

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO SYNTACTIC AND  
PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF TAUTOLOGIES  
IN ENGLISH AND IN VIETNAMESE**

**Field: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. RATIONALE

Language is the most effective means of communication through which we can convey our ideas, our thinking and our desire and which helps to clarify what we mean. To build successful conversation, partners have to be cooperative or follow four conversational or cooperative maxims [14]. They are quantity, quality, relation and manner. According to Grice's maxim of Quantity, cooperative speakers do not produce uninformative utterances.

In English and Vietnamese, we can see speakers flout this maxim by using tautological utterances such as: *A promise is a promise, war is war, boys will be boys, what happens, happens* and *sự thật là sự thật, đi thì đi, đàn bà là đàn bà ...* These tautological utterances provide no new information; one would not expect such constructions to be used in conversation. However, as a number of researchers have noted, tautologies are, informative and uttered quite frequently. During the process of teaching and researching materials through languages, I realize an interesting thing that people use these kinds of tautologies not only for describing their semantics but also for communicating, implicating something else.

This thesis is carried out with an endeavour to help speakers and hearers, especially learners of English, interpret conversational implicature and use successfully this kind of construction in conversation and reading. However, due to the scope of M.A Thesis, we are not able to cover every aspect of tautologies. What we would like to do is to focus on syntax and pragmatics of tautologies in

English and Vietnamese because it seems that all the time our written thesis no study has ever tried to mention to syntax and pragmatics of tautologies in the two languages. We would like to narrow our study on "*An Investigation into Syntactic and Pragmatic Features of Tautologies in English and in Vietnamese*".

### 1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

#### 1.2.1. Aims

Basing on the knowledge of syntax and pragmatics and within the framework of a M.A thesis, the study aims at:

- Focusing on examining the most important issues related to tautologies, understanding the profound using of tautologies of English and Vietnamese;
- Getting Vietnamese learners to acquire the nature of tautologies in English as well as the implicature meaning it conveys;
- Determining the differences and similarities of tautologies in English and Vietnamese;
- Offering some suggestions for learning and teaching English as well as for further studies.

#### 1.2.2. Objectives

The study is expected to:

- Describe the syntactic and pragmatic features of tautologies in English and in Vietnamese.
- Find out the differences and similarities of tautologies in English and Vietnamese.
- Provide deeper theoretical and practical insights into tautologies, especially the pragmatic values, of these two languages.

### 1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This thesis is predicted to help learners and users of English understand and use tautologies properly. That is, the needless repetition seems to be useless, actually not always useless. It is also expected to point out some suggestions that make learners become aware of the usage and implicature meaning of tautologies. As a result of this Thesis, the awareness of tautologies will be improved.

### 1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the aims and objectives raised above, we design three research questions as follow:

1. What are the syntactic features of tautologies in English and in Vietnamese?
2. What are the pragmatic features of tautologies in English and in Vietnamese?
3. What are the differences and similarities of tautologies in English and in Vietnamese?

### 1.5. RESEARCH SCOPE

Like other linguistic phenomena, tautologies can be examined in everyday speech or in various genres. We can find them in spoken and written forms, for examples: films, novels, newspapers, daily communication...

### 1.6. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The thesis consists of five chapters as follows:

**Chapter 1:** Introduction, including the rationale of the study, research scope, research questions, significance of the study and the organization of the study.

**Chapter 2:** Literature reviews, concerning with previous study and theoretical background. The first part will be a review of

previous studies related to the problems under investigation. The second one will be about theoretical background knowledge related to issues under investigation.

#### **Chapter 3:** Methods and Procedure

It mentions the methods and procedure of the study, the aims and objectives, the research design, research methods, data collection and analysis.

#### **Chapter 4:** Findings and Discussions

It represents the study that focuses on contrasting and discussing the syntactic and pragmatic features of tautologies in English and in Vietnamese.

**Chapter 5:** Conclusion and Implications, Limitations and Recommendations

It will be a review of the whole thesis by summarizing the main points discussed throughout the study and major findings of the investigation. It will also point out the limitation of the study and will offer some implications for learning and teaching languages. The chapter will end in some suggestions for further research and reference list of sources for the study.

## **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES**

In “*Logic and Conversation*”, Grice [14] and in “*Pragmatics*”, Levinson [18, p.110-111] say that in conversation, speakers are required to be informative; the asserting of tautologies blatantly violates it. Therefore, if the assumption that the speaker is actually cooperating is to be preserved, some informative inference must be made.

Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr. & Nancy S. McCarrell [12] and George Yule [32] write that the interpretation of nominal tautologies is context-dependent with different meanings attached to the same tautology depending on the conversational context and shared beliefs of the participants.

Anna Wierzbicka [31, p.392-393] states that colloquial tautologies are to some extent language-specific. She also says that English nominal tautologies can be distinguished in terms of their different syntactic patterns and their different nominal classifications.

In “*A Pragmatic Analysis of Tautological Utterances*”, G. L. Ward and J. Hirschberg [29, p.507-520] consider English utterances of these kinds of equatives, disjunctions, conditionals, subordinate conjunctions, headless relatives to be tautological utterances. With the same tautological utterance, when uttered by different speakers, it conveys different meanings in pragmatics.

In “*Linguistic Semantics*”, John Lyons [20, p.149-152] distinguishes tautologies and contradictions. Tautologies are propositions that are necessarily true by virtue of their logical form.

In “*Tiếng Việt Sơ Thảo Chức Năng*”, Cao Xuan Hao [37, p.224-226], in his study on Vietnamese functional grammar, also makes mention of tautologies that have Rheme completely repeating its Theme. These kinds of tautologies convey meaning of confirming obvious things, being concessive and reluctant to do something, accepting challenges...

Nguyen Duc Dan [41, p.132] points out that tautology's structure of ‘A là A’ conveys implicature. The preceded A is concrete it has reference. Meanwhile, the latter A is general and consists of concrete A. This structure flouts the maxim of Quantity.

In “*Đại Cương Ngôn Ngữ Học-Tập 2 – Ngữ Dụng Học*”, Do Huu Chau [38, p.388-389] says that to understand tautologies, listener has to find the deeper meaning that is not in the lexical meaning but in the context and that understanding implicature based on context is very important to maintain an effective conversation.

## **2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.2.1. Linguistic Communication**

Linguistic communication in face-to-face context is not identical to communication by other means. Therefore, in this investigation of tautologies, some background views about the communicative process in face-to-face context of tautologies will be involved.

#### **2.2.1.1. Context in Face-to-face Interaction**

Context of communication can be considered as the environment of the utterance including all that is present or in action at the moment of speaking.

Context of communication can be understood as environment of the utterance including all that is present or in action at the moment of speaking. It may be divided into linguistic and non-linguistic context.

#### **2.2.1.2. Participants in Communication**

Speaker is the person who utters the utterance; addressee is the person who is addressed explicitly or implicitly by the utterance; side-participant is someone who is taking part in the conversation but is not currently being addressed.

#### **2.2.1.3. Communicative Intention**

The communicative intention in communication with tautologies is to get the hearer(s) share the same view, attitude with the speaker or understand the implicature made by the speaker...

#### **2.2.1.4. Spoken Language in Face-to-face Communication**

Spoken language has to be understood immediately. For that reason, spoken language depends much on the situation context in face-to-face interaction: gestures and body language...[15, p.31].

#### **2.2.1.5. Mutual Belief in Communication**

The central point of the mutual contextual belief is reflexive intention (often referred to as R-intention). It is speaker's and addressee's belief and intention about each other's belief and intention, especially the speaker's belief that the hearer recognize this intention of communication in a particular context. Without this, communication cannot happen.

#### **2.2.1.6. Indirectness and Politeness in Communication**

A speech act can be indicated directly or indirectly. Searle states that politeness is the chief motivation for indirectness.

Nguyen Quang [43, p.190-191] suggests twenty factors that influence the use of directness and indirectness in communication:: Age, Gender, Residence, Occupation, Mood, Personality, Topic, Communicative purpose, Communicative environment, Place, Channel, Family relation, Social relation, Time pressure, Status power, Age power, Gender power, Intellectual power, Physical power, Economic power.

#### **2.2.1.7. Components of Speech: The SPEAKING Model**

The components of SPEAKING model consist of setting, participants, ends, act sequences, key, instrumentalities, norms and genres [3, p.290-292].

### **2.2.2. Cooperation and Conversational Implicature**

#### **2.2.2.1. Cooperation**

According to George Yule [32], in conversation, speakers and listeners involved are generally cooperating with each other. In most

circumstances, the assumption of cooperation is so pervasive that it can be stated as a cooperative principle of conversation and elaborated in four sub-principles, called maxims.

Quantity: make your contribution as informative as is required; do not make your contribution more or less informative than is required; Quality: try to make your contribution one that is true: do not say what you believe to be false; do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence; Relation: be relevant; Manner: be perspicuous: avoid obscurity of expression; avoid ambiguity; be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity); be orderly.

Tautological utterances may make no semantic contribution to a discourse; they are by no means meaningless. That is, in terms of a truth-conditional semantics, tautologies can convey to hearers nothing that is not necessary true; thus, they are uninformative. Using such utterances, speakers violate the Maxim of Quantity and convey implicature.

#### **2.2.2.2. Conversational Implicature**

The basic assumption in conversation is that, unless otherwise indicated, the participants are adhering to the cooperative principle and the maxims.

### **2.2.3. Speech Act Theory**

#### **2.2.3.1. Speech Act**

According to George Yule [32, p.134], "*a speech act is an action performed by the use of an utterance to communicate*".

Searle's Speech act consists of two parts: Propositional content and Illocutionary force.

Austin [4] states that speech act refers to utterance and the total situation in which the utterance is issued. Austin claims that an utterance consists of three types of acts: locutionary act, illocutionary act and performative act.

### 2.2.3.2. *Speech Act Classification*

Five types of speech act in Austin's system are: Declarations, Representatives (assertives), Expressives, Directives, Commisives.

There is a relationship between speech act and tautologies. Of course, each speech act consists of both illocutionary and perlocutionary act. However, perlocutionary act is more suitable for tautologies than illocutionary one.

### 2.2.4. **Tautologies**

#### 2.2.4.1. *Definition of Tautology*

We suggest a working definition of tautology 'Tautology is needless, redundant and uninformative. They are logical statements that are true by necessity or by virtue of its logical form. However, when used purposely, tautology creates force and effect in communication.'

#### 2.2.4.2. *Kinds of Tautologies*

1- Tautological expressions:

Frozen ice – ice is always frozen; East Timor means 'East East'.

2- Sentential tautologies:

Sentential tautologies can be analysed as violations of a maxim of quantity.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD AND PROCEDURE

#### 3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHOD

This research is designed to meet the aims and objectives of the study mentioned in Chapter 1. In order to achieve this purpose, a great number of tautologies in the two languages have been collected and treated differently at various time.

### 3.2. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The research procedures can be described as follow: Identifying and choosing the research topic by reviewing the previous studies thoroughly such as books, thesis and research papers relating to the topic in English and in Vietnamese; Observing and finding out the materials related to tautologies on books, films, newspapers, novels...; Underlying and collecting the tautologies on the basis of read-materials; Describing the syntactic and pragmatic features of the tautologies; Contrasting syntactic features of the tautologies and finding out the similarities and differences in English and in Vietnamese; Contrasting pragmatic features of using tautologies in contexts of both languages; Generalizing and giving implications in using tautologies in translating, teaching, communicating...

### 3.3. DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

After reading newspapers, research papers, novels and watching films, TV shows..., we underline, analyze, and then collect randomly some 500 discourses in English and in Vietnamese. Then, we classify and choose the suitable ones to come to the required number of 400 tautologies (200 in English and the same number in Vietnamese) to ensure the objectivity of using tautologies. After that, we contrast the data to find the similarities and differences of tautologies between English and Vietnamese.

### 3.4. INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

In the framework of descriptive research, observation and investigation are methods of collecting data. By observing and investigating the occurrence of tautologies in different contexts in films, novels, newspapers..., we collect, synthesize, analyze and classify them. Then we describe their linguistic features and find out how they work in different contexts in terms of pragmatic aspects.

Other supporting instruments such as checklists, statistics, and tables are used to show the frequency of occurrence of tautologies.

### 3.5. DATA COLLECTION

A corpus of English samples and Vietnamese samples is set up. The English samples are collected randomly from TV Channels: HBO, STARMOVIES, CINEMAX, some books, novels, newspapers, and websites on internet... The Vietnamese samples are picked out mainly from TV channels: VCTV, VTV1, some novels, short stories, newspapers, books...

**Table 3.1: The collected data in English**

Corpora	Tautologies analysed	
	English	Vietnamese
1. Newspapers	17	32
2. Novels, short stories	52	75
3. Books, research papers	50	16
4. Films, TV shows	81	77
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>

### 3.6. SUMMARY

This chapter presents a sketch of research method and procedure of the study. Firstly, the research design and research method are introduced. Secondly, research procedures are mentioned. Then, the paper gives description of the examples and instruments for data collection. Finally, the data collection used in the research is described.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter is going to describe the syntactic representation and the pragmatic features involved in the use of tautologies in

communication in English and in Vietnamese. Furthermore, the chapter mentions the similarities and differences in syntactic and pragmatic features of tautologies in English and Vietnamese.

### 4.1. THE SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF TAUTOLOGIES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

#### 4.1.1. The syntactic Features of Tautologies in English

##### 4.1.1.1. Equatives (Nominal Tautologies)

##### a. A be A

[a.1] **A be A:** A is a singular concrete noun (known as N): **(art)N is (art)N:** 'A toothbrush is a toothbrush.' [78]

[a.2] **A be A:** A is a plural concrete noun (known as Ns): **Ns are Ns.** Bachelors are bachelors. [22, p.108]

[a.3] **A be A:** A is an abstract noun (known as N): **N is N or Ns are Ns** A promise is a promise. [53]

[a.4] **A be A:** A is a noun phrase (known as NP): **NP is NP.** A brother's love is a brother's love'. [60]

[a.5] **A be A:** A is Adjective (known as ADJ): **ADJ is ADJ.** Late is late. [92]

[a.6] **A be A:** A is a pronoun: **Pr am/is/are Pr:** You're you. [65]

##### b. A be A (and) B be B

This structure of tautologies is not merely tautologies but double tautologies or coordinated tautologies (Meibauer, 2008).

Men are men and women are women. [97]

##### c. A will be A

Children will be children. [54]

##### 4.1.1.2. Headless Relatives

The structures of headless relatives can vary. Some common structures are: *Whatever p, p; what p, p; p what p; p who p; p where p.*

What's past is past. [105]

#### 4.1.1.3. Subordinate Conjunctions

Subordinate conjunctions consist of these formulas: *When p, p; p because p; p as p.*

When I get there I get there. [86]

I am not married because I am not married. [76]

4.1.1.4. **Conditionals:** Conditional tautology has the structure: *If p, p.*

If we lose, we lose. [104]

#### 4.1.1.5. Summary

The syntactic features of tautologies in English consist of four structures of equatives, headless relatives, subordinate conjunctions and conditionals.

**Table 4.2: Syntactic occurrence of tautologies in English**

Types/ Syntax	Occurrence	Percentage
1. Equatives	126	63%
2. Headless Relatives	35	17.5%
3. Subordinate	23	11.5%
4. Conditionals	16	8.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 4.1.2. The Syntactic Features of Tautologies in Vietnamese

#### 4.1.2.1. Equatives (Nominal Tautologies)

##### a. A là A

[1] A là A: A is a noun (known as N): N là N.

Pháp luật là pháp luật. [111, p.41]

[2] A là A: A is a noun phrase (known as NP): NP là NP.

Một bà già là một bà già... [114, p. 403]

[3] A là A: A is a pronoun: Pr là Pr: Tôi là tôi. [155]

**b. A không còn là A:** Cây xương rồng không còn là cây xương rồng. [135]

**c. A thì A:** Bỏ thì bỏ! [118, p.34]

**d. A là A, B là B:** Chủ tịch là chủ tịch, bí thư là bí thư. [131]

#### 4.1.2.2. Subordinate Conjunctions

The structure comforting the tautologies of subordinate conjunctions as follow: Khi nào/chừng nào p thì p; P bởi vì p.

Chừng nào nó về thì nó về. [129]

#### 4.1.2.3. Headless Relatives

There are different structures kinds of headless relatives in Vietnamese. Some common structures are: *cái gì/ cái nào p thì/ là p; ai p thì p; p ở đâu/ đâu thì p.*

Cái nào nói chơi là nói chơi, cái nào nói thiệt là nói thiệt. [129]

#### 4.1.2.4. Summary

The syntactic features of tautologies in Vietnamese consist of three structures of equatives, subordinate conjunctions and headless relatives.

**Table 4.4: Syntactic occurrence of tautologies in Vietnamese**

Types/ Syntax	Occurrence	Percentage
1. Equatives	166	83.0%
2. Headless Relatives	23	11.5%
3. Subordinate conjunctions	11	5.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 4.1.3. The Similarities and Differences in Syntactic Features of Tautologies in English and Vietnamese

- In equatives, there are three structures in English: *A be A; A be A (and) B be B; A will be A.* Meanwhile, there are four in Vietnamese: *A là A; A là A (và) B là B; A thì A; A không là A.* The structure *A will be A* does not appear in Vietnamese and in English, the structures *A thì A; A không là A* do not exist. In conditionals, there is one structure in English: *If p, p* but none in Vietnamese. In

subordinate conjunctions, English has two structures: *when p, p* and *p because p*. It has the same number in Vietnamese: *khi nào/ chừng nào p thì p* and *p bởi vì p*. In headless relatives, there are five structures in English: *whatever p, p*; *what p, p, p what p*; *p who p*; *p where p*. Meanwhile, there are three in Vietnamese: *cái gì/ cái nào p thì/ là p*; *Ai p thì p*; *p ở đâu/ đâu thì p*.

- Another difference in grammar is that 'to be' in tautological structures in English is an auxiliary verb (am/is/are). Meanwhile, 'thì, là' in Vietnamese are not verbs, they are connectors.

## 4.2. THE PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF TAUTOLOGIES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

### 4.2.1. The Pragmatic Features of Tautologies in English

#### 4.2.1.1. Showing Acceptance

A doctor to the patient: It doesn't matter if your illness is severe or mild – **a loss is a loss**. [89]

'A loss' in the example above means the illness which affects health no matter how severe or mild it is. When you are ill, the loss of your health happens and you have to accept this.

#### 4.2.1.2. Highlighting Nature

'Hardly anybody orders it. In a small town, people don't know the difference between vodkas. **Vodka is vodka**'. [29]

To clients, who come to the restaurant, they rarely order vodka just because they do not like vodka, not for its quality. To them all vodka is the same.

#### 4.2.1.3. Emphasizing the Idea

Natalie: By "other sororities", do you happen to mean Phi Iota Mu?

Teacher: I really don't think it matters who complained. Natalie, **rules are rules**. [56]

The teacher's idea in using '*rules are rules*' is that he must keep the rules and he doesn't want to argue with Natalie any further.

#### 4.2.1.4. Showing Obligation

Piper and Dodge are prisoners. They have a deal of sharing million dollars if escaping successfully. When they are free, Dodge reminds the deal to Piper.

Dodge: Come on, man. **A deal's a deal**. [69]

Because of having a deal of sharing the money, as Piper ignores, Dodge says '*a deal is a deal*' in (83) with the meaning of asking Piper to realize the deal of sharing the money.

#### 4.2.1.5. Showing Distinctness of Categories

In a cooking show on T.V:

Cook: I knew you'd like it. It's duck cacciatore, actually.

Lady: Oh no, sorry.

Cook: Yeah, **chicken is chicken and duck is duck**. Glad you like it. [62]

The lady can't differ the food is chicken cacciatore or duck cacciatore, so the cook reminds her that there are differences between duck and chicken.

#### 4.2.1.6. Showing Tolerance for the Nature

Woman B: Oh, I don't know, you must let them off the leash a bit now and then and remember that **boys will be boys**. [31]

The statement *boys will be boys*, at the first glance, seems to be nonsensical and gives no new information. It's hard to change the natures of boys. So, be tolerant and accept them.

#### 4.2.1.7. Summary

As far as we can see, we have analyzed six pragmatic features of tautologies in English: (1) showing acceptance, (2) highlighting

nature, (3) emphasizing the idea, (4) showing obligation, (5) showing distinctness of categories and (6) showing tolerance for the nature.

**Table 4.12: The frequency of tautological syntax and pragmatic features in English**

	Equatives		Headless relatives		Subordinate conjunctions		Conditionals		Total	
	Occ	%	Occ	%	Occ	%	Occ	%	Occ	%
Showing acceptance	+		+		-		+			
	28	22.2	19	54.3	0	0.0	16	100.0	63	31.5
Highlighting nature	+		+		-		-			
	33	26.2	16	45.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	49	24.5
Emphasizing the idea	+		-		+		-			
	17	13.5	0	0.0	23	100.0	0	0.0	40	20.0
Showing obligation	+		-		-		-			
	18	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	18	9.0
Showing distinctness of categories	+		-		-		-			
	16	12.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	8.0
Showing tolerance for the nature	+		-		-		-			
	14	11.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	7.0

#### 4.2.2. The Pragmatic Features of Tautologies in Vietnamese

##### 4.2.2.1. Highlighting Nature

Mrs Mua: Vâng, cảm ơn các vị, nhưng **công việc là công việc**.  
Cái biên bản chúng ta đã ký sẽ phải thực hiện. [124]

Mua's saying 'công việc là công việc' implies 'this is a very serious and important agreement that no one can cancel'.

##### 4.2.2.2. Emphasizing the Idea

Mợ đừng nói nữa, điếc tai tôi lắm, tôi đã bảo **không hề gì là không hề gì**. [117, p.140]

The man utters 'không hề gì là không hề gì' to confirm that he is sure there is nothing to happen to him.

##### 4.2.2.3. Showing Agreement or Acceptance

Soldier: Ô, leo bẻ vài trái dừa mày! Bẻ xuống tụi mình chặt uống chơi!

Út: **Bẻ thì bẻ**. [111, p.99]

The soldier suggests Ut to climb and pick some coconuts. Ut agrees by saying 'Bẻ thì bẻ'.

##### 4.2.2.4. Showing Obligation

Nghị Lại: Tôi không hiểu sao pháp luật lại quá bất công thế. Tôi đã làm nghị viên, rất trung thành với hai Chính phủ, không lẽ tôi lại dám làm điều phi pháp.

Tây đoàn: Phải, điều đó tôi hiểu và không ngờ gì ông cả, nhưng **pháp luật là pháp luật**. [112, p.41]

In the example, the custom officer saying to Nghị Lai 'pháp luật là pháp luật' implies 'the law is clear, you have obligation to follow. No one can break the law'.

##### 4.2.2.5. Showing Distinctness of Categories

Chủ tịch: Có lẽ cậu ta tưởng chỉ cần báo cáo với tôi là được rồi.

Bí thư: **Chủ tịch là chủ tịch, bí thư là bí thư.** Tìm địa điểm sơ tán cho tỉnh ủy thì cũng phải báo cáo cho Bí thư được biết chứ. [131]

The party secretary says '*Chủ tịch là chủ tịch, bí thư là bí thư*' he means that one should distinct '*chủ tịch*' and '*bí thư*'.

#### 4.2.2.6. Showing Urge

Mrs Ly to her husband 'Lần chân mãi. **Đi thì đi** dứt đi. Hay là để tôi cầm tay dẫn đi nữa. Tháng sau tôi không còn ở nhà đâu!'

Mrs Ly utters '*đi thì đi*' in (98) as a statement of urging.

#### 4.2.2.7 Summary

In Vietnamese, there are five pragmatic features of tautologies. They are: (1) highlighting nature, (2) emphasizing the idea, (3) showing agreement/ acceptance, (4) showing obligation, (5) showing distinctness of categories and (6) showing urge.

### 4.2.3. The Similarities and Differences in the Pragmatic Features of Tautologies in English and Vietnamese

**Table 4.22: The similarities in pragmatic features of tautologies in English and Vietnamese**

Pragmatic features	English tautological types	Vietnamese tautological types
(1) Showing acceptance/ agreement	- Equatives - Conditionals	Equatives
(2) Emphasizing the idea	- Equatives - Subordinate conjunctions	- Equatives - Headless relatives
(3) Highlighting nature	- Equatives - Headless relatives	- Equatives - Headless relatives
(4) Showing obligation	Equatives	Equatives
(5) Showing distinctness of categories	Double equatives	Double equatives

**Table 4.23: The Differences in Pragmatic Features of Tautologies in English and Vietnamese**

Pragmatic features	English tautological types	Vietnamese tautological types
(1) Showing tolerance for the nature	Equatives	
(2) Showing urge		Equatives

#### 4.2.4. Summary

The syntactic features of tautologies in English and Vietnamese are relatively similar including equatives, subordinate conjunctions, headless relatives. One difference of syntactic features of tautologies in English and Vietnamese is that conditional tautology is used in English but it is hardly seen in Vietnamese.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The last chapter of our study reviews the development of this study and some of the marked similarities and differences of tautologies in English and in Vietnamese in terms of syntactic and pragmatic features. Then it discusses a number of essential issues concerning teaching and learning English as a foreign language. Following these implications are the limitations of the study. At the end of this chapter, several suggestions for further research are put forward.

#### 5.1. CONCLUSIONS

##### 5.1.1. Summary of the Development of the Study

As we stated in previous chapters, this thesis involves the contrastive study of syntactic and pragmatic features of tautologies in English and Vietnamese. In order to carry out the work effectively, we have planed out the study in details. We have read numerous books,

many theoretical materials and a number of M.A theses relating to the topic under investigation in both English and in Vietnamese.

Over four hundred examples have been collected from books, novels, films, newspapers...The data have been classified according to types, classes and groups to be described and analyzed. Tautologies in both English and Vietnamese have been clarified in term of syntax and pragmatics. Similarities and differences have been shown.

### 5.1.2. Summary of the Findings

It is possible to conclude from the findings of this thesis that English and Vietnamese speakers employ quite a large number of tautologies in communication when they want to mention the matters indirectly or emphasize the idea...Using tautologies in communication makes the conversation more flexible and interesting.

Based on theories of Wierbicka [31], Meibauer [23], Ward & Hirschberg [29] about the structures of tautologies in English and Nguyen Duc Dan [41, p.56, 132], Cao Xuan Hao [37, p. 224-226] about the structures of tautologies in Vietnamese, we found out that tautologies can be presented under the forms of equatives, disjunctions, conditionals, subordinate conjunctions and headless relatives.

Based on the theories of Yule [32] and Grice [14] about cooperation and implicature, Searle [27] and Austin [4] about speech act, of Nguyen Duc Dan [41], Cao Xuan Hao [37] about tautologies in Vietnamese, we recognized that tautological expressions can be used to express seven pragmatic values according to concrete communicative situations.

In general, the summary of the findings in our study can be reviewed in the comparison of similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese tautologies in terms of syntax and pragmatics.

#### 5.1.2.1. Similarities

Basically, tautologies in English and Vietnamese share many characteristics in common:

Firstly, in syntax, there are totally four types in both English and Vietnamese but there are three types in common: equatives, subordinate conjunctions and headless relatives. The patterns of tautologies are relatively similar. Most of parts of speech used in equatives in both languages are nouns, noun phrases. In addition, tautologies of equatives occur with the highest number in both languages.

Secondly, in English and Vietnamese, tautologies are used with the same purposes of showing obligation, showing acceptance/agreement, emphasizing the idea, highlighting nature and showing distinctness of categories.

#### 5.1.2.2. Differences

Syntactically, in equatives, the structure *A will be A* (*A sẽ là A*) does not appear in Vietnamese. In English, the structures *A thì A* (*A be A, especially with A is a verb or an adverb*), *A không là A* (*A be not A*) do not exist. In conditionals, there is a structure in English: *If p, p* (*Nếu p, p*) but none in Vietnamese.

Pragmatically, English employs a lot of tautologies to show tolerance for the nature of someone or something. Meanwhile, in Vietnamese, among all of the tautologies investigated we do not find any Vietnamese tautologies denoting tolerance for the nature. In Vietnamese, people use tautologies to show urge but in English there is no tautology showing urge.

In short, although English and Vietnamese share a lot of similarities and differences in terms of syntactic and pragmatic features, tautological functions are almost analogous in the two languages. That is to say, using tautologies in writing or speaking creates a strong impression on the readers and the listeners. It is tautology that makes conversations and writings more effective and interesting. Being aware of this matter, we suggest some implications in the process of learning and teaching English and Vietnamese.

## 5.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

The contrastive analysis of tautologies in English and Vietnamese may be of some use for teachers and learners in that they can orient themselves in language teaching and learning. The similarities help learners acquire the target language more easily. The differences are also significant. Teachers should focus on the differences to help learners to use the language naturally and more effectively.

Through this thesis, we can draw out some implications as follow:

Firstly, as the first glance, tautology is considered as uninformative or a fault of style but as expressed above, tautology is really informative and creates implication.

Secondly, to work out the meanings of tautologies, contexts of communication are very important. One tautological utterance but in different contexts can create different meanings. That is to say, to master the implication of tautologies, contexts are what teachers and learners must depend on. Therefore, with the aim of helping learners of English to write as well as to communicate effectively, teacher should draw their attention to emphatic topics of everyday life, introduce suitable tautologies used in specific context and create opportunities for learners to practise using them in proper way.

Thirdly, shared knowledge is also needed in understanding tautologies in communicating and reading. Therefore, in order to understand and to use tautologies correctly, learners should equip themselves with a wide knowledge of cultural, political, religious and social aspects. So, translating and explaining are suitable ways of teachers to make learners understand more tautologies. However, not all of English tautologies can be translated directly into Vietnamese tautologies and vice versa; therefore, clear explaining and giving equivalence (if possible) of tautologies in the two languages are needed.

Finally, this study offers teachers and learners of English a general view on tautologies in both English and Vietnamese. It will be a good reference for them in understanding tautologies systematically. It will help them recognize tautologies in everyday speech in order to understand the speaker's intention, hence to improve communicative competence.

## 5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although we have tried our best to study and present the thesis, shortcomings are unavoidable.

- In Vietnamese, tautology in linguistics is a new matter and so far, there are no papers written systematically on this subject. Therefore, our study is maybe not enough and can not cover all aspects relating to tautologies.

- Owing to a limitation of time and sources of materials relating to the problem under investigation, mistakes and shortcomings are inevitable.

## 5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Obviously, we are just on the way to complete the so-called analysis of English tautological features and Vietnamese tautological features. We try our best to point out the similarities and differences between English tautological features and Vietnamese tautological features in terms of syntax and pragmatics. Although our ambition for further research is great, due to the limitation of time, the lack of references as well as materials, there are some other aspects to be further investigated. We strongly suggest:

1. Investigating lexical tautologies in newspapers in English and in Vietnamese.
2. Investigating tautologies in everyday speech.

We hope to receive constructive and insightful comments from teachers, friends and those who are interested in the field.