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VÕ NGUYỄN DẠ THẢO

AN INVESTIGATION INTO SYNTACTIC AND
SEMANTIC FEATURES OF INSTRUCTIONS FOR
USE OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES
IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

The language found in everyday life is full of what can be called “instructional text”. Instructional texts range from simple cooking recipes to large maintenance manuals. They also include documents as diverse as notices, signs, technical manuals, teaching texts, instructions for use, medical notices, etc... In fact, we can find instructions in many forms and many different situations in our daily lives. For examples, we can see some notices of instructions appear written on the doors: (1) “Full”, (2) “Push” or (3) “Automatic slide doors” etc... And also, in the office, we can see notices like (4) “No cigarette”, (5) “Emergency exit” or (6) “Entrance” etc... In the park, a lot of signs of instructional text are written like (7) “Please do not step on the grass” or (8) “Do not feed animals by your hands” and (9) “Stay away from dangerous lions” etc... Also, the manufacturers have given us instructions for use of electronic insect killer as (10) “Check the local voltage before operating” [15] or instructions for use of ceiling fans as (11) “After fan is completely installed, check to make sure that all connections are secure to prevent fan from falling and/or causing damage or injury” [E13] etc... In these examples mentioned, we can see that whatever the length, simplicity or complexity and mode of the instructional texts, they all share one common feature is that to get someone to perform properly one or more actions. Instructional text influences people’s behavior. For an instructional or procedural text to be acceptable, it must be written in such way that readers can follow the instructions, advices, guidance and so forth that the text provides.

Therefore, it is necessary to make an investigation on syntactic and semantic features of instructional text. Because of the large extent of the work, we just aim at studying syntactic and semantic features of instructions for use of household appliances. However, we find out the syntactic and semantic characteristics of instructions for use of

household appliances in both English and Vietnamese languages. In this sense, the study is expected to contribute to the practical knowledge of teaching English as a foreign language, to the improvement of manual writing and to help the consumer to have better understanding of how to operate the household appliances in the proper and safe way.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 Aims of the study

This study aims at finding out general characteristics of instructional text and the possible differences and similarities in the syntactic and semantic features of instruction manuals in the English and Vietnamese.

1.2.2 Objectives of the study

The study is intended to:

- Identify the syntactic and semantic features of instructional text of household appliances in English and Vietnamese.
- Compare and contrast the instruction for use in English and Vietnamese languages in terms of the similarities and differences.
- Suggest some possible solutions to understand and write the instructional text of household appliances effectively in the English and Vietnamese languages.

1.3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Nowadays, virtually every household product comes with sort of manuals, which cover operation routines, troubleshooting information, risks and hazards, etc. This leads to the necessity to provide the products with clear, comprehensible and comprehensive operation guides. With the aim to make an investigation on the syntactic and semantic features of instructional text for household appliances in their contrast in English and Vietnamese, the study is expected to be able to provide useful knowledge to enable better operation household products. The findings of the study are presumed to be the potential

source for the understanding and writing of instruction text in English and Vietnamese.

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Within the scope of the study, we would like to investigate syntactic and semantic features for instruction manuals of household appliances in English and Vietnamese languages.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Taking into account the above objectives the following research questions guided our study:

1. What are the characteristics of instructional text of household appliances in English and Vietnamese?
2. What are the syntactic and semantic features used in instructional text of household appliances in English and Vietnamese?
3. What are the differences and similarities of instructional text of household appliances in English and Vietnamese?

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: 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 LITERATURE REVIEW

Kosseim and Lapalme's work (1994) presented on the content and structure of instructional texts. Their work studied two types of tasks: operator tasks, i.e., procedures on a system or device to accomplish a goal external to that system or device (e.g., mowing the lawn), and maintenance or repair tasks, i.e., specific operations on a system or device (e.g., repairing a tape recorder). In addition, Kosseim

and Lapalme introduced an intermediate semantic level. This level classifies task knowledge into semantic carriers according to functional criteria (the mandatory/optional nature of operations, the execution time, the influence of an operation on the interpretation of the procedure, etc.). Kosseim and Lapalme's results are of great benefit for later study of semantic features in instructional text.

Linden (1993) has made an attempt to describe instructional text used in manual operation. He has focused on expressing rhetorical relations in instructional text. He suggested that instructional text can be viewed as the expression of a set of actions bearing procedural relationships with one another. Two tasks that an instructional text generator must perform are, first, to choose, for each action expression, the rhetorical relation it will hold with the other actions that best conveys their procedural relationships, and, secondly, to choose the grammatical form that will realize this rhetorical relation. However, Linden's analysis did not identify the rhetorical status and grammar form that will realize this rhetorical relation.

Paris and Scott, in their paper (Paris and Scott, 1994), described different ways, or stances, in which instruction manuals can convey information:

Information provision

Eulogy

Directive

Explanation

With respect to instructional text, in Vietnam, there was one studying of a discourse analysis in instructions for use of Drugs researched by Lâm Thị Thuỳ Linh but has not published yet. We will mention her work's results one available.

Relating to this research, there are some books showing us linguistic knowledge such as “Dụng học việt ngữ” by Nguyễn Thiện Giáp mentioned Context and Cooperative principle related to maxim's

quantity, “*Dẫn pháp phân tích điển ngôn*” by Trúc Thanh (1998), “*Văn bản*” by Diệp Quang Ban mentioned linguistic characteristics of discourse .

However, there is still no a specific study on the English and Vietnamese instructions for use of household appliances in terms of syntactic and semantic features. Within the framework, this paper will make a clear look at the syntactic and semantic features of instructions for use of household appliances in both languages English and Vietnamese.

2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The goal of an instructional text is to describe the actions to be performed to achieve a particular goal. An understanding of syntactic and semantic features is essential to the study of instructional text. It is important for understanding language in instructional text, as there are likely to affect meaning and for understanding instructions and effects of uses.

2.2.1 Brief overview of text typology in English

2.2.1.1 Types of text

Werlich (1976) analyses five text types-description, narration, exposition, argumentation and instruction.

2.2.1.2 Descriptive texts

Descriptive texts basically deal with factual phenomena, e.g. objects and people. Therefore, you find many verbs of “non-change” (e.g. to be, to stand, lie, sit etc.) and adverbs of place. Technical description tends to be neutral, exact and impersonal, while impressionistic description also gives expressions to the writer's feelings or moods.

2.2.1.3 Narrative texts

2.2.1.4 Expository texts

2.2.1.5 Argumentative texts

2.2.1.6 Instructive texts

Instructive texts the writer tells the reader/audience what to do. The instructive text type is based on the action-demanding sentence. Commercial and political propaganda, directions, regulations, rules etc. are typical examples because they aim at influencing behavior.

2.2.2. Overview of Instructions for Use of Household Appliances

2.2.2.1. Definition of Household Appliances

According to the online dictionary Wikipedia, Household Appliance is defined as a large machine which accomplishes some routine housekeeping task, which includes purposes such as cooking, or food preservation, whether in a household, institutional, commercial or industrial setting.

2.2.2.2. Definition of Instructional text

An instructional text is a non-fiction text that describes (instructs) how something is done using a series of sequenced instructions.

In an instructional text the writer is usually trying to tell the reader how to do something. This may include the resources or tools needed to make something and the steps on how to make it.

2.2.2.3 Definitions of Instructions for use of Household Appliances

Instructional texts, also equivalently called procedural texts consist of a sequence of instructions, designed with some accuracy in order to reach an objective. Instructional texts explain how to realize a certain goal by means of actions which are at least partially temporally organized.

2.2.2.4 Characterization of Instructional text

- a. Field of instructional texts*
- b. Tenor of instructional texts*
- c. Mode of instructional texts*

2.2.2.5 Language of the Instructional texts

An effective instructional text should be Concise, Understandable and Explicit.

2.2.3 Syntactic features of instructional text of household appliances

2.2.3.1 Syntactic Terms

2.2.3.2 Declaratives

Declarative sentences are the most common type. The subject in declarative word order comes before the verb. Declarative sentences are used to convey information or to make statement.

For examples:

(14) He would stay long.

(15) He would not stay long.

(16) The countries around the world fit into neat and precise categories of climate and weather.

(17) The countries around the world do not fit into neat and precise categories of climate and weather.

a. Modal Declaratives

The modal base here is the knowledge of the speaker, the modal force is necessity. Modal declarative sentences are declarative sentences having the modals come after subjects.

For instance:

(18) Linda **may** go.

In Vietnamese, according to Diep Quang Ban, sentences are also classified into declarative, imperative and exclamative based on communication purpose [2, p.224-239]. Declaratives in Vietnamese are used to narrate, confirm, or describe something. For instance:

(19) Tôi **nên** đi bây giờ.

b. Non- modal Declaratives

Non modal declarative sentences are declarative sentences without the modals as in the following sentence.

(20) Tôi đi đây.

2.2.3.3 Imperatives

a. Imperatives in English

The imperative is the only case in English in which the subject is omitted. However, we all understand that the missing subject of the imperative is the understood second person imperative, you.

For examples:

(21) She turned on TV, didn't she? Turn on TV, won't you?

(22) Sue has tried her best. Try your best.

Many imperatives do not have grammatical subjects, which becomes a distinctive grammatical feature of the imperative. This is the only case in English in which a subject is not required in the main clause of a sentence (Lynn M. Berk, 1999)

Take a look at the following samples:

(23) Close the book.

(24) Give me some sugar.

There is no distinctive tense in the imperative. In other words, the verbs in the imperative always take the same form, the simple form. This form is also known as the imperative mood. English imperatives are used for many different purposes such as command, instruction, request, and suggestion.

(25) Be on time for the meeting.

(26) Knock the door before entering.

The negative of the imperative is formed by adding the word do not or don't before the verb.

(27) Don't forget print the document.

(28) Don't smoke in public places.

b. Imperatives in Vietnamese

There are two ways to express imperative meanings in Vietnamese, which consists of using specialized words and using non-specialized words (Ban, 2004)

2.2.3.4 Complex Sentence

A sentence contains a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses (introduced by if, when, although, etc.). These sentences are called complex.

In the Vietnamese language, Cao Xuân Hạo[6, p.65] has raised his definitions on complex sentences on the basis of the functional grammar. Traditionally, contrary to a simple sentence, a complex sentence composes of more than one Subject-Predicate structure.

2.2.3.5 Conditional Sentence

According to Randolph Quirk (1987), conditional clauses state the dependence of one circumstance or set of circumstances on another [49, p.323] finite adverbials clauses of condition are introduced by the sub-ordinators if (positive condition) and unless (negative condition) [51,p.324]

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 “Vi....nên....”.

2.2.4 Semantic features of instructional text

2.2.4.1 Semantic terms

2.2.4.2 Speech Acts

2.2.4.3 Advising

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.

The writer tells the readers to do (or not do) something, also called directive.

For instance:

(37) Please do it carefully. [V72]

2.2.4.4 Informing

The writer provides the reader with information:

(42) Your telephone is guaranteed for one year. [E09]

(43) Tone button This key enables you to switch from Pulse to Tone dialing during a call. [E09]

(44) Do not use cooker near flammable object. It may cause fire or explosion. [E8]

2.2.4.5 Warning

Warning is an essential part in all ITOHAs and it often occurs in special warning about unsafe signs or unexpected situations for the users if the instruction is not followed. Let look the following examples:

(46) Don't cook acid, alkaline food or alike substance lest corrode inner pot on an open fire directly. [E01]

(47) Không nên đặt trực tiếp lòng nồi trên lửa. [V02]

2.2.5 Concepts related to the study of Instruction for use of household appliances

2.2.5.1 Expressing purpose relations

2.2.5.2 Expressing precondition relations

2.2.5.3 Expressing result relations

2.2.5.4 Expressing sequence relations

2.2.5.5 Expressing concurrent relations

CHAPTER 3: METHOD AND PROCEDURE

3.1 METHODS AND PROCEDURE

3.1.1 Research methods

In order to reach the goal of this thesis, I carried out the investigation based on the combination of methods of qualitative, quantitative and contrastive analysis methods. The study will describe and analyze the syntactic and semantic features of instructional text of household appliances in English and Vietnamese.

3.1.2 Procedures

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

The first step in my investigation in this thesis was data collection. The data used in the study were collected from leaflets, small booklets and large booklets of household appliances in both English and Vietnamese language.

The data consists of approximately 80 samples of instruction for use in each language of English and Vietnamese. All the samples collected were written in the nature language and vary in size, product and manufacturer.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The English corpus consists of 80 samples of data (provided in Appendix 1). The Vietnamese corpus (provided in Appendix 2) consists of 80 instructional texts.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 THE SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE USED IN INSTRUCTIONAL TEXT OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

4.1.1 The syntactic features of English used in instructional text of household appliances

4.1.1.1 Imperatives

a. Affirmative Imperative

In instructional texts, it is therefore possible to assume that each time a directive is intended, an imperative will be used, as in (57).

(57) Lift the handset. [E10]

b. Negative imperative

The negative of the imperative is formed by adding the word do not or don't before the verb. As Eastwood (1999, p.120), (1994, p.21);

Thomson and Martinet (1986, p.245) demonstrate, “DON’T” is the signal that helps us recognize the negative implication in an imperative.

(60) Do not press START at this stage [E16]

4.1.1.2 Declaratives

a. Modal Declarative

Declarative clauses with the modals must (as in (63)) and should (as in (64)).

(63) This Instruction Book must be kept handy for reference. [E47]

b. Non-Modal Declarative

Non-modalized expressions such as the future tense, as in (57), or the present tense in the passive voice, as in (58).

(65) The minimum height of the cooker **will be set** at 900mm to the top of the hob. [E49]

(66) ... optimum performance **is achieved** by preheating the grill for about 1 minute. [E49]

4.1.1.3 Complex sentence

In most types of texts, especially in ITOHAs, we find sequences of complex compounds composed of clusters of instructions that exhibit a number of semantic contextual dependencies between each other. These complex sentences are organized around a few main instructions, to which a number of subordinate instructions, warnings, arguments, and explanations of various sorts may possibly be combined. All these elements are used for safety purpose of the household appliances, because they are in essential in a compound for a good understanding of the procedure at stake.

For examples:

(67) The plug must be inserted into an appropriate outlet that is properly installed and grounded in accordance with all local codes and ordinances. [E41]

4.1.1.4 Conditional Sentence

In ITOHAs, most conditional sentences are formed:

- 1/ If clause + Main clause (S-V-O)
- 2/ If clause+ Bare Infinitive (V+(NP))

Take some examples:

(69) If keep the rice warm more than 5 hours, the rice will change color or taste. [E10]

(70) If there is a difficulty to disassemble with above mentioned, please push the team valve with hands from the inner as per right chart.

4.1.2 The syntactic features of Vietnamese in ITOHAs

4.1.2.1 Imperatives

a. Affirmative imperative

There are two ways to express imperative meanings in Vietnamese, which consists of using specialized words and using non-specialized words (Ban, 2004).

For instance:

(72) Chỉnh núm nhiệt độ về nhỏ nhất. [V20]

For specialized words in Vietnamese ITOHAs, most of negative imperative statements usually begin with “**cần**” “**nên**” as the following examples:

(73) **Cần** chú ý vận hành lưỡi dao, đặc biệt khi tháo lưỡi dao, vét sạch và trong quá trình làm sạch [E10]

(74) **Nên** sử dụng các đồ vật có chất liệu trong suốt để tăng tối đa những hiệu quả của sóng vi ba. [E20]

b. Negative imperative

Most of negative imperative statements in Vietnamese ITOHAs usually begin with “**không**” and “**không nên**”.

Let us have a look at the examples below:

(75) **Không** cho tay hay bất kỳ vật dụng khác vào máy để tránh bị thương. [V10]

(76) **Không nên** để trên mặt phẳng ướt hoặc không bằng phẳng [V02]

4.1.2.2 Declarative

a. Modal Declarative

Like English, modal declarative can function as the structures used in ITOHAs. The most considerable form of declarative as the structures used in ITOHAs in Vietnamese can be seen as follows:

(77) Bạn cần lựa chọn chế độ nướng ở vị trí 5 hoặc 7. [V11]

(78) Trong lần sử dụng đầu tiên có thể xuất hiện khói hay mùi. [V10]

b. Non Modal Declarative

Like English, using non modal declarative is one of the ways to describe something without modal verbs. Let take a look the following examples:

(79) Muối rất có hại đối với lớp chống dính phủ trên lòng nồi. [V43]

(80) Thiết bị an toàn đóng nguồn gas cung cấp cho bếp khi ngọn lửa đầu đốt bị tắt đột ngột.... [V50]

4.1.2.3 Complex sentence

Like English, complex sentences are often used in ITOHAs with the rate of 17.10% with 260 cases.

(81) Trước khi đập chặt nắp nồi phải dùng que thông ống thoát hơi từ bên ngoài, xem có tạp vật gây tắc không, kiểm tra lò xo hoạt động bình thường hay không. [V51]

(82) Khi một trong những bộ phận chính bị vỡ hoặc hỏng hóc, nó chỉ cơ thể thay thế cùng loại từ nhà máy, trung tâm bảo hành hoặc người được chỉ định. [V27]

4.1.1.4 Conditional Sentence

From 80 ITOHAs collected from cited sources, there are 165 cases in conditional sentences occupying 11.35%.

Nếu clause + Declarative clause
Nếu clause + Imperative clause

Consider the following examples:

(83) Nếu muốn lấy thức ăn ra khỏi lò khi thời gian nấu nướng chưa kết thúc, bạn có thể chọn một trong hai cách sau. [V20]

(84) Nếu dây điện bị hư hại cần liên hệ với xưởng sản xuất hoặc bộ phận liên quan để bảo trì nhằm tránh nguy hiểm.

4.1.3 Similarities and differences of syntactic features of English and Vietnamese used in ITOHAs.

4.1.3.1 Similarities

In the syntactic point of view, the syntactic representations of ITOHAs in English and Vietnamese are analogous in many ways.

Firstly, ITOHAs in both languages can exist in many different structures. We can find ITOHAs in **declarative, imperative, complex and conditionals**. It means that ITOHAs is a common phenomenon in both languages. Secondly, for structural forms, the frequency of occurrences in English is almost similar to that in Vietnamese. In the two languages, it can be seen that ITOHAs in **imperative** are the most typical with 820 cases (49.40%) in English versus 662 cases (45.60%) in Vietnamese. Next, the second position is **declaratives** with 404 cases (24.35%) in English and with 365 cases (25.15%) in Vietnamese. The complex structures come at the third with 255(15.40%) in English and the same number of that (260cases) (17.10) in Vietnamese. The structure contains conditionals also nearly the same in both languages with 180 cases (10.84%) in English and 165 cases (11.35%) in Vietnamese.

Secondly, among imperative structures, we can see that the frequencies of occurrences of affirmative structures in English and Vietnamese are the most typical with 696 cases (84.88%) in English and 500 cases (75.5%) in Vietnamese. Negative structures are nearly equal with 124 cases (15.12%) in English and 162 cases (24.5%) in Vietnamese. Most of the imperatives in collected samples in both languages were found in the form of affirmative and negative. There are some terms that express the same meanings in both English and

Vietnamese imperatives for examples terms **please, don't** in English and Vietnamese terms **cần, không nên**.

Thirdly, the result in table 4.6 shows that **declarative structures** in both English and Vietnamese also have modal and non modal .Modal in both languages occur rather typically with 208 cases (51.49%) in English and with 195 cases (53.5%) in Vietnamese. The second position is non modal with 196 cases (48.51%) in English and with 170 cases (46.5%) in Vietnamese. Through the declarative structures, we can see that manufacturers...

Fourthly, the result in table 4.6 shows that complex structures are at the third rate in both English and Vietnamese following imperative with 255 cases (15.40%) in English and with 165 cases (17.10%) in Vietnamese ITOHAs. This is the reason why manufacturers tend to use complex sentences to exhibit a number of semantic contextual dependencies between each other. These complex sentences are used in ITOHAs including a number of subordinate instructions, warnings, arguments, and explanations that helps users to use the products properly and correctly.

Finally, ITOHAs in both languages English and Vietnamese also contain conditional structures. In both languages, conditional clauses occupy the modest percentage with the rate of 10.84 % with 180 cases in English and with 11.35 % in 165 cases in Vietnamese. They are used to introduce conditions over instructions and convey the condition – consequence relation in ITOHAs. The manufacturers tend to use imperative form in the main clause in both English and Vietnamese conditional sentences to convey the notion of warning. This is very important to consumers when using the Household appliances.

4.1.3.2 Differences

Although syntactic representation of ITOHAs in English and Vietnamese is analogous on a number of major categories, there are some differences in syntactic representation of structures.

Firstly, as mentioned in the table 4.5 above, the frequency of the ITOHAs with affirmative imperative in English is higher than in Vietnamese with 696 cases (84.88%) versus 500 cases (75.5%). However, with negative imperative, the frequency of occurrences in English is lower than in Vietnamese with 124 cases (15.12%) and 163 cases (24.50%). It can be easily seen that there is an omission of the English imperative subject which is normally the understood second pronoun, **you** and a very limited number of indefinite nouns such as **someone, anyone**, etc. On the contrary, there is always the presence of the variety of subjects including pronouns, proper nouns and common nouns in Vietnamese imperatives. Thanks to that, Vietnamese ITOHAs are freer to express and request users/readers to use the instructions for use exactly and effectively.

(85) Do not allow children to sit or stand on any part of the appliance [E22]

(86) Không đặt muỗng com vào lòng nồi khi nồi đang nóng. [V01]

Secondly, although the ITOHAs in English and Vietnamese have modal declarative, they are realized in different forms. In English, they can be realized by a modal verb comes after the subject of the sentence. However, in Vietnamese they can be recognized by “có thể” with the meaning category of possibility.

Thirdly, ITOHAs in both English and Vietnamese have complex sentences. In English, complex sentences include at least one dependent clause introducing a subordinating conjunction such as after, before, when, while, until, etc. and an independent clause.

Fifthly, the linguistic means for the realization of the components of ITOHAs in English and Vietnamese are different in many places. English possesses such grammatical categories such as mood, modal finites, distal modals whereas in Vietnamese, such lexical categories as particles, indefinite words, address terms of various kinds are the effective means. These are matters of language-specifics.

In summary, the results of the data analysis point out that ITOHA can be realized by different forms of syntactic representation, they have a variation of syntactic form in the two languages. Most of them are similar to each other in the use. However, the devices used to express the meaning are somewhat different. That is due to the structure of each language.

4.2 THE SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE USED IN INSTRUCTION FOR USE OF HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

4.2.1 The semantic features of English used in instructional text of household appliances

4.2.1.1 Advising

The structure with this meaning can be seen in imperative structures of ITOHAs. Let us consider the following sentences:

(98) Press the RESET button. [E72]

(99) Do not operate any appliances with a damaged cord or plug. [E16]

4.2.1.2 Informing

With this meaning, this structure can be realized in declarative structures of ITOHAS combined with modals.

For examples:

(100) The manufacturer cannot accept any liability for personal injury or damage to property resulting from a failure to comply with this instruction.

[E08]

(101) You can fill the kettle with water via the spout or by opening the lid, by pressing on the lid release button.

[E80]

4.2.1.3 Warning

Warning meaning can be realized in imperative and conditional structures of ITOHAs. Here are a few examples:

(102) If the power cord is damaged, it must be replaced by the manufacturer or a qualified service engineer to avoid any risk to safety
[E10]

(103) Do not leave vacuum cleaner unattended when plugged in.
[E41]

4.2.2 The semantic features of Vietnamese used in instructional text of household appliances

4.2.2.1 Advising

This meaning is realized in 642 cases (48.5 %). The structure with this meaning can be seen in imperative structures of ITOHAs.

4.2.2.2 Informing

This meaning is realized in 589 cases (44.5%) and it appears in declarative combined with modals.

For instance:

(104) Vị trí đặt lò vi sóng phải bằng phẳng, khoảng cách an toàn tối thiểu dành cho mặt trên của lò là 20cm
[V21]

4.2.2.3 Warning

Warning can be seen in imperative and conditional structures. Take a look at the following examples:

(105) Nếu phát hiện thiết bị hoạt động không bình thường, hãy rút ngay dây điện và mang sản phẩm đi sửa chữa tại những nơi được ủy quyền hoặc người có chuyên môn để tránh sự cố.
[V20]

(106) Không nhúng bàn là vào trong nước hoặc chất lỏng khác.
[V20]

4.2.3 Similarities and differences of semantic features of English and Vietnamese used in instructions for use of household appliances

4.2.3.1 Similarities

Firstly, in regards to the Speech act, the majority of the structures in both languages perform the semantic function of Advice, Informative

and Warning. We can also find ITOHAs with the meanings of purpose expressions in English and Vietnamese.

It means that ITOHAs is a common phenomenon in both languages. The structures are widely used in both English and Vietnamese. Generally, manufacturers have a strong tendency in using speech acts with a lot semantic functions in both languages.

Secondly, the frequency of occurrences semantic representation in English is almost the same that in Vietnamese. It can be seen that ITOHAs with “Advice” is the most typical with 775 cases (58.5%) in English versus 545 cases (48.5%) in Vietnamese. Next, the position of “Informative” at the second, they are with 430 cases (32.50%) in English and the 500 cases (44.50%) in Vietnamese. The last position is the meaning of “warning” with 119 cases (9%) in English and 78 cases (7%) in Vietnamese.

Although English and Vietnamese have a number of similar features, they also possess a lot of differences. This will be discussed in the next section.

4.2.3.2 Differences

There are some differences in semantic functions between ITOHAS in English and Vietnamese. In the meaning fields of in English and Vietnamese, there are a few differences as follows:

Through the table 4.9 we can see that frequencies of occurrences of semantic representation in English and Vietnamese have some differences. “Advice” is higher frequency in English than that in Vietnamese: 775 cases versus 545 ones (about 58.50% vs 48.50%). “Informative” is higher frequency in Vietnam than that in English: 500 cases versus 430 ones (about 44.5% vs 32.5%). As for “Warning”, frequency of occurrences in English is much higher than that in Vietnamese: 119 cases versus 78 ones (9% vs 7%).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS – IMPLICATIONS LIMITATIONS – RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

5.1.1 A Summary of the Development of the Study

As it was stated in the previous chapters, the thesis involves the qualitative and quantitative study of the syntactic and semantic features of ITOHAs in English and Vietnamese.

In order to carry out the study effectively, we have read a lot of books and theoretical materials relating to instructional text and other issues concerning the research. After that, we designed an outline to specify the steps of the study.

5.1.2 A Summary of the Findings

Syntax and semantic are basic features to study how text are structured beyond the sentence level. This thesis is the study of how ITOHAs are written in English and Vietnamese so as to get a full understanding of the typical features of this kind of instructions in both languages. With this aim, I have set up major goal for the thesis to investigate and to find out the similarities and differences between ITOHAs in English and Vietnamese in terms of syntactic features and semantic features. The findings presented below are drawn from the major differences and similarities between ITOHAs in English and Vietnamese.

5.1.2.1 Similarities

Firstly, as regards the syntactic features, ITOHAs in both languages exist in declarative, imperative structures and complex and conditional sentences. It means that ITOHAs is a common phenomenon in both languages.

Secondly, as for semantic features, the findings show that English and Vietnamese ITOHAs have some similar tendencies. Generally, manufacturers have a strong tendency in using speech acts

with many different meanings such as: “Advice”, “Informative” and “Warning”.

Thirdly, we found that the longer the document length, the higher the degree of informative in the manuals. Shorter texts can consist of mostly directives/ advice, while longer texts offer additional background information.

Finally, in both English and Vietnamese, the manufacturers try to select the language instructions that are understandable, concise and explicit for users.

5.1.2.2 Differences

Syntactically, besides the similarities, there are differences between English ITOHAs and Vietnamese ITOHAs. First, the frequency of occurrences of all syntactic categories examined in English is higher than in Vietnamese. Particularly, the percentage of English imperative is higher than that of Vietnamese one. The percentage of declarative sentences in English is also higher than that of Vietnamese declarative sentences. In spite of their differences, English and Vietnamese ITOHAs have a noticeable similarity about the use of syntactic structure with simplicity and clarity. However, the percentage of imperative, declarative and conditional sentences in English ITOHAs is higher than in Vietnamese ITOHAs. The differences contribute to distinguish features of ITOHAs in each language.

Semantically, there are some differences in functions between English ITOHAs and Vietnamese ITOHAs. The frequency of occurrences of all semantic categories studied in English ITOHAs is higher than in Vietnamese ITOHAs.

5.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

As far as we know, language of instructions for use plays a very important role in our life. We use instruction manuals for household appliances that are able to automatically generate safety warnings to the users at appropriate points. Due to the different structures of both

English and Vietnamese, it is unavoidable for Vietnamese consumers of English to have some problems in using the instructional text in English. In fact, in learning English as a foreign language, we need to know how texts work so we can explicitly help learners learn how to understand and produce texts for various purposes. With the findings of linguistics features and the similarities as well as differences between 2 languages, it is our hope that the thesis will be of much benefit not only for users but also for teachers, learners and translators of English. Especially, from this result, human translators of ITOHAs can be aware of the way in which texts differ in each language, and use the study to guide their translation.

Through this researcher, we would like to have some suggestions for the manufactures to improve the languages and structures effectively in instructions for use.

Firstly, the finding of the study will probably be a useful reference focusing on some linguistics features in terms of syntactic and semantic features without mentioning cohesive devices and discourse features etc..., so it has not reached depth as it should. Secondly, although having compared and found out similarities and differences of syntactic and semantic features between ITOHAs of English and Vietnamese, the researcher has not explained the similarities and differences in the linguistics features in English and Vietnamese ITOHAs based on the cultural differences of two languages.

Secondly, the users will also be more able to understand both the structures and meaning of what the writer/manufacturers are using. As users may also have English as a second language, they may be less skilled in reading. The better the writers/manufacturers are at English comprehension and writing, the better the users/readers will be able to understand and follow what the instructions are required.

Thirdly, the typical linguistic features of both English and Vietnamese in ITOHAs as well as similarities and differences between two languages can make a considerable contribution to the translating and understanding English for specific purposes, especially for translators, manufacturers, and ultimate users.

Finally, the result of the study will supply the standard frame that helps them write and translate ITOHAs in Vietnamese with the right structures and effective content. Thanks to these good messages, users can use ITOHAs effectively and safely.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

In spite of the fact that we have tried our best in finding materials and investing our efforts, due to the lack of time for research and the limited knowledge of the writer, this study is not without limitations.

This research discusses the linguistic aspects of ITOHAs in English and Vietnamese. It was limited to syntactic and semantic features of ITOHAs in English and Vietnamese. With the limited data for the analysis which was mainly collected from English and Vietnamese instructions for use of household appliances, books and internet. Moreover, all samples are still small and not explored all complexities of language use.

5.4 SUGGESTING FOR FURTHER RESEARCHES

If the future research is conducted in this direction, the following aspects will be taken more consideration and investigation:

- Pragmatic features of English and Vietnamese used instructional text of household appliances.
- Cultural features of English and Vietnamese in instructional text of household appliances.