MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
UNIVERSITY OF DANANG

NGÔ THỊ HỒNG LĨNH

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE LIGUISTIC FEATURES OF INTEROGATIVE SENTENCES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE COMMUNICATION

Field Study : THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
Code   :   60.22.15

M.A. THESIS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
(A SUMMARY)

Danang - 2011

The thesis has been completed at the College of Foreign Languages, University of Danang.

Supervisor: **Assoc. Prof. Dr. LƯU QUÝ KHƯƠNG**

Examiner 1: **DƯƠNG BẠCH NHẬT, Ph. D.**

Examiner 2: **HỒ THỊ KIỀU OANH, Ph. D.**

The thesis was defended at the Examining Committee.
Time: 7th January, 2012
Venue: University of Danang

The original of thesis is accessible for the purpose of reference at the College of Foreign Languages Library, and the Information Resources Center, Danang University.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 RATIONALE

In daily conversations, ISs are used to seek new information, to request the answers to specify something or to ask for confirmation that something is true. There are many types ISs that linguists have studied because of its usefulness in communication. ISs are used by many kinds of people in various situations for different purposes, such as the ones for talkig, interview, and so on. Specifically, when using ISs people can communicate with their own ideas and purposes. For example:

(1)   A: What a beautiful dress ! Is it $10 ?
       B: ...   [95, p.64]

In this case B cannot tell the price of the dress. B must not also answer "Yes / No", but B must recogize that A says that the dress is very cheap. B can reply "Oh, it's only $10".

It is necessary that an investigation into ISs in English and Vietnamese communication should be carried out to help learners have a good knowledge and skill in communication. The study can contribute to a better process of teaching and learning English. Carrying out a contrastive study on ISs in English and Vietnamese, we would like to obtain some important insights that highlight both the similarities and the differences of ISs in English and Vietnamese.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 Aims of the Study

The study is aiming to study ISs in English and Vietnamese communication syntactically and pragmatically. It also investigates the frequency of ISs in English and Vietnamese communication.

1.2.2 Objectives of the Study

This study is planned to:

- Describe and analyses different types of Iss in English and in Vietnamese in pragmatic and syntactic aspects.

- Compare and find out the similarities and differences of various ISs to questions as well as different responding strategies in English and Vietnamese.

- Compare and find out the similarities and differences of frequency of pragmatics and syntax of ISs in English and Vietnamese.

- Put forward some useful implications for the teaching and learning of ISs in particular and of English and Vietnamese as a foreign language in general.

1.2.3 Reseach Questions

This study will seek answers to the following questions:

a. What types of English and Vietnamese interrogative sentences are used in communication ?

b. What are the syntactic and pragmatic features of interrogative sentences collected ?

c. What are the similarities and differences of syntactic and pragmatic characteristics of ISs in English and Vietnamese?

d. What are the similarities and differences of frequency of syntactic and pragmatic characteristics of ISs in English and Vietnamese?

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This investigation will be able to bring useful and significant knowledge of ISs in English and Vietnamese to language users and

learners so that they can use them effectively in daily communication in English and Vietnamese. The findings of the study can be the necessary source for suggesting some good implications for the teaching and learning ISs better.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is aimed to investigate the linguistic features of ISs in communication and discourses in terms of syntax and pragmatics. Besides, we are not ambitious to take all the existing styles into consideration, but rather our scope of investigation is limited to a few common and useful discourse types: daily conversations, newspapers, films, and literary work which appear in the spoken form, on TV, in paper or the internet.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 1- Introdution

CHAPTER 2 - Literature Review and Theoretical Background

CHAPTER 3 - Methods and Procedures

CHAPTER 4 - Findings and Discussions

CHAPTER 5 - Conclusions and Implications

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW AND
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 REVIEW OF PRIOR STUDIES RELATED TO THE RESEACH

There have been several studies on questions in English and Vietnamese communication, for example:

Lakoff (1973) proposed two kinds of responses: answers and replies.

Coulthard (1985) proposed eight assumptions of questioning acts and eight corresponding challenges and denials by examining questions and responses on "Othello"

In Vietnamese, Le Dong (1985) proposes different patterns of responses to questions.

Nguyen Thi Hanh (2006) investigated the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic features of rhetorical questions in English and Vietnamese literature.

Tran Thi Kieu Oanh (2007) studied positive responses to disagreement in communication (English versus Vietnamese).

Le Anh Xuan (2000 - 2001) studied positive and negative responding acts in forms of questions.

Nguyen Thi Chau Ha (2002) studied various patterns of verbal responses to information seeking questions in English and Vietnamese.

In brief, those reseaches have provided useful information about ISs. However, there are a lot problems dealing with ISs to be discussed. So far, little discussion about ISs has been offered in contrast to Vietnamese. I hope that this thesis *"An Investigation into*

Interrogative Sentences in English and Vietnamese Communication" will contribute a minor part to yielding fruitful information of this field.

2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1 Speech Act Theory

2.2.1.1 Speecd Act

According to Austin [23, p.157], the speech act is the act that one does in saying something. It is an utterance as a functional unit in communication.

2.2.1.2 Components of Speech Acts

A speech act consists of three components:

b) The Illocutionary Act: is the making of an act in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force as sociated with it (or with its explicit performative paraphrase).

c) The Perlocutionary Act: is the bringing about of effects, both intentional or unintentional, on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effect being special to the circumstance of utterances.

2.2.1.3 Felicity Conditions

The felicity conditions of questioning act are pacified by Searle [76] as follows.

Propositional content Any proposition or propositional function

Preparatory   (a) Sp does not know "the answer" i.e. does not know if the proposition is true, or, in the case of the propositional function, does not

know the information needed to complete the proposition truly.

(b) It is not obvious to both Sp and H that will provide the information at that time without being asked.

Sincerity   Sp wants this information.

Essential   Count as an attempt to elicit this information from H.

2.2.1.4 Classification of Speech Acts

Searle [68] proposes five categories of Speech Acts:

a) Representatives: Commit the speaker to something being the case such as assertions, reports, conclusions, descriptions, and so on.

b) Directives: The speaker gets the hearer to do something such as order, request, challenge, invite, and so on.

c) Commissive : Commit the speaker himself to do some future actions. This category includes promise, refusal, threat, swear, and so on.

d) Expressives : Express feelings and attitudes about a state of affaird such as apology, compliment, thank, and so on.

e) Declaratives: Change the world through utterance. This includes many of those which Austin first considered as perfomatives.

2.2.1.5 Direct and Indirect Speech Acts

Different types of speech acts, which can be distinguished on the basis of structure and a function, are called direct speech acts.

How we do more than one thing at once with our words (i.e. the multiple functions of an utterance) is part of the important thing of indirect speech acts [68]. An indirect speech act is defined as an utterance of another act (a 'literal' act).

2.2.2 Conversational Theory

2.2.2.1 Conversational Structure

- Conversation is the means by which we draw near to one another with sympathy and pleasure it is the basic of our social activity. [34, p.550]

Turn and turn taking

In order to know how a conversation is organized, we should first know what a turn is. A turn, according to Keche and Dustin [21,p.74], is seen as everything one person says before another speaker begins to speak. Sp turn may be short and consist of one or two words.

Adjacency pair

According to Schegloff and Sacks [34, p.112], an adjacency pair is the smallest structural unit in conversation that is a sequence of two adjacent utterances produced by different speakers and related to each other in such a way they form a pair type.

Three - part exchange

According to Suzane and Diana [37, p.98-99], the adjacency pair concept is sometimes unsatisfactory in classroom conversations. A typical classroom exchange is made up of three parts: an initiation by the teacher, a response by the pupil and an evaluating follow-up by the teacher (cited in [33, p.105]). For example:

(13)   A: What's the time please ?
         B: Three o'clock.
         A: Oh, it's late.   [64, p.28]

Sequence

The structure of adjacency pair described so far has been pointed the first pair - part followed by the second - pair part. However, Yule [42, p.118] points out it often happens that a question - answer sequence will be delayed while another question answer sequence intervenes. The sequence will then take the from of Q1 - Q2 - A1 - A2, with the middle pair (Q2 - A2) being called an "Insertion sequence" Schegloff [68] or a "side sequence" (Sefferson, [78]).

(17)   A: Are you going to walk Rufus ?   (Q1)
Insertion B: Did the bloke come about the TV yet ?   (Q2)
Sequence A: No.   (A1)
          B: He'll have to wait then.   (A2)

Preference Sequence

According to Thomas [68] there are numerous acceptable ISs, let us take an example from Tsui

[23, p.118].

(18)   A: What's the time ?
         B: a- Eleven
                 b- Time for coffee
                 c- How should I know ?
                 d- Why do you ask ?

The following table, adapted from Penka [33 ,p.336), indicates short of consistent match between format and content found across a number of adjacency pair second.

Table 1.1 Correlation of Content and Format in Adjacency Pairs

First part	Second part	
	Preferred	**Dispreferred**
Request	Acceptance	Refusal
Offer/Invitation	Acceptance	Refusal
Assessment	Agreement	Disagreement
Question	Expected answer	Unexpected answer or non-answer
Blame	Denial	Admission

[40, p.336]

Edmonds and House [78] propose the tripartite structure consisting of three phrases of a conversation: Opening - Core - Closing.

2.2.2.2 Conversational Principle

Cooperative Principle:

Grice [14, p.37] has mentioned four maxims which develop cooperative behavior.

Maxim of Quantily : Give the right amount of information when you talk.

Maxim of Quality : Be truthful. Make your contribution as informative as required and no more.

Maxim of Relevance : Be relevant.

Maxim of Manner : Be clear and orderly. Avoid obscurity and ambiguity.

Relevance Theory:

Relevance Theory [68, p.59] argues that the human mind will instinctively react to an encoded message. By "relevance", it is meant whatever allows the most new information to be transmitted in that context on the basis of the least amount of effort required to convey it.

Politeness Principle

In everyday conversational interaction, participants aim, to some extent, at how to create good impression and harmony, how to discourage the other but interact with them in a polite manner. The Politeness Principle plays an important language and Politeness is the Theory of Brown and Levinson on Politeness. This Theory focuses mainly on the **concept of Face - Saving** proposed by Goffman [70,p.74].

For each individual to act in a conversational interaction, there are two aspects of people's want involved with face [31, p.62-63]. They are negative face and positive face.

Positive politeness strategies are used by a speaker to show appreciation on the other's actions or needs to make him (her) feel good and feel that his (her) values are shared.

Negative politeness strategies such as apologizing, offering options or asserting a desire to mitigate the inconvenience caused by the FTAs. They protect the Hearer's face by stressing his want to have his freedom of action unhindered.

Off record means that the hearer has to find out what the speaker really meant by inference processes, record strategies leave

both speaker and hearer an act by providing a number of defensible interpretation of a speech act.

2.3 INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

2.3.1 Definition and Classification of ISs

An IS is a type of sentences which is usually a question. It can ask for information, confirmation, denial, assertion or others of a statement. Especially, the uses of an IS are not the same as the uses of a question. It is used in communication to clarify, to explain, to rebuke, to praise or to indicate other meanings the proplems that speakers or questions want to express.

There are seven types of ISs suggested by Tsui [78] Lyons and Quirk [68], as follows:

a. Alternative ISs

(19) *"Is he right or wrong ?"*

[81, p.46]

b. Declarative ISs

(20) *"It's nice ?"*

[77, p.61]

c. Hypothetical ISs

(21) *"If you want a president, what would be a reasonable price for you ?"* [95, p.19]

d. Indirect ISs

(22) *"Tell me some of your reasonable methods?"*.

[97, p.33]

e. Shortened Yes/ No ISs

(23) *"True ?"*

[87, p.5]

f. Wh – ISs

(24) *"What do you mean it's over ?"*

[85, p.57]

g. Yes/ No ISs

(25) *"Are you free ?"*

[95, p.40]

2.3.2 Pragmatic Aspects of ISs

2.3.2.1 Implicature

The communicative implicature is the term which is determined by the "communicative meaning of the word used" as Frice [68, p.412].

2.3.2.2 Speaker's / Writer's Thoughts and Attitudes

Thoughts and attitudes mean speakers/ writers want hearers/readers think, regconize or understand some implicated meanings indicated in the communication. Intention is closely connected to and partly based on thought.

2.3.2.3 Hearer's / Reader's Understanding

The speaker / writer when using ISs may presuppose that the hearer / reader can recognize or understand what is being communicated. According to Brown and Yule [78], there are three aspects of process of getting meaning or understanding.

2.4 SUMMARY

CHAPTER 3
METHODS AND PROCEDURES
3.1 METTHOD OF THE STUDY

3.1.1 Description of Samples

3.1.2. Data Collection and Analysis

3.1.2.1 Data Collection

3.1.2.2 Data Analysis

3.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

- Collecting ISs samples from different sources in English and Vietnamese and sorting out different types according to syntactic and pragmatic functions.

- Doing literature work.

- Analysing the strategies identified from the samples.

- Computing and discussing the syntax, pragmatics and frequency of ISs.

- Analysing and discussing the results.

- Working out the problems and suggesting some implications for teaching and learning English and Vietnamese as foreign languages.

3.3 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The data collection of this study was done with the major sources which are the ISs in English and Vietnamese in novels newspapers, films, short stories. In addition, I analyse the syntactic and pragmatic features of ISs basing on the quantitative and qualitative methods..

3.4 SUMMARY

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
4.1 SYNTACTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ISs IN COMMUNICATION

4.1.1 Syntactic Characteristics of ISs in English

4.1.1.1 Classification of Syntactic Characteristics of ISs in English

a) Alternative ISs

Adj/ N/ NP + or + Adj/ N/ NP

(27) *"Twice a year or a week ?"*

[83, p.32]

Have + S + p.p + O1 + or + O2

(30) *"Have you seen the British or American coins ?"*

[90, p.37]

Be + S + comp + or + comp

(31) *"Is the sun beneficial or the moon ?"*

[91, p.48]

Aux + S + V + O1 + or + O2

(36) Does he have any questions or answers?

[92, p.20]

b) Declarative ISs

S + V + O

(38) *"You have difficulty in writing, reading, speaking or listening?"*

[96, p.71]

S + be + comp

(40) *"Number 2. It's O.K. ?"*

[106, p.74]

c) Hypothetical ISs

If clause + Wh – ISs

(45) *"If I want a slave, what would be a reasonable price for me ?"*

[95, p.9]

d) Indirect ISs

Tell me + wh-word + NP

(47) *"Tell me what it is?"*.

[88, p.64]

e) Shortened Yes/No ISs

(53) *"Number 4 ?"*

[99, p.18]

In a Yes/No ISs, when the object is omitted it becomes a shortened Yes/No ISs. For example:

(56) *"Do you know ?"*

[88, p.7]

f) Wh-ISs

ISs with the wh-word:

Wh-word + be + S + comp

(58) *"So, when are you leaving, Ken ?"*

[102, p.64]

Wh-word + Aux + S + V

(61) *"What do you mean ?"*

[85, p.57]

ISs with How:

How (long/often/many/...) + be + S + ...

(62) *"How many people are there in the party ?"*

[103, p.18]

How (long/often/many/...) + Aux + S + V + ...

(63) *"How long have you learned English ?"*

[96, p.22]

ISs with Which:

Which + N + Aux + S + V + ...

(65) *"Which one did you get ?"*

[91, p.17]

g) Yes-no ISs

Be + S + Comp

(67) *"Are you interested in the film ?"*

[90, p.6]

4.1.1.2 The Frequency of Syntactic Characteristics of ISs in English

69) *"Are you sure ?"*

[85, p.38]

Be / Aux + S + V/ Comp

Table 4.1. The Frequency Syntactic Characteristics of ISs in English

Category	Occurrence	%
Alternative	23/200	11.5
Declarative	20/200	10
Hypothetical	10/200	5
Indirect	15/200	7.5
Sortenced yes - no	27/200	13.5
Wh - ISs	60/200	30
Yes/ No ISs	45/200	22.5

4.1.2 Syntactic Characteristics of ISs in Vietnamese

4.1.2.1 Classification of Syntactic Characteristics of ISs in Vietnamese

a)Total ISs

Question word (Phải chăng) +S + V + comp

Mã tổ hỏi: Trong thùng có chi ?

Nam Tuyến nói: Phải chăng lão già này ngậm miệng lại. Lão ăn nói như vậy à ?

[110, p.41]

S + V + Comp + Question word (à / ư / nhé / đấy ạ / chăng)

(74) ... Anh lắc lư hoài khiến cô chóng mặt, bèn nói "Anh nhặt được ở đâu đấy ư? Mau đem trả cho người ta ?"

[119, p.52]

b) Yes/No ISs

S + có + V + Comp

(76) "Anh có biết người mẫu khỏa thân không ?"

[111, p.4]

S + không + V + Comp

(78) "Anh không hỏi vợ đi dự sinh nhật của đồng nghiệp nào ? Có lẽ là tên Huy kia chăng ?"

[135, p.30]

S + có + V + Comp + hay không

(80) "Nhưng đã mê nhau, nào còn chấp đôi mắt trẻ con ? Khi nào vợ về, có nên hỏi thẳng cô ấy không ?"

4.1.2 Syntactic Characteristics of ISs in Vietnamese

S + không + V + Comp

S + có + V + Comp + hay không

(80) "Nhưng đã mê nhau, nào còn chấp đôi mắt trẻ con ? Khi nào vợ về, có nên hỏi thẳng cô ấy không ?"

[110, p.30]

(78) "Anh không hỏi vợ đi dự sinh nhật của đồng nghiệp nào ? Có lẽ là tên Huy kia chăng ?"

[135, p.30]

S + có + V + Comp+ không

(81) "Tôi hỏi anh: "Anh có biết người mẫu khỏa thân không ?"

[111, p.43]

S + V + Comp + không

(83) "Thầy Độc Nhãn chưng hửng, nhà ông khám bác sĩ còn ít, uống thuốc còn ít hay sao ? Ông tin tôi nói không hả ?"

[119, p.52]

c) Partial ISs

Ai / con gì + V + Comp

(84) "Ai đã gây ra sự cố đó?"

[120, p.42]

S + V + Comp + question word (bao giờ, bao nhiêu, ở đâu...)

(86) "Kiếm được nhiều tiền, gia đình sống ấm no hạnh phúc, thì vầng trăng ở đâu chả là vầng trăng ?"

[121, p.70]

Bao giờ + S + V + Comp

(87) "Bao giờ anh mới nghĩ đến mẹ con em đây. Hạnh nói trong sự tuyệt vọng"

[111, p.53]

d) Open ISs

Combining with the word "đâu"

(89) "Tuy vậy chị có ngủ được đâu"

[120, p.37]

Combining with the word "bao giờ"

[110, p.30]

Combining with the word "(làm) sao"

(93) "Sinh còn đang cuộc nào ngờ

Tỉnh dần dần lại bây giờ biết sao"

[133, p.32]

Combining with the word "nào"

Có + A + nào + X

(97) "Tôi còn đồng nào để anh cho anh mượn đâu?"

[116, p.42]

X + thế nào được

(99) "Anh về một mình à!

Tôi về một mình thế nào được?"

[112, p30]

Combining with the word "gì"

Có + A + gì + X

(101) "- Anh để em nghĩ đã.

- Còn nghĩ cái gì nữa ?" [90, p.46]

Làm gì có + A / chẳng + A + là gì

(102) "Họ làm gì có phóng viên ở Lào Cai".

[92, p.18]

4.1.2.2 The Frequency of Syntactic Characteristics of ISs in Vietnamese

Table 4.2 The Percentage of Syntactic Characteristics of ISs in Vietnamese

Category	Occurrence	%
Total ISs	35/200	17.5
Yes/ No ISs	60/200	30
Partial ISs	25/200	12.5
Open ISs	80/200	40

4.2 PRAGMATIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ISs IN COMMUNICATION

4.2.1 Pragmatic Characteristics of ISs in English

4.2.1.1 Classification of Pragmatic Characteristics of ISs in English

a) Showing Permission/ Agreement

b) Showing Surprise

c) Showing Refusals

d) Showing assertion

e) Showing Complaint

f) Requesting

g) Showing Rebuke or Criticism

h) Giving Advice

i) Showing Disagreement

k) Showing Wishes

4.2.1.2 The Frequencies of Pragmatic Characteristics of ISs in English

Table 4.3 The Frequency of Pragmatic Characteristics of ISs in English

Category	Occurrence	%
Surprise	35/200	17.5
Refusal	32/200	16
Rebuke / Criticism	30/200	15
Disagreement	22/200	11
Permission / Agreement	20/200	10
Complaining	17/200	8.5
Request	16/200	8
Assertion	15/200	7.5
Advice	8/200	4
Wish	5/200	2.5
Invitation	0	0
Greeting	0	0
Total	200	100

4.2.2 Pragmatic Characteristics of ISs in Vietnamese

4.2.2.1 Classification of Pragmatic Characteristics of ISs in Vietnamese

a) Showing Permission

b) Showing Surprise

c) Showing Refusal

d) Showing Assertion

e) Complaining

f) Requesting

g) Showing Rebuke or Criticism

h) Giving Advice

i) Showing Disagreement

k) Showing Praise

l) Inviting

m) Showing Greeing

4.2.2.2 The Frequency of Pragmatic Characteristics of ISs in Vietnamese

Table 4.4 The Frequency of Pragmatic Characteristics of ISs in Vietnamese

Category	Occurrence	%
Surprise	30	15
Refusal	20	10
Rebuke / Criticism	24	12
Disagreement	20	10
Permission / Agreement	18	9
Complaint	37	18.5
Requesting	11	5
Assertion	22	11
Advice	8	4
Wish	0	0
Invitation	6	3
Greeting	3	15
Total	200	100

4.3 DISCUSSIONS

4.3.1 The Similarties and Differences of Syntactic Charateristics of ISs in English and Vietnamese

4.3.2 The Similarities and Differences of Pragmatic Characteristics

4.3.3 The Similarties and Differences of Frequencies

4.4 SUMMARY

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The result of the study is useful for language learners. They can have a good insight to get involved in communication through the constrative analysis in English and Vietnamese. This study also helps learners develop their syntax and pragmatics of ISs.

5.2 IMPLICATIONS

5.2.1 Students' Problems in Using ISs in Communication

Vietnamese students should be trained to develop both pragmatic and syntactic knowledge of understanding, responding and asking question process.

5.2.2 Imlications for Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

5.2.2.1 Implication for the Class Interaction

Students should be instructed potential differences and similarities between the two languages to keep shock, embarrassment, misunderstanding away from both communicating sides..

- Try to "connect with" the speaker.
- Do not misunderstand the idea of communication.
- Give honest, emotional responses as feedback to Sp.
- Try to understand and recognize what the speakers say..

5.2.2.3 Classroom Management and Procedures

Class organization of practice and interaction should be concentrated on the appropriate use of the linguistic form to the

interlocutor's relationship, occasion of use and the speaker's purpose of communication.

5.3. LIMITATION

- The conversatinal ISs in the thesis are focused on open class while those of the close class is ignored.

- The semantic features as well as social and cross-cultural features have not been mentioned and analized.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Semantic features of ISs in English and Vietnamese communication.

- Social and cross-cultural features of ISs in English and Vietnamese communication