BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO

TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG

ISO 9001:2015

KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

NGÀNH: TIẾNG ANH

Sinh viên	**: Nguyễn Quang Hiếu**
Giảng viên hướng dẫn	**: ThS. Đặng Thị Vân**

HẢI PHÒNG - 2019

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO

TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG

A COMPARISON OF EXPRESSION OF TENSES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY

NGÀNH: TIẾNG ANH

Sinh viên   **: Nguyễn Quang Hiếu**

Giảng viên hướng dẫn   **: ThS. Đặng Thị Vân**

HẢI PHÒNG - 2019

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO

TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG

NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Sinh viên: Nguyễn Quang Hiếu   Mã SV: 1512751040

Lớp: NA1901A   Ngành: Tiếng Anh

Tên đề tài: A comparison of expression of tenses between English and Vietnamese

NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI

1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp (về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).

   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..

2. Các số liệu cần thiết để thiết kế, tính toán.

   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..

3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.

   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..
   …………………………………………………………………………………..

CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất:

Họ và tên:..

Học hàm, học vị:...

Cơ quan công tác:...

Nội dung hướng dẫn:..

Người hướng dẫn thứ hai:

Họ và tên:..

Học hàm, học vị:...

Cơ quan công tác:...

Nội dung hướng dẫn:..

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày … tháng ….. năm …..

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày …. tháng ….. năm ……

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN   Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

     Sinh viên   *Người hướng dẫn*

Hải Phòng, ngày ...... tháng........năm 20..

Hiệu trưởng

GS.TS.NGƯT *Trần Hữu Nghị*

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN HƯỚNG DẪN TỐT NGHIỆP

Họ và tên giảng viên: ....

Đơn vị công tác: ....

Họ và tên sinh viên: .... Chuyên ngành: ....

Nội dung hướng dẫn: ....

....

1. Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp

....

....

....

....

....

....

2. Đánh giá chất lượng của đồ án/khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu…)

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

3. Ý kiến của giảng viên hướng dẫn tốt nghiệp

Được bảo vệ ☐   Không được bảo vệ ☐   Điểm hướng dẫn ☐

Hải Phòng, ngày … tháng … năm ......

Giảng viên hướng dẫn

(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)

QC20-B18

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN

Họ và tên giảng viên: ....

Đơn vị công tác: ....

Họ và tên sinh viên: .... Chuyên ngành: ....

Đề tài tốt nghiệp: ....

....

....

1. Phần nhận xét của giáo viên chấm phản biện

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

2. Những mặt còn hạn chế

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

3. Ý kiến của giảng viênchấm phản biện

Được bảo vệ [ ]   Không được bảo vệ [ ]   Điểm hướng dẫn [ ]

Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm ......

Giảng viên chấm phản biện

(Ký và ghi rõ họ tên)

QC20-B19

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT KẾT QUẢ THỰC TẬP TỐT NGHIỆP

Họ và tên sinh viên: ....Ngày sinh: ……/……/……

Lớp: .... Chuyên ngành: .... Khóa...............

Thực tập tại: ....

Từ ngày: ……/……/… đến ngày ……/……/…

1. Về tinh thần, thái độ, ý thức tổ chức kỷ luật:

....

....

....

....

2. Về kết quả thực tập nghề nghiệp:

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

3. Đánh giá chung:

....

....

....

....

......................, ngày ...... tháng ...... năm ...

Xác nhận của lãnh đạo cơ sở thực tập   **Cán bộ hướng dẫn thực tập của cơ sở**

QC20-B10

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On the completion of this graduation paper, I have received plenty of assistance, guidance and encouragement from my teachers, family and friends.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Ms. Dang Thi Van, M.A, the lecturer of foreign language faculty, Haiphong Private University, for her whole-hearted guidance and support. Without her invaluable recommendations and advice, I could not finish this thesis successfully.

My sincere thanks are also sent to all the teachers of English faculty at Haiphong Private University for their precious and useful lessons during my four-year study which have been then the foundation of this research paper.

Last but not least, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to my family, my friends who always encouraged and inspired me to complete this graduation paper.

Hai Phong, June 10th 2019

Nguyen Quang Hieu

LIST OF TABLES

PART I. INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

For Vietnam in recent decades, along with many other foreign languages, English has been used for many different purposes, namely learning, teaching, researching and approaching scientific knowledge. Admittedly, English grammar is an important language skill, and it is often seen as a key element for English language learners to start their journey in learning English as a second language. To be certain, some parts of English grammar are more complex than others. If learners and teachers were asked to identify some of these more complex grammar points in English, mastery of the twelve tenses would certainly be among the top answers. Mastery of the English tenses is one of the topics that needs extensive effort from teachers to convey sufficient knowledge to their students. However, English and Vietnamese are two different languages. That means Vietnamese people, like many other non-native communities, can hardly avoid confusion when using English to express their ideas, opinions, culture, etc. when communicating with foreigners. Thus, the non-native speakers' English usage, including Vietnamese's one, certainly has differences from that of native English speakers. From these reasons, we chose to study the topic "Comparison of expression of tenses between English and Vietnamese".

In this topic, some general descriptions of tenses of each language will be made to give readers certain background information. The purpose of presenting them is to discuss the similarities and differences between two languages in terms of two aspects: form and meaning. In addition, several contrastive points will be indicated to explore the causes of mistakes often made by learners.

We conducted a specific survey on a group of students who were randomly selected at Kien An high school. This is the evidence that shows the reality of Vietnamese students' English learning, thereby emphasizing the importance of the topic we have implemented with great efforts.

2. Aims of the study

The study's main aim is to provide the similarities and differences of expression of tenses in English and Vietnamese. Therefore, the study was conducted with objectives as the following:

- Offer some general knowledge of the tenses in each of the languages as well as the contrast between them in their forms and meanings.
- Describe the current reality of the English tense learning of Vietnamese students at Kien An high school, Hai Phong, thereby recommending solutions to students' English study and teachers' methodology of language teaching.

3. Scope of the study

Due to the limited time together with the small scope of the study, the study was only designed to investigate errors made by the students of Kien An high school, Hai Phong when using English tenses. Also, arcording to the information provided by the teachers there about the students' competence and a consultative study [12], the number of tenses used for the study is restricted to 8 tenses which are *Simple present, Present progressive, Present perfect, Past simple, Past progressive, Past perfect, Present perfect progressive, Simple future*.

4. Methods of the study

To collect data, 3 main methods of study were used. They are: *classification-statistics*, *analysis and synthesis* and *comparison*. Each of them have individual advantages and drawbacks as well, but they are all important parts of the comprehensive method used for this sudy, Error analysis (EA).

5. Design of the study

The study is divided into five main parts:

- Part I is the introduction which includes the rationale, aims of the study, the scope, the study method and the design of the study.
- Part II is the Theoretical background

    II.1 An overview of Tenses

II.2 Function of English and Vietnamese Adverbs

II.3 Overview of the expression of tenses in English and Vietnamese

- Part III and IV are the core of this paper:

    - Part III covers the information in order to carry out contrastive analysis of English and Vietnamese tense and some basis concepts related to tenses learning.

    - Part IV shows detailed explanation of the methodology. It includes the context of the study, the research method, the participants and the findings of the study and gives some recommendation for teaching the English tense in Vietnam.

- Part V is the conclusion which summarizes what was given in previous parts, gives some limitations of the study as well as suggestions for further research.

PART II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

II.1. An overview of Tenses
II.1.1. What is a tense?

The concept of tense in English is a method that is used to refer to time - past, present and future. Many languages involve using tense to talk about time. Other languages have no concept of tense at all, but of course speakers using such languages can still talk about time with different methods. (Declecrk, 2006, p.25) [7]

Time is a term in grammar that refers to when a state of verbs in a sentence occurs, which indicates whether the information in question occurs or is expected to occur, happened at what time. In the grammar of some languages, it will determine the form of the verb in the sentence. In general, it can be divided into three types according to the evolution of time: Past, present and future. Different verb forms help to indicate the time in a sentence. However, tense and time are not uniform. Time is divided into past, present and future, while tense represents one or more forms of verbs used to describe the relationship of time. (Declecrk, 2006, p.25) [7]

Tense:

- It is possible to refer to an action, or state that took place in the past, present or future.

- It is possible to refer to an action that someone did, has done, or will do, going on for a certain period of time.

- It is possible to express that the action was, has just been or will be completed.

Time expresses:

- past - before now

- present - now, or any time that includes now

- future - after now

II.1.2. Towards a theory of tense and time expressions

As we have seen above, it is important not to confuse tense with time. Conceives of tense as a "linguistic concept denotes the form taken by the verb to express the temporal relation between the time of the situation in question and an "orientation time" which may be either the "temporal zero-point"

(which is usually the time of speech [...]) or another orientation time that is temporally related to the temporal zero-point." The orientation time is "any time that can provide the "known" time (or one of the known times) required for the expression of the temporal relation(s) encoded in a tense form" (Comrie, 1993, p.6) [5]. The temporal zero-point (t0) is the point in time from which all expressed temporal relations take their starting point. It is usually (but not necessarily) the time of the utterance.

A tense expresses a tense structure. A tense structure is a blueprint for one particular way of locating a situation in time. The structure expresses the temporal relation(s) between the situation time and one or more orientation times.

The various grammatical expressions of location in time which constitute the linguistic category "tense" are "tenses". A tense is the linguistic expression of a particular temporal meaning by a particular form (a "tense form"). In English, as in most languages that have tense, this is a form of the verb. The particular temporal meaning expressed by a tense is a tense structure. This is the temporal structure (minimally involving a situation time, an orientation time and a temporal relation between them) which represents a specific way of locating a situation in time. Thus, in English, *does*, *has done*, *had done*, *will do*, *will have done*, etc. are all verb forms expressing different tenses. Tenses represent a pairing of form and meaning.

A tense form can be either a simple or a complex verb form. That is, it may consist of one constituent (the main verb) only or be a phrase involving one or more auxiliaries next to the main verb

(a) 'verb stem - present or past tense morpheme' (helps, helped)

(b) '[verb stem of perfect tense auxiliary - present or past tense morpheme] - past participle (has helped, had helped)

(c) '[verb stem of future tense auxiliary - present or past morpheme'] - present infinitive' (will help, would help)

(d) '[verb stem of future tense auxiliary - present or past morpheme] - perfect infinitive' (will have helped, would have helped)

(e) combinations involving both the perfect tense auxiliary and the future tense auxiliary will and/or the "futurish" semi-auxiliary be going to (e.g. has been going to help, would have been going to help, etc.).

These five kinds of expressions of tense will all be referred to as "tense forms".

Every one of them can be interwoven with the progressive marker "be V-ing", which expresses progressive aspect, not tense.

Basing on Declerck's theory, he differentiates between absolute and relative tenses. Absolute tenses are those which express "a direct temporal relation with the temporal zero-point (= t0)" (Declerck, 2006, p.26) [8]. Relative tenses are those which express "a single temporal relation between the time of the situation referred to and an orientation time other than the zero-time (= t0)" (Declecrk, 2006, p.27) [7]. Relative tenses express one of the following temporal relations:

- anteriority: the situation time precedes the orientation time: He said he had got up early.

- simultaneity: the situation time coincides with the orientation time: He said he didn't feel well.

- posteriority: the situation time follows the orientation time: He said he would save us.

Absolute tenses are: present, past, present perfect, future.

Relative tenses are: past perfect, conditional.

The future perfect and the conditional perfect express two temporal relations at the same time: "the time of the situation is represented as anterior to an orientation time which is itself represented as posterior to another time" (Declecrk, 2006, p.29) [7]. In the case of the future perfect, this "another time" is t0, which makes the future perfect an absolute-relative tense, because it relates its situation time to an orientation time (this is the relative component) which is itself related to t0 (this is the absolute component). With the conditional perfect, neither of the orientation times is t0, which means that this tense has two relative components; Declerck calls this tense a "complex relative tense". The only two tenses which can be differentiated morphologically are the present and the past. All other tenses are formed with the help of auxiliaries. These other tenses are called "complex tenses", where the first auxiliary (= the operator, i.e. either have or will) is morphologically in the present or past tense (Declecrk, 2006, p.29) [8].

The most common tenses in English are traditionally indicated by the following terms:

(a) the present tense: I live here / I am living here.

(b) the past tense: I lived there / I was living there.

(c) the future tense: I'll go there / I'll be going there.

(d) the present perfect: I've lived here / I've been living here for ages.

(e) the past perfect (or pluperfect): I had lived there / I had been living there for ages.

(f) the future perfect: I will have left by then / By then she will have been living in London for some time.

(g) the conditional tense: We would soon find out / The next day he would be working on his thesis.

(h) the conditional perfect: She would have left by then / By then she would have been living in London for some time.

However, there are other tenses, indicating more complex structures, for which there are no traditional names.

II.2. Function of English and Vietnamese Adverbs

Most English adverbs are categorized as full words, whereas Vietnamese adverbs belong to the class of function words. However they are not meaningless, except for the last particles, which English does not have, all the "function words" (adverbs, connectives, interjections) actually compare to English adverbs, auxiliaries, negators, intensifiers, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections. In English they are sometimes categorized as a part of the open or lexical word classes but in both languages they modify the meaning of a verb, an adjective, another adverb or some other constituent. However, there are differences in their behavior, occurrence and usage. In my study, time adverbs are most related.

II.2.1. Time adverbials in English

Adverbs of time are used to express when the action expressed by the verb takes place. Adverbs of time have standard positions in a sentence depending on what the adverb of time is telling us. It is often possible, for emphasis and stylistic effect, to move adverbs about within a sentence. In fact, adverb mobility is one of their most special characteristics

- *Later Goldilocks ate some porridge. (the time is important)*
- *Goldilocks later ate some porridge. (this is more formal, like a policeman's report)*

(Asmaa, 1874, p.54) [2]

They are not always required, they are not necessarily essential to understanding the sentence. Besides, their omitting might not result in an ungrammatical sentence such as in the case of omitting an obligatory verbal complement. Usually the time adverbials have the syntactic function of adjuncts, the only difference might be inaccuracy and complete information referring to sentences. E.g: *They arrived yesterday. / They arrived.* [18]

As for the time expression of the event in which it is mentioned, time adverbial expressions are not required, because the tense marking on the verb or the auxiliary already shows this information.

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

II.2.2. Time adverbials in Vietnamese

Vietnamese adverbs are explained as "lexemes which accompany a content word and serve to modify the meaning of that head word either in a nominal of verbal expression" (Hòa, 1997, p.56) [10].

While English time adverbial expressions are not obligatory, in Vietnamese their use is essential to determine the time to which it is mentioned, as Vietnamese grammar lacks any kind of grammatical marking on the verb, which is like English. Not only do they show the time as in the location in time, but also how the action is distributed over time. In other words, they roughly mark the grammatical categories, which are marked by suffixes and auxiliaries, tense and aspect in English.

Their position in the sentence modifies: It is possible to stand in front of some of them to emphasize more, but another way, which is also very specific for an analytical language, is through repetition measures to achieve the same effect.

Some adverbs are not mandatory, especially if there is another factor, which expresses the tense or aspect information. Sometimes they are redundant, they do not contribute to the meaning, and sometimes they express

as a highlight. Abandoning a time adverb when a tense or present marker is already present, does not lead to an ungrammatical structure.

II.3. Overview of the expression of tenses in English and Vietnamese
II.3.1. Expression of tenses in English

As analyzed above in metamorphic languages, no matter how specific the meaning of time is, the verb still has to be conjugated according to certain rules. Based on the relationship between the time of the event and the time of reference, the researchers have divided it into two categories: absolute tense and relative tense. This classification is quite consistent between researchers like Comrie, Frawley, Kasevich, etc.

A Vietnamese verb is "timeless in itself, […] only linguistic and situational context provides a clue to relative time" (Hòa, 1997, p.58) [10]. Time reference is lexical, adverbials are used to define situations in time (Comrie, 1995, p.22) [6]. Thus, we cannot speak of tense as a grammatical category in Vietnamese. These adverbials provide information about the action that the verb expresses, but they are not a part of it as the English past tense suffix- *ed* is. On the other hand, English auxiliaries are not a part of the verb either, but for making a certain verb form for example past participle, it is used along with an inflectional suffix and even the auxiliary itself can take an inflectional suffix, for example in *had looked* the auxiliary is inflected for tense but the lexical verb is in the participle form with-*ed* suffix. Nothing like this is possible in Vietnamese.

II.3.2. Expression of tenses in Vietnamese

In the period before the 1960s, the research on expression in Vietnamese was influenced by European linguistics. Some typical researchers of this period are Truong Vinh Ky, Bui Duc Tinh. In the period after the 1960s, Vietnamese linguists had many works that were no longer influenced by European linguistics, with typical researchers such as Nguyen Kim Than, Le Quang Thiem, Nguyen Minh Thuyet, etc. In order to express its grammatical meaning, Vietnamese does not use a systematic grammatical method and not obey the same rules as in the Indo-European language, but it is expressed through the use of such words: functional words (*hư từ*) or order of words.

"Tense is related to the time of the situation to which it is referred to some other time, usually to the moment of speaking" (Comrie, 1995, p.27) [6]. Adverbs which have such function are *đã, sẽ, sắp, vừa, mới, rồi* etc. (*sẽ* might be considered as an auxiliary, as its possible English equivalent is *will*). Some of them also indicates how far in time the situation is from the time mentioned– near future or recent past.

II.3.3. Aspects

Another grammatical category is aspect which is concerned with "how the speaker perceives the duration of events, and how different events relate to one another in time" (Carter and McCarthy, 2006, p.89) [4]. In English it is realized through auxiliaries and a corresponding inflectional suffix on the lexical verb. There are three grammatical aspects – simple, perfect and continuous or progressive. "Perfect aspect is concerned with the speaker's perspective on the relationship between one time frame and an event that takes place in another time frame" (Carter and McCarthy 2006, p.91) [4]. Continuous aspect is concerned with the duration of the event. It may be ongoing, unfinished and it can also imply temporality of the duration of the event. Vietnamese uses adverbs to denote aspect such as *đang, xong, vẫn, mãi, cứ* etc. They represent features such as continuity, completeness or continuous repetition. The form of English verbs are combinations of grammatical tense and aspect, however in Vietnamese, it is not necessary to have both tense and aspect marking in one sentence. Aspect is not a grammatical category of a verb neither is tense. Expressing and understanding the time in Vietnamese language are mainly based on the context and time adverbials. In English the grammatical categories, tense and aspect, identified on the verb are enough; adverbials are used for specification but are absolutely unnecessary.

PART III. A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH–VIETNAMESE TENSES

Basing on the meaning of Vietnamese language in the expression of tense through Function words, I proceeded to analyze the expressions in the two languages in turn as follows:

III.1. Present time

Present tense has a large variety of uses, according to the author Leech that there are 5 ways of simple present tense – state use, event use, habitual use, simple present referring to past and future and imaginary use.

III.1.1. Simple present referring to past and future

As we can see, despite labeling the tense present, it is not necessarily concerned with the present. It can refer to the past as well as to the future, e.g. *The plane leaves for Dallas at 12.35*.[18] It is not always used to describe events holding at present moment, however, there is certain association with it (moment of speech). Besides, if we think of "present time" as a point in time, it is, in fact, a period hat extends indefinitely into the past and into the future. "In this sense, "present time" is potentially all-inclusive" (Leech, 2004, p.23) [11]. On the contrary, as they cannot extend further as far as the present moment, past and future times are limited. For these usages, we will analyze more details in chapter *Event use* and *Future time.*

III.1.2. State use

"The state use of the Simple Present is found with verbs expressing a temporally stable state of affairs" (Leech, 2004, p.45) [11]. They hold for the present moment but they began before the moment of utterance and also may continue and expand into the future.

Adverbials may be used to limit the duration or contrasting one period with another. For example, *I'm sorry he's out at present* [18] implies that he was at home before.

So-called "eternal truths" are also a state use of simple present tense. These statements are always true, usually shown in scientific or mathematical context, such as *four and three make seven*.[18]*, or the sun rises in the east*.

[18] Geographical statements also have no time limit, e.g. *Ha Noi is located in northern region of Vietnam.* [19]

Similarly to English, if Vietnamese verbs for referring to the present are used, no adverbial is required in the sentence. Vietnamese verbs thus appear in their "simple" form.

III.1.3. Event use

Present simple tense is also used with event verbs and it expresses "an event referred to as a whole and viewed simultaneous with the present act of speaking" (Leech, 2004, p.47) [11]. This is the case of sport commentaries and commentary of demonstrators. Similarly, it is used in exclamations as opposed to the use of the continuous aspect, which is rather unmarked, e.g. *Here Comes the Sun!* [20] In so-called performative utterances when the event and the act of speech are identical and occur at the same moment, for example, *We agree* or *I refuse your offer.* [18]

In Vietnamese, verbs expressing events also need no other tense marking as can be seen in the following example in the article *"Characteristics of the General Offensive and the Spring Offensive of 1968 Offensive in Saigon-Gia Dinh"*:

The 1968 Spring Mau Than General Offensive and Uprising breaks out on the eve of the traditional Lunar New Year (Tet) across the southern battlefield, especially in Saigon and Hue. [21]

Cuộc tổng tấn công và nổi dậy mùa xuân năm 1968 nổ ra vào đêm trước Tết Nguyên đán truyền thống trên khắp chiến trường miền Nam, đặc biệt là ở Sài Gòn và Huế.

III.1.4. Imaginary present

This particular type of present simple used is typical for fiction. Imaginary happenings are described in past tense and present tense is used for "dramatic heightening" (Leech, 2004, p.51) [11]. It has some effect on the reader as if they were experiencing the events described. Here is an example from a Harry Potter novel by J.K. Rowling [15] and a sample from William Shakespeare's play Hamlet [16]:

Harry Potter goes to Hogwarts School. He has two close friends, Hermione and ...

Shakespeare's Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark. One night he sees his father's ghost. The ghost tells him he has been murdered…

In the historic present, a past situation is represented as if it were a present situation. The historic present is generally assumed to be a means of describing a past situation vividly, as if it were actualizing in the speaker's and hearer's here-and-now, for instance from "Tuổi thơ dữ dội" by Phùng Quán [14]:

Mừng ignores his feelings and rushes to the watchtower. The entire crew sacrificed in the bombing. Hearing the noises from the radio above, Mừng climbs up the tree and gives the decisive signal that ignited the land mine, which makes large quantities of French troops destroyed.

Mừng phớt lờ cảm giác của mình và lao về phía đài quan sát. Toàn bộ tổ quan sát đã hy sinh trong một vụ đánh bom. Nghe thấy tiếng chuông điện thoại trên đỉnh đài quan sát, Mừng trèo lên cây và đưa ra tín hiệu quyết định đốt cháy bãi đất trống, một lực lượng lớn quân Pháp bị tiêu diệt.

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

III.1.5. Habitual use

For habitual use, we move on to analysis in chapter *Duration, continuation and repetition*.

III.2. Past time

"The past tense is used to represent a situation as actualizing at a specific past time. In addition to the event or state taking place before the present moment, another feature of the past tense is that the speaker must mention a certain time in mind" (Quirk, et al, 1985, p.44) [13] which is expressed by time adverbials such as *last week, in 1990, when I was in Ha Noi*, for instance in *I started working in 1999* or *I started getting married last year*. This is one of the main differences between the uses of past simple and present perfect. The past tense is used when the speaker is not thinking of the present, the situation referred to is completely over. The rule that the past tense is used when the speaker is concerned with THEN rather than with NOW implies that the past tense has to be used when the speaker focuses on a particular past time at which the situation actualized or on another aspect of the past situation.

We can distinguish three meanings of past – event (*I lost my wallet*), state (*I lived in Vietnam*) and habitual (*When I was still in school, I often escaped to*

the school gate to eat snacks.). Event meaning occupies a single point in time, habitual occupies multiple points in time and state occupies a continuous period of time.

This chapter demonstates the use of past tense including past simple and past perfect when one mentions about the situation reffered to in past tense is completely over. However, past simple and past perfect also contain function of expressing completion which is analyzed in chapter III.4.

III.2.1. Past simple

Bygone situations – *đã*: In English the past tense is represented by the suffix-ed on the verb, in Vietnamese, it is shown by the auxiliary *đã* along with time adverbials. Even without present marking of the tense, the interpretation in this case depends on the context. The adverb *đã* can be used for events, states and habits. It is always placed before the head verb. Its use seems to be optional, but as the meaning of the sentence might be not clear and one has to take the context into account, it limits the interpretation. It only emphasizes that the action took place in the past but also that it is completed. To be more precise, it has the characteristic of anteriority either for past or future time, it "signals that the head verb denotes a circumstance viewed as completed prior to some other circumstance" (Hòa, 1997, p.108) [10] in the past or future.

Tôi đã biết thằng đó là kẻ ăn trộm.

"I (already) knew that guy was a thief." [18]

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

Tôi làm vỡ cái lọ hoa.

I broke the flowerpot. (literally "I made the flowerpot broken.") [18]

Compounds such as *hôm qua - yesterday* (literally "the day that has passed"), *tuầntrước-last week* (literally "the week before") or *năm ngoái-last year* (literally "the outer year") usually present the sentence but can also introduce at the end.

Năm ngoái tôi đi Mexico.

Last year, I visited Mexico. [18]

III.2.2. Past Perfect

- In English:

The past perfect behaves similarly to the past, the main difference being that the past is an absolute tense, while the past perfect is a relative one. The past perfect is complex tense, made up of a form in the past and the past participle of a main verb.

I had done the housework. [18]

Past perfect has the meaning of "past-in-the-past, or more accurately, a time further in the past, seen from the viewpoint of a definite point of time already in the past" (Leech, 2004, p.68) [11]. Similarly to the past simple, it needs an already established point of reference. It is used both with definite and indefinite time, as opposed to present perfect which cannot be used with definite time reference. Past perfect is thus used for describing an event occurring at a definite or indefinite time but before some other definite point in time. In an example *When I came home, the police had left.* [18] it is clear that the given point of reference in the past is *when I came home* and *the leaving* activity occurred earlier and it is finished.

Additionally, the past perfect can be used to express the modal concept of counter actuality in that-clauses depending on the verb *wish*:

I wish (that) I had never met him. [18]

- In Vietnamese:

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

Khi tôi về nhà, cảnh sát đã rời đi (rồi).

"When I came home, the police had (already) left."

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

Nevertheless, there is a difference in Vietnamese that it is possible to have a verb (*đã*, x*ong*, *rồi*) without any tense marking with the meaning of past. If there are no those words, the interpretation depends on the context. In this case, their presence in the sentence is unnecessary for instance:

Hôm qua, tôi gặp anh ấy.

Hôm qua, tôi đã gặp anh ấy. (đã is unnecessary)

In summary, it is interesting that there are morphemes expressing the feature of past in both languages.

III.3. Future time

The future is used when a speaker wants to refer to a situation time that lies in the post-present zone of the present time-sphere. Specifically, the future is understood as anything which has not taken place yet, that is on the right side from the present moment on the time axis, but at the same time it can express something which will hold true in the future and possibly already did in the past or present.

The English future is a complex tense which can be expressed in one of two ways. It is either composed by the verb *will* + the infinitive of a main verb; or by a form of *be going to* + the infinitive of the main verb. In this chapter I will compare English constructions with *will, be going to* and *present tense* to Vietnamese particles denoting future time.

III.3.1. Auxiliary "will"

As a modal auxiliary verb, *will* is particularly versatile, having several different functions and meanings. One of *will* 's most common uses as a modal verb is to talk about things that are certain, very likely, or planned to happen in the future. In this way, it is used to create an approximation of the future simple tense and the future continuous tense. In other words, it is used to form future tenses, to express willingness or ability, to make requests or offers, to complete conditional sentences, to express likelihood in the immediate present, or to issue commands. If *will* refers to the future, it can express general or habitual prediction (*That will be enough*) or volition (*Please lend me some money, I will give it back*). [18] It precedes the main verb, which carries no inflection. This is similar to Vietnamese expression of future. Particle *sẽ* is placed after the subject, thus it stands before the head verb but also precedes negation.

Tôi sẽ không từ bỏ.

I will not give up. [18]

It shows that the action will likely take place in the future. Same as *đã*, when a time adverbial such as *mai* (tomorrow) or *tuần sau* (next week) is present, it is possibly redundant and not obligatory to present, but it is possible to only make the future reference more explicit. It is important that it represents

certain probability of an action taking place in the future. Although the difference is slight, it can be seen when comparing negative sentences. Negative sentence without particle *sẽ* implies almost absolute certainty that the action will not take place. When the particle is present, it means the action will not take place but it is also possible that it will. Thus this particle also partly has a modal meaning, similarly to English *will*. *Sẽ* is also be used in predictions.

Tôi sẽ không nấu bữa tối.	*Tôi không nấu bữa tối.*
I will not cook dinner. [18]	*I will not cook dinner.* [18]
(I might change my mind)	(It is my final decision)

In addition to expressing actions or intentions of the future, in English, we can also use *will* to express the likelihood or certainty that something is the case in the immediate present. For instance:

(In response to the phone ringing) "*That will be Jane—I'm expecting her call.*" [18]

Speaker A: "*Who is that with Jeff?*"

Speaker B: "*That'll be her new husband. They were just married in May.*"[18]

III.3.2. Be going to

According to the author Leech, *Be going to* infinitive construction is used to express future outcome of present circumstances, both intention and cause [11].

a. Intention - *định*

Định is placed before the main verb and plays a role as an auxiliary or modal verb. It is one of the verbs of volition and it translates as "to intend". When we have already decided or we INTEND to do something in the future (Prior Plan). The decision has been made before the moment of speaking. Therefore, for expressing intention a full-meaning verb is used, not a particle carrying only grammatical information as in earlier cases. This verb is used for emphasizing the intention, its meaning is close to "to plan", otherwise *sẽ* can be used as well.

Hôm nay em định làm gì vậy?

"*What are you going to do today?*" [18]

b. Prediction

Be going to is often used when the speaker wishes to draw a connection between present events, situations, or intentions and expected future events or situations, i.e. to express the present relevance of the future occurrence. Basing on the study by Leech "The future with present cause is found with animals and inanimate objects, as well as with human subjects" (Leech, 2004, p.111) [11]. When there are definite signs that something is going to happen for now (Evidence) or based on the experience you have, *be going to* is used to predict something. Additionally, it may imply immediate future, as the "train of events" leading to the future happening might be already under way. *Sẽ* is used but depending how soon the future will be, particle *sắp* or *sắp sửa* is used instead.

Nhìn kìa, trời nhiều mây thật. Chắc trời sắp mưa rồi.

Look, it's very cloudy. I think it's going to rain. [18]

III.3.3. Present tense

Present tense is often used to arrange and plan for the future and it implies that they have already been implemented. According to the author Declerck, the so-called "futurish forms" are often used to "combine reference to a post-present actualization with a sense of present judgment" (Declerck, 2006, p.108) [8]. Some of these forms could be said to refer to the present rather than to the future.

For instance in the sentences: *John is to leave. / about to leave.*, a "futurish" tense form is used. Such forms differ from future tense form in that they make dual time reference. This means that they refer to both present time and future time. These forms are also used to express another aspect of time which is called Immediate Future that will be discussed later in chapter III.6.2. The actualization of the situation is in the future; however, there are already indications (e. g. arrangements) in the present for the situation in the future. In the sentence *The train leaves at 10 a. m*, the situation (the departure of the train) will actualize in the future, but the reference is also to the scheduling of the train's timetable, which exists already before.

Unlike English, Vietnamese has no other means to indicate the future based on present plan or programme than the verb *định*. If the speaker does not

need to emphasize his intention with the use of *định*, only a time adverbial is used.

Hôm nay chị gái tôi nướng bánh.
Today my sister bakes bread.
Today my sister is baking bread. (for dinner) [18]

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

III.4. Completion

In Vietnamese, completion is quite an important feature and is expressed by *đã, xong* and *rồi*. However, English has no means to indicate completion or termination of a situation separately, i.e., the meaning in the sentences in English expresses a more detailed implication of the completion of the event. This meaning is implemented in various verb forms across tenses and aspects, usually expressed by past time reference tenses.

III.4.1. Past Simple and Past Perfect

It is popularly indicated that simple past tense is used to show the completion of action. These are mostly single-time events and may have a direct time reference, as opposed to present perfect which does not allow direct time reference. It focuses on when the action occurred, not on its duration nor its result. It can be contrasted with the present perfect. In examples *May has lived a happy life.* and *May lived a happy lif*e. the past simple implies that May is no longer alive, thus it indicates termination. Past Perfect has the function to indicate which of two events happened first as in this sample *When I came home, the police had already left*.

III.4.2. Present Perfect

The uses of present perfect are various and versatile such as to describe "An action or situation that started in the past and continues in the present, an action performed during a period that has not yet finished,…" [23] and persent perfect is also used to express completion. Namely, that use is to "describe an

action that was completed in the very recent past, expressed by *just* or *already*".

I have just finished my work.

I have already cleaned the floor.[23]

Because of its versatile use as mentioned above, present perfect will be encountered again in later chapters which is III.5.2 and III.6.1.

III.4.3. Future Perfect

Future perfect is used for expressing actions that will "already be completed by a certain time in the future" (Alexander, 1998, p.34) [1]. When we use this tense we are projecting ourselves forward into the future and looking back at an action that will be completed sometime later than now. It is most often used with a time expression. It is a combination of auxiliaries *will have* and past participle or *-ing* form. This form already consists of three words, four morphemes to be precise, which shows the analytic characteristics of the English language.

There are 2 specific ways to use the Future perfect:

Firstly, we use for describing an action or event completed before a future time point. For example:

I will have finished my homework by 9 o'clock this evening. [18] *(Cho đến trước 9h tối nay tôi sẽ hoàn thành xong bài tập về nhà rồi.)*

We see *"9h tối nay"* is a future time and *"bài tập về nhà"* will be completed before this time.

Secondly, future perfect is used for describing actions or events completed before another action or event in the future. The act and event of completing first will conjugate in the future perfect. The simple present tense will be used to express actions and events that occur later.

For example:

I will have made the meal ready by the time you come tomorrow. [18] *(Ngày mai tôi đã chuẩn bị bữa ăn sẵn sàng trước khi bạn đến ngày mai.)*

We see two actions that will happen in the future: "*chuẩn bị bữa ăn*" and *"bạn đến"*. *"Chuẩn bị bữa ăn"* will be completed before *"bạn đến"* so we use the future perfect to express that. What happens after *"bạn đến"* will be conjugated in the simple present tense.

III.4.4. *Đã, xong, rồi*

In Vietnamese, it is more important to express the feature of anteriority and completion than past time. As presented earlier in Chapter III.2, the particle *đã* expresses past time. Its main features, however, are completion and anteriority. It is used "when the speaker wants to indicate explicitly that an action has been completed. Therefore, it may be in fact used in any time reference" (Hoà, 1997, p.154) [11].

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

But sometimes there is a subtle nuance of modality: *Chú chó đã về rồi.* (The dog ANTERIOR return already.) may mean *"The dog has gone back."* or *"The dog has come back."* whereas *"Ông ấy đã về."* means *"The dog's back"* [from errand]. Moreover only the context can tell whether the action or condition is in the past or in the future.

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

Tháng sau đã hai năm rồi từ khi mình sang bên đây.

Next month it will have been 3 years since we moved here. [18]

In addition, adverb or possibly adjective *xong (finished)* can be used with *đã* and *rồi* resulting in the same meaning. *Xong* follows the verb or its object and precedes *rồi*. It is also a part of a compound *làm xong* "to finish" (literally "to make something finished"). All three elements expressing completion may be used simultaneously to get greatest emphasis on the fact of completion, as below:

Tôi đã sửa xong xe rồi.

I (have) (already) finished repairing the car. [18]

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

III.5. Duration, continuation, habitual use-regular repetition

Events that last for a period of time are grammatically expressed by the progressive (continuous) aspect in English.

III.5.1. Duration

English has various means of expressing this feature varying from different tenses to lexical verbs and adverbials. In Vietnamese, particle *đang*, which is placed before the main verb, used to indicate the feature of duration in the process. It can refer to an action in progress at present moment but also in the past or future but it is not used with the particles *đã* and *sẽ*.

Tôi đang doç báo

I'm reading newspapers. (now) [18]

The progressive aspect expresses the dynamic quality of actions that are in progress, going-on actions and also temporality. It can be different completely with the simple aspect, in the following example:

Which team do you support? and *Which team are you supporting?* [18]

The former one means in general and the latter one means at this particular match so the time in which this is occurring at the time in question, holds true is limited to a certain period of time, does not focus on the larger time-scale, therefore it is temporary.

The continuous aspect is constructed by using a form of the copula *to be* together with the present participle (marked with the suffix-*ing*). Some state verbs might change their meaning when in progressive form, for instance sense verbs such as *see, hear, smell* etc.

III.5.2. Continuation

The concept of continuation is more specific in duration. The progressive aspect expresses the dynamic quality of actions that are in progress while the continuous aspect expresses the state of the subject that is continuing the action. It means that this is completely contrary to the progressive aspect with the meaning of temporary duration. It emphasizes that a situation, which began in the past and lasts for a certain period of time, is still not completed at the present moment or other time specified and continues in the future and is most likely to last for a long time. In Vietnamese, these two notions are not interchangeable. It applies to series of repetitive events and also continuous

states along with *vẫn, cứ, còn, mãi, nữa.* This is, in English, expressed by the present perfect.

a. *Vẫn, cứ, còn, mãi, nữa*

Vietnamese uses adverbs *vẫn, cứ, còn,* and their combinations. They are placed before the main verb in order to indicate that an action or state of affairs goes on without ending or changing or that it occurs repeatedly. The context or time adverbials is used to define how long it lasts. *Vẫn* can be translated as *still, cứ* expresses that states or events go on without any change and *còn* is translated as *remain.* Their combinations denote their feature more emphasized forcefully.

Hắn vẫn cứ hút thuốc lá.

He is still smoking (cigarettes). [18] (even though he was told to stop)

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

Đứa trẻ cứ khóc mãi.

The baby is still crying. [18] *(He wouldn't stop crying)*

b. Present Perfect

The present perfect is an English tense which locates a situation time in the pre-present time zone of the present time-sphere leading up to, but not necessarily including NOW. That means the event occurs in the past but is related to the present in some way. Either it lasts up to the present moment or has results persisting at the present moment, so it includes an idea of continuation even though the action itself might have been terminated. The present perfect is a complex tense, composed by a form of *have* and the past participle of a main verb.

I have lived in Bristol since 1984. [23]

Tôi đã sống ở Bristol từ năm 1984.

Unlike the past tense, a speaker uses the present perfect when she/he wishes to refer not to a definite moment of occurrence of the event, but either simply to the anteriority of the event, or to an event in the past that is considered to be still relevant NOW.

III.5.3. Present Tense – Habitual Use, Regular Repetition

The habitual use expresses regularity or repetition in some event taking place. "The habitual usage typically occurs with event verbs and represents a series of individual events which as a whole make up a state stretching back into the past and forward into the future" (Leech 2004, p.98) [11].

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

In the evenings, I go home from work by bus.

Every evening I go home from work by bus. [18]

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

Regular repetition in some ways has a close relation with habitual use; however it focuses more specifically on how many times an action or a habit happens for a particular period of time. For example: *I go swimming twice a week in the summer.* or *I take a shower once a day.*[18]

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

The adverb *hay* precedes the main verb. *Thường xuyên* is a compound construction, it usually begins the sentence but it is not the rule. Adverbials such as *every day*, *every week* are constructed in this pattern.

Chiếc bình này hay vỡ.

The vase often/usually breaks. (because they are poorly made)

I cook dinner everyday.

Ngày nào tôi cũng nấu bữa tối.

Another mean to express continuation of an action is repitition. Howerver repitition implies the action happens in separate points of time. For example *He goes swimming once a week.* The action going swimming does not necessarily happen on a permanent day of a week.

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

III.6. Recent past and immediate future

This chapter deals with expressions of situations which occupy a point near to the present moment, in the past or in the present.

III.6.1. Present Perfect

As has been already analyzed above, the idea of recent past may be related with the perfect aspect. Present perfect is used to express past situation is very recent and close to the point of the current time. All cases of the present perfect do not necessarily have to express recent past even with certain present relevance, but an action completed in the very recent past may imply present relevance. It is most frequently expressed in news announcements.

The horrific accident caused 8 deaths in Kim Thanh, Hai Duong, which just happened in this afternoon. [22]

Vụ tai nạn kinh hoàng làm 8 người chết ở Kim Thành, Hải Dương vừa mới xảy ra chiều nay.

Present perfect allows time specification with the adverb *recently* such as *just*, and other time adverbials denoting recentness such as *a minute ago*, *yet*, *already* or *just now*.

The teacher has just gone out. (She went out a few minutes ago) [18]

Cô giáo vừa mới đi ra ngoài xong.

As can be seen, past simple may also indicate recent past, but without the emphasis on the persistent relevance.

- *Mới, vừa*

There are numerous time abverbs in Vietnamese to indicate that an action completed in the very recent past: adverbs *mới (new, recent)* and *vừa (just now)*. They precede the main verb and may not occur together, if they do, *vừa* precedes *mới*. However, their meaning is not exactly the same, that is the reason why they cannot appear together to achieve the recentness as English grammar. Additionally, *xong* may be used to indicate completion of the action.

Tôi vừa (mới) làm bài tập xong.

I have just finished doing my homework. [18]

III.6.2. Immediate Future

Immediate Future help to express immediate actions we plan or intend to do. It is a situation "when an action is imminent, i.e. when it approaches the utterance or a moment in either past or future". English expresses such situation with the form of *be about to* or *be to*. The tense of be depends on the time of the point of reference – past tense for actions approaching a moment in the past and present tense for actions approaching a moment in the future.

In *He came when I was about to/ was to leave.* [18], the point of reference is *he came* and the act of leaving is immediate future with respect to that point of reference.

This pattern is used to refer to an action that was imminent, but was interrupted. That pattern is often followed by a clause introduced by *when*.

Near or immediate future is generally understood as the time period within seconds or minutes. This pattern is used to refer to a time immediately after the moment of speaking, and emphasizes that the event or action will happen very soon. We often add the word *just* before the word *about*, which emphasizes the immediacy of the action.

Immediate future may also be used as one's intention as well as prediction, and this classification was used in Chapter Future time regarding *be going to*, which in fact may also imply near future. The sentences *It's about to rain.* and *It's going to rain.* [18] have more or less the same meaning.

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

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

She is about to cry. [18]

She is about to cry in a minute. (X)

Through comparison above, we can see that English has various means of expressing this feature varying from different tenses to lexical verbs and adverbials.

PART IV. ERRORS MADE BY VIETNAMESE WHEN USING TENSES AND SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING THE ENGLISH TENSES IN VIET NAM

Error analysis (EA) was established by Stephen Pit Corder and colleagues in the 1960s and "consists of a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining learners' errors" (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005, p.51) [9]. According to Corder (1981), learners' errors are significant in three ways: first, they give information about the language a learner is using; second, they provide information on how a language is learnt and finally, they provide information to the learner himself or herself since errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn. Error analysis also has pedagogical benefits because it gives useful input for designing and carrying out the teaching/learning process (Corder, 1981, p.8) [7].

When conducting research based on error analysis, a distinction between errors and mistakes must be made. Brown said that a mistake and an error are differentiated in the terms of self-correctness and competency. A mistake indicates an unconventional form in writing and speaking committed by a learner who has insufficient concentration or tiredness, but he or she can be self-corrected. An error, on the contrary, indicates a production made by a learner who has inadequate competency of knowledge and cannot correct his/her mistakes (Brown, 2003, p.23) [3].

Ellis stated that "[a]n error (in this technical sense) takes place when the deviation arises as a result of lack of knowledge (i.e. a lack of competence)" (Ellis, 2008, p.88) [9]. Corder informed that both second language learners and children who are acquiring their first language can make errors in the learning stage of their language development.

Corder establishes four steps to carry out error analysis research: collection of learners' test sample, identification of errors, the description of the errors that have been identified and finally the explanation of learner's errors (Corder, 1981, p.112) [7].

In the first step, researchers collect a sample of learner language. Because the type of sample that is collected may influence the nature and distribution of the errors observed, it is important to describe the type of discourse collected and whether learners had time to plan their production or not.

The identification of errors is the second step. It involves a comparison between what the learner has produced and what a native speaker counterpart would produce in the same context. Every utterance/sentence produced by the learner is assumed to be erroneous. Those utterances that are shown to be well-formed through a comparison with a native speaker's sample are eliminated. The remaining utterances/sentences are the ones that contain errors.

Once errors have been identified, the next step is describing learners' errors. To do so, it is necessary to have descriptive categories to classify and record the frequency of the errors that have been identified. There are four principal ways in which learners modify target forms: omission, addition, misformation and misordering. Errors of omission refer to an element which should be present but has been omitted. Addition is the presence of an element which should not be part of the sentence or utterance. Misformation is the use of the wrong form or morpheme or structure. Misordering errors are incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance.

The last step is the explanation of learners' errors, even though the explanation of errors is still highly speculative because of the complex psychological and neurological process involved in language learning.

Error analysis focuses on the errors learners make and is based on the comparison of learners' utterances/sentences in the target language and a native's utterances/sentences. It can help us to see how a learner's production deviates from target language forms and get information about the difficulties students face when learning a second or foreign language.

IV.1. Errors made by Vietnamese when using tenses

The aim of this research was to describe the students' errors and its causes in using basis English tenses (Simple present, Present progressive, Present perfect, Past simple, Past progressive, Past perfect, Present perfect progressive, Simple future). In this research, I used the qualitative method in a form of descriptive analysis (percentage) that included observation, collecting the students' tests, analyzing, and interpreting the data. For collecting the data the researcher used a survey test as the instrument. This research was conducted with 80 random students in grade 10 of Kien An high school.

This idea is also supported by the teachers of Kien An High School in Hai Phong who are teaching English grammar especially English tenses to the 10 grade students.

IV.1.1. Participants

A total of 80 random students from Kien An High School participated in the study including 40 students of English major and 40 non-English major students. The age of the students was 16 to 18 years old. Their English competence is also different because English major students are likely to have better English than non-English major students. Besides, the participants have been studying English for 5 to 8 years. In addition, they come from different places in Hai Phong City.

IV.1.2. Data collection instruments and procedure

In order to collect data for the study, survey test was chosen because it is a simple and familiar instrument of collecting information from the students and is less time-consuming than other instruments. The test consists of two exercises: "Exercise 1: Translate the following sentences from Vietnamese into English" and "Exercise 2: Use the correct form of verbs in brackets"; both exercises note using appropriate tenses.

The test was administered in the students' English class and students were given 60 minutes to complete. Before filling out the test, students were told that their participation was voluntary and their responses would remain confidential; they were also asked to fulfill the test as honestly as possible, which was crucial to the success of this investigation. I also confirmed to them that the research was carried out with the aim of improving their own English learning in general and their English tenses learning in particular.

IV.1.3. Data analysis and discussion

The data gathered through the test was analyzed to investigate which groups of mistakes that students of Kien An High School often make. It should be noted that the analysis considered errors in the use of English tenses and errors in form (misformation, omission, addition and misordering).

IV.1.3.1. Errors in the use of English tenses

I consider the correct choice of tense as prerequisite to express the writer's perspective on the time of an event. These errors are collected from students' result of *exercise 1* in Appendices, so I evaluate and analyze the results obtained in the area of mistakes in this exercise. Morever, due to limited scope of the study, this exercise covers only 4 absolute tenses: *present, past, present perfect* and *future*. As a result, 6 groups of mistakes synthesized.

Error types	Number of students corresponding to each type	Percentage (%)
Type 1	48	60
Type 2	12	15
Type 3	52	65
Type 4	15	18.75
Type 5	35	43.75
Type 6	21	26.25

Note: Type 1: Errors using present tense instead of past tense

Type 2: Errors using present tense instead of future tense

Type 3: Errors using present tense instead of present perfect tense

Type 4: Errors using past tense instead of future tense

Type 5: Errors using future tense instead of present tense

Type 6: Errors using future tense instead of past tense

Table 1: The ratio of students making errors in the choice of appropriate English tenses

According to the table we can see, the highest propotion of students answered wrong belongs to Type 3 (at 65%), followed by that of Type 1 (60%), which is 16.25% higher than that of Type 5 (43.75%). The percentage in Type 6 takes 26.25%, which is 7.5% more comparision with that of Type 4 (18.75%). The proportion of students in Type 2 is the lowest, only 15%.

IV.1.3.1.1. Errors using present tense instead of past tense

It is very rare to find a case in which students use past tense when they want to write about the present. Nevertheless, many learners "forget" to use past tense when mentioning something in the past. For example, when marking

students' test, I found that a lot of students chose the wrong tense to use for *sentence 7 of exercise 1*. Specifically, most of them used the present tense instead of the past tense to recount a memory like this:

That is an unforgettable memory to me. When I get there, it is in the middle of summer so it is extremely hot.

It is easy to realize that in the above example, the student commits several errors with form of verb. He/she should correct his writing like this:

That is an unforgettable memory to me. When I got there, it was in the middle of summer so it was extremely hot.

IV.1.3.1.2. Errors using present tense instead of future tense

This error type happens in *sentence 3 of exercise 1*: *Ngày mai tôi đi học.*

Vietnamese learners often to use the present base form in English. Instead of saying: *Tomorrow, I am going to school.* or *Tomorrow, I will go to school.*, some Vietnamese learners say: *Tomorrow I go to school.* As for the wrong choice of future, the error can be explained as in students' native language, the simple present would be used for the same context.

IV.1.3.1.3. Errors using present tense instead of present perfect tense

A typical example of students making this most popular type is taken from *sentence 6 of exercise 1*: *Tôi vừa bị con dao cắt vào tay. Giờ vẫn còn đau điếng.*

It could be written: *I have just had my finger cut deeply, and I still have acute pain now*. However, most students use present tense to express the meaning of this sentence, for instance *I have my finger cut deeply. I still have a pain now.* or *My finger is just cut by a knife, and it is still painful now*. This is an additional proof that Vietnamese students have a habit of translating nearly word by word from English into Vietnamese and vice versa.

IV.1.3.1.4. Errors using past tense instead of future tense

If in the native language, the presence of function word *đã* makes Vietnamese students think that it is a sign of the past tense. *Sentence 1 of exercise 1* is a suitable example for this.

Ngày mai là con đã lên mười rồi đấy.

The right translation of this in English could be *Tomorrow and you will be 10 years old*. In the survey, many students who ignored the adverbial sign of time "tomorrow", conjugated the verb in the sentence above in past tense as *Tomorrow, you were 10 years old*.

IV.1.3.1.5. Errors using future tense instead of present tense

This error is very hard for Vietnamese people to recognize, even for teachers. It sounds right but actually, no native person would use simple future in the case that simple present is necessary. To be more specific, when referring to a fact or a truth such as those of *Sentence 2 and 4 of exercise 1*, it is better to use simple present.

Some wrong sentences of students are shown below:

Sentence 2 of exercise 1: Sedentary lifestyle will be very harmful to our health.

Sentence 4 of exercise 1: It will be a disadvantage for anyone who does not have soft skills in this modern time.

Suggested sentence for the first one could be *Sedentary lifestyle is very harmful to our health.* As for the latter, it should be rewritten like *It is a disadvantage for anyone who does not have soft skills in this modern time.*

IV.1.3.1.6. Errors using future tense instead of past tense

In *sentence 5 of exercise 1: Năm ngoái tôi cứ tưởng là sẽ được đi Hawaii.,* the students should have realized the word *sẽ* happens in a situation of last year, so it must be conjugated in past tense as in this correct sentence *Last year I thought I would go to Hawaii.*

It can be seen from the above analysis that Vietnamese find some English tenses difficult to apply in translating because English tenses consists of various strict structures while Vietnamese requires only understanding of context and time adverbials.

IV.1.3.2. Errors in form (misformation, omission, addition and misordering)

Students'results of *exercise 2* in Appendices are used to analyze these errors. The highest frequency of error corresponds to mis-formation (109 errors), and the lowest corresponds to addition (10 errors). As the below table shows, the tense with the highest frequency of mis-formation is the present perfect.

Tense	Frequency of error				
	Omission	Addition	Mis-formation	Mis-ordering	**Total**
Simple present	16	0	22	0	38
Present perfect	0	0	35	0	35
Past perfect	10	0	11	13	34
Past simple	0	10	7	12	29
Past progressive	0	0	14	11	25
Present perfect progressive	2	0	20	0	22
Simple future	6	0	0	11	17
Present progressive	4	0	0	0	4
Total	38	10	109	47	204

Table 2: The number of students making errors in form

Overall, the tenses with the highest frequency of errors are the simple present (38 errors), present perfect (35 errors), past perfect (34 errors) and past simple (29 errors). The present progressive has the lowest frequency of error with 4 errors.

IV.1.3.2.1. Simple present tense

22 students committing mis-formation in simple present tense thought the verb "stop" of *sentence 8 of exercise 2* would be conjugated in future tense like this:

We can't do anything until it <u>will stop</u>.

These students understood that it would happen in the future. They applied that meaning to this sentence without knowing the right tense for this type of sentence is present simple conjugated as in this correct sentence:

We can't do anything until it <u>stops</u>.

Omission (16 errors) happens the most in present simple, particularly in the above sentence and *sentence 1 of exercise 2* as below:

We can't do anything until it <u>stop</u>.

He sometimes <u>come</u> to see his parents. Correct answer: *He sometimes <u>comes</u> to see his parents.*

This type of error can be labeled as exploiting redundancy, which means students are omitting characteristics of language that do not change the meaning of the utterance. All these students claimed to have accidentally forgotten the "s".

IV.1.3.2.2. Present progressive tense

Most students have mastered the basic use of present progressive tense in *sentence 8 of exercise 2* by conjugating the verb "rain" in "to be V-ing" unless there are still 4 errors of 4 students who accidentally forgot to add "to be" before V-ing:

Look! It <u>raining</u> hard.
Correct answer: *Look! It is <u>raining</u> hard.*

IV.1.3.2.3. Present perfect tense

The present perfect shows the highest frequency of mis-formation with 35 errors mostly due to students' problems with the past participle of the irregular verb "write" in *sentence 6 of exercise 2*:

You <u>haven't wrote</u> for a year. Frequency: 5
You <u>haven't written</u> for a year. Frequency: 26
You <u>didn't write</u> for a year. Frequency: 4
Correct answer: *You <u>haven't written</u> for a year.*

The result shows there is a lack of knowledge about past participle among these students. Also, 4 students who thought of past simple as the right tense when reading the sentence do need to practice present perfect more.

IV.1.3.2.4. Present perfect progressive tense

The frequency of mis-formation happening in present perfect progressive is ranked third in 8 tenses with 20 errors. Students made this error when dealing with *sentence 7 of exercise 2.*

I have spent 5 hours on playing games, and now I'm tired.

Correct answer: *I have been spending 5 hours on playing games, and now I'm tired.*

Present perfect can be used in this sentence but it can not express 5 consecutive hours as well as present perfect progressive. Most students said they did not notice of this.

Only 2 errors of omission are found in this sentence which relates to students' bad memory of the grammatical structure:

I have spending 5 hours on playing games, and now I'm tired.

IV.1.3.2.5. Past simple tense

Mis-ordering accounts for the largest proportion of total errors in this tense with 12 errors in *sentence 4 of exercise 2*:

You did receive the letter yesterday?

These 12 students obviously did not notice of the question mark "?" or they do need to research again on the formation of questions. Likewise, the students producing 10 errors of addition and 7 errors of mis-formation should practice more the structure of an particular English question:

Did you received the letter yesterday?

You received the letter yesterday?

Correct answer: *Did you receive the letter yesterday?*

Past simple also appear in *sentence 2 of exercise 2: By the time I got to Mary's party,* and no one made mistake with the verb "get".

IV.1.3.2.6. Past progressive tense

The most frequent error for the past progressive corresponds to mis-formation with 14 errors.

Expected answer in *sentence 5 of exercise 2* is *When I was a child, I (always wait) was always waiting for my father to buy me lovely candies.*

Certainly, the students realized the sign of past tense in the first clause of the above sentence, and they wrote *I always waited*. But what they did not realize is that this sentence describes an annoying habit of the kid by the adverb "always" plus V-ing.

Morever, 11 students who made 11 mis-ordering errors still encountered problems with the position of frequency adverbs such as "always":

I always was waiting.

IV.1.3.2.7. Past perfect tense

Mis-ordering makes up the most of total errors in past perfect with 13 errors. Expected answer in *sentence 2 of exercise 2* is *Everyone (arrive) had already arrived*. However, 13 students still got confused with the position of adverbs such as "already" towards the auxiliary "had":

Everyone already had arrived.

This tense does not present a high frequency of errors (7%) but as with the present perfect there are errors in the formation of the perfect form of an irregular verb.

Mis-formation and omission also account for comparative proportions of total errors in this tense with 11 and 10 errors respectively.

Everyone have already arrived.

11 students who wrote as above said they carelessly assumed the adverb "already" to be a sign of present perfect without considering the past perfect. In the same time, 10 students forgot to add "had" or thought of past simple due to the sentence *The traffic was very heavy.* and they wrote as below:

Everyone already arrived.

IV.1.3.2.8. Simple future tense

The simple future appears with a high frequency of mis-ordering (11 errors). The correct answer in *sentence 3 of exercise 2* should be *I will be free in June. When will you (come) come to Europe?*.

When you will come to Europe?

Again, it can be concluded that many students such as these 11 ones need to go over the structure of an English question in terms of auxiliary's position.

Less serious than that, there are only 6 students who omitted the auxiliary "will" and wrote *When you come to Europe*?.

IV.2. Suggested solutions for learning and teaching the English tenses in Viet Nam

IV.2.1. Some implications for Vietnamese students learning English language

The native language has a major influence on how to convey ideas of themselves through other languages, Vietnam is not an exception. It is the first that Vietnamese students have a habit of translating nearly word by word from English into Vietnamese and vice versa. This is the main reason why students make mistakes in their use tense to express their ideas. Secondly, it seems that students focus heavily on English theory to get high scores when taking the test, which leads to students understanding mechanically according to the formula while their use in each context is not fully understood. In English, each tense has its own formula and usage, due to lack of knowledge of basic grammar, students often create incorrect grammar sentences in the way they choose to express. Finally, students often hesitate to use complex grammatical structures to express their ideas due to their fear of misuse or because they are not confident with their own grammatical knowledge.

Although the number of students who showed difficulties with the formation of tenses is not the core of the study compared with the number of students who had problems using tenses and aspects, it is an area that also needs to be analyzed in terms of the time and type of drilling students need to be exposed to. The omission of the "s" for the third person singular is the most frequent error. The past participle form of irregular verbs and the position of elements are still a problem for some students.

The analysis of errors in students' work suggests a need for drilling and more time devoted to weak aspects detected, the wrong order of elements and the incorrect use of tense. It is necessary that students should be aware of the usage and meaning of each tense in expressing ideas by English language. Also, exercises contrasting the use of tense such as those two of my study should be practiced regularly to help students use them appropriately. Again, some

contrastive analytical materials between English and Vietnamese could help students learn the patterns for word order in the formation of English tenses.

IV.2.2. Some implications for teachers of English tense teaching in Viet Nam

From the above analysis, Vietnamese has more temporary features expressed by separate words not by bound morphemes. Meanwhile, English has multiple grammatical means of expressing these features but they are constrained by the grammatical and semantical relations in the sentence. Therefore, from a pedagogical perspective, these results suggest that it is very important and difficult for teachers to have a good professional level to convey sufficient knowledge, to help students understand the nature of the theory to apply it properly. To overcome problems, we suggest that teachers use contrastive exercises and give some contrastive analyses between English and Vietnames in order to help students internalize the use of tenses in English.

In addition, it is also critical that the teacher helps students by introducing, providing various tenses and giving detail explanation about definition, form and usage of tenses correctly and analyzing the grammatical errors. Furthermore, it would be helpful to implement remedial tasks to raise students' awareness of the importance of tense to convey meaning. In this case, it is useful for English teacher in order to understand more about the students' difficulties. By understanding what the problems encountered by the students, the teacher can furthermore give some assistance and positive motivation to students.

As our research shows Kien An students face problems regarding the choice of tenses in English. Therefore, teaching methods and materials should be revised in light of learners' errors to find ways to help them learn the use of tenses.

PART V. CONCLUSION

V.1. Summary

In conclusion, tense is an important grammatical point in English and Vietnamese, but it is expressed differently in the two languages. In this paper, I offered some general knowledge about the tense in English and Vietnamese as well as the contrast between them in their forms and meanings.

Error analysis attempts at identifying, describing and explaining learners' errors in relation to the use and formation of English tenses, thereby providing valuable information about the language the learner is using. Even though this method has some drawbacks, it is still a useful tool from a pedagogical perspective to obtain information about students' problems and to provide suggestions for improving the teaching-learning process.

I hope that this paper can help students and teachers have better knowledge and correct translations of the tense-meaning sentences. Eventually, learning a foreign language is not easy at all, especially knowing and mastering all the differences, thus I also suggest some implications for teaching languages in Vietnam high school. Learners should try their best to practice the languages and overcome the confusion and difficulty of the gaps between English and Vietnamese. Hopefully, this paper will be an appropriate choice for consultation that learners can rely on.

V.2. Limitations and suggestions for further study

This was an exploratory study that only caught a glimpse of the present status of tense learning of Kien An High School students. A larger sample with more diverse backgrounds would be desirable in order to yield more generalizable findings. Furthermore, the data for the study were based on the self-reports of the participants. Therefore, further studies are needed using other instruments such as oral interview and so on. Such multiple sources would provide more insights into what learners actually do. Hopefully, this will lead to more thorough investigations in the field.

REFERENCES

1. Alexander, L.G. (1988), *Longman English Grammar*, London: Longman.

2. Asmaa, S.G. (1874), *An introduction to the English Grammar*, بـ نت دار
   والـ توزي ع لـ لـ نشر الـ زي ات.

3. Brown, H. (2000), *Principles of language learning and teaching*, New York, NY: Addison Wesley Longman.

4. Carter, R. & Michael, M. (2006), *Cambridge Grammar of English*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5. Comrie, B. (1993), *Tense*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

6. Comrie, B. (1995), *Aspect*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

7. Corder, S. (1981), *Error analysis and interlanguage*, Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

8. Declerck, R. (2006), *The Grammar of the English Tense System: a Comprehensive Analysis*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

9. Ellis, R. & Barkhuizen, G. (2005), *Analysing learner language*, Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

10. Hòa, N.Đ. (1997), *Vietnamese*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

11. Leech, G. (2004), *Meaning and the English Verb*, 3rd ed. Harlow: Pearson.

12. Lia, R.K. (2014), *An analysis of students' errors in using english tenses,* Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University.

13. Quirk, R. et al (1985), *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*, London: Longman.

14. Quán, P. (1988), *Tuổi thơ dữ dội*, Kim Đồng.

15. Rowling, J.K. (1997), *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Bloomsbury Publishing.

16. Shakespeare, W. (1609), *Hamlet*.

17. Tense of English
   http://www.glottopedia.org/index.php/Tenses_of_English?fbclid=IwAR2y3Wj3fzH1NcCYS8RLox-7pw2IUY-CPXMkBcGIhMipf1hriFvOnEL10Dk

18. *www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com*

19. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanoi

20. https://forum.wordreference.com/threads/here-come-comes-a-car-and-a-bus.3028370/

21. *https://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/society/194763/photos-on-1968-spring-mau-than-general-offensive-and-uprising.html*

22. *http://vietnamnews.vn/society/484193/truck-crash-kills-eight-people-injures-five-in-hai-duong.html*

23. *https://www.ef.com/wwen/english-resources/english-grammar/present-perfect/*

APPENDICES

EXERCISE 1: Translate the following sentences from Vietnamese into English (note: using appropriate tenses)

1. Ngày mai là con đã lên mười rồi đấy.

2. Lối sống ít vận động sẽ rất có hại cho sức khỏe của chúng ta.

3. Ngày mai tôi đi học.

4. Điều đó sẽ là một bất lợi cho bất cứ ai không có kỹ năng mềm trong thời hiện đại này.

5. Năm ngoái tôi cứ tưởng là sẽ được đi Hawaii.

6. Tôi vừa bị con dao cắt vào tay. Giờ vẫn còn đau điếng.

7. Đó là một kỷ niệm khó quên với tôi. Khi tôi đến đó, vào giữa mùa hè nên cực kỳ nóng.

EXERCISE 2: Use the correct form of verbs in brackets.

1. He sometimes (come) _____ to see his parents.

2. The traffic was very heavy. By the time I (get) _____to Mary's party, everyone already (arrive) _____.

3. I will be free in June. When you (come) _____ to Europe?

4. You (receive) _____ the letter yesterday?

5. When I was a child, I (always wait) _____for my father to buy me lovely candies.

6. You (not write) _____ for a year.

7. I (spend) _____ 5 hours on playing games, and now I'm tired.

8. Look! It (rain) _____ hard. We can't do anything until it (stop) _____.

KEY TO APPENDICES

EXERCISE 1

1. Tomorrow and you will be 10 years old.

2. Sedentary lifestyle is very harmful to our health.

3. Tomorrow, I will go to school.

4. It is a disadvantage for anyone who does not have soft skills in this modern time.

5. Last year I thought I would go to Hawaii.

6. I have just had my finger cut deeply, and I still have acute pain now.

7. That is an unforgettable memory to me. When I got there, it was in the middle of summer so it was extremely hot.

EXERCISE 2

1. comes

2. got – had already arrived

3. will you come

4. Did you receive

5. was always waiting

6. have not written

7. have been spending

8. is raining – stops