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**A STUDY ON HEDGES IN CONVERSATIONS  
IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE FILMS**

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**(Summary)**

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has been widely accepted that communicative competence plays an important role in daily life conversation. In order to be a successful communicator, a speaker must be aware of not only what to say but also how to say it appropriately. Therefore, in a conversation, besides informative content of an utterance, speakers often use devices to attenuate or reinforce the illocutionary force of the speech act. One of the devices is hedges which are used to avoid misunderstanding or negative reaction to speaker's speech and contribute to the flexibility and continuation for a conversation as well as achieve communicative aims. Take a look at the following example.

(1.1) (In the Humvee, the EOD unit is accompanied by Colonel John Cambridge, a doctor, who does not usually go out into the war zone – James is instructing him how to act in case of danger)

Sergeant First Class Williams James: *Not to insult your intelligence, sir*, but if the shit hits the fan, please don't fire out the Humvee. The round will just bounce around, and someone might get shot. I don't like getting shot.

Colonel John Cambridge : Understood, Sergeant.

(Film "The Hurt Locker", 2009)

In the above conversation, Sergeant James gives his instruction by using the hedge *Not to insult your intelligence, sir, but* which acts as a device for minimizing threat to the face of Colonel John Cambridge, and thus helps avoid the negative reaction.

Until now there have been many investigations into hedges from different approaches. However, there has been no comparative study of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films. The idea rests on the supposition that film dialogues reflect natural conversations, and containing a wealth of contextualized linguistic information. Therefore, a desire to have a further insight into similarities and differences in the use of hedges in conversations in both languages has inspired the researcher to carry out this thesis “**A Study on Hedges in Conversations in English and Vietnamese films**”. All efforts are made with the hope to help learners acquire the use of hedges in various interactional situations in the two languages better.

## **1.2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.2.1. Aims**

The study aims to find out:

- The manifestation of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films.
- Pragmatic features of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films.
- Similarities and differences in the use of hedges in conversations in films between the two languages.

### **1.2.2. Objectives**

- To identify forms of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films.
- To analyze the pragmatic features of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films.
- To compare/contrast hedges in conversations in English films and in Vietnamese ones.

### **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- How are hedges manifested in conversations in English and Vietnamese films?
- What are pragmatic features of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films?
- What are the similarities and differences in the use of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films?

### **1.4. THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study focuses on only words, phrases and sentences functioning as hedges in spoken English and spoken Vietnamese.

Although communication comes with paralinguistic and extra-linguistic factors, the present study is restricted to the verbal mode of hedges. Paralinguistic factors such as tone, loudness, pitch, intonation, etc. and non-verbal factors such as facial expression, eye contact, gestures, etc are beyond the scope of this study.

The main data used for analysis are expressions functioning as hedges in utterances in the transcribed conversations of the three television film series: House of cards in American English and British English and Chủ Tịch Tỉnh (The Provincial President) in Vietnamese.

### **1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The research consists of five main chapters as follows.

- Chapter 1, *Introduction*
- Chapter 2, *Literature Review and Theoretical Background*
- Chapter 3, *Research Design and Methodology*
- Chapter 4, *Findings and Discussions*
- Chapter 5, *Conclusions and Implications*

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

**2.1. PREVIOUS RESEARCHES RELATED TO THE RESEARCH**

**2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

**2.2.1. Definition of Terms**

*a. Conversation*

*b. Hedges*

*Hedges* are defined as linguistic devices used to prevent misunderstanding or unexpected reaction to what is said. The misunderstanding and unexpected reaction are caused by violating the maxims of the cooperative principle or the politeness principle.

**2.2.2. Conversational Principle and Hedges**

*a. Cooperative Principle and Hedges*

- *Cooperative Principle*
- *Hedges Addressed to the Cooperative Principle*

According to Brown and Levinson [1, p.164-171], the hedges addressed to the CP include: Quality hedges which aims at reducing or emphasizing the propositional accuracy to avoid or mark the violation of the maxim of quality; Quantity hedges which are used to inform the H that the information the S is going to say is not adequate as the H expects. What is said may be more or less informative than expected; Relevance/Relation hedges which are used when the S marks the topic change or assert that the purpose of the speech act is in fact relevant; Manner hedges: concerned with the manner in which an utterance is delivered, whether it is brief, clear

and orderly or ambiguous and obscure. When using Manner hedges, the S also query whether H is following S' discourse adequately.

***b. Politeness and Hedges***

*- Politeness Principle*

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory focused on the concept of 'face' and politeness strategies. Two aspects of face are: Negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, right to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition; Positive face: the positive consistent self-image or "personality". Two types of actions which someone can do are face threatening acts (FTAs) - "*acts which intrinsically threaten face*" and face saving acts (FSAs) - "*the acts to lessen the possible threat to another's face*" [21, p.60 – 61]. However, when the S, for some reasons, must doing FTAs which threaten H's negative or positive faces, appropriate linguistic strategies should be applied to reduce H's face loss.

*- Hedges and Politeness Strategies*

According to Brown and Levinson [1, p.116], "*hedges are normally a feature of negative politeness*" and can be used to avoid "*presuming and assuming that anything involved in the FTA is desired or believed by the hearer*", i.e. hedges can be used as a sign to indicate that the S does not want to impose on the H's desires or beliefs. Since hedging "*indicates that S considers H to be in important respects 'the same' as he, with in-group rights and duties and expectations of reciprocity, or by the implication that S likes H so that the FTA does not mean a negative evaluation in general of H's face*" [1, p.70], it can also be seen as a positive politeness strategy.

### 2.2.3. Epistemic Modality and Hedges

Lyons [11, p.797] defined epistemic modality as follows:

any utterance in which the speaker explicitly qualifies his commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed by the sentence he utters, whether the qualification is made explicit in the verbal component or in the prosodic or paralinguistic component, is an epistemically modal or modalized utterance.

Coates (as cited in Nguyễn Dương Nguyễn Trinh, 2001) provided further description of epistemic modality as concerned with *“the speaker’s assumptions, or assessment of possibilities and, in most cases, it indicates the speaker’s confidence or lack of confidence in the truth of the proposition expressed”*. Palmer [13, p.51] sees epistemic modality *“as indication by the speaker of his commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed”* and *“as the degree of commitment”* by the S to what he says. Kärkkäinen [6] states: *“Epistemic modality can be expressed by a variety of linguistic forms, such as epistemic auxiliaries verbs, adverbs, adjectives, nouns, lexical verbs and participial forms”*. As mentioned above (in 2.2.2) Ss can use linguistic expressions to aim at reducing or emphasizing the propositional accuracy to avoid or mark the violation of the maxim of quality. These expressions are hedges addressed to the maxim of quality. The concepts of epistemic modality and hedges thus overlap. In other words, in this study, the linguistic devices which express epistemic modality are considered as hedges addressed to the maxim of quality.

#### **2.2.4. A Brief Review of TV films series “House of Cards” and “Chủ Tịch Tỉnh”**

#### **2.2.5. Summary**

This chapter has presented a literature review of hedges and proposed a working definition of hedges which based on their functions for identifying the expressions as hedges in the data. This chapter also discussed how hedges operate in the framework of the Cooperative Principle by Grice and politeness theory by Brown & Levinson. All this information was designated as building a theoretical framework that underlined the investigation in the next chapters.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

- 3.1. RESEARCH METHODS**
- 3.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLES**
- 3.3. DATA COLLECTION**
- 3.4. DATA ANALYSIS**
- 3.5. INSTRUMENTS**
- 3.6. RESEARCH PROCEDURES**
- 3.7. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**
- 3.8. SUMMARY**

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. FORMS OF HEDGES

##### 4.1.1. Forms of Hedges in the Conversations in English TV Films Series “House of Cards”

###### *a. Words as Hedges*

###### *- Epistemic nouns*

Epistemic nouns are potential hedges because they contained epistemic meanings inside. They include *tentative cognition nouns* and *nouns of tentative likelihood*. *Tentative cognition nouns* can indicate that what is said is not taken categorically, but subjectively. It is implied that information in the statements supported by the nouns is just S’s personal belief, assumption, prediction or estimation. *Nouns of tentative likelihood* are nouns which indicate the degree of probability of the statements.

###### *- Epistemic auxiliary verbs and epistemic lexical verbs*

Modal auxiliaries (*will, would, can, could, may, might, must*) have been commonly considered as main devices producing epistemic meaning. Besides, our data shows that many particular lexical verbs such as *think, guess, assume, suppose, seem,...* may express epistemic meaning.

###### *- Epistemic adjectives*

In the data, there appeared some hedges in the form of adjectives which marked the information presented as uncertain, tentative or not precise. They are epistemic adjectives such as *possible, likely, potential*.

###### *- Epistemic adverbs*

Adverbs such as *maybe, probably, perhaps, possibly, potentially,...* are also other lexical means to express epistemic meaning. These adverbs are considered to constitute hedges because it expresses degree of probability dealing with the certainty or accuracy of the statement.

***b. Phrases as Hedges***

In our data, there appeared numerous introductory phrases used as hedges such as *To the best of my knowledge, Suffice it to say, As you probably know, By the way ...* . The introductory phrases are mostly used to reduce the scope of performing of the statements or to express the author's personal assessment, to mark topic shift, or to indicate other pragmatic functions. They include

***c. Clauses as Hedges***

In our data, "If" clauses are very productive source of hedges.

- (4.1) *If my memory serves me* it was Mr. Karpenia who wrote it. [32, episode 8, 00:27:19]

***d. Sentences as Hedges***

- (4.2) Doug: I need you to put someone up for a while. A young woman.

Jane: What? Who?

Doug: Her name is Rachel. *I can't tell you anymore than that.* [32, episode 7, 00:35:48]

**4.1.2. Forms of Hedges in the Conversations in Vietnamese TV Film Series "Chủ Tịch Tỉnh"**

***a. Words as Hedges***

Hedges in the Vietnamese data include the following kinds of words:

Words with epistemic meaning such as nouns: *khả năng, nhận định, quan điểm, cảm giác...*; epistemic auxiliary verbs: *có thể, có khi, chắc chắn...*; epistemic adjectives: *có thể*; epistemic adverbs: *có lẽ, hình như, cũng nên, thì phải ...*; epistemic lexical verbs: *thấy, nghĩ, cho là, đoán....*

### **b. Phrases as Hedges**

They are the introductory phrases used to indicate the degree of the information reliability such as *nghe nói, nghe đâu, nghe phong thanh, người ta đồn/nói, theo ý kiến cá nhân của tôi ...*, to indicate the scope of the statements such as *về mặt pháp luật, ở một nghĩa nào đó, ở một phương diện nào đấy, ở một chừng mực nhất định, nhìn chung, khoảng độ ...* and to connect the information such as *như tôi đã nói, như mọi người đã biết ...*. Some of them are fixed phrases used regularly in communication such as *nói tóm lại, nói/hỏi thì không phải, nói bỏ ngoài tai/bỏ quá cho ...*.

### **c. Clauses as Hedges**

In the data collected, “If” clauses are commonly used as hedges to indicate certain conditions in which the statements or actions will be done. They include the clauses with the word “Nếu” such as *nếu B cho phép/muốn/không phiền, nếu có thể được... .*

### **d. Sentences as Hedges**

Sentences as hedges in our data can be simple sentences, compound sentences or complex sentences.

## **4.2. PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF HEDGES**

### **4.2.1. Hedges addressed to the Cooperative Principle**

#### **a. Quality hedges**

- *Hedges to stress S's commitment to the truth of the utterance*

The hedges *must, certainly, definitely, actually, really, absolutely, I'm sure, I'm certain, I do believe, ...* in English and *chắc hẳn, chắc chắn, hoàn toàn, A chắc (là), A đảm bảo (là), A tin (là)* show the S's subjective belief on the reliability of the information.

On the other hand, when the truth of the utterance can be checked and confirmed, the S use hedges such as *the truth is, according to* in English and *sự thật là, trên cơ sở, căn cứ vào, theo như...thì..., rõ ràng là, bằng chứng cho thấy* in Vietnamese to show that he/she just tells the truth and says what he/she has evidence.

- *Hedges to reduce S's full responsibility for the truth of the utterance*

When the S does not have enough evidence to back up what is said, he/she may qualify the information in the utterance as the secondhand information by using hedges: *X said (that), I hear/heard (from X)(that), the rumor is* in English and *X nói/bảo(rằng), Nghe đâu/nói, Có người thì thầm rằng* in Vietnamese.

The low reliability of the propositional content can be assured when the S indicates that his utterance is just a prediction or a guess by using hedges such as *probably, maybe, perhaps, can, could, may, might, would, seem* in English and *có thể, có lẽ, hình như, dường như* in Vietnamese.

In order to avoid the disagreement from the addressee on the accuracy of the utterance, the S usually use hedges: *I think / don't think / believe / assume/ suppose (that), to my understanding, to the best of my knowledge* in English and *(cá nhân) A nghĩ/thấy (là), A đoán (là), A không nghĩ (là), quan điểm của A là, theo A/nhận định của A (thì)* in Vietnamese. The use of these hedges qualifies the statement as a personal opinion that can be true or false.

### ***b. Quantity Hedges***

#### *- Hedges marking giving old information*

In conversations, saying what has been known by the addressee is considered an unnecessary thing. However, in order to emphasize the validity of the information or connect the old information with the new one for transmitting S's intent to the H, the S needs do this. Hedges employed in these cases help signal his/her awareness of quality maxim and may receive cooperative attitude from the addressee.

In the study, these hedges can be recognized by phrases as *as you (probably) know, you know, you see, as many of you may be aware, I said, Like I said* in English and *như B đã rõ/biết, B còn lạ gì, A đã nói (rồi), A đã nói với B bao nhiêu lần rồi* in Vietnamese.

It can be seen that hedges such as *as you (probably) know, as many of you may be aware* and the Vietnamese equivalents *như các anh đã rõ/biết* are used when the S predicts that the H has known the information which he/she is going to tell. This is a subjective prediction so it may be true or false. The function of these hedges is to emphasize the information in the utterance.

By using the hedges *I said* and *A đã nói (rồi)*, the S repeats the information which said to addressee, so this information is certainly old to both the H and the S. These hedges are usually employed when the S realizes that the H seems not to believe in what is said and thus he/she needs to tell this again to confirm the validity of the information at the present.

Beside the function of emphasizing the value of the utterance at the current time, hedges marking giving old information serve the purpose of connecting the old information with the new one. The old

information is considered as the foundation, the condition for the S to provide new information or the explanation for a certain speech act.

- *Hedges marking giving less information than expected*

In conversations in our study, for some subjective reasons or objective ones, the S cannot give sufficient information as expected, and thus he/she uses hedges like *the gist of it is, to some extent, suffice it to say that, I can't tell you anymore than that, I won't go into too many specifics other than to say, I couldn't possibly comment* in English and *đại khái là, nhìn chung, đứng về mặt luật pháp, A không biết gì hơn, A không thể nói gì nhiều* in Vietnamese to mark his/her violation.

- *Hedges marking giving more information than expected*

When Ss find it is necessary to give more information than expected to make something clear, they will use some hedges as an indication of their intended violating of the maxim, and thus can suppress such potential misunderstanding and uncooperative attitude from addressees. *Let me further say that* is an example of a hedge marking giving more information than expected.

**c. Relevance Hedges**

The function of the hedges is to either indicate that the S is about to say something which is unconnected or just seemingly unconnected to the main topic, or to indicate that he/she wants to move back the conversation's main topic following a digression or distraction. Besides, there are relevance hedges used to show "*the point or purpose of the speech act is in fact relevant*" [1, p.169].

- *Hedges marking topic change*

The shift of topic is marked by using the hedges *Oh, hey, now, by the way, anyway* in English and *à, này, à mà này, bây giờ A muốn*

*B chuyển qua, nhân đây, nhân tiện, à quên, ôi thôi chết rồi, nói chuyện khác nhé* in Vietnamese.

- *Hedges marking the relevance of the purpose of speech act*

They are the hedges used to indicate that the point or purpose of the S's speech act is in fact relevant. In our data, Ss use expressions such as *Nếu B cho phép/đồng ý/muốn* for declaratives and commissives and *B đã hỏi thì A cũng xin nói/chẳng đâu* for replies to questions.

#### **d. Manner Hedges**

This maxim is concerned with the manner in which an utterance is delivered, whether it is brief, clear and orderly or ambiguous and obscure.

- *Hedges to stress the observation of the maxim of manner*

In the following examples, the Ss introduce his utterances with the hedge *Tóm lại* and *The gist of it is that* to show their awareness of the expectation of being brief.

(4.3) Em vừa nói chuyện với Bình. Nhiều chuyện lắm nhưng **tóm lại** hai đứa khó lòng xa nhau.

[34, episode 37, 00:42:17]

(4.4) Of course, I'm getting this secondhand from Peter, but *the gist of it is that...* that you lack entirely in leadership, and that you have no sense of respect.

[32, episode 11, 00:09:50]

- *Hedges to notice the violation of the maxim of manner*

They include hedges such as *it's difficult to summarize, em không nhớ rõ lắm, ...*

- *Hedges for checking whether the maxim of manner has been met*

This type of hedges is used when the S wants to check whether his/her utterance is clear enough for the H to understand or not. The H's response will help him/her adjust the way to deliver the utterance. These hedges include expressions such as *rõ không?*, *hiểu không?* in Vietnamese and *got it?*, *OK?*, *do you understand?*, *do you know what I mean?*, *see what I'm saying?* in English.

#### **4.2.2. Hedges Addressed to Politeness**

##### ***a. Maxims Hedges addressed to Politeness***

Some quality hedges that weaken S's commitment may redress advice or criticism. Quantity hedges may be used to soften disagreements between Ss and Hs or to seek the agreement from the Hs.

##### ***b. Politeness Hedges***

Politeness hedges in our data collected serve the following functions.

##### ***- Hedges Expressing Esteem***

Being aware of the risk of making one lose face when making FTAs such as refusal, giving advices, making requests and so on, the speaker can choose the strategy of giving the listeners a face, viz. making them to feel great first. One effective way to do this is to show how you appreciate the partner. Obviously, these hedges are addressed to H's positive face.

In our English data, the hedges expressing esteem are commonly used when the S has to give a refusal. In our Vietnamese data, they are also used to redress advices.

- *Hedges as 'defuse' factors*

In a communication process, there are certain cases in which after receiving the information the H misunderstands the S and thus disagrees or has negative reactions. By using hedges, the S directly mentions these possible thinking or reactions from the H when receiving the information. This is considered as a way to 'defuse' the reactions and prevent them from happening. It can be seen that the hedges addressed to S's positive face.

- *Hedges as 'introductory' factors*

The introductory hedges are manipulated to inform that what is going to be said afterwards may threaten the H's face. Therefore, the Ss can avoid making Hs surprised or even shocked and provide them with psychological preparation before receiving the information.

- *Hedges as Explanation*

The hedges are employed as the explanation for doing the FTAs.

- *Hedges as Apology*

In the data collected, these hedges include those which Ss use to indicate reluctance, give overwhelming requests or beg for forgiveness.

### 4.3. THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF HEDGES IN CONVERSATIONS IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE FILMS

#### 4.3.1. Summary of the data – Quantification of hedges usage

##### a. Form categories

Table 4.1 Relative frequency (%) of grammatical forms of hedges in English and Vietnamese

Category	Occurrences		%	
	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese
<b>Word</b>	190	201	46.2%	41.8%
<b>Phrase</b>	88	113	21.4%	23.5%
<b>Clause</b>	117	131	28.5%	27.2%
<b>Sentence</b>	16	36	3.9%	7.5%
<b>Total</b>	411	481	100%	100%

Table 4.1. shows the high occurrences of words as hedges (46.2% in English and 41.8% in Vietnamese) compared with the other grammatical categories. In contrary, sentences as hedges take the modest number in both English data and Vietnamese data (3.9% and 7.5% in English and in Vietnamese respectively).

##### b. Pragmatic feature categories

- *Hedges addressed to the Cooperative Principle*

Table 4.6. Relative frequency (%) of hedges addressed to the CP in conversations in English and Vietnamese films

Category	Occurrences		%	
	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese
<b>Quality hedges</b>	44/278	40/194	61.1%	55.6%
<b>Quantity hedges</b>	17/31	13/38	23.6%	18.1%
<b>Relevance hedges</b>	4/11	15/174	5.6%	20.8%
<b>Manner hedges</b>	7/12	4/23	9.7%	5.6%
<b>Total</b>	72/332	72/429	100%	100%

- *Hedges addressed to politeness*

Table 4.9 Relative frequency (%) of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films

Category	Occurrences		%	
	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese
<b>Hedges addressed to the Cooperative Principle</b>	72/332	72/429	69.9%	79.1%
<b>Hedges addressed to politeness</b>	31/79	29/52	30.1%	31.9%
<b>Total</b>	103/411	91/481	100	100

Table 4.9. shows the predominance of hedges addressed to the CP in both English data and in Vietnamese one (69.9% and 79.1% in English and in Vietnamese respectively). The hedges addressed to politeness account for only 30.1% and 31.9% in English and in Vietnamese respectively. The result indicates that in conversations in English and Vietnamese films, the hedges addressed to the CP are used more frequently than the hedges addressed to politeness.

#### **4.3.2. The Similarities and Differences in the Use of Hedges in Conversations in English and Vietnamese films**

##### ***a. The similarities in the use of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films***

As for the hedge manifestation, hedges in English and Vietnamese can be words, phrases, clauses and sentences. The sentences as hedges are used less frequently than others by both English speakers and Vietnamese speakers. To the affairs which need frequent hedging as a part of the communication, the hedges are lexicalized and have the simple grammatical form as words, phrases

or clauses. Meanwhile, the hedges which are realized in sentences seem to be created and used in particular situations and reflect the speaker's individual characteristics.

In terms of pragmatic features of hedges, it can be seen that both English speakers and Vietnamese speaker use hedges to show their respect to the CP and to the politeness. Out of four maxims of the CP, the maxim of quality is considered as the most important reason for both English speakers and Vietnamese speakers to use hedges. Another similarity in the use of hedges in conversations is that in many cases, maxims hedges are used straightforward politeness applications. In other words, the maxims hedges are not only addressed to the CP but also addressed to politeness.

***b. The differences in the use of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films***

Beside the common features discussed above, there is a number of differences in the employment of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films. Followings are the differences revealed from the data analysis.

There are significant differences in the number of quantity hedges and relevance hedges and their occurrences in English data and in Vietnamese data. This indicates that besides the maxim of quality, English speakers give the respect to the maxim of quantity, while Vietnamese speakers consider the maxim of relevance as an important reason for hedging. This may be the result of the differences in the communication habits in the two cultures. The directness in the way Western people communicate in conversations requires them make their contribution as informative as required. Providing more or less information than expected seems to be

considered as the violation of the directness. People from the Eastern cultures like Vietnamese, on the other hand, prefer the indirectness in communication. Therefore, they are tend to not giving direct information but choosing beating about the bush and thus the hedges marking the topic change and the relevance of the purpose of the speech act frequently appear in the conversations.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **5.1. CONCLUSIONS**

This thesis has investigated hedges in the discourse of films in English and Vietnamese (particularly in conversations in the TV films series “House of cards” in English and the TV film series “Chú tịch tinh” in Vietnamese).

In the research, hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films have been viewed in the light of pragmatics. They have been seen as linguistic expressions functioning to avoid misunderstanding or negative reactions from the Hs. The study on hedges in the thesis was done by examining and analyzing the manifestation and the pragmatic features of hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films. Some similarities and differences in the use of hedges in conversations in films between the two languages were drawn out on the basis of the analysis.

In terms of the hedge manifestation, we have found out that hedges in English and Vietnamese can be in forms of words, phrases, clauses and sentences. The words as hedges are more frequently used

and the sentences as hedges are used less frequently than others in the conversations in both the English films and Vietnamese one.

In terms of the pragmatic features, it can be seen that both English speakers and the Vietnamese ones use hedges to show their respect to the CP and to the politeness. For four maxims of the CP, there are four types of hedges addressed to the CP: *quality hedges*, *quantity hedges*, *relevance hedges* and *manner hedges*. Quality hedges include those stressing S's commitment to the truth of the utterance and those reducing S's full responsibility to the truth of the utterance. Quantity hedges include those marking giving old information, those marking giving less information than expected and those marking giving more information than expected. Relevance hedges include those marking topic change and those marking the relevance of the purpose of speech act. Manner hedges include those stressing the observation of the maxim of manner, those noticing the violation of the maxim of manner and those for checking whether the maxim of manner has been met. In the four maxims, the maxim of quality is considered as the most important reason for the use of hedges in both English speakers and Vietnamese ones. Besides the maxim of quality, English speakers give more respect to the maxim of quantity than to others, while Vietnamese ones consider the maxim of relevance as the second important reason for their use of hedges. In many cases, the maxim hedges are also used for politeness function. Both quality hedges and quantity hedges are frequently used for politeness, and there are neither relevance hedges nor manner hedges used for this purpose by both English speakers and Vietnamese ones. In addition to the hedges on the maxims with the politeness function, there are other

politeness hedges. They include *hedges expressing esteem*, *hedges as 'defuse' factors*, *hedges as 'introductory' factors*, *hedges as explanation* and *hedges as apology*.

From all these findings, some implications have been suggested with an attempt to help teachers and students to teach and learn how to use hedges in English. Some exercises have been provided as class activities for teaching and learning hedges in general and hedges in conversations in particular.

## **5.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING**

The result from the data analysis has proved that linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to communicate successfully in the target language. Teaching hedges, accordingly, plays a very important part in language learning and teaching. Until now, English language learners have been provided language materials to use in communicative situations with language functions. They may know which proper patterns should be used in interaction but may not know why they should use them. In other words, they are not aware of the motivations of using these language patterns. Therefore, when teaching hedges, first and foremost, teachers should make students aware of the importance of hedges in languages and the motivations of using hedges. Also, teaching hedges should be context – based, so dialogues or conversations are where this can be done properly.

Followings are some class activities with the hope to aid teachers in guiding Vietnamese students to learn hedges in English.

**Activity 1**

*Teacher provides students with a dialogue containing hedges and asks them to identify all the hedges used in the conversation, then discuss what functions they might be fulfilling. Do they sound natural and meaningful, or are they distracting or unnecessary?*

The goal of this activity is to help students realize what hedges are and the functions of hedges.

**Activity 2**

*Teacher re-words the dialogue by taking out all the hedges, then ask students to compare the re-worded version to the original one.*

Again this activity is to show the students the importance of using hedges in communication. The worse re-worded version in comparison with the original one will give students the awareness of the importance as well as the functions of hedges in communication.

**Activity 3**

*Teacher asks students to translate the hedges in the dialogue into Vietnamese. Students work in group and discuss if these hedges sounds natural in Vietnamese version.*

This activity helps students be aware of the similarities and differences in the use of hedges in English and in Vietnamese, so they can properly use hedges in English.

**Activity 4**

*Teacher provides students with a list of hedges and asks them to put the right hedges into the gaps in the utterances in the conversation.*

With a list of hedges provided, students may work out which are the best places to put them in, so they can know how to use hedges properly

### **Activity 5**

*Role- play: Teacher gives a situation in which using hedges is necessary. Students were asked to making the conversation and using the proper hedges if necessary.*

This activity will give students a chance to practice what they have learnt and manipulate this for the real situations.

### **5.3. LIMITATIONS**

Despite the researcher's all efforts, the thesis does bear some limitations. Firstly, the present study could not take into account prosodic features and paralinguistic factors which are supposed to be crucial in spoken discourse to highlight their hedging meanings. Secondly, the data for the study was only taken from the three TV series films. Therefore, the similarities and differences in hedges in conversations in English and Vietnamese films have not fully been found.

### **5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTHER STUDY**

Due to the insufficiency of this study, I suggest that hedges in conversations in films should be investigated at socio-pragmatic approach in which the effects of some social factors such as age, social status, social relationship and so on should be examined. The prosodic features and paralinguistic factors should be taken into account in the future researches.

Besides, investigations into hedges in conversations in other discourses (e.g. talk shows, interviews, etc. ) are also needed.