越南語動詞「đi」（去）：語法化的歷史階段

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摘要

本研究探討了越南語動詞「đi」（去）在語法化過程的一個歷史階段，特別是在古典作品中的演變。我們旨在回答以下的研究問題：（1）「đi」除了其核心意義「去」之外，還發展了哪些獨特的意義？（2）「đi」是否存在和其他語言不同的語法功能？研究結果顯示：（a）「đi」在三個構式中表示離開/消失、手段和意圖。像「đi lại」（去來）和「đi đi lại lại」（去去來來）這樣的固定語式中，「đi」表達關聯性和互動性的意義。（b）「đi lại」（去來）能表達人際關係，是其獨特的語法功能。此外，與英語的「be going to」不同，越南語的「đi-VP」結構不能用於表達未來的認知形態。本研究通過對特定歷史階段的分析，增進了對越南語動詞「đi」語法化過程的理解。這個階段的「đi」從表示物理移動的動詞發展出更廣泛的意義，具獨特的語法功能。

關鍵詞：越南語，動詞「đi」，語法化，模態，動態動詞

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The Verb *Đi* (Go) in Vietnamese:

A Historical Stage of Grammaticalization

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Abstract

This study examines a stage in the grammaticalization of the Vietnamese verb *đi* 'go' in classical works, highlighting its evolution from a verb denoting physical movement to one with broader meanings and functions at a historical stage. We aim to answer the research questions: (1) What grammatical functions has *đi* developed beyond its core meaning of 'to go'? and (2) Is there any unique grammatical function of *đi* that is not found in the languages reviewed? The results show: (a) Three constructions of *đi* indicating moving away/disappearance, means, and intention. Fixed expressions like *đi lại* 'go come' and *đi đi lại lại* 'go go come come' illustrate *đi*'s development in expressing relational and interactive aspects. (b) The unique use of *đi lại* 'go come' to express interpersonal relationships marks a distinctive grammatical function. Additionally, unlike the English *be going to*, the *đi*-VP construction in Vietnamese does not exhibit the deontic or epistemic modality used to express future intentions. This study provides the understanding of the initial steps of grammaticalization of *đi* 'go' in Vietnamese and contributes further research into its continued grammaticalization.

Keywords: Vietnamese, the verb *đi*, grammaticalization, modality, motion verb

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1.　Introduction

The grammaticalization of the verb *go* in English has been investigated by numerous researchers (Wu et al. 2016; Bourdin 2008; Hoppe & Traugott, 2003; Tagliamonte et al. 2014). In addition, the investigation of the verb *go* across languages is evident in research by Bilmes (1995), Yi and Ogawa (2024), Bravo (2014), and Botne (2006).

In Vietnamese, the verb *đi* 'go' is among the most frequently used movement verbs and has evolved to encompass various meanings over time (Nguyễn 2023).[1] According to the Vietnamese dictionary (Hoàng 2002), there are a total of 18 meanings for the verb *đi* 'go' in Vietnamese. Furthermore, its dominant meaning of motion, *đi* 'go' also develops various other meanings. Nevertheless, studies on its grammaticalization remain limited, which motivates this study to further investigate its developmental stages, with a particular focus on the semantic shifts involved.

To explore the grammaticalization process of the Vietnamese verb *đi*, it is crucial to use a corpus covering a long historical period with diverse data. However, a comprehensive Vietnamese corpus is not available. Therefore, we use historical documents to build a relevant corpus for our study. The following research questions guiding our study are: (1) What grammatical functions has *đi* developed beyond its core meaning of 'to go'? (2) Is there any unique grammatical function of *đi* that is not found in the languages reviewed?

The remaining sections of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews the related literature, providing a theoretical and empirical foundation for the study. Section 3 outlines the research methodology, detailing our data sources. Section 4 presents the data analysis, showcasing our findings on the various grammatical functions of *đi*. Section 5 discusses the distinct structure and future modality of *đi*. Finally, Section 6 concludes the study, summarizing key insights and suggesting directions for future

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[1] We received the first reviewer's comment on the initial submission: "Vietnamese people do not typically address each other by their last name. Therefore, to follow international standards, the last name should be written first, followed by the given name, allowing readers to recognize the author". As a result, the citation style may lack consistency.

research.

2. Literature Review

In this section, we will examine the evolution of the verb go in English, Mandarin, and Thai. Referring to grammaticalization processes of *go* in other languages can inspire us to look into Vietnamese *đi*. Moreover, the grammaticalization of some Vietnamese verbs are reviewed.

2.1. The Grammaticalization of *Go* in English, Mandarin Chinese, and Thai

The grammaticalization of *go* in English has gradually developed into a marker of future tense. Sweetser (1990) indicated that within the historical process of grammaticalization, epistemic modality emerges from deontic modality. According to Yi and Ogawa (2024), in its initial usage during the late 16th century, *be going to* primarily conveyed the idea of directional movement. However, by the early 17th century, it started to convey the modal concept of future obligation with intention. In the mid-17th century, it expanded its meaning to include the epistemic modal sense of prediction, primarily with non-living subjects. By the early 18th century, this usage extended to include a wider range of syntax and animate subjects, further emphasizing its predictive function. Let's now turn to compare the grammaticalization of *go* in English with two languages in Asia: Mandarin *qu* 'go' and Thai *paj* 'go'.

Studying Mandarin, Yang, X (2015) examined the development of *lai* 'come' and *qu* 'go', noting that *qu* 'go' evolves into an intransitive verb, meaning it no longer requires an object. As *qu* 'go' becomes more commonly used, it shifts to a "low transitivity" role, indicating the meaning of reaching a destination. On the other hand, Yi and Ogawa (2024) compared the English *be going to*-VP with similar constructions in Mandarin, such as the *qu*-VP 'go-VP' and found no evidence to suggest that the Mandarin verbs *qu* 'go' and *lai* 'come' have grammaticalized into modal auxiliaries with root modal meanings.

In Thai, the verb *paj* 'go' has been examined by various linguists too. Bilmes (1995) explored grammaticalization of *paj* 'go' and identified four distinct functions of *paj* 'go': as a main verb, a prehead verb, a prehead, and a posthead. Another study by Thiengburanathum (2013) on the Thai motion verbs *paj* 'go' and *maa* 'come' found that these verbs can indicate conditions in various domains, such as space, time, and attributes, based

on the surrounding linguistic and pragmatic context.

We expect that the grammatical development of the Vietnamese verb *đi* 'go' will have more similarities with Mandarin and Thai but less with English *be going to*, because Vietnamese shares structural similarities with Mandarin and Thai.

2.2. The Grammaticalization of Vietnamese Verbs

There are several researchers who have examined the grammaticalization of Vietnamese verbs. In this section, we review the grammaticalization of the Vietnamese verbs *cho* 'give' and *được* 'acquire' due to its similarities with *đi* in certain constructions.

Nguyễn, Thu Trang (2021) investigates the grammaticalization of *được* 'acquire positively'.[2] The study reveals that được has evolved to include meanings of passivity, possibility, permission, and preference through mechanisms like metaphor, analogy, metonymy, and reanalysis. Thepkanjana and Ruangmanee (2015) also studied *được*, finding its development from 'acquire' to express ability, possibility, and permission, primarily driven by metonymy.

Mueanjai and Thepkanjana (2009) explore the semantic expansion of the Vietnamese verb *cho* 'give', beyond its original meaning of "to transfer possession". It has been noted that the grammatical extensions of *cho* 'give', which are also found in corresponding verbs in other languages, involve 1) dative-marking, 2) benefactive and malefactive-marking, 3) causative-marking, and 4) purposive-marking. On the other hand, the lexical extensions unique to Vietnamese include 1) placing something into a container and 2) offering an opinion.

Given the limited research on Vietnamese verb grammaticalization especially on the verb *đi*, these findings provide a foundation for our exploration of how it undergoes semantic and grammatical shifts. The following sections will examine the development of its meanings and structures as part of *đi*'s grammaticalization.

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[2] The translation of the verb *được* into the verb phrase 'acquire positively' may reflect the author's intention to highlight the positive meaning of the verb.

3.   Research material and the data collection process

This study traces the grammaticalization of *đi* in Vietnamese literature from the 13th to the 20th century. Chữ Nôm, a Vietnamese script, emerged around the 11th century (The Holyland of Vietnam Studies). Before Chữ Nôm, Vietnamese used Chữ Nho, which adapted Chinese characters to Vietnamese pronunciation. Our corpus spans from the 13th century Chữ Nho texts to the 20th century.

Three historical literary works have been selected for analysis. They are: *Hịch tướng sĩ* 'Call of the Soldier' (1284), *Quân trung từ mệnh tập* 'Letters and Commands during Military Service' (1423), and *Nỗi buồn chiến tranh* 'The Sorrow of War' (1990).

Hịch tướng sĩ 'Call of the Soldier' was written in year 1284 by the prince, Trần Quốc Tuấn, also known as Great King Hưng Đạo, aims to "encourage soldier spirit, gathering national united power" (Trần 2018, p. 638) before the second resistance war against the Mongols. We chose Huệ Chi's translation for data analysis as the translator is a linguist specializing in ancient, medieval, and modern Vietnamese literature.

Quân trung từ mệnh tập 'Letters and Commands during Military Service' written in 1423 by Nguyễn, Trãi, a national hero of Vietnam, includes correspondence between Lê Lợi and Ming generals. We selected this version due to its clear layout and citation of the original source.

Nỗi buồn chiến tranh 'The Sorrow of War', a novel by Bảo Ninh puplished in 1990. This novel, translated into multiple languages worldwide, narrates a soldier's reflection on his past while gathering fallen companions' remains. This novel is available online with a clear chapter-by-chapter format, allowing us to navigate the content more easily.

These works will provide material on how *đi* was employed linguistically and contextually during the historical period from the 13th to the early 20th century. The three works are abbreviated as below in order to be presented in section 4 (Data analysis).

- HTS: *Hịch tướng sĩ* 'Call of the Soldier' was written in year 1284.
- QTTMT: *Quân trung từ mệnh tập* 'Letters and Commands during Military Service' was written in year 1423.

- NBCT: *Nỗi buồn chiến tranh* 'The Sorrow of War" was published in Vietnam in 1990.

Since there is no existing Vietnamese corpus that provides historical data for tracking the development of *đi*, these three chosen works will span different historical periods to give an overview of its linguistic evolution.

To compile a self-built corpus, each literary work, originally in web format, will be converted into PDF format to maintain the original layout, as some works are in the form of traditional letters on the website. Subsequently, AntConc (version 4.2) is used for text analysis, enabling the extraction of *đi* frequencies, collocations, and contextual usage. First, each historical text file is loaded into AntConc, where we search for the keyword *đi*. We then copy the sentences containing *đi*, along with their right and left contexts, into a single PDF file, capturing relevant collocations. Finally, the extracted data from individual works will then be summarized into a consolidated Excel spreadsheet for grammatical development analysis. A detailed analysis is then conducted on high-frequency occurrences and unique meanings.

4. Data analysis

In this section, we will explore lexical meanings and the grammatical development of *đi* over time. According to *Từ điển tiếng Việt* (Vietnamese Dictionary) published by Vietnam Lexicography Centre (Hoàng 2002), there are a total of 18 lexical meanings associated with this verb. These meanings are detailed in other Vietnamese dictionaries and are foundational reference adopted by numerous researchers.

We first examine the lexical meaning of *đi* because it serves as a starting point for understanding its grammaticalization. By grasping its original usage, we can better appreciate how *đi* has evolved into various grammatical roles and functions over time. *Đi* denotes movement or travel, reflecting one of its core lexical meanings as our example (1) below shows. Hoàng, Phê (2002, p.331) describes one of the fundamental meanings of *đi* as a self-moving action, characterized by successive motions of the legs, where one foot is always on the ground while the other is lifted and placed elsewhere.

(1) Bây giờ ông phải đi đến rừng thông (NBCT, 1990, p.125)

'Now he had to go to the pine forest'

In (1), *đi* is used to indicate the physical act of moving towards a destination (*Rừng thông* 'the pine forest'). The primary function of *đi* here is to describe the action of going from one place to another.

In the current study, however, we will not delve further into the lexical meaning of *đi*, but rather focus on its grammatical development, so as to explore the evolution of *đi* within the historical process of grammaticalization in Vietnamese literature. The grammaticalization of *đi* has developed into various meanings in combination with different structures serving as markers of method, purpose, or intention. Building on the original meaning of *đi* as indicating movement, the following section explores how this verb forms structures that convey the action of disappearing or moving away.

4.1. The VP- *đi* and VP-NP- *đi* Construction

In Vietnamese, the verb *đi* is often used in conjunction with another verb to form the VP-*đi* 'VP-go' construction. This construction is employed to convey an action that results in someone or something being taken away, pushed away, or leaving a certain place. The use of *đi* in this context helps to emphasize the aspect of movement associated with the primary action described by the verb.

(2) a. Chẳng những gia quyến của ta bị đuổi mà vợ con các ngươi
          cũng bị kẻ khác <u>bắt đi</u>. (HTS, 1284, p.2)
          Not only were our relatives driven away, but your wives and
          children were also taken away by others'.

     b. Cái lấy được không đủ bù cho cái mất, sự thu hoạch không bõ
          vào sự <u>mất đi</u>. (QTTMT, 1423, p.51)
          'What is gained is not enough to compensate for what is <u>lost</u>,
          the harvest does not make up for what is lost'.

     c. Oán hận chị định thét lên, <u>đuổi cổ</u> anh <u>đi</u>. (NBCT, 1990, p.57)
          'Resentment, she wanted to scream at him, <u>chase</u> him <u>away</u>'

In sentence (2a), *đi* is used in conjunction with *bắt* taken away' to express

the action of someone being forcibly taken away. The addition of *đi* emphasizes the movement aspect of this action, suggesting that the individuals taken away have physically departed from their original location or that the entire family of the speaker will be forcibly removed. This meaning is further clarified in example (2b) when *đi* is used in conjunction with *mất* 'lost' to express the idea of something disappearing or being lost. The addition of *đi* suggests that whatever is lost has moved away or vanished rather than simply being absent.

The VP-NP-*đi* 'VP-NP-go' construction indicates removal from a position, as seen in (2c), where it suggests the object *anh* 'him' is being pushed away or removed. Unlike passive constructions, which affect the subject (2a), this example emphasizes the subject's active role.

This usage highlights the grammaticalization of *đi* to express not just physical movement but also changes in state or condition. On the other hand, *đi* also exemplifies a process of grammaticalization as it specifies different means or methods of accomplishing an action.

4.2. Đi-NP/VP as a Marker of Means

The verb *đi* can serve as a marker to denote means that refers to the mode of transportation or the method of doing something. In examples (3a-b), the construction *đi*-NP indicates the modes of transportation (*thủy* 'by water', *bộ* 'by road'), which correspond to established classifications such as air, road, rail, and water (Chapman, 2007; Van Fan et al., 2018). This demonstrates a form of grammaticalization where *đi* becomes associated with different methods of travel which refers to the specific means of transportation used to move from one place to another.

(3) a. đi thủy thì ta cho thuyền; đi bộ thì ta cho ngựa.
　　　　 (HTS, 1284, p.2)
　　　　 'Go by water, I provide a boat; go by road, I provide a horse'.

　　　b. Bữa nọ tôi gửi thư đến, chưa được trả lời, sai thông sự đi nói mồm không có gì làm bằng'. (QTTMT, 1423, p.66)
　　　　 'The other day, I sent a letter but haven't received a response yet, asking the messenger to go talk without any evidence'.

In example (3a), *thủy* 'water' is often used in older Vietnamese texts and is

a kind of Hán-Việt (Sino-Vietnamese) terms.[3] Here, *thủy* 'water' means traveling by different modes of water transportation, while *bộ* broadly refers to modes of 'road travel', in which *thủy* 'water' and *bộ* 'road' specifies the method of travel associated with *đi*, suggesting a journey either by water or land.

In (3b), the construction *đi nói mồm* 'go talk' indicates that the messenger is tasked with communicating verbally, using only words, without any supporting evidence or proof. The use of *đi* emphasizes the verbal act, highlighting the unusual of the situation.

4.3.　The *đi*-VP as a Marker of Purpose or Intention

We now turn to the role of *đi* as a marker of purpose or intention, where the construction of *đi* followed by a VP implies the intended action. In example (4), *đi* denotes the soldiers' intention to gather grass, highlighting the purpose that drives the soldiers' movement.

(4) Quân lính <u>đi lấy cỏ</u> cứ thấy bị giết. (QTTMT, 1423, p.13)
　　'The soldiers <u>went to get</u> grass and just saw being killed'.

However, when *đi* is combined with *lại* 'come' in *đi lại* 'go come' or repeated as in *đi đi lại lại* 'go go come come', it takes on a different significance, as illustrated in examples (5a-b). Originally denoting movement or action, the verb *đi* has developed its grammaticalization to extend beyond mere physical motion, conveying deeper meanings associated with engagement, interaction, and persistence.

In (5a), the VP *đi lại* signifies interaction or engagement between entities, specifically *tôi* 'I' (The speaker is Nguyễn Trãi) and *đại nhân* 'you' (the listeners are Vương Thông, Sơn Thọ & Mà Kỳ).[4] The decision *không*

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[3] Upon analyzing the data, we see that these historical works use many Sino-Vietnamese terms. Borrowing from Mandarin was pervasive at that time.

[4] Letter sent to General Vương Thông, eunuch Sơn Thọ, and Mà Kỳ in Đông Quan Citadel. Based on the decisive military victories that have been achieved, Nguyễn Trãi continues to analyze the pros and cons of various arguments, offering a way out for the Ming army to quickly end the war. The letter was sent around November in the year 1427.

cùng đi lại 'not to accompany anymore' suggests an ending of this interaction, possibly due to changing circumstances between the two countries. Thus, *đi lại* 'go come' conveys the idea of engagement or interaction between the speaker Nguyễn Trãi and the persons addressed. Nevertheless, in certain circumstances, *đi lại* 'go come' emphasizes its core lexical meanings. As demonstrated in example (5b), *đi lại* 'go come' refers to the concept of movement. In this case, *đi* primarily indicates the physical act of motion along the street, describing walking, typically with two feet. Unlike its use in example (5a), which illustrates relationships among parties, the term in (5b) retains its literal sense of physical motion.

Furthermore, (5c) employs the repetition of *đi* to intensify the notion of continuous movement. Initially, we would interpret the rapid movement of two legs. However, within the context of the two parties, it emphasizes the intended purpose of the action. The reduplication *đi đi lại lại* 'go go come come' conveys a sense of persistent action, emphasizing the ongoing effort of going back and forth endlessly to encourage the connection between the two countries. This repetition suggests that the speaker Nguyễn, Trãi is continuously and actively engaged in the pursuit of his goal.

(5) a. Như thế thì tôi quyết ý không cùng <u>đi lại</u> với đại nhân nữa.
       (QTTMT, 1423, p.68)
       'In that case, I've decided not to <u>accompany</u> you anymore'.

    b. Lén nhìn sứ ngụy <u>đi lại</u> nghênh ngang ngoài đường.
       (HTS, 1284, p.1)
       'Secretly watching the envoy of the usurpers <u>strutting</u> on the street'.

    c. Tôi sở dĩ cần quyền gửi thư, <u>đi đi lại lại</u> không dứt, chính là ơn của đại nhân. (QTTMT, 1423, p.68)
       'I, due to the need for the right to send letters, constantly go <u>back and forth</u>, solely because of your favor'.

4.4. The Expression of Future Modality in Vietnamese Verb *đi*

Let's now turn to *đi* when it expresses upcoming occurrences and purposes. According to Yi and Ogawa (2024, p.6), "The major change that takes place in the process of grammaticalization is the loss of the spatial meaning, and the function of expressing intention comes into play". Therefore, when using the English *be going to* construction to describe an action, speakers

typically convey intention or a future event. Furthermore, *be going to* often carries an epistemic modal meaning (Yi & Ogawa, 2024; Machová, 2015).

However, unlike English *be going to*-VP constructions, the *đi*-VP construction in Vietnamese is unable to convey either deontic or epistemic modal meanings. In other words, it lacks the ability to express necessity, obligation, permission, intentions or predictions about the future. This is exemplified through examples (6a-b). In example (6a), the presence of *sẽ* 'will' indicates the speaker's intention or commitment to accompany *anh* 'you', reflecting deontic modality. If *đi* could convey the same deontic modality meaning as *sẽ* 'will', then *sẽ* could be replaced by *đi*. However, this substitution is not possible, indicating that *đi* does not carry the same deontic modal connotations as *sẽ*.

Similarly, *sẽ* 'will' can be used in conjunction with *không bao giờ* 'never' (6b), expresses an epistemic modal meaning. This combination suggests the speaker's prediction regarding the likelihood of the door reopening in the future. The addition of *không bao giờ* 'never' intensifies the sense of permanence locked of the door. However, *đi* cannot replace *sẽ* to form an epistemic modal meaning. This inability to substitute *đi* for *sẽ* in this context highlights that *đi* does not perform either deontic or epistemic modal functions in the *đi*-VP constructions.

(6)　a.　Em sẽ <u>đi cùng</u> với anh. (NBCT, 1990, p.72)
　　　　　'I will <u>go with</u> you'.

　　　b.　Cửa giả bên buồng nàng im lìm khóa trái, có vẻ như <u>sẽ không bao giờ</u> còn mở ra nữa. (NBCT, 1990, p.34)
　　　　　'The door in her chamber remained tightly locked, seeming as if it <u>would never</u> open again'.

In sum, the examination of future modality in the verb *đi* reveals that *đi* does not carry the deontic or epistemic modal meanings found in English *be going to*. This distinction is illustrated through examples where *sẽ* 'will' in Vietnamese serves to express intention or prediction, roles that *đi* cannot fulfill. Yet, the Vietnamese *đi* expresses future modality in its own way.

5. Discussion: The Unique Construction and Future Modality of *đi*

This section focuses on the unique grammatical construction of *đi* and how it differs from *be going to* in expressing future modality.

Upon analyzing its grammaticalization through historical stage and comparing it with the reviewed languages, we find that the development of *đi* into the fixed expression *đi lại* **'**go come' is unique, as no equivalent structure has been identified in English, Chinese or Thai. As example (5a) shows, the fixed expression *đi lại* 'go come' conveys interaction, often used in situations involving two sides, and is primarily employed to indicate human relationships. In circumstances where no interaction is involved, *đi lại* 'go come' refers to physical movement rather than relationships, such as in (7).

> (7) Trước vì trại đóng hơi xa, thực khiến <u>đi lại</u> vất vả.
> (QTTMT, 1423, p.16)
> 'Previously, because the camp was located quite far away, it made <u>traveling</u> difficult'.

In example (7), the context describes the difficulty of travel due to the camp's distant location. The sentence focuses on movement between locations, emphasizing the physical effort required for going out and coming back to the camp, without implying any interaction between individuals or entities. Thus, the phrase *đi lại* **'**go come' in this case refers to physical movement instead of relationships.

In Taiwanese, the combination of *go* and *come* is also found. According to Lin (1975, p.126), in Taiwanese dialects, the directional motion verb *khi* 'go' can appear after *lai* 'come' at the end of a sentence (8a) or at the start (8b, emphasis added), but it cannot be placed in the middle.

(8) a. Sâm-à, lài₃ khì.
         Sam come go.
         Sam, let's go'.

     b. Sâm-à, lài₃ khì ciăq pīng.
         Sam come go eat rice.
         'Sam, let's go eat'

However, a fixed expression like the Vietnamese *đi lại*'go come' shows an undergoing of grammaticalization that Taiwanese combination of *lai* 'come' and *khi* 'go' does not communicating. While *lai* 'come', which suggests movement toward the speaker, has developed into a form that conveys the idea of starting or initiating action, similar to the English phrase *let's go,* Taiwanese *khi* 'go' indicates a transition to the next activity, unspecified (8a) or specified (eating) as in (8b). In other words, in Vietnamese, *đi lại* 'go come' has shifted from a literal directional meaning to a fixed expression indicating relationships, whereas in Taiwanese, *lai khi* 'come go' is used to encourage movement or engagement in a new activity. The phrase *đi lại* 'go come**'** refers more to a person's behavior, expressed in a delicate and indirect manner.

Furthermore, the English verb *go* has undergone a distinct grammaticalization process, transforming from the directional phrase *be going to* to a future marker. In this context, *be going to* functions as a single phrase indicating future intention or prediction. This contrasts with the Vietnamese verb *đi*, which, while used in various grammatical constructions to convey movement, purpose, or method, does not carry future meanings of intention or prediction.

One reason for this difference is that Vietnamese relies on different mechanisms to express modality. For example, future intentions or predictions are often conveyed using the verb *sẽ* 'will'. This separation of functions means that *đi* retains its core meaning related to physical movement or purpose rather than expressing future events. Thus, to indicate future intention, speakers use the structure *sẽ* 'will'+ VP, as shown in (6a-b). On the other hand, Vietnamese lacks an equivalent to the English be-V-ing for continuous or future actions. Instead, it typically uses a future morpheme with the main verb or relies on contextual clues, to convey ongoing actions.

Nevertheless, we also see the structure *sẽ* 'will'+ *đi* + VP in daily communication. In this case, *đi* does not denote future action but clarifies that the speaker will perform the action elsewhere, necessitating movement. See example (9):

(9) Tối nay em sẽ đi ăn <u>ở nhà hàng</u>
‘Tonight I will have dinner <u>at the restaurant</u>’

In (9), the speaker uses *sẽ* ‘will’ as an epistemic modal, indicating that the action will happen in the near future as planned. *Đi* is used to further clarify that the action will take place outside, requiring movement. Nonetheless, there are instances where *đi* cannot be used to express a similar requirement for moving actions as in (10).

(10) Tối nay em sẽ ăn <u>ở nhà</u>
‘Tonight I will have dinner <u>at home</u>’

In example (10), *sẽ* ‘will’ expresses the future meaning, but *đi* is not used to emphasize the action because the Vietnamese *đi* implies movement away from the origin. Since *nhà* ‘home’ is considered the starting point or origin for a person in Vietnamese culture, instead of using *đi*, people use *về* ‘come’. For example, in Cù, Huy Cận’s poem *Em về nhà* ‘You come back home’ (1940), the use of *về* ‘come’ illustrates this cultural perspective. This concept is also reflected in various songs, such as *Trở về mái nhà xưa* ‘Come back to the old home’ by Phạm, Duy (1948) and *Về nhà* ‘Come home’ by Nguyễn, Quang Dũng (2020). This separation of functions means that *đi* retains its core meaning related to physical movement or purpose rather than expressing the future events.

Note that this discussion is based on a limited data set of classical works given that a Vietnamese corpus is unavailable. Yet the existing dataset addresses this interesting linguistic fact that is worthy of presenting.

6. Conclusion

The grammatical evolution of *đi* reveals its adaptability and expanded functions in historical Vietnamese texts. The verb *đi*, initially defined by its core meaning of motion, has developed to serve multiple grammatical roles.

In conclusion, the Vietnamese verb *đi* illustrates the process of grammaticalization. In the VP-*đi* and VP-NP-*đi,* it denotes removal or disappearance, while the *đi*-VP demonstrates *đi* as a marker of purpose or intention, indicating the goal of actions. The use of *đi* with *lại* ‘come’ and its

reduplication also showcases its evolution to convey engagement, interaction, and persistent effort.

Moreover, the fixed expression *đi lại* 'go come' introduces a unique grammatical function in Vietnamese. The grammatical evolution of *đi* in the structure *đi* + VP/NP showcases its transition to a marker of method and purpose. Originally used to describe movement, *đi* has adapted to specify different methods of travel. The integration of *đi* into various contexts emphasizes its expanded function in marking both the method of movement and the strategic use of resources. Regarding future modality, while English integrates the progressive aspect and infinitive marker to form a future modal construction, Vietnamese employs separate modal verbs like *sẽ* 'will' to express similar meanings. The distinctive aspect of Vietnamese future construction lies in the fact that *đi* could not grammaticalize into a future marker, necessitating the use of *sẽ* 'will' + V, which contrasts with the English *go* that evolved primarily as a future marker in the phrase *be going to.*

Further research with a larger corpus could provide a deeper comprehension of the grammaticalization of *đi* and its interaction with modality in Vietnamese. Future studies could examine additional contexts and constructions to explore the roles of *đi* in expressing different grammatical functions.

This study adds to our comprehension of the early steps of grammaticalization of *đi*, an area with relatively limited exploration in Vietnamese linguistics. By examining historical texts, this study sheds light on the evolution of *đi* at the particular stage and may provide useful perspectives for exploring its grammaticalization in the modern period, post-20th century. Lastly, the study contributes to a broader understanding of the development of future modality in Vietnamese and offers data for comparisons with similar constructions in other languages.

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