

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
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**A STUDY ON VERBAL RESPONSES TO DIRECTIVES  
IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE CONVERSATION**

**Field Study : ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
Code : 60.22.15**

**A SUMMARY OF  
M.A. THESIS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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feedback from the student when receiving the teacher's directives.

Finally, the awareness of social and cross-cultural communicators facilitates the process of learning, producing language in real communications and interpreting and helps students avoid the so-called culture shock.

### **5.3. LIMITATION**

The research of verbal responses to directives bases on the data collected from literature works published in English and Vietnamese. Therefore, some types of directive responses which have just appeared or which are becoming more popular than before are not shown in the research.

### **5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Study on verbal responses to exclamatives in English and Vietnamese conversations.

## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. RATIONALE**

To keep the communicative process continuing effectively, keep our relationships as we want, avoid or limit face-threatening acts for both the hearer and the speaker, we can respond to each directive in many different ways as in examples: (1.1), (1.2), (1.3) and (1.4).

In order to respond to an invitation or a request, the two men, in example (1) and (4), can directly accept by using "*Certainly. I won't miss it.*" or "*Dạ việc gì cháu cũng làm được ạ.*" However, in example (2), the judge replied to John's request by giving an indirect acceptance: "*Be as quick as you can*" or in example (3), the response of Thuy: "*Mẹ đi chợ về rồi à?*" cannot show us if she accepts or refuses Nam's request.

We can easily recognize that the response in (2) is the old judge's to a boy. They have not got a blood-relation and in this case, the old judge has higher power than the boy. The female's response in (3): "*Mẹ đi chợ về rồi à?*" is softer and more polite than the male's response in (2): "*Be as quick as you can*". Nevertheless, in (4), it is the response of a poor man to a rich woman, they are at the same age and this is the first time they meet each other. The poor man really needs to work to earn money and the woman is the person who gives him the job. Thus, the response in (4) has higher politeness than (2), (3) and the others.

Moreover, as in the above examples, responses to directives are multiform, they can be a short or long utterance, a representative, a question, a directive or even a commissive. A response can be a

refusal or an acceptance, a direct or an indirect reply. Therefore, the addressee's responses depend on many factors such as addressee's knowledge, gender, age, social status and relationships.

From an intercultural aspect, acceptance or refusal of directives is differently produced in different languages, especially in English and Vietnamese conversations.

For these reasons, we recognize that it is necessary to carry out *a study on verbal responses to directives in English and Vietnamese conversations* so as to contribute to a better process of teaching and learning English. Through the study, we would like to gain some insights which highlight both the similarities and the differences of response types and strategies used to respond to directives in English and Vietnamese. The study also attempts to suggest some practical implications to help language learners improve their language skills to get the goal of social communication as well as to make the process of teaching and learning the two languages better.

## **1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.2.1. Aims**

This paper is aimed at exploring similarities as well as differences with a particular reference to the politeness strategies in responsive behavior to directives between English and Vietnamese. On the one hand, this study aims to provide native speakers of the two languages with practical information for consideration and awareness of pragmatic functions of responding acts to directives in order to convey relational and interpersonal meanings. On the other hand, the thesis confirms effects of socio-cultural factors such as age, gender and social status on the way of using languages during their conversational interaction.

strategies that the English and Vietnamese use. The research shows that in verbal communication, the interlocutors cannot only provide the expected answers (*accepting or refusing*) directly or indirectly but also evade the directive or show quibbling to the directive in different contexts.

Investigating and analyzing strategies of directive responses in English and Vietnamese in the syntactic and pragmatic aspects reflect the similarities and differences between the two cultures in terms of socio-culture factors such as gender, age and social status as represented in I.3.

The result of the research is useful for language learners and interpreters in helping them overcome the lack of the syntactic forms and pragmatic functions of directive responses as well as increase their communicative competence.

## **5.2. IMPLICATIONS**

Firstly, for the effective use of language and better communication when responding to directives, teachers should teach their students *the models of the linguistic forms, use (context appropriateness) and meaning* related to strategies of directive responses in oral conversations and put them in *contexts meaningful and variant* for students to practice during learning process.

Secondly, the teacher should provide *effective activities* for practising directive responses so as to make learners aware of the role and relationships, the situation of the talk, the communicative intention they have to achieve, the aspects of politeness, implicature, face want and the force of speech act.

Thirdly, for the class interaction, one of the effective factors developing the interaction with requiring and responding process is

b. Structures of directive responses in Vietnamese are more multiform than them in English.

c. In comparison with English, with address terms and modal particles, using imperatives in Vietnamese to respond to directives expresses formal and informal attitudes. In English literary style, these elements do not appear or appear with pronouns like *you* and *I*.

d. English speakers often use more direct responses than Vietnamese speakers.

e. The Vietnamese use less direct refusals when answering directives of the older people (0.9%) and the higher social status people (5.5%) than English addressees (older 16.9% and higher 13.4%).

f. The Vietnamese who learn English sometimes use the English strategies to respond to directives in Vietnamese conversations.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 5.1. CONCLUSION

The study has given necessary information about the syntactic and pragmatic aspects of directive responses in English and Vietnamese with the effort of helping language users, especially learners to use directive responses efficiently in communication.

Basing on the context and the relationship between participants in the conversations, the addressee chooses one of strategies suitably and effectively to respond to the directive in order to avoid damaging face of both the addresser and addressee. The description and analysis of directive responses obtained has represented various

#### 1.2.2. Objectives

- describe, classify and analyze syntactically and pragmatically different types of directive responses in English and Vietnamese conversations.

- investigate how verbal responses to directives express socio-cultural values by considering the relationship between language and gender, age, and social status of interlocutors in the relationship between directives and responses in the contexts.

- draw out some methodological implications for teaching English to Vietnamese learners, with particular reference to the teaching of the responses to directives in everyday conversations.

#### 1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the various types and strategies of verbal responses to directives in English and Vietnamese?

2. What are the similarities and differences in syntactic and pragmatic aspects between English speakers and Vietnamese speakers in responses to directives?

3. How do socio-cultural factors affect the ways the language users respond to directives?

#### 1.4. DELIMITATION

The study will only pay attention to investigating and describing indirect and direct verbal responses to directives, analyzing the syntactical and pragmatic features and the taxonomy of them in English and Vietnamese conversations and studying effects of age, gender and social status on the ways of verbal responses to directives. Within the limit of the thesis, both non-verbal responses and phonological features are out of the scope of the study.

### **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Pragmatically, the research will be a contribution to the teaching and learning English and Vietnamese, especially, helping language users know how to respond to directives effectively in everyday conversations. In addition, the study will help learners aware of and achieve the beauty as well as polite strategies of using languages to respond to directives in different contexts in order to get the goal of communication. Moreover, the findings of the research will provide learners with English syntactic knowledge and pragmatic experience that will certainly facilitate their English language learning and interpreting English responses to directives into Vietnamese and vice versa.

### **1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

Chapter one deals with the necessity for the research to be proceeded.

Chapter two consults previous definitions of directives and responses to directives and gives a new one as well as a review of theoretical concepts that give the foundations for the study of verbal responses to directives.

Chapter three consists of the research methods, the samples, the data collection, the data analysis, the instruments and the steps.

Chapter four is concerned with the description of different types of verbal responses to directives in their contrastive analysis and their syntactic and pragmatic functions in English and Vietnamese conversations.

Chapter five discusses the implications for developing pragmatic competence in English and Vietnamese learners, for the teaching and learning of English and Vietnamese as foreign

### **4.3. DISCUSSION**

#### **4.3.1. Similarities in Directive Responses Between English and Vietnamese**

a. In English and Vietnamese, addressees use strategies: direct and indirect accepting and refusing to respond to directives.

b. In both languages, when responding to directives directly, addressees use polite markers and negative elements and sentence structures: declaratives, interrogatives and imperatives.

c. Both English and Vietnamese addressees like using more indirect strategies when refusing directives than direct strategies.

d. English and Vietnamese males use more direct responses than females, especially when accepting directives.

e. Disproportion in rate of using strategies of directive responses between males and females in English is not far as shown in table 4.1 and this is the same in Vietnamese as shown in table 4.4.

f. When responding to directives of the people at the younger age, S<sub>2</sub> tends to equally use both direct accepting and direct refusing.

g. As seen in table 4.3 and 4.6, when replying to directives of the lower social status people, English and Vietnamese addressees limit using direct responses and increase using indirect responses.

#### **4.3.2. Differences in Directive Responses Between English and Vietnamese**

a. Different from English, direct directive responses in Vietnamese are utterances expressing addressees' attitude with modality phases. Moreover, Vietnamese addressees represent discriminative attitudes in using directive replying words or relative nouns expressing addressees' position in the relationship with addressers.

**Table 4.5 Occurrences of Responses to Directives of People at Different Ages in Vietnamese**

Directive Responses		AGE					
		Older		Same age		Younger	
		<i>Occ.</i>	%	<i>Occ.</i>	%	<i>Occ.</i>	%
<i>Direct</i>	Accepting	88	26.7	38	9.3	27	13.5
	Refusing	30	9.0	76	18.5	29	14.5
<i>Indirect</i>	Accepting	51	15.5	56	13.7	34	17.0
	Refusing	161	48.8	240	58.5	110	55.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>330</b>	100	<b>410</b>	100	<b>200</b>	100

**4.2.3.3. Social Status Effects**

**Table 4.6 Occurrences of Responses to Directives of People at Different Social Status in Vietnamese**

Directive Responses		SOCIAL STATUS					
		Higher		Equal		Lower	
		<i>Occ.</i>	%	<i>Occ.</i>	%	<i>Occ.</i>	%
<i>Direct</i>	Accepting	47	28.5	97	14.3	9	9.1
	Refusing	9	5.4	108	16.0	18	18.2
<i>Indirect</i>	Accepting	30	18.2	95	14.1	19	19.2
	Refusing	79	47.9	376	55.6	53	53.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>165</b>	100	<b>676</b>	100	<b>99</b>	100

languages as well as for interpreting.

**CHAPTER 2  
LITERATURE REVIEW  
AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

**2.1. PREVIOUS STUDIES RELATED TO THE RESEARCH**

There have been many studies on directives so far. Austin [1, p.151] classified speech acts into five types and he showed that the exercitives are the exercising of powers, rights, or influence. Searle [19] attempted to classify illocutionary acts into five types and made the definition of directives clear. They do not pay much attention to verbal responses to directives in English.

Diep Quang Ban [26, p.119] pointed out means of expressing directives' propositions. He only defines directives and the ways of classifying them, he does not pay much attention to verbal responses to directives in Vietnamese.

Luu Quy Khuong [33, p.64] showed the similarities and differences of invitations, responses to invitations in English and Vietnamese and effects of socio-cultural factors such as gender, social status and age on them.

The studies only focus on classifying directives, a small part of directives, questioning responses, or a type of directive response. However, our study "A Study on Verbal Responses to Directives in English and Vietnamese Conversations" will study aspects they have not studied before such as defining types of responses to directives, analyzing syntactic and pragmatic functions of them, effects of gender, age and social status on them and find similarities and differences of them between English and Vietnamese.

## 2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.2.1. Communication

According to Canale [4, p.4], “*Communication is an exchange and a negotiation about information between at least two individuals by means of verbal and nonverbal language signs, spoken and written modes or visual modes, and generative and understanding processes.*”

#### 2.2.1.1. Communicative Factors

#### 2.2.1.2. Communicative Competence

### 2.2.2. Speech Acts

#### 2.2.2.1. Speech Acts

According to Austin [1, p.94], a speech act consists of three components: the locutionary act, the perlocutionary act and the illocutionary act.

#### 2.2.2.2. Classification of Illocutionary Acts:

Searle [19, p.53] classified illocutionary acts into five classes: *Assertives, Directives, Commissive, Expressives and Declarations.*

#### 2.2.2.3. Presuppositions

Yule [25, p.25] defined that “*a presupposition is something the speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance*”.

### 2.2.3. Conversational Principles

#### 2.2.3.1. Cooperative Principles

Grice [7] defined that “*The cooperative principle is a basic assumption in conversation that each participant will attempt to contribute appropriately at the require time, to the current exchange of talk.*” [3, p.37]. Grice derived a set of four maxims: *Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner.*

ways of expressing refusing: direct refusing and indirect refusing.

#### a. Direct Refusing

Direct refusing is a way of immediately telling that S<sub>2</sub> does not accept S<sub>1</sub>'s directive with some negative elements in the utterance such as *không (thể), thôi, chẳng...*

#### b. Indirect refusing

(a) *Giving reasons or conditions to refuse directives*

(b) *Refusing the directive indirectly by giving a presupposition bringing a contrary meaning to the act suggested in the directive.*

(c) *Giving an utterance getting S<sub>1</sub> to do something*

(d) *Evading S<sub>1</sub>'s directive*

### 4.2.3. Socio-cultural Factors Affecting Directive Responses in Vietnamese

#### 4.2.3.1. Gender Effects

**Table 4.4 Occurrences of Responses to Directives of Males and Females in Vietnamese**

Directive Responses		Gender			
		Male		Female	
		Occurrence	%	Occurrence	%
<i>Direct</i>	Accepting	96	17.1	53	14.0
	Refusing	79	14.1	60	15.9
<i>Indirect</i>	Accepting	101	18.0	43	11.4
	Refusing	286	50.8	222	58.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>562</b>	100	<b>378</b>	100

#### 4.2.3.2. Age Effects

are dependent or subordinated acts providing information to make S<sub>2</sub>'s purpose clear in communication.

#### **4.2.2. Pragmatic Features of Responses to Directives in Vietnamese**

##### **4.2.2.1. Accepting**

###### *a. Direct Accepting*

Vietnamese direct accepting is an utterance given containing words expressing an agreement. It is a clear accepting without any misunderstanding. It can be recognized by polite markers or word repetition expressing a clear acceptance.

###### *b. Indirect Accepting*

In indirect accepting, addressees do not express immediately their intentions, but addressers can realize them based on circumstances. There are many ways to express indirect accepting:

- (a) Giving an utterance determining that the directive is executed.*
- (b) Giving questions relating to the content of the directives and containing a presupposition*
- (c) Eliciting more information to implement the act required*
- (d) Giving an utterance expressing a surprise, a pleasure for the directive*
- (e) Giving an positive evaluation of propositional content of the directive*
- (f) Giving an utterance expressing an apology instead of accepting*
- (g) Expressing S<sub>2</sub>'s ability in implementing S<sub>1</sub>'s directive*
- (h) Representing that S<sub>2</sub>'s opinion is dependent on S<sub>1</sub>'s decision*
- (i) Quibbling*

##### **4.2.2.2. Refusing**

Refusing is a negative response to the directive. There are two

#### **2.2.3.2. Politeness Principles**

Leech [13, p.16] showed that the politeness is closely related to *benefits* or *costs* made for the hearer; therefore, its goal as a principle is to minimize using words impolitely in speaking (*Negative Politeness*) and to maximize using words politely in speaking (*Positive Politeness*).

#### **2.2.3.3. Face**

For each individual to act in a social interaction, there are two aspects of people's want involved with face [3, p.62]: negative face and positive face.

### **2.3. DEFINITION AND VIEW ON TERMS**

*Directives* are those kinds of speech acts that speaker uses to get someone else to do something. They express what the speaker intends. They are commands, orders, requests, suggestions, and so on. They can be positive or negatives. [23, p.54]

*Responses to directives* are those kinds of speech acts that the addressee (S<sub>2</sub>) uses to answer and reply to the kinds of speech acts that the addresser (S<sub>1</sub>) uses to get him/her to do something. Responses to directives can be representatives, declarations, expressive, commissives, questions or directives. A response to a directive can be a direct speech act or an indirect speech act, a refusal, an acceptance, a delayed response, implicit response or topic-changing response. It can be negative or positive.

### **2.4. CLASSIFICATION OF DIRECTIVES AND RESPONSES**

#### **2.4.1. Classification of Directives**

Searle [19, p.15] divided directives into two small types: directives and questions.

- *Directives* are utterances used to try to get the hearer to do

something, including acts of requesting, ordering, forbidding, warning, advising, suggesting, insisting, recommending... and so on.

- *Questions* are utterances used to get the hearer to provide information including acts of asking, inquiring, and so on.

This study focuses on verbal responses to only directives, not questions.

#### **2.4.2. Classification of Responses**

Stubbe [9, p.18] proposes that after the production of an initiation, the  $S_2$  makes a systemic choice of whether, to support or reject it.

Le Dong [30, p.23] mentions different patterns of responding to question.

According to Lakoff [12], responses to questions consist of answers and replies.

Nguyen Thi Chau Ha [8, p.44] dealt with different types of responses to questions.

Luu Quy Khuong [33, p.33] classified responses to verbal invitations into direct and indirect acceptances and refusals.

Basing on the data collected, the study classifies directive responses into direct and indirect accepting and refusing.

### **2.5. SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING VERBAL RESPONSES OF DIRECTIVES**

Apart from the influence produced by the relationship between directives and responses to them,  $S_2$ 's responses to the directives depend much on the circumstance in face-to-face interaction. The choice of styles or strategies to respond to directives is also remarkably impacted by socio-cultural factors such as the age distance, the gender difference and the power relationship between  $S_1$

#### **4.2.1.1. Directive Responses in Forms of Incomplete Sentences**

##### *a. Directive Responses Can Be One Word or One Phrase*

In Vietnamese, one-word directive responses are often single or compound modal adverbs [31, p.698]: *Vâng, Được,...*, interjections: *Áy chết!* or interrogative proforms: *Sao vậy?* [109].

##### *b. Directive Responses Can Be More than One Constituent*

In our collected data, directive responses can be declaratives or questions; however, most of them omit subjects.

##### *c. Directive Responses Can Be One clause*

One-clause directive responses are usually begun with relational words such as "*Nhưng...*" [91, p.97], *Nhưng mà...* expressing the contrary relationship; "*Hay là...*" [77, p.217] suggesting another alternative; "*Thôi thì...*" [109] giving a conclusion... and so on.

#### **4.2.1.2. Directive Responses in Forms of One Sentence**

Basing on our collected data, directive responses in Vietnamese are presented in four types of sentences such as declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives and exclamatives.

##### *a. As Declaratives*

##### *b. As Questions*

##### *c. As Imperatives*

##### *d. As Exclamatives*

#### **4.2.1.3. Directive Responses Consisting of More than One Sentence**

Like English, when an utterance of Vietnamese directive response consists of more than one sentence, one of them expresses the action taking the dominant role as a directive reply, and the others

4.1.3.2. Age Effects

Table 4.2 Occurrences of Responses to Directives of People at Different Ages in English

Directive Responses		AGE					
		Older		Equal		Younger	
		Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%
<i>Direct</i>	Accepting	50	21.1	123	21.8	21	17.9
	Refusing	40	16.9	59	10.5	13	11.2
<i>Indirect</i>	Accepting	46	19.4	128	22.7	21	17.9
	Refusing	101	42.6	254	45.0	62	53.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>237</b>	100	<b>564</b>	100	<b>117</b>	100

4.1.3.3. Social Status Effects

Table 4.3 Occurrences of Responses to Directives of People at Different Social Status in English

Directive Responses		SOCIAL STATUS					
		Higher		Equal		Lower	
		Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%
<i>Direct</i>	Accepting	40	28.4	142	20.2	12	16.2
	Refusing	19	13.4	85	12.1	8	10.8
<i>Indirect</i>	Accepting	24	17.1	148	21.1	23	31.1
	Refusing	58	41.1	328	46.6	31	41.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>141</b>	100	<b>703</b>	100	<b>74</b>	100

4.2. RESPONSES TO DIRECTIVES IN VIETNAMESE

4.2.1. Syntactic Features of Responses to Directives in Vietnamese

In a syntactic aspect, a Vietnamese directive response can consist of an incomplete sentence, one sentence or more than one.

and S<sub>2</sub>. These personal relationships together with the shared knowledge and mutual belief in particular contexts between S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub> affect significantly to the interpretation of directive responses.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.1. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative), ensuring the meaningful interpretation of the data collected in the field. During the studying process, the writer will use statistical method to obtain the frequency of use of each type of responses to directives and use descriptive, analytical, and comparative and contrastive methods to define, to analyze the data in order to find similarities and differences in syntactical and pragmatic features of responses to directives between English and Vietnamese.

3.2. SAMPLING

The data consist of about 1,800 hundred English and Vietnamese conversations containing directives and responses for illustration are extracted from literary works, films, CDs and tapes.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION

- Read English and Vietnamese printed papers, stories and books, see English and Vietnamese films and plays that contain English and Vietnamese directive responses.

- Collect and select English and Vietnamese conversations that contain responses to directives.

- Store and group the quantitative data. For the qualitative data, the contents of conversations will be transcribed and kept in electronic copies in a computer.

### 3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

In this thesis, we first use a descriptive analysis to the data to know how speakers of English and Vietnamese respond to directives. Also, we apply the quantitative and qualitative approaches to settling the data to definite the frequency of using the types of responses to directives and effects of socio-cultural factors on them. After that, we make a parallel analysis in responses to directives between the two languages so as to find out the similarities and especially, differences to implicate in teaching and learning as well as in interpreting the two languages.

### 3.5. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

- Collecting and classifying data: we select and classify them by syntactic and pragmatic functions.

- Describing and classifying responses to directives in English and Vietnamese.

- Investigating and totaling up the frequency of occurrences of types of responses to directives in English and Vietnamese conversations.

- Analyzing data: first, we use a descriptive analysis to analyze responses to directives in English and Vietnamese conversations. Then, we use a contrastive analysis to find main differences and similarities of types of responses to directives between English and Vietnamese languages under effects of age, gender and social status.

- Suggesting some implications for teaching and learning of directives in both English and Vietnamese languages as well as for interpreting.

(e) To give an opposite course or action

(f) A refusing reason accompanied with expressing  $S_2$ 's feelings and attitudes

(g) To suggest another appointment

(h) An indirect refusal is implicated in another proposition

(i) To let  $S_1$  decide when  $S_2$  has no choice

(j) To evade  $S_1$ 's directive

### 4.1.3. Socio-cultural Factors Affecting Directive Responses in English

#### 4.1.3.1. Gender Effects

Table 4.1 Occurrences of Responses to Directives of Males and Females in English

Directive Responses		Gender			
		Male		Female	
		Occurrence	%	Occurrence	%
<i>Direct</i>	Accepting	135	23.1	59	17.8
	Refusing	72	12.3	40	12.0
<i>Indirect</i>	Accepting	127	21.7	68	20.4
	Refusing	251	42.9	166	49.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>585</b>	100	<b>333</b>	100

- (d) *To deny the presupposition of an addresser as an acceptance*
- (e) *To apology by an acceptance*
- (f) *To accept with or without any conditions*
- (g) *Actively agree to execute  $S_1$ 's directive*
- (h) *To make an assumption that  $S_2$  agrees to carry out  $S_1$ 's directive*
- (i) *To quibble*
- (k) *To evaluate something or give no idea*

#### **4.1.2.2. Refusing**

According to Tsui [22, p.165], a refusal is one which is not fully fitting as a negative responding act. We can refuse a directive by either a direct or an indirect way.

##### *a. Direct refusing*

A direct refusal brings some elements that  $S_1$  can immediately realize  $S_2$ 's refusing intention such as “No”, “I can't ...”, or “I'm sorry...” ... and so on. In this case,  $S_2$  keeps his/her negative face, so a direct refusal can be easy to hurt the  $S_1$ . Therefore, to do the FSA when directly refusing a directive,  $S_2$  must give his or her reasons.

##### *b. Indirect refusing*

An indirect refusal is an utterance bringing no elements that can help someone immediately recognize one's refusing intention. In other words, to avoid the risk of face loss for  $S_1$ ,  $S_2$  can slightly change the direction of the conversation by giving an advice, a reason, an assertion, an expressive, a question... and so on.

- (a) *To warn  $S_1$  about  $S_1$ 's directive*
- (b) *To refuse by giving a threat or a deal*
- (c) *To deny  $S_1$ 's presupposition*
- (d) *To refuse by showing dissatisfaction through making questions or reasking  $S_1$ 's question.*

### **3.6. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

First, the study provides knowledge of constructing directive responses in English and Vietnamese and improves the communicative competence for the learners. Secondly, the contrast which is executed base on English and Vietnamese data will point out similarities and differences in strategies of directive responses between the two languages. Finally, the study also has a part in improving the effect of teaching and learning English in Vietnam and teaching Vietnamese for Foriegners.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. RESPONSES TO DIRECTIVES IN ENGLISH**

##### **4.1.1. Syntactic Features of Responses to Directives in English**

###### **4.1.1.1. Directive Responses in Forms of Incomplete Sentences**

The incomplete sentences are usually used in informal responses to directives between friends or people in the same age or the same status power.

###### *a. Directive Responses Consisting of One Word or One Phrase*

When a directive response is a single word, it can be an incomplete declarative with only an interjection “No” [55, p.47], an adverb ‘Certainly’ [41, p.156], or an adjective reduced from a full sentence “I'm sorry”. A one-word question can consist of only a WH-question word “Who?” [70], “Why?”...

###### *b. Directive Responses Consisting of More than One Constituent*

A sentence can be divided into the following main constituents: subject, verb, object and complement. In certain contexts, some of the sentence constituents in a directive response can be omitted, but the directive response still keeps its full meaning when transferred to the addresser.

*c. Directive Responses Consisting of One Clause*

S<sub>2</sub> can use only *But*-clauses as an independent clause to respond to S<sub>1</sub>'s directive in order to present a contrary or a refusal or dependent clauses such as adverbial clauses or a noun clause.

**4.1.1.2. Directive Responses Consisting of One Sentence**

In our collected data, directive responses are in forms of declaratives, questions, and imperatives

*a. As Declaratives*

*b. As Questions*

b.1. Inversion questions:

b.2. Declarative questions:

*c. As Imperatives*

**4.1.1.3. Directive Responses Consisting of More than One Sentence**

When an utterance of directive response consists of more than one sentence that means more than one act is performed, one of them will take the dominant role as a directive reply, and the others are dependent or subordinated acts supporting information to make S<sub>2</sub>'s purpose clear in communication.

**4.1.2. Pragmatic Responses to Directives in English**

There are two ways of responding to directives: direct and indirect. A response to a directive can be an acceptance or a refusal.

**4.1.2.1. Accepting**

Accepting is an act of agreement about doing the thing an addresser gets an addressee to do. [10, p.4] Accepting a directive can be realized through either a direct or an indirect way.

*a. Direct Accepting*

According to Tsui [22], direct accepting of a directive is a kind of fully-fitting response as a positive responding act. It can be expressed by thanking and/or using words or phrases showing firmness, orally executing or committing. This indicates that S<sub>2</sub> is also interested in implementing what S<sub>1</sub> wants him/her to do. Direct accepting can be classified into the following types:

(a) *To satisfy an addresser's goal by orally implementing*

(b) *To approve an addresser's directive completely*

(c) *To commit to carry out the future action*

(d) *To carry out immediately the engagement*

(e) *To show the interesting attitude in executing a future action as required.*

(f) *To accept to execute a future action as required with a condition.*

(g) *To authenticate an addresser's assumption:*

*b. Indirect Accepting*

To avoid accepting cordially a directive, the addressee can accept a directive without saying straight and obviously his/her acceptance or using polite makers. She or he can indirectly accept by other ways such as "*I have no idea*", or "*I'm not busy now*". Sometimes, S<sub>2</sub> gives an expressive, a directive or even a question.

(a) *To give a comment*

(b) *To make a further exchange of the thing required*

(c) *To politely show a priority of choosing the activity for an addresser*