

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
THE UNIVERSITY OF DANANG**

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**HEDGED PERFORMATIVES IN ECONOMIC
SPEECHES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE
– A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS**

Field: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Code: 60.22.02.01

**M.A THESIS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
(A SUMMARY)**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Hedged performatives have a very important role in communicative success in English and Vietnamese in general and in economic speeches in particular.

1.2. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Through the study, an investigation into linguistic features of hedges in lectures in English, in some scope, will be contribute to the knowledge of hedged in general and hedged performatives in particular. It can be withdraw from the study that hedged performatives plays a important role in enabling listener, particularly speaker, to have smooth and effective speeches by boosting or attenuating force of illocution of speech act.

1.3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to examine the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic characteristics of hedged performatives on English and Vietnamese, comparing and contrasting different linguistic politeness strategies in economic speeches of English and Vietnamese. This paper is designed to aim at the following objectives:

- To find out the linguistic features of using hedged performatives in English and Vietnamese in economic speeches.
- To describe, compare and contrast the linguistic features in making economic speeches between English and Vietnamese.
- To suggest some hedged performatives in English language teaching and learning and use them in society.

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study deals with the issue of semantic, syntactic and pragmatic Politeness Theory. Only the lexical devices will be examined. Such prosodic features as stress and intonation are beyond the scope of this study.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the language realizations as linguistic devices of hedged performatives in English and Vietnamese in economic speeches?

- What are syntactic behaviors of the language components of hedged performatives and their syntactic function in clausal structure in English and Vietnamese?

- What are the semantic and pragmatic features of hedged performatives in the light of Politeness Theory in English and Vietnamese?

- What are the similarities and differences of hedged performatives in English and Vietnamese in economic speeches in terms of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features?

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

There have been a number of researchers who investigated the hedging and hedges, performatives, hedged performatives in English and Vietnamese.

Example: Austin (1962), in “How to do things with words”, studied performatives in parallel with contrastive. He also distinguished explicit performatives and implicit performatives. For foreign writers, regarding hedges, Holmes (1984) related hedging to the more general communicative strategies for modifying the strength or force of speech acts. Besides, Blum – Kulka and Kasper (1990), in “Pragmatics” by Yule, studied politeness and interaction. He defined the concept of politeness, positive politeness strategies.

For Vietnamese writers, regarding performatives, M.A. Thesis by Tran Ngoc My Chi (2002) with the title “Performative Verbs in English versus Vietnamese” examined the syntactic features, the semantic and pragmatic characteristics of performative verbs in utterances in the two languages. The MA thesis by Nguyen Duong Nguyen Trinh (2001) examined a wide range of hedging devices in the representative speech act in English and Vietnamese. In studies of Vietnamese, Nguyen Duong Nguyen Trinh (2001) did the investigation into lexical devices functioning as hedging in spoken English and spoken Vietnamese.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The definition of *discourse analysis*, *hedges*, *hedged performatives*, *performative and constatives*.

Characteristics of Performatives

According to Leech [18, p. 183-184] syntactically, a regular illocutionary performative utterance has the following distinguished features:

- The verb of the main clause is an illocutionary verb.
- This verb is the simple present tense.
- The subject of this verb is in the first person.
- The indirect object of this verb, if one is present, is you.
- Optionally, this verb is preceded by the adverb *hereby*
- The verb is followed by a reported-speech clause.

Beside, Austin distinguished five general classes of utterance and classified them according to their illocutionary force: Declarations, representatives, expressives, directives, commissives.

Besides, he claims that there are basically eight positions a speaker might hold toward a proposition, it means eight classes of illocutionary act:

- Acts of Asserting: the speaker's assessment which expressed fits into the conversation and the speaker's strength of conviction in the truth of the proposition expressed.

- Acts of Evaluating: the speaker's assessment of the truth of the proposition expressed, and the basis for this judgment.

- Acts of Reflecting Speaker Attitude: the speaker's assessment of the appropriateness of the state of affairs resulting by the proposition.

- Acts of Stipulating: the speaker's desire for the acceptance of the naming convention expressed by the proposition.

- Acts of Requesting: the speaker's desire for the hearer to bring about the state of affairs in the proposition.

- Acts of Suggesting: the speaker's desire for the hearer to consider the merits of the action expressed in the proposition.

- Acts of Exercising Authority: the speaker's proposal to create a new state of affairs by exercising certain rights or powers.

- Acts of Committing: the speaker's proposal to place himself under an obligation to bring about the state of affairs expressed in the proposition.

He also explains the standard modals (must, can, may, will, shall) and periphrastic versions (be able, have to) and models (want to, would like to, wish to).

2.3. SUMMARY

The literature review and theoretical background give an overall view of hedged performatives in all perspectives and give an approach to hedges by a number of theories related to this topic. Moreover, the knowledge about semantics, syntactics and pragmatics will help to investigate linguistic features of hedged performatives in economic speeches in English and Vietnamese.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to achieve the set goal the study is carried out through a descriptive and qualitative approach. English is chosen as L2 and Vietnamese is chosen as L1.

3.2. RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The method of this study is contrastive analysis. Contrastive analysis is the study and comparison of two languages. For example, this can be comparing English with Latin or Basque with Iroquois. This is done by looking at the structural similarities and differences of the studied languages. There are two central aims to contrastive analysis; the first is to establish the inter-relationships of languages in order to create a linguistic family tree. The second aim is to aid second language acquisition.

A contrastive analysis of hedged performatives was conducted so as to draw out some implications with particular reference to the teaching and learning of hedged performatives. In some places where the translational Vietnamese versions are applied for the contrastive work, Vietnamese is chosen as target language and English source one.

And Procedure contains:

- 1) Collecting data: in various genres of discourse.
- 2) Sorting out samples according to four kinds as mentioned.

The samples can be instances of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs in forms.

3) Finding out the similarities and the differences between the two languages English and Vietnamese in terms of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features.

4) Describing and comparing HPs in English economic speeches with their counterparts in Vietnamese.

5) Discussing the findings in reference to their similarities and differences.

6) Suggesting some implications for English teaching and learning of Vietnamese.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION

The samplings were made with the searching for hedged performative pattern of a wide range of linguistic structures in various genres of discourse. These hedged performatives can be found in instances of utterances in the two languages. They were collected from main sources such as videos and short stories on the internet.

3.4. DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION AND SAMPLES

A corpus of English economic speeches and Vietnamese ones was randomly gathered from different sources such as newspaper articles and on the internet. The samples were divided into four kinds of syntactic structures: noun, adjective, verb, adverb as the main component or the head of the hedged performatives structures.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of data is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision making. Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a variety of names, in different business, science, and social science domains. All the data

collected were processed descriptively and qualitatively. The procedure is as follows:

Data collected were classified into four kinds of syntactic structures: Noun, Adjective, Verb, and Adverb. Then they were employed to investigate the semantics, and pragmatics of hedged performatives in the dimensions of epistemic modality, speech acts, politeness principles, and dialogistic view.

By analyzing the data, the similarities and the differences of hedged performatives in English and Vietnamese in economic speeches of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features were considered.

The frequency of each hedged performative patterns in economic speeches in English and Vietnamese and their role in determining the correlation between the cultural differences of using hedged performatives and the frequencies of each type of hedged performatives in economic speeches in English and Vietnamese.

3.6. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

As presented above, the data collection is mainly based on spoken discourses of a wide range of linguistic structures in various genres of discourse in English and Vietnamese economic speeches. However, due to the manual counting process and rather small corpus, the reliability of the research is, to some extent, not as expected. And a large approaching of syntax, semantics and pragmatics make the linguistic features be fairly found out.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. SYNTACTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HEDGED PERFORMATIVES IN ECONOMIC SPEECHES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

Initial position: at the beginning of the sentence, before the subject:

(11) **Certainly**, I **would like to** share with you my vision.

[42]

(12) Mặc dù vậy, tôi bắt buộc phải nêu những thiếu sót trầm trọng về kinh tế trong những tháng gần đây.

[50]

Medial position: immediately before auxiliary or before PV

(13) I am **sincerely** welcome you at the ST Peter Burg Forum.

[42]

(14) Tôi, mặt khác phải dành nhiều ưu tiên hơn và tham gia nhiều hơn nữa trong hợp tác quốc tế.

[50]

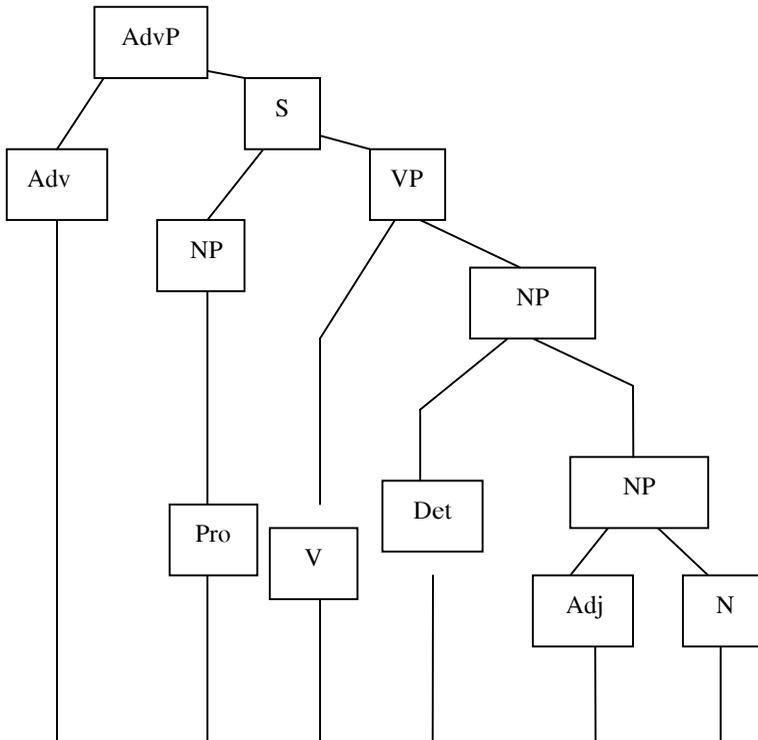
Final position: after an intransitive verb, an object or a complement.

(15) Will this make the world any more stable and predictable?

Probably not.

[42]

4.1.1. Adverbial structures of Hedged Performative in English and Vietnamese



Unfortunately, I receive a clear response

Figure 4.1: The tree diagram with initial position of Adv in English

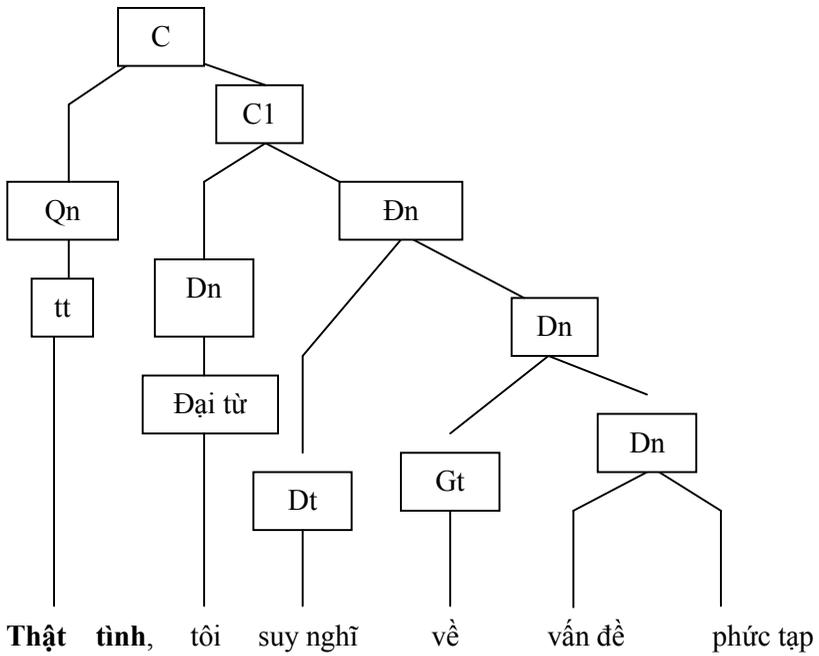


Figure 4.2: The tree diagram with initial position of Adv in English

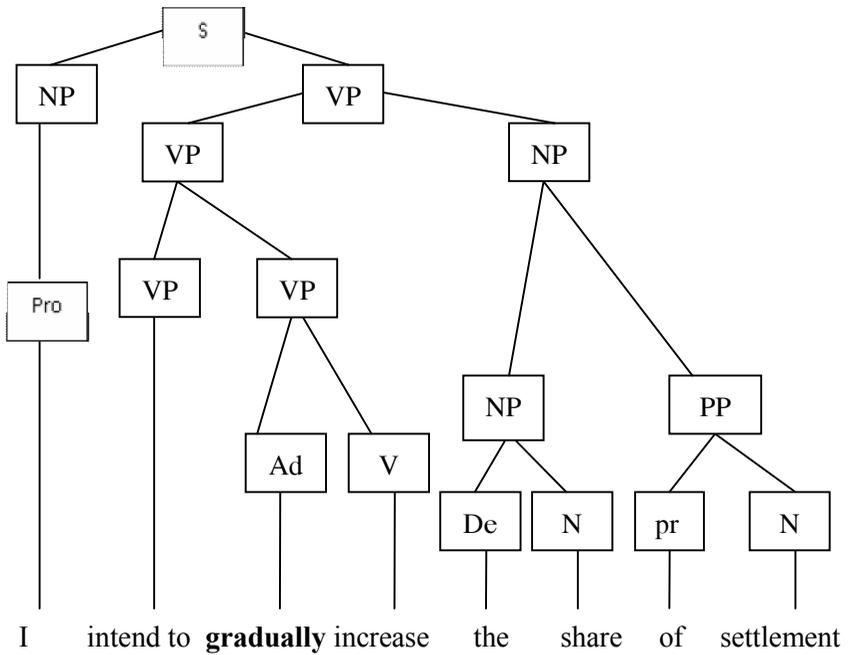


Figure 4.3: The tree diagram with medial position of Adv in English

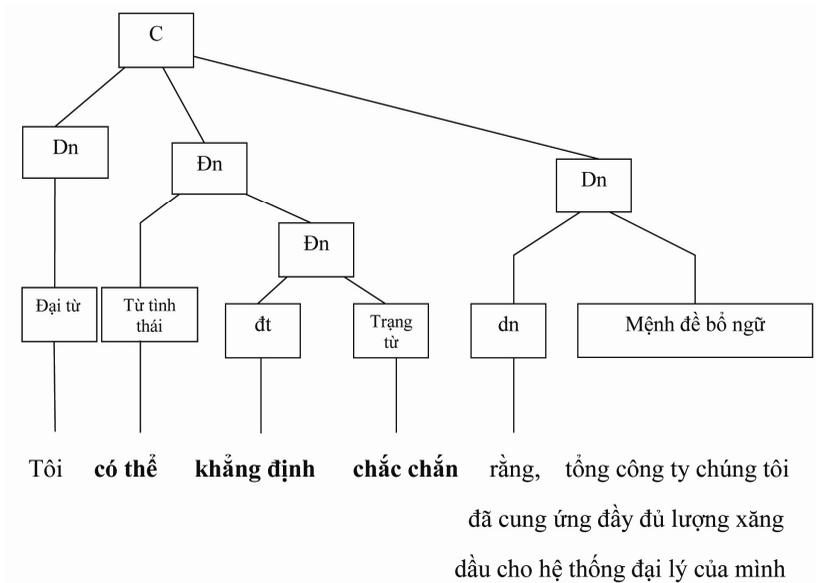


Figure 4.4: The tree diagram with medial position of Adv in Vietnamese

Table 4.1: Position of adverb -structure in English and Vietnamese equivalents in clausal structure

In general, I would like to show a syntactic position of adverb-structure in English and Vietnamese equivalents can be shown in tables 4.1 below

Position of Adv-structure	Initial	Medial	Final
English	+	+	+
Vietnamese	+	+	-

4.1.2. Adjectives structures of Hedged Performatives in English and Vietnamese

In this study, I examined hedged performatives with the following structures:

- "I + be + adjective + to V p"

- "It's + adjective + to V p"

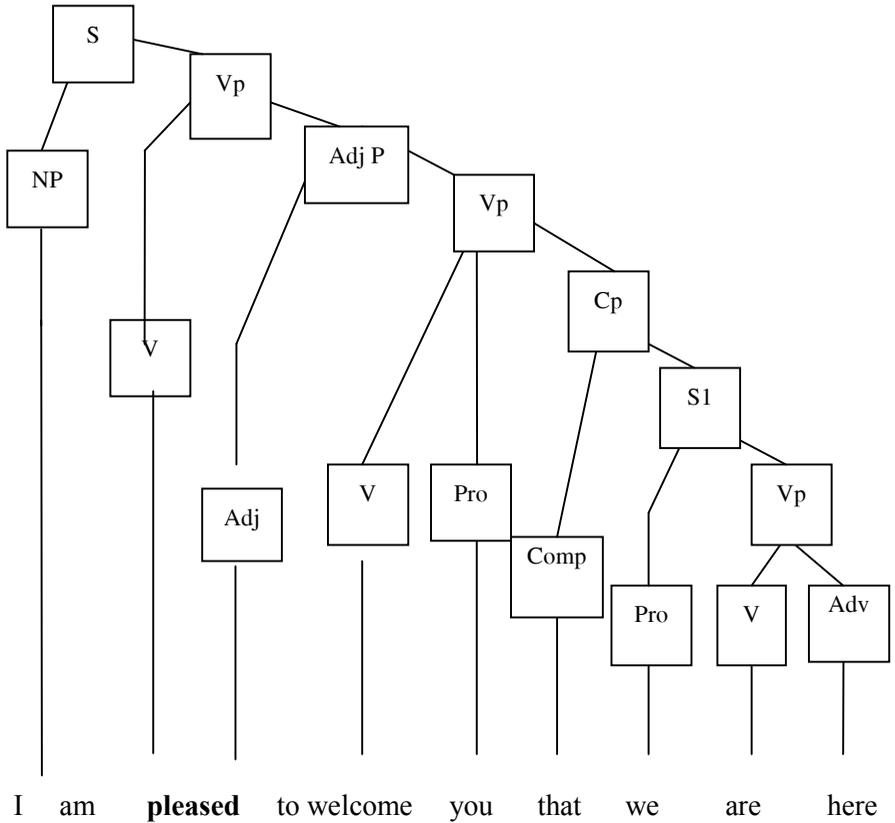


Figure 4.5: The tree diagram of adjective-structure of Adv in English

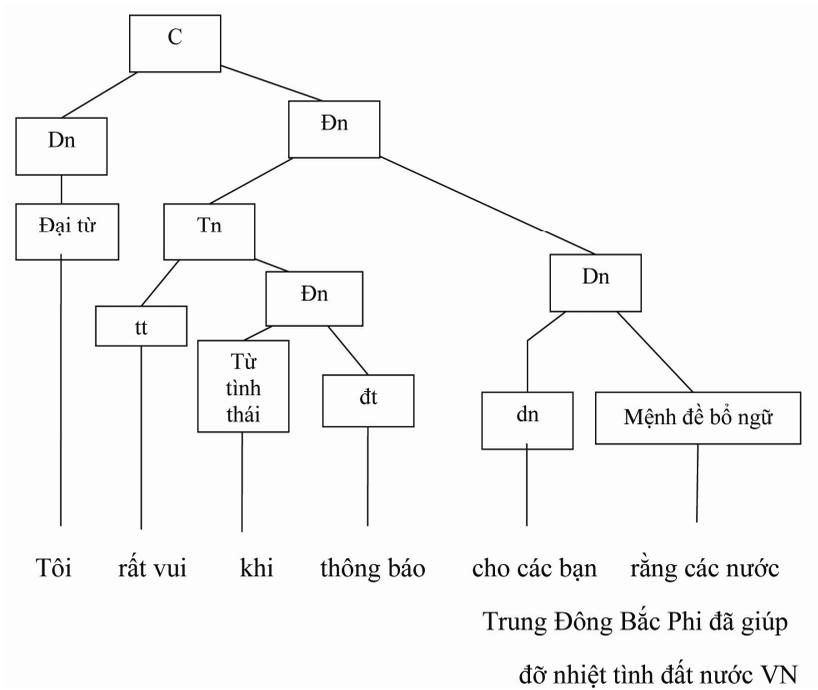
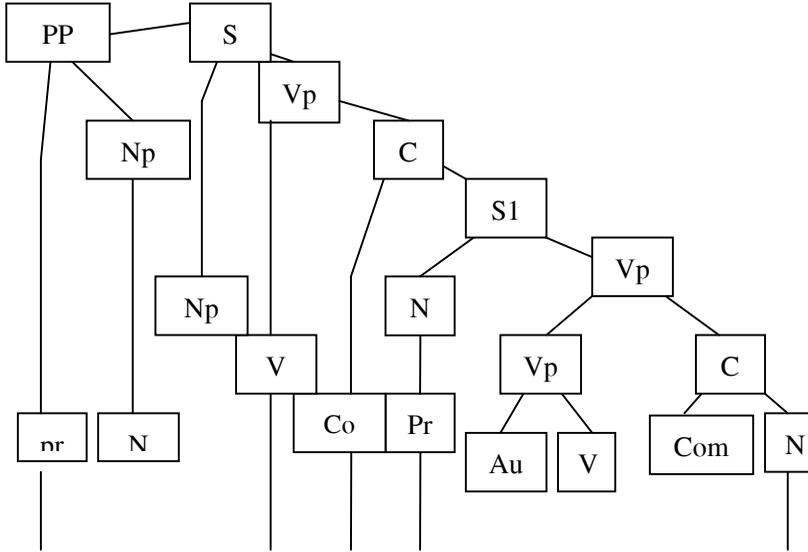


Figure 4.6: The tree diagram of adjective-structure of Adv in English

In general, the syntactic scope of hedged performatives can be summarized in table 4.2 below:

Position of adjective - structure	Initial	Medial	Final
English	-	+	-
Vietnamese	-	+	-

4.1.3. Noun structures of Hedged Performatives in English and Vietnamese



From respect, I note that I will decide that problems

Figure 4.7: The tree diagram of noun-structure in English

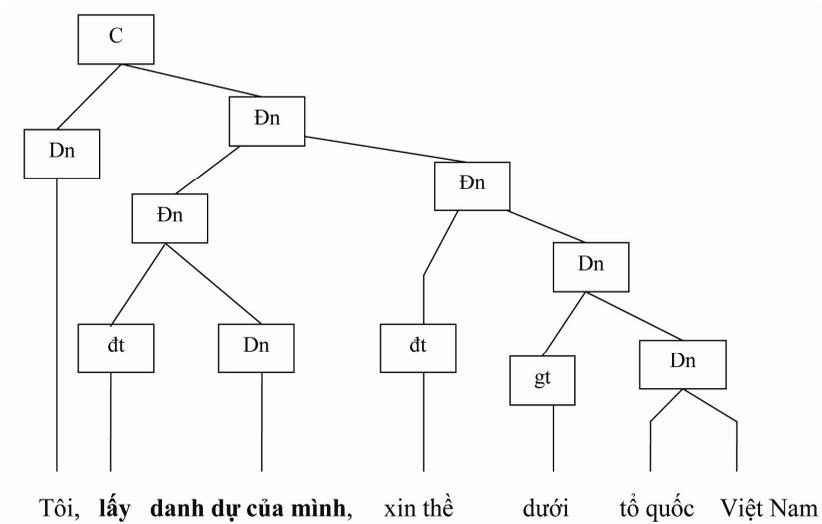


Figure 4.8: The tree diagram of noun-structure in Vietnamese

Table 4.3. Position of Noun-structure in English and Vietnamese equivalents in clausal structure

Position of noun - structure	Initial	Medial	Final
English	+	+	+
Vietnamese	+	+	-

4.1.4. Verb structures of Hedged Performatives in English and Vietnamese

Examples:

(40) I **must to say** to the world about our vision.

[44]

(41) Chẳng hạn, tôi **muốn ăn** một bữa tiệc đầy sơn hào hải vị.

[64]

Table 4.4. Position of Verb-structure in English and Vietnamese equivalents in clausal structure

Position of verb - structure	Initial	Medial	Final
English	+	+	-
Vietnamese	+	+	-

4.2. SEMANTIC AND PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF HEDGED PERFORMATIVES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

4.2.1 Hedged performatives in English and Vietnamese in view of modality

From modal auxiliaries to modal adverbs, noun phrases or adjective phrases functioning as subjuncts to the speech act verb. Then, this combination along with the first person subject, the functions as the disjunct of the utterance.

Consider some examples:

(50) I must inform you information about the wasted work proceeded.

[42]

(51) I **can now admit** that it was I who sent that respect.

[44]

(52) I'm **ready** to tell you a special event about last Forum.

[42]

(53) I **would like to** share with you a plan of reforming Russia

[42]

4.2.2. The semantic features of modal auxiliaries and semi modal occurring with performative verbs in English and Vietnamese

The modal auxiliaries (or modals). Modals are always followed by the base form of a verb or auxiliary verb. And modals are always the same form no matter what the subject is.

This section is concerned with the semantic features of *can, could, will, shall, would, must, dare, may, might, want to, would like to...* in English and *sẽ, có thể, phải, dám, muốn, dự định...* in Vietnamese. These modal auxiliary verbs were found in performatives to express the speaker's attitude to an asserting proposition and may contribute to the attitude towards the likelihood of the state of affairs.

4.2.3. Indicating scale of reliability

The degrees of reliability in English

Scale of reliability	Lower degree	High degree
May/might	+	-
Could	+	-
Can	-	+
Must	-	+
Dare	-	+
Will	-	+
Would	+	-

The degrees of reliability in Vietnamese

Scale of reliability	Lower degree	High degree
sẽ	+	+
có thể	+	-
phải	+	+
Dám	+	+

4.2.4 The modification of Modal Adverbs in Hedged performatives in terms of Facility Condition and Maxims of Conversation

This part is concerned with the semantic meaning of many English modal adverbs that can be used in the structure of hedged performatives such as *certainly, clearly, obviously, perhaps, bluntly, seriously, completely, sincerely, completely, happily, officially, always, ...* If modal verbs express modality by means of predication, adverbs typical involve modification.

4.2.5. Modifying strategies of hedged performatives:

a. Accuracy-oriented hedges

b. Speaker-oriented

4.3. SOME REMARKS FROM THE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF HEDGED PERFORMATIVES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE: THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Syntactic similarities, Semantic and pragmatic similarities, Syntactic, semantic and pragmatic differences

4.4. SUMMARY

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION
FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

In the early chapter, we have tried to find out the answer to the questions about linguistic features of hedging devices in lectures, including semantic, syntactic and pragmatic aspects.

In this chapter, based on what have been found, we would like to put forward some implications for language teaching and learning.

5.1. CONCLUSION

This thesis is a contrastive analysis of hedged performatives in English and Vietnamese and tried to present the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features in two languages.

Syntactically, English and Vietnamese can make use the same lexical devices as hedged performatives in various structures and they can be found in various positions in the clausal structure or utterance. But, in English has its disposal a wide range of modal auxiliaries in form of present tense and past tense to combine with performative verbs whereas modal makers in Vietnamese can not be used in the past and present form. And hedged performatives in Vietnamese were rarely found in the final position of the utterance.

Semantically, hedged performatives in both languages were used mainly as epistemic markers that function as to signal different shades of the speaker attitude towards the truth of the proposition. Hedged performatives in two languages can be used to express the speaker's stance toward the psychological aspect of the content of utterance. And English offers more choices with modal auxiliaries in past and present form as compared with Vietnamese.

Pragmatically, hedged performatives in both languages have a function to express the addresser' intention in boosting or mitigating the illocutionary force of the speech acts. Speaker can specify their

attitude towards the manner of delivering the pieces of the news and simultaneously imply the truth of the proposition.

5.2. IMPLICATION FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

From researching this thesis, we know about the analysis of the similarities and differences of hedged performatives in English and Vietnamese is significant and important to native speaker of English and Vietnamese learners of English in terms of language transfer.

The analysis of the similarities and differences of hedged performatives in economic speeches in English and Vietnamese is significant and important to native speaker of English and Vietnamese learners of English in terms of language transfer.

First of all, I would like to address some transfer problems that Vietnamese learners of may have to face in their performance of the target language and suggest some solutions for their learning.

The finding shows that the Vietnamese learners of English may not use hedged performatives as much as English do in some grammatical categories and in some positions because they may not have enough knowledge and experience to make use of hedged performatives in various structures. In the actual performance of modalized utterances, the Vietnamese learners of English mat not have chance to practice the use of hedged performatives. As a result, they limit themselves in some types of hedged performatives and fail to modulate their attitude in communication. The habit of using some hedged performatives in Vietnamese at some fixed position may cause the Vietnamese learners to apply this knowledge and habit in using hedged performatives in English.

In order to overcome this difficult point, Vietnamese learners of English may read materials in monolingual editions to master the

use of hedged performatives in English and then practice them in everyday conversations with their partners in their class and in the real life to acquire pragmatic knowledge about hedged performatives as well as to build up their pragmatic competence and then, successfully use hedged performatives with variety constructions.

Vietnamese learners of English as the language users should have access to the language resources in materials to acquire syntactic, semantic and pragmatic knowledge under the framework of epistemic modality, force and dynamics and politeness theory for a proper transfer. In this sense of language transfer, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic translational equivalents between Hedged performatives in the two languages should be identified and brought into use.

In teaching a language, the most important thing is to help the learners build up their language competence. Therefore, as to teacher, the following implications may be useful for teaching of hedges:

- Teacher should warm up the lesson to make it more attractive such as telling stories which including hedged performatives. This helps to make the learner become active participants during the lesson.

- To create an effective teaching method, teacher should pay much attention to both finding out and encoding hedged. Teacher should begin with easy tests that request learners to find out hedged performatives with hints and develop the test with other activities such as finding hedged performatives in illocutionary act or any speech without hints. And finally teacher should ask learners to create hedged performatives and use them in suitable cases.

- Also, hedged performatives and implicature are the two things that the learners are easily confused. Make the learners clear

that hedged performatives are often shown in some language signals and they function as the leading to the main points that are going to be conveyed; whereas, implicature needs a profound understanding and analysis of the hidden message and communication context.

- Due to limit of time in class study, the learners may have no enough time for doing exercises and reference more books about hedged performatives.

- The duty of the teacher is to give the learners communicating on class regular and representation about different topics. For Vietnamese learners of English, the different ways of expressing in writing and speaking in English may cause them many difficulties discovering and understanding hedged performatives. Therefore, it is very necessary for the learners to have a sufficient knowledge and understanding about hedged performatives in economic speech acts so that they can identify hedges in each situation.

So, from applying these methods, we will apply hedged performatives in speeches or in documents.

5.3. LIMITATION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Although it has been given a lot of effort, the study is inevitable to avoid shortcomings for the limitation in the ability of the researcher as well as the inadequacy of materials.

Besides, due to the lack of time, the examination of linguistic features of hedges in lectures was not as thorough as expected. If the researcher had more time, the analysis would be much more careful and detailed.

Therefore, I wish to further my study in the dimension of the issues presented above that is further study of the semantics of hedged performative in terms and how politeness strategies are employed by the speakers in conversations.