

Does the Tense Category exist in Vietnamese Language?

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The tense is a grammatical category that has been discussed for decades in the inflectional languages such as English, French, Spanish, etc. However, this grammatical phenomenon is still considered as a theoretical wall that divides the vietnamese linguistic world. Some linguists whose the linguistic theory is strongly based on webstern linguistics firmly think the tense exists in Vietnamese, and this are mainly expressed by the particles like ‘đã’ for the past, ‘đang’ for the present and ‘sẽ’ for the future, etc. Others, entirely opposing to the latters, reject the existence of this grammatical category in the Vietnamese. According to them, the mentioned particles are semantically aspectual markers.

To help foreign learners of Vietnamese more precisely understand the language they are studying, this papers will contribute to clarify the above issues, basing on the typological features of the Vietnamese. I absolutely support the ideas that there are no tenses in Vietnamese. In other words, the location of an event in Vietnamese on the temporal axe is completely grammaticalised. Besides, I try to make a brief systematic description about the aspectual system in Vietnamese.