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**A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF REQUESTING
IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE
CONVERSATIONS**

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

As a speech act, requests are made regularly in people's daily life. People consider requests as means to enhance their various social relationships. They include asking someone to do something for you, asking for help or requesting something. A request is, according to Searle (1969), a directive speech act whose illocutionary purpose is to get the hearer to do something in circumstances in which it is not obvious that he/she will perform the action in the normal course of events. (p.66). Based on the definition provided by Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary, request refers to the speech act of politely or officially asking for something in as in the sentence *I request for a taxi at eight o'clock*. Or taking a request in a Vietnamese novel, there is a sentence "*Ăn cho vui. Cô Nga*" (Thach Lam, 2000, p.167). This kind of speech act is socially understood as a way for people to express their attitude along with the request rather than just give some orders. However, the act of making a request may vary and also different cultures have a different view on which "polite" is considered to be "polite enough" in each particular situation, regarding of social factors.

The study of requesting in English versus Vietnamese will not only clarify the similarities and differences but also show the diversity in making request in both languages.

For a language learner, mastering how to make requests or any other types of conversations may help them use that language more efficiently. Therefore, this study is carried on to make a comparison between the ways English native speakers and Vietnamese native speakers make requests in daily situations.

1.2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.2.1. Aims

This study aims at comparing requests made in two languages, i.e., English and Vietnamese in order for learners to have a clearer view about how to make requests properly in the language that they are trying to master.

1.2.2. Objectives

This study is intended:

- To categorize the structures of requesting in English and Vietnamese conversations
- To show the similarities and differences in making requests

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What types of structures of requests are used in English and Vietnamese?
2. What are the similarities and differences in the requests made in the two languages?

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is confined to using data collected from English and Vietnamese daily situations, collected by survey. The requests made by respondents will be the data for this research.

In terms of contrastive analysis, speech acts in two languages are usually categorized by structures, semantics, grammar and pragmatics. However, due to the limited of time and the purpose of the study, the comparison between requesting in English and Vietnamese conversations will be made in terms of structures.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is carried out in order to contribute to the use of language, especially the act of making requests in English and

Vietnamese in terms of structures. Moreover, a contrastive analysis of requesting in the two languages, which are quite different in term of cultures, will provide evidence and contribute partly to the assumptions about universality character peculiarities of language in worldwide communication. Furthermore, the study of requesting associated with cultural and social factors can be broadened to the study of the culture of the spoken language community. Finally, the findings of this study may help to improve the effectiveness of learning English in Vietnam, especially when being affected by the cultural and social factors of the two languages.

1.6. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The organization of the study consists of:

Chapter 1 “Introduction”

Chapter 2 “Literature Review”

Chapter 3 “Research Methodology”

Chapter 4 “Findings and Discussion”

Chapter 5 “Conclusions”

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. OVERVIEW

By far, requests have been the most researched speech act not only in cross-cultural, variational and interlanguage pragmatics but also in conversation analysis research. In the leading top upon requesting was Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984). Requests and Apologies: A Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP). It had listed the strategies of requests in 8 different languages, but not including Vietnamese.

Until now, there have been some works studying about making requests. A Vietnamese researcher has done a study in this field, i.e., Le (2008). Politeness strategies in requests and invitations: A comparative study between English and Vietnamese. The study pointed some major differences between politeness strategies employed in English requests and invitations in comparison with the Vietnamese ones.

Dau (2007) focused on the relationship between politeness and indirectness used in the speech acts of making requests in English and Vietnamese. The study pointed some major differences in making requests in English and Vietnamese.

In another study, Umar (2004) compared the request strategies used by Arab learners of English to native English speakers (NESs). The researcher had concluded that the two groups used similar strategies when making a request to equals or people in higher rank. For lower position addressees, the Arabic tended to use more direct requests than the British. It was also revealed that NESs used more semantic and syntactic modifiers, so that they were considered to be more polite in making requests.

Hilbig (2009) took the similar way of studying with the request strategies in Lithuanian and British English. The researcher followed the principles from Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper's (1989) CCSARP. According to the findings, both groups used conventionally indirect requests, but the Lithuanian respondents used more direct strategies (e.g., imperatives) and non-conventionally indirect strategies (e.g., hints) and Lithuanians preferred to perform more positive politeness strategies.

Studying all these articles, the researcher noticed there is a gap in studies related to requesting. Mostly, they just focused on

politeness or directness rather than real and full requests in daily conversations. Moreover, there has been no specific study on comparison about requesting between English and Vietnamese, particularly in terms of structures. This thesis will contribute to knowledge of the field and provide help for English learners to be easier to master the use of requesting in the target language or culture.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. The theory of speech acts

According to Schmidt and Richards (1980), “*speech act theory has to do with the functions and uses of language*” (p. 129). In the broadest sense, speech acts are all the human five activities that people perform when they speak. For example, they use language to consolidate political regimes, to entertain, and to communicate. In the narrowest sense, as proposed by Hymes (1972), this refers to the situations associated with speech, such as “*fights, hunts, meals, parties, and the like.*”

2.2.2. Requests as a speech act

2.2.2.1. Definitions of requests

The speech act of request, according to Byon (2004), is “a directive that embodies an effort on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to do something, generally for a speaker’s goal” (1674).

2.2.2.2. Structure of the speech act of requests

a. In English

Direct and conventionally-indirect requests comprise a continuum of different strategies. A list of the strategies that comprise each request type (direct, CI, and NCI) is provided below, followed by examples for each strategy.

Table 2.2. Different strategies of making requests

| | Strategies | Examples |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Direct requests | Imperatives | Tell me the recipe! |
| | Performatives | I will ask the chef to tell us the recipe! |
| | Unhedged | I'm asking you to tell me the recipe! |
| | Hedged | I want to ask you the recipe! |
| | Want statements | I wish you'd tell me the recipe! |
| | Locution derivable | How to cook this dish? |
| Conventionally indirect requests | Availability | Have you got time to tell me the recipe? |
| | Prediction | Is there any chance to tell me the recipe? |
| | Permission | Could I ask you about the recipe? |
| | Willingness | Would you mind telling me the recipe? |
| | Ability | Could you tell me the recipe? |
| Non-conventionally indirect requests | Hints | I have to cook this dish. |

b. In Vietnamese

Khuat (2010) had classified the requests as followed:

Table 2.3. The classification of requests

| | Strategies | Examples |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Competitive requests | Ordering | Mai cả lớp đi học sớm trực nhật sạch sẽ cho Cô. |
| | Making suggestions | Ngày mai nếu được thì các bạn đi học sớm giúp lớp trực nhật được không? |
| | Asking permission | Ngày mai con đi học sớm để trực nhật được không Mẹ? |
| | Making requests | Nam, mai đi học sớm trực nhật giúp Cô nhé. |
| Friendly requests | Giving advice | Bạn nên đi học sớm để trực nhật sạch sẽ kẻo không Cô la đấy. |
| | Expressing encouragement | Cố gắng dậy sớm đi học cho kịp giờ trực nhật nhé. |
| | Making invitation | Mai đi ăn kem sau giờ học nhé! |
| Polite requests | | Bạn vui lòng giữ yên lặng trong thư viện nhé, xin cảm ơn bạn. |

Hoang (1980) said that the requests did not have their own distinctive grammar structures but the requesting voices and sub words. The requests claimed the speakers' need and request the

hearers respond by doing the actions requested. The sentences of requests always go with the meaning of the actions. It includes invitation, requesting, ordering, forbidding and wishing. The requests also have both positive and negative forms. These two forms have their own words to recognize.

According to Diep (2002), the requests are used to express the need of asking or force somebody to do something inside the content of the sentences. However, he had noted that we should consider whether it is a real request or a temporary request.

Chapter Three

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.1. RESEARCH METHODS

This study takes the form of qualitative research. The structures of the requests made by participants are taken into account. Descriptive method and comparative analysis using qualitative approaches are applied in order to achieve the research aims and objectives.

3.2. DATA COLLECTION

The survey was done with an English and a Vietnamese version. The researcher printed the questionnaires out to paper and gave them to the native speakers to fill in. First, the native speakers read through the situations and were encouraged to give out their immediate requests following the settings. The researcher sat with them in order to explain any misunderstandings so that the requests received were definitely clear.

3.3. DATA ANALYSIS

First, the requests in English and Vietnamese were sorted into groups of languages to sort out the frequent forms of requests

using in the two languages. Second, the two forms of requests were compared to give out the similarities and differences in term of structures.

Chapter Four

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. AN OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

4.1.1. Requests made in English in term of structures

4.1.1.1. Structures

From these collected samples, we can see that they have some general forms of making requests.

First, when they want to ask somebody to do something, they usually put some common words before, in the middle of or after the questions to make the requests more polite. For example, the most common used is “**please**” (in all collected samples). The structure we usually see is:

(Please) + Can/could/would + you + (please) + V + (,please)?

Moreover, English native speakers tend to say “**Thank you**” or “**Thanks**” following their requests to show their politeness even when they have not known if the addresser will accept to do it or not.

Second, when they want to give invitations to anybody, the structures used are various. However, the levels of the relationships between the people can affect the degree of directness in the structures. For example, when the speakers and the hearers are not so close or newly-met, they tend to used more indirect structures. However, if the relationships between the two are quite close, the structures vary. They usually use the informal structures that go directly into the purposes.

Together with the requests of invitations, the speakers tend to add the hearer’s names or nicknames or a way of calling someone

special to make it opener, such as **“My love”**, **“dear”**, **“honey”**, **“baby”**, **“babe”**, etc.

Third, requests of ordering still have various structures, especially when the actions needed are towards the speakers. In this case, the ordering requests are quite polite in any kind of settings, from family close-knit to complete strangers. Rarely did the researcher find any sentences of requests that do not have a polite common word like **“please”**, **“excuse me”**, **“pardon me”**, **“I beg your pardon”**, **“kindly”** or using **“would”** instead of **“can”** or **“could”**. The likely requests are:

- Would you please + V?
- Would you mind + V_ing?
- Can you please + V?

However, according to the survey data, in some particular circumstances, the speakers may choose the imperatives to get what they want quickly. Apparently, this kind of ordering can only be used for the people who are younger than the speaker or having close relations. But anyway, the polite words still cannot be forgotten.

Fourth, how people make requests towards a number of others is quite different from the face-to-face orders between just two. When they are in public or need to talk in front of many people, their requests tend to be shorter than normal. It can also be an imperative if you are the controllers of the situations or you are in a higher position. Take those as examples:

- Please + V!
- Can you please + V?
- N + would be appreciated.
- Can everyone + V?
- Can I have your + V?

Last but not least, Begging is also a particular type of requests. In this circumstance, the speakers are in lower position or dependent on the hearers. That is the reason why they need to vary their requests.

According to the data survey, the collected requests tend to have one or two sentences talking about the situations they have been through and the promising ideas they offer when they are satisfied with what they request. The frequent structures here are:

- (The situation) + Can you please + V + (The promise) + (Thanking)!

In short, there are many kinds of requests in term of structures that the English native speakers often use in their daily conversations.

Table 4.2. The English request structure.

| Number | Structures |
|--------|--|
| 1. | Can/could/would you please + V? |
| 2. | Let's + V! |
| 3. | Do you like to + V? |
| 4 | Imperatives. |
| 5 | Would you mind + V_ing? |
| 6 | The indirect ways (telling stories, promising, etc.) |

4.1.1.2. How social relationships affect the structure of requests that English native speakers used?

In the first situation, the requests are made to ask somebody to do something. However, the different settings or social relationships do not influence the structures much. Whereas they are close or completely strangers, in an academic settings or outside, they

all seem to be polite in making requests by using “**please**” and the structure of checking the hearers’ Ability of doing the actions.

Second, when making requests of invitation, the levels of the relationships between the people can affect the degree of directness in the structures.

Third, the ordering requests are quite polite in any kind of relationships, from family close-knit to complete strangers. Therefore, it does not affect much the structures they use. On the other hand, for the people who are younger than the speaker or having close relations, they would not choose the complicated or indirect structures of requests. They prefer to use short and direct structures (such as Imperatives) to get what they want. But anyway, the polite words still cannot be forgotten. As we can see, if they are in a family, the age still does not decide the difference in the structures of requests. They are almost the same because we use the same pronouns for all relationships (just “**you**” and “**me/I**”).

Fourth, how people make requests towards a number of others is still affected by the social relationships inside. When the speakers are in higher position and in control of the settings they are into, they tend to choose more direct ways of making requests such as Imperatives. However, a number of people would choose the Hints, in order for the hearers to know what to do themselves rather than say it out loud like other requests. And when the people are in a formal setting such as a wedding party, they also prefer to use extra polite requests to show respect. The structures they use change from direct Imperatives to indirect Hints.

Last but not least is the Begging. In this circumstance, the speakers are in lower position or dependent on the hearers. But they

still want to have their requests approved and done. So, in any social relationships that the researcher provided, the participants still choose many different ways of making requests with the hope that their need would be helped.

4.1.2. Requests made in Vietnamese in term of structures

4.1.2.1. Structures

As in the data table, some general forms of making requests in Vietnamese had been found. First, when they want to ask somebody to do something, they usually use this following type of requests.

Pronoun + V + giúp + Pronoun + nhé/vói/tí!

The differences in settings just make people use different pronouns addressing the hearers. Vietnamese people also use the word “**oi**” after the name they call the others to grab their attention before giving any requests. And to make the requests more comfortable to follow, Vietnamese tend to use the ending “**nhé**”, “**vói**”, “**tí**”, “**nha**”. The thanking is also often offered after the requests. Even when they want to make their requests into questions, they simply add the word “**có thể**” before the actions in the structures.

Second, when Vietnamese native speakers want to give invitations to anybody, the structures used depend on the levels of the relationships between the people. When the speakers and the hearers are not so close or newly-met, they tend to use more indirect structures. Mostly, they want to ask for the opinion on the invitations rather than directly giving one. The structure used is:

- Pronoun + có thể mời + Pronoun + V + không?

Sometimes, even before they ask for others’ opinion on the invitation idea, they will add an opening such as asking for their

availability of joining the activity on the date intended. Nevertheless, in some situations, the speakers will try to break the ice soon by just inviting like they have been close before. Anyway, it depends on the circumstances at the point of making this request of invitations.

However, if the relationships between the two are quite close, the structures vary. They usually use the informal structures that go directly into the purposes. Most of the time, they just use the structures of an order rather than a proper request of invitation. The words of encouragement will sometimes be provided to push the hearers to agree with the invitations, such as “**nhé**”, “**nào**”, “**đi**”. The promise of covering the expenses is usually applied, too.

Together with the requests of invitations, the speakers tend to add the hearer’s names or nicknames or a way of calling someone special to make it opener, such as “**Ê**”, “**Này**”, “**anh/em yêu**”, etc.

Third, requests of ordering are slightly different from just making requests to ask somebody to do something in Vietnamese, especially when the actions needed are towards the speakers. This includes bringing something to the order makers. In this case, the ordering requests are quite polite in any kind of settings, from family close-knit to complete strangers. However, for strangers, the structures used are longer with the polite common words such as “**xin lỗi**”, “**làm phiền**”, “**làm ơn**”, “**giúp tôi**”, “**cho tôi được không**”. The likely requests are:

- Pronoun, làm ơn/ nhờ + V!
- Pronoun + có thể cho/giúp + Pronoun + V?
- Làm phiền + Pronoun + V.

The pronouns that Vietnamese people use vary based on the age of the people. However, if the hearers are completely strangers,

people tend to choose a higher-position pronoun to address them in order to show politeness.

In Vietnamese close relationships, the speakers may choose the imperatives to get what they want quickly. They just need to call the people by their addressing pronouns related to the relationships (in family). Or simply just add the word “**giúp**” (means “**help**”) before the orderings. Sometimes, the thanking is not necessary because they think the order is too simple to say thank.

Fourth, how people make requests towards a number of others is quite different from the face-to-face orders between just two. When they are in public or need to talk in front of many people, the structures they use depend on whether they know the hearers clearly or not. If they don't know the people well, they will choose to use the structures that include the polite pronouns as subjects. Moreover, they tend to choose an indirect way of saying things. For example, they will lead people's attention to something else to get people quiet. No order of keeping silent is proposed. The structures they used are summarized:

- Mọi người có thể + V + không?
- Mời các anh chị + V!

For the acquaintances, they often use direct requests in form of an imperative. Moreover, to express their feelings towards the requests, some of them still put their emotions with making loud sound, driving the attention to something else or even threatening. Take those as examples:

- Tôi muốn mọi người + V!
- Đề nghị/ yêu cầu tất cả + V!
- Các em/bạn/ anh chị, V + nào!

Last but not least, the begging is also a particular type of requests. In this circumstance, the speakers are in lower position, dependent on the hearers or in need of something. That is the reason why they need to vary their requests.

According to the data survey, the collected requests tend to have one or two sentences talking about the situations they have been through and the promising ideas they offer when they are satisfied with what they request. Therefore, the requests here are often longer than normal. There are some factors that make an utterance seem to be polite in Vietnamese request. Some words which has a strong effect of asking for help or assistance on the listener such as **“làm ơn, nhờ, xin, lạ, giùm, giúp, thương, trăm sự nhờ, ...”**

In addition to the promising, some tend to add their negotiation into their requests with the hope that their need will soon be fulfilled.

In short, there are many kinds of requests in term of structures that the English native speakers often use in their daily conversations.

Table 4.4. Summary of Structures of Requests used in English

| Number | Structures |
|--------|---|
| 1. | Đề nghị/ Yêu cầu/ Mời + Pronoun _ V! |
| 2. | Pronoun + V + nhé! |
| 3. | Làm ơn/ làm phiền/ + Pronoun + V! |
| 4 | Imperatives. |
| 5 | Pronoun + V + không/ được không? |
| 6 | The indirect ways (telling stories, promising, negotiation, etc.) |

4.1.1.2. How social relationships affect the structure of requests that Vietnamese native speakers used?

First, in terms of pronouns, Vietnamese native speakers use variable ones to address the hearers. It depends on the relationships and age gaps between the speakers and the hearers. Therefore, when they want to ask somebody to do something, the differences in social relationships are responsible for the pronoun changes. However, they do not influence the structures much.

Second, when Vietnamese native speakers want to give invitations to anybody, the structures used depend on the levels of the relationships between the people. When the speakers and the hearers are not so close or newly-met, they tend to use more indirect structures with invitations or asking for their approvals rather than a request. Sometimes, even before they ask for others' opinion on the invitation idea, they will add an opening such as asking for their availability of joining the activity on the date intended. Apart from other types of relationships, the newly-met friends prefer using the word “**mời**”, which means “**invite**”, to show their respect, while other situations do not contain. However, if the relationships between the two are quite close, the structures vary. They usually use the informal structures that go directly into the purposes. Most of the time, they just use the structures of an order or an invitation that the speakers already know that they would get an approval without hesitation.

Third, requests of ordering are slightly different from just making requests to ask somebody to do something in Vietnamese.. In this case, the ordering requests are quite different in different kinds of social relationships. With people from a family, it is even different from the parent-child conversations to the child-parent one. Because of the differences in age and position in the family, the structures

vary. If the speakers are parents, they would definitely use Ordering since in Vietnam, helping parents is the children's duty. With the reverse relationships, the children also can use Ordering but they need to add some polite words and some words to show their proper manner. The structure they use must contain the Subject. Or else, they can choose to use Making Requests and wait for the approval from their parents. However, when they are complete strangers, Making Suggestions, Asking for Permission and Polite Requests are more suitable to use because Ordering would be too impolite. The pronouns that Vietnamese use are based on the age of the people. But they would prefer to use a higher-position pronoun to address them in order to show politeness.

Fourth, how people make requests towards a number of others is quite different from the face-to-face orders between just two. When they are in public or need to talk in front of many people, the structures they use depend on whether they know the hearers clearly or not. If they don't know the people well, they will choose to use the structures that include the polite pronouns as subjects. Moreover, they tend to choose an indirect way of saying things.

For the acquaintances, they often use direct requests in form of an imperative. Moreover, to express their feelings towards the requests, some of them still put their emotions with making loud sound, driving the attention to something else or even threatening.

Last but not least, the begging structures vary a lot in even the same social relationships. The reason for this is that they are in need for the hearers' help.

4.2. THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE STRUCTURES OF REQUESTS MADE IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

4.2.1. The similarities

In both English and Vietnamese, utterances are divided into three types: interrogative, which is mostly used; imperative and declarative.

Like Vietnamese, English people also insert some common word into their utterances to make it more polite such as “**please, hope, possible, possibly**”. These words contribute to the speaker’s politeness and also play an important role in showing that you respect the person whom you are talking to.

Apparently, English native speakers and Vietnamese native speakers both use the requests in direct and indirect forms and try to express politeness in their sayings.

4.2.2. The differences

In term of grammar use, most of polite request in English and Vietnamese are in present time. In English and Vietnamese, there are many ways of making requests but these following grammar structures is mostly used.

Table 4.5. The differences forms of requests in English and Vietnamese

| English | Vietnamese |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| - Can you....? | - Bạn có thể? |
| - Do you think you could....? | - Bạnnha. |
| - I wonder if.... | - Bạn giúp mình.....nhe. |
| - I hope... | - Giúp em làm cái này với. |

Most requests in English are indirect utterance, while Vietnamese have more direct requests. For example, when asking someone to go to the cinema,

- Vietnamese: “Đi xem phim không?”

- English: “Why don’t we go to the cinema tonight?”
or “Is it OK if we go to the cinema?”

Moreover, the level of politeness in English requests is usually higher than the Vietnamese ones. It makes the hearers feel more acceptable when receiving a request. Their structures always contain polite words like “**can you**”, “**could you**”, “**I wonder if you**”, “**excuse me**” or “**please**”.

Meanwhile, Vietnamese tend to use direct requests that made the hearers think they are forced to do something. For example, when they want the crowd to be quiet,

- Vietnamese: “Yêu cầu tất cả giữ im lặng”.

- English: “Everyone, please be quiet” or “Can I have everyone’s attention, please?”

Apparently, in two ways of saying, the English ones are more comfortable and easier than Vietnamese.

One more thing about the differences between English and Vietnamese request is the way language works in each country. Take this table for example,

Table 4.6. The differences in requests in English and Vietnamese

| English | Vietnamese |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Could you possibly lend me your car? | Bạn có thể cho mình mượn xe được không? Bạn cho mình mượn xe nha. Bạn cho mình mượn xe nhé. Anh cho em mượn xe được không? Anh cho em mượn xe nha. Màý cho tao mượn xe nha. Con cho ba mượn xe nhé. |

As you can see from the table, just one English utterance can be translated into many Vietnamese ones depending on the context. Obviously, it is because of the difference in the personal pronouns of these two countries. The personal pronoun “**I**” can be equivalent to “**tao, ba, em, mình..**” and the personal pronoun “you” are equal to “**mày, con, anh, bạn...**”. This difference makes us easily feel the politeness of Vietnamese request rather than English request because we can realize the relationship of the participants. When we read an utterance conveying the requesting intention in English, we can just realize its politeness through the sentence structure and some words such as “**please, hope, possible, possibly**”, but we cannot know whether they are friends, boss and staff or father and child.

And it will be a mistake if the researcher do not mention about the role of social relationships in the choices of structures. While in English, the influence lies in the different relationships. It is whether they are close or not and they are in a formal setting or not. However, in Vietnamese, the differences are based on the age and the social position of the speakers and the hearers.

Finally, about structures, English native speakers choose modal verbs for direct requests like “**can**”, “**could**”, “**may**”, “**would**” , etc., and other above phrases for indirect ones. And Vietnamese native speakers usually make requests with the words “**hãy**”, “**với**”, “**nhé**”, “**không**”, etc., to deliver. In comparison, the number of requests forms in English outnumbers the Vietnamese.

4.3. DISCUSSION

English people tend to be polite in formal situation, so teachers’ role is to provide them with some devices to make their utterances polite when making requests. The common words putting into their utterances to make it more polite are: “**please, hope,**

possible, possibly". Their structures always contain polite words like **"can you", "could you", "I wonder if you", "excuse me"**.

For example, Vietnamese students are used to translating word for word. When they want to express their request **"Bạn có thể mở cửa dùm mình được không?"**, they often translate **"Can you open the door?"**. In this situation, the teacher needs to give them some word showing politeness to add to their utterances such as **"please, possibly..."** or use other structures **"Could you...?, Do you think you could...?"**

For those who learn Vietnamese, it is necessary to learn personal pronouns and some words which has a strong effect of asking for help or assistance on the listener such as **"làm ơn, nhờ, xin, lạy, giùm, giúp, thương..."** . And for strangers, the structures used are longer with the polite common words such as **"xin lỗi", "làm phiền", "giúp tôi", "cho tôi được không"**.

The role of social relationships in the choices of structures is also important. While in English, the influence lies in the different relationships. However, in Vietnamese, the differences are based on the age and the social position of the speakers and the hearers.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSIONS

5.1. MAJOR FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1.1. Major findings

In terms of structures, Vietnamese participants employed more direct structures than those of English participants.

For the similarities, both English and Vietnamese, utterances are divided into three types: interrogative, which is mostly used; imperative and declarative. Apparently, English native speakers and

Vietnamese native speakers both use the requests in direct and indirect forms and try to express politeness in their sayings.

Talking about the differences in term of grammar use, most of polite request in English and Vietnamese are in present time. Most requests in English are indirect utterance, while Vietnamese have more direct requests. Moreover, the level of politeness in English requests is usually higher than the Vietnamese ones. It makes the hearers feel more acceptable when receiving a request. Meanwhile, Vietnamese tend to use direct requests that made the hearers think they are forced to do something. Apparently, in two ways of saying, the English ones are more comfortable and easier than Vietnamese.

And the role of social relationships in the choices of structures is also important in the way they choose the requests. While in English, the influence lies in the different relationships. It is whether they are close or not and they are in a formal setting or not. However, in Vietnamese, the differences are based on the age and the social position of the speakers and the hearers.

Finally, about structures, English native speakers choose modal verbs for direct requests like “**can**”, “**could**”, “**may**”, “**would**” , etc., and other above phrases for indirect ones. And Vietnamese native speakers usually make requests with the words “**hãy**”, “**với**”, “**nhé**”, “**không**”, etc., to deliver. In comparison, the number of requests forms in English outnumbers the Vietnamese.

5.1.2. Implications

It is, first, essential for learners to be aware of cultural similarities and differences of making requests in Vietnamese culture and the cultures where the target language is spoken. They also should distinguish and highlight which strategies of requests, in other words, when and they are used in informal situations as well as

formal ones. Through that, learners can get to know clearly the functions of this speech act in order to use it effectively in daily interactions. It drives the learners to be more confident when they make and keep the conversations with other people from the other language speaking countries.

5.2. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.2.1. Limitations of the study

The study contains some limitations that should be noted. Firstly, there was a limitation regarding the participants of the study. The participants came from different social backgrounds, ages and even different provinces. They have different jobs and consequently, in general, they have different social status. Some are university lecturers. This difference does not ensure a parallel data for the comparison of the strategy use of the two language groups. For example, a lecturer's response might be more formal than that of a student.

5.2.2. Suggestions for further studies

Although similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese requests in terms of structural perspective have been investigated so far in the thesis, it cannot cover all the aspects relating to such broad cultural and linguistic convention like requesting and its related issues. As a result, further researches can further find out more about this topic. Here are some suggestions: A comparative study on accepting a request in English and Vietnamese in terms of structural perspective; A comparative study on refusing a request in English and Vietnamese in terms of politeness strategies; A comparative study on hedges in refusing a request in English and Vietnamese in terms of cross-cultural perspectives.