Prepositional vs. directional coverbs in Vietnamese

SOPHANA Srichampa
Mahidol University

In Vietnamese, there is a class of words that Clark (1978) calls “Coverbs,” which are verbs, prepositions and adverbs. I agree with her mostly but on some points I would like to propose a different syntactic analysis from hers. By coverbs in my study, I mean words which may function as verbs, prepositions and directional verbs.

Ông ấy ở Sài gòn ra Huế thứ hai.
he to located Saigon go-out Hue Monday
Cvb(P)
‘He left Saigon for Hanoi on Monday.’
Thompson (1967: 230)

Mời ông vào.
please you go in
Cvb(P)
‘Please come in.’
Thompson (1967: 233)

Many linguists have studied these “coverbs”. Thompson (1967: 230-231), calls coverbs “Sequential Phrases,” treating them as coordinate phrases presenting situations which follow one another. Nguyễn Đình Hoà (1979:xiii) states “The category of direction is expressed by means of postverbs or coverbs, that is to say, verbs which occur following the main verb and play a ‘secondary’ role. They are reduced to the status of morphemes by the mere fact of appearing after full verbs: thus đi will mean ‘off, away’ when occurring after such a main verb of motion as bay đi ‘to fly off/ away’, chạy đi ‘to run away.’” Nguyễn Đăng Liệm (1975: 79) states “A defective directional verb is added to a verb stem to give it a directional meaning. It has the functional meaning of Directional Adverb in English, such as ‘up, down’..., etc. It still preserves its verbal nature because it can have a Location-Direction tagmeme of its own...”.

In the following list of coverbs, nos. 1-9 are from Clark, and I have added 10-11.

1. ở be in/ at, reside in
2. qua/ sang cross, get (over), pass, be by
3. lại come, arrive

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4. vè return
5. ra go out
6. vào enter, go in, come in/ in, into, on at
7. lên go up, come up, rise, ascend/ up, upwards
8. xuống go down (to)
9. đến/ tôi arrive, come, arrive at, get to, reach, to, till, until
10. cho give
11. đi go

These coverbs can all function as the main verb. I would like to further investigate their syntactic properties in the following functions:

1) Prepositional coverbs, abbreviated Cvb (P)

2) Directional coverbs, abbreviated Cvb (D)

1. Only prepositional coverbs

The following coverbs can function as a main verb or a preposition as in the following examples, but not as a directional coverb.

1.1 ò ‘be in/ at, reside in’

1.1.1 ò can function as a main verb as in examples 1-5.

(1) Tôi ò nhà số 10.
I be at house number 10
NP V NP
‘I am at house number 10.’

The structure of the sentence (1) is schematized as in (2).
(2)

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{CP} \\
\text{C'} \\
\text{IP} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{TÔI} \\
"I" \\
\text{VP} \\
\text{V'} \\
\text{V} \\
"to be" \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{nha só 10} \\
"house no. 10"
\end{array} \]

\( \overset{\circ}{} \) 'be at' is claimed to be a verb according to the following criteria.

(a) \( \overset{\circ}{} \) can be preceded by an auxiliary verb, as shown in (3)

(3) \[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{TÔI} \\
I \\
\text{sẽ} \\
\text{will be} \\
\text{nha só 10} \\
\text{house num. 10} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{AUX V NP} \\
'I will be at house number 10.'
\end{array} \]

(b) \( \overset{\circ}{} \) can be negated, as shown in (4).

(4) \[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{TÔI} \\
I \\
\text{không} \\
\text{not be} \\
\text{nha só 10} \\
\text{house num. 10} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{NEG V NP} \\
'I am not at house number 10.'
\end{array} \]

(c) \( \overset{\circ}{} \) can be preceded by certain preceding adverbs, as shown in (5)

(5) \[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{TÔI} \\
I \\
\text{cũng} \\
\text{also be} \\
\text{nha só 10} \\
\text{house num. 10} \\
\text{NP} \\
\text{Adv V NP} \\
'I am also at house number 10.'
\end{array} \]

1.1.2 \( \overset{\circ}{} \) can function as a prepositional coverb, as shown in (6).
In (6) \( \dot{o} \) functions as a preposition which is the head of the PP: P: \( \dot{o} + \) NP: \textit{Khoa tiếng Việt}. This PP is the adjunct of the VP. The structure of (6) is schematized as in (7).

\( \dot{o} \) is claimed to be a prepositional coverb by the following criteria:

a) Its following NP cannot be promoted by itself to the initial position of the sentence as in (8).

(8) \*\textit{Khoa tiếng Việt, tôi làm việc \( \dot{o} \) [NP e i].}  
Dept. language Vietnam I do work at  
NP V NP Cvb (P)  
'The Vietnamese Department, I work at.'
b) The whole PP cannot usually be preposed as in (9), but it can if the sentence is modified by an adverb of time as in (10).

(9) *Ô Khoa tiếng Việt, Lan làm việc.
    at Dept language Vietnam Lan do work.
    Cvb(P) NP NP V NP
    'At the Vietnamese Department, Lan works.'

c) It cannot be preceded by an auxiliary verb as in (11).

(11) *Lan làm việc sẽ ô Khoa tiếng Việt.
    Lan do work will at Department language Vietnam
    NP V NP Aux Cvb(P) NP

d) It cannot be preceded by the negator 'không'.

(12) *Lan làm việc không ô Khoa tiếng Việt.
    Lan do work not at Department language Vietnam
    NP V NP NEG Cvb(P) NP

e) However, when the negator không phải [lit: not right] precedes the preposition, the sentence is grammatical, as shown in (13).

(13) Lan làm việc không phải Ô
    Lan do work not right at
    NP V NP Aux Cvb(P)

    Khoa tiếng Việt.
    Department language Vietnam
    NP
    'Lan is working but not at the Vietnamese Department.'

f) It cannot be preceded by an adverb as in (14).

(14) *Lan làm việc còn Ô Khoa tiếng Việt.
    Lan do work still at Department language Vietnam
    NP V NP Adv Cvb(P) NP

The prepositional use of Ô as exemplified above parallels the non-coverbal prepositions such as tài ‘at’ and bàng ‘by’ as shown below (15, 16).

(15) Hội nghị họp tại Hà nội 3 ngày.
    conference hold at Hanoi 3 day
    NP V P NP
    'The conference was held at Hanoi for three days.'
(16) Tôi đi sang Trung Quốc bằng thuyền.
    I go cross China by boat
    NP V PostV NP P NP
    'I have been to China by boat.'

In sentences (15) and (16) tài ‘at’ and bằng ‘by’ are prepositions. They are heads of the PPs which are followed by NPs. The structure and the function of these sentences are the same as in sentence (6). In sentences (15) and (16), the preposing of the PPs is possible, but it rarely occurs except when the speaker wants to focus on the PP as follows:

(15a) Tài Hanoi hội nghị đã họp 3 ngày.
      at Hanoi conference already hold ba day
      P NP NP AUX V Adv
      'At Hanoi, the conference had already been held for three days.'

(16a) Bằng thuyền tôi đi sang Trung Quốc.
      by boat I go cross China
      P NP NP V PostV NP
      'By boat, I have been to China.'

In (15a) and (16a) some other temporal or locative is also in the predicate.

Tài ‘at’ meets similar criteria to test the preposition as mentioned for ở ‘at’. One additional criterion is that the negator không phải [lit: not right] can precede the preposition as in (15b) and (16b), but another negator không ‘not’ cannot precede the preposition:

(15b) Hội nghị họp không phải tài Hà Nội 3 ngày.
      conference hold not right at Hanoi three day
      NP V NEG P NP NP
      "It’s not correct that the conference was held at Hanoi for three days."

(16b) Tôi đi sang Trung Quốc không phải bằng thuyền.
      I go cross China not right by boat
      NP V PostV NP NEG P NP
      "It’s not correct that I have been to China by boat."

1.2 Qua ‘cross, get (over), pass, be by’

1.2.1 Qua can function as a main verb, as in the following examples:

(17) Tôi sắp qua cầu.
      I almost cross bridge
      NP AUX V NP
      Agt Path
      'I almost crossed the bridge.'
(18) Việc đã qua.
work already pass
NP AUX V
'The work finished.'

Qua can function either as a transitive verb as in (17), which has cảu 'bridge' as the complement, or as an intransitive verb as in (18). The verb qua in (17) can be preceded by the adverb sáp 'almost', and the verb in (18) can be preceded by an auxiliary đã 'already'.

1.2.2 Qua can function as a prepositional coverb, as shown in the following examples:

(19) Tôi nhìn qua cửa kính.
I look through window glass
NP V Cvb (P) NP
Agt Path
'I look through the glass window.'

Qua in (19) is a preposition which is the head of the PP: P qua + NP cửa kính in (19). This PP cannot be preposed as in (19a) because there is an intransitive verb in the sentence.

(19a) *Qua cửa kính, tôi nhìn [PP e i].
through window glass I look
Cvb (P) NP NP V
'Through the window, I look.'

A prepositional phrase can be preposed grammatically when the verb is transitive, as in (20).

(20) Qua cửa kính, tôi nhìn дорог phố.
through window glass I look road
Cvb (P) NP NP NP
'Through the window, I look at the road.'

In (20), the NP which is underlined is a complement of the verb. So the preposed prepositional phrase is grammatical. Moreover, a temporal or locative can be added to the transitive verbs. This additional constituent does not affect the preposed PP as in the following example:

(20a) Qua cửa kính, tôi nhìn дорог phố một thoáng.
through window glass I look road a moment
Cvb (P) NP NP V NP AdvP
'Through the window, I look at the road a moment.'

1.3 Cho 'give/for'

1.3.1 Cho can function as a main verb, as in the following examples:
(21) Anh đã cho tôi chiếc đồng hồ.
you already give I clf watch
NP AUX V NP NP
Agt Rec Pat
‘You gave me a watch.’

(22) Thầy còn cho thời gian để chuẩn bị.
teacher still give time for prepare
NP Adv V NP P VP
Agt Pat Ben
‘The (male) teacher gives time for preparation.’

In sentences (21) and (22), cho ‘to give’ is a transitive verb, which can be modified by an auxiliary verb as in (21) or an adverb as in (22).

1.3.2 Cho can also function as a prepositional coverb, as in the following sentences.

(23) Lan biểu một số tiền cho câu lạc bộ.
Lan give 1 number money for club
NP V NP Cvb(P) NP
Agt Pat Ben
‘Lan gave an amount of money to the club.’

(24) Anh ấy có khó khăn gì cho cam.
he have difficulties what for suffer
NP V NP Q Cvb(P) V
Agt Pat Man
‘What are the difficulties that cause him trouble.’

(25) Người ta cười cho đây.
people laugh for part
NP V Cvb(P) part
‘The people laughed at (you).’

Cho in (23) functions as a preposition which is the head of the PP. In (24) cho is an intransitive preposition, which conveys the purpose of the verb, whereas in (25) it conveys the result of the verb. A prepositional Cho cannot be modified by negation, an auxiliary or an adverb, as in (23a), (24a), (25a, b).

(23a) *Lan biểu một số tiền không cho câu lạc bộ.
Lan give 1 number money not for club
NP V NP NEG Cvb(P) NP
Agt Pat Ben

However, in (23a) although it is ungrammatical to use the negator không ‘not’, it is grammatical to use không phải ‘not correct’ (23b).
In (24a), the negators không phải ‘not correct’ and không ‘not’ cannot be used preceding the preposition because it is an intransitive preposition. If the preposition is followed by a NP then the negator không phải can be used (23b).

\[(25a) \quad *\text{người ta} \quad \text{cười} \quad \text{không/ không phải} \quad \text{đfüry.} \]

In (25a) cho cannot be negated by không or không phải ‘not correct’ either, because it is an intransitive preposition.

A negative, an adverb or an auxiliary verb can precede a main verb (25c) but cannot precede a prepositional coverb (25b).

\[(25b) \quad \text{người ta} \quad \text{không sẽ còn cười cho đühry.} \]

“The people will not laugh at (you).”

1.4 Đên/tói ‘arrive at’

1.4.1 Đên/tói can function as a main verb, as in the following examples:

\[(26) \quad Họ đã đến rồi. \]

“They have already arrived.”
(27) Chuyen toi tai ho.
    story arrive ear they
    NP V NP
    "The story reached their ears."

Dien in (26) and toi in (27) is a verb, which can be premodified by an auxiliary verb as in (26).

1.4.2 Dien/toi can function as a prepositional coverb, as in the following examples.

(28) Dong ho cham den nuoa gio.
    watch slow until half hour
    NP V Cvb(P) A NP
    "The watch is half an hour slow."

(29) Cho toi nuoa dem.
    wait until half night
    V Cvb(P) NP
    "Wait until midnight."

1.5 Xuong ‘go down, descend, step down, get down, down to’

1.5.1 Xuong can function as a main verb, as in the following examples:

(30) Toi xuong nuoi.
    I descend mountain
    NP V NP
    Agt Dir
    "I descend the mountain."

(31) Nuoc thu trieu da xuong.
    tide already descend
    NP AUX V
    Agt
    "The tide had already descended."

Xuong in (30) and (31) is a main verb. It can be preceded by a negative, an auxiliary or an adverb.

1.5.2 Xuong can function as a prepositional coverb, as in the following example:

(32) Ho nhay xuong song.
    they jump into river
    NP V Cvb(P) NP
    Agt Dir
    "They jumped into the river."
Xuông in (32) functions as a preposition followed by a NP.

1.6 Sang ‘cross, get (over), pass, be by’

1.6.1 Sang can function as a main verb, as in the following example:

(33) Lan sang Thálan hôm qua.
    Lan pass Thailand yesterday
    NP V NP AdvP
    “Lan came to Thailand yesterday.”

1.6.2 Sang can function as a prepositional coverb, as in the following examples:

(34) Anh ấy chạy sang nhà tôi.
    he run pass house I
    NP V Cvb(P) NP
    “He ran past my house.”

(35) Chị ấy nhìn sang bên canh.
    she look pass beside
    NP V Cvb(P) NP
    “She looked beside her.”

In (34)-(35) sang is a preposition preceding a NP.

2. Only directional coverbs

Hoà (1996:144) mentions that “The category of direction is expressed by means of postverbs or coverbs that is to say, verbs which occur following the main verb and play a ‘secondary’ role i.e. đi ‘off, away’ when occurring after such a main verb of motion as bay ‘to fly’ or chạy ‘to run’. The verb ra, which ordinarily indicates a movement ‘from the interior to the exterior, from one state to another, from a void to existence’ i.e.

cởi ra ‘to untie, take off (clothes)’
dem ra ‘to bring out’
dem vào ‘to bring in’

There are some examples which are composed of a main verb and a directional verb, such as:

chạy ra ‘to run out’
di ra ‘to go out’
nhảy ra ‘to jump out’
bước ra ‘to step out’
làm ra ‘to make’
nghĩ ra ‘to think it out’
tìm ra ‘to find out’
dẹp ra/lên ‘be more beautiful than before’
béo ra/lên ‘to get fatter’
bay đi ‘to fly off/away’
chạy đi ‘to run away’
bỏ đi ‘to abandon, leave out, discard’ etc.”

Goral (1986: 375-376) states that “the directional verbs, i.e. nghe ra [listen-exit] ‘to understand’, nghe không ra [listen-not-exit] ‘cannot understand’, không nghe ra [not-listen-exit] ‘did not understand (what was being said)’ are ‘serial verbs’.

I agree with him only with a specific set of verbs (perception verbs). According to my study (1997:137-144) ‘Serial verb constructions in Vietnamese’ is “a sequence of verbs occurring together with a non-overt subject and/or a non-overt object. The sentence with the non-overt subject is claimed to be an infinitival clause. The non-overt subject of infinitivals will be represented as PRO whereas the non-overt object will be represented as pro, which is non-referential.”

The directional verbs function as the postverbs of the main verbs, they bleach the meanings by conveying direction, expansion, dismantling, separation etc. The perception verbs, i.e. nhìn ra ‘to recognise’, nghe ra ‘to understand’, kiểm ra ‘to understand’ can be negated as Goral mentions, but with the motion verbs, i.e. chạy ra ‘to run out’, đi ra ‘to go out’, nhảy ra ‘to jump out’, bước ra ‘to step out’ the ra cannot be negated.

In this part, the words which can function as a main verb and a directional coverb are grouped in this topic.

2.1 Ra ‘go out (to)’

2.1.1 Ra can function as a main verb, as in the following examples:

(36) Mồ hôi  ra  như  tâm.
    sweat  go out  like  take a bath
    NP    V    Adv    V
    ‘The sweat comes out like taking a bath.’

(37) Ra  đi!
    go out  go
    V    Imp Mark
    ‘Go out!’

(38) Vườn  trà  đang  ra  buổi.
    garden  tea  Prog  go out  bud
    NP    AUX    V    NP
    ‘The tea garden’s plants are budding.’

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Ra in (36)-(38) is a verb. In (36) and (37) ra is an intransitive verb. In (37) ra is used in an imperative sentence. The meaning of this sentence varies according to the intonation of the speaker, which may convey command, persuasion or invitation. The imperative sentence may be ended by the imperative marker di. In (38) ra is a transitive verb which is followed by the NP complement bắp ‘bud’.

2.1.2 Ra can function as a postverbal directional verb. It can have a comparative function as in (39).

(39) Trọng anh béo ra.
look at you fat out
V NP V Cvb(D)
Pat
‘You look fatter.’

In (39), the significant meaning of béo is ‘fat’ whereas ra ‘out’ is a secondary verb or postverbal directional verb. ra cannot be negated as a main verb can, but the whole VP béo ra can be modified by an adverb as in (40).

(40) Trọng anh béo ra nhiều.
look at you fat out much
V NP V Cvb(D)Adv
Pat
‘You look much fatter.’

The motion verbs which take coverbs may be followed by either the source, or the direction, or the destination of the action, as in the following examples:

(41) Tôi đi ra ngoài.
I go out outside
NP V Cvb(D) P
Agt Dir
‘I go outside.’

(42) Lan bước ra khỏi nhà.
Lan step out from house
NP V Cvb(D)P NP
Agt Scr
‘Lan steps out from the house.’

(43) Tôi nhảy ra khỏi chỗ này.
I jump out from place this
NP V Cvb(D)P NP DemP
Agt Scr
‘I jumped out from this place.’

In (41)-(43) the ra is a postverbal directional coverb. It can be followed by another preposition as in (41), or by prepositional phrases as in (42), (43).
2.2 **Di** ‘to go’

2.2.1 **Di** can function as a main verb, as in the following examples:

(44) Tôi dã di Hà nội.
     I already go Hanoi
     NP AUX V NP
     ‘I have been to Hanoi.’

**Di** in (44) is the main verb of the sentence.

2.2.2 **Di** can function as a postverbal directional verb, as in the following examples.

(45) Anh ấy xâu di.
     he ugly go
     NP V Cvb(D)
     ‘He is more ugly (than before).’

(46) Anh ấy gầy di.
     he thin go
     NP V Cvb(D)
     ‘He is thinner (than before).’

**Di** in (45) and (46) is a postverbal directional verb which conveys a comparative meaning.

(47) Lan chạy di.
     Lan run go
     NP V Cvb(D)
     ‘Lan ran away.’

**Di** in (47) is a postverbal directional verb, which denotes the direction of the motion verb from the starting point but does not give the destination. It occurs sentence-final without a following NP.

2.3 **Lai** ‘come, arrive (back)’

2.3.1 **Lai** can function as a main verb, as in the following examples:

(48) Mai tôi sẽ lai anh chơi.
     tomorrow I will come back you play
     Adv NP AUX V NP V
     ‘Tomorrow I’ll come back to play at your house.’

(49) Con lai đẩy với mẹ.
     child come back here with mother
     NP V NP P NP
     ‘The child came back here with the mother.’

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In (48)-(49) *lai* functions as the main verb, which can be preceded by the auxiliary verb *sẽ* ‘will’ as in (48). In (49) *lai* can be preceded by a negative or by an auxiliary verb or adverb, as in (49a).

(49a)  
Con *không/ sẽ/ cùng* *lai* *dãy* *vói* *mẹ.*  
child not will also come back here with mother  
NP Neg AUX Adv V NP P NP  
‘The child did not come/ will come/ also came back here with the mother.’

2.3.2 *Lai* can function as a preposition, as in the following example:

(50)  
Tối *mang* *túi* *lai* *dãy.*  
I bring bag back here  
NP VP NP Cvb(P) NP  
Agt Pat Des  
‘I brought a bag back here.’

In (50), *lai* is a postverbal directional verb.

3. Prepositional and directional coverbs

The words which can function as a main verb, a prepositional coverb and a directional coverb are grouped in this part.

3.1 *Về* ‘return to’

*Về* can have three functions, which are:

3.1.1. As a main verb, as in the following examples:

(51)  
Tối *về* *nhà.*  
I return home  
NP V NP  
Agt Des  
‘I return home.’

*Về* in (51) is a verb, which can be preceded by a negative, an auxiliary or an adverb, like the other previous arguments of the verbs mentioned above in (51a).

(51a)  
Tối *sẽ/ không/ cùng* *về* *nhà.*  
I will not also return home  
NP AUX NEG Adv V NP  
Agt Des  
‘I will return/ did not return/ also return home.’

3.1.2 *Về* can function as a prepositional coverb, as in the following examples.

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(52) Họ còn có nhiều ý kiến về chuyện đó.
they still have many opinion about story that
Agt  Adv  V  A  NP  Cvb (P)  NP
‘They still have many opinions about that story.’

Về in (52) is a preposition, which is the head of the PP. The PP về chuyện đó is the adjunct of the NP ý kiến ‘opinion’.

The PP can be preposed to the front of the sentences, as in (53).

(53) Về chuyện đó, họ còn có nhiều ý kiến [PP e i]
about story that they still have many opinion
Cvb(P)  NP  NP  Adv  V  A  NP
‘About that story, they still have many opinions.’

3.1.3 Về can function as a directional coverb, as in the following example:

(54) Khi nào anh ấy sẽ trở về?
when he will return be back
AdvP  NP  AUX  V  Cvb(D)
‘When will he return?’

Về in (54) is a postverbal directional verb. It conveys the destination where the interlocutors are. In this sentence there is no noun phrase following the postverb.

3.2 Vào ‘enter, go in, come in/ in, into, on, at’

The verb vào has three properties:

3.2.1 As a main verb, as in the following examples

(55) Tôi vào nhà.
I enter house
NP  V  NP
Agt  Dir
‘I enter the house.’

(56) Từ Hà Nội, tôi vào Huế.
from Hanoi I enter Hue
P  NP  NP  V  NP
Scr  Agt ‘ Des
‘From Hanoi, I went to Hue.’

Vào in (55) and (56) is a main verb, which can be modified by a negative, an auxiliary verb or an adverb, as mentioned previously.
3.2.2 As a preposition, as in the following example:

\[(57) \quad \text{Con quay mặt vào tường.} \quad \]
\[
\text{child turn face into wall} \\
\text{NP V NP Cvb(P) NP} \\
\text{Agt Pat Dir} \\
\text{The child turned his face to the wall.}'
\]

In (57) **vào** is a preposition preceding the NP.

3.2.3 As a postverbal directional coverb, as in the following example:

\[(58) \quad \text{Tôi nhìn vào trong nhà.} \quad \]
\[
\text{I look into in house} \\
\text{P V Cvb(D) P NP} \\
\text{Agt Dir} \\
\text{"I looked into the house."}
\]

In (58), **vào** is a postverbal directional coverb. It is followed by a prepositional phrase. The postverbal directional verb cannot either be preposed or negated, as in the following examples:

\[(58a) *\text{Trong nhà tôi nhìn vào.} \quad \]
\[
\text{in house I look into} \\
\text{P NP NP V Cvb(D)}
\]

(58a) is unacceptable because of the contradiction between ‘in’ and ‘into’.

If there is a NP following the postverb **vào** as in (59b), it is acceptable.

\[(58b) \quad \text{Trong nhà tôi nhìn vào bức tranh.} \quad \]
\[
\text{in house I look into clf picture} \\
\text{P NP NP V Cvb(P) NP} \\
\text{‘In the house, I looked at a picture.’}
\]

In (58b), **vào** functions as a preposition followed by a NP.

\[(58c) *\text{Vào trong nhà tôi nhìn.} \quad \]
\[
\text{into in house I look} \\
\text{Cvb(D) P NP NP V}
\]

In (58c), the postverbal preposition is ungrammatical. In Vietnamese the topicalised sentence as in (58c) is not used. This is ungrammatical because the verb **nhìn** should be followed by a NP or a PP.

\[(58d) *\text{Tôi nhìn không vào trong nhà.} \quad \]
\[
\text{I look not into in house} \\
\text{NP V NEG Cvb(D) P NP} \\
\text{Agt Dir}
\]

In (58d), the postverbal directional **vào** cannot be negated.
(59) Lâm nhanh vào.
do fast into
V Adv Cvb (D)
‘Do it quicker!’

In (59) vào is a postverbal directional verb functioning as an intransitive preposition. It bleaches its meaning to convey the degree of the action. There is no need to be followed by any constituent.

3.3 Lên ‘go up, come up, rise, ascend/ up, upwards’

Lên has three functions, which are:

3.3.1 Lên can function as a main verb, as in the following example:

(60) Mặt trời đã lên cao.
sun already rise high
NP AUX VP Adv
“The sun already rose highly.”

In (60) lên functions as the verb preceded by an auxiliary verb.

3.3.2 Lên can function as a preposition, as in the following example:

(61) Tôi treo bức tranh lên tường.
I hang clf picture on wall
NP V NP Cvb(P) NP
Agt Pat Loc
“I hung the picture on the wall.”

In (61), lên functions as a preposition followed by the NP tường ‘the wall’. Neither (61) nor (62) can preposed lên, as in the following examples:

(61a) *Lên tường tôi treo bức tranh.
on wall I hang clf picture
Cvb(D) NP NP V NP
Loc Agt Pat

(62) Đất lọ hoa lên trên bàn.
put vase flower on on table
V NP Cvb(D) P NP
Pat Loc

“Put the vase on the table.”

In (62) lên is a postverbal directional coverb, which denotes the direction of the predicate.
3.3.3 *Lên* can also function as a postverbal directional verb, as in the following example:

(63) Các con lớn lên.

pl child grow on

"The children have grown up."

In (63) *lên* is a postverbal directional coverb, which functions as an intransitive preposition, without any following NP.

4. Summary

The words which are called ‘coverbs’ are divided into three functions. The first function is the verb and all of the words mentioned at the beginning of this part can function as the main verb. The criteria used in testing for verbs are:

1. They can be negated by the negator *không* ‘not’.

2. They can be modified by some preceding adverbs: *còn* ‘still’, *cũng* ‘also’, etc.

3. They can be preceded by any auxiliary verb: *sẽ* ‘will’, *đã* ‘already’.

The second function is the prepositional coverb. I would like to claim that the words can function as prepositions provided that they precede the NP. The criteria used to test the verbs mentioned above cannot be used with prepositions, except the negator *không phải* ‘not correct’. It can negate preceding the prepositional phrases (P+NP). The prepositional words are *ót, về, cho, qua, đến, vào, lên, xuống* and *sang*.

The third function is the postverbal directional coverb which has two functions:

1. The postverbal directional coverbs can function as intransitive prepositions which can denote a comparative construction, (39)

2. The postverbal directional verbs can be secondary verbs, bleaching their function and meaning to denote only the direction of the main verb. They can occur sentence-finally or preceding a preposition or a prepositional phrase (41), (42).
There is a certain set of perceptional verbs, i.e. nhìn ra ‘to recognize’ or nghe ra ‘to understand’, which can be negated before ra. Goral calls them ‘serial verbs’, although I agree on this for only certain verbs. But the postverbal directional coverbs following motion verbs cannot be negated, and I do not consider them “serial verbs”.

The following chart is the summary of the coverbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main verb</th>
<th>Prepositional coverbs</th>
<th>Postverbal directional coverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ó</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qua</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>về</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cho</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>đến/tới</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ra</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>lai</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>đi</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sang</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following chart is the summary of Clark’s coverbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main verb</th>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ó</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>sang</td>
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<tr>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>về</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>đi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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REFERENCES


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Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development
Mahidol University at Salaya
Nakhon Pathom 73170