

## VIETNAMESE

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Volume 9

Nguyễn Đình-Hoà

Vietnamese

# VIETNAMESE

## TIẾNG VIỆT KHÔNG SON PHẦN

NGUYỄN ĐÌNH-HOÀ

*Southern Illinois University, Carbondale*

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## PREFACE

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

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

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

While having the advantage of consulting nearly all the excellent monographs and journal articles produced by French authors of the last century as well as by Vietnamese academics around the Institute of Linguistics (established in Hanoi in 1969). I was handicapped in not being able to use the voluminous research work by Russian linguists---my foreign language baggage being limited to French, English and Chinese, with only a smattering of Latin, Spanish and Thai. Luckily, the relevant courses (in

general linguistics, English grammar, ESL methodology, Vietnamese grammar, language planning, and lexicography) at SIU-Carbondale, provided me with opportunities to do several contrastive analyses and to learn first-hand from many native speakers of non-European languages, including Chinese, Japanese, and such Southeast Asian systems as Thai, Khmer and Malay-Indonesian. I am thus very grateful for such an enriching exposure to a large variety of typological and areal features.

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

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

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

Nguyễn Dinh-Hoa

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Vietnamese as a National Language

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

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

cultural activities organized on festive occasions and traditional holidays. Formal courses in the Vietnamese language are taught in a number of foreign universities (in France, England, Germany, the United States, Australia, Japan, China, etc.), and some secondary schools in France, Australia and the U.S., etc. allow their students to choose Vietnamese as a foreign language.

### 1.2 Affinity with Chinese

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

### 1.3 Genetic Relationship

Vietnamese belongs instead to the Mon-Khmer stock---that comprises Mon, spoken in Burma, and Khmer (Cambodian), which is the language of Kampuchea, as well as several minority languages (Khmu, Bahnar, Bru, etc.) of Vietnam---within a large linguistic family called the Austro-Asiatic family. The latter, first mentioned by W. Schmidt [1907-08], includes several major language groups spoken in a wide area running from the Chota Nagpur plateau region of India in the west to the Indochinese peninsula in the east.

*1.3.1* In 1924, Jean Przyluski, a French scholar, after comparing Vietnamese with Mường, a sister language spoken in the midlands of northern provinces (Phú-thọ, Sơn-tây, Hoà-bình) and central provinces (Thanh-hoá, Nghè-an), wrote that Ancient Vietnamese was closely related to the Mon-Khmer languages, which have several affixes, but no tones. The similarities between Vietnamese and Mường can be seen in the following table as being closer than the similarities between either of them and other Mon-Khmer tongues (Mon, Khmer, Chrau, Bahnar and Røngao, for example):

	Việt	Mường	Mon	Khmer	Chrau	Bahnar	Rongao
EYE	<i>mắt</i>	<i>mắt</i>	<i>mät</i>		<i>mat</i>	<i>mät</i>	<i>mät</i>
NOSE	<i>mũi</i>	<i>muy</i>	<i>muh</i>	<i>crômuh</i>	<i>muh</i>	<i>muh</i>	<i>muh</i>
HAIR	<i>tóc</i>	<i>thắc</i>	<i>sök</i>	<i>sak</i>		<i>sök</i>	<i>sök</i>
FOOT	<i>chân</i>	<i>chon</i>	<i>jon</i>	<i>cong</i>		<i>jon</i>	<i>jen</i>
CHILD	<i>con</i>	<i>con</i>	<i>kon</i>	<i>koun</i>	<i>con</i>	<i>kon</i>	<i>con</i>
THREE	<i>ba</i>	<i>pa</i>	<i>pi</i>	<i>bej</i>	<i>pe</i>	<i>pen</i>	<i>pi</i>
FOUR	<i>bốn</i>	<i>pón</i>	<i>pan</i>	<i>buon</i>	<i>puon</i>	<i>puon</i>	<i>pun</i>
FIVE	<i>năm</i>	<i>dăm</i>		<i>pram</i>	<i>pram</i>	<i>podam</i>	<i>bodam</i>
BIRD	<i>chim</i>	<i>chim</i>	<i>cem</i>		<i>sém</i>		<i>cim</i>
BUFFALO	<i>trâu</i>	<i>tlu</i>		<i>krobej</i>	<i>kpu</i>		
BETEL	<i>trầu</i>	<i>tlu</i>	<i>joblu</i>	<i>mlu</i>	<i>below</i>		<i>bolau</i>
RIVER	<i>sông</i>	<i>khóng</i>	<i>klóng</i>		<i>krong</i>		<i>krong</i>

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

*1.3.3* Only in 1954 was André Haudricourt, a French botanist-linguist, able to trace the origin of the Vietnamese tones, arguing that, as a non-tonal language in the Mon-Khmer phylum at the beginning of the Christian era,

Vietnamese had developed three tones by the sixth century, and that by the twelfth century it had acquired all the six tones of modern Vietnamese, all this at the cost of losing final consonants /ʔ/, /h/. This explanation about “tonogenesis” has thus enabled specialists to state fairly safely the genetic relationship of the Vietnamese language: together with Mường, the language of Vietnam forms the Việt-Mường group within the Mon-Khmer phylum of the Austro-Asiatic family.

#### 1.4 Class-related Dialects?

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

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

### 1.5 Language and Religion

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

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

### 1.6 History of the Language

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

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

## 1.7 Writing Systems

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

### 1.7.1 *Chữ nho* or *chữ Hán*

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

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

### 1.7.2 *Chữ nôm*

While continuing to use Chinese to compose *luật-thi* ‘regulated verse’ as well as prose pieces, some of which have endured as real gems of Vietnamese literature in classical *wen-yen* (*văn-ngôn*), Buddhist monks and

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

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

Some examples of *nôm* characters follow:

- (1) *tài* ‘talent’  Cf. Sino-VN *tài* with same meaning
- (2) *bùa* ‘written charm’  Cf. Sino-VN *phù* with same meaning
- (3) *làm* ‘to do, make’  [from Sino-VN *làm*  ]

- |                           |  |                                 |
|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| (4) <i>một</i> '1'        |  | Cf. Sino-VN <i>một</i>          |
| (5) <i>biết</i> 'to know' |  | Cf. Sino-VN <i>bietet</i>       |
| (6) <i>mới</i> 'new'      |  | Cf. Sino-VN <i>māi</i>          |
| (7) <i>trái</i> 'fruit'   |  | [ 巴 <i>ba</i> + 賴 <i>lai</i> ]* |
| (8) <i>trời</i> 'sky'     |  | [ 天 + 上 ]**                     |
| (9) <i>tanh</i> 'fishy'   |  | [radical 肉 + 星 <i>tinh</i> ]    |
| (10) <i>cỏ</i> 'grass'    |  | [ 草 + 古 <i>cǒ</i> ]             |

\*the initial cluster bl- of this phonetic compound is listed in the 1651 dictionary, together with *tráng* 'moon', whose graph contains the same presyllable 巴 *ba* followed by 𩫑 *lang*.

\*\*this character is a semantic compound, just like the character 全 *trùm* 'village leader' or the character 𠵼 *seo* 'village crier'.

### 1.7.3 Chữ quốc-ngữ

Vietnam owes the Roman script called (*chữ*) *quốc-ngữ* to Catholic missionaries from Portugal, France, Spain and Italy, who at first needed some sort of transcription to help them learn the local language well enough to preach the Gospel in it without the aid of interpreters, and in the next step to give their new converts easy access to Christian teachings in Vietnamese translation. The French colonialists, on the other hand, viewed this romanization as a potential tool for the assimilation of their subjects, who they hoped would be able to make a smooth transition from this sound-by-sound transcription of their mother tongue in Latin letters to the process of learning French as their "*langue de culture*". The *quốc-ngữ* script proved indeed to be an excellent system of writing that enabled Vietnamese speakers to learn how to read and write their own language within a few weeks. Not

only did the novel script assist in the campaign against illiteracy, but it also helped the spread of basic education and the dissemination of knowledge, significantly introducing information about socio-political revolutionary movements in Japan, in China---and in European countries. Nowadays, *quốc-ngữ* serves as the medium of instruction at all levels of education, and despite its imperfections it has been groomed as the official conventional orthography: conferences and seminars have been held before and after reunification in 1976 to hear specialists from both zones discuss its inconsistencies and recommend spelling reforms, to be carried out gradually with a view to standardizing both the spoken and the written forms.

## 1.8 Diversity

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

Phonological structure veers off the dialect of Hanoi, for a long time the political and cultural capital of the Empire of Annam, as one moves toward the south. In each of the three complex nuclei *iē*, *uō*, *uɔ*, for example, the second vowel tends toward -â in the groups transcribed *iēc* /iâk/, *iēng* /iâñ/, *uōc* /uâk/, *uōng* /uâñ/, *uōc* /uâk/ and *uōng* /uâñ/. The Vinh dialect, which should belong to the Upper Annarn group, has three retroflexes: *tr-* [t̪] affricated, *s-* [ʃ] voiceless fricative, and *r-* [z], the corresponding voiced one. The Hué dialect, considered archaic and difficult, has only five tones, with the *hỏi* and *ngã* tones pronounced the same way with a long rising contour. The initial *z-* is replaced by the semi-vowel /j-/ and the palatal finals *-ch* and *-nh* are replaced by alveolars /t/ and /n/.

The phonemes of the Saigon dialect generally are not arranged as shown in the orthography. However, the consonants of Saigonese present the distinction between ordinary and retroflex initials. Also the groups *iēp*, *iēm*, *uōm*, *uōp*, *uōm* are pronounced /ip/, /im/, /um/, /up/, /um/, respectively.

Most dialects indeed form a continuum from north to south, each of them somewhat different from a neighboring dialect on either side. Such major urban centers as Hanoi, Hué and Saigon represent rather special dialects marked by the influence of educated speakers and of more frequent contacts with the other regions.

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

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

Members of the generations that grew up under French rule were bilingual in Vietnamese (their home language) and French, but have subsequently added English. The so-called generation of 1945, for whom French ceased overnight to be the medium of instruction, read and write English as well. During the 1954-1975 partition, because of the influence of socialist countries, Russian as well as Mandarin Chinese became familiar to

classes of professors, researchers, cadres and students in the northern half of the country, exposed to various currents of Marxist thought. South of the demarcation line, on the other hand, secondary school students could choose either French or English as first foreign language, to be studied for seven years, then at the senior high school level add the other tongue as their second foreign language in the three upper grades. French itself remained for many years the official language in diplomatic and political circles. Chinese characters continued to be taught as a classical language needed for studies in Eastern humanities.

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

### 1.9 Kinesics

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

### 1.10 Syllabic Structure

Vietnamese is an isolating language, that is to say, it has more free forms than bound forms. Each unit of form, often referred to as *tiếng* (*một*), is a syllable (*âm-tiết*).

*1.10.1* In the uniquely Vietnamese verse form called the “six-eight” (*lục-bát*) meter, a line of six syllables is followed by a line of eight syllables, thus

*Thanh-minh trong tiết tháng ba,*

*Lễ là tảo-mộ, hội là dập-thanh..*

(Nguyễn Du)

‘Now came the Feast of Light in the third month

‘With graveyard rites and junkets on the green.’

(transl. Huỳnh Sanh-Thông)

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

清明節 脂巴

禮 羅 拹 墓 會 羅 踵 青

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

*1.10.2* Each of the building blocks within a syllable is a unit of sound, called phoneme (*âm-vị*) and written with a symbol enclosed between slashes: we speak of the Vietnamese phonemes /m/, /i/, /n/ that make up the syllable *minh*, in which each phoneme may be represented by one letter (*m, i*) or two letters (*nh*).

Furthermore, since Vietnamese is a tonal language, the meaning of a given syllable may change according to its tone (*thanh-diệu, thính*), which is determined by a pitch level and a definite contour (level, falling, rising, dipping-rising, etc.): the same consonant-vowel combination /la/ has six realizations --- *la*, *là*, *lá*, *lă*, *lă*, *lă* --- which mean respectively 'to yell', 'to be, equal', 'tree leaf', '[of water] plain', 'exhausted', and 'strange'.

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

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

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

- a. those like *ăn* 'to eat', *hội* 'festival', *trong* 'inside', *ba* 'three', etc., which can be used freely in larger constructions---that is, in phrases or in sentences;
- b. those like *minh* 'bright, light', *tảo* 'to sweep', *thanh* 'green', etc. which cannot be used alone, but must occur in such larger forms as two-syllable compound words like *tảo-mộ*, *đập-thanh*, *thanh-minh*. These "restricted" forms are mostly borrowings from Chinese, which was the language of culture in traditional Vietnam, China having ruled so long over the country south of its border;
- c. those like *áp* in *á-m-áp* 'comfortably warm', *chạp* in *chập-chạp* 'slow(ly)', *sủa* in *sáng-sủa* 'bright, well lit', *lam* in *tham-lam* 'greedy', etc., which though not carrying a meaning of their own, serve as "helping"

syllables in the creation of such reduplicative, i.e. repetitive, forms that usually contain two syllables having the same initial sounds or rhyming together.

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

In the following sentence

- (1) *Tôi ăn cơm-trưa ở trường.*

I eat rice-noon at school

'I eat lunch at school.'

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

But in the next example

- (2) *Tôi ăn lót-dạ ở câu-lạc-bộ.*

I eat line-stomach at club

'I eat breakfast at the club.'

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

We are now ready to become familiar with a few more technical terms.

First, a word (*tù*) in Vietnamese may consist of:

one monosyllable, e. g. *tháng*, *ba*, *tôi*, *ăn*, *corn*, etc.;

or two syllables, e. g. *thanh-minh*, *táo-mզ*,  *cơm-trưa*, *lót-dạ*, etc.;

or three syllables, e. g. *câu-lạc-bộ* 'club', *quan-sát-viên* 'observer', *liên-lạc-viên* 'liaison person', *kiến-trúc-sư* 'architect', etc.

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

- (3) *Bấy-giờ là tiết tháng ba.*  
 that-time be season month three  
 'It was then the third lunar month.'
- (4) *Lễ đó gọi là lễ tảo-mộ.*  
 rite that call be ceremony sweep-grave  
 'That rite is called the grave-sweeping ceremony.'
- (5) *Tôi ăn lót-dạ ở câu-lạc-bộ, chữ không phải ở hợp-tác-xã.*  
 I eat line-stomach at club but not correct at cooperative  
 'I ate breakfast at the club, and not at the cooperative.'
- [The hyphenated units are either disyllabic, as in *bấy-giờ* 'then', *lót-dạ* 'breakfast', or trisyllabic, as in *câu-lạc-bộ* 'club', *hợp-tác-xã* 'cooperative'.]

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

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

Words or lexemes are in turn grouped into larger sequences known as phrases and sentences. The sentence as a unit of communication is a string of words carrying a meaningful message, obeying the syntactic rules of the

language and following a specific pattern of stress and intonation. As we shall see in the chapters on Syntax, the structure of a minimal sentence (*câu*) consists of two essential parts or constituents: the subject (*chủ-ngữ*) announcing a topic (*dề*) and the predicate (*vị-ngữ*) providing a comment (*thuyết*) on that topic.

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

- (6) *Trời mưa.*

sky rain

‘It’s raining.’

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

The same sentence may be reduced to

- (7) *Mưa.*, with the subject *trời* left out,

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

- (8) (*Nếu*) *trời mưa thì tôi không đi.*

if sky rain then I NEG go

‘If it rains, I won’t go’.

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

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

## Chapter 2

### The Sound System

#### 2.0 An Isolating Language

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

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

In each language, the spoken chain can be divided into syllables. A syllable is the minimum unit of pronunciation: it is larger than a single sound and smaller than a word. It is defined phonetically, within a string of sounds in any language, in terms of “peaks of sonority” with each peak corresponding to the center of a syllable. Phonologically, that is, with regard to an individual language, two classes of sounds can be distinguished: those which can occur on their own, or at the center of a sequence of sounds, and those which cannot occur on their own, or which occur at the margins of a sequence of sounds. The former sounds, like [a], [e], [i], [o], [u], etc., are generally referred to as vowels (*nguyễn-đám*); the latter sounds, like [p], [t], [k], [m], [f], [x], etc., are generally referred to as consonants (*phụ-đám*).

A consonant-vowel (CV) sequence seems to be found in all languages: these “open” syllables occur for instance in words [here hyphenated] in Japanese *ta-be-ru* ‘to eat’, Vietnamese *ba ni-cô* ‘three (Buddhist) nuns’, Thai *bu-rii* ‘cigarette’, French *ma-ri* ‘husband’, *ca-fé* ‘coffee’, etc. The CVC pattern is also very common: examples of “closed” syllables are Vietnamese *bát com* ‘bowl of rice’, Thai *maj-khiid* ‘matchstick’, English *fat, mad, cat, sit, hot, tin, roof*, etc.

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

## 2.1 Syllabic Structure

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

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

If we represent the beginning consonant by the symbol  $C_1$ , the final or rhyme by  $x$ , and the tone by  $T$ , then a CVC syllable in Vietnamese may be summarized as

$$\begin{matrix} T \\ C_1 + x \end{matrix}$$

[In traditional phonology, the initial (consonant)  $C_1$  is called *thanh-mẫu*, and the final or rhyme  $x$  is called *vận-mẫu = vận*.]

The final or rhyme  $x$  consists of the obligatory main vowel  $V$ , optionally preceded by the medial /w/ and optionally followed by a  $C_2$ :

$$x = (w) V + (C_2)$$

### 2.1.1 Initial Consonants (*phụ-âm đầu*)

The initial consonant  $C_1$  may be absent, as in *ᾶn*, *őm*, *im*, *ûng*, etc., wherein the rhyme  $x$  is /-ᾶn/, /-őm/, /-im/, and /-ûng/, respectively. Here the tones are /level/, /rising/, /level/, and /dipping-rising/, marking those syllables as meaning respectively ‘to eat’, ‘sick’, ‘to keep quiet’, and ‘rotten’. (Actually each vowel in the above examples is preceded by a “glottal stop” --- complete closure at the glottis --- [ʔᾶn], [ʔőm], [ʔim], [ʔûŋ<sup>m</sup>].)

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

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

a1	<i>t- ē</i>	$C_1 + V$	‘numb’
2	<i>t- ē n</i>	$C_1 + V + C_2$	‘name’
3	<i>t- u ē'</i>	$C_1 + w + V$	‘year of age’
4	<i>t- o ā n</i>	$C_1 + w + V + C_2$	‘math’
b1	<i>c- á</i>	$C_1 + V$	‘fish’
2	<i>c- á n</i>	$C_1 + V + C_2$	‘handle [of tool]’
3	<i>q- u á</i>	$C_1 + w + V$	‘to exceed’
4	<i>q- u á n</i>	$C_1 + w + V + C_2$	‘inn’

Phonetically, the examples a3, a4, b3 and b4 containing the medial /w/ are interpreted as follows:

a3	<i>t- u ē'</i>	/twé/ [tɥé]	a4	<i>t- o ā n</i>	/twán/ [tɥán]
b3	<i>q- u á</i>	/kwá/ [kɥá]	b4	<i>q- u á n</i>	/kwán/ [kɥán]

In the following table of consonant phonemes that may occur in the syllable-initial position, the letter(s) used to represent a consonant in the *quốc-ngữ* script almost coincide(s) with a phonemic symbol, which appears between slashes:

1. /b-/	<i>b-</i>	(ba bốn bà beo-béo)
2. /k-/	<i>c-, k-, q-</i>	(con cá, cái kim, quả cam)
3. /t-/	<i>ch-, tr-</i>	(cha, chú, chí; tra, trú, tri)
4. /tʂ-/	<i>d-, gi-, r-</i>	(da, di, gia, ra)
5. /d-/	<i>d-</i>	(đi đây đì đó)
6. /g-/	<i>g(h)-</i>	(ghi, ghê-gót, gay-go)
7. /h-/	<i>h-</i>	(ho-hen, hẹn-hò, hồn-hển)
8. /x-/	<i>kh-</i>	(khó-khăn, khὸ-khở, khoe-khoang)
9. /l-/	<i>l-</i>	(lú-lô, lέu-láo, lέ-loi, lôi-làm)
10. /m-/	<i>m-</i>	(mơ-màng, mãi-mãi, mờ-mờ)
11. /n-/	<i>n-</i>	(no-nê, nǎn-ní, nở-nang)
12. /ŋ-/	<i>ng(h)-</i>	(nghi-ngò, ngô-nghé, nghe-ngóng)
13. /ɲ-/	<i>nh-</i>	(nhè-nhé, nhó-nhung, nhắc-nhở)
14. /p-/	<i>p-</i>	(pip, pô-ke, pô-po-lin)*
15. /f-/	<i>ph-</i>	(phuong-pháp, phu-phen, phe-phái)
16. /t-/	<i>t-</i>	(téi ta, tú-tài tây, tí-tẹo, to-tướng)
17. /ʈʰ-/	<i>th-</i>	(thật-thả, thong-thả, thỉnh-thoảng)
18. /v-/	<i>v-</i>	(vui-vé, vội-vàng, vắng-vé)
19. /s-/	<i>x-, s-</i>	(xa-xăm, xa-xôi, Xã Xê; sa-sí, sao sáng)
20. /ʈʂ-/	<i>tr-</i>	(tra, trú, tri)
21. /ʃ-/	<i>s-</i>	(sa-sí, sao sáng)
22. /ʂ-/	<i>r-</i>	(rồi ra rất rác-rỏi)

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

Of the above 22 beginning consonants, the first nineteen represent the northern dialect typified by the speech heard around Hanoi whereas the last three (#20, #21 and #22) are typical of areas running from northern Central Vietnam southward and also of some areas in North Vietnam. Of these three retroflex consonants (pronounced with the tip of the tongue tilted upward), the last one is sometimes pronounced like /r/ in the Saigon dialect, which does not have the labiodental /v/ (#18) of the northern dialect.

In the northern dialect, the two consonants spelled *tr-* and *ch-* fall together in pronunciation (*tra* and *cha* sounding alike --- /ca/). Also in the north, urban speakers do not differentiate between words spelled with *s-* and *x-* (*sa* and *xa* sounding alike --- /sa/). Some people in rural areas do not differentiate between words spelled with *t-* and *n-*, pronouncing both *lām* and *nām* as /nām/: this is considered a non-standard feature. However, in the conventional orthography, members of such pairs as *sa : xa /sa : sa /*, *tra : cha / t'a : ca /*, and *lām : nām / lām : nām /* are differentiated. Although the sounds spelled with *d-*, with *gi-* and with *r-* no longer show any distinction in modern Hanoi speech, spelling rules require that the word for 'skin' be spelled *da*, the word meaning 'house(hold), home; family' be spelled *gia*, and the word for 'to go out, exit' be spelled *ra*. [Indeed, in a dictation test, even a teacher who is a native speaker of northern Vietnamese may give the "spelling pronunciation" of each of these three sounds.]

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

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

/bl-/ as in *blā*, *blai*, *blái*, *blang*, *blo*, *blōi*, etc. Cf. Modern VN *trä*, *trai*, *trái*, *träng*, *tro*, *trōi*, etc. with /bl/ becoming /t'/.

/ml-/ as in *mlām*, *mlāt*, *mlē*, *mlōi*, *mlōm*, etc. Cf. Modern VN *läm*, *lät*, *lē*, *lōi*, *lōm*, etc. with /m/ being dropped.

/mnh-/ as in *mnhäm*, *mnhe*, etc. Cf. Modern VN *nhäm*, *nhē*, etc. with /m/ being dropped.

/tl-/ as in *tlai*, *tlái*, *tläm*, *tlāu*, *tle*, etc. Cf. Modern VN *trai*, *trái*, *träm*, *träu*, *tre*, etc. with /tl/ becoming /t'/.

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

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

*tr-* as in *tre* ‘bamboo’, etc.) or even with a group of three consonant letters (*ngh-* as in *nghe* ‘to listen’, *nghi* ‘to suspect’, *nghẽ* ‘trade, occupation’).

Also, one same phoneme may assume two or three written forms: /k/ for instance is transcribed with the letter *k*- before a front vowel *i, ê, e*, but with the letter *q*- if followed by the medial /-w-/; and with the letter *c*- elsewhere:

*ki-lô* ‘kilogram’, *ký, kí /kí* ‘to sign’, *kč* ‘to trace’, *ké* ‘millet’,

*qua* ‘to cross over’, *quê* ‘native place’, *quán-quân* ‘champion’, *qui*, *quý* ‘precious’,

*cá* ‘fish’, *cǎm* ‘chin’, *câm* ‘dumb, mute’, *con* ‘child’, *cô* ‘aunt’, *com* ‘[cooked] rice’, *cũ* ‘used, old’, *cứng* ‘hard’, etc.

Both velar consonants --- the fricative /g/ [χ] and the nasal /ŋ/ --- are written with the extra letter *h* if the vowel is *i, ê, e/*: *ghi* ‘to record’, *ghẽ* ‘chair’, *ghe* ‘boat’, *nghi* ‘to suspect’, *nghẽ* ‘trade, occupation’, *nghe* ‘to listen, hear’, etc. This was due to the influence of Italian spelling.

### 2.1.2 Rhymes (*vần, vân*)

Within the final or rhyme *x*, the vowel nucleus can be one of the eleven simple vowels: *a, á, â, e, ê, i(y), o, ô, ò, u, ú* (respectively, low central, short low central, short mid central, unrounded low front, unrounded mid front, unrounded high front, rounded low back, rounded mid back, unrounded mid central, rounded high back, and unrounded high back). The nucleus can also be one of the three double vowels: /iâ/ spelled *ia*, *iê*-; /uâ/ spelled *ua*, *ûô*-; and /úâ/ spelled *ua*, *uo*-.

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

The nuclear vowel phoneme /i/ is sometimes spelled *i* (as in *dí* ‘to go’, *mì* ‘noodles’, *sí* ‘scholar’) and sometimes spelled *y* (as in *lý* ‘reason’, *ký* ‘careful, thorough’, *Mỹ* ‘America; American’). [*H, kí, Mí* would be better representations, as recommended in the campaign to standardize the spelling system. But specialists recognize that spelling reforms take time.]

All three diphthongs, written with two letters, are spelled *-ia*, *-ua*, *-uo*, respectively, if they occur in open syllables: *mía* ‘sugar cane’, *múa* ‘to buy’,

*mua* 'to rain' (examples a1, b1, c1 below). However, when there is a final consonant C<sub>2</sub>, that is, in a closed syllable, the complex vowels are spelled respectively *iē-*, *uō-*, *uɔ-*: thus, *miēng* 'morsel, bite, piece, bit', *muōn* '10,000', *muong* 'irrigation canal' (examples a2, b2, and c2):

a1	<i>m- ia</i>	C <sub>1</sub> + Vâ	'sugar cane'
2	<i>m- iēng</i>	C <sub>1</sub> + Vâ + C <sub>2</sub>	'morsel, bite'
b1	<i>m- ua</i>	C <sub>1</sub> + Vâ	'to buy'
2	<i>m- uō n</i>	C <sub>1</sub> + Vâ + C <sub>2</sub>	'10,000'
c1	<i>m- uə</i>	C <sub>1</sub> + Vâ	'to rain'
2	<i>m- uɔ ng</i>	C <sub>1</sub> + Vâ + C <sub>2</sub>	'irrigation canal'

The double nucleus /-iā/, spelled *-ia* or *-iē-*, obeys some special spelling rules. It is spelled *yē-* when there is a final consonant but no initial consonant (as in *yêu* /jâw/ 'to love', *yém* /jâm/ 'Vietnamese halter bra'), or when it is both preceded by the medial sound /-w-/ and followed by a final consonant (as in *uyēn* /wjâñ/ [-uɔŋ] 'mandarin ducks', *thuyết* /thwiāt/ 'theory', *Nguyễn* /ŋjwiāñ/ 'the family name Nguyen', *tuyēn-truyen* /t̪wjâñ-cwjâñ/ 'propaganda'). If there is no final consonant, then the sequence *-ia* is respelled *-ya*, as in the unique lexeme *khuya* /xwiâ/ 'late at night' (Cf. *khuyêñ* /xwiāñ/ 'to advise').

Let us finally note that the two vowels ā (short a) and â (short σ) cannot occur in an open syllable, but must be followed by a final consonant: *āñ* 'to eat', *āñ* 'lukewarm', *tām* 'toothpick', *tāñ* 'to increase', *sāp* 'to arrange', *māt* 'eye', *bāc* 'north', *cāñ* 'to need', *cāp* 'to provide', *dāñ* 'earth, ground', *nāc* 'hiccup', etc. The presence of a final consonant is implied when we place a hyphen after either vowel: *ā-*, *â-*.

### 2.1.3 Final Consonants (*phụ-ām cuối*)

There are eight possible elements occurring in syllable-final position: we can find one of the three stops (*tăc-ām*) / p t k /, one of the three nasals (*tj-ām*) / m n ŋ /, or one of the two semivowels (*bán-nghyēñ-ām*) / y w /:

*dáp* [d á p] ‘to reply’, *mát* [m á t] ‘cool’, *khác* [x á k] ‘other, different’, *khách* [x á i k] ‘guest’;

*nam* [n a m] ‘south’, *bán* [b á n] ‘to sell’, *trang* [c a n] or [t' a n] ‘page’, *tranh* [c á i n] or [t' á i n] ‘painting’;

*tai* [t a i] /tay/ ‘ear’, *tay* [t á i] /tāy/ ‘arm’;

*báo* [b á y] /báw/ ‘newspaper’, *báu* [b á y] /báw/ ‘precious’.

The (pre-)velar stop which follows *i* and *ê* is spelled *-ch* (as in *thích* [tʰ í k] ‘to like’, *éch* [á ĩ k] ‘frog’), and the (pre-)velar nasal is spelled *-nh* (as in *mình* [m ì n] ‘body’, *bệnh* [b à i n] ‘disease’).

Among the final consonants C<sub>2</sub>, the labials /p m/ pattern together, the alveolars /t n/ pattern together, just as the velars /k ɲ/ pattern together, as seen in the reduplications *ấm-áp* ‘comfortably warm, cosy’, *dèm-dẹp* ‘fairly good-looking’, *tòn-tốt* ‘rather good’, *man-mát* ‘rather cool’, *sinh-sích* ‘[of engine] running loudly’, *vầng-vặc* ‘[of moonlight] bright and clear’ [see 3.5.2.2].

The spellings *ung*, *ōng*, *ong*, *uc*, *ōc*, *oc* represent [uŋ<sup>m</sup>], [ăŋ<sup>m</sup>], [uŋ<sup>p</sup>], [ăŋ<sup>p</sup>], [ăŋk<sup>p</sup>], [ăŋk<sup>m</sup>], respectively, with labio-velar co-articulation following a rounded back vowel /u ă o/ as in *ung* ‘ulcer, cancer’, *ōng* ‘grandfather’, *ong* ‘bee’, *đục* ‘muddy’, *đōc* ‘poison(ous)’, *đoc* ‘to read’. In rare examples of simple velar nasals or stops occurring after back vowels /o/ or /o/, the latter are spelled *ōō*, *oo*: *cōōng* in *cōōng-kēnh* ‘to carry someone sitting astride or standing on one’s shoulders’ (cf. *cōng* ‘peacock’); *boong* ‘ship deck’ [< Fr. *pont*] (cf. *bong* ‘[of glued surface] to come loose’), *ba-toong* ‘walking stick, cane’ [< Fr. *bâton*] (cf. *tong* ‘lost, all gone’), *loong-toong* ‘messenger’ [< Fr. *planton*] (cf. *long* ‘to become detached’), *bù-loong* ‘bolt’ [< Fr. *boulon*], *xoong* ‘saucepans’ [< Fr. *casserole*] (cf. *xong* ‘completed’), *ro-moóc* ‘trailer’ [< Fr. *remorque*] (cf. *móc* ‘to pick out’), (*quần*) *soóc* ‘walking shorts’ [< Engl. *shorts*] (cf. *sóc* ‘squirrel’).

The semivowel /-y/ [j] --- which never follows /i ē e/ --- is spelled *-y* following the two short vowels /ă â/- (as in *tay* ‘arm’, *tây* ‘west’), but *-i* elsewhere (*tai* ‘ear’, *tỏi* ‘garlic’, *tôi* ‘I, me’, *tới* ‘to arrive’, *túi* ‘pocket’, *chửi* ‘to curse’, *duôi* ‘tail’, *duồi-ươi* ‘orangutan’).

The semivowel /-w/ [u] --- which does not occur after /u ă o/ --- is spelled *-o* following /a-, e-/ (as in *ao* ‘pond’, *mèo* ‘cat’), but *-u* elsewhere (*dâu* ‘where’, *máu* ‘blood’, *mưu* ‘ruse’, *kêu* ‘to shout’, *thiu* ‘stale’).

### 2.1.4 The Medial Sound (*điền dặm*)

The medial /-w-/ , spelled either -u- or -o-, indicates labialization or lip-rounding: *quả* 'fruit', *thuế* 'tax', *thủy* 'water', *quyền* 'authority', *toa* 'railroad car', *khoé* 'strong', *hoạt-dộng* 'active'. It does not follow a labial sound like /b, m, ŋ, v/, except in French loanwords: *búýt* 'bus', *moà* 'I, me', *moay-o* 'hub [of wheel]', *phuy* '(oil) drum', *voan* 'tulle'.

The lexemes that have the initial /hw-/ are all (rare) Sino-Vietnamese words: *noà* /hwə/ 'infant, baby', *noã* /hwã/ 'lazy', *noᾶn* /hwān/ 'egg', *nuy* /hwj/ 'dwarf'.

/-w-/ cannot be followed by a rounded vowel such as *u*, *ø*, *o*, *œ*- (i.e. /uâ/). If there is no initial consonant and the vowel nucleus is *i*, *ɛ*, *yê*, *ɔ*, *ă*, then /w-/ is spelled -u- as in *uý* /wi/ 'to delegate [authority]', *uế* /wé/ 'dirt, filth', *uyên(-uong)* /wién(-uong)/ 'mandarin ducks', *uất* /wát/ 'angered'. But if the vowel nucleus is *a*, *ă*, *c*, the syllable is spelled respectively *oa*, *oă*, *oe*, as in *oá* 'to break into tears', *hoa* 'peace', *oát* 'brat', *ngoặt* 'sudden turn', *oe-oe* '[of infant] to cry loudly', *khoé* 'strong'.

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

-u- as in *tuy* 'although', *Huế* 'the city of Huế', *thuyềñ* 'boat', *khuya* 'late at night', *hus* 'to brandish', *tuần* 'week', etc. and

-o- as in *hos* 'flower', *khoa* 'to brag', *ngoặc* 'bracket, parenthesis', etc.

If, on the other hand, the syllable starts with *q-*, then the rhyme sequences /-wa, -wă-, -we/ are spelled -ua, -uă, -ue (*que* 'to cross over', *quăn* '[of hair] curly', *que* 'stick', *quen* 'acquainted', *quét* 'to sweep', etc.).

### 2.1.5 Tones (*thanh-díệu, thanh, thinkh*)

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

rising, (4) creaking-rising --- raspy because of glottal stop, (5) (low) dipping-rising, and (6) constricted---also raspy with glottal stop. Their Vietnamese names are: *ngang*, *huyền*, *sắc*, *ngã*, *hỏi*, *nặng*, or respectively "level", "hanging", "sharp", "tumbling", "asking" and "heavy".

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

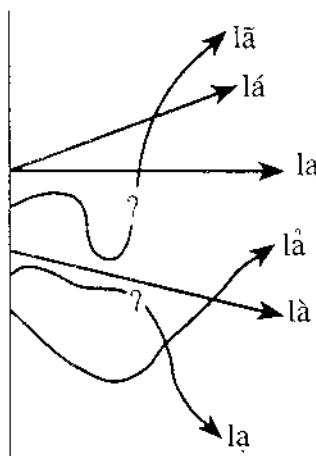
*la là lâ lâ lâ lâ*  
*ma mà má mâ mâ mâ*  
*bén bén bén (bén) bén bén*  
*gáp gáp*  
*mát mát*  
*sách sach*  
*công còng cóng (cóng) công công*

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

A syllable ending with a stop can only have either the *sắc* tone or the *nặng* tone, as in *gáp* / *gáp*, *mát* / *mát*, *sách* / *sach*, *hóc* / *hoc*, etc. [The items in parentheses (*bén*, *cóng*) are possible but nonsensical syllables.]

In some provinces of Central Vietnam, speakers do not keep apart the /*hởi*/ and /*ngã*/ tones, or the /*ngâ*/ and /*nặng*/ tones, or the /*hởi*/ and /*sắc*/ tones.

Diagram  
of the six tones



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

	Plain	Melodic	Glottal
High	a	á	ă
Low	à	ả	ą

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

	Normal	Relaxed	Glottal
Plain	a	ă	ą
Melodic	á	ả	ă

In poetry, the six tones are divided into two groups: the level (*ngang*) and falling (*huyền*) tones are called *bằng* "level, flat" whereas the other four (*sắc*, *ngã*, *hỏi*, *nặng*) belong to the *trắc* "oblique, sharp" group. Rules of prosody require that, in regulated verse, *bằng* - *trắc* tones occur in parallel lines, and that a word in a certain position must have the appropriate tone.

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

	<i>bằng</i> "level"	<i>trắc</i> "oblique"
Upper register	<i>ngang</i>	<i>sắc*</i>
Lower register	<i>huyền</i>	<i>hỏi**</i>

[Haudricourt in his 1954 article on the origin of Vietnamese tones (see 1.3.3) pointed out that, in the process of tone-development, non-tonal Vietnamese acquired the *sắc* and *nặng* tones\* when the final glottal stop [-?] dropped, and the loss of final [-s -ʃ -h] resulted in the *hỏi* and *ngã* tones\*\*.]

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

- (Upper register) ám ám 'a little warm' < ám 'lukewarm'
- nho nho 'smallish, tiny' < nho 'small'
- trắng trắng 'whitish' < trắng 'white'
- kha khá 'rather good, rather well' < khá 'pretty good'
- xám xám 'grayish' < xám 'gray'; etc.

- (Lower register) *hở hẹp* ‘rather narrow’ < *hở* ‘narrow’  
*nહ nhàng* ‘gently’ < *nહ* ‘light’  
*ngòn ngọt* ‘rather sweet’ < *ngót* ‘sweet’  
*ầm ĩ* ‘noisily’ < *ầm* ‘noisy’  
*lạnh lẽo* ‘frigid’ < *lạnh* ‘cold’; etc.

## 2.2 Number of possible syllables

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

## 2.3 Below the syllable

**2.3.1 Pig Latin.** In section 2.1 we have seen that a syllable is fruitfully analyzed as the sequence onset + rhyme ( $C_1 + X$ ): for example, *nam* = *n* + *am*; *lo* = *l* + *o*; *tương* = *t* + *ương*; *con* = *c* + *on*; *cây* = *c* + *ây*, etc. This enables native speakers to evolve a kind of “pig-Latin” that adults use in the presence of children. In English the inadvertent transposition of initial sounds of words, as queer old *dean* for dear old *queen*, is called a “spoonerism” [after English clergyman W. A. Spooner (1844-1930)]. In the Vietnamese variety, called *nói Jái*, if the two words in the phrase *tương lo* ‘The statue worries’ switch position and tones, we have *lo tương* ‘a bottle of soy paste’. Or *con cây* ‘the dog’ would become *cây còn* ‘the tree remains’. Likewise a mother could playfully say *dám dài* (no meaning) when she wants

to avoid the phrase *dái dầm* '(Baby) wet his / her pants', and gossipers refer to an unwed pregnancy (*chưa hoang*) as *hoảng chưa* 'Aren't you scared?'.

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

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

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

Smart children design their own secret language by adding a key syllable, for instance *la*, and letting it switch initial ( $C_1$ ) and rhyme ( $x$ ) with the pertinent word. Thus *ăn* 'to eat' becomes /l + ăn a/, *phở* 'beef noodle soup' becomes /l + ᫃ f + à/, *hoàn* /h + oan/ becomes /l + oan h + a/. Likewise each constituent of the compound *hoàn-cảnh* 'environment, circumstances', for instance, is decomposed as /h + oàn k + ảnh/, and after commutation of onset and rhyme with /l + a/, we have /loan - hà lanh - kả/. As soon as the kids' code is broken by grownups, they still rattle off in their medium now choosing a new key, for instance *chim*, and the new expression, using /ch + im/, becomes /choan - him chanh - kím/.

**2.3.2 *Subsyllabic morphemes***. When divided similarly into the two elements  $C_1$ - and - $x$ , each set of monosyllabic demonstratives shows extremely interesting semantic relationships among its members, as each pertinent syllable is broken down into an initial morpheme and a nuclear morpheme:

	Unspecified /-ao, -âu/	Close /ay, -ây/	Distant /-ây, -o/
Reference /n-/	<i>nào</i> 'which?'	<i>này</i> 'this'	<i>nấy, nọ</i> 'that'
Place /d-/	<i>dâu</i> 'where?'	<i>dày</i> 'here'	<i>dẩy, dồ</i> 'there'
Quantity /b-/	<i>bao</i> 'how much?'	<i>bây</i> 'this much'	<i>bấy</i> 'that much'
Manner /s-, v-/	<i>sao</i> 'how? why?'	<i>vày</i> 'this way'	<i>vậy</i> 'that way'

Examples:

*người nào?* 'which person?' *người này* 'this person' *người (n)ấy* 'that (same) person'

*hôm nào?* 'which day? when?' *hôm nay* 'today' *hôm nọ* 'the other day'

*ở đâu?* 'where?' *ở đây* 'here' *ở đấy, ở đó* 'there'

*bao nhiêu?* 'how much? how many?' *bấy nhiêu* 'this much, this many'  
*bấy nhiêu* 'that much, that many'

*bao giờ?* 'when?' *bây giờ* 'now' *bấy giờ* 'then, at that time'

*bao lâu?* 'how long?' *\*bấy lâu* *bấy lâu* 'for that long'

*bao xa?* 'how far?' *\*bấy xa* *\*bấy xa*

*(tại) sao?* 'why, how come?' *như vậy* 'this way' *như vậy* 'that way, so'

## 2.4 Syllable boundaries

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

*khoa* /xwa/ [xua] 'department; study'

vs. *khu A* /xu + a/ [xu a] 'section A';

*khoai* /xway/ [xuaj] '(sweet) potato'

vs. *khu ai?* /xu + ay/ [xu aj] 'whose area?'

vs. *khoa y* /xwa + i/ [xua i] 'the field (or school, or department) of medicine';

*quái /kwáj/ [ kuáj ]* ‘strange, weird’  
 vs. *cu Ái /ku + áy/ [ ku áj ]* ‘little boy (named) Ái’.

It is also juncture that helps distinguish between such sequences as:

*cám ơn /kám + ơn/* (feel favor) ‘thank you’ and  
*cá mơn /ká + mơn/* (fish mòn) ‘mòn fish’;  
*xem ô-tô /sem + oto/* ‘to look at automobiles’ and  
*xe mô-tô /se + moto/* (vehicle motor) ‘motorcycle’.

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

## 2.5 Stress (*độ nhấn*) and intonation (*ngữ điệu*)

A syllable may be unstressed, stressed, or heavily stressed. The following sentences contain all three degrees of stress:

*Tôi không biết /tɔi kʰóŋ biet/* (I NEG know) ‘I don’t know.’

*Tôi không đi /tɔi kʰóŋ di/* (I NEG go) ‘I’m not going.’

The stress on the pronoun *dâu* ‘where; anywhere’ marks emphasis or insistence when it means ‘(not) anywhere’ (7.3.2). Compare:

*Cô ấy đi đâu?* (aunt that go where) ‘Where did she go?’

*Cô ấy (cô) đi đâu!* (aunt that EMPH go anywhere) ‘She did not go!’

*Tôi không đi đâu (cả).* (I NEG go anywhere all) ‘I’m not going anywhere.’

*Tôi không đi đâu!* (I NEG go anywhere) ‘I’m not going. (Don’t insist.)’

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

In his descriptive grammar of Vietnamese [1965c, reprinted 1987], Laurence Thompson distinguishes four patterns of intonation: (a) decreasing, (b) fading, (c) sustaining, and (d) increasing, which he earlier [1959] called “*diminuendo*”, “*morendo*”, “*sostenuto*”, and “*crescendo*”, respectively.

Whereas the first example (*Cô ấy đi đâu?*) has the “morendo” intonation and the third example (*Tôi không đi đâu cả*) has the “diminuendo” intonation, the second and fourth examples (*Cô ấy có đi đâu!*, *Tôi không đi đâu!*) are lengthened, with the voice rising (“crescendo”) before the tonal contour of the last syllable goes down and the initial force of the accentuation completely phases out. The same “crescendo” phenomenon is noticed in these two contrasting sentences:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Examples:

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

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

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

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

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

*Tại sao cô thôi?* (because how aunt stop) ‘Why did you quit, miss?’

The same question words can be used as indefinite pronouns in exclamations, again with the “crescendo” intonation and a heavy stress on the syllables *ai*, *gì*, *dẫu*, etc. This phenomenon can be observed particularly in women’s speech:

*Không ai nói (cả).* (NEG who speak all) ‘No one spoke at all.’

*‘Ai nói!* (who speak) ‘No one spoke up.’

*Tôi nói ‘gì?* (I say what) ‘What did I say [wrong to upset him]?’

*Tôi đi bao ‘gì?* (I go what-extent time) ‘I never went.’

*Cô nói ‘gì tôi cũng tin.* (aunt say whatever I likewise believe)

‘I believe anything you say, Miss.’

*Cô ấy (có) đi ‘dẫu!* (aunt that EMPH go wherever)

‘But no, she did not go at all!’

*Cô ấy ‘dẫu có đi!* (aunt that wherever EMPH go) ‘No, she did not go!’

*Cô ấy không đi ‘dẫu!* (aunt that NEG go wherever)

‘She’s not going, don’t insist!’

## 2.6 Earlier records and recent reforms

When it was first invented, the Roman script (*chữ quốc ngữ*) did not show any diacritic signs: *co* instead of *cô*, *lut* instead of *lút*. There was no distinction between the vowels *a/á*, or between *o/ó*, *u/ú*, *e/é*. Thus, *án* was transcribed *an*; *mùon* was transcribed *muon*; *óng tràm* was spelled *ontrum*; and *hế̄i* was simply written *het*.

Middle Vietnamese [Gregerson 1969], as recorded in the trilingual dictionary by Alexandre de Rhodes (Rome, 1651), displayed the above distinctions through the use of vowel markers and tone markers. However, modern *v-* was written by means of *ɸ*, *u --- φac, uάc* for *váć*; *ɸeai, uai* for *vai*. *Óng* was written *o᷑*; *trong* was written *tra᷑*; *hóć* was written *haoc*, *háć*; and *cuong* was written *c᷑ang*; etc.

The language recorded in lexicographical works of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and particularly in the Vietnamese-Latin dictionary by Bishop Tabord (published in Serampore, India, in 1838) seemed to have been fairly codified, and its stabilized appearance did not differ greatly from its modern form. Lexicographic efforts by French missionaries and administrators as well as by Vietnamese priests and scholars themselves have

step by step contributed to the standardisation of the written medium through several excellent monolingual, bilingual and trilingual dictionaries, with Vietnamese being the source language or a target language. As the conventional orthography, (*chữ*) *quốc-ngữ* has immensely helped the literacy campaign since the 1940s, and at the same time served as a new vestment to groom the Vietnamese language into an adequate and efficient tool for the dissemination of culture and science [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1979].

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

## Chapter 3

### The Lexicon

#### 3.0 The Word in Vietnamese

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

#### 3.1 Monosyllables and Polysyllables

Phonologically, a Vietnamese word may have just one syllable (*âm-tiép, tiếng một*), or it may have two or more syllables. By looking at its structure, we will see that it is not correct to say that the language is monosyllabic “đơn-âm(-tiết)”. Outsiders used to think so because the majority of units in the Vietnamese lexicon consist of only one syllable: *nhà, cửa, cơm, cháo, quần, áo, ăn, ngủ, đi, đứng, học, làm, chó, mèo, trâu, bò, lợn, gà, cam, quýt, cau, dừa*, etc. [In English we may encounter a sentence which is a string of monosyllables, for instance, *I saw a big black cat on the hot tin roof out there*. But that does not allow us to say that English is “monosyllabic.”]

At any rate statistical studies have shown that in modern Vietnamese there is a clear tendency toward disyllabism, with many words consisting of two syllables. One study has mentioned the 80% ratio: examples are *cháu ngoại, bánh mì, xe đạp, nhà đá, nhà cửa, cơm nước, cơm cháo, quần áo, ăn học, điểm-tâm, bưu-diện, ngân-hàng, tiền-tệ, giám-dốc, đại-học, hiệu-trưởng*, etc. And there are even words that have three or four syllables, as we shall see below.

### 3.2 Full words vs. Empty words

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

(1) either "full words" (*thực-từ*), that is content words such as *nha* 'house', *cua* 'door', *chó* 'dog', *mèo* 'cat', *com* 'cooked rice', *nước* 'water', *sữa* 'milk', *cày* 'to plow', *cấy* 'to transplant [rice seedlings]', *ăn* 'to eat', *uống* 'to drink', *chăm* 'diligent', *lười* 'lazy', etc.

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

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

*to-to* 'fairly large', *tù-tù* 'slow(ly)', *cháu-cháu* 'grasshopper', *chuồn-chuồn* 'dragonfly', *vội-vàng* 'hurried(ly)', *lóng-tống* 'awkward, helpless', *chăm-chí* 'hard-working', *an-mặc* 'to dress', *an-ở* 'to live; to behave', *nha-cửa* 'home, house, housing', *mồ-hôi* 'sweat', etc.

*(bất-)thịnh-linh* 'suddenly', *khít-khìn-khit* 'close-fitting', *Liên-lạc-viên* 'liaison person', *hợp-tác-xâ* 'cooperative [store]', *cảnh-sát-trưởng* 'police chief, sheriff', *thực-vật-học* 'botany', *chinh-trị-gia* 'statesman', etc.

There are even words made up of four syllables through patterns of reduplication [section 3.5]: *vội-vội vàng-vàng* < *vội-vàng* 'in a great hurry', *bù-lù bù-loa* < *lu-loa* 'to raise a hullabaloo by crying and complaining', *lóng-tz lóng-tống* < *lóng-tống* 'completely helpless, at a complete loss', *háp-iáp háp-iáp* < *háp-iáp* 'hurriedly and nervously', etc.

### 3.3 Sino-Vietnamese (Hán-Việt)

Apart from the native vocabulary, there are numerous words that have been integrated into the language through the process of lexical borrowing from Chinese. Loanwords from other languages such as Malay, Tay-Thai, French, English and Russian are outnumbered by those borrowed from the language of China, since the country was under Chinese domination for no less than ten centuries (111 BC - AD 939).

The present forms of earlier loanwords from Chinese are nowadays hardly recognizable as such, because they have been thoroughly vietnamized in the spoken language, e.g.

*buồng* ‘room’, *buồm* ‘sail’, *bùa* ‘amulet, written charm’, *chè* ‘tea’, *chém* ‘to cut with knife’, *chén* ‘cup’, *chèo* ‘oar’, *đục* ‘turbid’, *đuốc* ‘torch’, *gác* ‘upper storey’, *gan* ‘liver’, *góc* ‘corner’, *hế* ‘summer’, *khéo* ‘skillful’, *khoe* ‘to brag’, *keo* ‘glue’, *quen* ‘acquainted’, *tuổi* ‘(year of) age’, *mong* ‘to hope’, *múa* ‘to dance’, *mùa* ‘season, crop’, *mùi* ‘smell, odor’, *muôn* ‘10,000’, etc.

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

Whereas the earlier forms cited above could be traced back to Archaic Chinese, their equivalents used by the native intelligentsia during the Táng dynasty are respectively: *phòng*, *phàm*, *phù*, *trà*, *trám*, *trán*, *trạo*, *trọc*, *chúc*, *cắc*, *cạn*, *giác*, *hở*, *xảo*, *khoa*, *giao*, *quán*, *tuế*, *vọng*, *vũ*, *vị*, *vạn*, etc.

In traditional Vietnam, the latter Chinese-borrowed elements, were taught through primers where, in verse form used to facilitate memorization, the “foreign language” items appear with their respective glosses: just like *thiên*, defined as *trời* ‘sky’, *địa*, whose native equivalent is *đất* ‘earth’, and *vân*, whose native equivalent is *mây* ‘cloud’ [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà, ed. *Nhát Thiên Tự* (1989)]. The pronunciation of these latter borrowings, close to that of Ancient Chinese, has been called “Sino-Vietnamese” (*Hán-Việt*) [Maspero 1912, Mineya 1972, Hashimoto 1978].

More recently borrowed lexemes have swollen the ranks of those 3,000-odd items of Chinese origin, and new concepts have helped the assimilation of new terms like *xã-hội* ‘society’, *canh-nông* ‘agriculture’, *kỹ-nghệ* (*kĩ-nghệ*) ‘industry’, *tự-bản* ‘capitalism’, *cộng-sản* ‘communism’, etc.

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

\**các* -- *gác* ‘upper storey’, \**can* -- *gan* ‘liver’, \**cận* -- *gần* ‘near’, \**hoa* -- *vạ* ‘calamity’, \**ký* -- *ghi* ‘to record’, \**kiếm* -- *guom* ‘sword’, \**kính* -- *guong* ‘mirror’, etc.

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

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

Practically all Vietnamese morphemes are monosyllabic, e.g. *người* ‘person, man, human being’, *com* ‘cooked rice’, *đi* ‘to go, walk’, *muốn*

'to want', *cao* 'tall', *dúng* 'correct, right'. A very small number of morphemes of obscure etymology or of foreign origin have more than one syllable, e.g. *cù-lao* 'island', *mǎng-cut* 'mangosteen' and *sầu-riêng* 'durian' [from Malay], *xà-phòng*, *xà-bóng* 'soap', *cà-rốt* 'carrot', *ét-xăng* 'gasoline', *so-mi* 'shirt', *ca-vát*, *cà-vát* [from French], *dầu-lâu* 'skull', *bù-nhìn* 'scarecrow; puppet', *mồ-hôi* 'sweat', etc.

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

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

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

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

order to examine how they are constructed from those building blocks (called morphemes) through reduplicating and compounding, the two principal processes of word-formation.

### 3.5 The simple word

A morpheme that has lexical meaning (*nhà, cửa, cơm, nước, ăn, uống*) or grammatical meaning (*dã, sẽ, rất, thì, mà*) (see 3.2) can function as a simple word, and so can a morpheme like *à!*, *ã!*, *nhé!*, *nhi!*, *chút*, which functions as a final particle to convey the speaker's feeling or attitude toward the hearer. Thus, a simple word is a word that contains only one single morpheme, and a word made up of two morphemes or more through derivation is either a reduplication or a compound.

**3.5.1.** Simple words can be broken down into four kinds:

**3.5.1.1.** Most simple words are "full words", i.e. they have lexical meaning and denote things, phenomena, concepts, etc. They include five classes:

Nouns: *bàn, ghế, sách, vở, chó, mèo, trâu, bò, cơm, gạo, mưa, gió, tay, chân, mặt, mũi, cây, cỏ*, etc.

Verbs: *ăn, uống, đi, đứng, ngồi, làm, học, nói, cày, cấy*, etc.

Adjectives: *cao, thấp, béo, gầy, xanh, đỏ, tốt, xấu, xinh, đẹp*, etc.

Numerals: *một, hai, đăm, ba, vài*, etc.

Substitutes (Pronouns): *tôi, taو, mày, anh, chị, ông, bà; đây, đây, đó, kia; ai, gì, nào; thế, vậy*, etc.

Each of these single elements can serve as the base in a reduplicative or compound pattern: *bàn* 'table' occurring in *bàn học* 'desk', *bàn giấy* 'desk [in office]', *bàn thờ* 'altar', *bàn ăn* 'dining table'; *ăn* 'to eat' occurring in *ăn cơm* 'to have a meal', *ăn lãi* 'to earn interest', *ăn trộm* 'to burglarize', *ăn tiền* 'to take bribes'; *béo* 'fat' occurring in *béo tốt* 'fat and healthy (!)', *béo phì* 'obese', *tốt* 'good' occurring in *tôn-tốt* 'rather good', *tốt-dep* 'nice, swell', *tốt bụng* 'kind-hearted', etc.

Most simple words are native elements, but a small number of them are Chinese loanwords: *buồng / phòng* 'room', *chè / trà* 'tea', *mùi* 'smell, taste, color', *vị* 'taste, flavor', *ngà* 'ivory', *nam* 'boy, male', *nữ* 'girl, female', *trọng* 'to respect', *khinh* 'to despise', etc.

**3.5.1.2.** Other classes of simple words serve as grammatical tools, i.e. they help express grammatical meanings within a phrase or a sentence: they are

Prepositions: *bằng, cùa, với, về, do, vì, cho*, etc.

Conjunctions: *nhưng, mà, và, nên, tuy, nếu, hễ*, etc.

Auxiliaries (Modals): *dang, đã, sẽ, không, chẳng, chưa, cung, vẫn, hãy, dùng, chờ, rồi, xong*, etc.

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

**3.5.1.3** Dozens of others have direct emotive values: they are either interjections such as *ô, ôi, ôi, ô, oi, chà, chao, hãi, hù*, or expressive final particles such as *à, ạ, ư, chុ, nhé, nhុ*, etc.

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

### 3.6 Morphological processes

The processes which affect entire words in Vietnamese can be considered at several levels. Basically, at the word level, English words like *cup : cups, dog : dogs, rose : roses, ox : oxen, talk : talked : talking*, display partial similarities of form and meaning (using the plural morpheme *-s/, -z/, -iz/*, or *-en*, etc. for nouns, and the past tense morpheme *-ed*, the present continuous morpheme *-ing* for verbs). Vietnamese has no such system of inflection, and instead of using such morphemes as English *-s, -es, -en, -ed, -ing* (i.e. “suffixes”, which must always be glued to a stem like *cup, dog, rose, ox, talk*), grammatical relations are indicated by means of “function words” and word order.

**3.6.1 Phonetic modification.** We can observe phonological alternations (consonant, vowel, tone) and contractions. In colloquial speech, the numeral *hai mươi* '20', when followed by a unit numeral is contracted into *hăm-*, as in *hăm mốt* '21' [ < *hai mươi mốt* ], *hăm hai* '22' [ < *hai mươi hai* ], *hăm ba* '23' [ < *hai mươi ba* ], etc. Similarly, *ba mươi* and *băm-* alternate, resulting in *băm mốt* = *ba mươi mốt* '31', *băm ba* = *ba mươi ba* '33', *băm lăm* = *ba mươi lăm* '35', etc.

### 3.6.1.1 A change of tone within a word:

#### A. Numbers.

*một* '1' > *mốt* '1 after *mươi*' : for example *hai mươi mốt* '21', *ba mươi mốt* '31', *bốn mươi mốt* '41', ....

*mươi* '10' > *mươi* '10 when preceded by a unit numeral' : for example *bốn mươi* '40', *năm mươi* '50', *tám mươi* '80', .....

*rưỡi* '[of quantity, amount, unit] and a half', as in *một tháng rưỡi* 'one month and a half', *một đô-la rưỡi* 'one and a half dollars', *hai giờ rưỡi* '2:30; two and a half hours', *tăng gấp rưỡi* 'to increase 50%' --- but *rưỡi* '[of number] and a half', as in *hai trăm rưỡi* '250', *ba nghìn rưỡi* '3,500', *tám triệu rưỡi* '8,500,000', ....

#### B. (Demonstrative) substitutes.

*nay* 'this; here, now' (*hom nay* 'today', *ngày nay* 'nowadays') : *này* (*tháng này* 'this month', *tuần này* 'this week', *học-kỳ này* 'this term')

*dày* 'here' : *dày* 'there'

*bây giờ* 'now' : *bấy giờ* 'then'

*kia* 'there' : *kia* 'yonder'

*nhiều* 'much, many' : *nhiều* [in *bao nhiêu?* 'how much? how many?', *bấy nhiêu* 'this much, this many', *bấy nhiêu* 'that much, that many'].

#### C. Verbs.

*cưa* 'to saw' > *cúa* 'to cut in a sawing motion with a (dull) blade'

*cứng* 'hard' > *cứng* 'to have an erection'

*mượn* 'to borrow' > *mướn* 'to hire, rent'

*ngang* 'transversal, horizontal' > *ngáng* 'to trip, make [somebody] stumble'

*ngược* ‘upstream, opposite direction’ > *ngược* ‘to look up’

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

#### D. Nouns.

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

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

<i>bà</i> > <i>bà</i>	= <i>bà ấy</i> ‘she’
<i>ông</i> > <i>ông</i>	= <i>ông ấy</i> ‘he’
<i>cô</i> > <i>cô</i>	= <i>cô ấy</i> ‘she’
<i>anh</i> > <i>anh</i>	= <i>anh ấy</i> ‘he’
<i>chị</i> > <i>chị</i>	= <i>chị ấy</i> ‘she’
<i>thằng</i> > <i>thằng</i>	= <i>thằng ấy</i> ‘that guy, he’
<i>thằng cha</i> > <i>thằng cha</i>	= <i>thằng cha ấy</i> ‘that bloody guy; he’

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

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

<i>hôm</i> (= <i>hôm ấy</i> )	‘that day’,
<i>bên</i> (= <i>bên ấy</i> )	‘that side; over there’.
<i>dàng</i> (= <i>dàng ấy</i> )	‘that location; there’,
<i>trong</i> (= <i>trong ấy</i> )	‘that space inside; in there’,
<i>ngoài</i> (= <i>ngoài ấy</i> )	‘that space outside; out there’,
<i>trên</i> (= <i>trên ấy</i> )	‘that space on top; up there’, etc.

The above items *trong*, *ngoài*, *trên*, *dưới* (and *trước*, *sau*, ...) make up a small word class of locatives that on the surface resemble English prepositions. They all refer to position (in space or time), so have been called “relator-nouns” [Thompson 1965: 200]---*phương-vị-từ* in Vietnamese.

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

### 3.6.1.2 A change in the initial consonant.

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

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

### 3.6.1.3 Vowel alternations.

There is a vowel alternation between /a/ and /à/, as in *bắc* ‘north’: *bắc* ‘[of wind] northerly’, and between /a/ and /ö/, as in *nam* ‘south’, *nòm* ‘[of script] southern, demotic’ and *nòm* ‘[of wind] southerly’.

There are also alternations between /u/ and /ü/, /ö/ and /ɛ/, /o/ and /e/, which will be discussed under reduplications (3.7).

**3.7 Reduplications (*lặp lẩy, lẩy*).** Reduplications are iterative forms (*tiếng dôi = mots doubles*) in which a repeated element reflects certain phonological characteristics of the base. This feature is also found in other Southeast Asian languages. In Thai, for instance, reduplication results in imitative words, such as *súbsib* ‘to whisper’, *haahee* ‘sound of hearty laughter’, etc. In Malay languages, a complete repetition denotes plurality: *orang-orang* ‘men’ < *orang* ‘man’, *bangsar-bangsar* ‘nations’ < *bangsar* ‘nation’, *api-api* ‘box of matches’ < *api* ‘fife’, etc. In English the nearest examples are

such compound words are *chop-chop*, *clip-clop*, *clackety-clack*, *dillydally*, *helter-skelter*, *mumbo-jumbo*, *palsywalsy*, *razzle-dazzle*, *teeter-totter*, etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**3.7.1.3.** Names of birds, insects, plants and fruits are often reduplications: *ba-ba* ‘river turtle’, *bướm bướm* ‘butterfly’, *cào-cào* ‘grasshopper, locust’, *châu-châu* ‘grasshopper’, *chuồn-chuồn* ‘dragonfly’, *đá-đá* ‘partridge’, *đom-*

*dóm* 'glowworm, firefly, lightning bug', *le-le* 'teal, tree duck', *chiên-chien* 'skylark', *choi-choi* 'plover', *kén-kén / kên-kèn* 'vulture', *tê-té* 'pangolin', *đồi-mồi* 'marine tortoise', *se-se* 'sparrow', *chôm-chôm* 'rambutan', *thầu-dầu* 'castor-oil plant', *đu-du* 'papaya', etc.

3.7.1.4. Examples of onomatopoetic forms are *ào-ào* 'imitative of water flowing', *ầm-ầm* 'noisy, uproarious, thunderous', *bô-bô* 'to speak loud(ly)', *cąc-cặc* '[of duck] to cackle', *dùng-dùng* 'noisy, noisily', *hổn-hển* 'to pant, breathe hard and quickly', *oang-oang* '[of voice] booming', *oe-oe* 'imitative of infant crying', *cọc-cạch* 'to clank', *tùng-tùng* 'drum beat', *lạo-xạo* 'crunching sound [of gravel under shoes]', *leng-keng* 'to clink, tinkle', *l López-c López* 'clop-clop, clumping sound of clogs', *sốt-soạt* '[of tree leaves, paper, starched cloth] to rustle', *the-thé* '[of voice] shrill, piercing', etc.

### 3.7.2 The patterns of reduplication show much variety.

3.7.2.1 Total reduplication. In a total or complete reduplicative pattern (3.5.1), the second syllable is stressed: *ào-ào* 'sound of water running', *dùng-dùng* 'with a big bang', *hao-hao* 'analogous, rather similar', *mành-mành* 'blinds', *xương-xương* 'angular, bony', *kháng-khang* 'obstinate, persistent', *khu-khu* 'to hold tight {to ....}, guard jealously', *tro-tro* 'unchanged; brazen-faced', *đòng-đòng* '[of rice] 'to be in ear', *bừng-bừng* 'glowing; in blazing anger', *trùng-trùng* 'to glower, stare', etc.

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

Tone harmony requires that the tone of the basic syllable (underlined in the examples) and that of the derived syllable belong to the same register [see 2.6]: *ngang*, *sắc*, *hỏi*, of the upper register, and *huyền*, *ngã*, *nặng*, of the lower register. Examples:

*âm-âm* 'rather lukewarm', *beo-beo* 'rather plump', *thâm-tháp* 'rather short', *trắng-trắng* 'whitish', *đỏ-đỏ* 'reddish', *nho-nhỏ* 'smallish', *kha-khá* 'pretty good', *tôn-tôi* 'rather good', *chẳng-chắc* 'more or less

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

*đèm-dep* 'rather pretty', *hở-nhỏ* 'rather narrow', *lành-lanh* 'rather chilly', *nặng-nặng* 'rather heavy', *ngòn-ngót* 'rather sweet, sugary', *sờ-so* 'a little scared', *sừng-sững* 'standing tall', *chầm-chậm* '(rather) slowly', *nhàn-nhat* 'rather bland, flavorless', etc.

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

A. Alliterative patterns. When the initial consonant is repeated (*diệp âm*), and only the rhyme of the basic syllable changes, we have alliteration: examples are /ch-/ *châm-chú* 'to concentrate', /l-/ *lâm-lụng* 'to work hard, toil', /r-/ *rắc-rối* 'complicated, intricate', etc.

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

*cũ-ký* 'old, outmoded', *mຸm-mິm* '[of baby] chubby', *tົ່ມ-tິມ* 'to grin, chuckle', *xູ-xີ* '[of surface] rough, not smooth', etc.

*gõ-ghẽ* '[of road] bumpy', *hổn-hển* 'panting', *ngó-nghẽ* 'to look incongruous', etc.

*cò-kè* 'to bargain, haggle', *nhô-nhé* '[of voice] soft', *thô-thé* '[of small child] to speak softly', etc.

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

C-x -- C-a: *thiết-tha* 'insistent, earnest' < *thiết* 'deeply interested';  
*nhục-nhã* 'shameful' < *nhục* 'disgraced, humiliated'.

C-än -- C-x: *dẫn-do* 'to weigh the pros and cons' < *do* 'to measure';  
*bần-bặt* 'to leave no echo, no news' < *bặt*;  
*khân-khǎn* 'smelly' < *khǎn* 'fetid';  
*ngᾶn-ngthᾶt* 'to cry, sob' < *ngthᾶt* 'to choke'.

C-x -- C-än: *đúng-dẫn* 'correct' < *đúng*;  
*nhô-nhᾶn* 'tiny' < *nhô*;  
*vừa-vận* 'just right' < *vừa*;  
*xinh-xắn* 'pretty, well-proportioned' < *xinh* 'cute'.

- C-x -- C-σ: *bắt-bớ* ‘to make arrests’ < *bắt* ‘to arrest, detain’;  
*gặp-gỡ* ‘to encounter’ < *gặp* ‘to meet’;  
*lãng-lợ* ‘flirtatious’ < *lãng* ‘amorous’;  
*nhắc-nhở* ‘to remind’ < *nhắc* ‘to recall’.
- C-x -- C-e: *mạnh-mẽ* ‘strong’ < *mạnh*;  
*mát-mẽ* ‘cool’ < *mát*;  
*sạch-sẽ* ‘clean, spotless’ < *sạch* ‘clean’.
- C-x -- C-inh: *bướng-bỉnh* ‘stubborn, headstrong’ < *bướng*;  
*ngô-nghinh* ‘[of child] cute’ < *ngô*.
- C-x -- C-ui: *đen-dủi* ‘unlucky’ < *đen* ‘black; unlucky’;  
*gần-gui* ‘close, next to’ < *gần* ‘near’;  
*ngắn-ngủi* ‘[of time] very short’ < *ngắn* ‘short’.
- C-áp -- C-x: *lèp-loè* ‘to flare, flick, waver’ < *loè* ‘to flare up’;  
*thập-thò* ‘to appear and disappear’ < *thò* ‘to stick out’;  
*nháp-nhở* ‘to rise and fall’ < *nhở* ‘to surge’;  
*bấp-bênh* ‘unstable’ < *bênh* ‘to tilt, slant’;  
*gập-ghềnh* ‘[of road, ride] bumpy’ < *ghềnh*;  
*khấp-khểnh* ‘[of teeth; trot] uneven’ < *khểnh*.

According to one analyst, who listed 254 instances of the latter pattern, all forms (in which the derived syllable C-áp has either the *sắc* or the *nặng* tone) convey the idea of something appearing then disappearing, or something moving up and down, or a flame or a shadow flickering, with a continuing, repetitive on-and-off motion [Phi Tuyết Hinh 1977: 42-50].

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

/-m/ and /-p/: *ấm-áp* ‘comfortably warm’, *ăm-ăp* ‘chock-full, crammed’, *cầm-cáp* ‘to tremble, shake [with cold or fear]’, *cồm-côm* ‘thick, bulging’, *đèm-dep* ‘rather pretty’, *nom nớp* ‘fearful, worried’;

/-n/ and /-t/: *tòn-tốt* ‘rather good’, *man-mát* ‘rather cool’, *kìn-kit* ‘[of crowd] milling’, *quán-quít* ‘to hang around [somebody]’;

/-ŋ/ and /-k/: *eng-éc* ‘[of pig] squeal’, *khang-khác* ‘somewhat different’, *phẳng-phác* ‘[of silence] complete’, *sinh-sích* ‘[of engine] throbbing, panting’, *vắng-vặc* ‘[of moonlight] bright and clear’.

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

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

with /k-/ as in *lích-kích* ‘[of carried utensils] weighty, burdensome, clangy; [of procedures] complicated’; *lung cúng* ‘cumbersome’,

with /d-/ as in *lảo đảo* ‘to stagger’, *lác dáć* ‘[of huts, trees, stars, rain drops] scattered’,

with /kh-/ as in *lom khom* ‘bending, stooping’, *lù-khù* ‘slow, laggard, lethargic’,

with /m-/ as in *lò-mò* ‘to grope (one’s way) (in the dark)’, *lò-mò* ‘dim, vague, unclear’,

with /nh-/ as in *làng-nhằng* ‘tangled; to drag on’, *hí-nhí* ‘[of writing] minuscule; [of voice] soft, indistinct’,

with /t-/ as in *linh-tinh* ‘miscellaneous’, *lung-túng* ‘embarrassed, helpless, not knowing how to get out of an awkward situation’.

with /th-/ as in *kr-thơ* ‘sparse, thin’, *lung-thũng* ‘to saunter, stroll along, walk leisurely’, etc.

**3.7.3 Stylistic effects.** Sometimes reduplications serve as onomatopoeias or sound-imitating forms, e.g. *chí-choé* ‘[of kids] to squabble’, *chiêm-chiêp* ‘[of small bird] to chirp’, *khúc-khích* ‘to giggle’, *lú-lo* ‘[of bird, kid] to trill’, *oa-oa* ‘[of infant] to cry’, *róc rách* ‘[of brook] to babble, murmur’.

Moreover, in literary utterances, the derivative forms help evoke visual imagery and suggest movements, gestures, shapes, sizes, lights, as in *lóm-ngồm* ‘to crawl, creep’, *lác-dáć* (see 3.7.2.2B), *lập lò* ‘to appear and disappear alternately’, *lom khom* (see 3.7.2.2B), *khúm-núm* ‘to bow low [in a servile or fawning manner]’, *thướt-tha / tha-thướt* ‘lithe, lissome’, *thoắn-thoắt* ‘to walk briskly’, *nhốn nháo* ‘[of crowd] disorderly, panicky’, *bập bùng* ‘[of flames] to flicker’, *đẩy-dà* ‘corpulent’, *khẳng-khiu* ‘lean, lank, skinny, twiggy’, *bát-ngát*, *mênh-mông* ‘[of space] immense’, *đìu-hiu* ‘desolate’, *quạnh-quẽ* ‘deserted’, etc.

Indeed, “each reduplication is a ‘musical note’ containing a concrete ‘picture’ of the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, accompanied by the impressions of the speaker’s subjective perceptions, evaluations and attitudes toward things and phenomena--impressions strong enough to deeply affect the hearer through his or her outward and inward senses” [Đỗ Hữu Châu 1981: 51].

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

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

*Nao-nao dòng nước uốn quanh,  
Nhịp cầu nho-nhỏ cuối ghềnh bắc ngang.  
Sè-sè nấm đất bên đàng,  
Đầu-dầu ngọn cỏ nửa vàng nửa xanh.*

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

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

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

*Ao thu lanh lêo nước trong veo,  
Một chiếc thuyền câu bé tèo teo  
.....  
Tầng mây lơ lửng trời xanh ngắt,  
Ngõ trúc quanh co khách vắng teo.*

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

‘Clouds dangling high aloft in stark blue skies.  
 ‘Path winding through bamboos where no man walks.’  
 [Thu điếu “Fishing in Autumn”, transl. Huỳnh Sanh-Thông]

*Năm gian nhà cỏ thấp le te,  
 Ngõ tối đêm sâu dóm lấp loè.  
 Lung giậu phát phơ màu khói nhạt,  
 Làn ao lóng lánh bóng trăng loe.*

‘Five rooms make up a low, low hut of thatch,  
 ‘Deep night, a pitch-dark alley--glowworms blink.  
 ‘Around the hedgerow vapors waft and fade,  
 ‘Inside the pond the moonlight gleams and glares.’  
 [Thu ẩm “Drinking in Autumn”, transl. Huỳnh Sanh-Thông ]

**3.7.4. Meaning differentiation.** A division of labor exists among reduplications from the same root. Thus, from *dễ* ‘easy’ one gets *dễ dãi*, which means ‘easy-going, not demanding’, and *dễ dàng*, which means ‘(fairly) easy to do’. From *nhỏ* ‘small’ we can derive *nhỏ nhặt* ‘little, tiny’, *nhỏ nhặt* ‘trifling, unimportant’, *nhỏ nhẹ* ‘[of voice] soft; [of table manners] gentle’, *nhỏ nhen* ‘petty, mean’, and *nhỏ nhói* ‘small, modest’. Likewise, from the root *quanh* ‘around’, a native speaker can obtain such forms as *loanh quanh* ‘roundabout’, *quanh co* ‘winding’, *quanh quẩn* ‘to stick around’, *quanh quất* ‘somewhere close by’, and *quanh quexo* ‘tortuous’.

A good writer discriminates between *thẹn thò* ‘shy, bashful’ and *thẹn thùng* ‘looking ashamed’ (< *thẹn* ‘shy, timid’). Likewise, of several reduplications containing *ém* ‘soft, gentle; calm’ an effective writer has a choice among *ém ả*, *ém ái*, *ém ấm*, *ém dịu*, *ém đẹp*, *ém đềm*, *ém thầm*, etc.

**3.7.5 Larger forms.** There are a number of forms that have three syllables: *nhớ nhớ nhớ (là)* ‘to miss .... very much’ < *nhớ* ‘to miss’, *còn còn con* ‘tiny’ < *còn còn* ‘little, tiny’ < *con*, *tí tí tí* ‘tiny’ < *tí tí* < *tí* ‘tiny’, *sạch sành sanh* ‘clean sweep; completely’ < *sạch* ‘clean’, *vui vui vui* ‘lots of

fun' < *vui* 'fun', *xốp xồm xốp* 'very porous' < *xốp xốp* < *xốp* 'porous', *tோo tோo teo* 'very tiny' < *tோo teo* 'tiny' < *teo* 'to shrivel, contract'.

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

*di lại* 'go and come,---to go back and forth' > *di di lại lại* 'back and forth, to and fro'; *hăm hở* 'ardently' > *hăm hăm hở hở* 'impetuously, enthusiastically'; *rầm rộ* 'noisily' > *rầm rầm rộ rộ* 'noisily, with great fanfare'; *anh em* 'elder brother and younger sibling' > *anh anh em em* 'to use sibling terms in addressing someone'; etc. The reduplication *vội-vàng* 'hurriedly' < *vội* 'to be in a hurry' can be intensified through repetition of each syllable, resulting in *vội voi vàng vàng* 'hurry-skurry'.

**3.7.5.1** Such disyllabic formations as *áp úng* '[of embarrassed person] to speak haltingly, embarrassedly', *lúng túng* 'at a loss, not knowing what to do', *lủng củng* 'cumbersome', *lung thùng* '[of garment] too roomy', *đủng đỉnh* 'to walk leisurely', *hởp tấp* 'hasty', *hổn hển* 'panting', *hổn hở* 'excited, elated', *nhí nhảnh* 'lively', *õng eo* 'to mince, walk with short, affectedly dainty steps' deserve special mention: To reduplicate such a disyllabic base, the base is preceded by two syllables, the first of which is the first syllable of the base (*áp*, *lúng*, *lủng*, *lung*, *đủng*, *hởp*, *hổn*, *nhí*, *õng*) while the second --- receiving stress --- consists of the initial consonant of the second syllable of the base followed by the new rhyme /-ə/ or /-à/. The resulting four-syllable formations with strong "dramatic" overtones are respectively:

<i>áp a áp úng.</i>	<i>lúng ta lúng túng,</i>
<i>lủng ca/cà lủng củng,</i>	<i>lung thà lung thùng,</i>
<i>đủng da/dà đủng đỉnh,</i>	<i>hởp ta hởp tấp,</i>
<i>hổn ha hổn hển,</i>	<i>hổn ha hổn hở,</i>
<i>nhí nhá nhí nhảnh,</i>	<i>õng à õng eo.</i>

With /-ə/ occurring less frequently as the new rhyme, we have

<i>cầu băt</i> 'vagrant, homeless' > <i>cầu bət cầu băt;</i>
<i>hởt hải</i> 'nervous and panicky, out of breath' > <i>hởt hət hởt hải;</i>
<i>vất vưởng</i> 'discarded, abandoned' > <i>vất vət/va vất vưởng;</i>
<i>ngắt ngưởng</i> 'tall, unsteady, staggering' > <i>ngắt nət/nga ngắt ngưởng;</i>
<i>nhón nhác</i> 'awestruck' > <i>nhón nhən/nha nhón nhác 'terror-stricken'.</i>

Lê Văn Lý calls /-a/ or /-o/ an infix, and also lists *phát phuồng* > *phát phor phát phuồng* [1968: 44]. His other example *nghèo xσ nghèo xάc* < *nghèo* ‘poor’ is ill-chosen because this is but an interlocking construction containing the compound *xάc xσ = xσ xάc* ‘ragged, tattered; denuded’ and optionally occurring as *nghèo xάc nghèo xσ*: either phrase means ‘as poor as a church mouse, pauperized, destitute---like a tatteredemalion’.

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

Talking to children, a mother or grandmother may exclaim *Dẹp oi là dẹp!* ‘Oh [you're] so pretty!', *Thương oi là thương!* ‘Oh, how I love you!', or *Ngon thật là ngon!* ‘So delicious!' A person impressed with a large quantity of mangoes or mosquitoes may cry out *Những xoài là xoài!* ‘So many mangoes!', *Những muỗi là muỗi!* ‘Nothing but mosquitoes!'

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

- ăn* > *ăn-iέc* ‘to eat’
- học* > *học-hiéc* ‘to study’
- hát* > *hát-hiéc* ‘to sing’
- nói* > *nói-niéc* ‘to speak, talk’
- áo* > *áo-iέc* ‘coats and the like’
- mũ* > *mũ-niéc* ‘headgear [collectively]’
- bạn* > *bạn-biéc* ‘friends’
- com* > *com-kiέc* ‘rice and the like’
- canh* > *canh-kiέc* ‘soup and the like’
- phở* > *phở-phiέc* ‘beef noodle soup and the like’
- xe* > *xe-xiéc* ‘cars and the like’
- sách* > *sách-siéc* ‘books and the like’
- góm* > *góm-ghiέc* ‘abominable, horrible’.

Emeneau, whose material contains none of this pattern, quotes Maspero [1912: 109] as saying that this is “a Cochin Chinese pattern” [Emeneau 1951: 186]. Actually, the northern dialect makes frequent use of this formative element. Indeed, this “chameleon alliterative suffix” [Thompson 1965c: 173, 176]---not at all limited to the southern dialect area---is used even when the base is a compound word: *di thi di thiếc* < *di thi* ‘to go take an exam’, *di học di hiếc* < *di học* ‘to go to school’. Given a basic form like *ô-tô* ‘automobile, car’ (a fairly recent loanword from French), the highly colloquial suffix *-iếc* would affect the second syllable and yield *ô-tô ô-tiếc* ‘automobiles and the like’, just like *xe đạp xe điếc* ‘bikes and the like’ < *xe đạp* ‘bicycle’, *ca-vát ca-viết* ‘neckwear’ < *ca-vát* ‘necktie’, and more recently *ti-vi ti-viết* ‘television and the like’ < *ti-vi* ‘TV’.

Nguyễn Quí-Hùng [1965: 124] cites three other examples of *-iếc* occurring in borrowings from foreign languages: *cà-phê cà-phiếc* ‘coffee and the like’, *ten-nít ten-niếc* ‘tennis and the like’ [from French], and *phá-sa phá-siếc* ‘roasted peanuts and the like’ [from Cantonese *fasang*].

A native speaker has no difficulty in understanding or using *hợp-tác-xâ* *hợp-tác-xiếc* ‘cooperatives and the like’ < *hợp-tác-xã* ‘cooperative’. The three-syllable English loanword *câu-lạc-bộ* (from ‘club’, borrowed via the Chinese transliteration) would be reduplicated as *câu-lạc-bộ câu-lạc-biệc* ‘clubs and the like’.

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

*Từ sáng đến giờ tôi đã cà-phê cà-phiếc gì đâu!*

(from morning reach now I ANTERIOR coffee-coffee whatever where)

‘I haven’t had any coffee this morning!’

*Mấy tuần nay chả ten-nít ten-niếc gì cả!*

(few week this NEG tennis-tennis whatever all)

‘No tennis these past few weeks at all!’

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

*dàn ông dàn ang* ‘men, males in general’ < *dàn ông* ‘man, male person’; *hoa tai hoa tung* ‘earrings [collectively]’ < *hoa tai* ‘earring’.

### 3.7.7 Concluding remarks

The discussions in sections 3.7.1 to 3.7.3 have presented the meanings and functions of reduplicative forms; the following summary will underline the important role of this process of building words from syllables.

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

- collective: *cây-cối* ‘vegetation’, *chim-chóc* ‘birds’, *da-de* ‘the skin’, *hội-hè* ‘festivals’, *máu-me* ‘blood’, *máy-máy* ‘machines, machinery’, *mùa-màng* ‘crops’, *phu-phen* ‘coolies’, *quà-cáp* ‘presents’, *thợ-thuyền* ‘workmen, workers’, etc. and also forms like *sách-siéć* ‘books and the like’, *ca-vát ca-việc* ‘neckties, neckwear’, etc.
- abstract: *còn-có (gi?)* ‘whatever reasons?’, *cung-cách* ‘ways, patterns [of behaviour]’, *mạnh-mői*, *mői-manh* ‘clue, lead’, *nông-nôi* ‘plight, condition’, etc.
- pejorative: *hoa-hoét* ‘flowery, gaudy, showy’, *mắt-mũi* ‘eyes’, *nghề-ngôñ* ‘any occupation at all’, *người-ngorem* ‘creature’, *thịt-thà* ‘meats’, etc.

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

- general, mutual, or reciprocal:
  - (a) *bàn-bạc* ‘to deliberate’ < *bàn* ‘to discuss’, *kể-lể* ‘to relate in detail’ < *kể* ‘to recount, enumerate’, *khóc-lóc* ‘to cry bitterly’ < *khóc* ‘to cry, weep’, *làm-lụng* ‘to toil’ < *làm* ‘to work’, *nói-nắng* ‘to talk’ < *nói* ‘to speak’, *tập-tành* ‘to exercise, drill’ < *tập* ‘to practice’, etc.
  - (b) *cãi-cợ* < *cãi* ‘to argue, quarrel’, *chen-chúc* < *chen* ‘to jostle, push, shove’, *dắt-diu* < *dắt* ‘to lead’, *gặp-gỡ* ‘to encounter’ < *gặp* ‘to meet’, *hẹn-hò* ‘date, tryst’ < *hẹn* ‘to make an appointment’, etc.
- expressive, ironical or imagist: *chạy-chạy* ‘to solicit [favor], run for [position]’, *chết-chóc* ‘to die, perish’, *dẫn-dò* ‘to keep reminding’, *gật-gù* ‘to nod’, *gửi-gắm* ‘to entrust’, *giữ-gìn* ‘to preserve’, *hát-hồng* ‘to sing’, *múa-múa* ‘to dance’, *ngán-nghía* ‘to keep looking at [oneself, something, someone]’, *nghĩ-ngợi* ‘to think, ponder’, *ngủ-nghẽ* ‘to sleep’, *nhảy-nhỏt* ‘to jump up and down; to dance’, *nhậu-nhở* ‘to have a

drinking bout', *nuôi-nâng* 'to nurture, rear', *quấn-quít* 'to hang on to', *rủ-re* 'to entice, lure, tempt', *sờ-soang* 'to paw, pet', *tìm-tòi* 'to search for, do research', *ta-tưởng* 'to think fondly, dream of', *uốn-éo* '[of woman] to wriggle, swing hips', *vồ-vập* 'to give an effusive welcome', *vuốt-ve* 'to fondle, caress', *xin-xỏ* 'to ask for this and that', etc.

### 3.7.7.3 Reduplicated forms of adjectives carry three broad meanings:

- general: *chặt-chẽ* 'tight(ly)', *đẹp-dẽ* 'beautiful, nice', *em-dẽm* 'peaceful, quiet, soothing', *im-lìm* 'quiet, still', *may-mắn* 'lucky, fortunate', *nhé-nhang* 'gentle, soft', *sạch-sẽ* 'clean', *vui-vé* 'glad, merry', etc.
- concrete: *bấp-bênh* 'unsteady, unstable' < *bênh*; *bối-rối* 'perplexed' < *rối*; *lung-lay* 'shaky' < *lay*; *luẩn-quẩn* '[of circle] vicious' < *quẩn*; *lẻ-loi* 'lonesome, lonely, solitary' < *lẻ*; *mở-mang* 'developing, expanding' < *mở*; *rối-rít* 'excited' < *rối*; *sắc-sảo* 'keen, smart' < *sắc*; *tập-tênh* 'limping' < *tập*; *xa-xăm, xa-xói* 'far, distant, remote' < *xa*; *xấu-xí* 'ugly, unattractive', *xấu-xa* 'shameful' < *xấu*; etc.

Some constructions have a good connotation: *bé-bóng* 'small' < *bé*; *gần-gũi* 'close, intimate' < *gần*; *thom-tho* 'aromatic' < *thom*; *tròn-trĩnh* 'rotund' < *tròn*; *xinh-xắn* 'cute, fine-drawn' < *xinh*. But others have a bad connotation: *hay-hóm* '(not) interesting' < *hay*; *méo-mó* 'awry, crooked' < *méo*; *quá-quắt* 'immoderate, irrational' < *quá*, etc.

- abstract: *biền-biết* 'leaving no traces', *còn-con* 'tiny, little', *chon-von* 'sky-high', *lai-láng* '[of sentiment] overflowing', *lặng-lặng* 'quiet, still', *lu-bù* 'over head and ears', *mập-mờ* 'dim, unclear', *ngầm-ngầm* 'secretly, clandestinely', *ngùn-ngùt* '[of flames] rising brightly', *nhá-nhem* 'darksome', *thẳm-thẳm* 'very deep', *thin-thít* 'quiet', *vén-vẹn* 'only, just'.

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

In the first grammar of Vietnamese written in English, *Studies in Vietnamese (Annamese) Grammar* (1951), Professor Murray B. Emeneau, to whom people often refer as the dean of American grammarians of

Vietnamese, offered the insightful remark that “any attempt at elevation of style, even in the most casual conversation, has as one of its marks a multiplication of pairs of verbs.” ..... “Sometimes the pairs are made up of freely used verbs, sometimes they are borrowings from Chinese, sometimes they are Vietnamese reduplicative formations. This trait is in some ways the equivalent of the sesquipedalianism of Johnsonese English” [1951: 76].

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



## Chapter 4

### The Lexicon (continued)

#### 4.0 Affixation and Compounding

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

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

Since numerous lexical elements of Chinese origin make up around 70% of the total vocabulary, Sino-Vietnamese (see 3.3) lexemes like *mộc* 'wood', *giáo* 'to teach', etc. will be identified as they occur in complex forms.

Regarding affixation, the types of formatives which can be used when added---glued---to a stem are called affixes: though limited in number, they are rather productive “bound” morphemes. Depending on their position with reference to the stem---whether preceding it, following it, or within it---affixes are classified into three types: prefixes (*tiền-tố*), suffixes (*hậu-tố*) and infixes (*trung-tố*), respectively. Malayo-Polynesian languages (Malay, Indonesian, Cham, etc.) have infixes, but modern Vietnamese has none.

#### 4.1 Prefixes

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

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

*thứ-* ‘prefix for ordinal numbers’ as in *thứ mấy?* ‘which one (in order)?’, *thứ nhất* ‘first’, *thứ hai* ‘second; Monday’, *thứ ba* ‘third; Tuesday’, *thứ mười* ‘tenth’, *thứ hai mươi* ‘20th’, *thứ bốn mươi ba* ‘43rd’;

*mồng / mùng* ‘prefix for the first 10 days of the month’ (cf. Fr. *quantième*) as in *mồng mấy?* ‘which day of the month?’, *mồng một tháng giêng* (day one month principal) ‘January 1st’, *mồng bốn tháng bảy* (day four month seven) ‘the Fourth of July’, *mồng mười tháng mười* (day ten month ten) ‘October 10’;

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

The item *thứ-* has as its close cousin the noun *thứ* ‘kind, variety, etc.’ which occurs in such compounds (see 4.3) as *thứ-bậc* ‘hierarchy’, *thứ-hạng* ‘category, class’, *thứ-tự* ‘order, sequence’, although the same Chinese “etymon” [the form from which a later form in Vietnamese derives] occurs as a bound element in such compounds as *thứ-nam* ‘second son’, *thứ-nữ* ‘second daughter’, *thứ-phi* ‘second imperial concubine’, *thứ-trưởng* ‘vice minister, undersecretary’, *thứ-yếu* ‘(of) secondary (importance)’, etc.

**4.1.2** Journalistic texts contain many of those frequently occurring prefixes of Chinese origin. Below are examples of highly productive Sino-Vietnamese prefixes found in newspapers and magazines:

*bán-* 'half, hemi-, semi-' as in *bán-cầu* 'hemisphere', *bán-dẫn* 'semiconductor, transistor', *bán-dảo* 'peninsula', *bán-kết* 'semifinal', *bán-kính* 'radius' ['half-diameter'], *bán-nghuyên-âm* 'semivowel', *bán-nghuyệt* 'semicircular', *bán-nghuyệt-san* 'semimonthly magazine', *bán-thân bát-toại* 'hemiplegia', *bán-tự-động* 'semiautomatic', etc.

*bất-* 'im-, in-, il-, non-' as in *bất-bạo-động* 'non-violent', *bất-bình-dảng* 'unequal', *bất-cẩn* 'careless, negligent', *bất-công* 'unfair, unjust', *bất-đồng* 'different; difference' [< *đồng* 'same'], *bất-động-sản* 'real estate', *bất-hiệu* 'impious, unfilial' [< *hiệu* 'filial'], *bất-hợp-pháp* 'illegal, unlawful' [< *hợp-pháp* 'legal'], *bất-lực* 'incapable; impotent' [< *lực* 'strength'], *bất-trung* 'disloyal' [< *trung* 'loyal'], etc.

*khả-* '-able, -ible' as in *khả-áí* 'lovable, lovely', *khả-kính* 'respectable', *khả-năng* 'capability; possibility', *khả-nghi* 'suspect; suspicious', *khả-ő* 'detestable', *khả-quan* 'good, satisfactory', etc.

*phản-* 'counter-, anti-, re-' as in *phản-ánh* 'to present, report; reflect(ion)', *phản-ánh* / *phản-chiếu* 'to reflect', *phản-cách-mạng* 'counterrevolutionary', *phản-chiến* 'antiwar', *phản-công* 'counteroffensive', *phản-đối* 'to be against, oppose', *phản-động* 'reactionary', *phản-gián* 'counterespionage', *phản-kháng* 'to protest', *phản-xạ* 'reflex', etc.

*phi-* 'il-, im-, in-' as in *phi-nghĩa* 'immoral, unethical', *phi-lý* 'irrational', *phi-chính-phủ* 'non-governmental', *phi-quân-sự* 'non-military, demilitarized' [< *quân-sự* 'military (affairs)'], *phi-pháp* 'illegal, unlawful', *phi-thường* 'unusual, extraordinary', etc.

*siêu-* 'super-, sur-, meta-' as in *siêu-âm* 'supersonic', *siêu-cường* 'superpower', *siêu-dảng* / *siêu-việt* 'outstanding, super-', *siêu-hiện-thực* 'surrealist', *siêu-ngôn-ngữ* 'metalanguage', *siêu-thị* 'supermarket', *siêu-(tự-)nhiên* 'supernatural', etc.

*tổng-* 'general' as in *tổng-bí-thư* 'secretary general', *tổng-động-viên* 'general mobilization', *tổng-giám-đốc* 'director general', *tổng-giám-mục* 'archbishop', *tổng-hành-dinh* 'general headquarters', *tổng-khởi-nghĩa* 'general uprising', *tổng-lãnh-sự* 'consul general', *tổng-thư-ký* 'secretary-

general', *tổng-sản-phẩm quốc-gia* 'General National Product', *tổng-tuyển-cử* 'general elections', *tổng-tư-lệnh* 'commander-in-chief', etc.

*tự-* 'self-, auto-' as in *tự-áí* 'self-pride', *tự-chủ* 'autonomy, self-control', *tự-dưỡng* 'autotrophic', *tự-động* 'automatic', *tự-ký* 'self-, auto-', *tự-lực* 'self-reliant', *tự-phát* 'spontaneous', *tự-phê-bình* 'self-criticism', *tự-quyết* 'self-determination', *tự-tin* 'self-confident', etc.

*vô-* 'un-, im-, -less' as in *vô-chính-phủ* 'anarchy', *vô-danh* 'anonymous, unknown', *vô-dụng* 'useless', *vô-dịch* 'matchless; champion', *vô-diều-kiện* 'unconditional', *vô-gia-cư* 'homeless', *vô-gia-dinh* 'without a family', *vô-lễ* 'impolite', *vô-nghĩa* 'meaningless', *vô-nhân-đạo* 'inhuman', *vô-sản* 'proletarian', *vô-thần* 'atheist', *vô-tu* 'impartial', *vô-tu-lý* 'carefree', *vô-vị* 'insipid', etc.

The two prefixes *bất-* and *vô-* display some erratic behavior: they are attached to some free stems to produce such idiomatic forms as *bất-cần* 'don't care', *bất-chấp* 'regardless of', *bất-chợt* 'suddenly', *bất-cứ / bất-kể* 'no matter, irrespective', *bất-nhược* 'we had better', *bất-thình-lình* [= *thình-lình*] 'all of a sudden'; *vô chùng* 'extremely', *vô-ké* 'extremely, innumerable', *vô-khối* 'plenty of', *vô-lo* 'carefree', *vô-lỗi* 'wrongly, for no reason', *vô-ngàn* 'extremely', *vô-thiên-lòng* 'plenty of, tons of', *vô-vàn* 'extremely, immensely, immeasurably', etc.

The military nomenclature uses the prefixes *hạ-, thiếu-, trung-, đại-, thượng-* to designate ranks: *hạ-sĩ* 'corporal', *trung-sĩ* 'sergeant', *thượng-sĩ* 'sergeant-major, warrant officer', *thiếu-uý* 'second lieutenant', *trung-uý* 'lieutenant', *thượng-uý* 'first lieutenant', *đại-uý* 'captain', *thiếu-tá* 'major', *trung-tá* 'lieutenant colonel', *thượng-tá* 'senior lieutenant colonel', *đại-tá* 'colonel', *thiếu-tướng* 'brigadier general', *trung-tướng* 'major general, rear admiral, air vice marshal', *thượng-tướng* 'lieutenant general, three-star general', *đại-tướng* '(four-star) general', etc.

**4.1.3** Within the past five decades or so, teachers and writers have had to coin a new terminology for each of the physical and social sciences. An increasing number of scientific and technical terms have crept into many disciplines, including atomic physics and cybernetics. From the very beginning three methods had been followed: using elements within the

mother tongue, transliterating terms from European languages, and using Sino-Vietnamese words [ Lê Khả Kế 1969: 113]. The new medical terminology, for instance, includes the following coinages, which each contain a prefix:

*tăng-* ‘hyper-’ as in *tăng axit* ‘hyperacid(ity)’, *tăng canxi* ‘hypercalcemia’;

*giảm-* ‘hypo-’ as in *giảm-đường* ‘hypoglycemia’, *giảm-thân-nhiệt* ‘hypothermia’;

*bản-* ‘an-’ as in *bản-huyết* ‘anemia’;

*viêm-* ‘inflammation, -itis’ as in *viêm họng* ‘angina’, *viêm mồm* ‘stomatitis’, *viêm mũi* ‘rhinitis’, *viêm gan* ‘hepatitis’, etc. This contrasts with the traditional way, when complaining of ailments, of using just the vague word *dau* ‘pain, hurt’ as in *dau họng*, *dau mồm*, *dau mũi*, *dau gan*, etc.

#### 4.2 Suffixes

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

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

*-gia* ‘-er, -ist’ as in *tác-gia* ‘author, writer’, *chính-trị-gia* ‘statesman’ [< *chính-trị* ‘politics’], *khoa-học-gia* ‘scientist’ [< *khoa-học* ‘science’], *sử-gia* ‘historian’, *ngữ-học-gia* ‘linguist’, etc.

*-giả* ‘-or, -er’ as in *học-giả* ‘scholar’ [< *học* ‘to learn’], *tác-giả* ‘author’ [< *tác* ‘to make, create’], *dịch-giả* ‘translator’, *soạn-giả* ‘author, compiler, editor’, *ký-giả* ‘correspondent’, etc.

*-sĩ* ‘-ist, expert’ as in *hoa-sĩ* ‘artist, painter’ [< *hoa* ‘to draw, paint’], *thi-sĩ* ‘poet’ [< *thi* ‘poetry’], *văn-sĩ* ‘writer’ [< *văn* ‘literature, prose’], *ca-sĩ* ‘singer’, *nhạc-sĩ* ‘musician’, *giáo-sĩ* ‘missionary’ [< *giáo*

‘religion’], *tu-sĩ* ‘priest’ [< *tu* ‘to enter religion’], *đạo-sĩ* ‘Taoist priest’ [< *đạo* ‘the Way, religion; Taoism’], etc.

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

*-trưởng* ‘head, leader’ as in *viện-trưởng* ‘head [of institute], university rector/president’ [< *viện* ‘institute; university’], *bộ-trưởng* ‘cabinet minister’ [< *bộ* ‘ministry, department’], *lý-trưởng* ‘village mayor’ [< *lý* ‘mile; village’], *hiệu-trưởng* ‘headmaster, principal’ [< *hiệu* ‘school’], *sư-doàn-trưởng* ‘division commander’ [< *sư-doàn* ‘division’], *cửa hàng trưởng* ‘store manager’ [< *cửa hàng* ‘store, shop’], *cảnh-sát-trưởng* ‘sheriff’ [< *cảnh-sát* ‘police’], etc.

*-vị* ‘-eme’ as in *âm-vị* ‘phoneme’, *hình-vị* = *ngữ-vị* ‘morpheme’, *từ-vị* ‘lexeme’, *ý-nghĩa-vị* = *ngữ-nghĩa-vị* ‘semanteme’, etc.

*-thức* ‘-nomial’ as in *đa-thức* ‘polynomial’, *đơn-thức* ‘monomial’, *nhi-thức* ‘binomial’, *tam-thức* ‘trinomial’, etc.

*-viên* ‘-or, -er’ as in *hội-viên* ‘member [of club, society]’ [< *hội* ‘club, society, association’], *quan-sát-viên* ‘observer’ [< *quan-sát* ‘to observe’], *liên-lạc-viên* ‘liaison officer’ [< *liên-lạc* ‘liaison’], *phối-trí-viên* ‘coordinator’ [< *phối-trí* ‘to coordinate’], *thuyết-trình-viên* ‘rapporteur, speaker’ [< *thuyết-trình* ‘to report, present (paper)’], etc.

*-học* ‘-logy, -ics’ as in *y-học* ‘medicine’, *số-học* ‘arithmetic’, *toán-học* ‘mathematics’, *hình-học* ‘geometry’, *hoá-học* ‘chemistry’, *văn-học* ‘literature’, *(ngôn-)ngữ-học* ‘linguistics’, *ngữ-văn-học* ‘philology’, *sử-học* ‘history’, *động-vật-học* ‘zoology’, *thực-vật-học* ‘botany’, *địa-chất-học* ‘geology’, *vật-lý-học* ‘physics’, *dân-tộc-học* ‘ethnology’, *nhân-loại-học* ‘anthropology’, *khảo-cổ-học* ‘archaeology’, *sinh-vật-học* ‘biology’, *diều-khiển-học* ‘cybernetics’, *tin-học* ‘computer science, informatics’, etc.

*-khoa* ‘science, field of study’ as in *y-khoa* ‘medicine’, *nha-khoa* ‘dentistry’, *được-khoa* ‘pharmacy’, *luật-khoa* ‘law’, *văn-khoa* ‘letters, liberal arts’, *nhãn-khoa* ‘ophthalmology’, etc. [The terms *nhãn-khoa*, *nhãn-học* and *mắt-học* successively experimented by ophthalmology teachers

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

*-hoá* ‘-ize, -fy’ as in *Au-hoá* ‘to europeanize’ [< *Au* ‘Europe’], *mỹ-hoá* ‘to americanize’ [< *Mỹ* ‘America’], *Việt(-nam)-hoá* ‘to vietnamize’, *dân-chủ-hoá* ‘to democratize’ [< *dân-chủ* ‘democracy’], *đơn-giản-hoá* = *giản-dị-hoá* ‘to simplify’ [< *đơn-giản* = *giản-dị* ‘simple’], *bình-thường-hoá* ‘to normalize’ [< *bình-thường* ‘normal’], *công-nghiệp-hoá* or *kỹ-nghệ-hoá* ‘to industrialize’ [< *công-nghiệp* = *kỹ-nghệ* ‘industry’], *cơ-giới-hoá* ‘to mechanize’ [< *cơ-giới* ‘machinery’], *hợp-tác-hoá* ‘to collectivize’ [< *hợp-tác* ‘cooperative’], *thần-thánh-hoá* ‘to deify’ [< *thần-thánh* ‘deity and saint’], *i-on-hoá* ‘to ionize’, *môi-hoá* ‘to labialize [speech sound]’ [< *môi* ‘lip; labial’], *đồng-hoá* ‘to assimilate’ [< *đồng* ‘same’], *dị-hoá* ‘to dissimilate’ [< *dị* ‘different’], *oxy-hoá* ‘to oxydize’, *a-xít-hoá* ‘to acidify’, *bản-cùng-hoá* ‘to pauperize’, *đồng-bộ-hoá* to synchronize’, *dá-ong hoá* ‘to laterize’ [< *dá ong* ‘laterite’], etc.

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

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

*-đồ* ‘-gram’ as in (*quang-*) *phổ-đồ* [later *ảnh phổ*] ‘spectrogram’, *điện-tâm-đồ* [later *điện-đồ tim*] ‘electro-cardiogram’;

*-ký* ‘-graph’ as in (*quang-*) *phổ-ký* [later *máy ghi phổ*] ‘spectrograph’, *điện-não-đồ-ký* [later *máy ghi điện-đồ não*] ‘electro-encephalograph’;

*-kế* ‘-meter’ as in *nhiệt-kế* ‘thermometer’, *nhiệt-lượng-kế* ‘calorimeter’, *hỏa-kế* ‘pyrometer’, *quang-phổ-kế* ‘spectrometer’, *áp-kế* ‘manometer’, *vi-kế* ‘micrometer’, *oát-kế* ‘wattmeter’, *tửu-kế* ‘alcoholometer’, *vôn-kế* ‘voltmeter’, *vũ-kế* ‘pluviometer’;

*-niêu* ‘-uria’ as in *đường-niêu* ‘diabetes’, *huyết-niêu* ‘hematuria’, *albumin-niêú* ‘albuminuria’;

*-phân* ‘-mer’ as in *dòng-phân* ‘unimer’, *đơn-phân* ‘monomer’.

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

### 4.3 Compounding

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

#### 4.3.1 Coordinate compounds

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

- N-N compounds

*chim-muông* ‘bird + beast --- animals’

*rau-cỏ* ‘vegetable + grass --- veggies’

*ruộng-nương* ‘wet field + dry field --- cultivated fields’

*ruồi-mosquito* ‘fly + mosquito --- flies and mosquitoes’

*quần-áo* ‘pants + coat --- clothes’

*sách-vở* ‘books + notebooks --- books’

*bàn-ghế* ‘table + chair --- furniture’

- V-V compounds

*ăn-uống* ‘to eat + to drink --- to get nourishment’

*ăn-ở* ‘to eat + to live --- to live; to behave’

*ăn-mặc* ‘to eat + to dress --- to dress’

*lo-nghi* ‘to worry + to think --- to worry’

- Adj-Adj compounds

*mạnh-khoe* ‘strong + strong --- well in health’

*đơ-bẩn* ‘dirty + dirty --- filthy’

*giàu-có* ‘rich + to have --- wealthy’

*lười-biéng* ‘lazy + lazy --- slothful’

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

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

#### 4.3.1.2 Generalizing Compounds.

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

- *bàn-ghế* ‘table + chair --- furniture’

*bát-đĩa* ‘bowl + plate --- dishes, dinnerware’

*chùa-chiền* ‘Buddhist pagoda + Buddhist temple --- temples’

*con-cháu* ‘child + grandchild --- offspring, descendants’

*éch-nhai* ‘frog + tree toad --- batrachians’

*ruồi-muỗi* ‘fly + mosquito --- flies, bugs’

*giấy-bút* ‘paper + pen --- desk supplies’

*mưa gió* ‘rain + wind --- the elements, inclement weather’

*phố-phường* ‘shop, street + guild --- streets’

*thóc-lúa* ‘paddy + cereal, rice --- grain, cereals’

*cây-cỏ* ‘tree + grass --- vegetation’

- thuyền-bè* ‘boat + raft --- boats, craft’
- đêm ngày* ‘night + day --- night(s) and day(s)’
- *mua-bán* ‘to buy + to sell --- to go shopping’  
*buôn-bán* ‘to buy in for resale + to sell --- to trade’
- cày-cấy* ‘to plow + to transplant --- to engage in farming’
- nấu-nướng* ‘to cook + to grill --- to cook’
- chải-chuốt* ‘to comb, brush + to polish --- to groom oneself’
- học-tập* ‘to study + to practice --- to learn, study’
- khen-chê* ‘to praise + to censure --- to critique’
- thay-dổi* ‘to replace + to exchange --- to change, vary’
- *khó-dễ* ‘difficult + easy --- difficulties’  
*thành-bại* ‘successful + unsuccessful’
- tươi-tốt* ‘fresh + good --- all fresh’
- xinh-dep* ‘cute + pretty --- beautiful’
- vui-sướng* ‘glad + happy --- happy’
- sớm-muộn* ‘early + late --- sooner or later’

#### 4.3.1.3 Characteristics

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

But in other compounds, the two constituents occur in a fixed order: *sách-vở* ‘books + notebooks’, *trâu-bò* ‘water buffalo + ox---cattle, livestock’, *đất-nước* ‘land + water---one’s country’, *học-hỏi* ‘to study (and to inquire)’, *ăn-uống* ‘to eat and drink’, *ân-ở* ‘to live; to behave’, *đi-lại* ‘to come and go’, *ngọt-bùi* ‘sweet + tasting like nuts ---[fig.] sweet, happy’, *may-rủi* ‘lucky + unlucky’, *lợi-hại* ‘good and bad factors’, etc.

People do not say \**cỏ-rau* for ‘vegetables’ or \**nghĩ-lo* for ‘to worry’: the correct forms are *rau-cỏ* [vegetable + grass], *lo-nghĩ* [to worry and to think].

The vast majority of non-reversible compounds seem to follow a decreasing order of size (*nha cửa* ‘house + door---house, building’, *bàn ghế* ‘table + chair---furniture’, *trời đất* ‘sky + earth’, *lớn bé* = *to nhô* ‘big + small’, *cao thấp* ‘high and low’, etc.), of importance (*bố con* ‘father + child’, *ông cháu* ‘grandfather + grandchild’, *ông bà* ‘grandfather + grandmother’, *cha mẹ* ‘father + mother’, *anh chị* ‘older brother + older sister’, *anh em* ‘older brother + younger sibling’, *trai gái* ‘male + female’, *tốt xấu* ‘good + bad’, *giàu nghèo* ‘rich + poor’, *no đói* ‘full + hungry’, etc.), or a chronological order (*nay mai* ‘today + tomorrow’, *trước sau* ‘before + after’, *sớm muộn* ‘early + late’, *dầu đuôi* ‘head + tail’, etc.) [Nguyễn Đức Dân 1993].

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

**C. Archaic morphemes.** Several of these “generalizing” compounds merit special attention. For instance, in such compound nouns as *áo-xõng* ‘clothes’, *bếp-núc* ‘kitchens in general; cooking’, *cá-mú* ‘fishes’, *chim-chóc* ‘birds’, *chùa-chiền* ‘temples, monasteries’, *chó-má* ‘dogs in general’, *chợ-búa* ‘markets’, *cỏ-rả* ‘grasses in general’, *đường-xá* ‘roads’, *gà-que* ‘chickens, fowl’, *heo-cúi* ‘pigs in general’, *làng-mạc* ‘villages’, *lúa-má* ‘cereals’, *tre-pheo* ‘bamboos in general’, *tuổi-tác* ‘age’, *vườn-tược* ‘gardens’, *xe-cộ* ‘vehicles’, the second constituent (*tiếng*) is often considered meaningless, when actually it used to have a definite meaning as a legitimate noun---nowadays still found in such a minority language as Mường or Tày-Nùng. Indeed at present few native speakers of Vietnamese realize, for example, that the bound lexemes *núc*, *má*, *cúi*, *pheo* in the above compound nouns, have simply lost their respective meanings (‘kitchen’, ‘dog’, ‘pig’, ‘bamboo’) and in modern usage occur only in combination with *bếp*, *chó*, *heo* and *tre* [Vương Lộc 1970: 32-34].

Similar examples are found among compound verbs and compound adjectives: *dổi-chắc* ‘to exchange’, *e-lệ* ‘shy’, *hỏi-han* ‘to ask, inquire’, *lo-âu* ‘to worry’, *nghèo-khổ*, *nghèo-ngất* ‘poor’, *ngõ-hầu* ‘so that, so as to’, *sống-vầy* ‘to be together as a family’, *theo-dõi* ‘to follow up’, etc. In fifteenth-century poetry, Nguyễn Trãi used many such autonomous lexemes (*âu* ‘to worry’, *chắc* ‘to buy’, *dõi* ‘to follow up’, *han* ‘to ask’, *lệ* ‘shy’, *khổ*, *ngất* ‘poor’, *ngõ* ‘in order to’, *vầy* ‘to have a reunion’) [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1985: 463-473], whose occurrence is nowadays restricted to “synonym compounds”: indeed, of the two parts within the modern compound verb *lo-âu*, for instance, the great bard used the item *âu* 27 times and its synonym *lo* only four times in his 254 poems in the vernacular [cf. Schneider 1987, an annotated French translation of Nguyễn Trãi’s *Quốc-âm Thi-tập* “Collected Poems in National Language”].

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

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

Thompson also cites some “reinforcing” compounds, which contain synonymous elements but have “a more figurative or abstract reference than either of their bases” [1965c: 130-131]: *giàu-có* ‘wealthy, well-off’ [to be rich + to own], *lâu-dài* ‘durable’ [to last + to be long], *quen-biết* ‘to know, be well acquainted with’ [to be acquainted with + to know'], *tấn-tối* ‘to make progress’ [to advance + to attain'], *mưu-kế* ‘strategy’ [ruse + scheme, plot'], *ngày-giờ* ‘time (in general)’ [day + hour].

Moreover, in such reinforcing compounds as *đón-rước* 'to meet', *tìm-kiếm* 'to search', *lừa-gạt* 'to dupe, cheat', *chọn-lựa / lựa-chọn* 'to select', *đơ-bẩn* 'dirty', *đứ-thừa* 'superfluous', *hở-hỗng* 'to break down, spoil', *là-mắng* 'to scold', *hăm-doạ* 'to threaten', *vâng-dạ* 'to obey; yes', etc. one component (*đón*, *tìm*, *lừa*, *chọn*, *bẩn*, *thừa*, *hở*, *mắng*, *doạ*, *vâng*) may be characteristic of the northern dialect while the other (*rước*, *kiếm*, *gạt*, *lựa*, *đơ*, *đứ*, *hở*, *hăm*, *dạ*) is its synonym in the southern dialect.

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

#### 4.3.2 Subordinative compounds

This type is a descriptive construction which is built up like an ordinary syntactic construction: its center is either a head noun followed by its modifier or a head verb (or adjective) followed by its complement (*từ ghép chính-phụ*). Thompson [1963c: 129-130] gives it the label "specializing compound".

##### 4.3.2.1. Compound nouns.

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

- with *cây* 'tree': *cây lúa* 'rice plant'
- cây cau* 'areca tree'
- cây đa* 'banyan tree'
- cây đu-đú* 'papaya tree'

- with *quả/trái* ‘fruit’: *quả cau* ‘areca nut’  
*quả chuối* ‘banana’  
*quả khế* ‘star fruit’
- with *bò* ‘bovine’: *bò đực* ‘ox, bull’  
*bò cái* ‘cow’  
*bò con/non* ‘calf’
- with *chó* ‘canine’: *chó đực* ‘he-dog’  
*chó cái* ‘bitch’  
*chó con* ‘puppy’
- with *gà* ‘chicken’: *gà trống* ‘rooster’  
*gà mái* ‘hen’  
*gà con* ‘chick’

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

- N-N (the modifier is a noun):

*chân trời* ‘horizon’ (foot + sky), *bánh mì* ‘bread’ (pastry, cake + wheat), *cơm gà* ‘rice with chicken’ (rice + chicken), *thuốc lá* ‘cigarette’ (drug + leaf), *thuốc láo* ‘tobacco’ (drug + Laos), *gà tây* ‘turkey’ (chicken + west), *xe bò* ‘oxcart’ (vehicle + ox), *bút lông* ‘writing brush’ (pen + hair), *bút chì* ‘pencil’ (pen + lead), *xe lửa* ‘railway train’ (vehicle + fire), *xe điện* ‘streetcar’ (vehicle + electricity), *nha đá* ‘stone house; jail’ (house + stone), *nước đá* ‘ice’ (water + stone), *dây thép* ‘telegram’ (wire + steel), etc.

- N-ADJ (the modifier is an adjective):

*cà chua* ‘tomato’ (eggplant + sour), *đường cái* ‘main road’ (road, path + big), *đũa cát* ‘stirring chopstick’ (chopstick + big), *đò ngang* ‘ferry boat’ (ferry + across), *nha thương* ‘hospital’ (house + wounded), *bảng đen* ‘blackboard’ (board + black), *tiếng Pháp* ‘French (language)’ (language + French), *áo dài* ‘Vietnamese dress, tunic’ (coat, shirt, gown + long), *bánh ngọt* ‘cake’ (cake, pastry + sweet), *đuă hấu* ‘water melon’ (melon + ?), etc.

- N-V (the modifier is a verb):

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

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

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

Sometimes a longish descriptive noun is needed: *cái gạt tàn thuốc lá* ‘thing flip ashes cigarette---ashtray’, *máy điều-hòa nhiệt-độ* ‘machine adjust temperature---air conditioner’, *tàu hả mióm* ‘craft open mouth---landing craft’, *máy bay cánh cụp cánh xoè* ‘machine fly wing fold wing spread---

F-115', *lính thuỷ đánh bộ* 'soldier water fight land---marine' (cf. *thuỷ-quân* *lục-chiến* 'water-soldier land-fight---navy man fighting on land').

#### 4.3.2.2. Compound verbs.

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

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

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

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

*ăn bám* 'to be a parasite, sponge on ...', *ăn cắp* 'to steal, pilfer', *ăn chay* 'to follow a vegetarian diet', *ăn cướp* 'to hold up', *ăn gian* 'to cheat', *ăn hiếp* 'to bully', *ăn hối-lộ* 'to take bribes', *ăn không* 'to be idle', *ăn lãi* 'to charge interest', *ăn mày* 'to beg for food', *ăn mừng* 'to celebrate', *ăn tiền* 'to take bribes', *ăn trộm* 'to burglarize', etc.

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

Other examples are:

*bôi nhọ* 'to smear', *bend cong* 'to bend [long piece of metal, bamboo or wood]', *uốn cong* 'to curl', *bỏ rơi* 'to drop, abandon', *chặt đứt* 'to chop off, cut [stick, bone, piece of wire]', *đập tan* 'to smash to pieces', *dánh bại*

'to defeat', *dẩy lui* 'to push back, repel', *gạn lọc khói trong* 'to purify, filter', *giết chết* 'to kill', *lật đổ* 'to overthrow, topple', *xé rách* 'to tear to pieces',  *ăn mòn* 'to corrode', *soi sáng* 'to illuminate', *tẩy sạch* 'to bleach clean', *xoa dịu* 'to soothe', etc.

#### 4.3.2.3. Compound adjectives.

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

- ADJ-N (the modifier is a noun) :
 

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

*dễ chịu* 'easy to bear---pleasant, comfortable', *dễ bảo* 'easy to guide---docile', *dễ chiều* 'easy to please', *dễ nuôi* 'easy to rear/raise', *chăm học* 'diligent in study---studious', *khó ở* 'difficult in living---under the weather', *khéo nói* 'clever in speech---diplomatic', etc.
- ADJ-ADJ (the modifier is another adjective) :
 

*xanh thẫm* 'dark blue/green', *xanh lạt* 'light blue/green', *ngọt dịu* 'sweet and mild---very sweet', *mát lạnh* 'cool + cold---very cool', etc.
- V-N (the complement of head verb is a noun) :
 

*có tiếng* 'to have + fame---famous, renowned', *có gan* 'to have + liver---daring', *có của* 'to have + wealth---wealthy', *có ích* 'to have + usefulness---useful', *làm biếng* 'to act + lazy---lazy', etc.

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

*chết tuối* 'dead + fresh---dead', *dốt đặc* 'dumb + solid, i.e. completely ignorant', *gầy nhom* 'gaunt + skinny---emaciated', *lấm sạch* 'dirty + clean ---all soiled', *dai nhách* '[of meat] very tough', *nhạt phèo* 'very bland, watery', *dày áp* 'chock-full', *rách buồm* 'tattered', *cũ rích* 'outdated,

obsolete', *ngắn cũn* '[of clothing] too short', *trong vắt* 'crystal pure', *ướt ráo* 'wet + all---all wet', *rỗng tuếch* 'empty, hollow', *xa lắc* 'very very far', *vắng tanh* 'wholly deserted', *sưng vù* 'tumid', *xanh ngát* '[of sky] deep blue, [of field] deep green', etc.

C. Among these, color adjectives are of special interest. The adjective *trắng* 'white', for instance, may occur in such compounds as *trắng bạch* (describing a sick person's pale skin), *trắng bôp* (describing the color of well-laundered linen), *trắng dã* (describing staring eyes that show only the whites), *trắng hâu* (describing a clean-shaved scalp), *trắng lốp* (describing well-bleached white cloth), *trắng nhõn* (describing a dog's teeth), *trắng nõn* (describing the smooth white of a complexion), *trắng phau* (describing a sand beach), *trắng tinh* (describing a sheet of paper), *trắng vát* (describing a radiant white), *trắng tréo* (describing a fine white complexion), *trắng xoá* (describing an expanse of white blossom or white clouds), etc.

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

#### 4.4. More on Sino-Vietnamese

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

'clear, unambiguous', *ảnh-hưởng* 'influence', *áp-lực* 'pressure', *thất-bại* 'to fail; failure', *thành-công* 'to succeed; success', *kiên-thiết* 'to build; construction', *tiện-lợi* 'convenient', *tranh-dấu* 'to struggle', *vĩ-dai* 'great', *văn-hoa* 'culture', *khoa-học* 'science', *nhân-tạo* 'artificial', *dân-cư* 'inhabitant, population', *thiên-phú* 'endowed, gifted', etc.

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

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

*thi-văn* 'literature' [poetry + prose], *gia-tộc* 'family + clan', *tổ-quốc* 'fatherland' ["ancestor country"], *dai-học* 'college, university' ["great learning"], *Pháp-ngữ* 'French (language)' [= *tiếng Pháp*], *ngữ-pháp* 'grammar' ["language rules"], *tiểu-tiện* 'to urinate, pass water' ["small convenience"], *dai-tiện* 'to defecate, have a bowel movement' ["big convenience"], *trung-tiện* 'to fart, break wind' ["intermediate convenience"], *Bắc-Âu* 'Scandinavia' ["northern Europe"], *Nam-Mỹ / Nam-Mĩ* 'South America', *quân-tử* 'the superior man', *tiểu-nhân* 'the small man', *bằng-nhân* 'middleman, go-between', *chủ-diểm* 'main point', *quốc-ca* 'national anthem', *quốc-kỳ / quốc-kì* 'national flag', *dân-ca* 'folk song', *đảng-viên* 'party member', *uyý-viên* 'committee member, commissar', etc.

Whereas the first two examples (*thi-văn*, *gia-tộc*) are coordinate compounds, the remaining examples (all subordinative compounds) show Chinese word order, with the modifier preceding the modified. This is the opposite of Vietnamese word order in attributive constructions that contain a modified followed by its modifier (see 4.3.2). In a concerted effort, linguists and writers appeal for the use of native elements instead of Chinese loanwords, a practice actually followed years ago by such patriotic authors as the fifteenth-century poet Nguyễn Trãi [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1975, 1983].

4.4.3. *Mixed origin.* Some compounds contain either both Chinese-borrowed elements or one Chinese-borrowed and one “native element”, the latter actually being just an earlier loanword: *tâm-hồn* ‘soul’, *lương-tâm* ‘conscience’, *binh lính* ‘soldiers’, *lính-tráng* ‘soldiers’, *in-ấn* ‘to print’, *nuôi-dưỡng* ‘to nourish, nurture’, *sức-lực* ‘strength’, *gan-dâ* ‘courage, bravery’, etc. Of the two constituents of the unique example *canh gác* ‘to guard, protect’, the first (*canh*) is a Chinese loanword, and the second (*gác*) is borrowed from Fr. *garder*.

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

*thu-ngân* [learnèd form of *thu tiền* ‘collect money’] ‘cashier’, *vệ-sinh* [guard life] ‘hygiene, sanitation’, *xuất-cảng / xuất-khẩu* [exit port] ‘to export’, *nhập-cảng / nhập-khẩu* [enter port] ‘to import’, *thông-tấn* [learnèd form of *thông tin* ‘announce news’] ‘news agency’, *dai-diện* [learnèd form of *thay mặt* ‘replace face’] ‘to represent’, *hạ-thuyề* [lower water] ‘to launch [ship]’, *phát-thanhd* [transmit sound] ‘to broadcast; radio’, *truyền-hình* [transmit picture] ‘to televize; TV’, etc.

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

#### 4.5. Other foreign borrowings.

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

- from Malay: *măng-cút* ‘mangosteen’, *sầu-riêng* ‘durian’, *cù-lao* ‘island; chafing dish’, *xà-lòi* ‘sarong’, etc.
- from French: *măng-lô* ‘topcoat’, *ba-dờ-suy* ‘overcoat’, *cát-kết* ‘cap’, *bé-rê* ‘beret’, *so-mi* ‘shirt’, *len* ‘wool’, *võ-lua* ‘velvet’, *măng-sét* ‘cuff links’, *cà-vát = cà-vạt* ‘necktie’, *mùi-soz* ‘handkerchief’, *găng* ‘gloves’, *phu-la* ‘scarf’, *bơ* ‘butter’, *kem* ‘cream, ice cream’, *phó-mát*

- 'cheese', *bíp-tết* 'steak', *ô-liu* 'olive', *xúc-xích* 'sausage', *giăm-bông* 'ham', *sô-cô-la = súc-cù-là* 'chocolate', *cao-su* 'rubber', *xì-gà* 'cigar', *sâm-banh* 'champagne', *bia = la-ve* 'beer', *xà-phòng = xà-bông* 'soap', *xa-lóng* 'living room', *đi-văng* 'sofa', *ghi-dông* 'handlebar', *phanh* 'brake', *sâm* 'inner tube', *lốp* 'tire', *vô-lăng* 'steering wheel', (*ét-*) *xăng* 'gasoline', etc.
- from English: *bồi* 'houseboy', *mít-tinh* 'meeting, rally', *ten-nút* 'tennis', *bát-két* 'basketball', *vô-lây* 'volleyball', *góp* 'goal; goalkeeper', *tiu* 'drive', (*đánh*) *bốc* 'boxing', *pô-ke* 'poker', *uýt-ki* 'whiskey', *cao-bồi* 'cowboy', etc.
  - from Sanskrit (through Chinese) : *Phật* 'Buddha' (cf. *Bụt*, a direct loan), *A-di-dà Phật* 'Amitabha', *Thích-ca Mâu-ni* 'Sakyamuni', *niết-bàn = náy-bân* 'nirvana', *la-hán* 'arhat', *tăng-già* 'sangha', etc.
  - from Japanese (through Chinese) : *biên-chứng* 'dialectic', *công-hoà* 'republic', *đại-bản-doanh* 'general headquarters', *kinh-tế* 'economy, economics', *mỹ-thuật* 'arts', *nghĩa-vụ* 'obligation', *phục-vụ* 'service', *thủ-tục* 'procedure', etc.

Among Chinese loanwords, those borrowed through the spoken dialects of South China denote popular foodstuffs introduced by street vendors or restaurant waiters : *chí-mà-phù* 'sesame dessert soup', *lực-tào-xá* 'mung bean dessert soup', *tào-phở* 'soybean chceese in syrup', *xá-xíu* 'barbecue pork', *lạp-xường* 'Chinese sausage', *m蠔-thần* 'wonton soup', *súi-cảo* 'shrimp dumplings in soup', *lò-mẩy-phàn* 'steamed glutinous rice', *xì-dầu* 'soy sauce', *mì-chính* 'cooking powder, MSG', etc.

#### 4.6. Nominalization.

A verb or an adjective often takes a "nominalizer" like *việc*, *sự*, *cuộc*, *nỗi*, *niềm*, *tính* to yield such definite nouns as *việc tranh giành* 'feud, quarrel, dispute' < *tranh giành* 'to fight, dispute', *sự cẩn-thận* 'cautiousness' < *cẩn-thận* 'cautious, careful'. *cuộc tranh-luận* 'debate' < *tranh-luận* 'to debate', *nỗi buồn* 'sadness' < *buồn* 'sad', *niềm vui* 'joy' < *vui* 'merry, fun', *tính nhất-quán* 'consistency [of an argument]' < *nhất-quán* 'consistent'. Such nominalizers function like the definite article *the*, *le*, *la*, *les* in western languages: *việc tranh-gia đình giữa thợ và chủ* 'the dispute

between labor [*thợ* “worker”] and management [*chủ* “boss”], *nỗi buồn mất nước* ‘the sorrow of losing [*mất*] one’s country [*nước*]’, etc.

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

The highly productive *máy* ‘engine, machine’ is used to form nouns denoting all kinds of newly introduced devices, contraptions, gadgets and machines (see 4.3.2.1). Here are some more examples: *máy (dánh) chữ* (machine strike letter) ‘typewriter’, *máy khâu = máy may* ‘sewing machine’, *máy ảnh* (machine photograph) ‘camera’, *máy quay phim* (machine turn film) ‘movie camera’, *máy bộ đàm* (machine walk talk) ‘walkie-talkie’, *máy ghi âm từ* (machine record sound magnetic) ‘tape recorder’, *máy ghi hình từ* (machine record picture magnetic) ‘video cassette’, *máy trợ thính* (machine help hear) ‘hearing aid’, etc.

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

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

*kính lúp* ‘magnifying glass’ < Fr. *loupe*, *kính cận(-thị)* ‘glasses for myopia’ < Sino-Vietnamese [or S-V] *cận-thị* ‘nearsighted’, *kính viễn(-thị)* ‘glasses for presbyopia’ < S-V *viễn-thị* ‘farsighted’, *kính hiển-vi* ‘microscope’ < S-V *hiển-vi* ‘to show + small’, *kính viễn-vọng* ‘telescope’ < S-V *viễn-vọng* ‘to look far’, *kính vạn-hoa* ‘kaleidoscope’ < S-V *vạn-hoa* ‘10,000 flowers’, *súng lục* = *súng sáu* ‘six-shooter, revolver’ < S-V *lục* ‘6’, *súng trường* ‘rifle’ < S-V *trường* ‘long’, *súng mìn-cchia* ‘mortar’ < Fr. *mortier*, *súng ca-nông* ‘cannon’ < Fr. *canon*, etc.

#### 4.7. Unanalyzed forms.

Finally it is necessary to mention, next to a few scores of reduplications that can be traced back to Chinese (*bàng-hoảng* ‘dazzled, stunned’, *bōi-hōi* ‘to fret, worry’, *bōn-ba* ‘to scurry, tramp about through thick and thin’, *do-dự* ‘to hesitate, waver’, *lői-lạc* ‘outstanding, eminent’, *thung-dung* ‘leisurely, calm’), a small number of two-syllable words which cannot be easily analyzed into their meaningful constituents:

*bō-hòn* ‘soap berry’, *bō-hóng* ‘soot’, *bō-kép* ‘soap pods used to make shampoo’, *bō-câu* ‘pigeon’, *bō-nông* ‘pelican’, *bō-quân* ‘flacourtie, red berry’, *bù-nhìn* ‘scarecrow; puppet’, *cà-cuồng* ‘mangdana, belostomatid’, *cà-kheo* ‘stilts’, *cà-khịa* ‘to pick a quarrel’, *cà-lãm* ‘to stutter’, *cà-nhắc* ‘to limp’, *énh-uơng* ‘tree frog’, *mà-ca* ‘to bargain, haggle’, *tu-hú* ‘summer blackbird’, etc.

#### 4.8. Concluding remarks about the unit called *tiếng*.

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



## Chapter 5

### Parts of Speech

#### 5.0 Parts of Speech.

##### A. Some earlier classifications

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

More recent authors relied on syntactical functions [Phan Khôi 1955, Nguyễn Lân 1956], on structuralism [Lê Văn Lý 1948, Emeneau 1951, Honey 1956, Trần Ngọc Ninh 1971-1974], on structuralism and meaning [Cadière 1958], on environment and transformations [Nguyễn Kim Thản 1963-64, 1977], on “nuclear strata” [Lưu Văn Lăng 1970], on phrases [Nguyễn Tài Cẩn 1975], on minimal sentences [Đái Xuân Ninh 1978], and on lexico-syntactic meaning [Đinh Văn Đức 1986]: they all came up with different classifications.

In his dissertation on *Le Parler Vietnamien* [1948, rev. 1960], Lê Văn Lý used sets of *mots témoins* to distinguish four classes: A, B, B' and C. Once identified, his classes A, B and B' turned out to be respectively nouns, verbs (of action) and adjectives (or verbs of quality), whereas

all other words, including "witness words", personal pronouns, numerals and particles are thrown into his C class. His insight is that the labels "nouns", "verbs" and "adjectives" as well as "pronouns", "numerals" and "particles" should not be assigned *a priori* to such and such a group: this is certainly a new and more reliable method, which incidentally had been employed four years before Charles Fries published *The Structure of English* (1952), which used the same criteria of combinatory possibilities.

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

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

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

### B. Full words and Empty words

The old classification, due to traditional Chinese grammar, divides the entire lexicon or vocabulary into two broad categories: "full words" (*thực-tù*) (3.2)

with lexical meaning regarding things and phenomena (as *trời* ‘sky’, *mưa* ‘rain’ in *Trời mưa* ‘It’s raining’, or *nó* ‘he, she’, *trốn* ‘to hide’ in *Nó trốn* ‘He’s hiding’), and “empty words” (*hư-từ*) with grammatical meaning (*rất* ‘very’, *quá* ‘too’, *và* ‘and’, *với* ‘together with’, *thì* ‘in that case, then’, *mà* ‘which, that’, etc.). The main difference between the two categories is that a full word can serve as either the subject (= topic) or the predicate (= comment) of a sentence [see Chapters 10 and 11], whereas an empty word cannot. Empty words can only combine with a full word to make up a phrase, for example *dang* ‘in the process of’ within the predicate of *Trời dang mưa* ‘It’s raining right now’, or to express a syntactic relationship, as in *Áo quần tôi bị ướt hết* (shirt pants I/me suffer wet finish) ‘My clothes were all wet’.

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

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

### C. Further division

In order to reach an acceptable classification, we will try not to rely on linguistic feeling, but to rely on contextual environment, that is, we will try to find objective evidence of combinatory possibilities of such and such a word. (1) Full words can be usefully divided into two broad syntactic classes : substantives and predicatives. Suppose a foreign student of Vietnamese who wants to comment on an orange he/she is eating says \**Quả cam này là* *ngon* (fruit orange this be delicious) for ‘This orange is delicious’. The teacher will correct him/her thus, “You don’t need *là*. Just say *Quả cam này ngon*.” (fruit orange this delicious). On another occasion the same student says *Quả đó* *bưởi* with the intended meaning ‘That fruit is a pomelo’.

This time the teacher will offer *Quả đó là (quả) bưởi*. (fruit that equal fruit pomelo). If the student scratches his/her head, the teacher can explain that when the predicative is an adjective like *ngon*, you don't need to translate *is* as *là* --- because "to be" is already built-in as part of *ngon* --- but when the predicative is a noun like *(quả) bưởi*, then you need to use the copula or identificational verb *là*.

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

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

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

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

In the following examples:

*Trời mưa.* (sky rain) 'It's raining.'

*Tuyết xuông.* (snow descend) 'The snow is falling.'

*Chó sủa.* (dog bark) 'The dog was barking.'

*Cơm ngon.* (rice delicious) 'The meal was delicious.'

*trời, tuyết, chó, cam* are nouns serving as subject in each sentence, whereas *mưa, xuông, sủa* are verbs serving (like *ngon*, an adjective) as predicate.

Let us next consider these two sentences:

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

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

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

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

*Trời sẽ mưa.* ‘It will rain.’

*Trời đã mưa rồi.* ‘It has already started to rain.’

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

*Cam này rất ngọt.* ‘These oranges are very sweet.’

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

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

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

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

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

(3) Finally, there are some words that do not quite belong with the full words or with the empty words. Indeed a word in this third class cannot serve as subject or as predicate, nor can it function as the center of a phrase or as the “satellite” of the center within a phrase. This class consists of mood markers (*tiểu-tù tình-thái*) which fulfill “the role of traffic lights” [Nguyễn Kim Thành 1963: 152] and which include two subclasses --- “particles” (discussed in 7.3) and “interjections” (discussed in 7.4). In addition to initial particles like *chính*, *cá*, *đến*, those occurring as “final particles” (*ngữ-kết-tù*) like *ạ*, *à*, *ù*, *nhé*, *nhi*, *chứ*, etc. express the speaker’s attitude : deference, surprise, doubt, irony, assertion, etc. On the other hand, vocatives, responses, exclamations, complaints, curses, etc. make up a small class of “interjections” (*cảm-thán-tù*) like *oi*, *oi*, *chà*, *úi*, *chà*, *vâng*, *dạ*, etc.

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

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

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

## 5.1. Nouns (danh-tù)

### 5.1.1 *Meaning*

This large, open class of substantives includes words which possess a general lexical meaning and denote concrete things as well as abstract notions.

### 5.1.1.1 Nouns that name persons, animals, plants or objects:

- *ông* ‘grandfather’, *bà* ‘grandmother’, *cha* ‘father’, *mẹ* ‘mother’, *anh* ‘older brother’, *em* ‘younger sibling’, *học-sinh* ‘student’, *thầy giáo* ‘teacher, master’, *Nguyễn Trãi*, *Đoàn Thị Điểm*, etc.
- *gà* ‘chicken’, *vịt* ‘duck’, *trâu* ‘water buffalo’, *bò* ‘ox’, *chó* ‘dog’, *mèo* ‘cat’, *chim* ‘bird’, *cá* ‘fish’, *dê* ‘goat’, *cừu* ‘sheep’, *hổ* ‘tiger’, *báo* ‘leopard’, etc.
- *cỏ* ‘grass’, *cây* ‘plant, tree’, *chuối* ‘banana’, *cam* ‘orange’, *dừa* ‘coconut’, *xoài* ‘mango’, *ổi* ‘guava’, *mít* ‘jackfruit’, *măng-cút* ‘mangosteen’, *hoa* ‘flower’, *quả* ‘fruit’, etc.
- *giường* ‘bed’, *tủ* ‘cupboard, cabinet, closet’, *bàn* ‘table, desk’, *ghế* ‘chair’, *áo* ‘shirt, coat’, *quần* ‘trousers’, *giấy* ‘paper’, *bút* ‘pen’, *bát* ‘eating bowl’, *đĩa* ‘dish, plate’, *đũa* ‘chopsticks’, *thìa* ‘spoon’, etc.

### 5.1.1.2 Nouns that denote natural and social phenomena:

- *trời* ‘sky’, *đất* ‘earth’, *trăng* ‘moon’, *sao* ‘star’, *ngày* ‘day’, *đêm* ‘night’, *sáng* ‘morning’, *tối* ‘evening’, *gió* ‘wind’, *sương* ‘dew; frost’, *mưa* ‘rain’, *nắng* ‘sunshine’;
- *lúa* ‘cereal; rice’, *gạo* ‘uncooked rice’, *ngô* ‘corn’, *khoai* ‘sweet potato’, *cối xay* ‘rice mill’, *cối giã* ‘rice mortar’, *com* ‘cooked rice’, *sản-phẩm* ‘product’, *làng* ‘village’, *xóm* ‘hamlet’, *quận* ‘county’, *huyện* ‘district’, *phủ* ‘prefecture’, *tỉnh* ‘province’, *đoàn-thể* ‘group’, *cơ-quan* ‘organ, agency’, *bộ* ‘ministry, department’, etc.

### 5.1.1.3 Abstract nouns: *đạo-đức* ‘morals’, *thói quen* ‘habit’, *ý-chí* ‘will’, *tâm-hồn* ‘soul’, *tinh-thần* ‘spirit’, *văn-học* ‘literature’, *văn-chương* ‘belles-lettres’, *chính-trị* ‘politics’, *cách-mạng* ‘revolution’, *dân-chủ* ‘democracy’, *nền văn-minh* ‘civilization’, *óc khoa-học* ‘scientific mind’, *hạnh-phúc* ‘happiness’, *hi-vọng* ‘hope’, etc.

### 5.1.2 Grammatical behavior.

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

*một / hai / mấy / vài* \_\_\_\_\_ *này / ấy / đó / kia*  
*những / các* \_\_\_\_\_

Thus, the noun *con* ‘animal’ can enter such expressions as *một con*, *hai con*, *vài con*, *ba con này*, *mấy con ấy*, *những con đó*, *các con kia*.

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

### 5.1.3 Noun subclasses.

#### A. Proper nouns vs. common nouns.

Nouns can first be classified as proper nouns (which name specific persons and places, or particular institutions, organizations, events --- *Nguyễn Trãi*, *Lê Quý Đôn*, *Việt-Nam*, *Hồng-hà*, *Sông Mã*, *Dèo Ngang*, *Hà-nội*, *Hải-dương*, *Làng Cháu-khê*, *Phố Hàng Bạc*, *Đền Hùng*, *Chùa Một Cột*, *Khởi-nghĩa Lam-son*, etc.) and common nouns (which refer to general concepts --- *mẹ* ‘mother’, *nhà* ‘house; family’, *làng* ‘village’, *com* ‘cooked rice’, *gà* ‘chicken’, *vịt* ‘duck’, *phố* ‘street’, *đền* ‘Taoist temple’, *nhà-cửa* ‘house; housing’, *com-nước* ‘meal’, *gà-qué* ‘fowl’, *tình-cảnh* ‘situation’, etc.).

A personal name consists of three elements: the family or clan name (*ho*), the middle name (*tên đệm*) and the given name (*tên riêng*) occurring in that order --- *Nguyễn Văn Nam*, *Trần Thị Mít*. Sometimes the middle name is absent: *Lê Lợi*, *Nguyễn Trãi*, *Nguyễn Du*, *Nguyễn Khuyến*, *Bùi Ký*, *Nguyễn Lan*. The middle name may go with the clan name to make up a compound family name: *Đặng-Trần*, *Tôn-thất* ('royal family'), *Nguyễn-Phúc*, *Ngô-Dinh*, *Nguyễn-Khoa*, etc. The middle name may indicate gender: *Thị* is found only in women’s names, although at the beginning, it merely meant ‘family, clan’ so that *Trần-thị* simply means ‘(So-and-So) of the Trần family’. [Family books often mention *Thị-Thuần*, *Thị-Thục*, etc.]

Compound names such as (*Dương*) *Quảng-Hàm*, (*Hoàng*) *Xuân-Hãn*, (*Hồ*) *Xuân-Hương*, (*Lê*) *Mỹ-Khuê*, etc. are all literary names chosen early by the child’s parents or grandparents. It is therefore incorrect to break up such compound names as (*Trần Thị*) *Hương-Lan* ‘Fragrant Orchid’, (*Nguyễn Thị*) *Mỹ-Hường* ‘Pretty Rose’, (*Trương Thị*) *Bạch-Cúc* ‘White Chrysanthemum’, (*Đặng Thị*) *Đỗ-Quyên* ‘Azalea’, (*Phạm*) *Tường-Vi* ‘Hedgerose’, etc. into monstrosities like *Lan Huong*, *Huong My*, *Cuc Bach*,

*Quyen Do, Vi Tuong*, etc. [A semiliterate person may guess that *Lan-Huong*, spelled with the appropriate diacritics, means 'Orchid Scent', different from *Huong-Lan* 'Fragrant Orchid'.]

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

Proper names [Nguyễn Bạt-Tuy 1954, Nguyễn Khắc-Kham 1973, Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1995] usually appear in apposition to a preceding common noun that denotes a familial or social relationship (*chú* 'Uncle' *Đình-Lai*, *cụ* 'Greatgrandfather' *Nguyễn Du*, *bà* 'Grandmother; Lady' *Trung Trác*, *anh* 'elder brother' *Nguyễn Văn Mô*), an occupation, position or title (*kỹ-sư* 'Engineer' *Hoàng Xuân-Hãn*, *luật-sư* 'Lawyer' *Trần Văn Chương*, *giáo-sư* 'Professor' *Nguyễn Manh-Tường*).

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

"*Đường Công-lý có hai Nguyễn Đình Hoà, ông muốn kiếm Hoà nào?*"

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

'There are two men named NDH on Công-lý Street, which one are you looking for?'

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

B. Common nouns can be divided into several subclasses : item nouns, collective nouns, unit nouns, mass nouns, time nouns, abstract nouns, categorical nouns (or classifiers), and locative (or position) nouns.

1. Item nouns. Such nouns name persons, animals, plants or objects [5.1.1.1] (for instance *anh* ‘older brother’, *chó* ‘dog’, *cam* ‘orange’, *bàn* ‘table’, etc.) and fill the central position in the noun phrase with a NUM(eral) and a classifier (N') on the left, and a demonstrative (DEM) on the right:

-2	-1	0	+1	
NUM	N'	N	DEM	
<i>hai</i>	<i>con</i>	<i>chó</i>	<i>ấy</i>	
two	animal	dog	that	‘those two dogs’
<i>mấy</i>	<i>cái</i>	<i>bàn</i>	<i>này</i>	
few	thing	table	this	‘these few tables’
<i>các</i>	<i>quả</i>	<i>cam</i>	<i>kia</i>	
plural	fruit	orange	yonder	‘those oranges over there’

2. Collective nouns. Unlike item nouns (*danh-từ đơn-thể*), collective nouns (*danh-từ tổng-thể*) like *trâu-bò* ‘cattle’, *ruộng-nương* ‘fields’ cannot be preceded either by a classifier like *cái*, *con*, a numeral like *hai*, *ba*, or a pluralizer like *cá*, *những*. But a collective noun like *quần-chúng* ‘masses’ can take a totalizer like *toàn-thể* ‘the entire body, the whole’.

3. Unit nouns (*danh-từ đơn-vị*). These are nouns which further determine item nouns denoting materials that exist *en masse* like *đất* ‘earth’, *bùn* ‘mud’, *cát* ‘sand’, *nước* ‘water’, *com* ‘rice’, *thịt* ‘meat’, *ruou* ‘wine’, *đồng* ‘copper’, *sắt* ‘iron’, *giấy* ‘paper’, *mực* ‘ink’, etc. These matters or substances have their individuality, but each mass noun has to occur in some kind of calculation or measurement, with such units as *thước* ‘meter’, *tấc* ‘decimeter’, *phân* ‘centimeter’, *lิ* ‘millimeter’, *cân* ‘kilogram’, *lít* ‘liter’, *mẫu* ‘mow’, *tấn* ‘ton’, etc. One cannot normally say \**hai sữa*, \**ba thịt*, \**năm đất*, but the well-formed phrases are for example *một thước vải* ‘one meter of cloth’, *hai lít sữa* ‘two liters of milk’, *ba cân thịt* ‘three kilograms of meat’, *năm mẫu đất* ‘five mows of land’, etc. Forms like *thước*, *tấc*, *phân*, *lí*, *cân*, *lít*, *mẫu*, *tấn*, etc. are measurement units of length, weight, capacity, area, etc.

There are also unit nouns used in approximate measuring, as in *một nắm cát* ‘a handful of sand’, *một ngụm rượu* ‘a gulp of wine’, *một hớp nước lạnh* ‘a gulp of cold water,’ *một đúm / nhúm muối* ‘a pinch of salt’.

The difference between a container used as temporary unit of capacity measurement and the content of such a vessel is worth pointing out : *một chén nước mắm* ‘a cup(ful) of fish sauce’ vs. *một cái chén* ‘a cup’, *hai bát cháo* ‘two bowl(ful)s of rice gruel’ vs. *hai cái bát và hai đũi* *đũa* ‘two eating bowls and two pairs of chopsticks’, *một bầu rượu* ‘a gourdful of wine’ vs. *một quả bầu* ‘a bottle-gourd, a calabash’.

Some nouns denote units of time: *giờ* ‘hour’, *phút* ‘minute’, *giây* ‘second’, etc. Ex: *giờ giới-nghiêm* ‘hour of curfew’, *phút mặc-niệm* ‘minute of silence’.

Other nouns denote units of organization: *xóm* ‘hamlet’, *làng* ‘village’, *quận* ‘district’, *huyện* ‘district, subprefecture’, *phủ* ‘prefecture’, *tỉnh* ‘province’, *khu* ‘area, zone’, *lớp* ‘class’, *tổ* ‘cell’, *đoàn* ‘group’, *dàn* ‘herd, flock, school’, *nhóm* ‘group, team’, *cụm* ‘cluster’, etc.

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

**4. Mass nouns (*danh-từ chất-liệu*).** Of mass nouns, already mentioned in the preceding section, some enter special collocations containing a “count noun” which denote a unit of precise (conventional) or vague measurement: *một lượng/cây vàng* ‘a tael of gold’, *một cục vàng* ‘a lump of gold’, *một thỏi bạc* ‘an ingot of silver’, *ba nồi cơm* ‘three pot(ful)s of rice’, *hai miếng thịt heo* (two piece meat pig) ‘two pieces of pork’, *hai mẩu bánh mì* (cake wheat) ‘two pieces of bread’, *một bầu* (gourd) *không-khí* ‘an atmosphere’, *một xe gạch* ‘a cartful / truckload of bricks’, etc.

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

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

'100 grams of meat', *một cân đường* 'a kilogram of sugar', *một cốc rượu* = *một ly rượu* 'a glass of wine' are well-formed.

5. Time nouns (*danh-từ thời-gian*) Time nouns are non-classified nouns, which do not follow a classifier: *hôm* = *ngày* 'day', *tuần* 'week', *tháng* 'month', *năm* 'year', *mùa* 'season', *thế-kỉ / thế-kỷ* 'century', *thời-kì / thời-kỷ* 'period', *thời-dai* 'epoch', *kỉ-nghịên / kỷ-nghịên* 'era', *dải* 'generation', *sáng* 'morning', *trưa* 'noon', *chiều* 'afternoon', *tối* 'evening', *dêm* 'night', *hồi, lúc* 'moment', *khi* 'time', *đạo* 'period', *thuở* '(past) period'.

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

Time nouns can be directly numerated as in *hai ngày* 'two days', *ba đêm* 'three nights', *đám bữa* 'a few days', *mười thế-kỉ* (= *mười thế-kỷ*) 'ten centuries', *dải khi* 'a couple of times'.

6. Abstract nouns (*danh-từ trừu-tượng*). Abstract nouns denote concepts and notions such as *tư-tưởng* 'thought', *ý-nghĩ* 'idea', *quan-diểm* 'viewpoint', *thái-dộ* 'attitude', *phong-cách* 'style', *phương-pháp* 'method', *tinh-thần* 'spirit; morale', *chủ-trương* 'advocacy, policy', *lập-trường* 'stand', *lí-tưởng* = *lý-tưởng* 'ideal', *ý-thức-hệ* 'ideology', *nghĩa-vụ* 'obligation', *bốn-phận* 'duty', *xã-hội* 'society', etc. These are non-classified nouns in the sense that they do not require a categorical (or classifier N): one can say *những ý-nghĩ* 'those ideas', *hai quan-diểm* 'the two viewpoints', etc.

However, some abstract nouns take their appropriate classifiers: *hai nền văn-hoa* 'the two cultures', *một mối lo-âu* 'one cause for concern', etc. Such nouns as *văn-minh* 'civilization', *văn-học* 'literature', *văn-chương* 'belles-lettres', *hội-họa* 'painting', *mĩ-thuật* = *mỹ-thuật* 'art', *triết-học* 'philosophy', *luân-lí* = *luân-lý* 'morals', etc. share one classifier *nền* 'foundation' (Nguyễn Tài Cẩn 1975: 169).

7. Categorical nouns (*danh-từ loại-thể*). These lexemes have been given different names: classifiers, measures, counters, quantifiers, "spécificatifs",

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

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

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

NUM	N'	N	DEM
<i>hai</i>	<i>con</i>	<i>chím</i>	<i>đó</i>
two	animal	bird	that
<i>ba</i>	<i>cái</i>	<i>bút</i>	<i>này</i>
three	thing	pen	this

‘those two birds’  
‘these three pens’

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

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

[*bên* ‘side’] *trái* would mean ‘the left shoe’ and *chiếc bên phải* ‘the right shoe’.

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

7D. When the head noun (N) denotes a person, the classifier or “co-noun” (N') would be *anh*, *bà*, *bác*, *bắc*, *cậu*, *chị*, *cô*, *chàng*, *chú*, *đáng*, *đứa*, *em*, *lão*, *mụ*, *nàng*, *ngài*, *người*, *ông*, *vị*, *viên*, *quân*, *tay*, *tên*, *thằng*, etc., as in *một ông thư-ký* ‘one grandfather clerk,---a clerk’, *một bà bác-sĩ* ‘one grandmother doctor,---a lady doctor’, *một cô y-tá* ‘one auntie nurse,---a nurse’, *một bác thợ mộc* ‘one uncle carpenter,---a carpenter’, *một anh tài-xế* ‘one elder brother driver,---a chauffeur’, *một nàng / cô tiên* ‘a (young) fairy’, *một vị anh-hùng* ‘a hero’, *một vị thần* ‘a deity’, *một viên lý-trưởng* ‘a village mayor’, *một thằng lùn* ‘a dwarf’, *một tên khủng-bố* ‘a terrorist’, etc. The classifiers *ngài*, *vị*, *viên* are honorific, and *quân*, *thằng*, *tên*, etc. are definitely pejorative. [For the use of such terms of family relationship as *ông*, *bà*, *cô*, *bác*, *chú*, *anh*, *chị*, etc. in address and reference as personal pronouns to show respect for age, learning and social rank, see section 6.3.2.1 on “status” personal pronouns.]

Sometimes the general classifier *cái* precedes the appropriate special classifier for persons in order to enhance the pejorative connotation, especially in the spoken language: *cái thằng chồng em* ‘that (good-for-nothing) husband of mine’, *cái ông giáo-sư tóc bạc* ['hair silver'] *đó* ‘that white-haired teacher over there’. This extra *cái* has been called “definite article” [Trương Vinh Tống 1932: 23] and “superarticle” [Bulteau 1950: 21].

7E. The most frequently found classifiers for nouns denoting specific inanimate things are:

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

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

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

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

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

'gun shot; inoculation', *nhát (dao)* 'knifing, slicing', etc. Here are some examples:

<i>tắm</i>	<i>một</i>	<i>cái</i>	'to take a bath / shower, bathe once'
<i>ia</i>	"	"	'to have a bowel movement, defecate once'
<i>đái</i>	"	"	'to pass water, urinate once'
<i>tát/vá</i>	"	"	'to give a slap, slap once'
<i>đấm</i>	"	"	'to give a punch'
<i>đá/dập</i>	"	"	'to give a kick'
<i>vụt</i>	"	"	'to give a whipping'

Likewise *thuí một quả* 'to punch once', *dánh một trận (đòn)* [*đòn* 'beating'] 'to give a spanking', *mắng một trận* 'to give a scolding', *đâm một nhát* 'to stab once', *ngủ một giấc* 'to take a nap', *bắn một phát (súng)* [*súng* 'gun'] 'to fire a (gun) shot', *chích một mũi* [*mũi* 'needle'] 'to give (or get) an injection', *đi một chuyến* 'to take a trip', etc. with \**mắng một mắng* considered anomalous.

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

**5.2.1.** Those lexemes can combine among themselves, as in *phía trên*, *phía dưới*, *bên trên*, *bên dưới*, *phía trong*, *phía ngoài*, *bên trong*, *bên ngoài*, *phía trước*, *phía sau*, *phương đông*, *phương tây*, *phương nam*, *phương bắc*, *hướng đông*, *hướng tây*, *hướng nam*, *hướng bắc*, with *trong*, *ngoài*, *trước*, *sau* also occurring with *đằng*.

5.2.2. Having absolute meaning, they cannot be numerated (except *bên*, *hướng*, *phía*, *phương*, *dàng*, *mặt*). But they freely take such a DEM like *này*, *ấy*, *đó*, *kia*: *trên này* ‘up here’, *trên ấy* ‘up there’, *trên kia* ‘further up there’, *dưới này* ‘down here’, *dưới ấy* ‘down there’, *dưới kia* ‘further down there’, *trong này* ‘in here’, *trong ấy* ‘in there’, *trong kia* ‘further in there’, *ngoài này* ‘out here’, *ngoài đó* ‘out there’, *ngoài kia* ‘further out there’. We have seen (pp. 43-44) that *bên* *ấy*, *trong* *ấy*, *ngoài* *ấy*, *trên* *ấy* become respectively *bên* ‘that side, over there’, *trong* ‘in there’, *ngoài* ‘out there’, *trên* ‘up there’ in the Saigon dialect.

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

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

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

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

“When occurring after a substantive, those same words become complements of that noun: *bên trong* ‘the inside,--the interior’, *miền trên* ‘the upper region,--the highlands’.” [Martini, *loc. cit.*] We can add other

examples: *bên ngoài* ‘the outside, the exterior’, *môi trên* ‘the lip which occupies the space above, the upper lip’, *môi dưới* ‘the lip which occupies the space below, the lower lip’, *ngăn trên* ‘the upper drawer’, *cửa trước* ‘the front door’, *cửa sau* ‘the back door’.

5.2.5. Beside serving as “place-words”, *trong*, *ngoài*, *trên*, *dưới*, *trước*, *sau* are also used to define a period of time, and so can be called “time-words” [see Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1971, *Colloquial Vietnamese*, Grammar note 13.2 on “locators”, p. 284, and Pattern Drill F, p. 283]. Some examples of temporal locatives: (*nội*) *trong nửa giờ* [in inside half hour] ‘within half an hour’, *trong vòng ba ngày* [inside circle three day] ‘within three days’, *trên năm tiếng đồng-hồ* [space-above five sound copper-vase, i.e. water clock] ‘over five hours’, *trước tám giờ* [before eight hour] ‘before 8 o’clock’, *sau 5g30 chiều* [after 5 hour 30 afternoon] ‘after 5:30 pm’, *trước kia* [before yonder] ‘previously, before, formerly’, *sau này* [behind this] ‘hereafter, later’.

5.2.6. A locative can serve as sentence subject :

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

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

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

*Trên* *nói // dưới* *nghe.* [*nói* ‘to speak’, *nghe* ‘to listen’]

‘(When) the upper echelon says something, the lower one listens.’

*Trên* *dưới* *một lòng.* [*một* ‘one’, *lòng* ‘innards; heart’]

‘The leader and his followers are of the same heart.’

*Trong* *dánh ra // ngoài đánh vào.*

[inside strike exit, outside strike enter]

‘Some attacked from inside, others attacked from outside.’

*Trong* *ấm // ngoài* *đêm.* [inside warm, outside calm]

‘Peace reigns at home and abroad.’

Keeping in mind the administrative hierarchy, a villager refers to the office of the district chief as *trên huyện*, and a district chief looks up to the

office of the province chief as *trên tinh*. Conversely, a mandarin (or official) at the provincial [*tỉnh*] level would refer to an officeholder at the (lower) district [*huyện*] level as *dưới huyện*, and the district chief in turn would refer to the village level as *dưới xã* [*xã* ‘commune, village’].

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

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

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

### 5.3. Numerals (số-tù)

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

**5.3.1.** The cardinal numbers can express a precise quantity in the decimal system (*một* ‘1’, *hai* ‘2’, *ba trăm* ‘300’, *bốn nghìn* ‘4,000’, etc.) or

only an approximate quantity (*một hai* ‘one or two’, *một vài* ‘a few’, *mười lăm* ‘ten to fifteen’). They may be simple numbers from one to ten (*một, hai, ba, bốn, năm, sáu, bảy, tám, chín, mười*) and such nouns as *tá* ‘dozen’, *chục* ‘group of ten’, *trăm* ‘100’, *nghìn* = *ngàn* ‘1,000’, *vạn* = *muôn* ‘10,000’, *mớ* = *ức* ‘100,000’, *triệu* ‘million’, *tỉ* ‘billion’.

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

Compound numbers go from eleven to one hundred: 11 *mười một*, 12 *mười hai*, 13 *mười ba*, 14 *mười bốn*, 15 *mười lăm*, 16 *mười sáu*, 17 *mười bảy*, 18 *mười tám*, 19 *mười chín* [ $10 + 1, 10 + 2, \dots, 10 + 9$ ]; 20 *hai mươi* [ $2 \times 10$ ], 21 *hai mươi một* [ $(2 \times 10) + 1$ ], 22 *hai mươi hai*, 24 *hai mươi bốn*, 25 *hai mươi lăm*, 30 *ba mươi*, 31 *ba mươi một*, 34 *ba mươi bốn*, 35 *ba mươi lăm*, 40 *bốn mươi*, 41 *bốn mươi một*, 49 *bốn mươi chín*, 50 *năm mươi*, 55 *năm mươi lăm* [ $(5 \times 10) + 5$ ], 60 *sáu mươi*, 64 *sáu mươi bốn/tứ*, 70 *bảy mươi*, 80 *tám mươi*, 99 *chín mươi chín* [ $(9 \times 10) + 9$ ]; 100 *một trăm* [= *mười mươi*  $10 \times 10$ ].

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

The other alternations are between *năm* ‘5’ and *lăm*, *nhăm* in *mươi lăm* ‘15’, *ba mươi lăm / nhăm* ‘35’, and between *rưỡi*--preceded by a numeral---and *rưỡi*--preceded by a non-numeral (3.6.1.1).

Beginning with the forties (*bốn mươi*, *năm mươi*, *sáu mươi*, *bảy mươi*, *tám mươi*, *chín mươi*) if there is a following unit number, then *mươi* may be dropped, especially in rapid speech:

*bốn (mươi) mốt* ‘41’, *bốn (mươi) tứ* ‘44’, *sáu (mươi) lăm* ‘65’, *sáu (mươi) tám* ‘68’, *tám (mươi) chín* ‘89’, *chín (mươi) chín* ‘99’.

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

The final head in a numerated phrase refers to the next lower level in the system: *hai trăm hai* means ‘220’, *năm trăm hai* means ‘520’, *năm nghìn*

*hai* means '5,200' [cf. *năm nghìn (không trăm) hai mươi* '5,020'], and so on. The particle *linh* (= *lẻ*) 'zero' indicates that one level (or more) is skipped: *hai trăm linh* (or *lẻ*) *hai* '202', *hai ngàn lẻ* (or *linh*) *hai* '2,002', *một nghìn một đêm lẻ* [one thousand one night odd-number] '1,001 nights', etc. Thus the house address 1650 (Công-lý Street), for example, is given out fully as *một nghìn sáu trăm năm mươi*, and the address 1605 (Taylor Drive) will be *một nghìn sáu trăm linh* (or *lẻ*) *năm*.

In order to designate one or several parts of a quantity or a fractionary number, the noun *phần* 'part' is placed behind the numerator and before the denominator: *hai phần ba* 'two thirds', *một phần tư* 'one fourth, one quarter', *ba phần năm* 'three fifths', *bảy phần mười* 'seven tenths', *tám mươi lăm phần trăm* '85%, 85 percent'.

'A half (1/2)' is *nửa* or *một nửa*: *Nó ăn một nửa quả táo*. 'He ate half the apple.' 'Half an hour' is *nửa giờ* or *nửa tiếng đồng-hồ* (half sound clock). Contrast *hai giờ rưỡi* '2:30, half past two' and *hai tiếng rưỡi* 'two and a half hours', with *rưỡi* meaning 'and a half'.

Among quantifying adverbs (*mọi* 'every', *mỗi* 'each', and *từng* 'each [in turn]'), only *mỗi* and *từng* occur in combination with *một*: *mỗi (một) người* 'each person', *từng người (một)* 'each person in turn, one by one'.

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

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

Each of the literary equivalents *dệ-nhát*, *dệ-nhị*, *dệ-tam*, *dệ-tứ*, *dệ-ngũ*, *dệ-lục*, *dệ-thát*, *dệ-bát*, *dệ-cửu*, *dệ-thập*, etc. precedes the head noun, thus obeying Chinese word order since the numerals occur in their Sino-Vietnamese forms: *dệ-nhất buồn* 'the No. One sadness', *dệ-nhị đảng* 'the

second class', *dệ-tam hạng* 'the third category', *dệ-năm chu-niên* 'the fifth anniversary', *dệ-nhị-thập-năm chu-niên* 'the 25th anniversary', *dệ-bách chu-niên* 'the 100th anniversary, centenary, centennial', etc.

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

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

A numeral can be found after *độ* 'degree', *khoảng* 'space' or *chừng* 'approximation': *độ hai mươi người khách* 'approximately 20 guests', *khoảng ba thước vải* 'roughly three meters of material', *chừng (độ) năm trăm đô-la* 'about US\$500', *lối ngàn đồng* 'around 1,000 piasters'.

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

*Trung, Nam, Bắc cũng là một nhà cả.*

(center south north likewise be one house/family all)

'Whether central, southern or northern, we are just one same family.'

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

*Bốn cái ghế này một kiểu mà!*

(four thing chair this one model I don't want to repeat)

'These four chairs are the same model, I told you.'

*Cụ ấy tám mươi tư tuổi rồi.*

(greatgrandfather that eight ten four year already)

'He [the old gentleman] is already 84 (years old).'

*Con gà nào ba chân hở?*

(animal chicken which three feet huh)

'Which chicken has three legs?'

**5.3.4.** Numerals are often given the status of a separate word class. However, their grammatical---i.e. syntactic---behavior seems to suggest that they stand somewhere between substantives, on the one hand, and predicatives, on the other hand, and can thus be called "semi-substantives".



## Chapter 6

### Parts of Speech (continued)

#### 6.0 Predicatives

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

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

The predicative class consists of "verbs", or rather of two kinds of verbs---verbs of action and verbs of quality. Verbs of action are like *ăn* 'to eat', *ngủ* 'to sleep', *đi* 'to walk', *đứng* 'to stand', *học* 'to study', *cày* 'to plow', *nói* 'to speak', *nhìn* 'to look', *nấu* 'to cook', *giết* 'to kill', *thành-công* 'to succeed', etc. Verbs of quality are like *to* 'big', *đẹp* 'beautiful', *trắng* 'white', *giàu* 'rich', *rộng-rãi* 'spacious', *rộng-lượng* 'generous', *dễ chịu* 'comfortable', etc.

The verbs of action are called **functive verbs** whereas the verbs of quality are called **stative verbs**. The former are "doing" and "action" words, and the latter describe the nature, quality, condition and state of being of someone or something.

The functive verbs are examined in the first part of this chapter (6.1), and the stative verbs (or adjectives) are taken up in the second part (6.2).

## 6.1 Verbs (động-tù)

### 6.1.1 Meaning

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

### 6.1.2 Grammatical behavior

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

*Anh hãy ăn đi!* (elder brother EXHORTATIVE eat go)

‘Go ahead and eat.’

\**Hãy trắng.* (EXHORTATIVE white)

\**Giáp rất ăn.* (Giáp very eat)

*Giáp rất cao.* (Giáp very tall) ‘Giáp is very tall.’

**6.1.2.2.** A verb like *ăn* ‘to eat’ can be preceded by an auxiliary like *còn*, *vẫn*, *cứ* (marking continuity), *dã*, *dang*, *sẽ* (marking tense), *không*, *chẳng*, *chả*, *chưa* (marking negation), *đừng*, *chớ* (marking prohibition), or *hãy* (exhortative). These accompanying elements serve as “witness words” or “markers” to help us identify various members of this predicative class:

*còn ăn, vẫn ăn, cứ ăn,*

*dã ăn, dang ăn, sẽ ăn,*

*không ăn, chẳng ăn, chưa ăn,*

*đừng ăn, chớ ăn,*

*hãy ăn.*

**6.1.2.3** Another set of witness words consists of “directional verbs” (such as *ra* ‘to exit’, *vào* ‘to enter’, *lên* ‘to ascend’, *xuống* ‘to descend’, *di* ‘to go’, *lại* ‘to come’) which may be used as “co-verbs of direction” to further define the preceding main verb of motion, e.g. *chạy* ‘to run’:

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

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

### ***6.1.3. Verb subclasses***

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

An intransitive verb ( $V_i$ ) like *ngủ* ‘to sleep’, *ngồi* ‘to sit’, *chạy* ‘to run’, etc. is not followed by a “direct object”:  $N_1 / V_i$

*Em bé đang ngủ.* (*dang* ‘continuous’) ‘The baby is sleeping.’

*Cò bay.* ‘The egret is flying.’

A transitive verb ( $V_t$ ) like *ăn* ‘to eat’, *viết* ‘to write’, *đọc* ‘to read’, *xây* ‘to build’, etc. has an object which completes the signification of the head verb.  $N_1$  being the subject of the sentence, and  $N_2$  the “direct object” of the verb  $V_t$ , the sentence structure can be represented thus:  $N_1 / V_t N_2$

*X. xây nhà.* ‘X built a house.’

*X. ăn cơm.* ‘X ate his meal.’

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

### 6.1.3.1 Intransitive verbs (*động-từ nội-dộng*)

An intransitive verb ( $V_i$ ) like *nói* 'to speak', *cười* 'to laugh', *đứng* 'to stand', *ngồi* 'to sit', *chạy* 'to run', *nhảy* 'to jump', *bay* 'to fly', *ngủ* 'sleep' has been called *động-từ viễn-ý* [Bùi Đức Tịnh], *tự-động-từ* [Lê Ngọc Vượng], *động-từ nội-hướng* [Nguyễn Kim Thản]. The activity which it expresses does not affect or relate to any object, so it does not require an object complement. Let us take the sentence *Em bé đang ngủ*. 'The baby is asleep.' If the verb *ngủ* 'to sleep' is followed by a nominal expression, then this phrase denotes the place, the time, the cause, etc. and thus serves as a circumstantial complement, e.g. *Em bé đang ngủ trên dì-văng*. (space above sofa) 'The baby is sleeping on the couch.' *Em bé đang ngủ lúc mẹ nó té*. (moment mother he fall) 'The baby was asleep when her mother fell down.'

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

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

### 6.1.3.2 Transitive verbs (*động-từ ngoại-dộng*)

A transitive verb ( $V_t$ ) like *ăn*, *viết*, *đọc*, *xây* has been called by such names as *động-từ khuyết-ý* [Bùi Đức Tịnh], *thi-động-từ* [Lê Ngọc Vượng], or *động-từ ngoại-hướng* [Nguyễn Kim Thản]. Based on the nature of the complement, we can distinguish three different types of active verbs: verbs of action, verbs of motion and semi-active verbs.

A. Verbs of action ( $V_{action}$ ). Either the action affects the object  $N_2$  (*com*), as in *ăn com* 'ate rice', or that object  $N_2$  (*nhà*) is a result of the action, as in *xây nhà* 'built a house'. Other examples of  $V + N_2$ : *uống nước* 'drank water', *mở cửa* 'opened the door/window', *đóng cửa sổ* 'closed the window', etc.

B. Verbs of motion ( $V_{motion}$ ) (*động-từ chuyển-động*). A group of important verbs denote motion in a given direction. Examples are: *ra* 'to exit, go out', *vào* 'to enter', *lên* 'to ascend, go up', *xuống* 'to descend, go down', *qua* 'to cross', *sang* 'to go over, come over', *về* 'to return, go back', *lại* 'to come', *đến*, *tới* 'to reach, arrive' as in *Học-sinh vào*. 'The students went in.' *Máy bay lên*. 'The plane went up.'

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

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

*chạy đi* 'ran away', *chạy về* 'ran back', *chạy lại* 'ran back',  
*chạy đến* 'came running', *chạy ra* 'ran out', etc.

*X. trèo lên cây bưởi*. 'X climbed up the pomelo tree.'

*X. nhảy xuống ao*. (down pond) 'X jumped into the pond.'

*X. chạy ra (ngoài) thư-viện*. 'X ran out to the library.' [5.2.6]

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

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

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

The latter verbs merit some special attention. Because they carry a sense of submissiveness or passivity, the verbs *bị*, *phải*, *chịu*, *mắc* are often used to translate the "passive" construction in a western language. Actually each of them is just the head of a pattern of complementation denoting an

unpleasant experience and sometimes even qualified with the degree marker *rất* ‘very’. As the typical “submissive verb”, the item *bị*, which has been glossed as “be adversely affected” [Nguyễn Đăng Liêm 1974: 199], clearly has the lexical feature [- pleasant] [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1972a].

*bị* ‘to suffer, undergo, sustain’ : *bị đói* ‘was hungry’, *bị dòn* ‘was spanked’, *bị phạt* ‘was punished’, *bị đạn* ‘got hit by a bullet’, *rất bị ghét* ‘was much hated’, *bị vợ bỏ* (suffer wife abandon) ‘(had the bad experience of) his wife left him’. This last example is the predicate of the sentence *Đông bị vợ bỏ* ‘Đông’s wife left him’, whose deep structure contains an embedded sentence *Đông bị / vợ bỏ Đông* (Đông suffer wife abandon ĐÔng).

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

*mắc* ‘to get caught’ : *mắc nợ* ‘was in debt’, *mắc lừa* ‘was duped’, *mắc bẫy* ‘was ensnared, was caught in a trap’, *mắc muối Giác Lượng* ‘was caught in Zhugé Liàng’s ruse’.

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

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

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

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

The label “submissive verb” is definitely better than “passive verb” [Nguyễn Đình-Hoà 1972a, Nguyễn Đăng Liêm 1974: 199], since the language does not have the passive voice as such. Indeed a sentence like

*Tám được Liên yêu.* 'Tám is loved by Liên.' really has the deep structure *Tám được [Liên yêu Tám]*, in which the embedded compleutive sentence 'Liên loved Tám.' gives *được* the feature [+ pleasant].

That is why *\*Tám được yêu bởi Liên* is considered an unnatural translation of the English sentence 'Tám is loved by Liên', with the preposition "by" [= Fr. *par*] copied as *bởi*.

#### 6.1.3.3 Verbs of existence (*động-từ tồn-tại*)

These verbs ( $V_{\text{exist}}$ ) denote existence, appearance and disappearance. The most common of them is certainly *có*, whose central meaning is 'to exist'. With object and no subject ( $V + N_2$ ) there is predicated existence of that object:

*Có tiền.* 'There is some money.'

*Có ai không hiểu, xin giơ tay lên.*

(exist whoever not understand beg raise hand ascend)

'Would anyone who didn't understand please raise your hand.'

*Xưa có một ông nhà giàu .....*

(formerly exist one gentleman house rich)

'Once upon a time there was a wealthy man .....

*Có ai ở nhà không? -- Không có ai hết.*

(exist whoever at house or-not -- not exist whoever finish)

'Is there anybody home? -- No one at all.'

*Không có sữa đặc.* (not exist milk condensed)

'There's no condensed milk.'

Other existential verbs are *còn* 'to remain, survive; there is still ....., left', *hết* 'to be used up; there is no more .....,', *mất* 'to be lost; there is loss of .....,', *mọc*, *nổi* 'to erupt', *dâm*, *trổ* 'to sprout, bud', as in

*Còn tiền đây.* (remain money here)

'There's some money left here.'

*Còn gạo nếp không?* (remain rice glutinous or-not)

'Is there any sticky rice left?'

*Không còn một đồng xu nhỏ.* (not remain one coin cent small)

'There's not one penny left.'

*Hết giấy rồi.* (finish paper already) 'There's no paper left.'

*Hết đường chưa?* (finish sugar yet) = *Còn đường không?* (remain sugar or-not) ‘Is there any sugar left?’

*Mất mùa.* (lose harvest) ‘There is/was a bad harvest.’

**6.1.3.4 Linking verbs ( $V_{link}$ ) (*dòng-từ biến-hoá*).** These “verbs of becoming” denote processes of change (in form or in character), processes of conversion or metamorphosis, so suggest the semantic feature of English verbs *seem*, *become*, *remain*, etc. Examples are: *dâm* ‘to become [something worse], turn [bad]’, *hoá* ‘to change into’, *(trở) thành*, *(trở) nên* ‘to become’, *giống* ‘to resemble’, etc. with the object of the verb indicating the result of change or a temporarily acquired feature:

*Con cá hoá rồng.* ‘The fish became a dragon.’

*con cá hoá long* ‘a fish (that has) turned (into a) dragon’

*Thằng ấy hoá dại à?* (boy that become crazy really?)

‘Has that guy gone berserk or something?’

*Con-cái đều đã nên người.*

(children all ANTERIOR become person)

‘The children have all become useful persons.’

*Ông ấy thành tiên.* ‘He became an immortal being.’

*Tất cả các cháu đó đang trở thành những công-dân tốt.*

(all plural grandchild that CONTINUOUS turn become plural citizen good)

‘All those kids are becoming good citizens.’

#### **6.1.3.5 Verbs of bodily movement ( $V_{body}$ )**

This group of verbs denoting bodily movements is not very large, but like the English verb “to shrug” each of them would take only a given part of the body: *gật* ‘to nod [head]’, *lắc* ‘to shake [head]’, *cúi* ‘to bend [head, neck]’, *chúm* ‘to purse, round [lips]’, *mím* ‘to tighten [lips]’, *vươn* ‘to stretch [arm, shoulder, neck]’, *nhún* ‘to shrug [shoulders]’, *nghén* ‘to crane [neck]’, etc.

But in the  $N_1 + V + N_2$  sentence *Nam lắc đầu* ‘Nam shook his head,’ the object may be moved to the front, and with the subject (or topic) changed to *đầu Nam* ‘Nam’s head’ the sentence becomes *Đầu Nam lắc*. ‘Nam’s head is shaking.’

### 6.1.3.6 Ditransitive verbs ( $V_{do}$ ).

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

#### A. Verbs of giving and taking/receiving.

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

*X. cho cô bạn gái một cuốn sách.* ‘X gave his girl friend a book.’

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

N<sub>1</sub> V<sub>giv</sub> + DO + *cho* + Goal  
*Tân gửi quà cho bố mẹ.*  
 Tân send gift give dad-mom  
 ‘Tân sent gifts to his parents.’

The two objects may switch position:

====> N<sub>1</sub> V<sub>giv</sub> + *cho* + Goal + DO  
*Tân gửi cho bố mẹ một thùng quà to-tưởng*  
 Tân send give dad-mom one carton gift huge  
 ‘Tân sent his parents a huge box of presents.’

Other examples are *đưa* ‘to hand’, *tặng*, *bíếu* ‘to present’, *giao* ‘to deliver’, *phát* ‘to distribute’, etc.

A similar situation obtains when the main verb carries the meaning “to take, to receive, to borrow, to steal, etc.” and when the word introducing the “indirect object” (or the source) is *của*, a noun meaning ‘property, possession, wealth’. With the formula

N<sub>1</sub> V<sub>tak</sub> + DO + *của* + Source  
*Nam lấy bút của cô y tá.*  
 Nam take pen property cl nurse  
 ‘Nam took the pen from the nurse.’

====> N<sub>1</sub> V<sub>tak</sub> + *của* + Source + DO  
*Nam lấy của cô y-tá cái bút Parker.*  
 Nam take property cl nurse cl pen Parker  
 'Nam took the Parker pen from the nurse.'

B. Verbs of insertion. This subgroup comprises such verbs as *ấn* 'to push', *đút* 'to stick', *nhồi* 'to stuff', *nhét* 'to cram', *th襌* 'to thrust', etc.

The pattern is N<sub>1</sub> V<sub>insert</sub> + DO + V' + Goal as in

*Tôi điền tên vào mẫu đơn.*  
 I fill in name enter model application  
 'I filled in my name on the application form.'

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

The pattern is N<sub>1</sub> V<sub>choose</sub> + DO + là/làm + Complement as in

- (1) *Họ bầu Quân làm chủ-tịch.*  
 they elect Quân do chairperson  
 'They elected Quân chairperson.'
- (2) *Cô coi Châu là kẻ-thù. [ cô < cô ấy ]*  
 she regard Châu be enemy  
 'She considers Châu an enemy.'

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

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

#### 6.1.3.7 Quotative verbs (V<sub>quote</sub>)

The next subclass consists of verbs of thinking, knowing and saying like *nghĩ* 'think', *tưởng* 'thought wrongly', *hiểu* 'understand', *biết* 'know', *nghe* 'listen, hear', *nhớ* 'remember; miss', *tin* 'believe', *bảo* 'tell, say', *tuyên-bố* 'announce, state', etc. These verbs denote such psychological activities as "to reflect, to realize, to perceive, to feel, to announce," etc. and the object or complement N<sub>2</sub> expresses what affects the action :

*X. nghe nhạc Việt.* ‘X listens to Vietnamese music.’

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

A degree marker may modify the head verb:

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

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

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

*X. nghĩ rằng [anh kia đúng].*

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

*Tôi tưởng là [các anh không thích].*

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

*Tôi biết rằng [các cô nhớ nhà].*

‘I know that you girls are homesick.’

#### 6.1.3.8 Causative verbs

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

Within the pattern *N<sub>1</sub> V<sub>1</sub> + N<sub>2</sub> + V<sub>2</sub>*, the object of the main verb *V<sub>1</sub>* is at the same time the subject of the second verb *V<sub>2</sub>*, as in

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

‘She allowed them to quit early.’

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

‘Let me do it right now.’

*Nó làm chúng tôi xấu hổ.* (he make exclusive we ashamed)

‘He makes us feel ashamed.’

*Họ đòi anh ấy (phải) từ chức.* (they demand he must resign)

‘They demand that he resign.’

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

(law-regulation forbid student NEG get smoke cigarette)

‘The law prohibits students from smoking cigarettes.’

6.1.3.9 Verbs of volition ( $V_{vol}$ )

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

Some examples:

*X. dám nghĩ, dám làm.* (X dare think dare act)

‘X dares to think and to act.’

*Ông ấy định sang năm về hưu.*

(gentleman that intend go-over year return retire)

‘He plans to retire next year.’

*Anh ấy muốn kiếm vợ.* (elder brother that want look-for wife)

‘He wants to look for a wife.’

*Mỹ toan can-thiệp.* (America plan interfere)

‘The U.S. was about to intervene.’

*Tôi tính mùa hè này sang Pháp chơi.*

(I plan season summer this go-over France amuse oneself)

‘I plan to take a trip to France this summer.’

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

*Liên là giáo-viên.* (L. be teacher) ‘Liên is a teacher.’

*Tám cũng là giáo-viên trường đó.* (T. likewise be teacher school that)

‘Tám is also a teacher in that school.’

*Dà-lạt vẫn còn là một thành-phố đẹp lắm.*

(Dalat still remain be one city beautiful very)

‘Dalat is still a very beautiful city.’

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

*Liên không phải là giáo-viên.* (= *Không phải Liên là giáo-viên.*)

‘Liên is not a teacher.’

*Tám cũng không phải là giáo-viên trường đó.*

(T. likewise not correct be teacher school that)

‘Tám is not a teacher at that school, either.’

#### 6.1.4 Chinese-borrowed abstract verbs

We have seen that there are a growing number of abstract nouns borrowed from Chinese (5.1.3. B6). Likewise there are many abstract verbs of Chinese origin which are used in socio-political context, e.g. *học-tập* ‘to study’, *thảo-luận* ‘to discuss’, *tranh-luận* ‘to debate’, *thương-lượng*, *điều-dịnh* ‘to negotiate’, *công-nhận* ‘to recognize’, *phủ-quyết* ‘to veto’, *phủ-nhận* ‘to deny’, *chấp-thuận* ‘to approve’, *đồng-ý*, *tán-thành* ‘to agree’, *phản-đối* ‘to oppose’, *định-công* ‘to strike’, *tuyển-cử*, *bầu-cử* ‘to elect’, *bổ-nhiệm* ‘to appoint’, *thuyết-trình* ‘to report, speak’, *xuất-duong* ‘to go overseas’, *du-học* ‘to go study abroad’, *tốt-nghiệp* ‘to graduate’, etc.

### 6.2 Stative verbs = Adjectives (*tính-tù*)

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

#### 6.2.1 Meaning

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

“Qualitative adjectives” are items like *tốt* ‘good’, *xấu* ‘bad; ugly’, *đẹp* ‘beautiful’, *giỏi* ‘competent’, *ngoan* ‘well-behaved’, *chăm (chi)* ‘diligent’, *lười (biếng)* ‘lazy’, *khôn* ‘wise, clever’, *sạch (sẽ)* ‘clean’, *bẩn (thiu)* ‘filthy’, *loãng* ‘[of liquid] weak’, *đặc* ‘strong, condensed’, *đang-trí* ‘absent-minded’, *ngu-xuẩn* ‘stupid’, *văn-minh* ‘civilized’, *lạc-hậu* ‘backward’, etc.

In the case of a predication, these verbs are usefully glossed “to be good, bad, beautiful, competent, etc.” because in that environment they contain a “built-in” verb *to be*, and it would be a mistake in that context to use the equational verb *là* (6.1.3.10):

*Quyển sách này tốt.* (cl book this good) ‘This book is good.’

\**Quyển sách này là tốt.*

*Cô ấy đẹp lắm.* (young lady that pretty very) ‘She is very pretty.’

\**Cô ấy là đẹp lắm.*

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

“Quantitative adjectives” are stative verbs like *cao* ‘to be tall’, *thấp* ‘to be low’, *dài* ‘to be long’, *ngắn* ‘to be short’, *rộng* ‘to be wide’, *hở* ‘to be narrow’, *xa* ‘to be far’, *gần* ‘to be near’, *nóng* ‘to be shallow’, *sâu* ‘to be deep’, *đầy* ‘to be full’, *nhiều* ‘to be abundant’, etc.

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

### 6.2.2. Grammatical behavior

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

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

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

*Học-sinh trường này giỏi lắm.* [The subject has the feature (+human).]

‘The students in this school are very good.’

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

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

*Học-sinh trường này rất giỏi.*

‘The students in this school are very good.’

*Bài toán ấy hơi khó.* (lesson math that a little hard)

'That math problem is a little difficult.'

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

'This orange is pretty sour.'

The two modifiers *rất* \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ *lắm* are mutually exclusive.

6.2.2.3 Compound adjectives (4.3.2.3) of the type *trắng tinh* 'pure white', *đen sì* 'jet black', *thơm phức* 'fragrant', etc. because of their absolute sense cannot take a degree marker such as *rất*, *khá*, *khí*, *hơi*, *lắm*, *quá*. Nor can an absolute adjective like *riêng*, *tư* 'private', *chung*, *công* 'public', *chính* 'principal, main' in such constructions as *thư-ký riêng* 'private secretary', *của công* 'public property', *phố chính* 'main street', etc. [cf. "absolute" adjectives *public*, *private*, *principal*, *main*, etc. in English].

6.2.2.4 Unlike functive verbs or verbs of action (6.1), stative verbs or verbs of quality cannot be preceded by the exhortative *hãy* 'let us ....':

\**hãy ngán*, \**hãy khó*, \**hãy chua* are not well-formed constructions. Contrast *Con hãy ăn đi đã!* 'Go ahead and eat first, sonny.', *Các anh hãy nghe lời tôi!* 'You fellows, listen to my advice.'; or *Ông hãy đi!* 'Go away!' --- all three "imperative" sentences containing *hãy*.

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

*rất giỏi toán* (very adept math) '(is) very good in math',

*rất chăm học* (very hard-working study) '(is) very studious'.

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

*cao thước tám* (tall meter eight) '(is) 1.8 meters tall',

*dài bốn mét* (long four meter) '(is) four meters long',

*sâu mười bộ* (deep ten foot) '(is) ten feet deep',

*gần nhà tôi lắm* = *rất gần nhà tôi*

(near house me very = very near house me)

'(is) very close to my house'

*rất xa nhà ga xe lửa*

(very far house station vehicle fire)

'(is) very far from the railroad station'

6.2.2.6 In addition to monosyllabic adjectives, there are those which have two syllables or more:

- (a) reduplicative adjectives: *cao-cao* 'rather tall', *xanh-xanh* 'bluish, greenish', *chua-chua* 'a little sour', *đỏ-đỏ* 'reddish', *ngòn-ngót* 'rather sweet', *dễ-dễ* 'rather easy', *dễ-dàng* 'fairly easy', *vội-vàng* 'hasty', *lóng-túng* 'awkward, helpless', *lác-dác* 'scattered', etc. (3.7.2)
- (b) compound adjectives with synonymous or antonymous constituents (4.3.1.1, 4.3.1.2, 4.3.2.3A) either native or Chinese-borrowed: *mạnh-khoe* 'well in health', *hiền-lành* 'mild, kind', *ngay-thắng* = *chính-trực* 'righteous', *ngon-lành* 'tasty, delicious', *chải-chuốt* 'well-groomed', *trôi-chảy* 'fluent', *hiền-hậu* 'sweet, meek', *anh-hùng* 'heroic', *tao-nhã* 'elegant', *văn-chương* 'literary', *danh-giá* 'reputable', *phong-trần* (wind dust) 'weather-beaten; miserable', *giàu-nghèo* 'rich and poor', *sang-hèn* 'noble and lowly', etc.
- (c) compound adjectives of the ADJ-N type: *giàu-của* 'rich in property', *nghèo-con* 'poor in children,---has few children', *tốn-tiền* 'costly', *mát-tay* '[of physician] skillful', *đẹp-mặt* 'honored', *dữ-da* 'has a sensitive skin that takes long to heal', *mau-mồm* = *mau-miệng* 'loquacious', etc. (4.3.2.3A)
- (d) compound adjectives of the verb-object (V-N) type: *có tiếng* 'famous', *có gan* 'daring', *có ích* 'useful', *làm bô* 'conceited', *vâng lời* 'obedient', *hiếu-học* 'studious', *lịch-sự* 'elegant, polite, well-mannered', *yêu nước* = *ái-quốc* 'patriotic', etc.
- (e) pseudo-compounds (4.1.2, 4.1.3) containing a prefix like *bất-* (*bất-hiệu* 'unfilial', *bất-trung* 'disloyal', *bất-lịch-sự* 'impolite, rude') or *vô-* (*vô-tâm* 'absent-minded', *vô-lẽ* 'rude', *vô-phép* 'ill-mannered', *vô-nhân-đạo* 'inhuman') or *phi-* (*phi-pháp* 'unlawful', *phi-nghĩa* 'ill-gotten', *phi-quân-sự* 'demilitarized', etc.).

6.2.2.7 The comparative and superlative forms are respectively \_\_\_\_\_ *hơn* 'superior; more .... than' and \_\_\_\_\_ *nhất* 'first; most ...'. Examples:

*X tốt hơn Y.* (X good more than Y) 'X is better than Y.'

*Thắng Hải giỏi nhất lớp.* (boy Hải adept most class)

'Hải is the best student in his class.'

*Thú vải này bền hơn hết.* (kind cloth this durable more than all)

'This cloth is the most durable of them all.'

*Cái bút này rẻ hơn cái bút ấy.* 'This pen is cheaper than that one.'

(thing pen this cheap more than thing pen that)

*Rau ở tiệm này rẻ nhất Phố Tàu.*

(vegetables at store this cheap most street China)

‘The vegetables in this store are the cheapest in Chinatown.’

*Màu nào đẹp nhất?* (color which beautiful most)

‘Which color is the best looking?’

*Màu này đẹp hơn màu vàng.*

(color this beautiful more than color yellow)

‘This color looks better than yellow.’

### 6.3 Substitutes (*dai-tu*)

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

#### 6.3.1 Meaning

Substitutes are used to point to someone or something, and to address people. They can substitute for nouns, for verbs (factive or stative), for numerals and even for an entire phrase, e.g. *hắn* = *nó* ‘he’, *họ* ‘they’, *tôi* ‘I/me’, *anh* ‘you [to young man]’, *mày* ‘you [arrogant]’, *tao* ‘I/me [arrogant]’, *ông* ‘you gentleman’, *bà* ‘you lady’, *cô* ‘you young lady’, *bác* ‘you [polite]’; *cá* ‘you young men’, *chúng ta* ‘we [inclusive]’; *này* ‘this’, *ấy* = *đó* ‘that’, *kia* ‘yonder’, *nó* ‘the other’; *đây* ‘here’, *đấy* = *đó* ‘there’, *kia* ‘over there’; *thế* = *vậy* ‘thus, so’; *bấy nhiêu* ‘that much, that many’, *cả* = *hết cả* = *tất cả* = *cả thảy* = *hết thảy* ‘all’, *ai?* ‘who’, *gi?* ‘what’, *đâu?* ‘where’, *bao giờ?* ‘when’, *nào?* ‘which’, *thế nào?* ‘manner which--how’, *sao?* ‘how’, *mấy?* = *bao nhiêu?* ‘how much, how many’.

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

### 6.3.2 Grammatical behavior

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

#### *6.3.2.1 Personal substitutes (đại-tù xưng-hô)*

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

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

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

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

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

“*Sẵn đây ta thắp một vài nén hương*”

(ready here I light one two classifier incense)

‘While I’m here I’ll light some joss sticks.’

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

*Ta* also means 'you and I'---just like *chúng ta* 'we, inclusive'.

The forms *tao* 'I', *chúng tao* 'we, exclusive', *mày* 'you', *chúng mày* 'you [plural]', *bay* or *chúng bay* 'you [plural]' are used by an arrogant speaker within a context of familiarity, for instance when parents address their children or when an older sibling addresses younger siblings, or when people are engaged in a quarrel or heated argument, to the extent that "status personal pronouns" (see below) are not being used. As a matter of etiquette, the set of pronouns *mày*, *tao*, *mi*, *tớ* is considered indecent in polite society, and their use is comparable to the practice, when speaking French, of "*tutoyer*", which consists in using the familiar and abrupt (not so considered in Canada, though) pronouns *tu* and *toi*.

The forms *nó* 'he, she, it' and *chúng nó* 'they' are at the same time superior and familiar. In some situations, they sound abrupt. But actually they do not carry arrogant overtones as do the forms *tao*, *mày*, *mi*, *bay* discussed above. They are used to refer generally to animals and children, but also as terms of opprobrium reserved for scornful or "unadmirable" individuals (like crooks and criminals) :

*Con chó này, nó chẳng bao giờ sủa cả.*

(animal dog this it not ever bark all)

'This dog, it never barks at all!'

*Thằng Huân, nó chưa ngủ à?*

(boy Huân he not yet sleep I'm surprised)

'Isn't little Huân asleep yet?'

*Tôi đã nói nhiều lần // nhưng chúng nó không nghe.*

(I ANTERIOR speak many time, but they NEG listen)

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

In *Tôi không thích cái áo sơ-mi ấy // vì nó không có túi.*

(I NEG like classifier blouse shirt that, because it NEG have pocket)

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

the pronoun *nó* is in the singular and refers to an inanimate article of clothing.

The noun *mình* ‘body’ is a familiar substitute used in intimacy to call one’s spouse, to refer to oneself (‘I, me’) or to the group otherwise called *chúng mình* = *chúng ta* ‘we, inclusive,---you and I’:

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

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

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

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

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

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

- FIRST PERSON: *min*, *qua* ‘I’ [masculine], *thiép* ‘I’ [feminine], *choa* ‘we’
- SECOND PERSON: *bậu*, *chàng* ‘you’ [the opposite of *thiép*]
- THIRD PERSON: *hắn*, *và*, *y*, *nghi*, *người ta*

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

### 6.3.2.2 Status substitutes (đại-tử kính-ngữ)

In formal situations (including religious ceremonies and public events), and taking into consideration factors of age, sex and relative social position---both within and beyond the family system---as well as in terms of the speaker’s (or writer’s) attitude, the forms used in address and reference are generally “honorific”. Usage is in a sense patterned after a discourse context of family members conversing---the participants being parent and child, grandparent and grandchild, older sibling and younger sibling, etc.

Kinship terminology will help work out who is talking to whom, if we keep in mind the patrilineal system characterized by the ramifications of the extended family---as opposed to the conjugal family.

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

	MALE	FEMALE
+3: GREAT-GRANDPARENTS	<i>cụ (ông)</i>	<i>cụ (bà)</i>
+2: GRANDPARENTS		
- paternal	<i>ông (nội)</i>	<i>bà (nội)</i>
- maternal	<i>ông (ngoại)</i>	<i>bà (ngoại)</i>
+1: PARENTS	<i>bố/cha/thầy/ba</i>	<i>mẹ/me/má</i>
- f.'s elder siblings	<i>bắc</i>	<i>cô</i>
f.'s younger siblings	<i>chú</i>	<i>cô</i>
- m.'s elder siblings	<i>cậu</i>	<i>già</i>
m.'s younger siblings	<i>cậu</i>	<i>dì</i>
EGO'S GENERATION		
- elder siblings	<i>anh</i>	<i>chi</i>
- younger siblings	<i>em (trai)</i>	<i>em (gái)</i>
-1: EGO'S CHILDREN	<i>con (trai)</i>	<i>con (gái)</i>
-2: EGO'S GRANDCHILDREN		
- through son	<i>cháu nội (trai)</i>	<i>cháu nội (gái)</i>
- through daughter	<i>cháu ngoại (trai)</i>	<i>cháu ngoại (gái)</i>

Kin terms from the 3rd ascending generation up (*cụ, kỵ*) and from the 2nd descending one down (*cháu, chắt, chút, chít*) display alliteration.

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

*Con ở nhà ngoan, bố đi làm nhé!*

(child stay house well-behaved, father go work OK?)

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

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

	1st person	2nd person
child speaking to father	<i>con</i>	<i>bố / ba</i>
child speaking to mother	<i>con</i>	<i>mẹ / má</i>
father speaking to child	<i>bố / ba</i>	<i>con</i>
mother speaking to child	<i>mẹ / má</i>	<i>con</i>
younger sib to elder br.	<i>em</i>	<i>anh</i>
younger sib to elder sis.	<i>em</i>	<i>chi</i>
elder br. to younger sib	<i>anh</i>	<i>em</i>
elder sis. to younger sib	<i>chi</i>	<i>em</i>

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

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

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

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

The word *cháu* thus means ‘grandchild’, but also ‘nephew’ or ‘niece’: like *em*, the term for ‘younger sibling’ regardless of sex, it requires a secondary modifier to designate a ‘grandson’ or a ‘granddaughter’, a ‘nephew’ or a ‘niece’ (*cháu trai* or *cháu gái*) [ cf. ‘younger brother’ or ‘younger sister’ (*em trai* or *em gái*) ].

The nuclear terms *ông* and *bà* referring to members of the second ascending generation (+2) when used in address do not need the secondary modifier *női* 'paternal' or *ngoại* 'maternal'. A couple of examples will suffice:

*Bà bảo các cháu không nghe, // thi bà không cho xem tivi nữa.*

grandma tell pl. grandchild not listen, then grandma not give watch TV more

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

*Mẹ cháu bảo cháu mời bà sang ăn phở.*

mother grandchild tell grandchild invite grandma come-over eat noodles.

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

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

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

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

As a unique feature of Vietnamese socio-linguistic usage, those same kinship terms are extended as status substitutes to persons not related to the speaker by blood or marriage, since "people from all four seas are brothers" (*tứ hải giao huynh-dé* 'four sea all elder brother younger brother'), .

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

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

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

*“Em vợ cụ là cậu chồng tôi.”*

Younger-brother wife greatgrandfather be maternal-uncle husband I

‘Sir, the younger brother of your wife is my husband’s *cậu*.’

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

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

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

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

A popular saying deplores in the following terms the rudeness of a brazen person who gets too familiar with “superiors”: *Gần chùa gọi Bụt bằng anh* (near temple address Buddha as elder brother) ‘Living near the temple, he dares call Buddha “elder brother”.’

Some remarks are in order with regard to the pluralizers *chúng* ‘group of animate beings’ and *cá*c ‘the various ...’ that appear in nominal expressions. While *chúng* is used for first-person status pronouns, *cá*c is used for second-person status pronouns, e. g.

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

-- *cá*c *ông* ‘you gentlemen’, *cá*c *bác* ‘you gentlemen’ [considered older than speaker’s parents], *cá*c *chú* ‘you gentlemen’ [considered younger than speaker’s parents], *cá*c *bà* ‘you ladies’, *cá*c *cô* ‘you young ladies’, *cá*c *anh* ‘you guys’, *cá*c *chị* ‘you gals’, *cá*c *cậu* ‘you young men’, *cá*c *em* ‘you youngsters’, *cá*c *cháu* ‘you children’, etc.

### 6.3.2.3 Interrogative substitutes (đại-từ-nghi-vấn)

These substitutes, used to ask about people or things, are the exact equivalents of English “who”, “what”, “which”, “where”, “when”, and “how”.

The word for ‘who?’ is *ai?* as in *Ông ấy là ai?* (gentleman that equal who) ‘Who is he?’, *Ai đói?* ‘Who is hungry?’. The word for ‘what?’ is *gì?* or *chi?* as in *Mẹ muốn xoi gì a?* (mother want eat what POLITE PARTICLE) ‘What do you want to eat, Mom?’ *Cá*c *ông* dùng *chi* *a?* (plural gentleman use what POLITE PARTICLE) ‘[Waitress to customers] What are you gentlemen going to have?’

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

*bàn nào?* (table which) ‘which table?’, *cái mũ nào?* (classifier hat which) ‘which hat?’, *bộ nào?* (ministry which) ‘which ministry?’, *thế nào?* (way which) ‘in which way?, how?’, *ông nào?* ‘which grandpa?’ [Answer: *ông ngoại* (grandfather outer) ‘maternal grandpa’ or *ông nội* (grandfather inner) ‘paternal grandpa’]; ‘which man?’ [Answer: (*cá*c) *ông đeo kính đen* (classifier gentleman wear glasses black) ‘the gentleman with sunglasses’].

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

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

*Bao giờ anh trở lại* (turn come) *Việt-nam?*

‘When are you going/coming back to Vietnam?’

*Anh trở lại Việt-nam bao giờ?*

‘When did you go/come back to Vietnam?’

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

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

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

*Con cứ làm như thế.* (child continue do like so)

‘You just do like that, sonny.’

*Anh Ba vừa đói vừa mệt. --- Tôi cũng thế.*

(elder brother Ba both hungry and tired --- I likewise be so)

‘(Brother) Ba is both hungry and tired.’ --- ‘I am, too,’ ‘So am I.’

*Giáp bắt nạt thằng em. --- A! cũng thế.*

(G. force threaten boy younger sibling --- A. likewise does so)

‘G. bullies his younger brother.’ --- ‘A. does the same,’ ‘So does A.’

*Chị ấy bi-quan // nhưng anh chẳng nên thế.*

(elder sister that pessimist, but elder brother NEG should be so)

‘Your wife is pessimistic, but you shouldn’t be (so).’

*Chị không được ăn nói với chồng như vậy.*

(elder sister NEG get eat speak with husband like so)

‘You must not talk to your husband like that.’

*Sự thật không phải thế.* (thing true NEG right so)

‘Actually it (the truth) wasn’t like that.’

*Sao lại thế?* (why unexpectedly be so)

‘How come (it’s like that)?’, ‘Why so?’

*Học-trò của ông ấy biết vậy // nhưng ...*

(student of gentleman that know so, but ...)

‘His students knew that, but ....’

*Tai-nạn đó xảy ra như vậy.*

(accident that occur like thus)

‘That accident happened this way ....’

*bởi/vì thế // cho nên* (because of thus consequently)

‘because of that, .... [as a result]’

*Vì vậy cô ấy mới tự-tử.*

(because of thus she only then self-kill)

‘That’s precisely why she killed herself.’ = ‘She only committed suicide because of that.’

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

#### 6.3.2.5 Demonstratives (đại-tù chỉ-dịnh)

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

*hôm nay* ‘today’, *ngày nay* ‘nowadays’, *năm nay* ‘this year’, *chiều nay* ‘this afternoon’, *lâu nay* ‘for a long time now’, *từ đó đến nay* ‘from that time to the present time’, *nha nay* ‘this house’, etc.

The specifiers *ấy*, *đó*, *kia*, *nó*, *nãy* point to entities that are located far from the speaker, as in

*cái bàn ấy* ‘that table’, *lúc đó* ‘that moment’, *con chó kia* ‘that dog over there, the other dog’, *hôm nọ* ‘the other day’, *lúc này* ‘just now, a moment ago’.

*An cây nào, rào cây này.* (eat tree whichever, fence tree that)

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

Some substitutes help the speaker point to a place (*đây* ‘this place, here’, *đấy*, *đó* ‘that place, there’, *kia* ‘that place over there, farther, yonder’) as an answer to the corresponding substitute that asks about a place (*dâu?* ‘where?’). The specifier *này* (this) replaces *đây* (here) in these two lines from *The Tale of Kiều*:

*Này chồng, này mẹ, này cha,*

*Này là em ruột (y. sibling), này là em dâu (y. brother's wife).*

‘Here are her husband, her mother, her father,

‘And here her sister, her brother, and his wife.’

A letter may start with *nay* ‘this time, now’ as in this example:

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

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

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

Other substitutes point to a time (*bấy giờ* ‘this time, now’, *bấy giờ* ‘that time, then’) in answer to *bao giờ?* ‘what time?, when?’.

Still other substitutes point to a quantity (*bấy nhiêu* ‘this much, this many’, *bấy nhiêu* ‘that much, that many’, *tất cả*, *hết thảy*, *toàn-thể*, *toàn-bộ* ‘all, the whole’, *bấy lâu* ‘all that long period’) in answer to *bao nhiêu?*, *mấy?* ‘how much?’ or ‘how many?’, *bao lâu?* ‘how long?’, respectively.

### 6.3.2.6 Indefinites (đại-từ phiếm-chí)

Appearing with high frequency are some indefinite substitutes, which are the same as those interrogatives mentioned above (6.3.2.3 & 6.3.2.5). They may not have any specific reference to any particular entity or concept. Earlier we have encountered four of those: *nào* ‘which?’, *dâu* ‘where?’, *bao* ‘how much?’ and *sao* ‘how? why?’ (2.3.2). In addition, there are the interrogatives *ai* ‘who?’, *gi* or *chi* ‘what?’. When they are found in a question, or a negative sentence, or when the notion of inclusiveness or

totality is involved, their meanings are somewhat like 'whoever, anyone', 'whatever, anything', 'whichever', 'wherever', 'whenever', 'however', etc. Examples:

*Ai cũng đói.* (anyone likewise hungry) 'Everyone is hungry.'  
i.e. 'Take whoever, that person, too, is hungry.'

The presence of *cũng* 'likewise, too, also' is mandatory.

*Có ai đi không?* (exist anyone go or-not) 'Did anyone go?'

*Không ai quên chuyện ấy.* (NEG anyone forget matter that)  
'Nobody has forgotten that business.'

*Mẹ ăn (cái) gì cũng được.* (mother eat anything, likewise OK)

'Anything would be fine for Mom to eat.' [mother or another person speaking]

Again the indefinite sentence has to have *cũng* before the verb.

*Tủ đá có gì ăn không?* (closet ice have anything eat or-not)

'Does the ice box have anything to eat?'

*(Bát cút) cơm gì Nam cũng không thích.*

(no matter rice whatever, Nam likewise NEG like)

'Nam dislikes any kind of food.'

*Ông ấy không chịu ăn gì cả.*

(gentleman that NEG consent eat anything all)

'He wouldn't eat anything at all.'

*Có nhà nào có điện-thoại không?*

(exist house any have telephone or-not)

'Does any home have a phone?'

*Không nhà nào có điện-thoại cả // nhưng nhà nào cũng có máy lạnh.*

(NEG home any have phone all, but home any likewise have machine cold)

'Not any home has a phone, but every home has an air-conditioner.'

*Hai anh có cần mua gì ở đâu không?*

(two elder brother EMPH need buy anything at anywhere or-not)

'Do you two need to buy anything anywhere?'

*Tôi không đi đâu cả.* (I NEG go anywhere all)

'I don't go anywhere.'

*Đâu cũng có karaoke.*

(anywhere likewise exist karaoke)

'Wherever (you go) there's karaoke.'

*Có bao giờ anh uống vodka chưa?*

(exist any time elder brother drink vodka yet)

‘Have you ever had vodka?’

*Nhà tôi không bao giờ uống bia cả.*

(spouse me NEG any time drink beer all)

‘My husband/wife never drinks beer.’

*Con có nói dối đâu à!*

(child EMPHATIC speak lie anywhere POLITE PARTICLE)

[child to parent] ‘I did *not* lie.’

*Tôi có nói dối bao giờ đâu!*

(I EMPHATIC speak lie any time anywhere)

[emphatic] ‘I have *never* told a lie.’

*Bao nhiêu tiền nó cũng tiêu hết.*

(however much money, he likewise spend finish)

‘No matter how much money [he gets], he would spend it all.’

*Đắt bao nhiêu tôi cũng mua.*

(expensive however much, I likewise buy)

‘I’ll buy it no matter how expensive it is.’

The three interrogative substitutes *ai?*, *gi?*, *dâu?* can all take the pluralizer *những* and even be reduplicated when they have the “indefinite” meaning: *những (ai) ai* ‘whoever [plural]’, *những (gi nhũng) gi* ‘whatever [plural]’, *những (dâu) dâu* ‘wherever’.

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

*Của ai này dùng.* (property whoever, that-same-person use)

‘Anyone uses their own possession [toothbrush, towel, pen, etc.]’

*Mạnh ai này chạy.* (strong whoever, that-same-person run)

‘It was a *sauve-qui-peut*.’ ‘It was a stampede.’

*Ước gì được này.* (wish whatever, get that-same-thing)

‘Whatever you wish for, you get it.’

*dọn-dẹp dâu vào đây* (arrange wherever into that-same-place)

‘to arrange things and put them where they belong’

*Cha nào con này.* (father whichever, child that-same-person)

‘Like father, like son.’

*Rau nào sâu ấy.* (vegetable whichever, worm that-same-one)

'Like father, like son.'

*Ghét của nào trời trao của này.*

(hate thing whichever, heaven give thing that-same-one)

'You are given the very object of your pet hate.'

*Kiếm bao nhiêu tiêu bấy nhiêu.*

(earn however much, spend that-much)

'You spend all that you earn.'

**6.3.2.7 Reflexive and Reciprocal.** When the subject and the object of a (transitive) verb are co-referential, i.e. when they relate to the same entity, the noun or substitute is repeated, with *tự* 'self' optionally preceding the verb:

*Mình (tự) khen mình.* (one self praise body ["self"])

'One compliments oneself.'

*Nó (tự) làm hại nó.* (he self do harm him)

'He harmed himself.'

*Cô ấy tự huỷ-hại thân mình.* [= *thân cô ấy*]

(young lady that, self destroy body self) (= body young lady that)

'She herself destroyed her own body.'

*Tôi tự đánh máy ký.* (I self strike machine self)

'I did the typing myself.'

The mutual relationship is expressed by the reciprocal substitute *nhau* '(with) each other, (with) one another', e.g.

*yêu nhau* 'love each other',

*hiểu nhau* 'understand one another'.

*Hai bà cãi nhau.* (two lady argue each-other)

'The two ladies had an argument.'

*Hai thằng đánh nhau.* (two boy beat each-other)

'The two boys had a fight.'

*Anh ấy kiện nhau với ông chủ.*

(brother that sue each-other with CLASSIFIER boss)

'He filed a lawsuit against his boss.'



## Chapter 7

### Parts of Speech (continued)

#### 7.0 Function words.

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

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

### 7.1 Adverbs (phô-tù)

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

#### 7.1.1 Meaning

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

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

#### 7.1.2 Subclasses

##### 7.1.2.1 Plurality and totality. A head noun may be preceded by *những*, *các* '[pluralizer]', *mọi* 'every', *mỗi* 'each', *từng* 'each individually'.

There is a difference in scope between the two plural markers *những* and *các*. The former is not any more "literary" or any less "common" than the latter, as Thompson has stated [1965c: 180]. Actually the Chinese loanword *các* 'the various ....' means that *all* members of a given set are involved; we have seen that it serves as pluralizer for second-person status pronouns, as in *các ông* 'you gentlemen', *các bà* 'you ladies', *các anh* 'you guys', *các cháu* 'you kids', etc. (6.3.2.2).

In addition to pluralizing those kinship terms used as terms of address, it also pluralizes all other nouns, e.g. *các người em cô ấy* (plural classifier younger-sibling young lady that) '[all] her younger siblings', *các cô con gái ông bà Nam* (plural classifier child female gentleman lady Nam) '[all] Mr. and Mrs. Nam's daughters', *tất cả các nước tư-bản (chủ-nghĩa)* (all plural country capital -ism) 'all the capitalist countries', etc.

On the other hand, *những* 'some, several (of the same variety)' implies that only certain units of the total possible number are referred to. Indeed it is used when the head noun (in plural) is followed by a determiner, e.g.

*những quyển từ-dictionaries nói trên* (plural roll dictionary speak above) 'the above-mentioned dictionaries',

*những lý-do khó chấp-nhận* (plural reason difficult accept) 'reasons difficult to accept',

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

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

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

*những công-nhân làm ca đêm* (plural worker work shift night) 'those workers on the graveyard shift'.

The descriptive [relative] clause may be explicit:

*những (cái) máy tính { (mà) nhà trường vừa mua tuần trước }* (which house school just buy week before) 'the calculators which the school just purchased last week'.

The noun phrase for 'those students (whom) you met yesterday' would be *những (người) sinh-viên { (mà) anh gặp hôm qua }* (plural classifier student whom you meet day past).

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

*Xin các ông, các bà giữ chỗ trước!* (beg các gentleman các lady retain seat beforehand) 'Ladies and gentlemen, please make reservations in advance.' vs. *những ông bà (nào) { chưa giữ chỗ }* (những gentleman lady whichever not yet retain seat) 'those of you ladies and gentlemen who haven't made reservations'.

The meaning “nothing but ....” has been mentioned in 3.7.5.2 for *những ..... là .....*, as in *những xoài là xoài!* ‘so many mangoes!’, *những muỗi là muỗi!* ‘so many mosquitoes!’

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

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

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

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

*Mọi hôm, tôi dậy muộn // nhưng hôm nay tôi dậy sớm.*  
(every day I rise late, but day this I rise early)

‘I usually get up late every day, but today I got up early.’

*Tất cả mọi người đều sinh ra bình đẳng.*  
(all every person all be born out equal)

‘All people were created equal.’

*Mỗi buổi sáng, uống ba viên.* (each half-day morning, drink three tablet)  
‘Take three tablets each morning.’

*Mỗi cô một vẻ.* (each young lady one appearance)  
‘Each of the girls has her own beauty.’

*Nguyệt-liêm* là tiền hội-phí đóng mỗi tháng [= hàng tháng].  
 (month-dues be money association-fee pay each month)

‘Monthly dues are association fees that you pay each month.’

*Mỗi (một) người* đóng 200đ. (each one person pay 200 dong)

‘Each person pays 200 đồng.’

*Mỗi (một) bàn* ngồi mười người. (each one table sit ten person)

‘Each banquet table seats ten guests.’

*Mỗi giờ 65 dặm.* (each hour 65 mile) ‘65 miles per hour.’

*Mỗi năm ra hai số.* (each year issue two number)

‘[of a publication] Two issues per year.’

*mỗi ngày mỗi nghèo* (each day each poor) ‘poorer each day’

*mỗi lúc một nhanh (hơn)* (each instant one fast more)

‘faster and faster every moment’

*Mỗi người một ý.* (each person one idea)

‘Each person has his/her own idea.’

*Từng* ‘each (in turn)’ adds the notion of individual entities following one another and taken separately: *từng người* (*một*) ‘each person in turn, one by one’, *từng trang* (*một*) ‘page by page’, *dịch từng chữ* (= từ) *một* ‘to translate word for word, to translate literally’, *phân-công từng người* *phụ-trách* *từng việc* (divide each person in charge each task) ‘following a division of labor, each person is assigned an individual task,’ *Ông bà ấy lo cho chúng tôi từng li từng tí* (gentleman lady that take care for us each millimeter each bit) ‘They took care of us down to the smallest detail.’ *Công-an lục-soát từng nhà một*. (public security search each house one) ‘The public security agents thoroughly searched each and every household.’

[The schematic diagrams in 5.1.2 and 5.1.3(B)1 show the structure of the simplest noun phrase containing *những* or *các*. More detailed schematic descriptions of the nominal construction are given in Chapter 8.]

**7.1.2.2 Contrast, comparison, continuity and uniformity.** Within a verbal expression, the head verb is also surrounded by adverbial elements. One type of modifying elements manifest concepts of contrast, comparison or uniformity: some of those elements are placed before the nuclear verb, hence the term “pre-verbs”, and others follow the nuclear verb, hence the term “post-verbs”. When their positions are plotted out, one can also see that a few adverbs are mutually exclusive while others can appear in combination.

A. The preposed adverb *cũng* is often glossed ‘also’, but our teaching experience tells us that a better equivalent is ‘too, likewise’, since this item occurs in both affirmative and negative sentences, e.g.

*Tôi ăn mì. --- Anh ấy cũng ăn mì.*

‘I ate noodles.’ --- ‘He also ate noodles.’

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

*Tôi không ăn cơm. --- Anh ấy cũng không ăn cơm.*

(I NEG eat rice --- he likewise NEG eat rice)

‘I didn’t eat rice.’ --- ‘He didn’t (eat rice) either.’

[= *Anh ấy cũng thế*. ‘He neither.’]

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

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

*Người nào cũng được thưởng.* (person whichever likewise get reward)

‘Everybody was rewarded.’

*Cuốn nào cũng được.* (roll whichever likewise OK)

‘Any one of them (books) will be OK.’

*Ngày nào họ cũng cãi nhau.*

(day whichever they likewise argue each other)

‘They quarrel every day.’

*Cơm gì tôi cũng ăn.* (rice whatever I likewise eat)

‘I will eat any kind of food.’

*Đi đâu cũng vậy (= thế) thôi.*

(go wherever likewise thus/so only)

‘Wherever one goes, it’s the same.’

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

*Cam của bà này cũng ngọt đấy chứ!*

(orange property lady this also sweet there don’t you agree)

‘This lady’s oranges are sweet OK. don’t you think?’ [ they are not that bad after all, are they? ]

*Con vẽ cái nhà thế cũng đẹp rồi.*

(child draw classifier house thus, also beautiful already)

‘[mother to child] The way you drew that house is pretty, too, sonny.’

*Cô chị cũng không xấu lắm.*

(classifier elder sister also not ugly very)

'The older sister is not that ugly-looking (after all).'

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

Compare

*Ai cũng đói.* (anyone likewise hungry) 'Everyone was hungry.' and

\**Ai đều đói.*

*Cô nào cũng bị ướt.* (young woman whichever likewise suffer wet)

'Every girl got wet.' and \**Cô nào đều bị ướt.*

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

(*Tất cả*) *mọi người đều đói.* (all every person equally hungry)

'Everybody was hungry.' 'All were hungry.'

(*Tất cả*) *các cô đều bị ướt.* (all classifier girl equally suffer wet)

'Every girl got wet.' 'All the girls got wet.'

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

*Ai này đều đói.* (whoever that-same-person equally hungry)

'Each and every person was hungry.'

*Cô nào cô này đều bị ướt.*

(girl whichever girl that-same-person equally suffer wet)

'Each and every girl got wet.'

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

*Ai cũng đều đói (cả) = Mọi người cũng đều đói.*

(whoever also equally hungry all) (every person also equally hungry)

'Everybody was hungry.'

*Cô nào cũng đều bị ướt (cả).*

(girl whichever also equally suffer wet all)

'Every girl got wet.'

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

Suppose someone continues to complain without interruption about his boss:

*Nam cứ phàn-nàn mãi về ông chủ.*

(Nam continue complain on and on about classifier boss)

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

Other examples:

*Tôi đánh thức nó hai ba lần // mà nó vẫn (cứ) ngủ.*

(I strike wake he two three time, yet he still continue sleep)

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

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

*Nó hãy còn (dang) ngủ.* (he still continuous sleep)

'He's still asleep.'

*Lúc ấy, tôi hãy còn bé, chưa biết gì cả.*

(moment that I still small not-yet know anything all)

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

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

To the question *Vẫn còn thử đấy chứ?* (still test there I-presume) 'Are you still testing [that gadget]?' the answer could be

*Vâng, chúng tôi cũng vẫn còn đang thử mỗi ngày.*

(yes we exclusive likewise still continuous test each day)

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

With *còn* expressing the idea of some additional action, the sentence often starts with the expression *ngoài ra* 'furthermore, moreover':

*Ngoài ra, tôi còn phải rửa bát, quét nhà (nữa).*

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

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

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

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

(father me still strong, remain like mother me then sick often)

'My father is well as usual; as for my mother, she is often sick.'

*Tôi bận lắm. Còn anh, (thế nào?)*

(I busy very, as for elder brother how)

‘I’m very busy. How about you? [= And you?]’

Since the adverb *cứ* (see *vẫn cứ* above) indicates that the action or state of affairs goes on without any change, the head verb may be followed by the postposed adverb *mãi* or *hoài* ‘on and on’, as in

*Chị ấy cứ khóc (mãi).* (she continue cry on and on)

‘She kept on crying.’

*Chuyện đó, ồng cứ kể đi kể lại hoài.*

(story that he continue tell go tell come on and on)

‘That story, he keeps telling it repeatedly.’

Sometimes, an action takes place at regular intervals, as in

*Cứ độ mười phút, ông ấy lại phải vào buồng tắm.*

(continue about ten minute he again must enter room bathe)

‘Every ten minutes or so he has to go to the bathroom.’

[See below about the use of *lại*.]

In an imperative sentence, *cứ* has the force of ‘go ahead and ...’, as in

*Chị (hãy) cứ mua đi, rẻ đây.*

(elder sister EXHORTATIVE continue buy IMPERATIVE cheap there)

‘You go ahead and buy it---it’s a real bargain (believe me).’

D. The two adverbs *lại* and *nữa* ‘again, more’ may be used singly or together to express the idea of recurrence or resumption.

*Trời lại mưa (nữa) rồi.* (sky again rain more already)

‘It’s raining again.’

*Nó lại rót hở?* (he again flunk huh) ‘Did he flunk again?’

*California lại động đất (nữa) à!*

(California again shake earth more really?)

‘Another earthquake in California?’

There is a difference between *lại* \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ *lại*. The phrase *lại viết* means ‘wrote again, resumed writing (after an interruption)’, and the sequence *viết lại* means ‘rewrote, wrote [something] over [because the writing was not done right the previous time]’.

Other examples: *lại nói* ‘talked again, resumed talking’ vs. *nói lại* ‘repeated, said it once more’; *lại sơn nhà* ‘again painted the house,

resumed painting the house' vs. *sơn nhà lại* 'repainted the house [because the rain had washed off the first coat]'

*Ông đã không cho tôi thuê nhà // lại còn đe dọa đánh tôi nữa.*  
(he ANTERIOR NEG let me rent house yet still threaten beat me more)

'He not only had refused to rent the apartment to me, but even threatened to beat me up.'

(On *còn* 'still, even', see 7.1.2.2C; on *đã* 'anterior', see 7.1.2.4D.)

In this last example about landlord and tenant, the postponed adverb *nữa* seems to have the core meaning 'more, further, also, in addition'.

More examples :

*Con đói // thì ăn nữa đi.*

(child hungry then eat more IMPERATIVE)

'Eat some more--since you're hungry.'

*Mời ông bà dùng cơm nữa đi chứ!*

(invite gentleman lady use rice more IMPERATIVE I insist)

'Please have some more food.'

*Cậu uống bia nữa nhé!*

(maternal uncle, drink beer more OK?)

'[host to young friend] Some more beer?'

*Ông Thanh biết uống cá vót-ca nữa.*

(gentleman Thanh know drink even vodka additionally)

'Mr. Thanh can drink even vodka.'

*Nó có thể ăn thêm hai bát cơm nữa.*

(he has ability eat add two bowlful rice additionally)

'He can eat two more bowls of rice.'

*Hai người chết // và ba người nữa bị thương.*

(2 person dead and 3 person additional suffer wound)

'Two dead and three others injured.'

[..... \**và ba người khác bị thương* (and 3 person different suffer wound)  
sounds like a bad translation of the preceding English sentence.]

The preposed *lại* may carry another meaning: the action is against some warning or contrary to some expectation (logical, esthetic or moral), e. g.

*Ai lại dí sơn cái nhà màu vàng khè như thế!*

(who contrary-to-taste go paint CL house color yellow very like so)

'How could anyone paint a house in that (awful) yellow color?'

*Mẹ đã bảo không // sao con lại làm thế?*

(morn ANTERIOR say no, why child contrary-to-warning do so)

'[mother to child] I already told you not to. How come you went ahead and did it?'

*Cái kéo này, mẹ dùng để cắt vải. Sao con lại đem ra cắt các-tông?*

(CL scissors this, mom use to cut cloth, why child contrary-to-warning bring out cut cardboard)

'[mother to son] I use this pair of scissors to cut cloth. Why are you using it to cut cardboard?'

**7.1.2.3 Negation and confirmation.** The negatives constitute a highly special adverbial class (*không*, *chẳng*, *chả* ‘no, not’, *chưa* ‘not yet’), each member of which immediately precedes the head verb (or head noun). Examples:

*Tôi không ăn // vì tôi chưa đói.*

(I not eat because I not yet hungry)

'I'm not eating because I'm not hungry yet.'

*Anh ấy không (hè) gọi dây nói cho ai // mà cũng chẳng (hè) hỏi thăm bà mẹ ở trong Nam.*

(he not ever call wire talk give anyone and likewise not ever ask visit classifier mother at inside south)

'He never telephoned anybody, and never inquired about his mother in the south, either.'

*Thu không nói-nắng gì cả.*

(Thu not speak-REDUPL anything all)

'Thu did not say anything.'

*Thành không cao, không thấp.* (Thanh not tall not short)

'Thanh is neither tall nor short.'

*Ông Quang không vợ, không con.*

(gentleman Quang no wife no child)

'Mr. Quang has no wife, no children.'

A (stronger) literary equivalent of *không* is *chẳng* ‘definitely not’:

*Phương chẳng nói, chẳng rằng.* (Phương not speak not say)

'Phương wouldn't say a word.'

*Chẳng tham ruộng cỏ, ao liền / Tham về cái bút, cái nghiên anh đỡ.*

(not greedy ricefield big pond adjoining / greedy about CL writing brush CL inkstand CL student)

'I don't care for large fields and twin ponds / Only care for the scholar's writing brush and inkstand.' [a proverb]

*Tôi mệt quá, nên chẳng thích ăn-uống gì cả.*

(I tired much, so not care eat-drink anything all)

'I'm so tired, so wouldn't be interested in any food.'

The variant *chả* occurs frequently in colloquial speech: *Chả thèm!* (not crave) 'I'm not craving (for) it.' *Chả cần!* (not need) 'I don't care.'

Besides occurring before an indefinite substitute like *ai*, *gi*, *dâu*, *mấy*, *bao nhiêu* (6.3.2.6), e.g. *không ai* 'nobody', *không đâu* 'nowhere', *không mấy* 'not much, not many', the common negative preverb can enter a double negative construction such as

*Ta không thể không rớt nước mắt*  
(we not able not drop water-eye)

'We could not help shedding tears'.

*Không phải tôi không biết.* (not correct I not know)

'It's not that I didn't know.'

The equivalent of an English yes-or-no question uses the sequence *có ..... không?* e.g. *Anh có cần tiền ngay bây giờ không?* (you EMPHATIC need money right now or not) 'Do you need money right now?'

The interrogative sentence *Chí thích không?* 'Do you like it?' as a type of choice-question (seeking a yes-or-no answer) started out in the form

*Chí có thích hay (là) không thích?*  
(you EMPHATIC like or not like)

That explicit question 'Do you like it or don't you like it?' has been step by step reduced to

*Chí có thích hay (là) không?, then to*

*Chí có thích không?,*

and finally the emphatic *có* is deleted. [*hay (là)* is a connective commonly known as the conjunction of coordination 'or'.]

The preposed negative *chẳng* becomes *chāng* when used as a final question particle, e.g. *Cô ấy không thích chāng?* (she not like I wonder) 'Could it be that she doesn't like it?', 'I wonder if she doesn't like it.'

The construction "not only ..., but also ..." is featured in this sentence:

*Bộ quần áo này không nhāng (= chẳng nhāng) đep mà còn rẻ nữa.*  
(set pants coat this not only pretty but also cheap additionally)

'This suit of clothing is not only nice-looking, but also inexpensive.'

*Không những (= chẳng những) trẻ con, mà cả người lớn cũng thích phim đó.* (not only young kid, but even person big too like movie that)

'Not only children, but adults also enjoy that movie.'

Lately the sequence *không nhũng* 'not only' is sometimes replaced by *không chỉ*, but not by *\*chẳng chỉ*.

To indicate that an action has not yet taken place, the adverb *chưa* is used before the verb, e. g. *chưa đến* 'hasn't arrived yet', *chưa đói* 'isn't hungry yet', *chưa dỗ tú-tài* (pass flower-talent title) 'hasn't passed the high school exam yet', *chưa bắt đầu* (catch head) 'hasn't started yet', etc. Thus there is a difference between *không có con* 'have no children, cannot have children' and *chưa có con* 'have no children yet'.

The adverb *chưa* may also precede an indefinite, as in *Chưa ai tới cả* (not yet whoever arrive all) 'Nobody has shown up yet.' *Chưa bao giờ có hiện-tượng ấy*. (not yet whenever exist phenomenon that) 'Never has there been such a phenomenon.'

One construction often found in poetry contains a predication with *chưa* .... followed by another predication with *dã* .... [see 7.1.2.4C]. It expresses two shades of meaning. In sentence (1), one action may not have happened before another action takes place, as in

(1) *Chưa dỗ ông nghè đã đe hàng tổng,*

(not yet pass CL doctor ANTERIOR threaten whole canton),  
an idiomatic expression referring to someone "who threatens his village community even *before* he passes his doctoral examination".

But the two actions may also quickly follow each other, as in the literary context of sentence (2)---two lovers' separation happening right after their being reunited:

(2) *Chưa vui sum-hop đã sầu chia-phôi.*

(not yet joyful reunion already sad separation)

'No sooner had they been reunited in joy than they already felt the sorrow of parting' [*The Tale of Kiều*].

The word *chưa?* can serve as a final particle to end another type of question, that also expects a yes-or-no answer, about a past action or state "concerning which there is expectation on the part of the speaker that, even if it has not yet happened, it may still happen" [Emeneau 1951: 210].

*Lúc đó, ông đã gọi dây nói cho sở cảnh-sát chưa?*

(moment that you already call wire-talk for office police or-not-yet)

‘At that time, had you telephoned the police yet?’.

Indeed like *có .... không?*, the discontinuous expression *đã .... chưa?* asks whether an action has taken place yet, and the question

*Con đã uống thuốc hay (là) chưa uống thuốc?*

(child ALREADY drink medicine or not-yet drink medicine)

‘[mother to child] Have you taken your medicine (or not) yet?’

undergoes successive deletions until *đã* itself can be left out:

*Con đã uống thuốc hay (là) chưa?*

> *Con đã uống thuốc chưa?*

> *Con uống thuốc chưa?*

To such an “already-or-not yet” question (using the conjunction *hay* or *hay là*), the answer may be

*Thưa mẹ, con đã uống rồi à.*

(report mom, child ANTERIOR drink already POLITE PARTICLE)

‘Yes, mom. I have already.’

{and abbreviated to (*Thưa mẹ*) *đã à*, or *rồi à*. }

or in the negative *Thưa mẹ, con chưa (uống) à.* (report mom, child not-yet drink POLITE PARTICLE)

In a simpler, much less formal situation, only the question particle *chưa* is used, as in *Xong chưa?* ‘I finished yet? Done yet?’, *Ngủ chưa?* ‘Have you fallen asleep yet?’, *Dói chưa?* ‘Hungry yet?’, etc.

Some more examples of such questions and answers:

*Hiểu chưa? --- Hiểu rồi. --- Chưa hiểu.*

‘Have you understood?’ ‘Yes, I have.’ ‘No, I haven’t.’

*Đủ chưa? --- Đủ rồi. --- Chưa đủ.*

‘Is this enough?’ ‘Yes, this is enough.’ ‘No, not enough.’

Finally, in order to seek the agreement or sympathy of the hearer regarding something which the speaker himself feels is obvious, the sentence may also have that final particle: *Dẹp mặt chưa?* ‘[sarcastically] Aren’t you ashamed (yet)?’ [On compound stative verbs, see 6.2.2.6(c)]

The preverb *có* is used to emphasize a confirmation, as in

*X có ăn ('eat') hối-lộ.* ‘X did take bribes.’

[cf. *X ăn hối-lộ.* ‘X took bribes.’]

*Tôi có gửi thư mời ông ấy mà!*

(I EMPHATIC send letter invite gentleman that believe me)

'I did send him an invitation.'

[cf. *Tôi gửi thư mời rồi.* 'I have already sent out the invitation.')

7.1.2.4 Tense and modality. Adverbs placed before the head verb to serve as tense and modality markers are *dang*, *vừa*, (*vừa*) *mới*, *sắp*, *sẽ*, *đã*, and those placed after the head verb are *xong*, *rồi*.

Actually if the speaker wants to specify the time when an action takes place, a sentence adverbial ("tomorrow afternoon", "now", "next week", "yesterday"), followed by a comma pause, begins the sentence, e.g.

*Chiều mai*, con phải thi. (afternoon tomorrow, child must take exam) 'I must take a test tomorrow afternoon.'

*Bây giờ*, tôi ra thư-viện đây. (now I go out library here) 'I'm going to the library now.'

*Tuần sau*, họ dọn nhà sang Oakland. (week after they move house go over Oakland) 'They're moving to Oakland next week.'

*Hôm qua*, anh ấy gửi điện-tín rồi. (day past he send telegram already) 'He already sent a telegram yesterday.'

But when the speaker wants to be explicit, an adverb may be used before the head verb to mark past, present or future tense.

A. To mark (present, past or future) continuous tense, the adverb *dang* (= *đương*) precedes the head verb, e.g.

*Ông ấy đang đi trên đường đến sở.*

(he CONTINUOUS go on road reach office)

'He is (or was) on his way to the office.'

*Khi nào chị đang nấu phở // thì xin chị gọi em đến xem nhé!*

(time whichever elder sister CONTINUOUS cook phở, then beg elder sister call younger sibling come watch OK?)

'[Next time] (when) you cook beef noodle soup, please call me so that I may watch you going through the process, will you?'

B. When the speaker wants to indicate explicitly that an action has been completed, the adverb *đã* is placed before the head verb.

The notion of anteriority is basic (for either past or future time):

*Ông đã quên chuyện đó rồi hay sao!* (you ANTERIOR forget story that already or how) 'Have you forgotten that already?'

*Chúng tôi đã biết ngay từ đầu.*

(we ANTERIOR know right from head)

‘We had known it right from the start.’

*Hôm qua, lúc tôi gõ cửa // thì họ đã ăn cơm xong rồi.*

(day past, moment I knock door, then they ANTERIOR eat rice finish already)

‘Yesterday, when I knocked at the door, they had already finished their dinner.’

*Mai tám giờ anh đến // thì tôi đã lên máy bay rồi.*

(tomorrow eight hour you arrive then I already go up plane already)

‘Tomorrow, when you come at eight, I will already have boarded the plane.’

Both *dang* and *đã* have been linked to Indonesian *sedang* and *sudah*, respectively, in an attempt by Gregerson [1991: 81-94] to raise the possibility of an Austronesian origin for those aspectual preverbs.

When occurring as a final particle, the lexeme *đã* also signals that the head verb denotes a circumstance viewed as completed prior to some other circumstance.

*Chúng ta hãy nghỉ một lúc đã.*

(we inclusive EXHORTATIVE rest one moment first)

‘Let’s rest a while first [before we do anything else].’

*Để tôi còn xem đã : tôi chưa muốn mua vội.*

(let me still see first, I not-yet want buy hurry)

‘Let me have a look first. I don’t want to buy [it] in a hurry.’

In *đã 20 năm rồi* .... ‘(it has been) twenty years already’, the adverb *đã* emphasizes a stretch of time.

The use of *đã* in conjunction with *chưa* has been discussed in 7.1.2.3.

C. To indicate that an action will likely take place in the future, the head verb is preceded by the adverb *sẽ* : whereas *đã* can be glossed ‘anterior’, the focus of *sẽ* is ‘subsequent’. But like *đã*, the element *sẽ* is not obligatory, since in the sentence

*Tháng sau, tôi qua Pháp ăn cưới con gái ông Hữu*

(month behind I cross-over France eat wedding daughter gentleman H.) the time expression *tháng sau* indicates that the speaker will go over to France only next month (to attend Mr. Hữu’s daughter’s wedding).

The use of *sẽ* would indeed be redundant, since futurity is already clearly marked.

D. When an action is imminent, i.e. when it approaches the moment of the utterance or a moment in either the past or the future, then the adverb *sắp* or *sắp sửa* ‘about to, on the point of’ precedes the head verb, as in

*Sắp mưa rồi.* (about rain already) ‘It’s going to rain [right away].’

*Em sắp khâu xong rồi à.*

(younger sister about sew finish already POLITE PARTICLE)

‘I’m about to finish this sewing task.’

*Máy bay sắp xuống.* (plane about descend)

‘The plane is about to land.’

*Khi ấy, tôi sắp qua Mỹ du-học.*

(time that I about go over America study)

‘I was then on the point of going to study in America.’

*Nó đang sắp ở Pháp về // thì cô á di lấy chồng.*

(he CONT about in France return, then CL gal go take husband)

‘He was just coming back from France when the gal got married.’

*Khi nào ông bà sắp về nước // thì xin cho tôi biết.*

(whenever gentleman lady about return country, then beg let me know)

‘When you (two) are about to go back home, please let me know.’

More examples:

*Mời bác ngồi chơi, ba cháu đi làm sắp về rồi à.*

(invite uncle sit play, dad nephew go work about return already  
POLITE PARTICLE)

‘Please sit down. My dad will soon be back from work.’

*Anh Sơn sắp (sửa) lấy vợ.* (elder brother S. about take wife)

‘Son is about to get married.’

*Corn sắp chín rồi.* (rice about ripe already)

‘The rice will be done soon = Dinner is almost ready.’

However, if there is a time expression like *chóp nữa*, *chút nữa*, *lát nữa* (moment additional) ‘in a short while’, etc. then *sẽ* will be used instead of *sắp* (*sửa*), and the last three examples will be changed as follows:

*Mời bác ngồi chơi, ba cháu đi làm, chút nữa sẽ về à*

‘..... My dad will be home from work in a little while.’

*Anh Sơn đúng mười ngày nữa sẽ lấy vợ.*

(brother Son exact ten day additional will take wife)

‘Son will get married in exactly ten days.’

*Năm phút nữa, cơm sẽ chín.*

(five minute additional, rice will ripe).

‘The rice will be done in five minutes.’

E. The idea of “recent past” is rendered by means of the adverbs *vừa* and *mới* ‘only just, right now, recently’ used singly or in combination, e. g.

*Chúng cháu vừa mới ăn cơm xong à.*

(group nephew just recent eat rice finish POLITE PARTICLE)

‘We [your nephews/nieces/grandchildren] just finished eating.’

*Tôi vừa (mới) buông đũa buông bát // thì công-an / ập vào.*

(I just put down chopstick bowl then public security storm enter)

‘I had just laid down my bowl and chopsticks when the public security agents stormed in.’

*Anh ấy mới (vừa) bước chân ra ngoài.*

(he just step foot exit outside)

‘He just stepped outside.’

Sometimes, *mới* (and not so much *vừa*) is used to emphasize the idea of restriction, e.g. *Năm 1966 tháng Huân mới lên bốn.* (year 1966 boy Huân just go up four) ‘Huân was only four years old in 1966.’

*Sinh-viên mới được nghỉ hè có ba tuần.*

(student just get rest summer only three week)

‘The students started their summer vacation just three weeks ago.’

Frequently the restrictive sense is expressed when the predication containing *mới* ‘then and only then---not before’ follows another proposition which is advanced as its prerequisite: the sequence of the two semantic units in the sentence---“the order of mention”---parallels the order in which events in the outside world occur , as in

*Quá nửa đêm, nó mới về.* (past half night he only-then return)

‘It was past midnight before she got home.’

*Bây giờ, tôi mới biết.* (now I only-then know)

‘It’s only now that I know it.’

*Hôm qua, mới xong.* (day past, only-then finish)

‘Only yesterday was it completed.’

*Sang năm, nó mới có thể nộp đơn,*

(go-over year he only-then have ability submit application)

‘Only next year can he apply.’

*Trẻ con làm xong bài // mới được xem ti-vi.*

(kid do finish lesson only-then get watch TV)

‘The kids may not watch TV until after they’ve finished their homework.’

*Chín tiếng nữa mới đến Đài-bắc.*

(nine hour more only-then reach Taipei)

‘Only in another nine hours will we get to Taipei.’

*Thế mới hay chứ!* (thus only-then interesting don’t you see?)

‘That’s really interesting [if that’s the way it is]!’

The construction containing the preverb *mới* can be appropriately used when in a similar situation English prefers the sequence “not .... until” or “not .... unless”, e.g.

*Ông trả tiền // (thì) tôi mới đi.*

(you pay money then I only-then go)

‘I won’t leave until you pay me.’

*Có biên-lai // mới lấy được sơ-mi.*

(exist receipt only-then take get shirt)

‘You can’t get your shirts until you produce the receipt.’

*Anh phải nộp phạt // thì cảnh-sát mới cho anh lái xe về.*

(you must pay fine then police only-then let you drive car return)

‘The police won’t let you drive your car away until you pay the fine.’

F. In a narration, the adverb *bên* or *liền* ‘then and there’ precedes the head verb, e.g.

*Nói xong, ông Viên bèn đứng dậy, bước ra khỏi phòng họp.*

(speak finish, Mr. V. then stand rise step out away-from room meet)

‘So saying, Mr. V. (immediately) got up and walked out of the conference room.’

G. Another time adverb, *từng* ‘has (once) ....-ed in the past’, follows *đã* ‘already’ in the affirmative, and *chưa* ‘not yet’ in the negative, e.g.

*một phong-cảnh chưa từng thấy* (one landscape not-yet experience see)

‘a landscape never seen before’

*Tôi chưa từng nếm thử trái đó.*

(I not-yet experience taste kind fruit that)

‘I’ve never tasted that kind of fruit.’

*Bố cháu đã từng dạy học ở Ha-oi.*

(father me have experienced teach study in Hawaii)

‘My dad has taught in Hawaii.’

*Hai cụ ấy đã từng phải ăn bùa rau, bùa cháo.*

(two greatgrandparent that have experienced must eat meal vegetable  
meal rice gruel)

‘That old couple have had to alternate their meals between

vegetables and rice gruel.’

*Tôi đã từng lấy cua đó.* (I have experienced take course that)

‘I have taken that course.’

Note: this adverb *từng* [*< tùng-trái* ‘to be experienced, seasoned’] is not to be confused with the pluralizer *tùng* ‘each (in turn)’ (7.1.2.1).

In addition to the preverbs discussed above, the adverb *rõi* ‘(definitely) over and done with; already’ occurs after the head verb, so can be called a ‘postverb’. It marks a terminated action or condition, as in *Tôi ăn rồi.* (I eat already) ‘I’ve already eaten.’ *Tôi ăn xong rồi.* (I eat finish already) ‘I have finished eating.’ *Nhớ rồi.* (remember already) ‘(I) remember.’ *Xong rồi.* (finish already) ‘The task is finished.’ *Mấy giờ rồi?* (how many time already) ‘What time is it (already)?’

But sometimes there is a subtle nuance of modality: *Ông ấy đã về rồi.* (he ANTERIOR return already) may mean ‘He has gone back.’ or ‘He has come back.’ whereas *Ông ấy đã vè.* means ‘He’s back [from errand].’

Moreover only the context can tell whether the action or condition is in the past or in the future. Examples:

*Xuân vè rồi.* (spring return already) means ‘Spring is back already.’ But *Mai, chúng tôi đã về Mỹ rồi.* (tomorrow we ANTERIOR return America already) means ‘Tomorrow we’ll be going back to the U.S. already.’

**7.1.2.5 Order and prohibition.** Commands and injunctions in many languages use the imperative mode. But in Vietnamese, a command is structured just like a statement, so that such a sentence as *Anh xách cái túi này.* (you carry CLASSIFIER bag this) may mean ‘You’ll carry this bag.’, ‘You carried this bag.’ as well as ‘Carry this bag, will you?’

The preverb *hãy* is often said to mark an order or a command. But actually it can also be glossed ‘let’s be sure to ....’, ‘one should ....’, ‘we’d better ....’ and thus advance an exhortation or suggestion when it is placed before the head verb with or without a subject:

*Con hãy nín đi!* (child EXHORTATIVE stop-crying IMPERATIVE)

‘[parent to child] Stop crying!’

*Hãy ngồi đây!* (EXHORTATIVE sit there) ‘Sit there (first)!’

It is more often used “in prayers” [Lê Văn Lý 1960: 237] and in formal situations than in everyday language:

*Hãy vâng lời cha mẹ!* (EXHORTATIVE obey word father mother)

‘Obey your parents!’

*Hãy noi gương nhà chí-sĩ cách-mạng Phan Bội-Châu!*

(EXHORTATIVE follow example classifier scholar revolutionary PBC)

‘(Let’s) follow the example of PBC the revolutionary scholar!’

*Chúng ta hãy chăm-chỉ học-hành!* (we EXHORTATIVE diligent study)

‘Let’s study diligently!’

*Chị hãy cẩn-thận nhé!* (elder sister EXHORTATIVE careful OK)

‘Be careful!’

The preverbs *chớ* or *dùng* ‘don’t’ correspond to English negative imperatives: the dissuasive meaning applies to whatever follows, e. g.

*Anh chớ (có) uống rượu.* (elder brother PROHIBITIVE drink wine)

‘Don’t drink alcohol.’ ‘You shouldn’t drink alcohol.’

*Chớ vì thất-bại mà nản lòng.*

(PROHIBITIVE because fail and discourage heart)

‘Don’t be discouraged because of failure.’

*Dừng đi máy bay; đi xe đò rẻ hơn mà không nguy-hiểm.*

(PROHIBIT go plane; go vehicle-ferry cheap more and not dangerous)

‘Don’t go by plane. The bus is cheaper and not dangerous.’

*Không sao đâu! Con đừng sợ.*

(not matter anywhere, child PROHIBITIVE afraid)

‘It’s nothing. Don’t be afraid.’

*Ta đừng (nên) kết-luận với-vàng.*

(we inclusive PROHIBITIVE should conclude hurry)

‘Let us not jump to any conclusion.’

*Xin đừng ai hiểu lầm tôi.*

(beg PROHIBITIVE anyone understand error me)

‘Please don’t anybody misunderstand me.’

*Chúng ta hãy đừng quên lời trói-trắng của cụ Tú.*

(we EXHORTATIVE PROHIBITIVE forget words last-will of elder T.)

‘Let us not forget Mr. Tú’s last words.’

The verb *đi* ‘to go’ may also appear as final particle in an imperative sentence with the sense of ‘Go ahead and ....’, as in

*Bé ngủ đi! Mẹ vào bây giờ.*

(little sleep IMPERATIVE, mom enter now)

‘Go to sleep! Mom will be in soon.’

*Con hãy vào bếp rửa tay đi dã.*

(child EXHORTATIVE enter kitchen wash hand IMPERATIVE first)

‘Go wash your hands in the kitchen first.’

There are also *cần* ‘need to’, *nên* ‘appropriate, necessary, should’, *phải* ‘must, ought to, have to’ --- all three regular verbs that some authors analyze as preverbs denoting desirability or obligation, e.g.

*Chúng mình cần dành tiền để mua xe.*

(we inclusive need save money in-order-to buy vehicle)

‘We need to save money to buy a car.’

*Có lẽ mình nên đợi đến sang năm, anh à!*

(exist reason, we inclusive should wait arrive go-over year, older brother POLITE PARTICLE)

[wife to husband] ‘Maybe we should wait until next year, honey.’

*Chết! Tôi phải ra bưu điện trước năm giờ.*

(die, I must exit post-office before five hour)

‘Whoops! I must go to the post office before 5 o’clock.’

In the negative, *không cần ...* means ‘doesn’t need ...’, *không nên ...* ‘should not ...’, *must not ...*, and *không phải ...* ‘doesn’t have to ....’

7.1.2.6 Degree. The language has several degree markers, some of which are preverbs (*rất* ‘very’, *khá* ‘rather’, *khí = hơi* ‘a little’) and others are postverbs (*lắm* ‘very’, *quá* ‘excessively, too’). Here are examples of stative verbs being modified by one of those adverbs:

*rất đẹp* ‘very pretty’, *khá đẹp* ‘rather pretty’, *đẹp lắm* ‘very pretty’, *đẹp quá* ‘so pretty’, *dài quá* ‘too long’, *khí dài* ‘a little too long’, *hở*

*khó* ‘a little difficult’, *khó quá (xá)* ‘excessively difficult’, *cực hay* ‘extremely interesting’, *cực-kỳ ngộ-nghĩnh* ‘very very cute’. The pairs *rất* and *lầm*, *rất* and *quá* are mutually exclusive (6.2.2.2).

Several other markers may either precede or follow the head verb:

*thật đẹp = đẹp thật* ‘really pretty’, *tuyệt đẹp = đẹp tuyệt* ‘extremely pretty’, *hoàn-toàn sai-lầm* ‘entirely wrong’, *hết sức kính-trọng = kính-trọng hết sức* (respect exhaust-strength) ‘extremely respect’, *hết sức khâm-phục* ‘deeply admire’, *tuyệt-đối trung-thành = trung-thành tuyêt-đối* ‘absolutely loyal’, *Tôi tin-tưởng hoàn-toàn ở anh* (I believe entire in you) ‘I wholly trust you,’ etc.

Degree markers can also occur before verbs of feeling and knowing such as *yêu* ‘to love’, *ghét* ‘to hate’, *thích* ‘to like’, *thương* ‘to feel sorry for’, *nhớ* ‘to miss’, *biết* ‘to know’, etc. Thus one can say *Tôi rất ghét những người đạo-đức giả*. (I very hate plural person virtue false) ‘I intensely hate hypocrites.’ *Bà rất thù tên Sở-Khanh đó.* (she very resent classifier S-K that) ‘She deeply resents that Casanova.’

On the other hand, being a degree marker, the preverb *rất* does not allow the head verb to have a quantifying complement: \**rất rộng năm mươi* (very wide five mows), \**rất rộng mênh-mông* (very wide immensely).

### 7.1.3 Ordering and co-occurrence of adverbs

The co-occurrence patterns of preverbal auxiliaries is extremely interesting as well as complex. Such authors as Emeneau (1951), Nguyễn Kim Thành (1963; 1975), and Thomas (1981) have analyzed the relative ordering of those elements within the verbal expression. The last two analysts provide useful charts that detail possible sequences and co-occurrences. For teaching purposes I have used such sequential phrases as *cũng sẽ còn đau* (likewise shall still hurt), *cũng vẫn còn đau* (likewise still still hurt) ‘will still hurt’, *vẫn còn dang kêu đau* (still still continuous holler hurt) ‘still complaining right now about the pain’, *cũng sẽ không đau* (likewise shall not hurt) ‘won’t hurt either’, *cũng vẫn không đau* (likewise still not hurt) ‘still does not hurt’, *sẽ vẫn còn đau* (shall still still hurt) ‘will still hurt’, *sẽ không còn đau (nữa)* (shall not still hurt further) ‘won’t hurt any more’, etc.

Of all the sixteen or so positions found to the left of the nuclear, i.e. main, verb (*đau* ‘to hurt’ in the preceding examples), *cũng* ‘likewise,

too, also' occupies the one furthest from the verb, and *dang sap* 'now about to' occurs closest to the verb.

## 7.2 Connectives (quan-hệ-từ)

Members of this word class manifest grammatical relations between words or between syntagms, i.e. phrases. They are divided into two subclasses:

(a) those which link a complement to its preceding head word: *của* 'of', *bằng* 'by means of', *ở* 'at, in', *bởi* 'because of', *tại / vì* 'because of', *do* 'by', etc.; and

(b) those which link two items of equal ranking: *và* 'and', *với* 'together with', *hay* 'or', *hoặc* 'or', *nhưng* 'but', *mà* 'yet', *vừa* .... *vừa* .... 'both .... and ....', *càng* .... *càng* .... 'the more .... the more ....', *nếu* 'if', *hết* 'as sure as', *mà* 'which, that', etc.

The former are usually known as "prepositions", and the latter are usually labeled "conjunctions".

### 7.2.1 Prepositions (giới-từ)

These connectives express possession, means, direction, etc. with the "object" denoting the owner, the tool, or the direction, etc., and the whole expression is called a prepositional phrase, e.g.

*sách của tôi* (book property me) 'my book(s)', *nhà bằng gạch* (house by-means-of brick) 'brick house', *bảng đen ở Lớp 4* (board black in class four) 'the blackboard in Grade 4', *đi với hai cô em* (go together with two CL younger sibling) 'went with two younger sisters', *đau bởi ghen* (hurt because-of jealous) 'suffering from jealousy', *chết vì bệnh ung thư* (die because-of disease cancer) 'died of cancer', etc.

As can be seen in the above examples, a preposition itself cannot serve as a constituent of a syntagma (= phrase), and only a prepositional phrase (underlined in each example above) can serve as a grammatical constituent that has a definite meaning: possession, material, location, accompaniment, cause, etc.

The most frequently used prepositions are: *của* 'of; from; by'; *bằng* 'of, by means of, by, in'; *với* 'to, together with, against'; *về* 'about, on'; *đến* 'about, on, over'; *ở* 'at, in, from'; *tại* 'at, in, because of';

*vì* ‘because of, on account of’; *từ* ‘from’; *dể* ‘(in order) to’; *đo* ‘from, by, because of’; *bởi* ‘because of, by’; *cho* ‘to, for; until’.

*Note:* These items are prepositions proper, some of which are in the first instance full words---nouns (e.g. *của* ‘property, wealth, asset’) or verbs (e.g. *đến* ‘to arrive, reach’). They are kept separate from position words such as *trên*, *dưới*, *trong*, *ngoài*, *trước*, *sau*, etc. which denote spatial and temporal locations, and have been treated (in 5.2) as a class of “locatives” or position words (*phương-vị-từ*): the latter lexemes behave more like nouns (5.2.1 to 5.2.8), so merit to be placed in an autonomous class of substantives although at first sight their equivalents are prepositions in English.

On the other hand, verbs of motion ( $V_{motion}$ ) such as *ra* ‘to exit, go out’, *vào* ‘to enter’, *lên* ‘to ascend, go up’, *xuống* ‘to descend, go down’, etc. (6.1.3.2B) may occur following a non-directional verb of motion like *chạy* ‘to run’ to indicate the direction of the movement: in such compounds as *chạy ra* ‘ran out’, *chạy vào* ‘ran in’, *chạy lên* ‘ran up’, *chạy đi* ‘ran away, ran off’, *chạy về* ‘ran back’, etc. Some earlier grammars have treated these items as prepositions, too, but we treat them as coverbs (V') of DIRECTION (6.1.2.3; 6.1.3.2B). In other expressions such as *kiếm ra* .... (find exit) = *tìm thấy* .... (look find) ‘found [a lost object after looking]’, *nghe thấy* .... (listen hear) ‘heard [as a result of listening]’, *mua được* .... (buy get) ‘was able to buy [something cheap]’, *dẫm phải* .... (step suffer) ‘stepped on [thorn, nail]’, we have V-V' compounds in which the coverb V' manifests the idea of RESULT. Likewise, in the sentence *Bà ấy ôm lấy đứa con*. (she hug take CL child) ‘She hugged her child.’ the coverb V' *lấy* expresses the idea of ORIENTATION. [Nguyễn Đình-Hoa 1972.]

### 7.2.2 Conjunctions (liên-từ).

A conjunction joins or connects words, phrases or sentences. There are two kinds of conjunctions: coordinators and subordinators.

7.2.2.1 Conjunctions of coordination: these join two elements of equal footing (nouns, phrases, sentences), expressing several different meanings:

- Addition or reunion : *và*, *với* ‘and’ as in *Hoa và con gái* ‘Hoa and her daughter’; *học và hành*, *học với hành* ‘to study and to practice’; *cá với nước* ‘fish and water’; *cùng*, *cùng với* ‘together with’ as in *thầy cùng với trò* ‘master and student’ ;

- Alternative : *hay, hay là* ‘or’ as in *mai hay (là) mốt* ‘tomorrow or the day after’, *hoặc* ‘either or’ as in *sinh-viên độc-thân hoặc có vợ* (student single or have wife) ‘single or married students’; (*hoặc*) *cho vay hoặc cho hàn* (either give borrow or give definitive) = *cho vay hay cho hàn* ‘either as a loan or as a gift’. However, only *hay* can be used in a choice-question: *Anh có định ra sân bay hay không?* (you EMPHATIC plan exit field-fly or not) ‘Do you plan to go to the airport?’;
- Consequence : *nên* = *cho nên* ‘as a result’, *nên chi* ‘so’, *thành thử* ‘as a consequence, as a result’, e.g. *Tôi không cẩn-thận // nên bị móc túi.* (I not careful so suffer pick pocket) ‘I wasn’t careful, so they picked my pocket.’;
- New argument or progression in reasoning : *và, và lại, và chăng* ‘besides, moreover, in addition’, *huống chi, huống hồ* ‘all the more reason’; ‘much less’;
- Opposition, variance or restriction : *nhưng, nhưng mà, song* ‘but, yet’, *song le* ‘however’; *chứ* ‘but (not) ...’; *tuy nhiên* ‘however, nevertheless’;
- Transition : *còn như* ‘as for ....’;
- Purpose : *hầu, ngõ hầu* ‘in order to’; *kéo, kéo lại, kéo mà* ‘lest’;
- Acquiescence supported by an explanation : *hèn chi, thảo nào* ‘no wonder’, e.g. *Cô ấy không buộc dây an-toàn. --- Hèn chi bị chết!* (she not tie belt safe -- no wonder suffer die) ‘She did not buckle up her seat belt. --- No wonder she was killed!’ )

*Note:* Some lexemes serve both as prepositions and conjunctions.

#### 7.2.2.2 Conjunctions of subordination: traditionally these are said to join a “subordinate” predication and its “main” predication (cf. 11.2.3):

- Cause and effect: *vì, bởi, bởi vì, vì rằng, tại, tại vì ....* (*cho*) *nên ....* ‘because ...., as a result or consequently ....’ ; *sở dĩ .... là vì ....* ‘the reason why .... is because ....’
- Purpose : *để, để cho* ‘in order that ....’
- Consequence : *dến nỗi* ‘to the point that ...., so .... that ....’
- Comparison : *cũng như, đường như* ‘as if...’, *thế nào.... thế ấy*.
- Time : *khi, lúc* ‘(at the moment) when ....’, *đang khi/lúc* ‘while ....’, *trong khi* ‘while ....’, *trước khi* ‘before ....’, *sau khi* ‘after ....’
- Concession : *dù, dầu, mặc dầu, dầu (rằng), tuy (rằng)* ‘though, although’ with the main clause introduced by *nhưng* ‘but’.

- Supposition : *giả (mà), giả như, ví như, giả sử* ‘suppose’,
- Condition : *nếu (như), ví bằng, ví dù, ví thử, nhược bằng* ‘if...’, *hết* ‘as sure as’. In a compound sentence, if the subordinator is *nếu, hết, giả, giả sử* (condition, supposition), the main predication is introduced by *thì* ‘then, in that case’, e.g. *Nếu tôi không làm // thì ông Ninh trước làm quận-trưởng.* ‘If I am not mistaken, [then] Mr. Ninh was formerly a district chief.’ (*trước làm* ‘previously make’)
- Expressing a preference : *thà* ‘had rather .....’ as in  
*Thà làm quỷ nước Nam còn hơn làm vương đất Bắc*  
(rather make demon country south still better make king country north)  
‘I’d rather be a demon in Vietnam than being a prince in China.’  
*Thà chết chứ không đầu hàng.* (rather die but not surrender)  
‘Rather die than surrender!’
- Quotation: *rằng* ‘that ....’ introduces a compleative predication and follows a verb of saying and thinking (*nói* ‘say’, *biết* ‘know’, *nghĩ* ‘think’, *tưởng* ‘thought wrongly’, *mong* ‘hope’, *tin-tưởng* ‘believe’, *xác-nhận* ‘confirm’, *nhấn mạnh* ‘emphasize’).

7.2.3 Both subclasses of connectives (prepositions and conjunctions) can be considered *syntactic* functors, whereas adverbs (preverbs and postverbs) discussed in 7.1 can be viewed as *lexical* functors.

### 7.3 Particles (tiểu-tù tình-thái)

The language has a number of particles which convey the speaker’s attitude and may occur at the beginning or at the end of a predication. The final particles are often called *ngữ-khi-tù*, but we have chosen the term *tình-thái-tù* for both the initial and final particles, to be distinguished from *cảm-thán-tù*, the interjections.

#### 7.3.1 Initial particles

Such items as *chính, đích* ‘it is precisely ....’, *cá, đến cá, ngay* ‘even ....’ are used to emphasize a following word or a phrase, e.g. *Chính hắn giết vợ.* ‘(It was precisely) he (who) killed his wife.’ (*Dến*) *cá ông thầy nó cũng chịu thua luôn.* (even CL teacher he likewise concede defeat then) ‘Even his master had to give up.’

### 7.3.2 Final particles

These “emotive” particles are used at the end of a predication to express the speaker’s attitude, mind set or mood (questioning, negation, insistence, surprise, doubt, humility, politeness, etc.) :

- *à* -- mild surprise, questioning: *Chị quên rồi à!* (you forget already I’m surprised) ‘Have you forgotten already?’
- *ạ* -- politeness: *Thưa bà dùng món gì ạ?* (report lady, use dish what POLITE PARTICLE) ‘What would you like to have?’
- *chẳng* -- suspicion: *Em bé buồn ngủ chẳng?* (young sibling small feel-like sleep I wonder) ‘Is the baby sleepy [by any chance]?’  
*Bà vợ nó biết chẳng?* (CL wife he know I wonder) ‘Could it be that his wife knew? I wonder.’
- *chứ* -- certainty, hope, assumption: *Bác vẫn mạnh khoẻ chứ ạ?* (older uncle still well strong I presume POLITE PARTICLE) ‘You’ve been well as usual, I presume.’  
*Anh có ăn được mắm tôm không? --- Được chứ!* (you EMPHATIC eat able fermented shrimp or-not -- can certainly) ‘Can you eat shrimp paste? ---Yes, certainly!’
- *chưa* -- “yes-or-not yet” question: *Thầy giáo đã tới (hay) chưa?* (teacher ANTERIOR arrive or not-yet) ‘Has the teacher arrived yet?’ (see 7.1.2.3)
- *có* -- variant of *kia*.
- *đã* -- an action or state must be completed before something else can take place: *Khoan đã!* (hold it first) ‘Wait (before doing that)’ (see 71.2.4B).
- *đâu* -- strong negation: *Tôi (có) muộn đâu!* (I EMPHATIC borrow anywhere) ‘I did not borrow it.’ *Cô ấy không đi đâu!* (she not go anywhere) ‘She’s not going, don’t insist!’ (see 6.3.2.3)
- *dáy* -- “personal touch” particle (Blood 1958) used in a question that has an interrogative substitute (*ai*, *gì*, *đâu*) or a predication that is admitted rather grudgingly : *Anh nói chuyện với ai dáy?* (you talk story with who there) ‘Who were you talking to (just now)?’ *Con đang làm gì dáy?* (child CONTINUOUS do what there) ‘Honey, what are you doing (there)?’ *Bài đó cũng được dáy // nhưng có vài lỗi ấn-công.* (article that also ok there, but exist a few error printer) ‘That article is OK, but it has some typographical errors.’

- *đi* -- imperative: *Học nữa đi!* (study further IMPERATIVE) 'Study some more!' *Chúng ta đi ăn đi!* (we inclusive go eat IMPERATIVE) 'Let's go eat, shall we?'
- *hả, hử* -- mild surprise: *Tôi hả?* (me huh) 'You mean me?' *Đến lượt tôi hả?* (arrive turn me huh) 'My turn?' *Sao các cháu lại chơi bóng trong nhà hử?* (why plural grandchild contrary-to-rule play ball inside house huh) 'Why are you kids playing ball inside the house?'
- *không* -- "yes-or-no" question: *Anh có bận không?* (you EMPHATIC busy or-not) 'Are you busy?'
- *kia* -- preference: *Nó thích sơ-mi màu xanh kia!* (he like shirt color blue instead) 'He likes a blue shirt instead [of white, for instance].'
- *mà* -- insistence: *Tôi đã bảo mà!* (I ANTERIOR tell EMPHATIC) 'I told you!'
- *nào* -- intimate offer or urging: *Chị để em rửa rau cho nào!* (elder sister let younger sibling wash vegetables give come-on) 'Let me wash the vegetables for you, elder sister.'

*Con đánh lại bài đó cho Bác Hường nghe đi nào!*  
(child beat over song that give aunt H. listen IMPERATIVE come-on)  
'Play that song again for Auntie Hường, sonny.'

- *nghe* -- authoritative command: *Nhớ khoá cửa nghe!* (remember lock door hear) 'Remember to lock the door, (do you) hear?'
- *nhé < nhớ* -- friendly proposal: *Chúng ta ngồi đây nhé!* (we inclusive sit here ok?) 'Shall we sit here?'
- *nhi* -- seeking confirmation: *Hôm nay, trời lạnh quá nhi?* (day this sky cold excessively, don't you think?) 'It's very cold today, isn't it?'  
*Cá vươn này rộng nhi?* (CL garden this wide, don't you think)  
'This garden is big, don't you think?'
- *sao* -- Saigon variant of surprise particle à?
- *thay* -- exclamation of the "lo and behold" type: *May thay!* 'Luckily! How lucky!'
- *thế* -- questioning the extent: *Làm sao thế / vậy ?* (do how thus) 'What's the matter?'
- *u* -- surprise: *Chỉ có sáu trăm đô-la thôi u?* (only exist six hundred dollar that's all, really?) 'Only \$600? [I expected more]'

- *vậy* -- acceptance of a second best choice:  
*Hết màu xanh da trời rồi. --- Thế thì tôi lấy màu xanh lá cây vậy!*  
 (finish color xanh skin sky already -- so then I take color xanh leaf tree as a second choice)  
 'There are no more blue ones left.---Then I'll take a green one.'
- *với* -- appeal: *Khiêng hộ tôi với!* (carry help me with) 'Please carry this for me.' *Cứu tôi với!* (save me with) 'Help! (I'm in danger)'

#### 7.4 Interjections (cảm-thán-tử)

These have been described as "vocal signs that translate a sensation either affective or acoustic" [Lê Văn Lý 1960: 198]:

- vocatives -- *hỡi*, *oi!*, *é!*, *này!* 'hey, I say'
- responses -- *vâng*, *dạ*, *bẩm* 'yes' [polite], *ừ*, *phải* 'yes' [neuter]
- exclamations -- *ó!*, *ó!* 'oh', *ó hay!*, *σ hay!*, *σ kia!* 'hey, wait a minute', *à!*, *chà!* [surprise], *a!*, *a ha!* [joy], *oi!*, *ói!*, *ái!* 'ouch', *eo ói!* 'yukky', *hởi ói!*, *than ói!*, *chao ói!* 'alas', *ái chà!* 'wow', *trời đất!* 'heaven (and earth)', *khiếp!* 'awesome', *khổ!* 'miserable', *chết!* 'death', *thay!* {pain, fear}, *hurt!*, *hùm!*, *hú!* [anger], *é!*, *lêu lêu!* [derision], *tội-nghiệp!* [pity].

7.5 Multiple class membership. Let us conclude this chapter on function words by noting that several of those functors cross class boundaries and fulfill more than one function in the grammatical apparatus. Indeed some lexemes may belong to one word-class in a given context, but also function as members of another word-class in a different context. This phenomenon ("class conversion") has caused some early grammarians to say that "Vietnamese has no parts of speech."

#### A. Content word ==> Function word

Some content words (= full words) become function words (= empty words).

- *của* -- An item like *của* belongs to both the noun class and the preposition class: *thần giữ của* (deity guard wealth) 'guardian spirit for wealth', *của quý* (property precious) 'valuable asset'. *giết người cướp của* (kill person rob property) 'killing people and seizing property' vs. *sách của tôi* (book of me) 'my book(s)', *trâu bò của dân làng* (water buffalo ox

of citizen village) ‘cattle that belong to the villagers, the villagers’ livestock’.

- *cho* -- The lexeme *cho* is a verb in *cho con tiền* (give child money) ‘gave their son/daughter some money’, but a preposition in *gửi tiền cho con* (send money to child) ‘sent money to their son/daughter’.
- *trên* -- Likewise, *trên* in *leo lên trên* (climb ascend space-above) ‘climbed to the top’ is a locative (noun), but *trên* in *leo lên trên núi Tam-dảo* (climb up on mountain Tam-dảo) ‘climbed up Mount Tam-dảo’ is a connective (= preposition).

### B. Verb ==> Noun

- Some verbs can be nominalized with *cái* ‘object, thing’, *sự* ‘affair’, *nhiều = nỗi* ‘feeling, sentiment’, e.g. *cái ăn* ‘foodstuff, eatables’, *sự sống* ‘living, life’, *sự ủng hộ* ‘support’, *nhiều tin* ‘faith’, *nhiều hi vọng* ‘hope’, *nỗi buồn* ‘sorrow’.
- Many disyllabic verbs of feeling can also be used as nouns, e.g. *cảm-nghĩ* ‘to feel and think’ > ‘feeling’; *lo-lắng* ‘to worry’ > ‘worry’ (cf. *những cảm-nghĩ* ‘feelings’, *nhiều lo-lắng* ‘many worries’).
- Some verbs like *gói* ‘to wrap’, *bó* ‘to tie’ can give such unit nouns as in *một gói thuốc lá* ‘a pack of cigarettes’, *một bó củi* ‘a bundle of firewood’.
- There is definitely some overlapping between nouns denoting tools and verbs denoting actions accomplished by means of those tools: *cày* and *cái cày* ‘to plow’; ‘plow’, *bừa* and *cái bừa* ‘to harrow’; ‘harrow’, *cào* and *cái cào* ‘to rake’; ‘rake’, *cuốc* and *cái cuốc* ‘to hoe’; ‘hoe’, *hái* and *cái hái* ‘to reap’; ‘reaping sickle’, *cưa* and *cái cưa* ‘to saw’; ‘saw’, *đục* and *cái đục* ‘to chisel’; ‘chisel’, etc.

### C. Stative verb ==> Noun

Such compound adjectives as *khó-khắn* ‘difficult’, *vất-vả* ‘hard’, *vui-mừng* ‘glad’, *hạnh-diện* ‘proud’, *sung-sướng* ‘happy’ can also be used as nouns when preceded by *cái*, *sự*, *nỗi*, *nhiều*, e.g.

*những sự khó-khắn ban đầu* ‘the initial [time head] difficulties’, *bao nhiêu nỗi vất-vả* ‘so many hardships’, *một niềm hạnh-diện* ‘a pride’, etc.

In recent writings, certain authors omit such nominalizers as *sự* 'affair, business', *nỗi = niềm* 'feeling, sentiment', etc., and such noun phrases as the following are often found in newspapers and magazines:

*những khó-khăn ban đầu của người tị-nạn* (plural difficulty period-head of person flee-disaster] 'the refugees' initial difficulties', *những lo âu của bậc cha-mẹ* (plural worry of rung father-mother) 'the parents' worries', etc.

#### D. Noun ==> Stative verb

- *bụi* 'dust' > 'dusty'; *khói* 'smoke' > 'smoky'; *vàng* 'gold' > 'yellow'; *đá* 'stone' > 'stingy'; *gạo* 'rice' > 'studious'; *sách-vở* 'book and copybook' > 'bookish'; *dẻo* 'pole carrier' > 'crooked, roguish, knavish'; *tây* 'west' > 'western, French(-like)'; *quý-tộc* 'aristocracy' > 'aristocrat'; *tư-bản* 'capital' > 'capitalist'; *nhà-quê* 'countryside' > 'boorish'; *đạo-đức* 'virtue' > 'virtuous, ethical'; etc.
- *thật là Việt-Nam* 'really Vietnamese', *một cử-chí rất Trần Cao-Linh* 'a gesture very Trần Cao Linh-like', *phong-cách đặc Nguyễn Công-Hoan* 'a style typically Nguyễn Công Hoan-esque'.
- *chủ-nghĩa tư-bản* 'capitalism' and *tu-bản-chủ-nghĩa* 'capitalist', *chủ-nghĩa xã-hội* 'socialism' and *xã-hội-chủ-nghĩa* 'socialist', *chủ-nghĩa cá-nhân* 'individualism' and *cá-nhân-chủ-nghĩa* 'individualist', *chủ-nghĩa cơ-hội* 'opportunism' and *cơ-hội-chủ-nghĩa* 'opportunist', etc.

## Chapter 8

### The Noun Phrase

#### 8.0 Phrase structure

After studying the various parts of speech, we will now look at the different ways they combine with one another to make up a larger unit, called **phrase** (or **syntagm**).

But we will first discuss briefly the four basic patterns of grammatical grouping: (1) modification, (2) complementation, (3) predication, and (4) coordination. Examples are:

(1) Modification. In a modification pattern, the central (or nuclear) grammatical unit, called “modified”, governs another grammatical unit called “modifier”, which as a satellite may precede or follow the central unit. For example, the head noun *bò* ‘bovine’ may be followed by a qualifier like *sữa* ‘milk’, or *đực* ‘male’, or *cái* ‘female’, resulting in *bò sữa* ‘milch cow’, *bò đực* ‘bull’, *bò cái* ‘cow’. The same noun may be preceded by one modifier or more, as in *một con bò cái* ‘one cow’, a phrase containing the numeral *một* ‘one’ and the categorical noun *N* (= classifier) *con* ‘animal’. The sequence may further contain a specifier called “demonstrative” like *này* ‘this’, *đó* ‘that’---which occurs at the end---so that this expression, called a **NOUN PHRASE**, now reads

*một con bò cái này* [NUM + N' + N + DEM] ‘this one cow’  
[cf. the examples on pages 92 and 95]

(2) Complementation. A verb may occur alone (*về* ‘returned’, *nghe* ‘listened’, *ngủ* ‘slept’) or it may be followed by an item called its “complement” as in .... *thấy một con bò cái*. ‘.... saw a cow’, in which the verb of perception *thấy* ‘to see’ is followed by the object of that perception---‘one unit of the female bovine species’.

The structure of such a VERB PHRASE can be much more complex, with several kinds of complement.

(3) Predication. The verb phrase in (2) would make up a meaningful sentence if it is preceded by a partner called "subject", and this resulting larger sequence represents the third pattern---a predication: *Tôi thấy một con bò cái*. 'I saw a cow.' Likewise *Tôi về quê*. 'I went back to my native village.' *Tôi nghe mãi*. (continuously) 'I listened and listened.' *Tôi ngủ luôn* (without interruption) *mười tiếng đồng-hồ*. 'I slept through ten hours.'

(4) Coordination. Two words, two phrases, or two sentences are conjoined.  
*hai với hai* 'two and two'

*Nam và vợ* 'Nam and [his] wife'

*hai con bò đực* (male) *và một con bò cái* (female) 'two bulls and one cow'

*Tôi về phòng và ngủ luôn mười tiếng đồng-hồ*.

(I return room and sleep uninterruptedly ten sound clock)

'I went back to my room and slept through ten hours.'

*Tôi muốn về quê // nhưng xe đạp hỏng*.

(I want return native village, but vehicle-kick out of order)

'I wanted to go back to my village, but my bike broke down.'

### 8.1 The noun phrase (danh-ngữ)

8.1.0 We will first examine the pattern of modification in a noun phrase (NP) in this chapter, leaving the pattern of complementation in a verb phrase (VP) to the next chapter. As for the pattern of predication involving a subject (or topic) and a predicate (or comment), it will be studied in Chapters 10 and 11, in which different sentence structures are discussed. All three major patterns may contain constituents that display a pattern of coordination.

Before going on to look at the structure of a noun phrase as a pattern of modification, it is important to distinguish between compound nouns and noun phrases. Examples of compound nouns are *bò sữa* (cow milk) 'milch cow', *gà mẹ* (chicken mother) 'mother hen', *xe đạp* (vehicle kick) 'bicycle', *máy bay* (machine fly) 'airplane', *máy kéo* (machine pull)

'tractor', *dây nói* (wire talk) 'telephone', *quần-áo* (pants shirt) 'clothes', *đồng-hồ* (copper vase) 'watch, clock', *mùa-màng* (crop REDUP) 'crops', *chân trời* (foot sky) 'horizon', *cà chua* (eggplant sour) 'tomato', *người ở* (person live) 'servant', etc. [see 4.3.2.1]. A noun phrase [= nominal expression], on the other hand, involves a relationship of modification, with the head (or nuclear) constituent, a noun, modified by the other---called "modifier". A noun can be modified by a noun, a substitute, a locative (noun), a numeral, a verb, an adjective (= stative verb), a demonstrative, or even a "relative clause". Examples:

- NOUN-NOUN : *cân đường* 'kilogram of sugar', *lít sữa* 'liter of milk', *bát cơm* 'bowl of rice', *tách trà* 'cup of tea'; *gói thuốc lá* 'pack of cigarettes', *chuồng heo* (pen pig) 'pig sty'; *dàn chim* 'flock of birds', *tổp thợ* 'group of workers', *nải chuối* 'hand of bananas', *tóc mây* (hair cloud) 'cloud-like hair', *bò sữa Hà-lan* (Holland) 'Dutch milch cows', *làng Châu-khê* 'the village of Châu-khê'.
- NOUN-SUBSTITUTE : *làng tôi* 'my village', *trường nó* 'his/her school'.
- NOUN-LOCATIVE : *tầng trên* (storey space above) 'the upper floor', *môi dưới* (lip space below) 'the lower lip', *ngón giữa* (finger middle) 'the middle finger', *phía ngoài* (direction outside) 'the outside'.
- NOUN-NUMERAL : *lớp nhất* (grade first) 'top grade [in primary school]', *tháng năm* (month five) 'fifth lunar month, May', *bia ba* (cover three) 'inside back cover'.
- NOUN-VERB : *gà luộc* 'boiled chicken', *gà quay* 'barbecued chicken', *thịt tái* 'rare beef', *rau sống* 'raw vegetables', *chuyến về* 'the return trip', *cuộc đời vất-vả* (classifier life hard) 'rugged life', *xe-dạp mới* 'a new bicycle', *quần áo rẻ tiền* (pants coat cheap money) 'cheap clothes'.
- NOUN-DEMONSTRATIVE : *bà này* 'this lady', *ông ấy* 'that gentleman', *hôm kia* (day yonder) 'day before yesterday', *bữa nọ* (day that) 'one day'.
- NOUN-PREPOSITION-NOUN : *gà của mẹ* 'mom's chicken', *ước muôn* (wish want) *của tôi* 'my wishes', *thời-tiết ở Hà-nội* 'the weather in Hanoi', *bốn-phận đối với gia-dinh* 'duty towards one's family', but *anh tôi* 'my elder brother', *tay tôi* 'my hands', *cha [của] Nguyễn Du* 'Nguyễn Du's father', *nhà /bằng* 'by means of' / *gạch* 'brick house'.

*bưởi* [tù] *Biên-hoà* ‘grapefruit from Biên-hoà’, *sách* [cho] *Dự-bị Văn-khoa* ‘textbook for the “Classe Propédeutique” [Preparatory] Year of the College of Letters’.

- NOUN-RELATIVE CLAUSE : *chiếc đồng-hồ* [ (mà) *chú tôi vừa gửi cho tôi*] (which uncle me recently send give me) ‘the watch (which) my uncle just sent to me’, *chiếc áo* [ *mới may tuần trước*] (recently sew week before) ‘the dress just tailored last week’, *con dao* [ (mà) *anh cho tôi mượn*] (which you give me borrow) ‘the knife you lent me’.

8.1.1 In his early grammar of Vietnamese, Emeneau [1951: 84-85] provides the following schema of a (fairly complex) noun phrase:

“A numerated substantive phrase [= our NOUN PHRASE, NP] contains (1) a numerator [= our NUM], which precedes the noun with its classifier [= our N'], if it is a classified noun; or (2) a demonstrative numerator [= our DEM], which follows the noun with its classifier, if it is a classified noun; or (3) both a numerator and a demonstrative numerator.”

“If the noun in a numerated phrase is followed by an attribute [= our ATTRIBUTIVE] and a demonstrative numerator, they occur in that order, no matter what the length of the attribute may be.”

Thus, at the center of a NP, there is a head noun [N] surrounded by determiners, some of which precede N, and others follow it.

The preposed determiners are often single items that belong to those word classes with closed membership whereas the postposed determiners are quite a few and sometimes occur in combinations.

The preposed determiners, which express the idea of totality, or quantity, or a categorical, occur to the left of the head noun [N, position 0], in precise positions represented respectively by -3 (*tất cả* ‘all-all’), -2 (*năm* ‘five’), -1 (*chiếc* ‘CLASSIFIER’), vis-à-vis 0 (*áo-dài*) in the phrase *tất cả năm chiếc áo-dài* ‘all five dresses’. [*áo-dài* is a compound noun ‘upper garment + long’.]

The postposed determiners, which describe such attributive features as material, size, quality, possession, etc. occur to the right of the head noun, represented by +1 (*lụa*), +2 (*xanh*), +3 (*mới may tuần trước*), +5 (*của tôi*), respectively:

*tất cả / năm / chiếc / áo-dài / lụa / xanh / mới may tuần trước / của tôi*  
 (all-all five N' VN dress silk blue newly sew week past of me)  
 ‘all the five blue silk dresses of mine that were tailored last week’.

Compare the following three NPs containing a demonstrative in slot +4 in the boxed formula:

*hết thảy / các / bà / y-tá / già / ấy*

(all plural N' nurse old that)

'all those old nurses'

*sáu / ngôi / nhà / gạch / đó* (six N' house brick that)

'those six brick houses'

*cả / hai / cuốn / từ-diển / Việt-Anh / này / của nó*

(all two N' dictionary Viet-Engl this of he)

'both of these [two] Vietnamese-English dictionaries of his'

*tất-cả / những / đề-nghị / hợp-lý / đó / của / diên-giả*

(all plural suggestion logical that of speaker)

'all those logical recommendations by the speaker'

#### STRUCTURE OF THE NOUN PHRASE

-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
<i>tất-cả</i>	<i>năm</i>	<i>chiếc</i>	<i>áo-dài</i>	<i>lụa</i>	<i>xanh</i>	<i>mới</i>	<i>may</i>	<i>của tôi</i>
						<i>tuần</i>	<i>trước</i>	
<i>hết thảy</i>	<i>các</i>	<i>bà</i>	<i>y-tá</i>	<i>già</i>			<i>ấy</i>	
	<i>sáu</i>	<i>ngôi</i>	<i>nha</i>	<i>gach</i>			<i>đó</i>	
<i>cả</i>	<i>hai</i>	<i>cuốn</i>	<i>từ-diển</i>	<i>Viet-Anh</i>			<i>này</i>	<i>của nó</i>
<i>tất cả</i>	<i>những</i>	<i>đề-nghị</i>		<i>hợp-lý</i>			<i>đó</i>	<i>của X.</i>

#### 8.1.2 Position zero (0)

- A) A noun phrase (NP) may consist of a single noun filling the central slot 0, without any determiner preceding or following it, e. g. *chim* 'birds' in *Chim sa.* 'Birds sweep down.', *cá* 'fishes' in *Cá lặn.* 'Fishes dive.', *hoa* 'flowers' in *Hoa cười.* 'The flowers smile.', *du-dú* 'papayas' in *Đu-dú ngọt quá.* (sweet too) 'The papayas are so sweet.', *công-nhân* 'workers' in *Công-nhân đình-công rồi.* (stop-work already) 'The workers already went on strike.', *sinh-viên* 'college students' in *Sinh-viên đang bận thi.* (presently

busy exam) ‘The students are busy with their exams.’, etc. [Each NP serves as subject of a sentence.]

B) A noun phrase may also consist of a head noun surrounded by determiners. Thus the nuclear slot 0 may be filled by an item noun (p. 92), a collective noun (p. 92), an abstract noun (p. 94), or a locative (pp. 98-101). Which preposed or postposed determiner may occur depends on the subclass to which the head noun belongs. When the filler is an item noun, it may be surrounded by all the determiners, e.g.

*quả đu đủ chín này* (fruit papaya ripe this) ‘this ripe papaya’

*cả hai con chim sẻ đó* (all 2 N’ sparrow that) ‘both of those sparrows’

*mấy con cá nhỏ xíu này* (a few N’ fish small tiny this)

‘these few tiny fishes’

*sáu bông hoa hồng kia* ‘(6 N’ rose that) ‘those six roses over there’

*tất cả sáu mươi người công-nhân đó*

(all sixty N’ worker that) ‘all those sixty workers’

A collective noun like *quần-chúng* ‘the masses’, *nhân-loại* ‘mankind’ can take only such a quantifier as *toàn-thể* ‘the whole, the entire’: *toàn-thể nhân-loại hiếu-hoà* (love peace) ‘the whole peace-loving mankind’.

An abstract noun like *đề-nghị*, *ý-kien*, *quan-niệm*, etc. cannot be preceded by a N’ or by a unit noun: *tất cả những đề-nghị hợp-lý/ hợp-lý đó của diễn-giả* ‘all those logical recommendations by the speaker’.

A locative noun cannot be preceded by any determiner, and it can be followed only by a demonstrative specifier, as in *trên ấy* (space-above that) ‘up there’, *trong này* (inside this) ‘in here’, *trước kia* (space-in-front that) ‘formerly’, *sau này* (space-behind this) ‘from now on, later’.

Sometimes a categorical (or classifier, N’) may serve as the head, when the category involved is obvious: at the shoe store, when the customer says (1a) *Tôi không thích dôi này.* (pair this) ‘I don’t like this pair.’, the context tells us that the customer means (1) *Tôi không thích dôi giày này.* (pair shoe this). In other words, the classifier N’ *dôi* ‘pair’ in (1a) has assumed the role of the central N. Likewise, *dôi den = dôi giày den* (pair [shoe] black) ‘the pair of black shoes’.

### 8.1.3 Position -3

In slot -3, the outermost position, may occur such substitutes denoting totality (6.3.2.5) as *cả*, *tất cả*, *hết thảy*, *toàn-thể*, *toàn-bộ* ‘all, the whole

...., the entire ....' (the head noun is a collective noun like *quần-chúng* 'the masses', *nhân-loại* 'mankind', or an abstract noun like *dè-nghị* 'suggestion, recommendation', *ý-kien* 'idea, opinion', *quan-niệm* 'concept', as in the examples in 8.1.2B above).

*tòan-thể nhân-loại hiếu-hoà* 'the whole peace-loving mankind'

*tất cả những dè-nghị hợp-lí dó của diễn-giả*

'all those logical recommendations by the speaker'

#### 8.1.4 Position -2

The fillers in slot -2 can be:

- a cardinal numeral like *một* 'one', *hai* 'two', *ba* 'three', etc. or *vài*, *vài ba* 'a few', *đăm*, *đăm bảy* 'five or seven, several';
- a quantifying substitute like *bao nhiêu*, *mấy* 'how much, how many', *bấy nhiêu* 'this much, this many', *bấy nhiêu* 'that much, that many'; or
- a pluralizer like *các*, *những* 'the various', or *mỗi* 'every', *mỗi* 'each', *từng* 'each in turn', etc.

TOTAL	NUM	N'	N			DEM	POSSESS	
-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
<i>tất cả</i>	<i>tám</i>	<i>cái</i>	<i>ghế</i>	<i>máy</i>			<i>kia</i>	
	<i>máy</i>	<i>con</i>	<i>cá</i>		<i>nhỏ</i>	<i>xíu</i>	<i>này</i>	
	<i>sáu</i>	<i>bông</i>	<i>hoa hồng</i>		<i>tươi</i>	<i>mát</i>	<i>kia</i>	
	<i>60</i>	<i>người</i>	<i>công-nhân</i>				<i>dó</i>	
<i>hết thảy</i>	<i>các</i>	<i>bà</i>	<i>y-tá*</i>		<i>già</i>			
	<i>những</i>		<i>dè-nghị**</i>		<i>hợp-lí</i>	<i>dó</i>	<i>của X.</i>	

(all eight N' chair rattan yonder)

(a few N' fish small tiny this)

(six N' rose fresh-cool yonder)

(sixty N' worker that)

(all plural N' nurse old)

(plural suggestion rational that of X.)

\**bà y-tá* refers to an older nurse, as opposed to *cô y-tá*, which refers to a younger nurse (cf. the discussion of categorical nouns, N', or classifiers):

when the head noun refers to a person, the appropriate N' is one of those kinship terms used as honorific classifiers, age being a pertinent factor.

\*\**dè-nghị* is one of those non-classified nouns, so needs no N'.

*Note:* Cardinal numerals and pluralizers in -2 are mutually exclusive.

### 8.1.5 Position -1

The fillers in slot -1 can be:

- a classifier N' like *con* [for nouns denoting living things], *cái* [for nouns denoting non-living things], or *chiếc*, *đôi*, *quyển*, *cuốn*, *bức*, *ngôi*, *tấm*, *tờ*, *lá*, *cây*, *quả*, *ngọn*, *viên*, etc. [for nouns denoting inanimate things with specific shapes or other attributes] (see 5.1), e.g.  
*một con cá* ‘a fish’, *một cái ghế* ‘one chair, a chair’,  
*một chiếc giày* ‘a shoe’, *một đôi giày* ‘a pair of shoes’,  
*một quyển/cuốn sách* ‘a book’, *một bức tranh* ‘a painting’,  
*một ngôi nhà* ‘a house, a building’, *một tấm màn* ‘a curtain’,  
*một tờ giấy* ‘a sheet of paper’, *một lá cờ* ‘a flag’,  
*một cây nến* ‘a candle’, *một quả núi* ‘a mountain’,  
*một ngọn đồi* ‘a hill’, *một viên gạch* ‘a brick’
- a classifier N' like *người*, *ông*, *bà*, *cô*, *bác*, *cậu*, *anh*, *bắc*, *vị*, *viên*, *tên*, *gã*, *thằng*, etc. for nouns denoting persons in terms of age, sex, social rank, familiarity, etc., for example:  
*một người bạn* ‘a friend’, *một ông quan* ‘a mandarin’,  
*một bà hiệu-trưởng* ‘a school principal’, *một cô y tá* ‘a nurse’,  
*một bác nông-phu* ‘a farmer’, *một cậu học-sinh* ‘a schoolboy’,  
*một anh tài-xế* ‘a driver’, *một bậc hiền-tríết* ‘a philosopher’,  
*một vị anh-hùng* ‘a hero’, *một viên tri-huyện* ‘a district chief’,  
*một ông ăn-mày* ‘an old beggar’, *một tên giặc* ‘a rebel’,  
*một gã tiều-phu* ‘a woodsman’, *một thằng kẻ-trộm* ‘a burglar’
- a classifier N' for nouns denoting units of measurement like *thước*, *cân*, *mét*, *lít*, *tạ*, *mẫu*, *mớ*, *dúm*, etc. (see 5.1.3B). for example:  
*ba thước lụa* ‘three meters of silk’, *ba kí đường* ‘3 kilos of sugar’,  
*ba lít xăng* ‘3 liters of gasoline’, *ba tạ gạo* ‘3 quintals of rice’,  
*ba mẫu ruộng* ‘3 mows of ricefield’, *ba dúm muối* ‘3 pinches of salt’,  
*ba mớ rau cải* ‘3 bunches of mustard greens’, etc.

- a classifier N' for nouns denoting quantities held by specific containers or vessels like *nồi*, *bát*, *chảo*, *chén*, *cốc*, *tách*, *ly*, *thìa*, etc., for example:

*hai nồi cơm* ‘2 pot(ful)s of rice’, *ba bát cơm* ‘3 bowls of rice’,  
*một chảo mì xào* (noodle stir-fry) ‘a wok of stir-fried noodles’,  
*vài chén rượu* ‘a few cups of wine’, *hai cốc sữa* ‘two glasses of milk’,  
*một tách trà* ‘a cup of tea’, *một ly cà-phê sữa đá* (coffee milk ice)  
‘a glass of iced coffee with condensed milk’,  
*bốn thìa nước mắm* (liquid salted-fish) ‘four spoonfuls of fish sauce’  
*mấy muỗng bột ngọt* (powder sweet) ‘a few spoonfuls of MSG’, etc.

Cf. noun phrases referring to individual utensils, pots and pans, cups and glasses: *hai cái nồi* ‘two pots’, *ba cái bát* ‘three eating bowls’, *một cái chảo* ‘a wok’, *vài cái chén* ‘a few cups’, *hai cái cốc* ‘two (empty) glasses’, *một cái tách* ‘a coffee cup’, *một cái ly* ‘an (empty) glass’, *bốn cái thìa/muỗng* ‘four spoons’.

There may also be a separate slot that immediately precedes -1 (N'), which merits some discussion. Its only filler is *cái*, which occurs within the nominal expression thus: *cái + N' + N + DEM*.

When discussing this lexeme in detail in his monograph devoted to the NP, Nguyễn Tài Cẩn [1975b: 239-250] gives the following examples:

<i>cái chiếc</i> (single piece)	<i>bàn này</i>	‘this table’
<i>cái quả</i> (fruit)	<i>núi này</i>	‘this mountain’
<i>cái cây</i> (tree)	<i>bút này</i>	‘this pen’
<i>cái bức</i> (panel)	<i>thư này</i>	‘this letter’

in which the element *cái* serves to emphasize and individualize the particular object which is talked about. Before him, grammarians have also pointed out that this “article” *cái* “serves to explain more clearly or to reinforce the meaning of a noun” [Trần, Phạm & Bùi 1943: 52].

About this lexeme, which had been called “definite article” [Trương Vĩnh Tống 1932: 23] and even “superarticle” [Bulteau 1953: 21], the three co-authors cited above add that it serves “to attract the reader’s attention to the head noun” as in

*Việc này lôi-thôi lắm.* ‘This business is very embarrassing.’

*Cái việc này lôi-thôi lắm.* ‘This particular business is very embarrassing.’ [Trần, Phạm & Bùi 1943: 52]

To Lê Văn Lý [1960], *cái* in this usage has “the value of a ‘definite’ or ‘demonstrative’ word” as in

*Cái con dao anh cho tôi mượn, nó thật sắc.*

(*cái* living thing knife you give me borrow, it real sharp)

‘The knife (which) you lent me is really sharp.’

*Cái người thợ may đến sáng ngày đâu rồi?*

(*cái* person artisan sew arrive morning day, where already)

‘Where is the tailor who came this morning?’

*Cái con ngựa ấy chạy nhanh thật.*

(*cái* living thing horse that, run fast real)

‘That horse over there runs really fast.’ [1960: 213]

Indeed the role of this polyvalent lexeme *cái* is to individualize, to single out a particular item---denoted by a classified noun---(*cái cuốn sách này* ‘this book here’), or a particular conventional unit (*cái lít sữa này* ‘this liter of milk’), or even a particular kind of material---denoted by a mass noun (*cái mực này* ‘this ink’).

Moreover, when preceding the appropriate “special classifier”, this “extra” general classifier adds---with the help of intonation---a pejorative connotation to such utterances as the examples given on p. 96:

*Cái ông giáo-sư tóc bạc đó có ba bà vợ rồi đây.*

(*cái* man teacher hair silver that have three woman wife already there)

‘That white-haired teacher over there has (no less than) three wives.’

*Cái thằng chồng em nó chẳng ra gì.*

(*cái* guy husband younger-sibling he not turn-out anything)

‘That husband of mine is good for nothing.’

*Note:* The “restrictive” elements to the left of the head noun are content words, which often occur singly and can be listed exhaustively, whereas each of those “descriptive” elements that follow the head noun belongs to an open class and sometimes can itself occur as the head of a short phrase .

### 8.1.6 Positions +1, +2 and +3

As shown in the box below, the positions to the right of the central position (0), occupied by the nuclear or head noun, can be filled by nouns, funtive verbs, stative verbs, substitutes or numerals, that describe various attributes of the head noun, for example material, color, size, quality,

order, demonstrative, possession. Before slot +4 (DEM), the three slots +1, +2 and +3 perform their own functions.

-1 N'	0 N	+1 MATERIAL SIZE	+2 COLOR	+3 OTHER ATTRIB	+4 DEM	+5 POSSESS
(1) <i>chiếc</i>	<i>áo-dài</i>	<i>lụa</i>	<i>xanh</i>	<i>mới may</i>	<i>này</i>	<i>của tôi</i>
(2) <i>cái</i>	<i>ghế</i>	<i>mây</i>		<i>mới mua</i>	<i>ấy</i>	
(3) <i>ngôi</i>	<i>nhà</i>	<i>gạch</i>	<i>to-tường</i>	<i>ba nóc vừa</i> <i>mới tết</i>		
(4)	<i>canh</i>	<i>năm</i>				
(5)	<i>huyện</i>				<i>đó</i>	
(6) <i>ông</i>	<i>huyện</i>				<i>đó</i>	
(7)	<i>nơi</i>			<i>tôi ra đời</i>		
(8)	<i>khi</i>			<i>mẹ tôi mất</i>		
(9) <i>cậu</i>	<i>sinh-viên</i>			<i>anh gặp hóm nọ</i>		

In example (1), slot +1 is filled by *lụa* ‘silk’, a noun denoting material. Slot +2 is filled by *xanh* ‘blue, green’, an adjective denoting color. Slot +3 is filled by *mới may* ‘recently tailored’--- a (reduced) determinative clause.

#### 8.1.7 Positions +4 and +5

If we include slots +4 (*này* ‘this’) and +5 (*của tôi* ‘of mine’), we have a nominal phrase in which every position is filled:

- (1) *chiếc / áo-dài / lụa / xanh / mới may / này / của tôi*

‘this newly-tailored blue silk dress of mine’

Example (2) does not have anything in slot +2 or slot +5. Slot +1 is filled by *mây* ‘rattan’, a noun denoting material. The filler in slot +3, *mới mua*, means ‘(which someone) recently purchased’, and we have :

- (2) *cái / ghế / mây / mới mua / ấy* ‘that newly bought rattan chair’

In example (3), the head noun *nhà* ‘house’ is preceded by its classifier *ngôi* ‘edifice, throne’ in the N’ slot, and followed by three descriptive qualifiers:

the noun *gạch* ‘brick’ denoting material (slot +1), the adjective *to-tuồng* ‘huge’ describing size (slot +2), and a further attributive *ba nó vừa mua tậu* (dad he just recently buy) ‘[that] his dad just bought’, which is the equivalent of a reduced (embedded) relative clause in English.

As a matter of fact, the connective *mà* was needed in the early 20th century to translate the “relative pronoun” *qui*, *que*, *dont*, *où* in French. This usage is considered artificial [Bulteau 1953: 197; Nguyễn Quí-Hùng 1965: 426-427] since normally in both the spoken and written forms the use of this item is not obligatory:

- (3) *ngôi / nhà / gạch / to-tuồng / [mà] ba nó vừa mua tậu*

‘the huge brick house [which] his father just bought’

The short noun phrase in example (4) consists of a non-classified time noun *canh* ‘night watch--one of the five segments of a night reckoned in rural Vietnam’ followed by the (ordinal) numeral *thứ năm* ‘fifth’ : *canh thứ năm* > *canh năm* means ‘the fifth watch’.

In modern usage, *năm giờ* means ‘5 o’clock’ --- and also ‘five hours’ (cf. the expression *giờ thứ năm* [hour fifth] used in the 19th century for ‘5 o’clock’ [see 5.3.2], but nowadays only for ‘the fifth hour’).

Example (5) is another short noun phrase made up of *huyện* ‘district’, a non-classified noun denoting an administrative unit, followed by *dó* ‘that’, a demonstrative: *huyện dó* ‘that district’. [Fillers of slot +4 are demonstratives (DEM) *này*, *ấy*, *dó*, *kia*, *nó*.]

In example (6), however, the central noun *huyện* means ‘district chief’ instead, so is preceded by the “polite” classifier (N') *ông* ‘grandfather; gentleman’, reserved for officeholders: *ông huyện dó* ‘that district chief’.

Examples (7), (8) and (9) share the same structure as examples (1), (2) and (3). Their respective meanings are *nơi << tôi ra đời >>* (place I go-out world) ‘the place (where) I was born’, *khi << mẹ tôi mất >>* (time mother me lost) ‘the time (when) my mother died’, *cậu sinh-viên << anh gặp hôm nọ >>* (boy student you meet day other) ‘the student (whom) you met the other day’.

Compare the attributive in examples (1) and (2):

- (1) *chiếc / áo-dài / lụa / xanh <mới may>*,

where the determinative *mới may* means ‘which somebody recently made’---another reduced “relative clause” serving to modify the head noun *áo-dài*;

(2) *cái / ghế / mây < mới mua >*,

where the determinative *mới mua* means ‘which somebody has recently purchased’---another reduced “relative clause” serving to modify the head noun *ghế*.

Thus the connective (= preposition) *mà*, optionally used only when the head noun is followed by several modifiers, has been erroneously treated as a “relative pronoun” [Trần, Phạm & Bùi 1943: 193], e.g.

(7) *nơi << tôi ra đời >> = nơi (mà) tôi ra đời* ‘the place where I was born’

(8) *khi << mẹ tôi mất >> = khi (mà) mẹ tôi mất* ‘(the time) when my mother died’

(9) *cậu sinh-viên << anh gặp hôm nọ >> = cậu sinh-viên (mà) anh gặp hôm nọ* ‘the student (whom) you met the other day’

(10) *người << tôi kính-trọng nhất >> = người (mà) tôi kính-trọng nhất* ‘the person (whom) I respect most’

(11) *cái con dao << anh cho tôi mượn >> = cái con dao (mà) anh cho tôi mượn* ‘the knife (which) you lent me’

[This and the following example are from Lê Văn Lý (1960: 213).]

(12) *cái người thợ may << đến sáng ngày >> = cái người thợ may (mà) đến sáng ngày* ‘the tailor who came this morning’

(13) *chiếc ô-tô << cảnh-sát khám thấy ma-tuy >> = chiếc ô-tô (trong đó) cảnh-sát khám thấy ma-tuy* ‘the car in which the police (searched and) found drugs’

(14) *chính-sách << vì đó Pháp mất mặt >>* ‘the policy because of which France lost face’

The last two examples (13) and (14) use a compound connective (respectively, *trong đó* ‘in that place, in there, wherein’, and *vì đó* ‘because of that’) to express the relationship between the embedded clause and the antecedent of the relevant connective (respectively *ô-tô* ‘car’ and *chính-sách* ‘policy’).

Sentence (14) can also be paraphrased as (14a) *cái chính-sách << (mà) đã khiến Pháp mất mặt >>* (cái policy which ANTERIOR cause France lose face) ‘the policy which caused France to lose face’.

When the determinative clause (in slot +3) denotes the agent of the action which affects the head noun, the connective *đó* is used, as in

- (15) *một phái đoàn << do Giáo-sư NXY cầm đầu >>*

(one delegation by professor NXY hold head)

'a delegation led by Professor NXY'

Slot +5 can be filled by a prepositional phrase that contains a connective like *của* 'of', *về* 'about', *đến* 'concerning', *cho* 'for', followed by its object---a noun phrase.

The connective (or preposition) *của* (7.2.1) links a complement to the head noun, as in *sách của tôi* 'my book(s)'. But when the possessive relationship is obvious, it may be omitted, as in *cô tôi* (aunt I/me) 'my aunt', *tóc mẹ* (hair mother) 'Mom's hair', *chân bàn* (leg table) 'table leg', *lưng ghế* (back chair) 'chair back', *cửa sông* (mouth river) 'estuary', etc. And when there is a verb immediately in front of it, then *của* must be used: *bố yêu của con* 'my dear daddy', *ý muốn của chúng tôi* 'our wish', *nhiều vui của họ-hàng* 'the joy of relatives', *tiếng nói của lương-tâm* 'the voice of one's conscience', etc.

The connective *của* can replace *do* when the idea of ownership is apparent within the (embedded) determinative clause, e.g.

- (16) *quyển từ-dictionaries [của / do tôi soạn]* (N' dictionary of/by I compile)

'the dictionary which I compiled'

- (17) *cây ổi / của anh Hiền trồng năm kia*

(tree guava of brother Hiền plant year yonder)

'the guava tree which Brother Hiền planted the year before last'.

In the next chapter we will see that *của* is also used as a connective in a verb phrase (to introduce what is the source of a gift or a loan).

## Chapter 9

### The Verb Phrase

#### 9.0 The verb phrase (động-ngữ)

Like the structure of a noun phrase (NP), the makeup of a verb phrase (VP) consists of a central position and a number of slots preceding and following that central position. The central or nuclear position (slot 0) may be occupied by a single verb (V), or by a verb surrounded by determiners which occur in several positions to the left and to the right of that head verb.

The nature of each of the various verb classes (6.1.3) affects the structure of a particular verb phrase. For instance, while *Nó chạy* is a complete utterance meaning ‘He runs, He jogs.’, *Tôi tưởng* ‘I thought wrongly.’ is an incomplete sentence, unless it can be expanded into *Tôi tưởng (rằng) nó vẫn chạy* (I thought that he still run) ‘I was under the impression that he is still jogging (these days).’ Such utterances as \**Nó chạy rằng*, or \**Nó rất chạy*, are ungrammatical, as opposed to *Nó rất mệt*, a well-formed sentence containing a stative verb and meaning ‘He is very tired.’

In Chapter 6, we have learned that *chạy* ‘to run’ is an intransitive verb (6.1.3.1), that *tưởng* is a “quotative” verb of thinking whose complement is introduced by *rằng* ‘that’ (6.1.3.7), and that only stative verbs (like *mệt*) and verbs denoting psychological states (like *yêu* ‘to love’, *thích* ‘to like’) can be preceded by *rất* ‘very’---a degree marker. On the other hand, verbs denoting an activity like *chạy* ‘to run’, *đi* ‘to walk’, *đứng* ‘to stand’, *nói* ‘to speak’, *hỏi* ‘to ask’ do not take a degree marker.

Also, a linking verb denoting change (like *hoá*, *thành* ‘to become’) (6.1.3.4) cannot occur without a complement whereas a verb of existence (like *có* ‘to exist’, *còn* ‘to remain’) (6.1.3.3) can occur with or without an object --- or subject.

We will now look at the various determiners, first those occurring to the left, then those occurring to the right of the head verb.

**9.1 Preverbs.** The determiners that precede the head verb could be called “preverbs”. Below are examples of preverb subclasses.

**9.1.1. Preverbs** may be adverbs that denote the following aspects :

9.1.1.1. confirmation: *có* ‘do, does, did’ in *Tôi có trả lời rồi*. (I EMPHATIC pay words already) ‘I did answer [the invitation].’ (7.1.2.3); *chỉ* ‘only’ in *Nó chỉ nói thôi*. (he only talk stop) ‘He only talks.’

9.1.1.2. negation: *không*, *chẳng*, *chả* ‘not’ in *Tôi không / chẳng / chả thích*. ‘I don’t like [it].’; *chưa* ‘not yet’ in *Họ chưa trả lời*. ‘They haven’t answered yet.’ (7.1.2.3)

9.1.1.3. tense: *dang* ‘in the process of’, *dã* ‘anterior’, *sẽ* ‘future’, *sắp* ‘immediate future’, *vừa mới* ‘recent past’, *từng* ‘experience’ in *dang ăn* ‘is eating’, *dã đến rồi* ‘already arrived’, *sẽ mua* ‘will buy’, *sắp (sứa)* *lấy vợ* (about to take wife) ‘will get married soon’, *vừa mới bán* ‘just sold (recently)’, *từng ở Nữu-Uốc = Niu-Oóc* (experience reside New York) ‘has lived in New York’. (7.1.2.4A through G)

9.1.1.4. time: *hay* ‘often’ in *hay ăn chóng lớn* ‘[of infant] to eat often and grow fast’; *nắng* ‘frequently’ in *nắng đi nắng lại* (*đi* ‘go’, *lại* ‘come’) ‘to frequent’; *thường* ‘generally’ in *thường dùng xe điện* (use vehicle electric) ‘usually takes the streetcar’; *bỗng* ‘suddenly, unexpectedly’ in *Trời bỗng mưa to* (sky suddenly rain big) ‘It suddenly rained hard.’; *chợt* ‘suddenly, unexpectedly’ in *Em* (younger sister) *chợt đến* (arrive), *chợt đi* (go) ‘You come and go just like that.’; *thỉnh-thoảng* ‘now and then’ in *Tôi thỉnh-thoảng mới gặp anh ấy* (only-then meet young man that) ‘I see him once in a while.’; *lâu-lâu* (long REDUPLICATION) ‘every now and then’ in *Cô ấy* (young woman that) *lâu-lâu mới viết thư* (only-then write letter). ‘She only writes once in a blue moon.’, etc.

9.1.1.5. comparison, uniformity and continuity : *cũng* ‘likewise, too, also’ in *cũng thích mì* ‘also likes noodles’, *cũng không thích mì* (likewise not like noodle) ‘does not like noodles either’; *đều* ‘equally’ in (*cũng*) *đều thích món phở* (likewise equally like dish phở) ‘[they] all like beef noodle soup’; *cùng* ‘together’ in *cùng học một trường* (together study one school) ‘[they] study at the same school’; *vẫn* ‘still’, *cứ* ‘continues to’, and *còn* ‘still’ occurring in combination in *vẫn cứ ngủ* ‘went on sleeping’, *vẫn cứ hút thuốc lá* ‘continues to smoke cigarettes [despite

warning]', *hãy còn đang ngủ* 'is still asleep', *vẫn còn uống rượu* 'is still drinking alcohol' (7.1.2.2A through C).

9.1.1.6. recurrence or resumption: *lại* 'again' in *Trời lại mưa nữa* (sky again rain additional) 'It is raining again', *Họ nghỉ một lúc rồi lại làm* (they rest one moment then again work) 'They rested a moment, then resumed working', *Mẹ đã bảo không được ăn kẹo, sao con lại cứ ăn?* (mother ANTERIOR say not allowed eat candy, how child contrary-to-expectation continue eat) '[mother speaking to child] I told you not to eat candy, why did you go ahead and do it (despite my warning)?' (7.1.2.2D).

9.1.1.7. order or prohibition: *hãy* 'exhortative' in *Hãy nín đi!* (EXHORTATIVE stop-crying IMPERATIVE) 'Stop crying!'; *chớ* or *đừng* 'prohibitive' in *Chớ (cố) uống rượu!* (PROHIBITIVE EMPHATIC drink alcohol) 'Don't (you) drink alcohol.' *Đừng quên lời mẹ dặn!* (PROHIBITIVE forget words mother advise) 'Don't forget what Mom told you.' (7.1.2.5).

9.1.2. Preverbs may be auxiliary verbs denoting possibility, probability, ability or volition. Examples are:

*có thể* '(have ability) 'can, may' in *có thể làm nổi* (do capable) 'can do it'; *chịu* 'suffer, undergo' in *chịu thua* (lose) 'conceded defeat'; *định* 'intend' in *định học luật* (study law) 'plans to study law'; *toan, tính* 'plan' in *Tôi toan/tính qua nhà Bác Cả chơi.* (go-over house uncle big play) 'I thought of going to First Uncle's house for a visit.'; *dám* 'dare' in *Cháu không dám hỏi chú* (nephew/niece not dare ask younger paternal uncle) '[child to uncle] I did not dare ask you.'; *dành* 'be resigned to' in *Ông ấy đành bỏ cả tủ sách lại.* (gentleman that resign leave all closet-book behind) 'He reluctantly left his entire library behind.'; *nỡ* 'have the heart to' in *Sao anh nỡ bỏ em?* (how elder brother be as cruel as drop younger sister) '(Darling) how can you have the heart to abandon me?'; *muốn* 'want' in *Anh ấy không muốn làm như thế, nhưng ....* (fellow that not want act like so, but ...) 'He did not want to act that way, but .....'; *cần* 'need' in *Con cần suy-nghĩ thêm.* (child need think-think add) 'You need to think it over.'; *phải* 'must, have to' in *Tôi phải rời khỏi nơi này.* (I must leave away-from place this) 'I must leave this place.'; *nên* 'should' in *Em nên nghe chị.* (younger sibling should listen to elder sister) '[older sister to younger sister] You had better listen to me.'; *quyết* 'resolve, be

determined' in *Chàng quyết (chí) phục-thù cho cha* (he resolve will avenge for father). 'He resolved to avenge his father.' etc.

**9.1.3.** Preverbs may be degree markers that help identify stative verbs or adjectives: *rất* 'very, quite', *khá* 'rather, pretty', *khí* 'a little too ....', *hơi* 'a little', *quá* 'excessively', etc. (9.7.2.2) These same markers may also precede verbs of feeling and knowing like *yêu* 'to love', *thích* 'to like', *ghét* 'to hate', *nhớ* 'to miss', *sợ* 'to fear', *mê* 'to love passionately' (*rất yêu*, *rất thích*, *rất ghét*, *rất nhớ*, *quá yêu*, *quá sợ*, *quá mê*, etc.).

**9.1.4.** Preverbs may also be some fixed expressions like *càng ... càng* .... 'more and more' as in *càng nghe càng thích* 'the more I listen, the more I like it.'; [*càng*] *ngày càng* .... 'more ..... every day' as in [*càng*] *ngày càng lớn mạnh* 'grows bigger and stronger every day'; *mỗi ngày một* .... 'more .... each day' as in *mỗi ngày một tiến-bộ* 'more progressive each day'.

**9.2** The relative positions of preverbs. The determiners that precede the head verb occur in specific order. The table below shows the relative positions of some frequently used preverbs:

POSITIONS OF PREVERBS

<i>cũng</i>	<i>đều</i>	<i>vẫn</i>	<i>sẽ</i>	<i>rất</i>	<i>không</i>	<i>hay</i>	
<i>còn</i>	<i>đang</i>				<i>chẳng</i>	<i>năng</i>	
<i>đã</i>					<i>chỉ</i>		
<i>vừa</i>					<i>chưa</i>		
<i>mới</i>							
<hr/>							
<i>hay</i>							
<i>chờ</i>							
<i>đứng</i>							
							<b>HEAD</b>
							<b>VERB</b>

Some preverbs are difficult to classify, but roughly speaking, those which are farthest from the head verb show tense, time, etc., and those marking negation and prohibition tend to come closer to the head verb. As already mentioned in 7.1.3, efforts have been made to examine possible sequences and co-occurrences [Nguyễn Kim-Thản 1963 & 1975; Thomas 1981]. The negators *không*, *chẳng*, *chả* 'not', *chưa* 'not yet', *chớ* and *dừng* 'do not', for instance, are mutually exclusive. So are *đã* 'anterior' and *vẫn* 'still', although *đã* may appear after *cũng* 'also' or *đều* 'all'.

In addition to several possible sequences listed in 7.1.3, we can mention that in modern journalistic style one interesting construction includes all three "tense markers" *đã*, *dang* and *sẽ* in that order:

*Chúng tôi đã, đang và sẽ giúp các bạn đẩy lui nạn nghèo-khổ và đói-nát.*

(we exclusive ANTERIOR PRESENT and FUTURE help plural friend push retreat disaster poor-poor and ignorant-ignorant)

'We have helped you, we are helping you, and we will help you push back the scourge of poverty and ignorance.'

The pair of adverbs *vẫn* and *thường* 'usually, habitually' may co-occur, and it is reversible: *Tôi vẫn thường = thường vẫn tập bơi vào buổi sáng*. (I usually practice swim enter half-day morning) 'I usually practice swimming in the morning.'

**9.3 Postverbs.** The determiners that follow the head verb could be called "postverbs". They present a more varied picture, particularly with regard to various objects or complements that a member of one given verb subclass calls for. There are three possibilities: either the complement must immediately follow the head verb, or it may require a connective, or the situation may be indifferent.

#### 9.3.1. There is no connective:

A. The verb is transitive and takes a direct object as in *ăn cơm* 'ate dinner', *học bài* 'studied the lesson', *đánh Pháp đuổi Nhật* 'fight the French and expel the Japanese' [Vietminh slogan], *trồng cây gậy rừng* 'plant trees and start forests', *viết sách* 'wrote a book', *mặc áo* 'wears a shirt', *giết vợ* 'killed his wife', *thích mùa thu* (season autumn) 'likes autumn', *sợ lạnh* 'fears the cold weather',  *yêu nước* 'loves one's country', *tặng bạn* 'presents [something] to one's friend', *viết bút chì*

'writes in pencil', *nhan tién* 'received money', *vay tién* 'borrowed money', *mượn dao* 'borrowed a knife', *bị tên* 'was hit by an arrow', *phải lòng* 'fell in love with', etc.

B. The verb of motion takes a complement which denotes a goal, a destination as in *đến trường* 'reached the school', *đi chợ* 'went to the market', *về nước* 'went back (to one's) home (country)', *sang Thái-lan* 'went over to Thailand', *qua cầu* 'crossed the bridge', *lên phòng ngủ trên gác* (ascend room-sleep space-above upper-floor) 'went up to the bedroom upstairs', *lên Đà-lạt* 'went up to Dalat', *xuống ga-ra* 'went down to the garage,' *ra thư-viện* (go out library) 'went out to the library', *ra Hà-nội* (go out Hanoi) 'went up to Hanoi [from further south]', *vào phòng tắm* (enter room bathe) 'went into the bathroom', *vào Huế* (enter Hué) 'went down to Hué [from further north]', etc.

C. The situational complement denotes state, manner, frequency, scope, result, as in *nằm đất* 'lay on the floor', *ngủ màn* 'slept under a mosquito net', *ăn chậm* 'eats slowly', *kêu to* 'shouts loudly', *ăn no* 'ate until full', *tô hồng* 'painted it red', *ra ngoại-quốc mấy lần* (go out foreign country a few time) 'went abroad several times', *tắm một cái* (bathe one time) 'took a bath', *đến trước* (arrive before) 'arrived first', *về nhì* (return second) 'came second in the race', *chôn sống* 'buries alive', *Tù-Hải chết đứng*. 'Tù Hải died standing', *tìm ngược tìm xuôi* (look upstream look downstream) 'hunted far and near', *ở hai tháng* 'stayed two months', *mua năm* 'subscribed annually', etc.

D. The coverb denotes result, direction or orientation, as in *nghe thấy* (listen perceive) 'heard [sound]', *kiếm ra* (search out) 'found', *tìm thấy* (look find) 'found [a lost object]', *tạo nên* (create result) 'created', *thuê được nhà rẻ* (rent gain house cheap) 'was able to rent a cheap house', *lấy phải vợ xấu* (take suffer wife ugly) 'married an ugly wife', *giẫm phải gai* (step suffer thorn) 'stepped on a thorn', *chạy ra chạy vào* (run exit run enter) 'runs in and out', *gửi về* (send return) 'sent back', *cấp cho* (grant give) 'grants to, gives to', *ôm lấy đứa bé* (embrace take classifier small) 'hugged the child', etc.

E. The complement denotes causality, as in *chết bệnh* 'died of illness', *chết đói* 'died of hunger, starved to death', *chết bom* 'died in a bomb raid', *chết đạn* 'died of a bullet', *chết rét* 'died of cold', etc.

F. The complement is a postposed adverb like *lắm* 'much' (*ăn lắm* 'ate a lot'), *quá* 'too, excessively' (*làm quá* 'worked too hard'), *nữa* 'again, more, further' (*làm nữa* 'did it again'), *rồi* 'already' (*lấy rồi* 'took it already'), *nốt* 'finish up' (*dịch nốt* 'finished the translation'), *ngay* 'right away' (*viết ngay* 'wrote it right away'), *liền* 'immediately' (*làm liền* 'did it right away'), *hắn* 'definitively' (*bỏ hắn* 'gave up entirely'), *đã* 'first' (*nghỉ đã* 'rest first'), *hẳng* 'first' (*ăn cơm hẳng* 'eat dinner first'), *luôn* 'often; immediately; to a full extent' (*nói luôn* 'talks incessantly', *sẵn có dịp, lên luôn Đà-lạt* (available exist opportunity ascend right away Dalat) 'took advantage of a chance to go up to Dalat'), *mãi / hoài* 'continually, on and on' (*khóc mãi / hoài* 'kept on crying'), *dần* 'gradually' (*uống dần* 'drinks little by little'), etc.

[The reduplicated forms of the last three terms---*luôn luôn* 'constantly', *mãi mãi* 'for ever', and *dần dần* 'gradually---are movable adverbs like *tuyệt* 'super', *quá* 'too, excessively, so', *hết sức* 'utterly', *vô cùng* 'extremely': they may either precede or follow the head verb.]

G. The complement denotes denial, prohibition or failure to notice, with such verbs as *tù-chối* 'to refuse', *bác-bỏ* 'to reject', *cự-tuyệt* 'to turn down' (*tù-chối [không cho] tăng lương* 'refuse not give increase salary'---'denied [somebody] a raise'), *cấm* 'to forbid', *ngăn-cản* 'to prevent' (*cấm [không được] hút thuốc lá* 'forbid not get suck drug-leaf'---'prohibited [somebody] from smoking', *ngăn-cản không cho vào thư-viên* 'prevent-stop not allow enter library'---'stopped [somebody] from entering the library'), *quên* 'to forget' (*quên [không] ghi vào sổ địa-chi* 'forget not note enter book address'---'forgot to write it down in the address book').

[Under French rule, one sign often found in the capital city of Hanoi spelled out CAM KHONG DUOC DAI (the grammatical equivalent of DEFENSE D'URINER). Lý Toét, a cartoon character from the countryside, read the four romanized words the way he was taught to read Chinese characters---from right to left---and argued with the *agent de police* that at that particular wall people "can pass water (since) there was no forbidding": *đái được không cấm!* The gendarmerie should have made the sign read unambiguously CAM DAI.]

### 9.3.2. There must be a connective:

A. The complement indicates accompaniment, association or opposition, as in *ở nhà với mẹ* 'stays home with his mother'; *học với ông*

*Carjat* 'studied with Mr. Carjat'; *nói với bạn* 'speaks to one's friend'; *đến với đồng-bào* 'comes to one's countrymen'; *trở về với Tổ-quốc* (turn return with fatherland) 'returns to one's fatherland'; *tuyên-bố với cử-trí* 'announced to the electorate'; *vui-thú với vợ-con* 'enjoys home life with his wife and kids'; *trái với nguyên-tắc* 'contrary to the principle', *thành-công với hai bàn tay trắng* 'succeeded with two (hand white) empty hands', *Trường Chu Văn An đấu với Nguyễn Trãi*. 'Chu Văn An High School (fight with) is playing against Nguyễn Trãi.', etc.

B. The complement indicates an objective to pursue: *ăn cho no* 'ate until one is full'; *kiếm cho ra, kiếm bằng được* (search until out, search equal obtain) 'try to find it at all costs'; *lấy cho kỳ/bằng được* (marry until equal obtain) 'married [her] at all costs'.

Such a construction as *Lấy bút chì màu* (pen-lead color) *mà vẽ*! 'Use a color pencil to draw [it]!' or *Lấy xe đạp của bố* (bike property dad) *mà đi chợ!* 'Use daddy's bike to go to market!' employs the connective *mà* with the meaning '(in order to)' following an (imperative) predication which contains the "disposal verb" *lấy* 'to take, use'.

Note: Some compound idioms exist without the connective: *nói dừa* 'said jokingly', (*bốn món*) *ăn chơi* (four dish eat play) 'the four assorted appetizers' [cf. Fr. *amuse-gueules*].

C. The complement indicates the second term of a simile: *ăn như bò ngón cỏ* (eat like ox gulp grass) 'to eat gluttonously', *làm như bốn* 'to do easily as in play', *đẻ như thỏ* 'to reproduce like rabbits', etc.

D. The object of the connective *của* is the source of a gift, a loan, when it follows a verb of taking, borrowing, stealing, seizing, etc., as in *lấy của ông nội nhiều tiền* (take property grandfather-inner much money) 'took a lot of money from his paternal grandfather'; *vay của bà hàng xóm* (borrow property lady-hamlet one bowl sugar) 'borrowed a bowl of sugar from the lady next door'; *mượn của thư viện hai cuốn tiểu-thuyết* (borrow property book-house two roll novel) 'borrowed two novels from the library'; *năm 1862 Pháp chiếm của Việt-nam ba tỉnh miền đông* (year 1862 France seize property Vietnam three province region east) 'in 1862 France seized the three eastern provinces of Vietnam'.

E. The complement indicates location, point of departure or focus: *làm việc ở ngay thủ đô* 'works right in the capital city', *ở Nha-trang ra* (live

Nhatrang exit) 'came up from Nha-trang', *xây-dựng tại Hải-phòng* 'builds in Hải-phòng' (cf. *xây-dựng Hải-phòng* 'builds up Hải-phòng'), *phát-triển ở miền duyên-hải* 'develops in the coastal area' (cf. *phát-triển miền duyên-hải* 'develops the coastal area'), *tin ở sự ủng-hộ của quần-chúng* 'believed in the support of the masses'.

F. The complement indicates motivation: *ra tranh-cử vì quyền-lợi cá-nhân* (exit run-election because of interests individual) 'ran (in the election) because of personal interests', *lừa em ruột vì/tại tham cùa* (dupe younger sibling innards because of covet property) 'cheated his own sibling because of greed', *làm việc vì lợi-ích chung* (do job because of usefulness common) 'works for the sake of the common good'.

G. The complement indicates the topic presented or discussed: *nói chuyện về truyền-nôm* (talk-story about tale vernacular) 'spoke about the narratives in nôm verse', *thảo-luân về thơ lục-bát* (discuss about poetry six-eight) 'discussed poetry in the lục-bát meter'.

H. The complement indicates attention or concern: *để ý đến* (place mind reach) 'pays attention to', *chú-ý tối* (concentrate reach) 'concentrates on', *chả dèm-ngó gì đến việc học của con-cái* (not glance-look whatever reach business study property children) 'never takes a look at his kids' schoolwork'.

I. The complement indicates some reason: *bỏ nhà ra đi tại cô vợ kinh-khủng đó* (leave house exit go because of classifier wife terrible that) 'left home because of that terrible wife of his'; *thất-bại tại cái chính-sách bất-nhất đó* (fail because of classifier policy not-one that) 'failed because of that inconsistent policy', *Kế-hoạch đổ vỡ là tại chúng nó.* (plan tumble-break be because group-he) 'The plan collapsed because of them.'

J. The complement indicates an origin: *giành độc-lập từ tay người Pháp* (wrest single-stand from hand person France) 'wrested independence from the French', *sửa từ đầu đến cuối* (correct from head to end) 'to revise from beginning to end'; *thốt tự trong đáy lòng* (utter from inside bottom heart) 'to express [feeling] from the bottom of one's heart'.

K. The complement indicates the beneficiary: *nấu cho lũ con* (cook give band child) 'to cook for one's children', *chế-tạo cho người già* (make-create give person old) 'to manufacture for the benefit of older people', *viết*

*cho bậc tiểu-học* (write give level small-study) ‘to write [books] for the primary level’.

L. The complement indicates some purpose: *sống để hưởng-thụ* (live in order to enjoy) ‘lives to enjoy things’, *ra tranh-cử để phục-vụ đồng-bào* (exit run in order to serve compatriot) ‘ran (in the election) in order to serve his countrymen’.

M. The complement indicates the origin of an action or an attitude: *do bốn phía đánh vào* (originate four side strike enter) ‘attacked from four directions’, *do óc kỳ-thị* (originate brain discriminate) ‘because of discrimination’, *do trí-thức lãnh-dạo* (originate intellectual lead) ‘led by intellectuals’ [this preferred to *lãnh-dạo bởi trí-thức*, translationese for the French construction containing the preposition *par* ‘by’; see below].

N. The connective *bởi* ‘because of, on account of’ is used to indicate the cause or motive: *bởi máu ghen kinh-khủng của bà vợ* (because blood jealous terrible property classifier wife) ‘because of his wife’s terrible jealousy’; *Gia-dinh tan-nát bởi tính mê cờ-bạc của anh ấy*. (family demolished because of habit addicted chess-silver property fellow that) ‘The family got broken up because of his addiction to gambling.’

Usually the complement indicates the actor, the doer, the agent : *sáng-lập bởi người Á-dông* ‘founded by (people Asia east) Asians’, (*Nước ta*) *bị cai-trị bởi* *thực-dân Pháp* *trong hơn 80 năm*. (country we/us suffer govern by colonialist France in more eighty year) ‘Our country was ruled by French colonialists for over eighty years.’ [The active forms (*do*) *người Á-dông sáng-lập* and *Thực-dân Pháp cai-trị nước ta trong hơn 80 năm* are considered more natural than the “passive” form, cf. 6.1.3.2.]

Lately, this *bởi*-construction is tolerated in scientific discourse when used in definitions, e.g. “*Khối là phần không-gian giới-hạn bởi một mặt khép kín.*” ‘A volume is a portion of space bound by (one surface closed) a closed surface area.’; “*Góc là một hình tạo bởi hai nửa đường thẳng cùng xuất-phát từ một điểm.*” ‘An angle is a figure formed by two straight half-lines (together originate from one point) diverging from a common point.’ [*Từ điển tiếng Việt* 1994]

O. The complement indicates the content of a belief or an opinion: *tin là thật* ‘believes that [something] is true’ (cf. *tin thật* ‘truly believes’), *biết là hắn* ‘knows that [it was] him’ (cf. *biết hắn* ‘knows him’).

**9.3.3. A connective may be used or not :**

A. The complement is a place or a time: *nằm (ở) trên giường* ‘lies in [on] bed’; *ngồi (ở) đây* ‘sits [in] here’; *bị té (vào) ngày thứ sáu 13* (suffer fall enter day-sixth 13) ‘fell down on a Friday the 13th’; *giở dạ (vào) lúc 2g sáng* (turn uterus enter moment two hour morning) ‘[of expectant mother] started going into labor at 2 am’.

B. The complement indicates a means or an instrument: *nói (bằng) tiếng Pháp* (speak by-means-of language France) ‘speaks in French’; *ăn (bằng) đũa* (eat by-means-of chopstick) ‘eats with chopsticks’; *đi (bằng) xe buýt* (go by-means-of vehicle-autobus) ‘goes by bus’; *chữa (bằng) thuốc nam* (cure by-means-of medicine south) ‘cure by Vietnamese herbal medicine’; *nuôi (bằng) sữa mẹ* (nourish by-means-of milk mother) ‘to breastfeed’; *tát (bằng) gầu sòng* (bail by-means-of scoop sòng) ‘irrigate by-means-of tripod-scoop’; etc.

But the connective is mandatory if a direct object, too, is present, as in *nói chuyện* (talk story) *bằng tiếng Pháp* ‘talks in French’; *ăn cơm* (eat rice) *bằng đũa* ‘eats rice with chopsticks’; *đi San José* (go San José) *bằng xe buýt* ‘goes to San José by bus’; *chữa ung thư* (cure cancer) *bằng thuốc nam* ‘cures cancer by Vietnamese herbal medicine’; *nuôi con* (nourish child) *bằng sữa mẹ* ‘breastfeeds her baby’; *tát ruộng* (irrigate ricefield) *bằng gầu sòng* ‘irrigates the ricefield using the tripod scoop’; *nìn tôi bằng cặp mắt nghi ngờ* (look at me by-means-of pair eye suspect) ‘gave me a look of suspicion’, etc.

C. The complement is the content of thought or speech, as in *nói rằng* .... ‘said that ....’, *nhấn mạnh* (press strong) *rằng* .... ‘emphasized that ....’, *nghĩ rằng* .... ‘thinks that ....’, *tín-tưởng rằng* .... ‘believes that ....’, *xác-nhận rằng* .... ‘confirmed that ....’. *Chị ấy bảo (rằng) Thanh-Tùng được nhận rồi.* (elder sister that say that Thanh-Tùng get accept already) ‘She said that Thanh-Tùng had been admitted.’; *Chúng tôi ngờ (rằng) ông ấy chưa có vợ.* (we exclusive thought that gentleman that not-yet have wife) ‘We thought (wrongly) that he is not married.’

D. The complement indicates the recipient or the provider (“the indirect object”) and the verb is one of giving (*cho, tặng, biếu*) or receiving (*lấy, vay, mượn*)---a “double-object” or “ditransitive” verb---[see 6.1.3.6A]: e.g. *tặng bạn sách* ‘presented his friend with books’ [= *tặng sách cho bạn*],

*mượn anh ca-vát* ‘borrowed a tie from (his) elder brother’ [= *mượn ca-vát của anh*].

E. The complement of a causative verb (*làm* ‘to make’, *khiến* ‘to cause’) follows the object of that verb: *làm bố mẹ buồn* ‘makes his dad and mom feel sad’, *khiến mọi người lo* ‘caused everyone to worry’, etc.

Other frequently used causative verbs ( $V_{cause}$ ) [6.1.3.8] are *cho* ‘let, allow, permit’, *dé* ‘let’, *mời* ‘invite’, *rủ* ‘invite for a Dutch treat’, *xin* ‘ask, request’, *yêu-cầu* ‘request’, *đòi* ‘demand’, *giúp* ‘help’, *ép* ‘compel’, *khuyên* ‘advise’, *bắt*, *buộc*, *bắt-buộc* ‘force, coerce’, etc. They are sometimes called “telescoping” verbs since the object of the main verb  $V_1$  is at the same time the subject of the second verb  $V_2$ .

Several verbs denoting prohibition or opposition (*cấm* ‘prohibit’, *ngăn* ‘prevent, stop’, *ngăn-cấm* ‘forbid, prohibit’) that we already mentioned in section 6.1.3.8 above, can also be included among the large subclass of causative verbs.

F. The “factitive” complement of a verb of choosing---a “double-object” or “ditransitive” verb [6.1.3.6C]---occurs following the direct object (DO) and the copula *là/làm*, in accordance with this formula:

$V_{choose}$	+	DO	+	<i>là/làm</i>	+	COMPLEMENT
(Cô) <i>coi</i>		<i>Châu</i>		<i>là</i>		<i>kẻ thù.</i>
she	regard	Châu	be			enemy
						‘She considers Châu an enemy.’
(Họ) <i>bầu</i>		<i>Quân</i>		<i>làm</i>		<i>chủ-tịch.</i>
they	vote	Quân	do			chairman
						‘They elected Quân chairperson.’

Since the “ditransitive” verb at the central position expresses the idea of evaluation, selection, election, appointment or assignment (e.g. *coi* ‘to regard, consider’, *gọi* ‘to call, name’, *chọn* ‘to choose, select’, *tuyển* ‘to select’, *bầu* ‘to elect’, *cử* ‘to appoint’), its object and its complement are co-referential, i.e. refer to the same entity [cf. Engl *People call him a crook*].

G. The head verb is a verb of insertion---another “double-object” or “ditransitive” verb [6.1.3.6B]---which denotes a limited movement and is followed successively by its direct object (DO), a coverb of direction (V’), and its complement (which denotes the destination of that movement).

The pattern is as follows:

	V <sub>insertion</sub>	+	DO	+	V'	+	COMPLEMENT
(Anh)	th襍		tay	vào	túi.		
he	stick		hand	enter	pocket		
	'He stuck his hand into his pocket.'						
(Nó)	nhét		quả cam	vào	bì.		
he	force		fruit orange	enter	bag		
	'He forced the orange into his bag.'						
(Tài-xế)	đẩy		ô-tô	vào	ga-ra.		
driver	push		car	enter	garage		
	'The chauffeur pushed the car into the garage.'						
(Hắn)	gí		súng	vào	tai vợ.		
he	press		gun	enter	ear wife		
	'He pressed the handgun against his wife's ear.'						

9.4 The complement may be placed either before or after the head verb.

9.4.1. Several adverbs of manner like *sẽ*, *khẽ*, *thầm* may either precede or follow the head verb they modify: *sẽ / khẽ nói* = *nói sẽ / khẽ* 'speaks softly', *thầm nghĩ* = *nghĩ thầm* 'thinks silently', etc. Others always precede the head verb as in *trộm* (surreptitiously) *nghĩ*, *thiết* (hypothetically) *nghĩ*, *thiển* (shallow) *nghĩ*--all expressions used by a speaker modestly expressing his opinion: '(I) humbly think, in my shallow opinion', etc.

9.4.2. Other adverbs of manner, most of them disyllabic Chinese loanwords, may also either precede or follow the head verb, e.g. *nhé nhàng*, *nhỏ nhẹ* '[speak] soft(ly)', *hoàn-toàn* 'entirely, completely', *tuyệt đối* 'absolutely', *tương-dối* 'relatively', *tích-cực* 'actively, positively', etc. in *hoàn-toàn tin-tưởng* = *tin-tưởng hoàn-toàn* 'to have full confidence'; *tuyệt-đối trung-thành* = *trung-thành tuyệt-đối* 'to be absolutely loyal'; *tích-cực làm việc* = *làm việc tích-cực* 'to work actively'; etc.

In journalistic style, it is possible to use the phrase *một cách* (one fashion/manner) .... 'ly', Fr. '-ment' to express manner: *trình bày một cách rõ-ràng* 'presents clearly', *tuyên-bố một cách hồn-xược* 'rudely stated', *một cách kiên-nhẫn* 'patiently', etc.

9.4.3. An adverb of time or duration can also be movable: *suốt đời vất-vả* = *vất-vả suốt đời* ‘worked hard all one’s life’; *tron đời hi-sinh* = *hi-sinh tron đời* ‘made sacrifices throughout her life’.

9.4.4. When the complement denotes frequency or a certain amount per time unit, it may also be placed either before or after the head verb:

*ăn mỗi ngày một bữa thôi* (eat each day one meal stop) = *mỗi ngày ăn một bữa thôi* (each day eat one meal stop) ‘eats only one meal a day’;

*Hội Từ-diển-học Bắc-Mỹ họp hai năm một lần* (society lexicography north America meet two year one time) = *hai năm họp một lần* (two year meet one time) ‘The Dictionary Society of North America meets once every two years.’;

*Báo Ngày Nay ra hai tuần một số* (newspaper “Today” come out two week one number) = *hai tuần ra một số* (two week come out one number) ‘The newspaper *Ngày Nay* is published every two weeks.’

9.5 Finally there is a unique construction in which as many as three actions are recounted in chronological order: the first verb is usually *đi* ‘to go’, the second verb denotes whatever activity takes place at the destination of the first movement, then the third verb (always *về* ‘to return’) denotes the opposite direction of that first movement---hence the label “round-trip phrase” (*ngữ khứ-hồi*) [Diệp Quang Ban 1992: 74]. Examples are:

*đi bơi* ‘swim’ *về* ‘came back from swimming’

*đi học* ‘study’ *về* ‘returned from school’

(*mới*) *đi chơi* ‘play’ *Việt-nam về* ‘just returned from a Vietnam trip’

(*vừa*) *đi thư-viện* ‘library’ *về* ‘just came back from the library’

(*đã*) *đi đến* ‘reach, arrive’ *nha chú về (rồi)* ‘already’

‘already back from Uncle’s house’

The first verb can be any other verb, as in

*chạy ra chợ Bến-thành (mới) về (bằng xích-lô)*

(run exit market Ben-thanh just return by-means-of pedicab)

‘just came back from Bến-thành Market by pedicab’

*đưa vợ đi mỹ-viện (vừa mới) về*

(lead wife go beauty-salon recently just return)

‘just came back from taking his wife to the beauty parlor’

*tiễn bạn ra sân bay về (lúc này)*

(see-off friend exit field-fly return moment this)

'came back a while ago after seeing his friend off at the airport'

*vào Sài-gòn ra (rồi)*

(enter Saigon exit already)

'already came back up from Saigon'

*lên Đà-lạt xuống (hôm qua)*

(ascend Dalat descend day past)

'came down from Dalat yesterday'

- 9.6 The positions of postverb determiners present more variety than in the case of determiners surrounding a head noun.

Following are some possible sequences:

.... *rồi cũng sẽ chỉ (thất-bại)*

(then likewise shall only lose)

'will then only fail, too.'

.... *rồi cũng đều sẽ (hối-hận)*

(then likewise all shall repent)

'will all be sorry, too.'

.... *rồi cũng vẫn sẽ lại (thất-vọng)*

(then likewise still shall again disappointed)

'will still be disappointed again, too.'

.... *rồi cũng sẽ không chỉ (đau buốt)*

(then likewise shall not only hurt-sad)

'likewise will not only be grieved.'

Auxiliary verbs like *phải*, *chịu*, *nỡ* occur after the above markers :

*không phải trả* 'does not have to pay'

*chẳng chịu thua* 'did not concede defeat'

*không nỡ giết* 'did not have the heart to kill'

- Postposed determiners sometimes occur in a fixed order, sometimes do not:

*Tôi khuân mãi từ Sơn-tây về đây cho anh đấy !*

(I carry continue from Son-tay return here give you there)

'I lugged this all the way from Son-tay down here for you.'

*Tôi nghĩ mãi không ra đáp số.*

(I reflect continue not come-out answer-number)

'I thought and thought but could not figure out the answer.'

*Nó ba chân bốn cẳng chạy thẳng về nhà.*

(he three leg four leg run straight return house)

'He ran straight home as fast as his legs could carry him.'

But there is more freedom when the head verb has a v' (coverb) as directional complement: the equivalent of 'took home two dictionaries' could be *mang / hai quyển từ-diển / về nhà* or *mang / về nhà / hai quyển từ-diển*. However, when the direct object is only a noun (like *sách* 'book, books') instead of a [longer] noun phrase (like *hai quyển từ-diển* 'two + roll + dictionary'), then the only order allowed is *mang / sách / về nhà* 'took the book(s) home'.

### 9.7 The adjectival phrase (tính-ngữ)

The verb phrase whose head verb is one of quality (or a stative verb, i.e. an adjective) also offers an interesting picture with regard to various possible determiners occurring before or after that adjective.

#### 9.7.1 Structure of the adjectival phrase.

9.7.1.1 First, whether a stative verb or adjective has an absolute meaning or not is the relevant factor.

A. An absolute stative verb does not take a degree marker. Examples of absolute adjectives are *dực* 'male', *cái* 'female', *so* '[of baby] first born', *riêng*, *tự* 'private', *chung* 'common', *công* 'public', *chính* 'main, principal', and such compound adjectives as *chắc nịch* 'very firm', *trắng tinh* 'pure white', *xanh ngắt* 'dark green', *tím bầm* 'black and blue', *thơm phức* 'especially fragrant', *rầm rì* 'murmur-like', *rì rào* 'rustling', etc. [6.2.2.3] Forms such as \**rất chung* (very public), \**rất chính* (very main), \**hởi thơm phức* (a little fragrant especially) are ill-formed.

B. A stative verb with relative meaning can take a preposed degree marker like *rất*, *khá*, *khí*, *hởi*, *cực*, *cực kì*, or a postposed degree marker like *kám*, *quá*, *nữa* [6.2.2]. Examples of relative adjectives are *tốt* 'good', *xấu* 'bad; ugly', *đẹp* 'beautiful', *hay* 'proficient, interesting', *giỏi* 'good, competent', *đỏ* 'red', *to*, *kém* 'big, large; great', *nhỏ*, *bé* 'small, little', *cao* 'tall', *thấp* 'short, not tall', *lùn* '[of person] short', *dài* 'long', *ngắn* 'short, not long', *khó* 'difficult', *dễ* 'easy', (*sung*) *sướng* 'happy', *khó* (*sợ*) 'unhappy, miserable', *dễ chịu* 'comfortable', etc., which may appear

with a degree marker as in *rất tốt*, *hở xấu*, *khí dài*, *khá dễ*, *sướng lắm*, *khổ quá*, *khó nua*, etc.

9.7.1.2 Second, some adjectives can take a complement but others cannot:

(1) Those mentioned in (A) above (*dực*, *cái*, *chính*, *phụ*, *công*, *tư*, *tráng tinh*, *thơm phức*, *rì rào*, *mùm mùm*) do not take a complement: *Đây là con đường chính*. ‘This is the main road.’ *Cái này là chính*, *cái đó là phụ*. ‘This piece is the principal element, that one is secondary.’ The sequences *\*rất chính* (very primary), *\*rất phụ* (very secondary), either in attributive function or in predicative function, are ungrammatical.

(2) Adjectives that can take a complement are “quantitative adjectives” (6.2.1): *lớn* ‘big, large, great’, *nhỏ* ‘small, little’, *nhiều* ‘plentiful, much, many’, *ít* ‘little, few’, *giàu* ‘rich’, *nghèo* ‘poor’, *đủ* ‘sufficient, complete’, *đầy* ‘full’, *đông* ‘crowded’, *đau* ‘painful’, *buốt* ‘stinging’, *nhức* ‘aching’, *thẳng* ‘straight’, etc., as in *giàu của nghèo con* ‘rich in wealth but poor in children---wealthy but having no or few kids’, *đông học-trò* ‘crowded with students’, *đầy kiến* ‘full of ants’, *đủ tiền* ‘has enough money’, *không đủ sức* ‘does not have enough strength’.

### 9.7.2 *Preposed determiners*.

With the exception of the prohibitive preverbs *đừng*, *chớ* and *hãy*, the modifiers or adverbs placed before a stative verb are the same as those that may precede a functive verb. [The admonition by Hồ Xuân-Hương (1772 ?-1822 ?) in one of her poems---*Đừng xanh như lá, bạc như vôi* “Don’t be green as a leaf or white as slaked lime!” is a case of poetic licence.]

The permitted determiners express the following :

9.7.2.1 Negation and confirmation, as in *có ốm* (EMPHATIC sick) ‘is sick’, *không ốm* (not sick) ‘is not sick’, *chẳng ốm-dau gì cả* (not sick-sick whatever all) ‘was not sick at all’, *chả ốm lần nào* (not sick time any) ‘was not sick once’, *không bao giờ ốm* (not whenever sick) = *chưa ốm bao giờ* (not-yet sick whenever) ‘has never been sick’ [with the head adjective in boldface type].

9.7.2.2 Degree, as in *rất nghèo* ‘very poor’, *khá giàu* ‘pretty wealthy’, *khí dài* ‘a little long’, *hở khó* ‘a little too difficult’, *quá tò-mò* ‘too inquisitive’, *cực tốt* ‘extremely good’, *cực-kì quan-trọng* ‘extremely

important', *hết sức rắc rối* 'extremely complicated', *hoàn-toàn sai-lầm* 'entirely erroneous, completely wrong', etc.

9.7.2.3 Tense and aspect, as in *Giáp đã khoẻ*. (ANTERIOR strong) 'Giáp has been better in health', *Giáp đã khoẻ chưa?* (ANTERIOR strong yet) 'Is Giáp feeling better yet?' *Át đang ốm*. (CONTINUOUS sick) 'Át is (presently) sick', *Tân (vẫn) còn ốm*. (still still sick) 'Tân is still sick', *Cá lớp vẫn im-lặng*. (all class still silent quiet) 'The whole class was still quiet', *Họ sẽ giàu*. (they shall rich) 'They will be rich', *Bà Bình chưa mạnh hẳn*. (lady Bình not-yet well completely) 'Mrs. Bình has not completely recovered yet', etc. (cf. 7.1.2.4)

9.7.2.4 Uniformity, as in *Đông nghèo; Tây cũng nghèo*. 'Đông is poor, Tây is also poor.' *Nam cũng không giàu-có gì*. (Nam likewise not rich-have whatever) 'Nam is not rich either.' *Hai bên nội ngoại cùng nghèo*. (two sides inner outer together poor) 'The parents on both sides are poor.' *Cả hai vợ chồng đều khéo*. (all two wife husband equally skilled) 'Both husband and wife are skillful.' etc.

9.7.2.5 Progression, as in *Bắc lại càng kiêu-ngạo hơn*. (Bắc even all-the-more arrogant superior) 'Bắc is even more arrogant', (*càng*) *ngày càng thất-vọng* (more day more lose-hope) 'more and more disappointed', (*mỗi*) *ngày một hùng-cường* (each day one powerful-strong) 'more powerful each day', etc.

### 9.7.3 Postposed determiners.

The postposed complements that can follow an adjective consist of three kinds: those that follow the adjective directly, those that are introduced by a connective, and those that may or may not be present.

#### 9.7.3.1 The complement directly follows the head adjective.

A. The complement is a functor whose function is that of a degree marker, as in *hay lám* 'very interesting', *hay quá* 'so interesting', (*về sau sẽ còn*) *hay nữa* (return afterward shall still interesting additionally) 'will be even more interesting toward the end', (*sẽ còn*) *nghèo mãi* (shall still poor continuously) 'will continue to be poor', *đẹp tuyêt* 'extremely beautiful', *đỏ rồi* (red already) '[of color] red enough already', *X. (làm việc nhiều quá) ốm rồi*. (X work job much excessively sick already) 'X. worked too hard, so already got sick.', etc. [There is a slight difference between *hay*

*lắm* 'very interesting (I'm telling you)' and *hay quá* 'so interesting (I saw it, I read it)', *mỏng lắm* 'very thin' and *mỏng quá* 'too thin (as is').]

B. The complement following a quantitative adjective is a full word (like an adjective, a numeral or a noun phrase) which describes manner, scope, extent or frequency: *đẹp lạ-lùng* 'astoundingly pretty', *đẹp dể sợ* (pretty easy afraid) 'awfully beautiful', *đẹp lóng-lẫy* (pretty resplendent) 'glamorous', *hay ghê* (interesting awful) 'fascinating', *cao quá sức tưởng tượng* (tall exceed force imagination) 'tall beyond imagination', *ốm nhom* (skinny very) 'emaciated', *mập quá chừng quá đỗi* (fat exceed extent exceed scope) 'immeasurably obese', *xinh nhất lớp* (cute first class) 'cutest in our class', *lớn hơn* (large superior) 'bigger, older', *dài mươi thước* (long 10 meter) 'ten meters long', *sâu bốn thước* (deep 4 meter) 'four meters deep', *nặng 160 bông* (heavy 160 pound) 'weighs 160 lbs', *chẵn hai tá* (even-numbered 2 dozen) 'exactly two dozens', *hỏng mấy lần* (out-of-order a few time) 'broken down several times', etc.

C. The complement is a noun that completes some aspect of the content of the head adjective, as in *đầy kiến* 'full of ants', *đầy bụi* 'full of dust', *đông người* (crowded person) 'full of people', *đông con* 'having many children', *vắng khách du-lịch* (not-crowded visitor travel) 'deserted by tourists', *đày cùi* (thick pulp) '[of fruit] with a thick pulp', *đúng phương pháp* (accurate method) 'methodical', *đúng thê-lệ* (accurate rule) 'in conformity with the regulations', *giàu của nghèo con* (rich property poor child) 'wealthy but having no or few children', *giàu kinh-nghiệm* (rich experience) 'experienced', *thừa tài-nguyên* (have surplus resource) 'not lacking resources', *thừa sức* (have surplus force) 'not lacking strength', *tốt gỗ* '[of furniture] made of good wood'---as favorably compared to *tốt nước sơn* 'having just a good coat of paint', *xa nhà* 'far from home', *gần ngày giỗ bố* (near day memorial father) 'close to the anniversary of his father's death', *chứa chan hi vọng* (overflow hope) 'full of hope', etc.

D. The complement is a noun denoting a bodily part when the whole verb phrase describes a physical defect or an ailment, e.g. *gù lưng* (hump back) 'hunchbacked', *còng lưng* (curved back) 'bent-backed', *què chân* (crippled leg) 'lame', *hở đầu*, *hở trán* (bald head/forehead) 'bald-headed', *sứt môi* (cleft lip) 'hare-lipped', *diếc tai* (deaf ear) 'deaf', *ù tai* (buzz ear) 'having buzzing ears', *sai cổ* (twist neck) 'having torticollis,

having a wryneck', *khản cổ* (hoarse throat) 'hoarse', *nhức đầu* (ache head) 'having a headache', *nhức răng* (ache tooth) 'having a toothache', *mù mắt* (blind eye) 'blind', *chợt mắt* (spoiled eye) 'one-eyed', *loá mắt* (blinded eye) 'dazzled', *lác mắt* 'cross-eyed', *hoa mắt* (flower eye) 'see stars', *chóng mặt* (turn face) 'dizzy', *sún / sâu răng* (worm-eaten tooth) 'having a decayed tooth', etc.

E. The complement may be a verb, as in *khó nói* 'difficult to say', *khó tin* (*tin* 'to believe') 'incredible, unbelievable', *khó diễn-tả* (*diễn-tả* 'express, describe') 'difficult to express', *khôn nguôi* (difficult abate) '[of feeling] difficult to soothe', *khéo vá* (skillful mend) '[of clothing] skillfully mended', *sung-sướng được đoàn-tụ với vợ-con* (happy get reunited together-with wife child) 'happy to be reunited with his wife and kids', etc.

#### 9.7.3.2 The complement is introduced by a connective.

A. It expresses a comparison, and the sequence is a simile, e.g. *đẹp như tiên* 'pretty like an immortal fairy', *xấu như ma* 'as ugly as a ghost', *trong như ngọc trăng như ngà* 'pure like jade, white like ivory', *tối như mực* 'as dark as ink,---pitch-dark', *chậm như rùa* 'as slow as a turtle', *hở như hói* 'as lazy as a leper', etc.

B. It clarifies some kind of relationship to the receiver (*tốt cho người già* 'good for old people', *lợi cho sức khoẻ* 'beneficial to [your] health' [cf. *ích quốc lợi dân* 'useful to the country and beneficial to the people'], *nguy hiểm cho hành-khách* 'dangerous for the passengers', *rủi cho cô Kiều* 'unfortunately for Miss Kiều'), or to the scope of the characteristic (*đúng về căn-bẢN* 'accurate regarding fundamentals,---basically correct', *sai về đường-lối* 'inaccurate regarding guidelines,---incorrect according to the guidelines', *trái với nguyện-vọng của toàn-dân* 'contrary to the aspirations of the entire population'), etc.

#### 9.7.3.3 The connective may be optionally left out, as in:

*Rõ-ràng (là) nó giết vợ và tình-dịch.* (clear be he kill wife and love-rival) 'It is very clear that he murdered his wife and her lover.'

*Đúng [= Chính ] (là) bọn chúng cướp nhà băng và bắn cảnh-sát.* (accurate be band they rob house-bank and shoot police) 'It is precisely they who held up the bank and shot the police.'

*Nước ta giàu (về) nông-sản.* (country us rich regarding farm-product)  
 'Our country is rich in agricultural products.';

*Em trai tôi giỏi (về) chữ nôm nhưng lại dốt (về) toán.* (younger-sibling male me good regarding script southern, but contrary-to-expectations dumb regarding math) 'My younger brother is very good in *nôm* characters, but poor in math.'

#### 9.7.4 Order of determiners.

The sequential order of determiners surrounding a stative verb seems to be less complex than in the case of a functive verb. Below are some examples:

*Điều ấy quan-trọng hết sức đối với chúng tôi.*

(item that important exhaust-force face together we exclusive)

'That is extremely important to us.'

*Thằng Hoàn giống mẹ nó về hai con mắt.*

(boy Hoàn resemble mom he regarding two classifier eye)

'Little Hoàn has his mother's eyes.'

*Xuân kém Hạ về trí tưởng-tượng.*

(Xuân inferior Hạ regarding mind imagination)

'Xuân has less imagination than Hạ.'

*Thu sành nghề làm thơ hơn Đông.*

(Thu expert occupation make poetry superior Đông)

'Thu is more skillful than Đông in composing poetry.'

#### 9.8 Coordination

We have examined two of the four basic patterns of grammatical grouping: the pattern of modification reflected in the structure of a noun phrase (Chapter 8, from section 8.1), and the pattern of complementation reflected in the structure of a verb phrase (this chapter, sections 9.0 through 9.7). Before moving on to Chapter 10 to examine the sentence, which displays the pattern of predication, we will conclude this chapter by examining the third pattern--that of coordination, which may appear in each of the other three constructions.

Coordination is achieved by a comma pause between two or more items placed in juxtaposition and called "coordinates":

(1) *Nhung, Ngọc, vợ Ngọc, chúng tôi ....*

'Nhung, Ngọc, his wife (and) the two of us'

- (2) *quần-áo, sách-vở (của các cháu)*  
 (pants coat book notebook property plural nephew [of yours])  
 ‘our children’s clothes and books’
- (3) *nồi-niêu, xoong-chảo*  
 (metal pot earthenware pot frying pan wok)  
 ‘pots and pans’
- (4) *tắm, giặt* ‘bathing and washing clothes’
- (5) *ăn cơm, học bài, xem ti-vi*  
 (eat rice study lesson watch TV)  
 ‘(They) ate dinner, did their homework, and watched TV.’
- The items in concatenation may also be joined by a connective called “conjunction”. Connectives may occur singly or in combination.
- Examples of single connectives are *và* ‘and’, *hay* ‘or’, *hoặc* ‘or’, *nhưng* ‘but’, *mà* ‘and, yet’, now added to examples 1 to 5:
- (1a) *Nhung, Ngọc, vợ Ngọc và chúng tôi*  
 (2a) *quần-áo và sách-vở của các cháu*  
 (3a) *nồi-niêu và xoong-chảo*  
 (4a) *tắm và giặt*  
 (5a) *ăn cơm, học bài và xem ti-vi*

Examples of paired connectives are: *cả .... lẫn ....* ‘both .... and ....’, *vừa .... vừa ....* ‘both .... and ....’, *càng .... càng ....* ‘the more .... the more ....’, *không những .... mà còn ....* ‘not only.... but also ....’, *tuy .... nhưng ....* ‘although .... (yet) ....’

- (6) *cả đi lẫn về* ‘both going and coming back,---both ways; round trip’  
 (7) *vừa đánh trống vừa ăn cướp*  
 (both beat drum and hold up)  
 ‘sounded the alarm drum and pillaged the village at the same time’
- (8) *càng lớn càng đẹp*  
 (more big more pretty)  
 ‘[of girl] is prettier as she grows older’
- (9) *không những bền mà còn rẻ*  
 (not only durable but in addition cheap)  
 ‘not only durable but also cheap’
- (10) *Cháu Khuê tuy còn ít tuổi nhưng rất khôn-ngoan.*  
 (granddaughter Khuê though still little age but very wise and nice)

'Although Khuê is still quite young she is wise and well-behaved.'

- (11) *có gì ăn này* (have whatever eat same thing)  
 'to eat whatever one has' (see 6.3.2.6)
- (12) *Của ai này dùng.* (property whoever same-person use)  
 'Anyone uses his/her own [pen, towel, etc.].'
- (13) *Cha mẹ đặt đâu con ngồi đây*  
 (father mother place wherever, child sit that same place)  
 'A child sits wherever the parents put him/her.'
- (14) *bảo sao nghe vậy* (tell however, listen to that same way)  
 'to obey whatever one is told'

There may be a verb series, denoting actions that occur in chronological order:

- (15) *ngủ dậy* (sleep + rise) 'to rise, wake up, get up'
- (16) *đi học về* (go + study + return) 'returned from school' (see 9.5)
- (17) *ốm khỏi* (sick + recover) 'recovered from illness'
- (18) *X. nói xong, đứng dậy, cúi chào rồi ra về.*  
 (X speak finish stand rise bow salute afterward exit return)  
 'So saying, X. got up, bowed, then left.'



## Chapter 10

### The Sentence

#### 10.0 The sentence as unit of communication

A sentence is understood as a linguistic unit designed for communication and possessing a content to convey with the speaker's appropriate mood, attitude and feeling, and a specific grammatical structure uttered in a specific stress and intonation pattern. The content of the sentence may be affirmative, negative, interrogative, imperative or emotive. Its grammatical structure is a string of words carrying a meaningful message and obeying (syntactic) rules about the arrangement of gradually smaller and smaller constituents.

#### 10.1 The simple sentence

10.1.1. Basically a sentence (*câu*) follows an independent pattern of predication (8.0), i.e. it consists of two immediate constituents--the subject (*chủ-ngữ*) announcing a topic (*dè*) followed by the predicate (*vị-ngữ*) which provides a comment (*thuyết*) on that topic.

Examples are:

- (1) *Troi / mưa.* (sky, rain) 'It's raining.'
- (2) *Mặt trời / mọc.* (face sky, rise) 'The sun rises.'
- (3) *Chim / hót.* 'Birds are singing.'
- (4) *Nam / cao.* 'Nam [is] tall.'
- (5) *Nam / là sinh-viên.* 'Nam is [a] student.'
- (6) *Mẹ tôi / người Hải-dương.* (mother me, person Hải-dương)  
'My mother (was) a native of Hải-dương.'
- (7) *Mẹ tôi / mất năm 1943.* (mother me, lose year 1943)  
'My mother died in (the year) 1943.'
- (8) *Con chim ấy / hót hay kín.* (classifier bird that, sing beautiful very)  
'That bird sings very beautifully.'

In each of the above predications or simple sentences, the subject is a noun phrase which consists of a single noun (*trời, chim, Nam* in examples 1, 3, 4, 5), a compound noun (*mặt trời* in example 2), or a noun phrase (*mè tôi* in examples 6 and 7; *con chim ấy* in example 8).

The predicate in each example is a verb (*mưa, mọc, hót, cao*) or a verb phrase (*là sinh-viên, [là] người Hải-dương, mất năm 1943, hót hay lám*).

*10.1.2.* But sometimes the sentence consists only of a verb phrase, whose head is a verb of existence, appearance or disappearance (6.1.3.3), or a verb denoting a psychological state, or a weather verb, as in

- (9) *Có khách.* (exist visitor) ‘There’s a visitor.’
  - (10) *Hết tiền.* (exhaust money) ‘There’s no more money left.’
  - (11) *Buồn quá!* (sad excessively) ‘How sad!’
  - (12) *Mưa rồi.* (rain already) ‘It started raining already.’
- 10.1.3.* The sentence may also consist of a single word, which is an exclamation, or an abbreviated note or comment, as in
- (13) *Mưa!* ‘It’s raining.’
  - (14) *Vỡ!* ‘It’s going to break!’
  - (15) *Tuyệt!* ‘Great! Superb!’
  - (16) *Trật-tự!* ‘Order!’ [in law court]
  - (17) *Nghiêm!* ‘Attention!’ [to soldiers]

## 10.2 The subject-less sentence.

Very often the subject is absent.

*10.2.1.* The sentence begins with a verb of existence ( $V_{\text{exist}}$ ):

- (9) *Có khách.* ‘There’s a visitor.’
  - (18) *Có người khách ở viễn-phương.* [The Tale of Kiều]  
(exist person visitor at far-direction)  
‘There was a stranger from afar.’
  - (19) *Còn nước, còn tát.* (still water left, still bail)  
‘If there’s some water left, we’ll go on bailing,---There’s still some hope, so we’ll have to try.’
- 10.2.2.* The sentence is some general statement or a proverb:
- (20) *Ở Nhật-bản phải đi bên tay trái.*  
(in Japan must go side hand left)  
‘In Japan you must keep to the left.’

- (21) *Nên lấy chữ hiếu làm trọng.*  
 (should take character hiếu do heavy)  
 ‘People should emphasize [the notion of] filial piety.’
- (22) “Ăn quả nhớ kẻ trồng cây.” [a proverb]  
 (eat fruit remember person plant tree)  
 ‘Eating a fruit, one should think of the person who planted the tree.’
- 10.2.3. The subject has already been mentioned or is obvious:
- (23) *Đạo này tôi ít đi bơi, vì người yếu và hay mệt.*  
 (period this I little go swim, because body weak and often tired)  
 ‘I haven’t been swimming a lot lately because I don’t feel very well and tire easily.’
- (24) *Mỹ mua vào nhiều hơn bán ra, thành ra bị thâm-thủng ngân-sách.*  
 (America buy in much more sell out, result suffer deficit budget)  
 ‘The U.S. imports more than it exports, so it has a deficit.’

10.2.4. The sentence is a monologue, a soliloquy, or an exchange in which only the context helps identify either interlocutor:

- (25) *Buồn ngủ quá! Mai làm nốt.*  
 (feel-like sleep so-much, tomorrow do finish)  
 ‘I’m so sleepy! I’ll finish it tomorrow.’ [speaker talking to oneself.]
- (26) *Đi đâu đấy? --- Ra bưu-điện.*  
 (Go where there, exit post-office)  
 ‘Where are you going? --- To the post office.’

[This is an exchange between friends and equals. Children would be scolded if they do not use the appropriate terms of address : they are taught, when the father asks “*Con đi đâu đấy?*” (child go where there) to respond politely “*Thưa bố, con ra bưu-điện à.*” (report father, child exit post office POLITE PARTICLE) ‘Daddy, I’m going to the post office.’ (cf. 6.3.2.2)]

- (27) *Thi chưa? -- Chiều thứ hai mới thi.*  
 (take exam yet, afternoon Monday only then take exam)  
 ‘Have you guys had the test yet? --- Only on Monday afternoon.’  
 [Schoolmates talking]

10.2.5. The sentence is an order (peremptory or not) or an exhortation:

- (28) *Im (di)! ‘Quiet!’*  
*Nín (di)! [to child] Stop crying!*  
*Thôi (di)! ‘Stop! ---Cut it out!’*

[The final particle *đi!* (7.3.2) makes the order less abrupt.]

- (29) *Ăn nữa đi!* 'Eat some more!'
- (30) *Cứ nói đi!* 'Go ahead and say it!'
- (31) *Hãy chờ đây đã!* (EXHORTATIVE wait there first) 'Wait there first!'
- (32) *Hãy uống nữa đi đã!* (EXHORTATIVE drink more IMP first)  
'Drink some more first!'

10.2.6. The sentence is a response to a yes-or-no question (of the type *có ... không?*, *đã ... chưa?*) or a content-question containing the interrogative substitute *ai* 'who?':

- (33) *Anh có muốn mua không? --- Muốn.*  
(elder brother EMPHATIC want buy or-not --- want)  
'Do you want to buy it? --- Yes, [I] do.'
- (34) *Hội-chợ Tết có đông người không? --- Đông lắm.*  
(fair New Year EMPHATIC crowded person or-not --- crowded very)  
'Are there many people at the Tết fair? -- [It's] very crowded.'
- (35) *Chị đã hiểu chưa? --- Hiểu rồi.*  
(elder sister ANTERIOR understand yet --- understand already)  
'Did you understand? --- Yes, [I] did.'
- (36) *Cậu bằng lòng không? --- Bằng lòng chứ!*  
(maternal uncle equal-heart or-not --- equal-heart surely)  
'Do you agree? --- Certainly!' [boys talking] (On *chứ*, see 7.3.2)
- (37) *Cô ấy làm cho ai? --- Làm cho Toà Đại-sứ Mỹ.*  
(aunt that work give who --- work give seat big-envoy America)  
'Whom does she work for? --- For the U.S. Embassy.'

### 10.3 The sentence without a predicate.

The predicate is omitted among equals, when the sentence is a response (considered abrupt) to a question containing the interrogative substitute *ai* 'who?':

- (38) *Ai lấy cái bút chì đỏ trên bàn này? --- Tôi.*  
(who take classifier pen lead red space above table this --- I)  
'Who took the red pencil on this desk? --- I [did].'
- (39) *Ai muốn phát biểu? --- Tôi.*  
(who want express [opinion] --- I)  
'Who wants to speak? -- I [do].'

- (40) *Ai là sở-hữu-chủ ngôi nhà này? --- Vợ chồng tôi.*  
 (who be own-er classifier house this --- wife husband me)  
 'Who is the owner of this house? -- My wife and I [are].'

#### 10.4 The subject-less sentence with a reduced predicate.

This is the case of the shortened response to a question that contains an interrogative word as complement:

- (41) *Chị viết gì đây? --- Thư.*  
 (elder sister write what there --- letter)  
 'What are you writing? --- A letter.'
- (42) *Thư cho ai? --- Bác Thuần.*  
 (letter give who --- uncle/aunt Thuần)  
 'A letter to whom? --- Aunt Thuần.'
- (43) *Bao giờ cô Green về Mỹ? --- Tuần sau.*  
 (what-extent time miss Green return America --- week later)  
 'When is Miss Green going back to America? --- Next week.'
- (44) *Cô Green về Mỹ bao giờ? --- Tuần trước.*  
 (miss Green return America what-extent time --- week before)  
 'When did Miss Green go back to America? --- Last week.'

#### 10.5 The kernel < S-P > sentence.

The Subject-Predicate (S-P) construction can be examined in terms of its two immediate constituents: (a) the subject is a noun phrase; (b) the subject is a verb phrase; and (c) the subject is itself a predication (S-P).

##### A. The subject is a noun phrase (NP).

The predicate may contain a functive verb, a stative verb, or it may be a noun phrase introduced by *là*, or it may be a verb phrase (or a prepositional phrase) introduced by *là*, or it may itself be a predication optionally introduced by *là*.

###### 10.5.1 SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + VERB PHRASE

The head predicative is a functive verb, i.e. a verb of action---either intransitive or transitive. Examples:

- (45) *Tâm còn ngủ.* (still sleep) 'Tâm is still asleep.'
- (46) *Anh bạn tôi chỉ ăn cơm Việt-nam thôi.*  
 (classifier friend me, only eat rice Vietnamese stop)

- ‘My friend only eats Vietnamese food.’
- (47) *Các bà ấy làm thơ bát-cú.*  
 (plural lady that, make poem eight-line)  
 ‘Those ladies write 8-line poems.’
- (48) *Tâm mua sách ở Đường Tự-do.*  
 (Tâm, buy book at road freedom)  
 ‘Tâm buys books on Tự-do Street.’
- (49) *Bố nó phạt nó mấy lần rồi.*  
 (father him, punish him a few time already)  
 ‘His father has punished him several times.’
- (50) *Nó bị (bố) phạt mấy lần rồi.*  
 (he, suffer father punish a few time already)  
 ‘He has been punished (by his father) several times.’
- (51) *Bà hiệu-trưởng thưởng tất-cả các cậu học-sinh này.*  
 (lady school-head, reward all plural classifier student this)  
 ‘The principal rewarded all these students.’
- (52) *Tất-cả các cậu học-sinh này đều được (bà hiệu-trưởng) thưởng.*  
 (all plural classifier student this, equally get lady school-head reward)  
 ‘All these students were rewarded (by the principal).’  
 [ On *bị* and *được*, see 6.1.3.2C ]
- (53) *Tôi quen anh Duy từ hồi 1945.*  
 (I, know fellow Duy from time 1945)  
 ‘I’ve known Duy since 1945.’
- (54) *Thưa伯, tuần nào chúng cháu cũng đi Vũng Tàu à.*  
 (report uncle, week any group nephew likewise go V. T. POLITE PART)  
 ‘Uncle, we go to Vũng Tàu every week.’
- (55) *Các cháu ra Vũng Tàu hoài !*  
 (plural nephew, exit V.T. continuously)  
 ‘You guys go to Vũng Tàu all the time, don’t you?’
- (56) *Tôi chạy ra thư-viện nhé!*  
 (I run exit book-house OK?)  
 ‘Shall I run out to the library?’
- (57) *Trong bếp còn gạo nếp không?*  
 (inside kitchen remain rice glutinous or-not)  
 ‘Is there any sticky rice left in the kitchen?’

- (58) *Nhà này không có gạo nếp.*  
 (house this, NEG have rice glutinous)  
 ‘This house doesn’t have sticky rice.’
- (59) *Hoan vẫn không chịu lấy vợ.*  
 (Hoan, still NEG consent take wife)  
 ‘Hoan still would not get married.’
- (60) *Mọi người đều hi vọng trúng số.*  
 (every person, equally hope hit number)  
 ‘Everybody hopes to win the lottery.’
- (61) *Cô ấy thường nghĩ vậy.*  
 (girl that, usually think thus)  
 ‘She usually thinks so.’
- (62) *Chàng thư-sinh trong truyện thành tiên.*  
 (guy student inside story, become immortal being)  
 ‘The young scholar in the story became an immortal being.’
- (63) *Quan-công hiển thánh.*  
 (Quan-công, become saint)  
 ‘Guan Yu became a deity [= was deified].’  
 [On verbs of becoming *thành* and *hiển*, see 6.1.3.4]
- (64) *Cô Mỹ-Huyền lắc đầu.*  
 (miss Mỹ-Huyền, shake head)  
 ‘Mỹ-Huyền shook her head.’
- (65) *Mẹ tôi gửi tiền cho tôi.*  
 (mother me, send money give me)  
 ‘My mother sends me money.’
- (66) *Thái gửi rất nhiều tiền cho vợ.* (T. send very much money give wife)  
 = *Thái gửi cho vợ rất nhiều tiền.* (T. send give wife very much money)  
 ‘Thái sent a lot of money to his wife.’
- (67) *Tôi sẽ phải vay tiền của nhà băng.*  
 (I shall must borrow money property house-bank)  
 ‘I’ll have to borrow money from the bank.’
- (68) *Tôi đã phải vay mười ngàn đô-la của nhà băng*  
 (I ANTERIOR must borrow ten thousand dollar property house-bank)  
 = *Tôi đã phải vay của nhà băng mười ngàn đô-la.*  
 ‘I had to borrow 10,000 dollars from the bank.’

- (69) *Hải mượn sách của tôi.* (property me) ‘H. borrowed books from me.’
- (70) *Hải mượn năm cuốn sách quý của tôi.*  
 (Hải borrow five classifier book precious property me)  
 = *Hải mượn của tôi năm cuốn sách quý.*  
 ‘Hải borrowed from me five valuable books.’
- (71) *Tôi vẫn coi Nam là người bạn thân nhất.*  
 (I always consider Nam be classifier friend intimate most)  
 ‘I always consider Nam my closest friend.’
- (72) *Uỷ-ban Chấp-hành bầu Thu làm chủ-tịch.*  
 (committee executive, vote Thu do chairman)  
 ‘The Executive Committee elected Thu chairperson.’
- (73) *Thu được Uỷ-ban Chấp-hành bầu làm chủ-tịch.*  
 (Thu, get committee executive vote do chairman)  
 ‘Thu was elected chairperson by the Executive Committee.’  
 [On ditransitive or double-object verbs ( $V_{do}$ )---verbs of giving, taking, insertion and evaluation---see 6.1.3.6]
- (74) *Thằng lùu-manh đó làm chúng tôi xấu-hổ.*  
 (classifier crook that, make we exclusive ashamed)  
 ‘That crook made us feel ashamed.’ [*làm* is a  $V_{cause}$  (6.1.3.8)]
- (75) *Luật ở đây cấm công-nhân (không được) hút thuốc lá.*  
 (law at here, forbid worker NEG get smoke drug-leaf)  
 ‘The law here forbids workers to smoke cigarettes.’
- (76) *Ông bà Hoà vừa mời chúng tôi.*  
 (gentleman lady Hoà, recently invite we exclusive)  
 ‘Mr. and Mrs. Hoà just invited us.’
- (77) *Ông bà Hoà vừa mời chúng tôi ăn cơm tối.*  
 (gentleman lady Hoà, recently invite we exclusive eat rice evening)  
 ‘Mr. and Mrs. Hoà just invited us to dinner.’
- (78) *Ông bà Hoà vừa mời ăn cơm tối.*  
 (gentleman lady Hoà, recently invite eat rice evening)  
 ‘Mr. and Mrs. Hoà just invited [X] to dinner.’
- (79) *Cụ Thẩm Quỳnh dạy chữ Hán.*  
 (greatgrandfather T. Q., teach character Hán)  
 ‘Old scholar Thẩm Quỳnh taught Chinese characters.’

- (80) *Cụ Thẩm Quỳnh dạy chúng tôi.*  
 (greatgrandfather T.Q., teach we exclusive)  
 ‘Old scholar Thẩm Quỳnh taught us.’
- (81) *Cụ Thẩm Quỳnh dạy chúng tôi chữ Hán.*  
 (greatgrandfather T.Q., teach we exclusive character Hán)  
 ‘Old scholar Thẩm Quỳnh taught us Chinese characters.’

#### 10.5.2 SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + VERB PHRASE

The head predicative is a stative verb, i.e. an adjective. Examples:

- (82) *Sương thu* (frost autumn) *lạnh.* ‘The autumn frost is cold.’
- (83) *Lá thu* (leaf autumn) *đẹp quá!* ‘The autumn foliage is so beautiful!!’
- (84) *Cơm vừa chín tối.* (rice just ripe reach)  
 ‘Now the rice is cooked just right.’
- (85) *Cháu* (nephew, grandson) *Tùng cao lắm.* ‘Tùng is very tall.’
- (86) *Nó cao hơn anh nó.* (he tall superior elder brother he)  
 ‘He’s taller than his older brother.’
- (87) *Ông Lai cao nhất nhà.* ‘Mr. Lai is the tallest in the family.’
- (88) *Cả lớp vẫn im-lặng.* ‘The whole class was still quiet.’
- (89) *Anh Xuân rất vui tính.* (elder brother Xuân very joyful nature)  
 ‘Xuân is very jovial.’
- (90) *Vườn cụ Phúc đầy hoa.* ‘Mr. Phúc’s garden is full of flowers.’
- (91) *Chợ Bến-thành đông người quá!*  
 ‘The Bến-thành Market was so crowded (with people).’
- (92) *Cặp vợ-chồng chúa-chan hi-vọng.* ‘The couple was full of hope.’
- (93) *Bà ấy thật khéo ở!* ‘That lady acts so diplomatically.’
- (94) *Cụ già khó chiều quá!* ‘The old man is so difficult to please.’
- (95) *Anh tôi khổ về thằng con trai.*  
 (elder brother me unhappy regarding classifier child male)  
 ‘My older brother suffered so much because of his son.’
- (96) *Chỗ này sâu năm mét.* ‘This spot is 5 meters deep.’
- (97) *Cái giảng-đường này rộng quá nhỉ?*  
 ‘This auditorium is very large, don’t you think so?’
- (98) *Bài tập này hơi khó.* ‘This exercise is a little too difficult.’
- (99) *Thằng Khánh giống hệt bố nó.* ‘Khánh looks exactly like his dad.’
- (100) *Chúng tôi lác mắt* (we exclusive cross-eyed).  
 ‘We were so impressed!’

- (101) *Chuyện ấy rắc-rối hết sức [= hết sức rắc-rối]*  
       ‘That issue is extremely complicated.’
- (102) *Em gái tôi rất giỏi (về) toán.*  
       ‘My younger sister is very good in math.’
- (103) *Điều đó trái với nguyện-vọng của toàn-dân.*  
       (item that, contrary with aspiration property the whole population)  
       ‘That is contrary to the aspirations of the entire population.’

#### 10.5.3 SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + *là* + NOUN PHRASE

The sentences in 10.5.1 and 10.5.2 are those in which the predicate describes the activity, status or nature of the topic announced in the subject constituent.

The sentences introduced in this section are different. Each sentence cited here contains the identificational verb ( $V_{id}$ ) *là* (6.1.3.10), which, acting like the “equals” sign [=], functions as the equivalent of English copula *be*. This equative verb introduces the nominal predicate, which is equated with the nominal subject, and the construction resembles an equation. Examples:

- (104) *Liên là cô giáo.* ‘Liên is a teacher.’  
 (105) *Cô giáo là Liên.* ‘The teacher is Liên.’

In the 15th century, it was possible to say *Núi láng-giềng, chim bầu-bạn* (Nguyễn Trãi) ‘Mounts [are] (my) neighbors, birds (my) friends.’

- (106) *Nam là sinh-viên năm thứ ba.* (Nam be student year third)  
       ‘Nam is a junior.’
- (107) *Người sinh-viên năm thứ ba là Nam.*  
       (classifier student year third, be Nam)  
       ‘The third-year student is Nam.’
- (108) *Nguyễn Trãi là một nhà-thơ lớn của chúng ta.*  
       (Nguyễn Trãi be one expert-poetry great property we inclusive)  
       ‘Nguyễn Trãi was one of our greatest poets.’
- (109) *Tám cũng là giáo-viên trường đó.*  
       ‘Tám is also a teacher in that school.’
- (110) *Giáo-sư đại-học bên ấy (that side) đều là công-chức.*  
       ‘University teachers over there are all civil servants.’
- (111) *Đà-lạt vẫn còn là một thành-phố đẹp lắm.*  
       ‘Dalat is still a very beautiful city.’

- (112) *Bên bờ hồ là những cây lệ-liễu thướt tha.*  
       ‘On the lakeshore are graceful weeping willows.’
- (113) *Bây giờ (là) mười giờ.* ‘It’s now ten o’clock.’
- (114) *Hôm qua (là) chủ nhật.* ‘Yesterday was Sunday.’
- (115) *Bây giờ là năm Ất-Dậu.*  
       ‘That was the Ất-Dậu Year (of the Rooster).’
- (116) *Lúc bấy giờ là giữa tháng tám âm-lịch.*  
       ‘That [time] was the middle of the eighth lunar month.’
- (117) *Trên bàn thờ là một pho tượng Đức Phật.*  
       (space above table worship be one classifier statue virtue Buddha)  
       ‘On the altar is a statue of Buddha.’
- (118) *Mẹ tôi (là) người Hải-dương.*  
       ‘My mother is a native of Hải-dương.’
- (119) *Cái anh tây ba-lô đó (là) quốc-tịch Ca-na-da.*  
       (classifier brother west knapsack that, be citizenship Canada)  
       ‘That young backpack westerner has Canadian citizenship.’
- (120) *Ô-mé-ga (là) đồng-hồ Thụy-sĩ.* (copper vase Switzerland)  
       ‘Omega is a Swiss watch.’
- (121) *Cụ áy chín mươi tuổi rồi.* (greatgrandfather that, 90 year already)  
       ‘He’s already ninety years old.’  
       [\**Cụ áy là chín mươi tuổi rồi.* would be ill-formed.]
- (122) *Nho không hột này hai đô-la một kí.*  
       (grape NEG seed this, two dollar one kilogram)  
       ‘These seedless grapes cost \$2.00 a kilogram.’
- (123) *Cuốn từ-diển này (là) của cô giáo.* (property aunt teach)  
       ‘This dictionary belongs to the teacher.’
- (124) *Ai là sở-hữu-chủ ngôi nhà áy? --- Vợ chồng tôi (là sở-hữu-chủ ngôi nhà áy).*  
       (who be own-er classifier house that --- wife husband me ....)  
       ‘Who is the owner of that house? -- My wife and I are.’
- 10.5.4. SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + Là + VERB PHRASE**
- The subject of the sentence is usually an abstract noun meaning ‘idea’, ‘hope’, ‘purpose’, ‘method’, etc. (5.1.3) and not a concrete noun. Examples:
- (125) *Ước-muốn của tôi là hoc y-khoa.* (wish-want property me ....)  
       ‘My wish is to study medicine.’

- (126) *Nhiệm-vụ quan-trọng nhất là chống nạn thất-học.*  
 (task important most be fight scourge illiteracy)  
 ‘The most important task is to combat illiteracy.’
- (127) *Bốn-phận làm con là phải phung-dưỡng cha mẹ.*  
 (duty act child be must serve-nourish father mother)  
 ‘A child’s duty is to take care of one’s parents.’
- (128) *Mục-đích duy-nhất của tôi là cung-cấp tài-liệu cho đọc-giả trẻ.*  
 (goal single property me be provide material give read-er young)  
 ‘My sole objective is to provide materials to young readers.’

#### 10.5.5. SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + *Là* + PREP(OPTIONAL) PHRASE

- (129) *Hai cái túi áy (là) bằng ni-lông.*  
 (two classifier bag that, be by-means-of nylon)  
 ‘Those two bags are made of nylon.’
- (130) *Việc tai-tiếng đó là tai ông tinh-trưởng.*  
 (business scandal that, be because of gentleman province-chief)  
 ‘That scandal was due to the province chief.’
- (131) *Ung-thư phổi là vì/do khói thuốc lá.*  
 (cancer lung, be because of smoke drug-leaf)  
 ‘Lung cancer is caused by cigarette smoke.’
- (132) *Sự thành-công của hắn chỉ là nhờ gia-dình nhà vợ đây thôi.*  
 (fact succeed property he, only be rely family house wife there all)  
 ‘He was successful only thanks to his wife’s family.’

#### 10.5.6. SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + < PREDICATION >

The embedded <SUBJECT - PREDICATE> structure provides a descriptive attribute of the subject NP, and the utterance can be analyzed as a complex sentence. Examples:

- (133) *Anh Trịnh Quang < nhà rất khá-giả >.*  
 (brother T.Q.---family very well-to-do)  
 ‘Trịnh Quang comes from a well-to-do family.’
- (134) *Cô ấy < khổng người cao ráo >.* (girl that---stature body tall)  
 ‘She’s tall in stature.’
- (135) *Cây quỳnh này < hoa đỏ >.* (plant cereus this---flower red)  
 ‘This night-blooming cereus has red flowers.’
- (136) *Xe đạp của tôi < phanh không ăn >.* (bike of me---brake not eat)  
 ‘My bicycle has brakes that don’t work.’

- (137) Ông Hàn Thành < bung phuỗn ra >  
 (gentleman academician Th---belly protrude out)  
 'Academician Thanh has a fat belly.'
- (138) Lão già dê < mắt lim-dim >. (old old lustful---eye half-closed)  
 'The old satyr half-closed his eyes.'
- 10.5.7 SENTENCE = NOUN PHRASE + Là + < PREDICATION >**
- Here, too, the embedded <SUBJECT-PREDICATE> construction qualifies the utterance as a complex sentence. Examples:

- (139) Thiển-kiến của tôi là < chúng ta đều phải cố-gắng hơn nữa >.  
 (shallow opinion of me be we equally must try more further)  
 'My shallow opinion is that we all must make further efforts.'
- (140) Chỉ-thị của Bộ là < mỗi Ti Tiêu-học mở khoá tu-nghiệp riêng >.  
 (order of ministry be each office primary ed open session  
 upgrade separate)  
 'The directive from the Ministry says that each provincial  
 educational office should organize its own refresher course.'

#### B. The subject is a verb phrase (VP)

This structure is used mostly in definitions and in explanations (to justify something). Except for the first type (10.5.8), all examples contain *là* (*V<sub>id</sub>*).

#### 10.5.8 SENTENCE = VERB PHRASE + VERB PHRASE

- (141) Học đi đôi với hành. (study go pair with practice)  
 'Study goes hand in hand with action.'
- (142) Học nói đi trước học đọc. (learn speak go before learn read)  
 '(You) learn to speak before learning to read.'
- (143) Học đọc đi kèm với học viết.  
 (learn read go together with learn write)  
 'You learn to read and to write at the same time.'

#### 10.5.9 SENTENCE = VERB PHRASE + Là + VERB PHRASE

- (144) Tập thể-đục là giữ-gìn sức khoẻ.  
 (drill physical education, be preserve strength healthy)  
 'To exercise is to preserve one's health.'
- (145) Hi-sinh là chấp-nhận một sự mất-mất nào đó.  
 (sacrifice, be accept one matter lose whatever that)  
 'Hi-sinh means to accept to lose something valuable.'

- (146) *Hì-sinh cùng nghĩa là chết vì một lý-tưởng cao-đẹp.*  
 (sacrifice, likewise mean be die because of one ideal lofty-pretty)  
 ‘Hi-sinh also means to sacrifice one’s life for a lofty ideal.’

*10.5.10 SENTENCE = VERB PHRASE + Là + NOUN PHRASE*

- (147) *Gả chồng cho ba cô con gái là ý-muốn của ông bà hàng xóm.*  
 (marry off husband for three classifier child female, be desire of  
 gentleman lady row hamlet)

‘Marrying off their 3 daughters is the wish of our neighbors.’

- (148) *Chạy cho cậu con cả sang Mỹ du-học là nỗi lo-âu của họ.*  
 (run for classifier son oldest go America study, be classifier worry  
 of them)

‘Their concern is to take the required steps to enable their oldest  
 son to go study in the U.S.’

*10.5.11 SENTENCE = VERB PHRASE + Là + < PREDICATION >*

- (149) *Hợp-tác là < mọi người họp nhau lại cùng làm >.*  
 (cooperate be every person gather each-other come together work)  
 ‘To cooperate means everyone works together on a project.’

*10.5.12 SENTENCE = VERB PHRASE + Là + PREP(OSITIONAL) PHRASE*

- (150) *Làm cách-mạng là để thay đổi đời sống và xã-hội.*  
 (make revolution be in order to change-exchange life and society)  
 ‘(The point of) making a revolution is in order to change life and  
 society.’

### C. The subject is a predication

Following the embedded <SUBJECT - PREDICATE> in the subject position, the predicate of the kernel sentence can be a VP, or a NP or a PREP(OSITIONAL) PHRASE, introduced by *là*. That predicate in the first three examples does not need *là*. Examples (151) and (152) contain a causative verb (*V<sub>cause</sub>*).

- (151) < Họ cười khóc-khích > làm chúng em then  
 (they laugh giggle make group younger sibling embarrassed)  
 ‘(The fact that) they giggled embarrassed us.’

- (152) < Thằng cháu Hải nói lú-lo > khiến các bác buồn cười.  
 (boy nephew H. speak babble cause PLURAL uncle feel laugh)  
 ‘Little Hải’s babbling made all uncles and aunts smile.’

- (153) < *Nước ấy thua trận* > *đã rõ-ràng ngay từ đầu.*  
 (country that lose war ANTERIOR crystal-clear right from head)  
 'That it will lose the war has been clear from the start.'
- (154) < *Chị cù-xú như thế* > *là rất đúng.*  
 (elder sister behave like so be very correct)  
 'It was very correct of you to behave that way.'
- (155) < *Anh nói thế* > *không đúng hẳn.*  
 (elder brother say so NEG correct completely)  
 'What you said isn't completely true.'
- (156) < *Ông ấy giải-thích thế* > *là sai.*  
 (gentleman that explain so, be incorrect)  
 'His explanation is incorrect.'
- (157) < *Bà ấy đòi hai trăm* > *là rẻ quá rồi.*  
 (lady that demand two hundred, be cheap excessively already)  
 'She asked for two hundred? That's quite cheap.'
- (158) < *Anh từ-chối* > *là rất phải.* (elder brother refuse, be very right)  
 'Your declining was the right thing to do.'
- (159) < *Anh không dự buổi họp hôm nọ* > *là một điều hay.*  
 (elder brother NEG attend half-day meet day other, be one thing good)  
 'Your not attending the meeting the other day was a good thing.'
- (160) < *Chúng ta đóng thuế thu-nhap* > *là nghĩa-vụ công-dân đấy.*  
 (we inclusive pay tax income, be obligation citizen believe me)  
 'For us to pay income tax is indeed a citizen's obligation.'
- (161) < *Bác Quảng làm thế* > *là vì mọi người trong họ.*  
 (uncle Q. do so, be because of every person inside family)  
 'Uncle Quảng did so for the good of everybody in the family.'
- (162) < *Xã-hội cũ phát-triển chậm-chạp* > *là tại các tập-doàn phong-kiến.*  
 (society old develop slowly, be because PLURAL group feudalist)  
 'The old society developed slowly because of feudalist groups.'
- (163) < *Hai đứa bỏ nhau* > *là tại gia-dinh thằng chồng.*  
 (two individual leave each other, be because of family guy husband)  
 'They divorced because of his family.'
- (164) < *Cụ Nhàn chóng khỏi* > *là nhờ ông bác-sĩ tận-tâm.*  
 (greatgrandfather N. fast recover, be rely gentleman doctor devoted)  
 'Mr. Nhàn recovered fast thanks to a dedicated doctor.'

### 10.6 Adjuncts to the kernel < S-P > sentence

Outside the essential Subject-Predicate structure, a simple sentence usually contains some adjunct constituents, which serve a number of functions to further modify the central predication.

We can distinguish a vocative adjunct, a circumstantial adjunct, an appositive adjunct, a focal adjunct, and a transitional adjunct.

#### 10.6.1 The vocative adjunct.

This constituent consists of relatively emotional words or phrases, which express an exclamation, a call, a curse, or an oath simply added to the main predication. This vocative adjunct usually begins an utterance. But it can also be placed at the end of an utterance or even between the subject and the predicate. Examples:

*Ôi chao! mệt quá!* (oh tired too much) ‘Oh, I’m exhausted!’

*Trời ôi! Tính sao bây giờ?* (oh heaven figure out how now)  
‘Heavens! How can I cope with it?’

*Mình ơi! Cứu em với!* (oh darling rescue me please)  
‘Honey! Help me!’

*Ái! Đau quá!* (ouch hurt too much) ‘Ouch! It hurts.’

*Chết! Sao nó ra bờ ao làm gì?*  
(death, why he exit edge pond do what)

‘Woe! What was he doing near the pond?’

*Úi chào! Trên này sương mù ghê thế này à!*  
(wow space above this fog mist awful manner this really?)

‘Wow! Is it always this foggy up here?’  
*Chúa tôi! Lại bão to nữa!* (lord me again storm big additionally)

‘My Lord! Another hurricane!’

*Hú vía! May mà chúng tôi không đáp chuyến máy bay đó!*  
(call soul, lucky that we exclusive not ride trip plane that)

‘Phew! A narrow escape! Luckily we were not on that flight.’  
*Không phải đâu, anh Bình à.* (not correct anywhere, brother B voc)

‘It’s not like that, Binh.’

*Cái kéo của Bà, quỉ-sú, hỏng mất rồi!*  
(classifier scissors of grandma, devil, out of order loss already)

‘The devil! Someone broke my scissors!’

*Úa! Anh tối hồi nào đấy?* ‘Hey, when did you get here?’

*Mẹ kiếp! Ô-tô lại chết máy rồi!*

(mother fate, automobile again die engine already)

'My damned fate! The car engine is dead again!'

*Lêu lêu! Mắc cở!* (oh oh shame, ashamed) 'Shame on you!'

### 10.6.2 The circumstantial adjunct.

This adjunct is no other than an adverbial phrase, which adds some meaning to the main predication in terms of circumstances of time, place, means, purpose, manner, state, etc. The adverbial phrase may consist of just a noun or a noun phrase, or it may be a prepositional phrase.

Examples:

#### Time and Place :

*Năm nay, California mưa nhiều.* (year this, California rain much)

'California has a lot of rain this year.'

*Mai, chúng tôi ra sông Potomac câu cá.*

(tomorrow, we exclusive exit river Potomac catch fish)

'Tomorrow we'll go fishing on the Potomac River.'

*Ở San José, có nhiều người Mexico.*

(at San José, exist many person Mexico)

'There are many Mexicans in San José.'

*Ở nhà quê, về mùa gặt, vui đáo đế.*

(at house village, return season reap fun radically)

'In the countryside there is great fun during harvest time.'

*Về mùa hè, trên San Francisco, hay có sương mù.*

(return season summer, space above SF, often exist fog mist)

'In the summer, it is often foggy in San Francisco.'

When they co-occur, the time adverbial usually comes first:

*Đến đời nhà Trần, Nho-giáo hầu như thành quốc-giáo.*

(reach era house Trần, Confucianism almost become state religion)

'Under the Trần dynasty, Confucianism nearly became the state religion.'

*Thỉnh thoảng, ông ấy dùng xe buýt lên thăm chúng tôi.*

(once in a while, gentleman that use bus ascend visit we exclusive)

'Occasionally he takes the bus to come up and visit us.'

*Lâu lâu, bà ấy lại rủ chúng tôi đi Chợ Trời.*

(long long, lady that again invite we exclusive go market sky)

'Every now and then she invites us to go with her to the Flea Market.'

*Sang nǎm, cả hai cháu gái đều ra trường.*

(come over year, all two niece [of yours] equally exit school)

'Next year both our daughters will graduate.'

*Xưa nay, chả ai hỏi vợ kiều dở!*

(from before until now, not whoever ask wife fashion that)

'From ancient times until now, nobody has looked for a wife that way.'

Purpose:

*Vì sinh-kế, anh ấy phải dọn lên tận Alaska.*

(because livelihood, he have to move ascend all the way Alaska)

'To make a living he had to move all the way to Alaska.'

*Để tiết-kiệm thì-giờ, chúng ta hãy nên bàn ngay vấn-dề ấy đã.*

(in order to save time, we inclusive EXHORTATIVE should discuss right away problem that first)

'To save time let's discuss that problem right away first.'

Means and Comparison:

*Bằng con mắt nghi- ngờ, ông thư-kí già quay sang nhìn tôi.*

(by means of classifier eye suspect, gentleman clerk old turn over look me)

'The old clerk turned around and gave me a suspicious look.'

*Theo chỉ-thị của Bộ Giáo-đục, đơn xin học-bổng phải nộp trước ngày 15 tháng giêng.*

(follow order of ministry education, application ask scholarship must submit before day 15 month principal)

'According to the Education Ministry directive, applications for scholarships must be submitted before January 15.'

*So với năm ngoái, bà ấy mập ra nhiều.*

(compare with year past, lady that fat out much)

'She's much fatter (now) than last year.'

*So với ông cùi, ông ba trông già hơn đây.*

(compare with gentleman oldest, gentleman third look old more I say)

'Uncle Number 3 looks older than Uncle Number 1.'

Manner:

*Lễ phép, mẹ con chị Dậu cùng cúi chào. ("Tắt đèn")*

(polite, mother child elder sister D. together bow salute)

'Dâu and her child politely bowed down and said good-bye.'

*Ôm đứa con vào lòng, bà ấy lấy khăn tay lau nước mắt.*

(hug classifier child enter bosom, lady that take kerchief hand wipe water eye)

'Hugging her child in her bosom, she used a hankie to wipe her tears.'

*Ngạc-nhiên, tôi bỏ ra khỏi phòng để kiếm ông giám đốc.*

(surprised, I leave exit from room in order to find gentleman director)

'Surprised, I left the room to look for the director.'

*Tà-tà bóng ngả về tây.* (slant shadow bend toward west)

'The sun was slanting toward the west.'

*Mịt-mù dãm cát đồi cây.* (dust-mist trail sand hill tree)

'Sand trails, wooded hills clouded in mist'

*Xập-xè én liệng lầu không.* (rustle swallow hover tower empty)

'Swallows rustled through the empty home.'

[These three lines from *The Tale of Kiều* each start with a reduplicated adjective full of imagery.]

*Chân nam [= dãm] đá chân chiếu, người say rượu trở lại lò gạch.*

(foot right kick foot left, person drunk wine return back kiln brick)

'Staggering, the drunkard returned to the brickkiln.'

### 10.6.3 The appositive adjunct.

A noun or noun phrase may be placed after another as an explanatory equivalent, both of them having the same syntactic relation to the other elements in the sentence:

*Nguyễn Du, nhà thơ lớn của Việt-nam, đã để lại một truyện nôm  
bất-hủ gồm 3.254 câu thơ.*

(Nguyễn Du, expert poet great of Vietnam, ANTERIOR leave behind one tale southern immortal consist of 3,254 line verse)

'Nguyễn Du, Vietnam's great poet, has left an immortal tale composed of 3,254 lines of vernacular nôm verse.'

*Linh-mục Lê Văn Lý, nguyên Viện-trưởng Viện Đại-học Đà-lạt, là một  
nhà ngữ-học kíệt-xuất.*

(priest LVL, former rector institute university Dalat, be one expert linguist outstanding)

‘Father Lê Văn Lý, former Rector of Dalat University, was an outstanding linguist.’

*Năm 1010, Thăng-long---ngày nay là Hà-nội---được Lý Thái-tổ chọn làm thủ-đô.*

(year 1010, Thăng-long day this be Hanoi get Lý Thái-tổ choose do capital)

‘In 1010, Thăng-long---present-day Hanoi---was chosen by Emperor Lý Thái-tổ to be the capital city.’

*Chúng tôi ở chơi hai hôm với anh chị Nguyễn Hiếu---là thố-công thành-phố Niu-Oóc.*

(we exclusive stay play two day with elder brother elder sister NH, be kitchen-god city New York)

‘We spent two days with Nguyễn Hiếu and his wife, who really know the city of New York inside out.’

*Vụ giết người đó, mà báo-chí đã tường-thuật đầy-dủ, đáng làm cho cộng-dồng ta xấu-hổ.* [The adjunct is enclosed with commas.]

(affair kill person that, which newspaper magazine ANTERIOR relate fully, merit make community we inclusive ashamed)

‘That murder---of which (incidentally) the press has given a full account---rightly makes our community feel ashamed.’

[cf. *Vụ giết người < mà báo-chí đã tường-thuật đầy-dủ > .....*

‘The murder of which the press has given a full account .....’]

#### 10.6.4 The focal adjunct.

One word or one phrase within the main predication may be fronted so as to highlight a fact, a phenomenon, an idea, which is thus “topicalized”, i.e. made into a topic or a “therme”. The latter is followed by a comma pause, following which the rest of the utterance is optionally introduced by *thì*.

Examples:

*Tôi (thì) tôi hoàn-toàn tán-thành. < Tôi hoàn-toàn tán-thành*  
(me then I entirely approve)

‘As for me, I fully approve of it.’

*Rộng* thì *cái văn-phòng* đó *rộng* *lớm*. < *Cái văn-phòng* đó *rộng* *lớm*.  
 (spacious then classifier office that spacious very)

‘As for size that office is very large.’

*Lạp-xường* (*thì*) *còn hai đôi*, *chứ trứng muối* (*thì*) *hết sạch*.  
 (sausage then remain two pair, but egg salted then finish clean)

< *Còn hai đôi lạp-xường*, *chứ hết sạch trứng muối* *rồi*.

‘Of Chinese sausages, there are two pairs left. As for salted eggs, though, we are completely out of them.’

*Giàu* (*thì*) *tôi cũng giàu* *rồi*. < *Tôi giàu* *rồi*.  
 (rich then I likewise rich already)

‘Speaking of being wealthy, I have been wealthy.’

*Cá anh sinh-viên* *ấy* *thì tôi biết rõ* *quá* *rồi*.  
 (classifier fellow student that, then I know clearly excessively already)

< *Tôi biết quá rõ cá anh sinh-viên* *ấy* *rồi*.

‘That student? I know him too well.’

*Chuyện* *đó*, *con xin để* *thày mẹ quyết định* *ya*.  
 (matter that, child beg let dad mom decide POLITE PARTICLE)

< *Con xin để thày mẹ quyết định chuyện* *đó* *ya*.

‘Mom and Dad, on that matter, I’ll leave it for you to decide.’

*Rượu* *không uống*, *thuốc lá* *không hút*, *mà cũng bị ung thư!*  
 (wine not drink, cigarette not smoke, yet likewise suffer cancer)

< *Không uống rượu*, *không hút thuốc lá*, *mà cũng bị ung thư*.

‘No drinking, no smoking, yet he has cancer just the same!’

*Cờ-bạc* *không*, *rượu-chè* *không*, *thật là một người chồng lý-tưởng!*  
 (chess gamble not, wine tea not, really be one classifier husband ideal)

< *Không cờ-bạc*, *không rượu-chè*: *thật là một người chồng lý-tưởng!*

‘Doesn’t gamble, doesn’t drink---really an ideal husband!’

### 10.6.5 The transitional adjunct.

This element makes the transition (from one sentence or one thought to the next) smoother. The transitional adjunct, which introduces the second thought, is usually a word or a fixed phrase, such as

*cuối cùng* ‘finally’, *do đó*, *do vậy* ‘therefore’, *đại-khai là* ‘roughly speaking’, *hèn chí*, *hèn gì* ‘no wonder’, *hơn nữa*, *ngoài ra* ‘moreover, besides’, *huống chí*, *huống hồ* ‘all the more reason, much less’, *mặt khác*

'on the other hand', *nói cho cùng* 'to carry the argument further', (*nói*) *của* *đáng tội* 'well, to be fair; well, actually', *nói khác đi*, *nói một cách khác* 'in other words', (*nói*) *tóm lại* 'to sum it up', *thảo nào* 'no wonder', *thật vậy* 'indeed', *trái lại* 'on the contrary', *tuy nhiên* 'however, nevertheless', *và chăng*, *và lại* 'besides, moreover', etc. Some examples:

*Tôi không xin. Vả chăng có xin cũng chẳng được.*

(I not apply, besides EMPHATIC apply likewise not get)

'I did not apply. Besides, even if I apply I will never get it.'

*Thôi, khuya rồi, không đánh nữa. Vả lại, anh còn đang ho, cần ngủ.*

(stop late already not play more, besides you still coughing need sleep)

'Let's quit [the card game], it's getting late. Besides, you're still coughing. You need some sleep.'

*Nói tóm lại, đó là một vấn-dề tự-do cá-nhân.*

(speak sum up, that be one problem freedom individual)

'To sum it up, that is a question of personal freedom.'

*Trái lại, về phương-diện pháp-lí, cô ấy vô tội.*

(contrary back, regarding viewpoint legal, aunt that not guilty)

= *Về phương-diện pháp-lí, trái lại, cô ta vô tội.*

'On the contrary, from the legal point of view, she is not guilty.'

*Người dung ông ấy còn giúp, nữa là [= huống chi] chỗ họ-hàng.*

(person stranger gentleman that still help more reason place related)

'He helps strangers, all the more reason for him to help a relative.'

*Nó ốm. -- Hèn chi [= thảo nào] không thấy đến lớp.*

(he sick no wonder whatever not see come class)

'He's sick. -- No wonder he didn't come to class.'

### 10.7 Sentence expansion

Thus far we have reviewed a large number of sentence structures. Not counting the adjuncts, the essential kernel structure consists of two immediate constituents: a topic and a comment. Each of these positions is filled by a single word, as in the three simple sentences cited earlier in 10.1.1 :

(1) *Trời mưa.* (sky rain) 'It's raining.' (3) *Chim hót.* 'Birds are singing.' (4) *Nam cao.* 'Nam is tall.'

But in a real speech situation, normal sentences exchanged between two native speakers are likely to be longer than the minimal forms we have seen.

Indeed sentence (1), for instance, can easily be expanded into several larger sequences:

- (1a) *Trời sắp mưa.* 'It's going to rain soon.'
- (1b) *Trời mưa rồi, mẹ ơi!* 'Morn, it already started raining.'
- (1c) *Trời vừa mưa vừa nắng.* 'It's both rainy and sunny.'
- (1d) *Hôm kia, trời mưa to.* 'It rained hard day before yesterday.'
- (1e) *Hôm qua, trời không mưa.* 'It didn't rain yesterday.'

Sentence (3) can also be expanded into such utterances as:

- (3a) *Chim sẻ hót cũng hay.* 'Sparrows also sing well.'
- (3b) *Con chim ấy hót hay lắm.* 'That bird sings very beautifully.'
- (3c) *Các con kia chẳng hát gì cả.*  
(plural animal over there not sing whatever all)  
'The ones over there don't sing at all.'
- (3d) *Con gà trống này gáy to và ăn khoẻ.*  
(animal rooster this crow big and eat strong)  
'This rooster crows loudly and eats a lot.'

Some expanded forms of sentence (4) can be as follows:

- (4a) *Em Nam cao quá nhỉ!* 'Brother Nam is so tall, don't you think?'
- (4b) *Năm nay Nam cao hẳn lên.*  
(year this Nam tall clearly upward)  
'This year Nam grew noticeably taller.'
- (4c) *Nam và Bắc cao bằng nhau.* (Nam and Bắc tall equal each other)  
'Nam and Bắc are of the same height.'
- (4d) *Đông vừa cao vừa khoẻ.* (and tall and strong)  
'Đông is both tall and strong.'

Historically *vừa .... vừa ....* 'both .... and ....' (in examples 1c and 4d) used to be *và .... và ....*

Coordinators [7.2.2; 8.0 (4)] used in the above sentences are:

- vừa mưa vừa nắng* (example 1c)
- con (chim) này và con (chim) ấy* (example 3b)
- gáy to và ăn khoẻ* (example 3d)
- Nam và Bắc* (example 4c)
- vừa cao vừa khoẻ* (example 4d)

Not only words (*Nam, Bắc*) and phrases (*con chim này, con chim ấy; gáy to, ăn khoẻ; vừa mưa, vừa nắng; vừa cao, vừa khoẻ*) can be conjoined in juxtaposition. Two or more sentences can also appear in sequences:  $S_1 + S_2 + S_3$ , etc.---with or without the help of connectives.

The occurrences of complex sentences will be examined in the next chapter after we take a look at different types of single sentences from the point of view of their structures and meanings.

## Chapter 11

### The Sentence (continued)

#### 11.1 Types of sentences

In terms of their semantic content, sentences can be divided into different types: the affirmative sentence, the negative sentence, the interrogative sentence, the imperative sentence, and the exclamatory sentence.

##### 11.1.1 The affirmative sentence.

Almost every sentence cited in the previous chapter is an affirmative sentence, since each of them amounts to an assertion, e.g.

- (1) *Hôm nay, nó học đàn.* (day this he study piano)  
‘He has his piano lesson today.’
- (2) *Nam thông-minh.* ‘Nam is intelligent.’
- (3) *Nam là cháu ông ấy.* (Nam be nephew gentleman that)  
‘Nam is his nephew.’

But when the assertion is emphatic, a common device consists in using the adverb *có* (7.1.2.3) or some particle before the predicative, e.g.

- (4) *Hôm nay, nó có học đàn.* ‘He did have his piano lesson today.’
- (5) *Nam có thông-minh thật* (really). ‘Nam is really intelligent.’
- (6) *Nam chính là cháu ông ấy.* ‘Nam is [precisely] his nephew.’
- (7) *X. có ăn hối-lộ.* ‘X did take bribes.’
- (8) *Tôi có gửi thư mời ông ấy mà!*  
(I EMPHATIC send letter invite gentleman that I told you before)  
‘I did send him an invitation.’

##### 11.1.2. The negative sentence.

A. Negation of the content of the predicate is expressed by means of an adverb (*không*, *chẳng*, *chỉ* ‘no, not’, *chưa* ‘not yet’) placed before the head verb (7.1.2.3) in “the comment”, as in

- (9) *Hôm nay, nó không học đàn.* ‘He didn’t have his piano lesson today.’
- (10) *Nó chẳng nói, chẳng rằng.* (he not speak not say)

'He did not say a word.'

- (11) *Nó chả ăn gì cả.* (he not eat whatever all)

'He doesn't eat anything at all.'

- (12) *Nó chưa ăn quà sáng* (he not yet eat snack morning).

'He hasn't had breakfast yet.'

- (13) *Giáp không thông minh lắm.* 'Giáp is not very intelligent.'

But to negate a nominal predicate---introduced by the equative verb *là*---one must use not *không*, *chẳng*, *chưa*, but *không phải*, *chẳng phải*, *chưa phải* as in

- (14) *Nam không phải là cháu ông ấy.*

(Nam not correct be nephew he)

'Nam is not his nephew.'

- (15) *Nó chẳng phải là gì cả đối với cô ấy.*

(he not correct be whatever all face with she)

'He is not anything to her.'

- (16) *Nó chưa phải là công-dân Mỹ.*

(he not-yet correct be citizen America)

'He's not a U.S. citizen yet.'

When the predicate contains a stative verb---which describes a quality, an attribute---there is a slight difference between *không* and *không phải là*. Contrast

- (17) *Chuyện đó không khó giải-quyết.*

'That matter is not difficult to solve.'

- (18) *Chuyện đó không phải là khó giải-quyết.*

'It's not true that that matter is difficult to solve.'

When someone has said, for instance, that "the matter is difficult to solve," sentence (18) is a stronger denial (= 'That matter is easy to solve.') than sentence (17), which merely states that the matter isn't difficult to solve.

B. Negation can also be achieved by placing the negator *không*, *chẳng*, *chưa* before the subject, if that subject is an indefinite substitute like *ai*, *người nào* 'whoever', *cái gì* 'whatever', *dâu* 'wherever', etc. (6.3.2.6).

- (19) *Không ai quên chuyện ấy.*

(not whoever forget affair that)

'Nobody has forgotten that.'

- (20) *Chẳng ai hỏi đến nó.* (not whoever ask reach he)  
       'Nobody talked to him.'
- (21) *Chả ai hỏi đến nó.* 'Nobody talked to him.'
- (22) *Chưa ai trả chìa khóa cả.*  
       (not yet whoever return key lock all)  
       'No one turned in their key yet.'
- (23) *Không người nào trả nợ cả.* (not person whichever pay debt all)  
       'Nobody paid their debt.'
- (24) *Không gì quý bằng tự-do.* (not whatever precious equal freedom)  
       'Nothing is so precious as freedom.'
- (25) *Chẳng đâu đẹp bằng Hà-nội.* (not wherever pretty equal Hanoi)  
       'No place is so beautiful as Hanoi.'
- (26) *Chưa kế-hoạch nào xong cả.* (not yet project whichever finish all)  
       'No project has been completed yet.'
- C. The whole sentence, i.e. the entire < S-P > predication, may be negated by placing *không phải* (là), *chẳng phải* (là) at the beginning:
- (27) *Không phải (là) tiểu-bang Cali thiếu tiền.*  
       (not correct be state California lack money)  
       'It's not that the State of California lacks money.'
- (28) *Chẳng phải (là) anh chồng biết.*  
       (not correct be fellow husband know)  
       'It's not that her husband knew about it.'
- (29) *Không phải Nam là cháu ông ấy.*  
       (not correct Nam be nephew he)  
       'It's not true that Nam is his nephew.'
- D. The utterance may contain a double negative.
- (30) *Không ai không khen nó.* (not whoever not praise he)  
       'Everyone praised him.'
- (31) *Chị ấy không thể không khóc.* (she not can not cry)  
       'She couldn't help crying.'
- (32) *Không phải là tiểu-bang Cali không thiếu tiền.* [cf. ex. (27)]  
       (not correct be state California not lack money)  
       'It's not that the State of California doesn't lack money.'
- (33) *Chẳng phải là anh chồng không biết.* [cf. ex. (28)]  
       'It's not that her husband doesn't know about it.'

- (34) *Chá ngày nào là Hoàng không gọi dây nói về Việt-nam cho vợ.*  
 (not day whichever be H. not call wire talk return Vietnam to wife)  
 ‘There’s not one day when H. does not call his wife in VN.’
- (35) *Chẳng đêm nào là ông không dậy ba bốn lần.*  
 (not night whichever be Grandpa not rise three four time)  
 ‘There isn’t a night when Grandpa doesn’t get up three or four times.’
- E. The utterance may use the final particle *dâu!* to state a strong denial  
 (6.3.2.3; 7.3.2) as in
- (36) *Hồng-công có rẻ dâu!* (Hongkong EMPHATIC cheap where)  
 ‘Hongkong is not cheap.’

The element *dâu* (with heavy stress) may begin the predicate, as in (37):

- (37) *Hồng-công dâu có rẻ!* ‘Hongkong is not cheap.’
- (38) *Hồng-công không rẻ dâu!* (Hongkong not cheap where)  
 ‘Hongkong is not cheap. [Don’t kid yourself.]’
- (39) *Tôi (có) mượn bút của anh dâu!*  
 (I EMPHATIC borrow pen of you where)  
 ‘I did not borrow your pen.’
- (40) *Trước đây tôi có quên cái gì dâu!*  
 (before here I EMPHATIC forget thing whatever where)  
 ‘I did not forget anything in the past, did I?’
- (41) *Ông Mỹ này có ăn cay được dâu!* [ $=$  *không ăn cay được dâu!*]  
 (gentleman American this, EMPHATIC eat peppery-hot OK where = not eat hot OK where)  
 ‘This American gentleman can not eat spicy stuff.’
- (42) *Mồng 5 tháng tư thì chưa xong giấy tờ dâu!*  
 (day 5 month four then not yet finish paper-sheet where)  
 ‘We won’t get all the papers by April 5.’
- (43) *Chị đừng lo nấu cơm: chúng tôi ăn trên tàu, không đói dâu!*  
 (you PROHIBITIVE worry cook rice: we exclusive eat on train  
 not hungry where)  
 ‘Don’t bother to cook. We are eating on the train, so won’t be hungry at all.’
- (44) *Có ấy không chịu dâu!* ‘She won’t agree to that. [don’t insist.]’
- F. The complement of a verb denoting prohibition, refusal, forgetting, cessation or omission often takes *không* (see anecdote in 9.3.1.7), e.g.

- (45) *Cấm không được hút thuốc!* (forbid not get smoke cigarette)  
       ‘No smoking!’ [= *Cấm hút thuốc!*]
- (46) *Tôi từ-chối không dự bữa tiệc đó.*  
       (I decline not attend meal banquet that)  
       ‘I refused to attend the dinner.’
- (47) *Chết! Tôi quên không bỏ thư!* (death I forget not drop letter)  
       ‘Gee! I forgot to mail the letter.’ [= *Tôi quên bỏ thư!*]
- (48) *Nó quên không dán tem.* (he forget not stick stamp)  
       ‘He forgot to put a stamp.’ [= *Nó quên dán tem.*]
- (49) *Anh ấy thôi không đánh con nữa.*  
       (elder brother that stop not beat child more)  
       ‘He stopped beating his child.’ [= *Anh ấy thôi đánh con rồi.*]

### 11.1.3. The interrogative sentence.

A. The choice question. One type of question---the “yes-or-no” question---requires either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ as an answer, so has been also called the “alternative question”.

1. The pattern of coordination is used by placing the disjunction connective *hay* (*là*) ‘or’ between two words or two phrases, as in
- (50) *Chị hay (là) chị Thảo đi trước?* (you or elder sister Thảo go before)  
       ‘Are you or sister Thảo going first?’
- (51) *Cái áo ba-dờ-xuy này, Bố tính cho anh Chính hay (là) anh Hiển?*  
       (classifier coat overcoat this, dad plan give brother C. or brother H.)  
       ‘Daddy, this overcoat, you plan to give it to Chính or to Hiển?’
- (52) *Em muốn mua rau ở Safeway hay (là) Phố Tàu?*  
       (younger sister want buy vegetables at Safeway or town China)  
       ‘Honey, do you want to buy vegetables at Safeway or in Chinatown?’
- (53) *Mấy ông mua vé theo giá chính-thức hay (là) theo giá chợ đen?*  
       (few gentleman buy ticket follow price official or follow price market black)  
       ‘Did you gentlemen buy your tickets at the official rate or at the black-market rate?’
- (54) *Hai cô muốn dạo phố, sắm đồ hay ngồi nhà xem tivi?*  
       (two young lady want stroll street, buy thing or sit home watch TV)  
       ‘You want to walk downtown, shop or stay home and watch TV?’

2. The disjunctive phrase *có .... không?* or *dã .... chưa?* is used, e.g.
- (55) *Anh có tiền lẻ không?* (elder brother have money odd or-not)  
       ‘Do you have some change?’
- (56) *Anh có cần tiền lẻ không?*  
       (elder brother EMPHATIC need money odd or-not)  
       ‘Do you need some change?’
- (57) *Anh đã lĩnh lương chưa?* (elder brother ANTERIOR receive salary yet)  
       ‘Have you received your pay check yet?’

The query in example (56) is understood to be the result of successive reductions from

- (56a) *Anh có cần tiền lẻ hay không cần tiền lẻ?*  
       (... emphatic need money odd or not need money odd)
- (56b) *Anh có cần tiền lẻ hay không?* [after deleting *cần tiền lẻ*]  
       (... emphatic need money odd or not)
- (56) *Anh có cần tiền lẻ không?* [after deleting the connective *hay*].  
       A final --- optional --- deletion of *có* would result ultimately in
- (56c) *Anh cần tiền lẻ không?*, which contains only the question particle *không* and which means exactly ‘Do you need some change?’

Thus in informal situations, the preverb *dã* ‘anterior’ as in sentence (57) can be omitted, and the final particle *chưa* can by itself help the speaker ask whether an action or a state has happened yet, as in

- (57a) *Anh lĩnh lương chưa?* ‘Have you received your salary yet?’
- (58) *Thi chưa?* ‘[Did you] take [your] exam yet?’
- (59) *Còn nước gì chưa?* [rice water whatever yet]  
       ‘Have you eaten yet?’

B. The content question. The second type of question, which seeks some precise information, requires the use of question words (“who?, what?, where?, when?, why?, which?, whose?”) that are interrogative substitutes like *ai?*, *gi?*, *dâu?*, *bao giờ?*, *sao?*, or equivalent phrases like *người nào?*, *cái nào?*, *chỗ nào?*, *khi nào?*, *thế nào?*, *của ai?*, etc. (6.3.2.3) Additional examples:

- (60) *Ai khát nước?* (who thirsty water)  
       ‘Who is thirsty?’

The interrogative substitute *ai* occupies the slot which is filled by the answer in the response, for instance *Tôi khát nước.* ‘I am thirsty.’

- (61) *Chúng mình đợi ai?* (we inclusive await who)  
 ‘Whom are we waiting for?’

Answer: (*Chúng mình*) *dợi Giáo-sư Hiếu.*  
 ‘We’re waiting for Professor Hiếu.’

- (62) *Cậu uống gì?* (maternal uncle drink what)  
 ‘What do you want to drink?’ [asking a young man]

Answer: *Tôi uống trà nóng* (tea hot). ‘I’ll drink hot tea.’

- (63) *Ai uống gì nào?* (who drink what come-on)  
 ‘Who drinks what?’

- (64) *Xin mẫu đơn ở đâu?* (ask model application at where)  
 ‘Where do you ask for an application form?’

Again, the substitute *dâu* occupies the slot potentially filled by the answer, for instance *Xin mẫu đơn ở sở bưu-điện.* (ask model application at office post-and-telecom) ‘You ask for an application form at the post office.’ The word order in question (64) suggests that Vietnamese speakers have to learn to place the English interrogative word in front. On the other hand, speakers of English will find it easy to formulate such questions in Vietnamese if they keep in mind the “We wait for who? ” “You know what? ” “He go where? ” “She think how? ” word order.

- (65) *Ở đâu có bán đậu phộng?* (at where EMPHATIC sell tofu)  
 ‘Where do they sell tofu?’

Answer: *Đường Stockton có bán đậu phộng.* ‘On Stockton Street.’

Samples of content questions have been given in 6.3.2.3. Note the exception regarding a ‘when’ expression like *bao giờ*, *mấy giờ*, *hôm nào*, etc.

- (66) *Bao giờ máy bay tới?* (when machine-fly arrive)  
 ‘When is the plane coming?’

- (67) *Mấy giờ bắt đầu hát?* (what o’clock catch-head sing)  
 ‘What time will the show begin?’

- (68) *Cô Green về nước bao giờ?* (Miss G. return country when)  
 ‘When did Miss Green go home?’

- (69) *Ông Brown về nước hôm nào?* (Mr. B. return country day which)  
 ‘When did Mr. Brown go back home?’

Examples (66) and (67) ask about a future event, and questions (68) and (69) are about a past event.

C. The tag question. A tag question comparable to English “is it not?”, “do you?”, “weren’t they?”, etc., French *n’est-ce pas?*, and Spanish *no es verdad?* consists in seeking confirmation on some situation, as in

- (70) *Cô muốn ghi tên, phải không?*  
(you want register name, correct or not)

‘You wish to register, don’t you?’

- (71) *Quyển này đắt hơn, phải không?*  
(roll this expensive more, correct or not)

‘This one [book] is more expensive, isn’t it?’

- (72) *Bài thơ đó là của Nguyễn Trãi, đúng không?*  
(text poetry that be of N.T., accurate or not)

‘That poem is by Nguyễn Trãi, right?’

D. The final particles. Final particles such as *à?*, *sao?*, *u?*, *hả?*, *chẳng?*, *phỏng?*, *nhi?* may be used also to seek corroboration on some supposition. The first four examples connote surprise on the part of the speaker, though *sao?* is used more often in the Saigon dialect. While (73) through (76) are unproblematic, (78), (80), (82) and (83) are less so.

- (73) *Hôm nay anh bận à?* (day this, you busy, I’m surprised)  
‘So you are busy today?’

- (74) *Anh không mệt à?* (you not tired, I’m surprised)  
‘Aren’t you tired [after working so hard]?’

- (75) *Chị bệnh (hay) sao?* (you sick, or somehow) ‘Are you sick, sister?’  
(76) *Mẹ chưa tiêm (hay) sao?* (mother not-yet have shot or somehow)  
‘You haven’t had your shots yet? [How come?]’

- (77) *Không phải cần-sa hay sao?* (not correct marijuana or somehow)  
‘Isn’t that marijuana?’

- (78) *Chỉ có hai trăm thôi u?* (only exist two hundred stop really)  
‘Only two hundred? [I expected more]’

- (79) *Hết phim hả?* (finish film, huh) ‘Are you out of film?’

- (80) *Cô ấy bằng lòng lấy tên đó hở?*  
(she agree marry name that, I’m surprised)  
‘So she consents to marry that guy?’

- (81) *Họ quên chẳng?*  
(they forget I wonder)  
‘Could it be that they forgot? (I wonder)’

- (82) *Mình đáp chiếc xe buýt kia phỏng?*  
 (we inclusive board classifier vehicle bus over there right?)  
 'We're boarding that bus over there, aren't we?'  
 [The final particle *phỏng?* is a contracted form of *phải không?*]

- (83) *Chồng bà Chi là ai nha?* (husband lady Chi be who, do you know)  
 'Who is Chi's husband? I wonder.'

E. The rhetorical question. Finally a sentence which has the structure of a question may actually be an affirmative sentence, and does not expect an answer, e.g.

- (84) *Đời nào cô ấy chịu lấy ông già ấy?*  
 (era whichever she consent marry gentleman old that)  
 'Never will she agree to marry that old man!'

Cf. the paraphrase in (84a):

- (84a) *Không đời nào cô ấy chịu lấy ông già ấy đâu!*  
 (not era whichever she consent marry gentleman old that where)  
 'Never will she agree to marry that old man [believe me].'

- (85) *Nó láo thế, ai mà tha được?*  
 (he insolent so, whoever that forgive okay)  
 'He was so insolent, who on earth can forgive him?'

This sentence can be paraphrased as (85a).

- (85a) *Nó láo thế, không ai tha được!*  
 (he insolent so, not whoever forgive okay)  
 'He was so insolent. Nobody can forgive him.'

- (86) *Ai chẳng biết?* (who not know) 'Who doesn't know that?!'

- (87) *Sáng nào mình chẳng làm hai tách cà-phê?*  
 (morning whichever you not do two cup coffee)  
 'Is there any morning you don't drink two cups of coffee, honey?'

Cf. the two paraphrases (88) and (89) :

- (88) *Sáng nào mình chẳng làm hai tách cà-phê là gì* ('be what')?  
 (89) *Sáng nào mình chẳng làm hai tách cà-phê đó sao* ('there how')?

The latter three highly idiomatic sentences uttered by a wife all mean something like "Don't you already as a rule drink two cups of coffee every morning? [You can't deny it.]"

*11.1.4. The imperative sentence.* This type of sentence formulates an order, a request, a compliment or an exhortation.

A. The final particles. In “emergency situations” a verb alone will suffice---with the help of intonation: *Im!* ‘Quiet!’ *Nín!* ‘[to child] Stop crying!’ *Thôi!* ‘Stop! That’s enough!’ *Cẩn-thận!* ‘Careful!’ *Đứng lại!* ‘Halt! Freeze!’ However, the most common imperative structure contains a final particle like *đi!* ‘go ahead and .....’ or *vết!* ‘together; so that we/you can be together’, the former used as an injunctive addressed even to one’s own group, and the latter used in earnest requests or entreaties.

- (90) *Thôi mày im đi!* (stop thou quiet IMPERATIVE)  
‘Shut up!’ [arrogantly to “inferior” or “equal”]
- (91) *Mày có im đi không?* (thou EMPHATIC quiet IMPERATIVE or-not)  
‘Won’t you shut up?’ [arrogantly]
- (92) *Anh ăn đi đã!* (you eat IMPERATIVE first)  
‘Go ahead and eat first.’
- (93) *Chờ tôi với!* (await me together with)  
‘Wait for me, please.’
- (94) *Cứu tôi với!* (rescue me together with)  
‘Help! [I’m in danger.]’
- (95) *Ông ngoại cho thằng Khánh nó đi với!*  
(grandfather outer let boy Khánh he go together with)  
‘Grandpa, please let Khánh go with you, will you?’

B. The imperatives *hãy*, *dừng*, *chớ*. These adverbs help formulate some advice or admonition, and the counsel may be either positive or negative, e.g.

- (96) *Hãy bình-tĩnh.* (EXHORTATIVE calm) ‘Keep calm!’
- (97) *Con hãy nén cõ-gắng làm cho bố vui lòng.*  
(child EXHORTATIVE should endeavor make father pleased heart)  
‘Be sure to try to please Daddy.’
- (98) *Người Việt-nam, xin đừng quên!*  
(person Vietnam beg PROHIBITIVE forget)  
‘Vietnamese! Please don’t forget.’ [a popular song by Thẩm Oánh]
- (99) *Chớ có theo bạn mà thử ma-tuy nhé!*  
(PROHIBITIVE follow friend and try narcotics, hear me)  
‘Don’t you let your friends talk you into trying drugs!’

- (100) “*Sông sâu chờ lội, đò đầy chờ đi.*” [a proverb]  
     ‘River deep---don’t ford it; ferry crowded---don’t ride it.’
- C. The polite request. Regular verbs may be used to make requests, e.g. “(I) invite you”, “(I) beg you”, “(I) request”, “(I) suggest”, as in
- (101) *Mời bố mẹ xơi món cá này a!*  
     (invite dad mom eat dish fish this POLITE PARTICLE)  
     ‘Dad and Mom, please help yourselves to this dish!’
- (102) *Xin hai anh cứ ăn tự-nhiên!*  
     (beg two elder brother go ahead eat naturally)  
     ‘Please help yourselves. Don’t be shy! No ceremony!’
- (103) *Yêu-cầu quý-vị chú-ý!*  
     (request distinguished-persons pay attention)  
     ‘Please may I have your attention, ladies and gentlemen?’
- (104) *Đề-nghị chúng ta cho các cháu bé ăn trước.*  
     (suggest we inclusive let plural nephew/niece small cat before)  
     ‘May I suggest that we let the children eat first?’

It is customary to use a pleasant tone of voice, especially in a large crowd that includes several older persons, who deserve all the honorific terms. Shouting across the room is not considered polite behavior.

**11.1.5** The exclamatory sentence. Any narrative or descriptive sentence can be turned into an exclamatory sentence, especially with the help of the final particle *thay!* ‘how ...!', a phrase like *làm sao!* ‘how ...!', *biết bao!* ‘[heaven] know how much ...!', *biết chừng nào!* ‘[heaven] know extent whichever', *xiết bao!* ‘[one can't describe] adequately how much' --- and a crescendo intonation (2.10). e.g.

- (105) *Hay quá!* (interesting excessively) ‘How interesting! How clever!’
- (106) *May thay!* ‘How fortunately!’
- (107) *Bức tranh sơn-thủy đó mới đẹp làm sao!*  
     (classifier painting mountain-water that only-then beautiful how)  
     ‘How exquisite that landscape painting is!’
- (108) *Sao mà con Mỹ-Khuê giống mẹ nó thế?*  
     (how girl Mỹ-Khuê resemble mother her so)  
     ‘Mỹ-Khuê looks so much like her mother!’
- Sometimes *thay* or *sao* is placed inside the sentence, e.g.

- (109) *Dau-dớn thay, phận dàn-bà!* (painful how, fate woman)  
       ‘How sorrowful a woman’s lot!’ [*The Tale of Kiều*]
- (110) *Mặt sao dày gió dạn sương!* (face how endure wind bear frost)  
       ‘How weather-beaten her face has been!’ [*The Tale of Kiều*]

### 11.2 The compound sentence

The compound sentence can be generated through three different processes: concatenation, the use of paired substitutes, and the use of connectives.

#### 11.2.1 Concatenation of simple sentences.

The first process consists in forming a string of simple sentences placed in juxtaposition, thus Sentence<sub>1</sub> + Sentence<sub>2</sub> + Sentence<sub>3</sub>, etc. The structure is loose-jointed, there can be any number of constituents, and the order in which they appear is purely arbitrary, e.g.

- (1) *Nó chạy, nó nhảy, nó bơi.* ‘He ran, he jumped, he swam.’  
       or ‘It ran, it jumped, it swam.’
- (2) *Tàu cười, Tây khóc, Nhật no.*  
       ‘The Chinese are laughing, the French are crying, the Japanese eat their full.’ [This refers to the situation in 1945 Vietnam.]
- (3) *Trời mưa, tôi không đi.* (1.11) ‘It’s raining. I’m not going.’

The semantic relation between the elements in (1) and (2) is not clear, and the series of simple sentences often denote sequential actions or simultaneous activities. The two constituents of (3), on the other hand, may reveal some semantic relation in various contexts:

- ‘When it rains, I don’t go out.’
- ‘If it rains, I won’t go.’
- ‘Because it’s raining, I am not going.’

(The disambiguating process depends on the use of connectives.)

- (4) *Tôi làm, nó làm. Tôi nghỉ, nó nghỉ.* is another example of a series that may mean variously
- ‘When I work, he works. When I stop, he stops.’
  - ‘If I work, he works. If I stop, he stops, too.’
  - ‘He worked because I worked. And he also stopped because I stopped.’

### 11.2.2 Correlative pronouns.

Forms such as *này* 'that same one', *ấy* 'that', *vậy* 'that same way', *dẩy* 'that same place', *bấy* 'that same extent' are used in correlation with an indefinite substitute like *ai* 'whoever' or *nào* 'whichever'. Examples are:

- (5) *Ai làm này chịu.* (whoever do, that same person suffer)  
‘Whoever did it has to suffer.’
- (6) *Mạnh ai này chạy.* (strong whoever, that same person run)  
‘It was a run for your life.’ [Fr. “sauve-qui-peut”]
- (7) *Bàn chải của ai, người ấy dùng.*  
(table brush of whoever, person that use)  
‘Each one uses his/her own (tooth)brush.’
- (8) *Việc ai này làm.* (job whoever, that same person do)  
‘Each one takes care of his/her own job.’
- (9) *Cờ ai này phất.* (flag whoever, that same person wave)  
‘Each waving his/her own flag.’
- (10) *Cha nào, con này.* (father whichever, child that same one)  
‘Like father, like son.’
- (11) *Cha mẹ đặt đâu, con ngồi đây.*  
(father mother place wherever, child sit that same place)  
‘You sit wherever your parents put you.’ [fig. ‘You marry whatever husband your parents selected for you.’]
- (12) *Ai ở đâu ở đây.* (whoever stay wherever, stay that same place)  
‘Wherever you are, you should stay there.’
- (13) *Vợ nó bảo sao nó làm (như) vậy.*  
(wife he tell however, he do like that same way)  
‘He does exactly how his wife tells him to do.’
- (14) *Kiếm bao nhiêu, tiêu bấy nhiêu.*  
(earn however much, spend that much)  
‘He spends whatever he earns.’

### 11.2.3 Connectives of coordination.

Thirdly, the structuring of compound sentences relies upon connectives that express various relations (7.2.2), e.g.

- conjunction (*và* 'and', *còn* 'whereas, while'),
- disjunction (*hay*, *hay là*, *hoặc*, *hoặc là* 'or').

- cause and effect (*vì .... nên ....; tai .... cho nên ....; sở dĩ .... là vì ....* ‘the reason why.... is because ....’),
- condition or supposition (*mà .... thì ....* ‘if .... then ....’; *hết .... là ....* ‘as soon as ...., then ....’; *nếu .... thì ....* ‘if .... then ....’; *đóng .... là ....* ‘as soon as .... then ....’),
- concession (*tuy .... nhưng ....* ‘although .... [yet] ....’; *thà .... chứ không ....* ‘rather .... than ....’; *dù .... vẫn ....* ‘even though .... still ....’; *mặc dầu .... vẫn ....* ‘even though .... still ....’),
- progression (*càng .... càng ....* ‘the more .... the more ....’; *không nhũng/chỉ .... mà còn ....* ‘not only ...., but also ....’), etc.

Strictly speaking, these relations are relations of INTERDEPENDENCE rather than relations of SUBORDINATION.

- (15) *Anh tôi thích Đà-lạt, còn tôi thích Nha-trang.*  
 (elder brother me like Dalat, as for me like Nhatrang)  
 ‘My brother likes Dalat, and I like Nha-trang.’
- (16) *Anh về ngay hay ở lại?*  
 (elder brother return immediately or stay behind)  
 ‘Are you leaving right now or are you staying?’
- (17) *Chị đi chợ hay là em đi chợ?*  
 (elder sister go market or younger sibling go market)  
 ‘Sis, are you going to market or am I?’
- (18) *Bà mua ớt chuông hay ớt cay? --- Ớt tây hoặc ớt ta cũng được.*  
 (lady buy pepper bell or pepper hot --- pepper west or pepper ours likewise okay)  
 ‘Do you want to buy bell peppers or pimentos, ma’am? --- Either western peppers or Vietnamese peppers will do.’

Whereas the connective or conjunction *hay (là)* is used in choice (yes-or-no) questions (11.1.3A), *hoặc* cannot be used in such an alternative question. Instead, when a statement contains *hoặc*--as in the response in (18)--the connotation is that the alternatives are not mutually exclusive (“either one would be fine”).

- (19) *Anh đến 8 giờ hoặc [= hay] 9 giờ cũng được.*  
 (you come 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock likewise okay)  
 ‘Either 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock will be fine.’

- (20) *Hoặc bố hoặc mẹ, một người phải có mặt ở đây chứ!*  
 (either dad or mom, one person must have face at here I'm sure)  
 [mother speaking to child] ‘Either dad or I, one of us definitely  
 has to be present, I hope.’
- (21) *Vì không cẩn-thận nên tôi bị móc túi.*  
 (because not careful consequently I suffer pick pocket)  
 ‘Because I was not careful they picked my pocket.’

In this structure [*vì S<sub>1</sub> nên S<sub>2</sub>*], S<sub>1</sub>, that denotes a cause and is often called a “circumstantial clause” [Trần, Phạm & Bùi 1942: 23-27], can be placed after S<sub>2</sub> (the “effect clause”) : in that case, the element *nên* ‘as a result, consequently’ will be deleted from the fronted S<sub>2</sub>, as in

- (22) = *Tôi bị móc túi vì không cẩn-thận.* ‘id.’ [S<sub>2</sub> *vì* S<sub>1</sub>]

Several analysts, including the three above-cited co-authors, consider the circumstantial S<sub>1</sub> a subordinate sentence. We prefer to treat this as a case of coordination.

- (23) *Tại họ chủ-quan cho nên mới bị thất-bại.* [tại S<sub>1</sub> cho nên S<sub>2</sub>]  
 (because they subjective consequently only then suffer failure)  
 ‘They failed only because they were subjective.’
- (24) = *Họ bị thất-bại tại (họ) chủ-quan.* ‘id.’ [S<sub>2</sub> *tại* S<sub>1</sub>]
- (25) *Sở dĩ cuộc họp bị hoãn lại là vì văn-phòng ông bộ-trưởng chưa được chuẩn-bị* [The order of the two linked sentences is fixed.]  
 (the reason why session meet suffer postpone behind be because office  
 gentleman minister not yet get ready)  
 ‘The reason why the meeting was postponed is because the  
 minister’s office had not been made ready for it.’
- (26) *Pháp mà thi-hành đạo luật ấy thì dân-chúng sẽ phản đối liền.*  
 (France if carry out classifier law that then people shall oppose  
 immediately)  
 ‘If France implements that law, the people will immediately  
 protest.’

In the S<sub>1</sub> denoting condition, *mà* can be used with *nếu* ‘if’, and the combination is fronted, as in

- (27) = *Nếu mà Pháp thi-hành đạo luật ấy thì dân-chúng sẽ phản đối liền.* ‘id.’
- (28) = *Dân-chúng sẽ phản đối liền nếu (mà) Pháp thi-hành đạo luật ấy.*

- (29) *Nếu tôi không làm thì trước 1975 ông ta làm quận-trưởng.*

'If I am not mistaken, [then] he was a district chief before 1975.'

The connective may express either condition or supposition. Contrast the two sentences (30) and (31):

- (30) *Nếu có tiền, chúng tôi sẽ mua cái nhà ấy.*

(if have money, we exclusive shall buy classifier house that)

'If we have/had money, we will/would buy that house.'

- (31) *Nếu có tiền, thì chúng tôi đã mua cái nhà ấy rồi.*

(....., then we exclusive ANTERIOR buy classifier house that already)

'If we had had money, we would have bought that house.' [But we don't have money.]

Here *giá* 'if, by any chance' can substitute for *nếu*.

Sometimes the connective *nếu* does not express either condition or supposition, but comparison, e.g.

- (32) *Nếu Pike có công soạn cuốn "Phonemics" thì Nida có công soạn cuốn "Morphology".*

(if P. have credit compose book "Phonemics" then N. have credit compose book "Morphology")

'Whereas Pike was credited with the book *Phonemics*, Nida contributed the one on *Morphology*.'

- (33) *Ông nhà tôi hé nói là làm!*

(gentleman house me as soon as say be do)

'Once my husband says it, he does it!'

- (34) *Ông ấy khó tính lắm: động hỏi đến là gắt.*

(he difficult character very: move ask reach be holler)

'He's a very difficult man: as soon as you ask him something, he bursts into angry words.'

- (35) *Tuy nó mới có mười tuổi nhưng nó thông-minh bằng người mười bốn mươi lăm.*

(though he only have ten year (of age) but he intelligent equal person fourteen fifteen)

'Though he is only ten years old, he is as intelligent as somebody 14 or 15 years old.' [no need to translate *nhưng*]

Unlike the case in English, the S<sub>2</sub> that follows the concession has to be introduced by the connective *nhưng* or *song* 'but, however'.

The two juxtaposed sentences  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  can switch position, too :

- (36) *Thằng bé thông-minh lắm tuy mới có mười tuổi.*  
(boy small intelligent very though only have ten year (of age))  
‘The boy is very intelligent although (he is) only ten years old.’
- (37) *Dù / dẫu con có muốn cũng không được.*  
(though child EMPHATIC want, likewise not okay)  
‘Sonny, even though you want it, you still can’t have it.’
- (38) *Mặc dầu trời mưa, họ vẫn đá.*  
(though sky rain, they still kick)  
‘They [= the soccer teams] still played although it rained.’
- (39) *Dù muốn dù không, mình cũng vẫn phải đợi cho thằng Ninh học xong đã.*  
(though want though not, we inclusive likewise still must wait for boy Ninh study finish first)  
‘Whether we want it or not, we still have to wait until Ninh finishes his studies.’
- (40) *Dẫu sao chăng nữa, Phạm Quỳnh cũng đã có công góp phần vào việc xây-dựng nền quốc-văn mới.*  
(though whatsoever not additional, Phạm Quỳnh likewise ANTERIOR have credit contribute share enter task build up classifier national literature new)  
‘At any rate, Phạm Quỳnh deserved credit for his contribution to the buildup of a new national literature.’
- (41) *Tướng Phú bảo vợ: “Thà chết chứ không đầu-hàng”.*  
(general Phú tell wife: would rather die but not surrender)  
‘General Phú told his wife: “I’d rather die than surrender.”’
- (42) *Khi chàng du-học-sinh trở về thì mối tình của nàng lại càng đầm-thắm hơn nữa.*  
(time when classifier student turn return, then classifier love of her even increasingly intense more additionally)  
‘Upon the young scholar’s return from studying abroad, her love for him grew even more intense.’
- (43) *Ông ấy càng van xin thì đám thanh-niên càng la ó.*  
(he more pray beg, then mob youth more shout holler)  
‘The more he begged, the more loudly the crowd of youths roared.’

- (44) *Gừng càng già càng cay.* (ginger more old more pungent)  
       'The older ginger is, the more pungent it becomes.'
- (45) *Chị Kim-Hoàn trông càng ngày càng đẹp ra.*  
       (elder sister Kim-Hoàn look more day more beautiful out)  
       'Sister Kim-Hoàn looks prettier every day.'
- (46) *Học phí mỗi ngày một cao.* (study fee each day one high)  
       'Tuition fees are getting higher and higher.'
- (47) *Các văn-sĩ không những làm thi phú, mà còn làm các thể văn khác nữa.* [Đương Quảng-Hàm]  
       (plural writer not only do poem rhyme-prose, but also do plural genre writing other additionally)  
       'Writers not only composed poetry and rhyme-prose, but also wrote in other genres.'
- (48) *Không chỉ kỹ-sư cơ-khí, mà cả kỹ-sư hoá-học cũng khó kiếm việc.*  
       (not only engineer mechanics, but even engineer chemistry likewise difficult find job)  
       'Not only mechanical engineers, but also chemical engineers find it hard to land a job.'

More examples of coordination:

- (49) *Chiếc cầu đó, họ phải mất gần mười năm mới xây xong.*  
       (classifier bridge that, they must lose nearly 10 year then and only then build finish)  
       'They had to spend almost ten years before that bridge got built.'
- (50) *Ai, nó cũng vay tiền.* (whoever, he likewise borrow money)  
       'He would borrow money from anyone.'
- (51) *Đắt bao nhiêu, tôi cũng mua.*  
       (expensive however much, I likewise buy)  
       'I'll buy it no matter how expensive it is.'
- (52) *Mẹ ăn (cái) gì cũng được.*  
       (mom eat whatever likewise okay)  
       'Anything would be fine for Mom to eat.'
- (53) *Nhiều vũ-khí thế mà vẫn thua đáy!*  
       (many weapon so yet still lose there)  
       'Despite all those weapons they got beaten just the same.'

11.2.4 Within one compound sentence, each constituent can in turn consist of two or more submembers tied by some similar relation of interdependence:

- (54) *Nếu anh muốn mua mà chị ấy không đồng ý, thì anh không nên mua, tuy rằng đó có thể là một vụ đầu tư hay.*  
 (if you want buy yet sister that not agree, then you not should buy, though that has possibility be one affair invest interesting)  
 ‘If you want to buy that property but your wife doesn’t go along, then you shouldn’t buy---although that could be a good investment.’
- (55) *Hoa quỳnh lúc nở thì thật đẹp, nhưng nó chóng tàn, mà đã tàn thì không đẹp nữa tuy vẫn còn thơm.*  
 (flower night-blooming-cereus time open then really beautiful, but it fast wilt, and ANTERIOR wilt then not beautiful more, though still fragrant)  
 ‘The night-blooming cereus is really beautiful when the flower opens, but the bloom doesn’t last long, and once it is wilted it no longer looks pretty---though the fragrance still lingers on.’

### 11.3 The complex sentence.

We can distinguish two kinds of complex sentences: those that contain an embedded compleptive sentence, and those that contain an embedded determinative sentence.

11.3.1 The embedded compleptive sentence serves as complement of the “mother” or “matrix” sentence, which it follows, e.g.

- (56) *Dòng bị < vợ bỏ >.* (Đồng suffer: wife abandon)  
 ‘Đồng’s wife left him.’
- (57) *Nam được < bố mẹ vợ cho chiếc ô-tô mới >.*  
 (Nam gain: father mother wife give classifier automobile new)  
 ‘Nam’s parents-in-law gave him a new car.’
- (58) *Tám được < Liên yêu >.* (Tám gain: Liên love)  
 ‘Tám is loved by Liên.’
- (59) *Họ bầu Quân < làm chủ-tịch >.* (they vote Quân: do chairperson)  
 ‘They elected Quân chairperson.’
- (60) *Cô coi Châu < là kẻ thù >.* (she regard Châu: be person foe)  
 ‘She considers Châu an enemy.’

- (61) *Tôi nghĩ (rằng) < anh kia đúng >*.  
 (I think that: fellow other correct)  
 ‘I think that the other guy is right.’
- (62) *Tôi tưởng (là) < các anh không thích >*.  
 (I thought wrongly that: plural fellow not like)  
 ‘I thought (wrongly) that you fellows don’t like it.’
- (63) *Bác biết rằng < các cháu nhớ nhà >*.  
 (uncle know that: plural nephew/niece miss home)  
 ‘I [your uncle] know that you are homesick.’
- (64) *Chúng mình đừng hòng < nó giúp mình >*.  
 (we inclusive PROHIBITIVE hope: he help us inclusive)  
 ‘Let’s not entertain any hope that he will help us.’
- (65) *Gia-dình chúng tôi mong < quý-vị lượng-tình tha-thú >*.  
 (family we exclusive hope: distinguished persons sympathize forgive)  
 ‘Our family hope that you will understand and forgive us.’
- (66) *Mẹ đã nói rằng < chúng mình phải chờ ông ngoại >*.  
 (mom ANTERIOR say that: we inclusive must await grandfather outer)  
 ‘Mom said that we have to wait for Grandpa.’
- (67) *Chúng tôi đều tin-tưởng rằng < chính-nghĩa quốc-gia sẽ thắng >*.  
 (we exclusive equally believe that: just cause national shall win)  
 ‘We all believe that the national cause will prevail.’
- (68) *Bộ Ngoại-giao xác-nhận rằng < Công-chúa chưa đồng-ý >*.  
 (ministry foreign confirm that: princess not yet agree)  
 ‘The Foreign Office confirmed that Her Highness had not agreed.’
- (69) *Bên nào cũng nhấn mạnh là < mình tuân-thủ thoả-ước ngừng bắn >*.  
 (side any likewise emphasize that: self obey agreement stop-fire)  
 ‘Each side emphasizes that it abides by the cease-fire agreement.’
- (70) *Văn-thư của nhà trường bảo rằng < nó không hội đủ điều-kiện >*.  
 (letter of school say that: he not gather complete requirement)  
 ‘The note from the school says he doesn’t meet all requirements.’
- (71) *Tôi ngỡ < nó nói đùa >*. (I thought: he speak jest)  
 ‘I thought he was kidding.’
- (72) *Tôi biết thừa rằng < tên đó không thật-thà >*.  
 (I know surplus that: name that not honest)  
 ‘I’ve known all along that that guy is not honest.’

- (73) *Anh ấy tưởng rằng < cô ấy chê anh xấu trai >*.

(he thought wrongly that: she slight he ugly boy)

'He got the wrong impression that she thought he isn't handsome.'

The matrix sentence in each of the above examples contains a verb of saying, thinking, knowing, guessing, hoping, evaluating, etc. In the following examples, on the other hand, the matrix sentence contains a causative verb.

- (74) *Bà ấy cho < họ nghỉ sớm >*. (she let: they rest early)

'She allowed them to quit early.'

- (75) *Anh dέ < tôi làm ngay bây giờ >*. (you let: I do right now)

'Let me do it right now.'

- (76) *Nó làm < chúng tôi xấu hổ >*. (he make: we exclusive ashamed)

'He makes us feel ashamed.'

- (77) *Họ đòi < anh ấy (phải) từ-chức >*. (they demand: he must resign)

'They demand that he resign.'

- (78) *Luật-lệ cấm < sinh-viên không được hút thuốc lá >*.

(law forbid: student not allowed suck drug-leaf)

'The law prohibits students from smoking cigarettes.'

**11.3.2** The embedded determinative sentence---commonly known as "the relative clause"---serves as an attribute modifying the NP in the matrix sentence (7.1.2.1; 8.1.7), e.g.

- (79) *Nơi < tôi ra đời > đã bị bom đạn phá-huy.*

(place <I exit life> ANTERIOR suffer bomb bullet destroy)

'The spot where I was born has been destroyed by bombs and shells.'

- (80) *Cái ông < đeo kính đen > chắc là tay mật vụ.*

(classifier man <wear glasses black> surely be hand secret-affairs)

'The man with dark glasses must be a Secret Service agent.'

- (81) *Những cái máy tính < nhà trường vừa mua tuần trước > bị mất rồi.*

(plural classifier machine calculate <school just buy week before> suffer lose already)

'The calculators the school just bought last week have been lost.'

- (82) *Những ai < làm ca đêm > đều được trả lương phu-trội.*

(plural who <do shift night> equally gain pay salary supplementary)

'All those who work on the graveyard shift get overtime pay.'

- (83) *Những ông bà nào <chưa giữ chỗ> sẽ phải trả khoản phụ-trội.*  
 (plural gentleman lady any <not yet retain seat> shall must pay item extra)  
 ‘Those who didn’t make reservations will have to pay an extra fee.’
- (84) *Cái đồng-hồ <(mà) chú tôi vừa gửi cho tôi> không phải lên dây.*  
 (classifier watch <which uncle me just send to me> not must wind)  
 ‘The watch that my uncle just sent me does not need any winding.’
- (85) *Cái người thợ may <đến sáng ngày> cắt áo khéo.*  
 (cl cl artisan sew <arrive morning day> cut coat skillful)  
 ‘The tailor who came this morning is very skillful.’
- (86) *Tôi thích ngôi nhà gạch to-tưởng <(mà) ba nó vừa mua tậu>.*  
 (I like classifier house brick huge <that dad he just recently buy>)  
 ‘I like the huge brick house that his father just bought.’
- (87) *Người <(mà) tôi kính-trọng nhất> lại là một giáo-sư nghèo.*  
 (person <that I respect most> unexpectedly be one teacher poor)  
 ‘The person I respect most happens to be a poor teacher.’
- (88) *Cái ô-tô <trong đó cảnh-sát khám thấy ma-tuy> là chiếc Ford cũ.*  
 (classifier car <inside that police search find drug> be classifier Ford used)  
 ‘The car in which police found drugs is an old Ford.’
- (89) *Đó là cái chính-sách <vì đó Pháp mất mặt>.*  
 (that be classifier policy <because that France lose face>)  
 = *Đó là cái chính-sách <(mà) nó đã khiến cho Pháp mất mặt>.*  
 (that be classifier policy <which it ANTERIOR cause France lose face>)  
 ‘That is a policy which has caused France to lose face.’
- (90) *Việt-nam gửi một phái-doàn <do Giáo-sư XYZ cầm đầu>.*  
 (Vietnam send one delegation <origin professor XYZ hold head>)  
 ‘Vietnam sent a delegation led by Professor XYZ.’
- (91) *Họ đã tự-tiện.in lại quyển từ-diển <của tôi soạn hồi 1976>.*  
 (they ANTERIOR brazenly print again classifier dictionary <property I compile time 1976>)  
 ‘They printed a pirate edition of the dictionary I compiled in 1976.’
- (92) *Cây ổi <của anh Hiển trồng năm kia> ra bao nhiêu là quả!*  
 (tree guava <property brother Hiển plant year other> give out so many fruit)

- (93) ‘The guava tree Hiển planted two years ago has borne so much fruit.’  
*Quyển bách-khoa <(mà) tôi mua hôm nọ> bị ăn cắp mất rồi.*  
 (book encyclopedia <which I buy day other> suffer steal lost already)  
 ‘The encyclopedia I bought the other day has been stolen.’
- (94) ‘In all there are only 130 refugees who signed up for repatriation.’  
*Tất cả chỉ có 130 thuyền-nhân <dã đăng-ký tự-nguyễn hồi-hương>.*  
 (all only exist 130 boatpeople <ANTERIOR register voluntary  
 repatriate>)
- (95) ‘American Technologies---whose annual business [incidentally]  
 amounts to nearly 100 million dollars---is a Vietnamese corporation.’  
*American Technologies, <mà số thương-vụ hàng năm lên tới gần  
 100 triệu Mỹ-kim>, là một công-ty Việt-nam.*  
 (AT, <which amount commercial affairs yearly ascend reach nearly  
 100 million US dollars> be one company Vietnam)  
 ‘American Technologies---whose annual business [incidentally]  
 amounts to nearly 100 million dollars---is a Vietnamese corporation.’
- The adjunct enclosed by commas is a “non-essential, non-restrictive” predication introduced by the “relative” connective *mà* meaning variously ‘which, to which, of which, from which, against which, whose, etc.’

## APPENDIX 1

### PARTS OF SPEECH

#### I. FULL WORDS = CONTENT WORDS ( *thực-từ* )

##### A. SUBSTANTIVES ( *thể-từ* )

1. Nouns ( *danh-từ* )
- 1a. Classifiers ( *loại-từ* )
2. Locatives ( *phương-vị-từ* )
3. Numerals ( *số-từ* )

##### B. PREDICATIVES ( *vị-từ* )

4. (Functive) Verbs ( *động-từ* )
5. Stative Verbs = Adjectives ( *tính-từ* )

##### C. SUBSTITUTES ( *đại-từ* )

6. Substitutes ( *đại-từ* )  
Pro-nouns ( *đại-danh-từ* )  
Pro-verbs ( *đại-vị-từ* )

#### II. EMPTY WORDS = FUNCTION WORDS ( *hư-từ* )

##### D. ADVERBS ( *phó-từ* )

7. Adverbs ( *phó-từ* )

##### E. CONNECTIVES ( *quan-hệ-từ* )

8. Prepositions ( *giới-từ* )  
Conjunctions ( *liên-từ* )

##### F. PARTICLES ( *tiểu-từ* *tình-thái* )

9. Initial and Final Particles ( *tình-thái-từ* )
10. Interjections ( *cảm-thán-từ* )

## APPENDIX 2

### TEXTS

#### 1. FOLK VERSE ABOUT THE LOTUS

*Trong đầm gì đẹp bằng sen,*  
(inside pond what beautiful equal lotus)  
'Lotus in a pond: what a great beauty!'

*Lá xanh bông trắng lai chen nhí vàng.*  
(leaf green flower white and mix stamen yellow)  
'Leaves shiny green, petals pure white, yellow stamens.'

*Nhí vàng, bông trắng, lá xanh :*  
(stamen yellow, flower white, leaf green)  
'Yellow stamens, white petals, green leaves.'

*Gần bùn mà chẳng hôi tanh mùi bùn.*  
(near mud yet not putrid noisome odor mud)  
'It grows in mud, yet has no mud stench.'

This quatrain, which compares the incorruptible "superior man" to the lotus flower, consists of two couplets, in which a line of eight syllables follows a line of six syllables, hence the name *lục-bát* or "six-eight" meter. The sixth syllable of line 2 (*chen*) rhymes with the final syllable of line 1 (*sen*). Likewise, the sixth syllable of line 4 (*tanh*) rhymes with the final syllable of line 3 (*xanh*).

The most popular narrative, artfully crafted by Nguyễn Du (1765-1820), is the 3,254-line *Tale of Kiều*, which consists of 1,627 such couplets.

## 2. EXCERPT FROM A NOVEL

Dialogue between Bà Án (A), the widow of a judiciary mandarin (*án sát*), and her son Lộc (L), who came to confess his love for Mai and asked for the permission to marry her. The mother uses different pairs of personal pronouns “I-you”: *mẹ - con, tôi - anh, tao - mày, tôi - cậu.*

- A : *Chắc con có điều gì phiền-muộn mà con giấu mẹ.*  
 (surely child have matter whatever worry that child hide mother)  
 ‘You must have something troubling you’re trying to hide from me.’
- L : *Vâng, có thể.*      *Bẩm mẹ,*                  *con khổ lắm.*  
 (yes, emphatic so. respectfully report mother, child unhappy very)  
 ‘Yes, I have. Mother, I’m very unhappy.’
- A : *Chuyện gì thế con?*  
 (story what so child)  
 ‘What is the matter, son?’
- L : *Mẹ có tha tội cho con*                            *thì con mới dám thưa.*  
 (mother emphatic forgive sin to child; then child only-then dare report)  
 ‘Mother, I dare tell you only if you forgive me.’
- A : *Con cứ nói.*  
 (child go-ahead speak)  
 ‘Go ahead and say it.’
- L : *Cô Mai ....*  
 (miss Mai)  
 ‘Mai ....’
- A : *Con Mai. Có phải con bé nhà-quê nó quyến-rũ anh không? Thế sao?*  
 (girl Mai. emphatic correct girl little country she seduce you or-not so,  
 how)  
 ‘Mai? The country girl who tried to seduce you, son? What about her?’
- L : *Bẩm mẹ,*      *bây giờ cô ấy vẫn ở với con,*                  *cô ấy đã ....*  
 (respectfully report mother, now she still live with child, she has ...)  
 ‘Mother, she’s still living with me. She is ....’

*A : Thế thì mày giỏi thật .... Mày dối tao, mày đánh-lừa tao ....*

(so then you good really .... you lie me, you strike-dupe me ....)

*Mày đi thuê nhà riêng để ở với nó.*

(you go rent house private in order to live with her)

*Mày còn coi tao ra gì nữa, thằng kia?*

(you still regard me as anything further, rascal there)

'So you really did it! You lied to me, you tricked me. You rented a separate house to live with her. You rascal, what are you taking me for?'

*Muốn sống ngày mai phải về đây ở với tao. Còn con bé*

(want live day tomorrow must return here live with me. remain girl  
*thì tao sẽ trình sở cảnh bắt bỏ vào nhà thổ.*

then I shall report office commissioner arrest drop enter house earth)

'If you want to live, you come back here tomorrow to live with me.

As for that girl, I will report her to the police commissariat and have her put in a brothel.'

*L : Bẩm mẹ, người ấy đã là vợ con.*

(respectfully report mother, person that anterior be wife child)

'But mother, she has been my wife.'

*A : Vợ mày! Ai hỏi nó cho mày?*

(wife you. who ask her for you)

'Your wife? Who asked her in marriage on your behalf?'

*L : Con hỏi lấy.*

(child ask myself)

'I asked her myself.'

*A : À, thằng này giỏi thật, vượt quyền cha mẹ.*

(ah, boy this, excellent really, go beyond authority father mother)

*Phải rồi! Cậu văn-minh! Cậu tự-do kết-hôn.*

(correct already you civilized you freely get-married)

*Nhưng dù thế nào cậu cũng phải xin phép tôi đã chứ?*

(but though whatever you likewise must ask permission me first, I'd say)

'Oh, this boy really did it! Ignore your parents' authority! I know.

You are civilized. You want to freely choose your wife. But in any event you must ask for my permission first, must you not?'

- L : *Bẩm mẹ,* *con đã xin phép mẹ,*  
 (respectfully report mother, child past ask permission mother,  
*nhung mẹ không bằng lòng*  
 (but mother not agree)  
 'I did ask for your permission, mother, but you didn't give it.'
- A : *Vậy tôi không bằng lòng thì cậu cứ lấy, có phải không?*  
 (so I not agree then you go ahead take, emphatic correct or-not)  
 'And even if I don't agree you still go ahead and marry her, is that it?'  
*Nhưng thôi, tôi không cần nhiều lời.* *Cậu còn muốn trông thấy*  
 (but stop, I not need many words. you still want look-see  
*mặt tôi nữa thì phải lập tức tống cô con đi ấy đi,*  
 face me more then must at once expel neck classifier slut that away,  
*rồi về đây ở với tôi.*  
 then return here live with me)  
 'Enough, I don't need to speak so much. If you still want to see my  
 face, you must immediately kick that harlot out, then come back  
 here to live with me.'
- L : *Bẩm mẹ, thật con không tuân theo ý mẹ được.*  
 (report mother, really child not abide follow wish mother possible)  
 'Mother, really I cannot obey your wish.'  
*Dẫu mẹ giết, con cũng cam chịu,*  
 (even if mother kill, child likewise content suffer)  
*vì người ấy đã có chửa với con*  
 (because person that anterior have pregnancy together with child)  
 'Even if you kill me, I'll be willing to suffer, because she is now  
 pregnant by me.'
- A : *Nhưng con đã chắc chắn rằng nó có chửa với con!*  
 (but child anterior sure anywhere that she have pregnancy with you)  
 'But how can you be sure that she is pregnant by you?'  
*Rồi con sẽ rõ .... Thôi, thế này.*  
 (later child shall see clear .... stop, way this.  
 'Later you will see ..... For now, here is the thing.'  
*Nếu anh muốn lấy con bé ấy làm lẽ, thì tôi cũng cho phép anh.*  
 (if you want take girl that do concubine, then I likewise give  
 authorization you)  
 'If you want to marry her as a concubine, I'll authorize you to do so.'

*Làm trai lấy năm lấy bảy mặc ý.*

(be man take five take seven never mind wish)

‘A man may have five to seven wives if that’s his wish.’

*Nhưng phải nghe tôi: đến tháng tám này tôi cưới con quan tuần cho anh đây.*

(but must listen me: come month eight this I marry daughter mandarin governor for you there)

‘But you must listen to me: this coming eighth month I will get the governor’s daughter as your wife.’

*Tuỳ anh nghĩ sao thì nghĩ.*

(depend you think however then think)

‘It’s up to you to think what is right.’

*Nửa chừng xuân*

by Khái-Hưng (1896-1947)

### 3. EXCERPT FROM A NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT

*TRUNG-TÂM DỊCH-VỤ XYZ*

(center service XYZ)

XYZ SERVICE CENTER

*Quốc-tịch -- INS : Đặc-biệt miễn thi nhập-tịch*

(citizenship INS : special waiver exam naturalization)

‘Citizenship, Immigration & Naturalization Service: Special Waiver of Naturalization Exam’

*Những người bệnh-tật đang nằm tại nhà-thương hay tại nhà,*

(plural person sick-infirm presently lie in house-wounded or at home,

*không thể tới sở di-trú được, chúng tôi sẽ mời một nhân-viên sở đó*

not able come office immigration ok, we shall invite one staff office that

*tới ngay giường bệnh để phỏng-vấn cho quý-vị, khỏi*

come right bed sick to interview give distinguished persons, not obliged

*to phải di-chuyển*

worry must move around)

‘For those of you, distinguished clients, who are sick lying in bed in the hospital or at home, unable to go to the Immigration Service, we’ll invite a staff member of INS to interview you, so that you would not have to travel.’

*Dành riêng cho người già yếu, bệnh-hoạn, tật-nguyễn, câm, mù, (reserve special give person old weak, sick, disabled, dumb, blind, điếc, mental, không nói hay viết tiếng Anh,... đang lãnh SSI, deaf, mentally ill, not speak or write language English .... now receive SSI theo đúng tiêu-chuẩn điều-kiện mới nhất INS ban-hành. follow exact standards conditions new most INS issue)*

‘Special service for people who are old, sick, disabled, dumb, blind, deaf, mentally ill, unable to speak or write English, currently receiving SSI\* following exactly all standards and requirements most recently issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.’

---

\*The initials SSI stand for “Supplementary Security Income”, a financial aid granted to people with low income.

*Chúng tôi sẽ lo mọi dịch-vụ miễn thi, phỏng-vấn và  
(We will take care every service waiver examination, interview and  
tuyên-thệ lấy quốc-tịch cho quý-vị.  
swear take citizenship for distinguished persons)*

‘We will take care of all services including applying for the test waiver, preparing the interview and the oath of allegiance so as to secure US citizenship for you, our distinguished clients.’

*Đoàn-tụ gia-dinh : đem vợ con, vị-hôn-thê, vị-hôn-phu sang Hoa-Kỳ,  
(reunite family: bring wife kid, fiancée, fiancé over USA  
khỏi cần về Việt-Nam. Quý-vị sẽ đón họ tại San Francisco từ 6 tháng.  
not need return VN. You shall meet them in SF from six months)  
Điện con nuôi, con ghé, con vợ 1, vợ 2 .... kẹt ở Việt-Nam.  
(category child adopted, stepchild, child wife 1st, wife 2nd .... stuck in VN)*

‘Orderly Departure Program [ODP] : bring your wife and kids, your fiancée or fiancé over to the USA without having to go back to Vietnam and apply there. You will meet them in San Francisco in six months.

Or those falling under the categories of adopted children, stepchildren, children of your 1st wife, of your 2nd wife, who got stuck in Vietnam.’

*Thời-báo (San José, California)*

*May 29, 1997 issue*

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