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**CONDITIONAL SPEECH ACTS  
IN ENGLISH AND 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

In everyday conversation, we communicate with each other by using a variety of speech acts. Very often we use representative speech act in form of conditional sentences to express a logical relation between the condition and the conclusion or the antecedent/premise and the consequence. However, in many cases, we employ conditional sentences not to express a descriptive message about the logical relation between the real or unreal condition and the judgement about the likelihood of the possibility of a state-of-affair. In fact, the condition described in these cases is found to have a specific function other than a description of the condition for a normal conditional sentence. Rather, the condition here is assumed to function as a modification of a speech act like representative, directive or question. This linguistic fact raise a question about a kind of conditional sentence or speech act concerning their linguistic features.

Being a young teacher of English at a college in Danang city, I always wonder how to inspire my students in learning English to get good result after a term. After a long time I realize that good knowledge and high score is not enough. We need to have good language behavior whenever we contact the foreigners and how can we use language to achieve our purpose? It depends on our ability in communication. In this respect, I decide to do my research on the linguistic features of conditionals in communication. We will support some special view of the phenomenon of conditionality. The main object will be simply to explain the functioning of conditionality in

speech act domain with the topic: “Conditional Speech Acts in English and Vietnamese”

The findings are expected to find out the similarities and differences of conditional speech acts so that it can help the learners get success in communication and help us understand and have good manipulative skills of conversations in communication.

#### 1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To identify and describe the kinds of conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese.

- To compare these kinds of conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese to find out the similarities as well as differences in this kind of condition between two languages.

- To suggest some implications for Vietnamese learners of English

#### 1.3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on conditional speech acts and their linguistic feature in English and find out more than 180 instances of conditional speech acts from English and Vietnamese short stories, novels, and newspapers, magazines. And this paper focuses on analyzing conditional speech acts in some special view of the phenomenon of conditionality.

#### 1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the linguistic features of conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese?

2. What are the similarities and differences in conditional speech acts between English and Vietnamese?

3. What are the effective solutions to use conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese in communication?

## 1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 “Introduction”

Chapter 2 “Literature Review”

Chapter 3 “Method and Procedures”

Chapter 4 “Findings and Discussions”

Chapter 5 “Conclusions and Implications”

### Chapter 2

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

##### 2.1. PREVIOUS STUDIES

Conditional sentences have been carried out from various theoretical aspects

Yan (2010) examined conditionals from truth-functionality, non-truth-functionality and suppositional theories and semantically in these three domains

Sweester (1990) did not describe in length theory of conditionals, but she supported some particular view of the phenomenon of conditionality, and elucidated the functioning of conditionality in the content, epistemic, and speech act domains.

Searle (1969) states that there exist implicit functioning of speech-act conditionals. Whereas Kitis (1999) studied conditional constructions as rhetorical construction used in discourse.

According to Eun-Ju Noh (2000) in the light of relevance theory, a certain range of indicative conditionals (as opposed to subjunctive conditionals) have been examined. And Vander Auwera (1986) has showed the relation of conditionals in “Conditionals and Speech Act”.

As far as in the Vietnamese language is concerned, conditional speech acts are very popular in short stories, magazines, etc. For example, Nguyen Khanh Ha (2008) mentioned prototype theory and prototype conditionals in Vietnamese. Le Thi Minh Hang (2009) examined the causal relation and conditionals. She has explained and demonstrated all kinds of conditionals. Vu Thi Nga has analyzed conditional hedges in Vietnamese communication utterances. She examined a lot of different communicative situations especially in Vietnamese literature.

##### 2.2.1. Conditional and speech acts

###### 2.2.1.1. *The Notions of Conditional sentences*

In general, conditional sentences are considered as a popular connective used in grammatical category like other forms: preposition, conjunction, etc.

According to *Wikipedia*, conditional sentences are categorized into two fields:

- In grammar, conditional sentences are sentences discussing factual implications or hypothetical situations and their consequences
- Syntactically, the condition is the subordinate clause, and the consequence is the main clause.

Conditional Sentences are also known as Conditional Clauses or If Clauses.

In the language magazines Le Thi Minh Hang has explained clearly the causal relation and conditions. It is a causal relation and its meaning: “Nếu...thì...” or “Vì....nên...” It also helps us to distinguish conditional sentences and conditional speech acts.

### 2.2.1.2. *The Notions of speech act*

A speech act is an act that a speaker performs when making an utterance, including the following:

A general act (illocutionary act) that a speaker performs, analyzable as including: the uttering of words (utterance acts), making reference and predicating (propositional acts), and a particular intention in making the utterance (illocutionary force)

Searle (1975) set up the following classification of illocutionary speech acts: **assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, declarations**

Crystal (2002) quoting J.R. Searle, gives five such categories: Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives, Declarations

### 2.2.1.3. *The Notions of conditional speech acts*

Michele de Oliveira (1999- 2000), speech act conditionals are utterances which have the apparent structure of conditionals but function semantically as speech acts (e.g., invitations, suggestions) [19]

### 2.2.2. **Speech-act conditionals**

The truth of the antecedent is a sufficient condition for the performance of a speech-act involving the consequent

### 2.2.3. **Speech Acts and Truth-Conditional Meaning**

Manfred Krifka Humboldt-Universität, Berlin and Zentrum für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft, Berlin (Truth-conditional meaning and speech acts, classical view (cf. Stenius (1967), Searle (1969): Illocutionary Force and Truth Conditions

The underlying algebraic structure is Boolean (conjunction, disjunction, negation as basic operations, lifted from truth values to other domains – cf. Keenan & Faltz (1985)).

### 2.2.4. **Implicature and speech act theory**

Grice has proposed the theory of "implicature" in a series of lectures at Harvard in 1967. He recognized that the meaning of communication is dependent not simply on what is said, but also on what is implicated (implied). He also distinguished between the inferences that one could possibly draw from an utterance and the inferences .

### 2.3. **SUMMARY**

This chapter has presented the review of the literature with previous studies on the topic of conditional sentences in general and conditional speech act in particular. Also, such key concepts as speech act theory, conversational implicature have been dealt with. These are treated as preliminary information to carry out the contrastive analysis of conditional speech acts.

## Chapter 3

### METHOD AND PROCEDURES

#### 3.1. **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The aim of this investigation is to examine and describe linguistic features of conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese. This research was carried out through a descriptive and qualitative approach. This method was used to identify similarities and differences in the ways of using conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese. Empirical evidence was used to justify the result from the analysis.

## 3.2. STUDY PROCEDURES

### 3.2.1. Data Collection

The relevant examples were collected and then they were listed in the “References” section and classified according to kinds of conditional speech acts

### 3.2.2. Data Analysis

- Conditional speech acts in English were analyzed and compared with those in Vietnamese

- The study suggests some effective solutions for Vietnamese learners of English in using conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese in communication.

## Chapter 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1. THE LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF CONDITIONAL SPEECH ACTS IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

This chapter presents the linguistic features of conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese and the similarities and differences of these linguistic units in terms of syntax and pragmatics.

##### 4.1.1. The Syntactic Constructions of CSA

A normal conditional sentence typically consists of two componential parts in terms of syntax: the If-clause and the statement. In the corpus of my study, conditional speech acts were found to occur with the statement in form of different structures of sentence such as declarative, interrogative and imperative.

##### 4.1.1.1. CSA in form of Conditional clause + Declarative

*a CSA in form of Conditional clause + Declarative / Declarative + Conditional clause in English*

- 1) If clause + Main Clause (S + V)
- 2) If clause + Main Clause (S-V-C)
- 3) If clause + Main Clause (S-V-O)
- 4) Main Clause + If clause (S-V-A)
- 5) Main Clause + If clause (S-V-O)
- 6) If clause + Main Clause (S-V-O-A)

*b CSA in form of Conditional clause + Declarative in Vietnamese*

*Table 4.2 CSA in form of Conditional clause + Declarative in Vietnamese*

Syntactic pattern	E.g.
Nếu clause + Declarative clause	<i>‘Nếu VFF mời, tôi sẽ nhận lời làm HLV ĐTQG’</i>
Declarative clause + Nếu clause	<i>Sẽ có tri âm nếu bạn là tri âm</i>

##### 4.1.1.2. CSA in form of If-clause + Interrogative (Question)/ + Interrogative (Question) + If-clause

A typical interrogative sentence can be recognized with the inversion of Subject and Auxiliary Verb and can be classified into 2 types such as Yes-No Questions and Wh-Questions.

##### *a. Yes-No Question/Confirming Question in English*

*Table 4.3 CSA in form of If-clause + Interrogative in English*

Syntactic pattern	E.g.
If clause + Aux + S + V?	<i>If I gave you ten thousand dollars, do you think you could fix everything up?”</i>
Aux + S + V + If clause?	<i>“Father, would you mind if I went down to the ranch Friday afternoon?”</i>

If clause + Wh-words + Aux + S + V?	<i>“Well, if that’s what you think, <u>why don’t you write to them and tell them?</u>”</i>
Wh-words + Aux + S + V + If clause?	<i><u>How can you have faith in him if you didn’t love him?</u>”</i>

*c. Confirming Question in Vietnamese*

Nếu clause + S + có + V + không?

*d. Informative Questions in Vietnamese*

1) Nếu clause + S + có + V + không?

2) Nếu clause + S + (có) + V + Informative Question Word?

3) S + (có) + V + Informative Question

**4.1.1.3. CSAs in form of Imperative (Directive)**

The order of the if-clause and the main clause can be reversed according to the context of the speech act and the speaker’s intent in phrasing the sentence like *If clause + Bare Infinitive Clause (V+(NP))* or *Bare Infinitive Clause (V+(NP)) + If clause*

*a. CSAs in form of Imperative in English*

1) If clause + Bare Infinitive Clause (V+(NP))

2) Bare Infinitive Clause (V+(NP)) + If clause

*b. CSAs in form of Imperative in Vietnamese*

1) Nếu clause + Hãy + V + (O)

2) Nếu clause + Xin + V + (O)

3) Nếu clause + cứ + V + (O)

4) Nếu clause + xin hãy + V + (O)

5) Nếu clause + hãy cứ + V + (O)

6) Nếu clause + xin đừng + V + (O)

7) Nếu clause + không nên + V + (O)

8) Nếu clause + cần + V + (O)

9) Đừng + V + (O) + Nếu clause

10) Không nên + V + (O) + Nếu clause

**4.1.2. Pragmatic functions of conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese**

*Illocutionary forces of CSAs and their Linguistic Realizations*

*a. CSAs as Representatives and their Linguistic Realizations*

1) Giving opinion

2) Asserting a fact

3) Warning

*Table 4.7 CSAs as Representatives and their Linguistic Realizations in English*

<b>Communicative function</b>	<b>Linguistic Realizations</b>	<b>E.g.</b>
Giving opinion	Declarative sentence	<i>if college is where a man can go to find his relation to his whole world, I don’t object.</i>
Asserting a fact	Declarative sentence	<i>“I say if they’re big enough, they’re old enough.”</i>
	Imperative sentence	<i>If you ever feel sad, just remember that at this moment there’s a fat kid somewhere in the world dropping his Ice-Cream.</i>
Warning	Warning	<i>it can be risky if you don’t do it right, according to CPA Michael Hanley, who ...</i>

Table 4.8 CSAs as Representatives and their Linguistic Realizations  
in Vietnamese

Communicative Function	Linguistic Realizations	E.g.
Giving opinion	Declarative sentence	<i>Theo tôi để giải quyết vấn đề ìn tắc, nếu là tôi, tôi làm cách khác. Một là: phát triển hạ tầng. Việc này không thể làm ngay được. Bằng chứng như ở Thái Lan, tôi ...</i>
Asserting a fact	Declarative sentence with performative verb	<i>Nếu bạn muốn thành công trong ngành nghề kinh doanh theo mạng thì chúng tôi chắc chắn rằng chương trình đào tạo này là VÔ CÙNG CẦN THIẾT VỚI BẠN.</i>
	Imperative sentence with <i>nhớ</i>	<i>Hãy luôn nhớ rằng nếu cánh cửa này đóng thì có cánh cửa khác đang mở</i>
Warning	Declarative sentence with <i>có thể</i>	<i>Thai phụ nếu nghỉ ngơi nhiều và nằm xuống quá thường xuyên có thể dẫn đến nhiều biến chứng nguy hiểm.</i>

*b. CSAs as questions and their Linguistic Realizations*

The speech acts of this group can be classified within the category of directives. However, to make clear the pragmatic functions of CSAs, it is necessary to present these speech acts as a separate type here to highlight their functions.

**In English**

- 1) Inviting/calling for a Confirmation (80)- (82)
- 2) Eliciting Information (83)- (88)

**In Vietnamese**

- 1) Inviting/calling for a Confirmation (89)- (92)
- 2) Eliciting Information (93)- (95)

*c. CSAs as Commissives and their Linguistic Realizations*

This conditional speech act can be recognized with various sub-functions in presenting information concerning the speaker's will or intention as shown below.

**In English**

- 1) Promising/ Offering Help  
An action that is assumed to be beneficial to the hearer.(96)-(101)
- 2) Threatening  
The action mentioned in the proposition of the speech act was by nature harmful or undesirable to the hearer. (102)-(104)

**In Vietnamese**

- 1) Promising/ Offering Help (105), (106)
  - 2) Threatening (106), (107)
- d. CSAs as Directives and their Linguistic Realizations*
- A directive speech act can also be hedged or modified with a conditional clause to modulate the force of a command, request or order.

**In English**

- 1) Making Request/Order

An act of asking for permission can be hedged with a conditional clause that helps the speaker to fulfil this directive speech act in a more effective way. (108)- (110)

## 2) Giving Advice/Suggestions

The speech acts can have the illocutionary force of getting the hearer do something that the addresser believe to be good and desirable for him/her. (111)- (113)

### In Vietnamese

#### 1) Making Request/Order (114)- (116)

#### 2) Giving Advice/Suggestions (117)- (126)

*e. Pragmatic functions of Conditional Clause in Conditional Speech Acts*

#### 1) Conditional Hedges as Performative Markers

Our speech acts are marked with a performative marker in form of a speech act verb, a performative adverb to make clear our intention in making an act of communicative.

### In English

The analysis of the corpus of study shows instances of conditional clauses as performative markers of such speech acts like stating opinion with the speech act verbs say, asking with the speech act verb like ask ....(127)- (132)

### In Vietnamese

The Vietnamese corpus of study did not yield instances of performative markers with speech act verbs like those in English. Vietnamese was found to make use of such pragmatic markers such as xin được hỏi, xin được nói rằng, xin đề nghị rằng. (133)- (134)

2) Conditional Hedges as a Downtoner of a Claim of Knowledge

The speaker/addresser may hedge his/her claim with a condition to reduce the impositional force and make the claim more acceptable. (135)- (148)

## 3) Conditional Hedge as a mitigator of a Request/Advice

A sixth type of commentary pragmatic markers are markers of mitigation, which signal the speaker's desire to reduce the face loss associated with the basic message (149)- (158)

## 4.2. SOME REMARKS ON THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF CSAs IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

With the preliminary information from the descriptive analysis now the study proceeds with the contrastive analysis to show some similarities and differences in terms of syntactic and pragmatic features

### 4.2.1. Similarities of CSAs in English and Vietnamese in syntactic features

Regarding the order of the clauses distributed in the structure of CSAs in form of declarative sentence, we can see that CSAs in English and Vietnamese allowed the reversal of the conditional clause and the main clause. This means either conditional clause or the main clause can assume the initial position in the structure of the superordinate clause.

*Table 4.17 Similarities of CSAs in English and Vietnamese in terms of structure Conditional clause + Main clause (declarative)*

Structural component	Conditional clause	Main clause
English	<i>If you go</i>	<i>we'll all have to go</i>
Vietnamese	<i>Nếu VFF mời</i>	<i>tôi sẽ nhận lời làm HLV ĐTQG</i>

Table 4.18 Similarities of CSAs in English and Vietnamese in terms of structure Main clause (declarative) + Conditional clause

Structural component	Main clause	Conditional clause
English	<i>I can send some chipped ice</i>	<i>if you like</i>
Vietnamese	<i>Sẽ có tri âm</i>	<i>nếu bạn là tri âm</i>

Regarding the employment of the interrogative structure, it is noticed that both English and Vietnamese were found to use the syntactic structure of both confirming question and informative question in CSAs.

Table 4.19 Similarities of CSAs in English and Vietnamese in terms of structure Main clause (Interrogative) + Conditional clause

Syntactic patterns	English	Vietnamese
Confirming question	<i>“Father, <u>would you mind</u> if I went down to the ranch Friday afternoon?”</i>	<i>Nếu bây giờ có người uy hiếp bạn, <u>muốn bạn</u> die thì <u>bạn có sợ không?</u></i>
Informative question	<i>“Well, if that’s what you think, <u>why don’t you write to them and tell them?</u>”</i>	<i>Nếu bạn có chanh, <u>sao không sử dụng chúng để làm đẹp?</u></i>

Table 4.20 Similarities of CSAs in English and Vietnamese in terms of structure Conditional clause + Main clause (Imperative)

Syntactic patterns	English	Vietnamese
Confirming question	<i>If I haven’t already asked you to do so, <u>please sign the guest book before you go.</u></i>	<i>Nếu chưa đăng ký, <u>hãy đăng ký thành viên tại đây hoặc xem phim hướng dẫn tại đây.</u></i>

Informative question	<i>If he says he thinks <u>you can do it, don’t tell Father.</u>”</i>	<i>Nếu bạn yêu, <u>xin đừng ngần ngại.</u></i>
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#### 4.2.2. Differences of CSAs in English and Vietnamese in syntactic features

Although both English and Vietnamese were found to share some similarities in employing all the three kinds of the sentence structures such as declarative, interrogative and imperative, the employment of the grammatical devices to form the sentence structures were not the same.

1) The use of modal auxiliary verb: interrogative clauses with Yes-No or Confirming questions in English and the mainly structure Có ... không? Phải ... không? in Vietnamese.

Let’s consider some examples

*If a twisted gene or a malformed egg can produce physical monsters, may not the same process produce a malformed soul?*

[15,ED, p.88]

*“Father, would you mind if I went down to the ranch Friday afternoon?”*

[15,ED, p.536]

*If I gave you ten thousand dollars, do you think you could fix everything up?”*

[15,ED, p.617]

The Vietnamese language showed to outnumber the English one in imperative sentences with the use of the imperative markers such as *xin, hãy, cứ, chớ, đừng*, and their combinations such as *xin hãy, xin đừng, xin vui lòng, xin cứ, hãy cứ, hãy đừng ...* as compared with the imperative structures initiated with *do, don’t, just, please, let*.

Table 4.22 Differences of CSAs in English in terms of Imperative markers

Imperative structure	Grammatical devices	E.g.
Imperative sentence initiated with imperative marker	<i>please</i>	<i>If I haven't already asked you to do so, <u>please sign the guest book before you go.</u></i> [6]
	<i>Don't</i>	<i>If he says he thinks <u>you can do it, don't tell Father.</u>?"</i> [15,ED, p.535]
	<i>let</i>	<i>"And, Joe—if you need any money, <u>let me know.</u> ?"</i> [15,ED, p.594]
	<i>just</i>	<i>And if you find her, <u>just tell her what I said.</u> ?"</i> [15,ED, p.594]

Table 4.23 Differences of CSAs in Vietnamese in terms of Imperative markers

Imperative structure	Grammatical devices	E.g.
	Hãy	<i>Nếu chưa đăng ký, <u>hãy đăng ký thành viên tại đây hoặc xem phim hướng dẫn tại đây.</u></i> [53]
	xin	<i>Nếu các bạn có thể tham dự buổi họp mặt này, <u>xin cho tôi biết ngay lập tức nhé.</u></i> [55]
	Xin hãy	<i>Nếu bạn thật sự yêu....<u>xin hãy nhớ đến cả mùi hương nước gội đầu của người ấy.</u></i> [143]
	Xin đừng	<i>Nếu bạn yêu, <u>xin đừng ngần ngại.</u></i> [79]

	Không nên	<i>Nếu bạn mới biết lái thì <u>không nên mua xe quá cũ.</u></i> [133]
	Cần	<i>Nếu bạn phải làm việc đêm, đồng hồ sinh học của bạn bị thay đổi thì <u>cần chú ý ngủ ngày để đảm bảo sức khỏe.</u></i> [38]
	Cứ	<i>Nếu bạn muốn <u>hãy cứ tin vào cổ tích.</u></i> [142]

#### 4.2.3. Similarities of CSAs in English and Vietnamese in Pragmatic features

##### 4.2.3.1. Similarities in Illocutionary forces

Table 4.24 Similarities of CSAs in English and Vietnamese in terms of Illocutionary forces

Illocution	English	Vietnamese
giving opinion	<i>if college is where a man can go to find his relation to his whole world, I don't object</i> [15, ED, p.607]	<i>Nếu tôi là bạn, tôi sẽ không bao giờ cố giấu hay kìm nén những cảm xúc đối với ai đó...</i> [69]
asserting a fact	<i>"If you say it's her, it's her," said Joe, and he pushed a twenty and a five across the table.</i> [15, ED, p.573]	<i><u>Hãy luôn nhớ rằng nếu cánh cửa này đóng thì có cánh cửa khác đang mở</u></i> [34]
warning	<i>If you wanta drive your head into a pile a broken glass, there ain't nobody can tell you different.</i> [36, p.26]	<i>Ăn vặt một chút sẽ chẳng có vấn đề gì nhưng nếu bạn quá lạm dụng chuyện ăn vặt thì chúng sẽ gây rất nhiều nguy hiểm cho sức khỏe của bạn ...</i> [27]

inviting a confirmation	<i>Can I Collect Unemployment if I'm fired?</i>	<i>Nếu không hoàn thành KH đầu tư thì có được chi hết chi phí BLDA ?</i> [137]
eliciting information	<i>What would you think if you saw this at the store?</i>	<i>Bạn nghĩ sao nếu chụp ảnh không cần chỉnh tiêu cự?</i> [97]
making request/order	<i>If I get an upgrade, may I cancel the upgrade within the first month ...</i>	<i>Nếu bạn nào biết chỉ rõ cho tôi với nhé!</i> [53]
giving advice/ suggestion	<i>"If it hits you wrong, don't take no offense at it, will you?" "I don't take no offense 'cept a bust in the nose," said Joad. "What did you figger?"</i> [36, p.13]	<i>Nếu bạn thấy rắc rối với Frame xin hãy thử một bài nhỏ nhỏ.</i> [43]
promising	<i>I promise I'll never hide my identity if I run a blog that calls you a skank.</i>	<i>Nếu bạn ngã, tôi sẽ luôn bên bạn...</i> [59]
threatening	<i>If you throw a banana at me, I will kill you</i>	<i>Đừng phàn bới tôi, nếu không câu sẽ chết.</i> [50]

#### 4.2.3.2. Similarities in Functions of Conditional Clause

As the modifier of the conditional speech acts, conditional clauses or conditional hedges in English and Vietnamese assumed the

same basic functions in softening or mitigating the illocutionary forces of such speech acts as request, asking, warning ...

#### 4.2.4. Differences of CSAs in English and Vietnamese in Pragmatic features

The significant differences in using Conditional clauses to signal the performative force with illocutionary forces in English and Vietnamese is the actualization of the act of speaking denoted by a speech act verb. Here in this pragmatic aspect, English was seen to be more explicit than Vietnamese in employing the speech act verb in the conditional clause.

#### 4.3. SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the descriptive and contrastive information of CSAs in English and Vietnamese in terms of syntactic features and pragmatic features. Such qualitative information of CSAs as the syntactic structures with declarative, interrogative and imperative, and the pragmatic functions of CSAs in communication were highlighted in categories of illocutionary forces and hedging functions of conditional clauses.

### Chapter 5

#### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The earlier chapter has presented the linguistic features of conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese. This chapter is devoted to the conclusion on similarities and differences between two languages in terms of the syntactic features and pragmatic features, and some implications for Vietnamese teachers and learners of English to be more successful in teaching and in communication.

## 5.1. CONCLUSIONS

The contrastive analysis of CSAs in English and Vietnamese enables us to draw the following conclusions.

In terms of syntactic features, CSAs in English and Vietnamese were found to be similar and different in the following points.

First, CSAs in English and Vietnamese are similar in employing various kinds of sentence structure of the main clause such as declarative, interrogative and imperative. Also, CSAs in both English and Vietnamese allow the reversal of the order between the conditional clause and the main clause where the conditional clause as the modification can be fronted or postponed after the main clause.

Second, CSAs in English and Vietnamese are different in the extent of utilizing the grammatical devices to diversify the sentence structures in terms of interrogative and imperative mood. English was found to be richer in making use of various kinds of modal auxiliary verbs in interrogative sentences whereas Vietnamese had numerous imperative markers that signal the imperative sentences.

In terms of pragmatic features, CSAs in English and Vietnamese were found to be similar and different in the following points.

First, both English and Vietnamese make use of CSAs in fulfilling different communicative functions with such illocutionary acts within the representatives, questions, directives and commissives as giving opinion, asserting a fact, warning, inviting confirmation, eliciting information, making request, giving advice/suggestion, promising, threatening.

Second, both English and Vietnamese have at their disposal various kinds of conditional clauses or hedges as modifier to soften or mitigate the illocutionary forces of a claim of knowledge, a request or order to reduce the risk of threatening the hearer's face and to achieve the acceptability of the speaker's speech acts.

Finally, while English is found to be more explicit in actualizing the performative force of a speech act with the speech act verb embedded in the conditional clause, Vietnamese explicate the speech act with the performative verbs in the main clause instead.

## 5.2. IMPLICATIONS

From the major findings about the similarities and differences in syntactic features and pragmatic features in CSAs in English and Vietnamese, the study puts forward these following implications.

Regarding the English teaching, it is essential for teachers of English to spend some time analyzing the syntactic structures of the conditional speech acts with reference to their communicative functions.

The first thing to mention here is the differences in mood where the traditional or normal conditional sentences make use of mostly declarative mood with the emphasis of the distant verbs with the shift of tense while conditional speech acts have more employment of not only declarative but also other moods like interrogative and imperative. This makes the latter kind of conditional sentence sound more like speech act than the former.

The second thing to be noticed here is the similarities in syntactic features like the utilization of various kinds of sentence structures in English and Vietnamese enable the Vietnamese speakers

of English to have positive transfer in CSAs. It is the teacher's task to raise the students' awareness of this kind of transfer to build up more confidence in using CSAs in English.

The third thing for the teachers in raising the students' awareness of the communicative functions of conditional clauses as hedges is to highlight the pragmatic roles of these as downtoners or mitigators of the illocutionary forces of the speech act the nature of which is likely to threaten the hearer's face. This is crucial to the teaching of conditional speech act because the learners have tendency of interpreting conditional clauses as the premise which signals a logical relation between the if-clause and the main clause where the matter of truth condition or factivity is focused on rather than the matter of illocutionary force and the hedging function of conditional clause against this illocutionary force.

With regard to the learners of English, they should be aware of other roles of conditional sentences other than a description of the state-of-affairs or logical relation between the premise and conclusion. Accordingly, the students should feel free in making different kinds of speech act with the modification of a conditional clause as a contextual marker of speech act, a performative marker of conditional speech act, a conditional hedge that downtone, soften or mitigate the illocutionary force of claim of knowledge, a request or a warning.

To achieve this awareness and habit of using conditionals in conversations rather than in narrative or describing a logical relation between propositions, the students should equip themselves with pragmatic knowledge about the speech acts and principles of politeness.

### **5.3. LIMITATION**

The study has just touched the fringe of the issues of conditional speech acts such as the syntactic structures with reference to the mood structure of the sentence, and the basic illocutionary forces and the hedging functions of conditional clauses. However, these matters have not been looked into details to yield richer qualitative information. Also, the pragmatic roles of the conditional clauses have not been further interpreted to yield more insightful contrastive information in English and Vietnamese.

### **5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

From the limitation of the study mentioned above and the issues of study that have been left unaddressed we would like to propose these aspects of pragmatic issues involving conditional speech acts:

- A study of the pragmatic features of conditional clauses as polite markers in conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese.
- A study of speech act verbs in conditional clause in conditional speech acts in English and Vietnamese in the light of Relevance Theory perspectives in order to improve themselves and contribute to the development of our country.