The projection of Inner Aspect in Vietnamese

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Abstract

Several semantic and syntactic distinctions, which have largely been neglected in the Vietnamese linguistic literature, are drawn together in this paper in a comparative context with other better-studied languages in order to indicate that Inner Aspect is projected within the VP shell and independently of the projection of Outer Aspect – a structural proposal originally advanced by Travis (2010). Overall, Vietnamese with its isolating character and rigid word order provides us with unusually direct evidence for an articulated VP structure.

Keywords: Telicity, Inner Aspect, Vietnamese.

1. Introduction

In the theoretical literature on aspect, it is widely held that two kinds of aspect should be distinguished: grammatical aspect and lexical aspect. The former, also called viewpoint aspect, is concerned with the bounded/unbounded distinction, and describes the temporal properties of the situation denoted by the verb phrase from the speaker's viewpoint. The latter, also called situation aspect, is concerned with the telic/atelic distinction and describes temporal properties that are inherent to the situation itself (Vendler 1957; Comrie 1976; Klein 1994; Smith 1997). For many syntacticians, viewpoint aspect is assumed to be realized as a functional category within the inflectional domain. It is much less clear whether situation aspect also has a position in phrase-structure, as it is rarely morphologically realized and its interpretation is dependent on other elements such as the type of the predicate

and the object complement. This paper argues that both aspectual categories are syntactically encoded in Vietnamese, though by different means.
A similar claim is made in Travis (2010) for Western Austronesian languages. Specifically, Travis proposes the following clause structure:

(1)
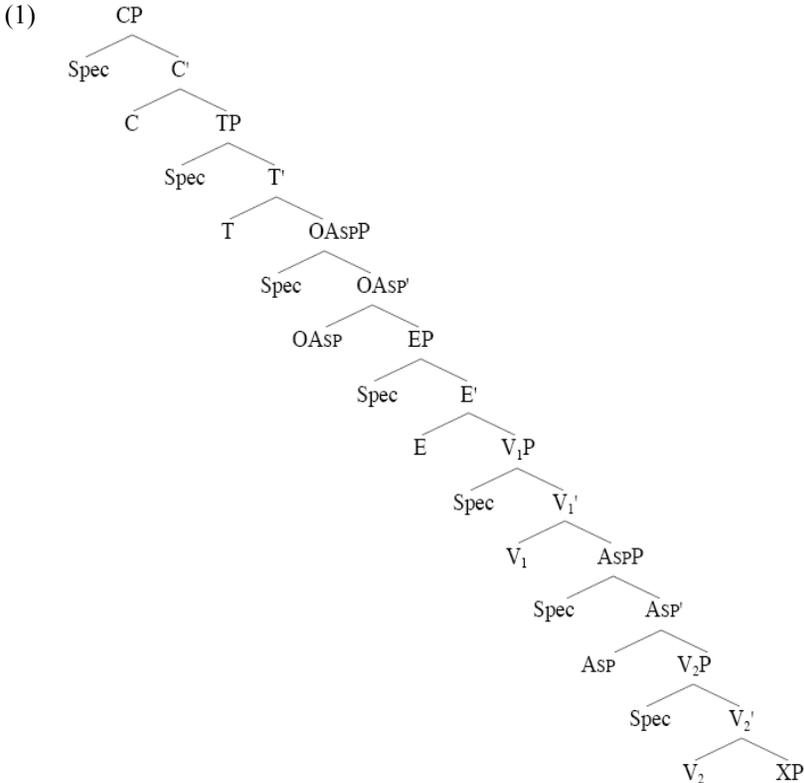
From Travis (2010): The Cartography of Outer and Inner Aspect.

I will argue that Travis's proposal should be adopted for Vietnamese as well.[1] The crucial characteristic of her analysis is that there are two aspect heads in a clause. While viewpoint aspect (Asp) is sandwiched between these two VP shells, situation aspect (OAsp) takes scope over this entire event (EP). Because of their different position relative to the VP (VP-external vs. VP-internal), viewpoint aspect is referred to as "Outer Aspect" and situation aspect as "Inner Aspect" (cf. also Ramchand 2003; Borer 2005; MacDonald

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[1] See also Duffield (2011) for independent data, from analytic causative constructions, in support of this claim.

2006; Nossalik 2009). Another significant implication of this approach is that telicity, i.e. Inner Aspect, is not determined by the inherent lexical property of the main verb alone, but also by other lexical elements contained within the verb phrase, including the object DP, as well as other independently projected postverbal particles.

A number of morphological devices in Vietnamese are generally considered to add aspectual meanings to the verb to which they are attached. These particles display rigid ordering and can be divided into two main groups based on their consistent distribution. Preverbal elements, consisting of the anterior morpheme *đã* and the progressive *đang/đương*, are usually independent of the timeline that includes the utterance time and serve to anchor the event time to a certain reference time. For this and other reasons, they are argued in Duffield and Phan (2010), to be manifestations of Outer Aspect (in the relational sense of Klein 1994), rather than Tense elements, as more traditionally supposed. Postverbal elements, by contrast, indicate whether the event reaches its endpoint, and are usually known as 'telic markers.' Although the distribution and interpretation of these elements pose intriguing problems, they have not been analyzed in any detail hitherto. It will be argued that these elements, which are the focus of the present paper, should best be understood as realizations of Inner Aspect in Vietnamese.

In the following sections, I will show how telicity is expressed in Vietnamese (section 2), and how telicity is encoded syntactically in this language, which matches well with the Travis's tree (section 3), and I will end with a speculation note on the internal structure of causative constructions, which might further support this tree.

2. Compositionality of telicity in Vietnamese

In Vietnamese, telicity is conditioned by different factors: the lexical semantics of the main verb; the presence of particles, the quantification of the direct object, and the type of verbal construction involved. Each of these will be examined in turn.

2.1. Vietnamese has a small set of verbs which are inherently telic, such as 'nổ' (explode), 'vỡ' (broken), 'thấy' (see); for such verbs, the endpoint is indefeasible.

(2) a. Bom đã nổ
     Bomb ANT[2] explode
     'The bomb exploded.'

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[2] Abbreviations used: ANT = anterior, PRN = pronoun, CLS = classifier, DEM = demonstrative, PRT = particle, NEG = negation

  b. Cái lọ đã vỡ
    CLS vase ANT broken
    'The vase was broken.'
  c.Tôi đã thấy nó
    PRN ANT see PRN
    'I saw him.'

  As expected, they cannot co-occur with a telic particle:

(3) a.??Bom đã nổ xong
      Bomb ANT explode finish
      'The bomb exploded.'
  b. *Cái lọ đã vỡ xong
      CLS vase ANT broken finish
      'The vase is broken.'
  c. *Tôi đã thấy nó xong
      PRN ANT see PRN finish
      'I saw him.'

It may be observed that these verbs are [-volitional]: that is to say, the subjects are not Agents, but Undergoers. This is clear from the examples in (2): in (2a), the bomb undergoes a change of state from not being blown up to being blown up, in (2b), the vase undergoes a change of state from not being broken to being broken, while in (2c) the speaker experiences a change in visual perception. All of these events take place without deliberate intention. In addition, 'xong' (literally means 'finish') in examples (3) functions not only as a telic marker, but also as a diagnostic of durativity.[3] Their incompatibility with 'xong' also suggests that they are also punctual verbs.

Their lack of intentionality and durativity indicates that they are achievements – in Vendler's (1957) terminology. As these verbs are already specified as [+telic] in the lexicon, co-occurence with 'xong' results in some kind of redundancy which presumably leads to deviance.

2.2. Aside from the small number of lexically telic verbs just exemplified in 2.1, telicity can be manipulated through the addition of a telic particle.[4] These particles occur between the main verb and the direct object and serve to convert an atelic event into a telic one:

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[3] Cf. Uesaka (1996).
[4] This property is shared by other languages such as Mandarin Chinese (Lin 2004) and Thai (Koenig and Muansuwan 2000), etc.

(4) a. Chú bò tìm bạn
     Cls cow search friend
     'The cow looked for his friend'.
   b. Chú bò tìm **ra**bạn[5]
     Cls cow search out friend
     'The cow found his friend'.

The particle *ra* literally means 'out': it normally bears a directional meaning, indicating that the object follows a path from within a contained space to some place outside that space:

(5) Nó dắt ngựa **ra**.
   PRN lead horse out
   'He led the horse out'

However, in (4b), the referent of the object does not involve such a movement in physical space. The interpretation of the particle 'ra' in this sentence is purely aspectual; that is, it contributes a connotation of 'culmination' (or 'completeness') to the event.

There is no fully agreed set of postverbal telicity markers among researchers, but the list typically includes *ra* ('out'), *xong* ('finish'), *hết* ('end'), *nốt* ('the rest of'), *mất* ('lose'), *cả* ('all'), *được* ('obtain,' 'get'), *phải* ('must'), among others.[6] Here, I shall briefly discuss the interpretation and distribution of some of these.

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[5] The contrast between 'tìm' vs. 'tìm ra' in Vietnamese is similar to the synthetically expressed contrast in English between *look* vs. *see, listen* vs. *hear, look for* vs. *find*. For that, Vietnamese is more morphologically transparent than English.

[6] Providing a full list of postverbal aspectual particles is beyond the scope of this study. Some morphemes which have not been included in any accounts of aspectual particles do in fact bear some aspectual information. For instance, compare 'lại' (again) in the two following sentences:
(a) Ông lại viết thư.
     PRN again write letter
     'He wrote another letter'
(b) Ông viết lại thư.
     PRN write again letter
     'He revised the letter'. (I thank Nigel Duffield for bringing these examples to my attention.)
Different positioning of 'lại' results in different interpretations. Both (a) and (b) imply repetition but differ in what is repeated: in (a) the whole event of writing a letter is done over, but only the result state of the event is repeated in (b). See von Stechow (1996) for a similar repetitive/restitutive ambiguity effect of 'wieder' (again) in German. What matters here is that there is a result state – denoting component which is hosted in a syntactic position immediately after the verb; and 'lại' (in (b)) is one of the detectors of this component.

   The first thing to note about their distribution is that telic particles are syntactically distinct from adverbs. Although both telic particles and the adverb *rồi* ('already') appear postverbally, the completive marker always precedes the adverb *rồi*. Even when there is position shift between the object DP and the completive particle, as in (6) below, *rồi* still stays at the right edge of the sentence:

(6) a.Nó đã đọc sách **xong rồi**   Object – Particle – 'rồi'
       PRN DA read book PRT.FINISH already
       'He has finished reading (the) books'
    b. Nó đã đọc **xong** sách **rồi**.   Particle – object – rồi
       PRN DA read PRT.FINISH book already
       'He has finished reading books.'

   As can be seen in (6a), unlike the particle *xong*, the adverb *rồi* cannot intervene between the verb and the direct object. The same holds for other prototypical manner adverbs, such as *từ từ* ('gradually'); though they can normally occur quite freely in the sentence, they cannot be positioned between the verb and its noun complement:

(7) a.Ta tấn công địch từ từ
       PRN attack enemy gradual
       'We attack the enemy gradually.'
    b. Ta từ từ tấn công địch
       PRN gradual attack enemy
       'We gradually attack the enemy.'
    c.* Ta tấn công từ từ địch
       PRN attack gradual enemy
       'We gradually attack the enemy.'

   This characteristic is also shared by English adverbs, a commonality that is presumably due to the absence of finite verb-raising in the two languages.

(8) a.Alice slowly does her homework.
    b. Alice does her homework slowly
    c. Slowly Alice does her homework
    d. Alice is slowly doing her homework
    e. *Alice does slowly her homework

   The fact that telic particles can appear in what is otherwise an opaque syntactic position therefore suggests that they deserve special treatment.[7]

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   [7] Tue Trinh (p.c.) pointed out that adverbs, in fact, can appear between the verb and the direct object in German. However, to me this descriptive fact only means that

What is more, the interpretation of certain post-verbal particles is affected by their syntactic distribution. Duffield (1999), for instance, observes that the interpretation of the modal particle *được* ('can') varies depending on where it is initially merged in the clause.

(9) a.Cô ấy **được** kiếm việc   Deontic modal
    PRN DEM obtain seek job
    'She is allowed to seek a job'

  b. Cô ấy kiếm việc **được**   Abilitative modal
    PRN DEM seek job obtain
    'She is able to seek a job'

  c.Cô ấy kiếm **được** việc   Achievement
    PRN DEM seek obtain job
    'She found a job.'

These examples illustrates that whereas preverbal *được* corresponds to the deontic modal CAN, and sentence-final *được* is interpreted as an abilitative modal,[8] positioning *được* immediately postverbally yields a purely aspectual (achievement) reading: the presence of *được* in (9c) assures the completion of the 'job-seeking' situation.

Another example of a multi-functional word is *xong*. The morpheme *xong* can either behave as a matrix predicate, in which case it means 'finish' as in (10), or as a telic particle somewhat akin to the telicizing particle 'up' in English. As a main predicate, 'xong' can merge with TP.

(10) Nó sửa **đã xong**
    PRN fix DA FINISH
    'He finished fixing'. (Examples of Cao 2000)

As a telic particle, as in (11), *xong* places some restriction on the definiteness of the direct object. Although objects may be found either preceding or following the particle, there are semantic restrictions on preceding objects, namely, a fronted object may be definite or generic NP denoting theme, but it CANNOT be indefinite:

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the lexical verb in German raises cross the adverbs to a higher functional position. English and Vietnamese lexical verbs, on the other hand, do not move that high. Therefore, in a language that lacks verb movement to a position outside of the VP like Vietnamese, the position of the telic particles in sentences like (6b) is clearly of interest.

[8] To see how the sentence-final 'được' challenges Universalist constraints, the readers are referred to Duffield (1999).

Definite NP

(11) a.Tôi nướng <u>cái bánh</u>[9] **xong** rồi   Object- Particle
      I bake CLS cake finish already
      'I have already finished baking the cake.'

    b. Tôi nướng **xong** <u>cái bánh</u> rồi   Particle - Object
      I bake finish CLS cake already
      'I have already finished baking the cake.'

Generic NP

(12) a.Tôi uống <u>bia</u> **xong** rồi   Object - Particle
      I drink beer finish already
    b. ?Tôi uống **xong** <u>bia</u> rồi[10]   ?Particle - Object
      I drink finish beer already
      'I have finished drinking beer.'

Indefinite NP

(13) a.*Tôi nướng <u>một cái bánh</u>[11] xong rồi   * Object - Particle
      I bake one CLS cake finish already
    b. Tôi nướng <u>xong một cái bánh</u> rồi   Particle - Object
      I bake finish one CLS cake already
      'I have finished baking one cake.'

    Examples (11)-(13) illustrate a three-way contrast: only if the object is definite can it freely precede or follow the particle as in (11); if it is bare kind-referring noun, it preferably precedes the particle as in (12); however, if it is indefinite noun phrase, it must appear to the right of the particle as in (13).

    MacDonald (p.c.) observes that this restriction on direct objects due to the presence of 'extra' material in the VP is reminiscent of Slavic prefixes and English telicizing particles. For example, in Bulgarian, although the

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[9] In Vietnamese, 'cái' is usually treated as a marker of specificity, rather than that of definiteness (Cao 2003), given that specificity and definiteness are different concepts: 'the feature [+definite] reflects the state of knowledge of both speaker and hearer, whereas the feature [+specific] reflects the state of knowledge of the speaker only' (Ionin et al 2004:4). In this case, 'cái bánh' (the cake) is interpreted as specific definite.

[10] This sentence will sound much better in the context of serial events, say, the speaker has to try a variety of drink, such as beer, coke, cocktail, etc, and he has just finished one kind of drink in this series.

[11] In Vietnamese, a NP with classifier co-occurring with a numeral (but without a demonstrative) is interpreted indefinite. The same seems hold true in Chinese (Li&Thompson 1981:130). All these descriptive facts can interestingly reveal the structure of NP in Vietnamese, something like DP>NumP>ClsP>NP, which is, however, far beyond the scope of this paper.

morphologically bare NP can generally be interpreted as either [+specific] or [-specific], the presence of some preverbs forces the [+specific] reading:

(14) Tojna-pis-a   pisma   *3casa/za 3 casa
     He PV-write-3SG/ AORIST   letters *for 3hours/in 3 hours
     'He wrote letters in 3 hours'   (Slabakova 2001: 89)

    Thus, the definiteness requirement is well-attested cross-linguistically; (see also Diesing 1997) for Germanic languages, (Cheng and Sybesma 1999) for Chinese). What is crucial about these examples, however, is the observation that only objects preceding the particle are subject to definiteness constraints. This indicates that the verb-particle-object order is the unmarked order, while the verb-object-particle is derived as a result of leftward movement of the object.

    In summary, the exact function and interpretation of *xong* varies depending on its position of 'xong' in phrase-structure:[12] in a high position, it functions as a main verb (like English 'finish'), and can bear clausal tense; in a lower position internal to the VP, *xong* is a telic particle (like English 'up'), in close dependency with the direct object.

    In brief, 'được' in (9c) and 'xong' in (11b) provide strong evidence for the existence of a syntactic position which is immediately below that occupied by the main verb, and which accommodates aspectual features.

    A futher important point to notice concerning the distribution of telic particles is that they are restricted to co-occur with cerrtain kinds of predicate: they may combine with dynamic and durative predicates, or accomplishments, in Vendler's terminology, but not with stative or punctual verbs.

(15) a.* Nó chưa no **xong**
       PRN NEG full FINISH
       'He has not been full yet.'
   b. *Nó chưa nổ **xong**
       PRN NEG explode FINISH
       'It has not been exploded yet'.
           (Cao's examples 2000: 11)

    In more restricted contexts, aspectual 'ra' (out) is mostly compatible with verbs of creation, and 'hết' (end) with verbs of consumption:

(16) Họ đã tìm **ra** giải pháp
     PRN ANT search OUT solution
     'They found out the solution'.

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[12] I am thankful to one of the anonymous reviewers for convincingly pointing this out.

(17) Nó ăn **hết** bát cơm
      PRN eat FINISH bow rice
      'He ate up the bow of rice'.

It should be noted that verbs of creation and verbs of consumption have been reported in the literature to share the same attribute: their 'Incremental Theme object' ((Tenny 1987; Slabakova 2008), amongst others). That is to say, the object can 'measure out' the event, in the sense that how much it comes into existence tell us how much complete the event is. As a result, examples of eventive predicates with 'Incremental Theme objects' have been paid much attention in the literature of telicity composition (e.g., (Pustejovsky 1991, Travis 2010).

2.3. Another factor that is also responsible for the telicity of the predicate in Vietnamese is the cardinality of the direct object.

It is well-known in the literature that in English, depending on the presence and the [+q] feature of the object, the predicate is telic or atelic. This phenomenon is usually referred to as the object-to-event-mapping (OTEM)[13] property (Verkuyl 1972; MacDonald 2010). Specifically, dynamic telic verbs and dynamic atelic verbs are marked as different partly because the objects of telic verbs are compulsory and 'quantity' (Verkuyl's terminology) (i.e., singular indefinites, definite, or numeral) while those of atelic verbs are optional and non-quantity (i.e., mass nouns or bare plurals). Examples in (18) illustrate that the existence of a quantity object always results in a dynamic telic events in English:

(18) a. Arthur planted [a protective circle of mushrooms] around the house
         in one day
                        Singular indefinite   Telic
     b. Edmund ate [the box of Turkish Delights that the Queen gave him]
         in 5 minutes
                        Singular definite   Telic
     c. Susan read [the engravings on the door] in 2 minutes
                        Plural definite   Telic

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[13] It is also important to bear in mind that OTEM is different from incrementality. As MacDonald (2010) observed, achievement verbs do not take incremental objects but they do exhibit the OTEM property. For instance:
(a) John dropped the book #for ten minutes.
(b) John dropped paper for 10 minutes.   (Examples of MacDonald 2010)
The grammaticality difference between (a) and (b), (a) is ill-formed on a single event interpretation while (b) is not, results from the difference between the [+q]NP the book and the [-q]NP paper.

d. The magician produced [two maps of Narnia] in an instant
                     Numeral   Telic
                                    (Examples of Nossalik 2009: 33)

As shown above, the [+q] feature of English DPs depends on other properties: definiteness and cardinality (Gavruseva 2008).

Vietnamese lacks articles even though it has its own way to designate definiteness (e.g., by demonstratives, some kinds of classifier, plurality, or other contextual factors), so the only obvious way to mark [+q] feature is cardinality. In Vietnamese, the event must be completed when the perfect accomplishment sentence includes a numeral object, but not when the object is a demonstrative noun phrase.

(19) a. Nó **đã** ăn cái bánh đó nhưng chưa **xong**   Demonstrative   Atelic
         PRN ANT eat CLS cake DEM but NEG FINISH
         'He ate that cake, but he did not finish it'

    b. *Nó **đã** ăn ba cái bánh nhưng chưa **xong**   Numeral   Atelic
         PRN ANT three CLS cake but NEG FINISH
         'He ate three cakes, but he did not finish them'.

The similar effect holds true in Chinese:
(20) a. Ta chi-le #liang-ge dangao/na-ge dangao, keshi mei   chi-wan.
          he eat-LE two-Cl cake/   that-Cl cake   but   not   eat-finish
         'He ate two cakes/that cake, but he did not finish them/it.'
    b. Ta   kan-le   #liang-ben shu/ na-ben shu, keshi mei kan-wan.
          he   read-LE two-Cl book/that-Cl book   but   not   read-finish
         'He read two books/that book, but he did not finish them/it.'
                                    (Examples of Soh & Kuo 2005: 204)

That is to say, though it is not so strong as in English, but still to a certain extent, Vietnamese DPs do have effect on the aspectual interpretation of the predicate.

2.4. Telicity is also triggered by other factors such as the resultant secondary verb in resultative constructions, or the path-goal PP in motion verb constructions.

(21) a.   Tôi lau **sạch** mọi thứ rồi
          PRN ANT wipe clean every thing already
          'I wiped everything clean.'
    b.   Con mèo nhảy **lên** giường.
          CLS cat jump up bed
          'The cat jumped up on (my) bed.'

The presence of 'sạch' (clean) and 'lên' (up) forces the telic reading of these sentences.

2.5. In conclusion, like many other languages, Vietnamese encodes telicity either lexically or syntactically. Factors that license telicity are found cross--linguistically. However, linguistic variation lies in which factor plays the most significant role and how the different factors interact. That is to say, all languages express telicity but they differ in how/where exactly telicity is syntactically projected in each language. It is also the locus of difference among hypotheses offered in the literature. For instance, the most well--studied pair of languages in the realm of Inner Aspect is English and Russian. The crucial difference between the two languages is that unlike in English, in Russian, it is not the internal argument, but the preverb that has final say in the aspectuality of the whole predicate, as can be seen in the example (14), repeated here for convnience, the predicate is interpreted as telic due to the presence of the preverb 'na', and regardless of the [–q] DP object:

(14) Toj na-pis-a pisma *3 casa/za 3 casa
       he PV-write-3SG/AORIST letters *for 3 hours/in 3 hours
       He wrote letters in 3 hours.'
                        (Slabakova 2001: 89)

To account for this language variation, Slabakova (2001) and Travis[14] (2010), argue that cross-linguistcally, telicity is encoded in different syntactic heads: this head could be located in the V_1 (or little v in other terminology systems) (such as in Russian) or in Asp (such as in English[15] and Malagasy), or in X (such as goal phrases in English and resultative predicates Chinese).

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[14] See Borer (2005), Nossalik (2009), MacDonald (2010) for alternative views. For instance, Borer (2005) and Nossalik (2009) argue that even though both English and Russian have the projection of Inner Aspect in their phrase structure, the two languages have different telicity assigning mechanism: English verbs acquire their telic value indirectly from the internal argument, while in Russian, Asp_Q (equivalent to Travis's Asp) acquires its range directly from the preverbs. MacDonald (2010), on the other hand, explains this language variation by proposing that English and Russian actually have different phrase structure: English has the projection of Inner AspP in their phrase structure whereas Russian lacks of this projection.

[15] Actually, Travis (2010) argues that telicity in English is located in X, instead of in Asp as proposed by Slabakova (2001). However, the crucial point that remains the same in the two accounts is that Russian places telicity structurally higher than English.

(22)

V₁P
⇨ V₁
V₁'
AspP
DP
Asp'
⇨ **Asp**
V₂P
V₂'
V₂
XP
X ⇦

(Adopted from Travis 2010)
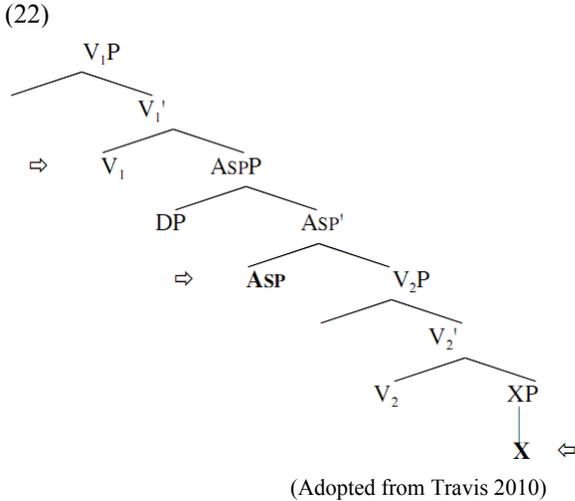
The three possible positions in which event boundaries can be indicated are differentiated by Travis (2010) according to:

(i) whether the telicity marker is a lexical (adjective or preposition), an inflectional (ASP) or a light verb head (V₁),

(ii) whether it is in the Goal position setting up the endpoint of the event; or in the Aspect position determining a specific point of the event, or in the Process position of the event in which it can supply an arbitrary bound to the process,

(iii) and most importantly, its relationship with the internal argument, i.e., whether its scope is above or below the event measuring DP.

At first glance, Vietnamese seems to be in common with Russian in marking telicity morphologically overtly for the most part, as indicated in section 2.2; and also share with English in the role of the internal argument in the computation of telicity as shown in section 2.3 The question is if we assume that telicity can be marked in three positions in the tree, namely V1, Asp, X under which functional head does Vietnamese place telicity.

3. Syntactic projection of telicity in Vietnamese

The aim of the paper is to claim that telic particles in Vietnamese head the Inner Asp phrase, which appears between V₁P and V₂P. Their syntactic position in the phrase structure is argued to be determined by their interaction with the main verb and with the internal argument.

The verb and the telic particles appear to form a single unit. Together they thematically license both the internal argument and the external argument. For instance, in the examples (9c), repeated here for convenience:

(9c) Cô ấy kiếm được việc
      PRN DEM seek obtain job
      'She found a job'

'cô ấy' (she) is understood as the subject of the complex verb-particle 'kiếm được' (seek obtain); and also 'việc' (job) is interpreted as the object of the complex. That is to say, the particle on its own is not predicated of the object.[16] In this sentence, the particle 'được' (obtain) says nothing about the properties of the object 'việc' (job)[17].

   However, the main verb-particle complex can be separated by the object, which result in two alternative word orders:

(23) a. Nó làm **xong** bài rồi   V-particle-object
         PRN do finish exercise already
         'He has done the exercises.'/ 'He finished doing the exercises.'
     b. Nó làm bài **xong** rồi   V-object-particle
         PRN do exercise finish already
         'He has done the exercises.'/ 'He finished doing the exercises.'

   Structurally, telic particles are argued to dominate VP for they change the interpretation of the whole predicate by adding telicity to atelic events, as seen in the contrast between (4a) and (4b), repeated here:

(4)   a. Chú bò tìm bạn
          Cls cow search friend
          ' The cow looked for his friend'.
      b. Chú bò tìm **ra** bạn.
          Cls cow search out friend
          'The cow found his friend'.

   In brief, the unity, and the autonomy, and the hierarchy between the telic particles and the main verb are those characteristics that are of importance in

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[16] This property distinguishes the verb-particle constructions from the resultative constructions. While the particles are not predicated of objects, the resultative secondary verbs are. For instance, in the example above (21a), repeated here:
   (21a) Tôi lau **sạch** mọi thứ rồi
       PRN ANT wipe clean every thing already
       'I wiped everything clean.'
   'Everything clean' is clearly a predicative structure.
[17] This suggests that the DP internal argument is not base-generated in the complement position of the particle. In other words, [Spec, Asp] is a derived position of the object which is initially merged in a lower position, a well-reported observation in the literature (Nossalik 2009, Travis 2010, Ramchand & Svenonius 2002).

determining their syntactic positions and need to be taken into consideration in any studies.

To account for this relationship, (Fukuda 2007) proposes that telic particles head a XP projection above VP, and the word order derived via movement of the main verb to a functional projection yet higher than the projection of telic particles:

(24)

$$[_{YP} \quad V_i + Y \; [_{XP} \quad \text{T-PART} \; [_{VP} \; \cancel{V_i} \quad NP]]]$$

Furthermore, Fukuda clearly spells out that that XP projection is Inner Aspect, following Travis:

(25)

```
              VP
             /  \
     External    V'
     argument   /  \
              V    AspP
          'cause'  /  \
            Derived   Asp'
            Object    /  \
                   Asp    VP
                         /‾‾\
```
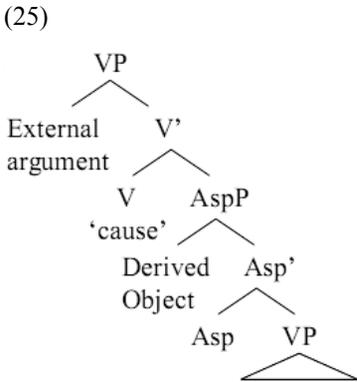
(Fukuda 2007)

Proposing that telic particles head their own phrase, which is immediately above VP, nicely captures the autonomy and the hierarchy between the particles and the main verb discussed above. However, as Fukuda admitted, his study leaves unexplained the question of how the main verb moves from V_1 to V_2 (or V to v in other terminology systems) via Asp without violating Head Movement Constraints (Travis 1984), given that the main verb must move from V_1 to V_2 for theta role assigning purposes.

I will present a proposal adapted from Nicol (2002)'s Extended VP-Shell Hypothesis, which not only offers a mechanism of head movement inside the VPs, but also allows the two word orders shown in (23) to derive.

According to Nicol, there is a head inside the VP shells under which the particles might get inserted (*w* in his word, equivalent to *Asp* in Travis's terms). Furthermore, particles have the formal feature of either [+verbal] or [+nominal], which need to be checked during the derivation. This is

empirically aided by the fact that English particles can be nominalized or verbalized, as indicated by the following examples:

(26) a. They were bewildered at the ups and downs of the NASDAQ.
     b. We upped the ante.
     c. He downed the whole bottle.
              (Nicol 2002:168)

Similarly, Vietnamese particles are originally verbs, and also are able to undergo the nominalization process by appearing after classifiers:

(27) a. Cuối cùng anh cũng được thư nhà.
         Finally PRN also obtain mail home
         'He finally got a mail from home.'
     b. Nó mất mẹ từ khi còn nhỏ.
         PRN lose mom from when still small
         'He lost his mom since he was young.'
     c. Họ phải cân nhắc cả cái được và cái mất trước khi đưa ra quyết định.
         PRN must consider all CLS obtain and CLS lose before when give
         out decision
         'They have to consider all the pros and cons before making a
         decision'.

It is assumed that the verbal feature of the particles motivates V_1-to-Asp raising, and the nominal feature of the particles attracts nominals to its specifier. Accordingly, the verb-particle-object order derives as a result of particle insertion with the verbal checking feature: the particle is inserted under Asp with the feature [+verbal], V_1 is triggered to move to Asp, erasing the formal feature; then the [V_1+ particle] complex raises to V_2.[18] On the other hand, the verb-object-particle order derives when the particle is inserted with the feature [+nominal], motivating the direct object raise to [Spec, AspP] to erase the checking feature; then V_1 moves to V_2 in one step, and hence we get the right order.

4. Immediate consequence

Projecting an intermediate VP-internal functional head helps shed some light on the thematic hierarchy of the complex causative constructions in Vietnamese. Specifically, the complex causative constructions exhibit a three-way thematic contrast of VP-internal arguments (instead of the standard

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[18] See Koizumi (1995) for a similar proposal.

twofold classification Agent vs. Theme): Intentional Cause (prototypical Agent) > Non-intentional Cause > Theme, in which Non-intentional Causes are projected independently, and structurally lower than 'Intentional Causers', but higher than Theme, thus, are argued to occupy the specifier position of a functional head which is layered between V_1P and V_2P (adopted from Duffield 2011). Let's unpack these claims.

As an isolating language, Vietnamese causativity must be computed analytically by (at least) two predicates: the higher causative predicate V_1 'làm' (literally means: do, make) and the monovalent base predicate V_2:

(28) Tôi làm cái ly vỡ (rồi).
　　　PRN make CLS glass broke (already)
　　　'I broke the glass.'

No synthetic causative is allowed:

(29) a.　Cái ly vỡ (rồi).
　　　　　CLS glass broke (already)
　　　　　'The glass broke.'
　　　b.　*Tôi vỡ cái ly (rồi).
　　　　　PRN break CLS glass (already)
　　　　　'I broke the glass'
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Examples of Duffield 2011)

The 'làm' causative constructions are argued to be mono-clausal in terms of binding domain as well as other syntactic diagnostics (Kwon 2004; Duffield 2011). What really interests us is that the 'làm' causative constructions display several contrastive facts due to the unaccusativity of the V_2 predicate. The first remarkable contrast is that the non-controlled unaccusative V_2 predicates are much more well-formed than the controlled unergative V_2 ones in the constructions (as shown in the difference between (30a) and (30b). Only with the addition of another predicate 'cho' (literally means: give), the unergative causatives become perfectly acceptable (as illustrated in the contrast between (30b) and 30c):

(30) a.　Tôi làm thằng bé ngã
　　　　　I make CLS boy fall
　　　　　'I made the boy fall'
　　　b.　??Tôi làm thằng bé nhảy
　　　　　I make CLS boy dance
　　　　　'I made the boy dance'

   c. Tôi làm cho thằng bé nhảy[19] (Duffield 2011)
      I make give CLS boy dance
      'I made the boy dance'.

Secondly, some core unaccusative predicates are allowed to precede the DP₂, furthermore, it is clearly preferred than the non-inverted order; in sentences involving typical unergative predicates, on the other hand, the inverted order is completely forbidden:

(31) a. Tôi làm rách tờ giấy
       I make torn CLS paper
       'I made the paper torn'
    b. !Tôi làm tờ giấy rách
       I make CLS paper torn
       'I made the paper torn'
    c. *Tôi làm nhảy thằng bé
       I make dance CLS boy
       'I made the boy dance'.

These examples together show a three-way contrast of thematic relations of VP's arguments: Intentional causes (or Agent) are excluded from the 'làm' causatives (as shown in the marginal acceptability of (30b)); only arguments interpreted as non-Agent (non-intentional Cause and Theme) can be licensed (as illustrated in (30a) and (31b)), in which a true Theme is merged lowest in the structure (as indicated in (31a)).

In brief, what is drawn from all of the Vietnamese data above is that the non-intentional cause is a syntactically independent argument, which is merged in a lower position than Agent, but higher than Theme. Proceeding from the assumption that different thematic roles are generated under different but strictly ordered specifier positions and different shells are created in order to house extra theta-positions (Larson 1988, Nicol 2002), we need (at least) one functional head sandwiched between V_1P and V_2P to host the Non-intentional Cause argument in the structure. It is exactly what the projection of Inner Aspect offers us, as shown in the following Travis's tree:

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[19] In this paper, I follow Duffield (2011) in treating 'làm' causative and 'làm cho' causatives as two distinct structures according to their different syntactic behavior with respect to the thematic hierarchy. Only the 'làm' causatives show thematic constraints, therefore they are the focal point of the paper.

(32)

```
                V₁P
          ╱           ╲
    Causer            V₁'
                ╱           ╲
              V₁             YP
                      ╱             ╲
              Non-intentional       Y'
                              ╱           ╲
                  Cause      Y            V₂P
                                      ╱         ╲
                                                V₂'
                                           ╱         ╲
                                         V₂          Theme
```
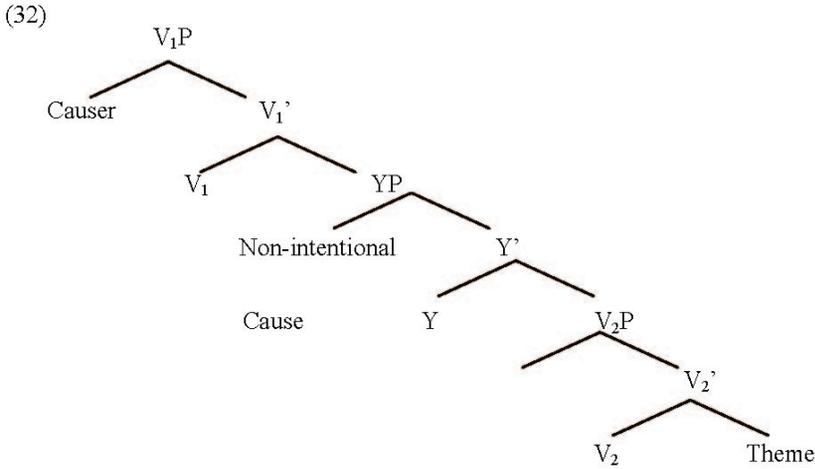
(Cited in Duffield 2011)

The ungrammaticality of (30b), therefore, results from the inability to license Agents, whose base position – [Spec, V₁] – is too high in the structure. The above fact in Vietnamese is compatible with the widely-held assumption that External argument[20] (which is usually Causer or Iniatior theta-role wise) is too structurally high to participate in the computation of Inner Aspect (Travis, 2010; MacDonald 2010). The predicates are telic regardless of the [-q] feature of the external argument NP:

(33) a. Wildlife ate the bag of trash in ten minutes/#for ten minutes.
    b. Livestock pushed the cart into the barn in/#for ten minutes.
         (Examples of MacDonald 2010: 74)

To sum up, the realization of Inner Aspect in Vietnamese helps to bring verb-particle constructions and complex causatives pattern together. They are generally considered as 'aspect-related constructions' (Slabakova 2001), which are doubtless of empirical interest when applying into second language

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[20] The following sentences seem to be counter-examples of that assumption, when the Subject actually contributes to the telicity of the predicate:
(a) John died in an hour/ * for an hour.
(b) Tourists died for an hour/* in an hour.
      (Examples of Shi 1990:106)
However, I follow the Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter 1978) and take the subject of this sort of intransitive sentence as the underlying object, which raises to the surface position of the subject during the derivation.

acquisition to see whether or not they are related manifestations of the same parameter value.[21]

Putting these observations together, the paper argues that Inner aspect is syntactically represented in Vietnamese, therefore support the viewpoint that Outer Aspect and Inner Aspect are independent aspectual components and encoded in the syntax differently.

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[21]   See Duffield & Phan (2011) for the acquisition of Vietnamese telicity by Chinese L2ers.

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