### **Control in Vietnamese**

Shin Fukuda University of California, San Diego

Vietnamese (vie), Austro-Asiatic also known as Kinh, Gin, Jing, Ching, Viet, Annamese spoken in Vietnam (Asia)

### 1 Grammar Profile

### 1.1 Morpho-Syntax

#### 1.1.1 Head position

Vietnamese is generally considered as head-initial.

Vietnamese has SVO as its canonical word order.

- (1) Tân đã đánh nó Tân Perf hit him 'Tân hit him.'
- (2) Minh nói rằng [Lan d٠ lái riêng của nó] xe Mihn say that [Lan Perf drive car own Poss Prn] 'Minh said that Lan drove his own car.'

Except for some auxiliary/modal verb-like items, a verbal element cannot appear sentence-finally when there is a complement.

- (3) Minh không thể giúp Lan được Minh Neg ?? help Lan can 'Minh cannot help Lan.'
- (4) \*Minh không thể Lan giúp Minh Neg ?? Lan help

The subject is obligatorily in the clause initial position, whether it is a matrix or embedded clause, as can be seen in (5) and (6) below. Some notable exceptions are the presentational construction with  $c\delta$ , as in (7) and embedded unaccusative verbs, as in (8).

- (5) a. \*(Đã) ngừng tai nạn xảy ra (Perf) stop accident happen
  - b. Tai nan đã ngừng xảy ra accident Perf stop happen

'Accidents stopped happening.'

- (6) a. Tôi muốn [trời mưa] I want [sky rain]
  - b. \*Tôi muốn [mưa]
    I want [rain]
    'I want it to rain.'
- (7) Nếu có khói thì ắt hẳn phải có lửa if be smoke then surely must be fire 'If there is smoke, surely there must be fire.'
- (8) Tân làm (té) tôi (té)
  Tân make fall I fall
  'Tân made me fall'

Vietnamese has many preposition-like elements, such as  $\mathring{o}$ , which always precede and never follow their complements.

(9) Chung nó mua thức ăn ô chớ They buy food at market 'They buy food at the market'

Relative clauses, adjectives, demonstratives follow nouns, while numerals and classifiers precede them (Nguyen 2004, Simpson 2004)

- (10)Hai cuốn sách vàng [mà tôi mới mua] này Two CL book yellow [that T this just buy] CL Nom Num Adi RC Dem 'These two yellow books that I just bought.'
- 1.1.2 Morphological type

isolating

# 1.1.3 Case system

No overt (morphological) case marking.

#### 1.1.4 Verbal Agreement

No subject or object agreement.

### 1.1.5 Transitivity Patterns

There doesn't seem to be any morpheme that serves purely to alter transitivity. However, they are lexical verbs that serve to function like passive and causative in other languages.

The subject of two verbs, bi 'suffer' and duoc 'get or be granted' are interpreted as affected favorably or adversely by an embedded event, respectively, and the theme or patient argument of the embedded event is interpreted to share its referent with the matrix subject. Thus, these verbs realize 'object to subject promotion' effect typical of passive.

- (11)  $D\tilde{u}ng_i$  bị Minh đánh  $ec_i$   $D\tilde{u}ng_i$  suffer Minh hit  $ec_i$  'Dung was hit by Minh. ( $\approx D\tilde{u}ng$  suffered Minh's hitting him)'
- (12)  $Minh_i$  được Dũng giúp  $ec_i$   $Minh_i$  get Dũng help  $ec_i$  'Minh was helped by Dũng. ( $\approx$  Minh was granted Dũng's helping him)'

*làm cho*, 'make', is used to express indirect causation, with the subject of the verb being the causer and the theme or patient argument of an embedded event being the causee. (Kwon 2004)

tiếng (13)Dũng làm cho Minh hoc Anh make Dũng **English** give Minh study lang. 'Dũng made Minh study English.'

Since *làm cho* is limited to *indirect causation*, (13) can only mean that something that Dũng did influenced Minh and she voluntarily started studying English. In contrast, *ép buộc* 'force' is compatible with both *direct* and *indirect causation*. Thus, (14) below can be interpreted as Dũng directly or indirectly caused Minh to study English.

(14) Dũng ép buộc Minh học tiếng Anh Dũng force Minh study lang. English 'Dũng forced Minh to study English.'

Many prepositions-like elements function as applicatives.

- (15) Ông ấy bán sách *cho* tôi Prn sell book to I 'He sold the book to me.'
- (16) Ông ấy mua sách *giùm* tôi Prn buy book for I 'He bought the book for me.'

I am not aware of any instance of anti-passive in Vietnamese.

# 1.1.6 Null Arguments

Subject can be null depending on discourse conditions. Generally, objects cannot be null, even with a clear discourse context.

- (17) Sẽ đi.
  Imp go
  'I/he/she/it/they etc. will go'
- (18) Dũng che chở \*(nó)
  Dũng protect Prn
  'Dũng protected him/her.'

However, with the passive-like constructions with bi 'suffer' and  $du\phi c$  'get or be granted', the objects are preferred to be null.

### 1.1.7 Non-Finite Categories

Due to its isolating morphology, the verb forms are invariable irrespective of finiteness or different functions that a given verb serves in non-finite environments.

#### 1.2 Matrix Clause

#### 1.2.1 Basic word order

**SVO** 

### 1.2.2 Alternate word orders

*Toplicalization* can alter the basic SVO word order. (20) shows that the topicalized element can be overtly realized as a pronoun in situ.

- (19)Thành phố nàv thích lắm thì tôi không this Top Ι Neg like city very 'This city, I like very much'.
- (20)lắm Thành phố này thì tôi không thích nó city this Top I Neg like Prn very 'This city, I like it very much.'

Incidentally, topicalization is also possible within a finite-like complement introduced with  $r\dot{\alpha}ng$ .

(21) Minh rằng [sách thì cô ấy thích nói này đọc] Minh say that [book this Top she like read] 'Minh says that this book, she likes to read.'

In Vietnamese, there are a number of elements which appear to serve different functions in different syntactic environments, and *ai* is one of them. For instance, it can be a wh-phrase in a wh-question, an NPI when there is negation.

- (22) **Ai** biết cô ấy ở đâu **Ai** know Prn be where '**Who** knows where she is?'
- (23)Tôi biết gia đình này không ai trong cả I Neg know ΑI family this ?? in "I don't know anyone in this family."

When it is in subject position, ai is interpreted as universal quantifier together with  $c\tilde{u}ng$  'also'.

(24) **Ai** cũng quen cô ấy **Ai** also know Prn 'Everyone knows her/him.'

However, ai cannot be preceded by  $c\tilde{u}ng$  (and maintain the universal reading). Ai has to be at the front to avoid being governed by  $c\tilde{u}ng$  (Duffeild 2004).

- (25) \*Cô ấy cũng quen **ai** she also know ai 'She knows everyone.'
- (26)  $\mathbf{Ai}_i$  cô ấy cũng quen  $\Delta_i$   $Q_i$  she also know ec<sub>i</sub>

This obligatory ai fronting may cross a clause boundary, as in (27). However, these two elements must maintain a local relation. Thus, ai fails to get licensed in (28), in which  $c\tilde{u}ng$  is found in the embedded clause while ai is in the matrix.

- (27) $Ai_i$ rằng Lan cũng nghĩ [nó quen  $\Delta_{\rm i}$ Lan also think that [he know ec<sub>i</sub>] 'Lan thinks that he knows everyone.'
- (28)??Aii Lan nghĩ rằng [nó cũng quen  $\Delta_{\rm i}$ Lan think that [he also know ec<sub>i</sub>]
- 1.2.3 Ordering of nominal and pronominal arguments

The same.

#### 1.3 Embedded Clause

#### 1.3.1 Basic word order

SVO (except for some unaccusative predicates under *làm* 'make'. See 4.1).

### 1.3.2 Verbal agreement

N/A

#### 1.3.3 Restrictions on tense, aspect, mood

Aspect/tense markers are generally optional, and often presence of a time adverbial suffices to establish the time of an event denoted.

Please describe any limitations on voice in the embedded clause.

Both of the two passive-like predicates, bi 'suffer' and  $du\phi c$  'get, gain, or be granted' can be in an embedded clause.

#### 1.3.4 Possible morphological categories of the embedded clause

There is no verbal morphology.

### 1.3.5 Non-control complements

Finite-like complements can optionally be introduced with items like  $r \grave{a} n g$  and  $l \grave{a}$ .

(29) Dũng nói *rằng/là* Minh đã trở về nhà Dũng say that Minh Perf return home 'Dũng said that Minh had gone gome.'

*cho* can also be found preceding a complement, with verbs like *làm* 'make', *thích* 'like', and *muốn* 'want'. However, a complement introduced by *cho* is incompatible with an aspect marker, unlike ones that are introduced by *rằng* and *là*.

- tiếng (30)Dũng làm Minh (\*đã) hoc Anh Dũng make Minh (Perf) lang. **English** study 'Dũng made Minh to study English.'
- (31) Dũng thích *cho* chúng nó (\*đã) đến Dũng like they (Perf) come 'Dũng (would) like them to come.'
- (32) Dũng muốn *cho* chúng nó (\*đã) đến Dũng want they (Perf) come 'Dũng wants them to come.'

There appear to be different types of compound/complex verbs in Vietnamese. One common type is a combination of two predicates of similar meaning ('Reinforcing compounds' in Thompson 1965).

```
cố 'try'
cố gắng 'try' + 'strive' = try hard
đánh 'hit'
đánh đập 'hit' + 'beat' = beat
```

Some desiderative verbs, such as  $mu\acute{o}n$  'want' and  $th\acute{c}h$  'like', instantiate disjoint reference between an embedded subject and matrix arguments, which is the closest Vietnamese equivalent of ECM construction in other languages where case is visible. These verbs take a non-finite clausal complement, and the subjects of the clausal complements are not subject to selectional restrictions. The subject can be an inanimate object, as in (37), and it can also be non-referential, as in (38).

- (33) Dũng muốn Lan (\*đã) đến Dũng want Lan (\*Perf) come 'Dũng wants/wanted Lan to come.'
- (34) Dũng muốn **hộp đó** đi San Diego Dũng want box that go San Diego 'Dũng wants that box to go to San Diego.'

Some aspectual verbs, such as *ngừng* 'stop' and *tiếp tục* 'continue', as well as some modals, such as *phải* 'must', *cần* 'need', and *nên* 'should', allow a non-referential DPs to be their subject, suggesting that they are raising verbs.

- (35) Trời phải /cần /nên mưa Sky must /need /should rain 'It must be raining/needs to rain/should rain.'
- (36) Trời tiếp tục /ngừng mưa Sky continue/stop rain 'It continues/stops raining.'

The same group of verbs (aspectual verbs) appear to be preserve the meaning of an idiomatic expression such as *kiến bò bụng* 'be/get really hungry' (which means literally 'ants craw in one's stomach').

(37) Kiến bắt đầu/tiếp tục bò bụng ant begin/continue craw stomach 'I am beginning to get really hungry/I continued to be really hungry.'

#### 2 Control Profile

- 2.1 forward subject control into a non-finite complement
- 2.1.1 Example structure
- (38) Minh cố (gắng) giúp Dũng.
  Minh try (strive) help Dũng
  'Minh tries/tried to help Dũng.'
- (39) Dũng muốn học tiếng Anh Dũng want study lang. English 'Dũng wants/wanted to study English.'
- (40) Dũng thích học tiếng Anh Dũng like study lang. English 'Dũng likes/liked to study English.'
- (41) Dũng định học tiếng Anh Dũng intend study lang. English 'Dũng intended to study English.'
- 2.1.2 Predicates participating in the construction

verb, implicative,  $c\hat{o}$  'try'

verb, desiderative, muốn, 'want', thích 'like, would like', quyết 'decide', định 'intend'

#### 2.1.3 Evidence in support bi-clausal structure

First of all, evidence suggests that complements of the verbs listed above are clearly different from the finite-like complement introduced by either  $r \grave{a} n g$  or  $l \grave{a}$ . A  $r \grave{a} n g$  complement can have an overt subject

and it allows topicalization within itself, as has already been seen (see 5.2. and 6.4). The complements of the presumed control verbs are not compatible with an overt subject or topicalization.

- (42) Dũng muốn che chở nó Dũngi want protect Prnj 'Dũngi wants to protect himj/herj /itj.'
- (43) \*Dũng muốn ông ấy che chở nó
  Dũngi want hei protect Prnj
  'Dòngi wants hei protect himj/herk.'(intended)
- (44) \*Dũngi muốn Kimj thì (nói) che chở ecj Dũngi want Kimj Top (Prni) protect ecj 'Dòng wants Kim, he protects.' (intended)

- (45)Tôi nghĩ rằng [Minh không thíck hoc tiếng Anh gì cả] I think that [Minh Neg like study lang. English at all] 'I think Minh doesn't like to study English at all.'
- (46)\*Tôi không nghĩ rằng Minh thíck hoc tiếng Anh gì cả] [Minh like neg think that study lang. English at all] 'I don't think Minh likes to study English at all.' (Intended)
- (47) Dũng không cố (gắng) hút thuốc lá gì cả Dũng Neg try strive inhale cigarette at all 'Dũng didn't try to smoke cigarette at all.'

Although the evidence presented so far may be taken to suggest monoclausal status of the control sentences, a closer look at the distribution of negation and licensing of NPIs suggests that the presumed control sentences are biclausal.

First, negation can be found in a complement.

(48) Dũng cố (gắng) **không** hút thuốc lá Dũng try striveNeg inhale cigarette 'Dũng tried not to smoke.'

Also, at least for some speakers, the presumed control complements under some of the presumed control verbs are compatible with the imperfective aspect marker.

(49) Dũng muốn **sẽ** học tiếng Anh Dũng want Imp study lang. English 'Dũng wants/wanted to study English.'

There is also evidence that suggests the presumed control complements involve a structure that includes an embedded subject. The evidence is the distribution of a subject-oriented particle *tur*. A particle *tur* can be used as an emphatic/contrastive marker or part of reflexive together with a pronoun.

- (50) Dũng **tự** che chở nó Dũng<sub>i</sub> Self protect Prn 'Dũng<sub>i</sub> protected him<sub>i</sub>/her<sub>i</sub> by himself.'
- (51) Dũng **tự** nó che chở nó Dũng<sub>i</sub> Self Prn<sub>i</sub> protect Prn<sub>i</sub> 'Dũng protected himself.'

In a simple sentence, *t*<sub>w</sub> can appear either before or after a subject. But it cannot follow or precede an internal argument, as in (57) and (58).

(53) **Tự** Tân làm đau nó Self Tân make sick Prn

(54) \*Tân làm đau **tự** nó Tân make sick Self Prn

(55) \*Tân làm đau nó **tự** Tân make sick Prn self

In the disjoint reference configuration, tur must appear before the entire complement.

(56) Minh muốn **tự** [Dũng (??**tự**) che chở nó] Minh want Self [Dũng (Self) protect Prn]. 'Minh<sub>i</sub> wants Dũng<sub>i</sub> himself<sub>i</sub> to protect him<sub>i/i/k</sub>.'

(57) suggests that  $t_{i}$  is located above the level of a complete clause including a subject (i.e. vP), as in (58):

(57) Minh muốn [tự [<sub>vP</sub> Dũng che chở nó]]

(58) Minh want [Self [ $_{\nu P}$  Dũng protect Prn]]

However,  $t_{i}$  must follow an aspectual marker and the negation when they are present, as in (59) and (60). This suggests that  $t_{i}$  occupies the level that is lower than the levels where these functional elements appear.

(59) Cửa đó **đã** tự (\*đã) đóng Door that Perf Self (\*Perf) close 'That door closed itself.'

(60) Dũng **không** tự (\*không) đi bộ được Dũng Neg Self (\*Neg) walk can 'Dũng can not walk by himself.'

Going back to the presumed control verbs, with these verbs, tu must appear following the matrix control verb<sup>1</sup>.

(61) Minh (\*tự) muốn **tự** che chở Dũng Minh (\*Self) want Self protect Dũng 'Minh wants to protect Dũng himself.'

Recall that a control complement can have negation. As can be seen below, when *t*<sub>\$\vec{u}\$</sub> and the negation co-occur in a presumed control complement, *t*<sub>\$\vec{u}\$</sub> must follow the negation, as expected.

(62)  $\tilde{\text{Dung}}_{i}$   $\tilde{\text{co}}$  (gắng) [**không** [ $_{XP}$  tw [ $_{VP}$   $\Delta_{i}$  hút thuốc lá]]]  $\tilde{\text{Dung}}_{i}$  try strive[Neg [ $_{XP}$  Self [ $_{VP}$   $\Delta_{i}$  inhale cigarette]]]

Given the foregoing analysis, the presence of  $t\mu$  after the matrix control verb suggests that the presumed control complement has a subject position, as in (63).

(63)  $\operatorname{Minh}_{i}$   $\operatorname{mu\acute{o}n}$   $\operatorname{tw}$  [ $_{\operatorname{VP}}$   $\Delta_{i}$  che chở Dũng]  $\operatorname{Minh}_{i}$  want self [ $_{\operatorname{VP}}$   $\Delta_{i}$  protect Dũng]

Thus, the presumed control sentences appear to be biclausal.

<sup>1</sup> It is not clear why *tu* cannot appear preceding the matrix *want*.

8

### 2.1.4 Selectional restrictions

Non-referential DPs cannot be subjects of the presumed control verbs.

- (64) Trời mưa Sky rain 'It rains/rained.'
- (65) Trời tiếp tục mưa Sky continue rain 'It continues/continued to rain.'
- (66) ??Trời muốn /cố mưa Sky want /try rain 'It wants/tries to rain.'

#### 2.1.5 Control type: obligatory

Local, c-commanding, no split antecedent is required.

- (67) Con của Dũng muốn đi Sàigòn Son poss Dũng want go Saigon 'Dũng<sub>i</sub>'s son<sub>i</sub> wants Δ\*<sub>i/i</sub> to do to Saigon.'
- (68) Kim nói rằng Lan muốn có hội nghị Kim say that Lan want have meeting 'Kim<sub>i</sub> said that Lan<sub>i</sub> want  $\Delta_{*i/i/*i+j}$  to have a meeting.'

### 2.2 forward object control into non-finite complement

### 2.2.1 Example structure

- (69) Dũng *ép buộc* Minh học tiếng Anh Dũng force Minh study lang. English 'Dũng forced Minh to study English.'
- (70) Dũng *làm cho* Minh học tiếng Anh Dũng make Minh study lang. English 'Dũng (indirectly) made Minh study English.'
- (71) Dũng *yêu cầu* Minh không nói tiếng Việt Dũng order Minh Neg speak lang. Vietnamese 'Dũng order Minh to not speak Vietnamese.'
- (72) Lan thuyết phục Minh đi UCSD. Lan convince Minh go UCSD 'Lan convinced Minh to go to UCSD.'

### 2.2.2 Predicates participating in the construction

verb, manipulative, ép buộc 'force', làm cho 'cause, make', yêu cầu 'require, order', thuyết phục 'convince'

# 2.2.3 Evidence in support bi-clausal structure

With these verbs, two conflicting time adverbials can modify the matrix and embedded verb, suggesting that there are two independent events involved.

(73) **Hôm qua** Dũng yêu cầu Minh **hôm nay** đi Sàigòn Yesterday Dũng order Minh today go Saigon 'Yesterday, Dũng order Minh to go to Saigon today.' The distribution of  $t\mu$  that has been discussed earlier makes a prediction with respect to the position of objects in the proposed object control verbs. If these verbs are indeed object control verbs, the second DPs in the object control sentences are arguments of the matrix verbs, i.e. objects. If these are matrix objects,  $t\mu$  is predicted to never precede them, unlike the case of disjoint reference, in which the relevant DPs are embedded subjects (see 9.3.3.). The fact that  $t\mu$  may only follow the DP suggests that the DP belongs to the matrix:

- (74)Dũng ép buộc (\*tự) Minh tự nói tiếng Viêt (\*Self) Minh Dũng force Self speak lang. Vietnamese 'Dong forced Minh herself to speak Vietnamese.'
- (75) Dũng làm cho (\*tự) Minh tự nói tiếng Việt
  Dũng make (\*Self) Minh Self speak lang Vietnamese
  'Dòng cause Minh herself to speak Vietnamese.'

#### 2.2.4 Selectional restrictions

Unlike the case with the disjoint reference verbs, the second DPs in the proposed object control verbs are subject to selectional restriction.

- (76) \*Dũng ép buộc trời mưa Dũng force sky rain 'Dũng forces it to rain.'
- (77) ??Dũng làm cho trời mưa Dũng make sky rain 'Dũng makes it to rain.'

For some speakers, non-referential DP is acceptable with *làm cho*, presumably because it denotes indirect causation. For instance, (79) is felicitous when someone is making fun of someone else when it rained after s/he has done something out of his/her character.

### 2.2.5 Control type: obligatory

Split antecedent is impossible.

- (78) \*Dũng ép buộc Minh giúp nhau
  Dũng force Minh help each\_other
  'Dũng<sub>i</sub> forced Mihn<sub>i</sub> to help each other<sub>i+i</sub>' (intended)
- (79) \*Dũng làm cho Minh giúp nhau
  Dũng make Minh help each\_other
  'Dũng<sub>i</sub> make Mihn<sub>j</sub> to help each other<sub>i+j</sub>' (intended)

The antecedent must c-command the covert subject.

- (80) $Minh_k \quad \Delta *_{i/i/*k}$ tiếng Dũng<sub>i</sub> ép buộc con; của nói Việt force Dũng<sub>i</sub>  $son_i$ Poss  $Minh_k$  $\Delta *_{i/J/*K}$ speak lang. Vietnamese 'Dòng forced Minh's son to speak Vietnamese.'
- (81) Dũngi làm cho coni  $Minh_k \quad \Delta *_{i/j} / *_k$ tiếng Việt của nói  $Minh_k \quad \Delta *_{i/j} / *_k$ Dũng; make Poss lang soni speak Vietnamese 'Dong caused Minh's son to speak Vietnamese.'

### References

- Duffield, N. 1998. 'Auxiliary placement and interpretation in Vietnamese.' CLS 34. 95-109.
- Duffied, N. 1999. "Final modals, adverbs, and anti-symmetry in Vietnamese," *Revue québécoise de linguistique* 27, 92-129.
- Duffield, N. 2004. "Aspect of Vietnamese clause structure: separating tense from assertion," ms. McGill University.
- Kwon, Nayoung. 2004. "A semantic and syntactic analysis of Vietnamese causatives," To appear in *The proceedings of Western Conference on Linguistics*, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.
- Nguyen, T. H. 2004. *The Structure of the Vietnamese Noun Phrase*, doctoral dissertation, Boston University.
- Simpson, A. 2005. "Classifiers and DP structure in Southern Asia," In G. Cinque and R. Kayne (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Syntax. 806-838, Oxford: University of Oxford Press.
- Thompson, L. C. 1965. A Vietnamese Grammar, Seattle: University of Washington Press.

# **Native Speaker Informants:**

Ms. Kim Chi Nguyen

Mr. Hung Nguyen

Mr. Thuan Tran

Shin Fukuda
Department of Linguistics
University of California, San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive #0108
La Jolla, CA 92093-0108
fukuda-ling.ucsd.edu
http://ling.ucsd.edu/~fukuda