

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

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**A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF  
HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN ENGLISH  
AND IN VIETNAMESE**

**Field: ENGLISH LINGUISTICS**

**Code: 822 02 01**

**MASTER THESIS IN  
LINGUISTICS AND CULTURAL STUDIES OF  
FOREIGN COUNTRIES  
(A SUMMARY)**

**Da Nang, 2019**

**The thesis has been completed at  
THE UNIVERSITY OF DANANG**

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The thesis was orally defended at The Examining Committee.

Field: English Linguistics

Time: 07/06/2019

Venue: The University of Danang

The thesis is accessible for the purpose of reference at:

- *Information Resource Center, The University of Danang*
- *The Center for Learning Information Resources and Communication – The University of Da Nang.*

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. RATIONALE

Global tourism is now generally recognized as one of the largest industries in the world and one of the most significant sources of employment and Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Recently, with the growth of tourism in Viet Nam, there are a lot of foreigner visitors coming to Viet Nam. Because English is considered as an international language, most of them use English in communicating in general and in giving their feedback to the hotels in particular. In reviewing the hotel service, they have to use their language to show their opinion and feedback about the hotels they stayed before. That is the reason why language is a significant element in hotel reviews. Although both Vietnamese and English tourists use their language in reviews, I recognize distinctions of their linguistic features. However, it is not an easy task to understand the reason why there are a lot of dissimilar linguistic features in two languages belonging to different cultures. Because of its importance, the language used in hotel service reviews should be taken into consideration. The most essential thing is that Vietnamese is my native language and I always have a strong desire to study more on Vietnamese besides English, a global language. In addition, being a language learner, I cannot ignore a linguistic study of hotel service reviews, a big issue concerned recently. For the above reasons, I choose to do a research on the topic *“A Contrastive Analysis of Hotel Service Reviews in English and in Vietnamese”*.

## **1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.2.1. Aims**

The main aim of the study is to analyze linguistic features including lexical feature, syntactic feature and pragmatic feature of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese. In addition, the study is also aimed at comparing the way to use languages basing on lexical choices, syntactic features and pragmatic features through their linguistic expressions in English and in Vietnamese. The study also helps us obtain a deeper view of similarities and differences in their languages belonging to two different cultures.

### **1.2.2. Objectives**

To achieve the aims mentioned above, the thesis is proposed:

- To investigate lexical features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese
- To investigate syntactic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese
- To investigate pragmatic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese
- To find out the similarities and differences of linguistic features including lexical, syntactic and pragmatic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese

## **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In order to fulfill the aims and objectives, the study is to answer the following questions:

- What are lexical choices of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese?

- What are syntactic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese?
- What are pragmatic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese?
- What are the similarities and differences in linguistic features consisting of lexical, syntactic and pragmatic features in hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese?

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

The thesis mainly focuses on studying the similarities and differences in lexical choices, syntactic and pragmatic features between English and Vietnamese languages used in hotel service reviews. In nature, analyzing the linguistic features in hotel service reviews is studying discourse analysis. And the data will be collected from *Tripadvisor*, a famous website relating to hotel service reviews.

#### **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

From the study, readers will have an insight overview about the language used in hotel service reviews, especially in English and in Vietnamese. Analyzing the linguistic features including lexical choices, syntactic and pragmatic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese helps the readers compare and understand the similarities and differences in the way they use their language in hotel service reviews.

#### **1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The thesis would consist of five chapters as the followings:

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

**Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Background**

**Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures**

**Chapter 4: Findings and Discussions**

**Chapter 5: Conclusion and Implications**

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

#### **2.1. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

##### **2.1.1. HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS**

In fact, the term “review” concerns different fields. In hotel service, reviews could be written by both experts in the area and tourists coming to the hotels. In this thesis, I just concentrate hotel reviews written by tourists. Review, therefore, refers to their feedback, both positive and negative on service quality of the hotel where they chose to stay for their schedule. Normally, reviews of the tourists are written to “help other customers make good decisions” by sharing their experiences.

##### **2.1.2. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS**

#### **2.2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Though there are no separating studies on language in hotel reviews, “*An Analysis of Online Reviews by Language Groups: the Case of Hotels in Porto, Portugal*” written by Pacheco (2016) is one of some previous studies directly relating to the linguistic features used in reviews in general and in hotel reviews in particular. Furthermore, Nuno et al. (2018), also do a research into hotel online

reviews and language. In their writing *“Hotel Online Reviews: Different Languages, Different Opinions”*, they attempt to analyze hotel reviews from famous online review sources and hotel sales data. They point out the relationship between ratings and the languages. As a result, the ratings differ according to the languages of hotel reviews.

Besides, there are more and more studies relating to contrastive analysis of linguistic features between English and Vietnamese, such as film reviews by Trương Thị Minh Hiền (2011), showbiz news in online newspaper by Đỗ Huỳnh Mỹ Liên (2015), travel advertisements by Nguyễn Tiết Hạnh (2015).

## **2.3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.3.1. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

### **2.3.2. SPEECH ACT THEORY**

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. RESEARCH METHODS**

The study aims at analysing lexical choices, syntactic and pragmatic features in hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese. Descriptive method and comparative analysis using both qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied in order to achieve the research aims and objectives.

#### **3.2. RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

#### **3.3. DATA COLLECTION**

The samples are hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese that are collected from *Tripadvisor* websites.

The number of collected hotel reviews is 1300 random samples (650 hotel service reviews in English and 650 hotel service reviews in Vietnamese, both positive and negative reviews) with some particular criteria:

- Time: from the beginning of 2015 up to now
- Length of each review: from 100 to 250 words

### **3.4. INSTRUMENT**

### **3.5. DATA ANALYSIS**

The procedure for analysing the data is carried out to satisfy qualitative approach as the followings:

- Analysing the linguistic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese
- Comparing the linguistic features of hotel service reviews to point out the similarities and differences in English and in Vietnamese

### **3.6. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. LEXICAL FEATURES OF HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN ENGLISH**

##### **4.1.1. NOUNS**

##### **4.1.1.1. Personal Nouns**

Table 4.1: Personal nouns used in HSREs

	<b>Function</b>	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
The first person	Subject	I	We
	Object	Me	Us
The second person	Subject	You	You
	Object	You	You
The third person	Subject	He She It	They
	Object	him her it	Them

#### **4.1.1.2. Common nouns**

#### **4.1.1.3. Proper nouns:**

In this case, most of proper nouns relate to three main groups.

- The first is the names of the hotel and resort. Some of them can often be written in short form because of the length
- Another group we can add into the proper nouns will be the most attractive places the writers would like to recommend or the mentioned location at that time
- The last in the group is names of the staff or people in charge of giving the service who left deep impressions

## **4.1.2. ADJECTIVES**

### **4.1.2.1. Adjective describing people's feelings**

### **4.1.2.2. Adjective describing people's personality**

### **4.1.2.3. Adjectives describing quality of hotel service**

In terms of adjective, there are two key points worthy noting down:

- The adjectives denoting feelings of the guest will be the deciding factor if it is a compliment or a complaint.
- The more adjectives writers use, the higher quality the reviews are. The adjectives contribute on making the review much more lively and attractive.

In addition to various kind of adjective, a great number of adverbs are added to emphasize and express opinions more clearly.

## **4.1.3. VERBS**

### **4.1.3.1. Verbs expressing feelings**

### **4.1.3.2. Verbs expressing suggestions and opinions**

Normally, sentences containing these verbs are at the last position of each review with the aim to show opinions or suggestions of the writers about hotel service quality.

## **4.1.4. OTHER LEXICAL CHOICES**

### **4.1.4.1. Abbreviations**

### **4.1.4.2. Slangs**

## **4.2. LEXICAL FEATURES OF HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN VIETNAMESE**

## 4.2.1. NOUNS

### 4.2.1.1. Personal nouns

In Vietnamese, personal pronouns are dependent on a lot of elements, such as: the age, gender, and especially level of respect we have toward the other person on the specific social context or in daily life communication.

Table 4.10: The first person used in HSRVs

<b>Singular in Vietnamese</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>	<b>Plural in Vietnamese</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>
Tôi	1003	Chúng tôi	351
Cá nhân tôi	3	Chúng ta	3
Mình	590	Tụi mình	6
Chị	1	Bọn mình	13
Em	4	Chúng mình	1
Người ta	1		

Table 4.11: The second person used in HSRVs

<b>Singular in Vietnamese</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>	<b>Plural in Vietnamese</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>
Bạn	351	Các bạn	134
		Các em	10
		Quý vị	1

Table 4.12: The third person used in HSRVs

<b>Singular in Vietnamese</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>	<b>Plural in Vietnamese</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>
Chú	6	Họ	56

Gia chủ	1	Anh chị	17
Cha đó	1	Các thánh	1
		Người ta	2
Cô	5		

#### 4.2.1.2. Common nouns

Table 4.13: Common nouns used in HSRVs

Vietnamese common nouns	English equivalence	Occurrence
Khách sạn	Hotel	967
Đội ngũ nhân viên	Staff	681
Bộ phận quản lý	Manager Department	44
Bộ phận lễ tân	Receptionist	156
Tiện nghi	Facilities	101
Khu nghỉ dưỡng	Resort	27
Dịch vụ	Service	325

#### 4.2.1.3. Proper nouns

In Vietnamese hotel service reviews, we can easily find out a variety of proper nouns which refers to the proper name of a hotel, a person or location.

### 4.2.2. ADJECTIVES

#### 4.2.2.2. Adjectives describing people's feelings

#### 4.2.2.3. Adjectives describing people's personality

##### 4.2.2.1. Adjectives describing evaluations

In Vietnamese, besides adjectives, adverbs of degree are used to combine with the descriptive adjectives in a high frequency to

show different level of each adjective. I found out some common adverbs of degree written in hotel service reviews, such as: *thực sự/ thật sự, tuyệt đối, trên cả ..., rất, khá, tương đối, có chút, cực kì, không thể ... hơn*, etc

### **4.2.3. VERBS**

#### **4.2.3.1. Verbs expressing feelings**

#### **4.2.3.2. Verbs expressing suggestions and opinions**

### **4.2.4. OTHER LEXICAL CHOICES**

#### **4.2.4.1. Abbreviations**

#### **4.2.4.2. English terms used in hotel service reviews in Vietnamese**

#### **4.2.4.3. Borrowed words**

#### **4.2.4.4. Slangs**

## **4.3. SYNTACTIC FEATURE IN HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN ENGLISH**

### **4.3.1. STRUCTURE OF AN ENGLISH HOTEL SERVICE REVIEW**

In this part, we can summarize some key points of structure of an English hotel service review:

In the first part of a review, general feelings and evaluation are mainly mentioned. The service quality seems to be appeared on the title and the first sentence of the review to impress and save the other's time when people are looking for an idea or a suggestion. The review can be a compliment or a complaint and we can realize it at the first glance through the title and heading sentences.

The noticeable points are recorded in the body of a review. The guest focused on pinpointing what makes them feel good and bad, what left them impressions for a supporting review and what they were not satisfied for a complaining review.

Lastly, the writer sums up the review by expressing their opinions in a condensed way and answering the question will they return or recommend for others in conclusion of the review.

#### **4.3.2. COMMON SENTENCE STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS**

Table 4.26: Common sentence structures in HSREs

<b>Types of common sentences</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>
Conditional sentence	206
Wishing sentence	26
Exclamatory sentence	32
Comparative sentence	219
<i>Total</i>	483

#### **4.4. SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN VIETNAMESE**

##### **4.4.1. STRUCTURE OF A VIETNAMESE HOTEL SERVICE REVIEW**

In summary, a hotel service review in Vietnamese consists of three main parts. The first part including its title and some heading sentences express writer's general feelings and evaluation. Body of the review covers all what leaves impression or disappointment for

the writer. The last part is normally a recommendation, thankfulness or suggestion.

#### **4.4.2. COMMON SENTENCE STRUCTURES IN VIETNAMESE HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS**

Table 4.27: Common sentence structures in HSRVs

<b>Types of common sentence</b>	<b>Occurrence</b>
Conditional sentence	153
Wishing sentence	46
Exclamatory sentence	37
Comparative sentence	182
<i>Total</i>	418

#### **4.5. PRAGMATIC FEATURES IN HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN ENGLISH**

##### **4.5.1. SPEECH ACT OF COMPLIMENT**

###### **4.5.1.1. Explicature of compliments**

###### **4.5.1.2. Implicature of compliments**

##### **4.5.2. SPEECH ACT OF COMPLAINTS**

###### **4.5.2.1. Direct complaints**

###### **4.5.2.2. Indirect complaints**

##### **4.5.3. SPEECH ACT OF SUGGESTION**

###### **4.5.3.1. Direct suggestions**

###### **4.5.3.2. Indirect suggestions**

#### **4.6. PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN VIETNAMESE**

##### **4.6.1. SPEECH ACT OF COMPLIMENT**

**4.6.1.1. Explicature of compliments****4.6.1.2. Implicature of compliments****4.6.2. SPEECH ACT OF COMPLAINT****4.6.2.1. Direct complaints****4.6.2.2. Indirect complaints****4.6.3. SPEECH ACT OF SUGGESTION****4.6.3.1. Direct suggestions****4.6.3.2. Indirect suggestions****4.7. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN ENGLISH AND IN VIETNAMESE****4.7.1. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF LEXICAL FEATURES OF HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN ENGLISH AND IN VIETNAMESE**

Table 4.28: Lexical choices of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese

<b>Lexical choice</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>EHSRs</b>	<b>VHSRs</b>
NOUNS	Personal nouns	+	+
	Common nouns	+	+
	Proper nouns	+	+
ADJECTIVES	Adjectives describing evaluation of hotel service quality	+	+
	Adjectives describing people's feelings	+	+

	Adjectives describing people's appearance	+	+
VERBS	Verbs denoting people's feelings	+	+
	Verbs denoting people's suggestions or giving opinions	+	+
OTHER	Abbreviations	+	+
LEXICAL	Slangs	+	+
CHOICES	Borrowed words	-	+

#### 4.7.1.1. Similarities of lexical feature of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese

#### 4.7.1.2. Differences of lexical features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese

Table 4.29: Personal pronouns in HSREs and HSRVs

	Singular		Plural	
	HSREs	HSRVs	HSREs	HSRVs
<b>First person</b>	I	Tôi Cá nhân tôi Mình Chị Em Người ta	We	Chúng tôi Chúng ta Tụi mình Bọn mình Chúng mình
<b>Second person</b>	You	Bạn	You	Các bạn Các em

				Quý vị
<b>Third person</b>	He She	Chú Cha đó Gia chủ Cô	They	Họ Anh em Người ta Các thánh

#### 4.7.2. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN ENGLISH AND IN VIETNAMESE

Table 4.30: Common sentence structures in HSREs and in HSRVs

<b>Sentence structures</b>	<b>HSREs</b>	<b>HSRVs</b>
Conditional sentences	42.7%	36.6%
Wishing sentences	5.4%	11%
Exclamatory sentences	6.6%	8.9%
Comparative sentences	45.3%	43.5%
<b><i>Total</i></b>	100%	100%

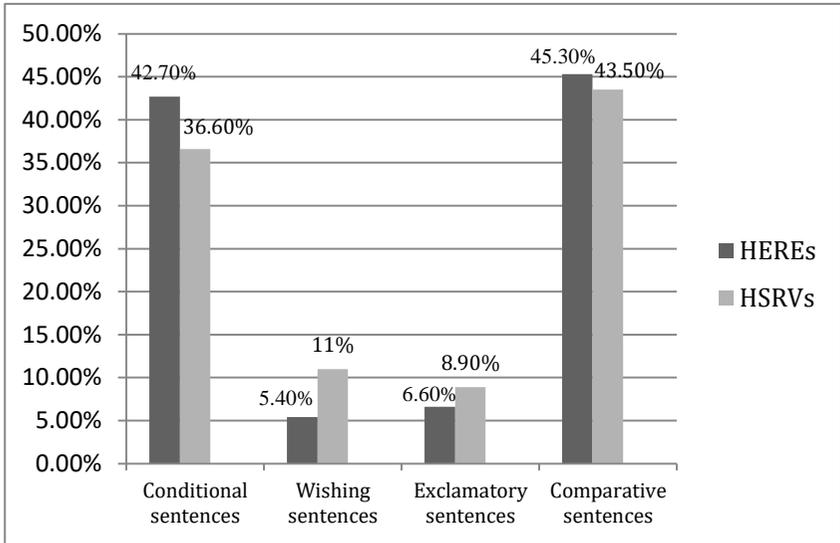


Figure 4.1: Common sentence structures in HSREs and HSRVs

#### 4.7.2.1. Similarities in syntactic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese

The most significant similarity is that each review in English and Vietnamese includes three parts:

- General feelings and evaluation of writer
- The most noticeable impression or disappointment
- Conclusion (recommendation/ suggestion/ thankfulness)

#### 4.7.2.1. Differences in syntactic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese

Through the research, the most noticeable difference is frequency of numbers of conditional, wishing, exclamatory and

comparative sentences in English and Vietnamese hotel service reviews.

### 4.7.3. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF HOTEL SERVICE REVIEWS IN ENGLISH AND IN VIETNAMESE

Table 4.31: Positive reviews, negative reviews, positive and negative reviews in HSREs and HSRVs

Categories	HSREs		HSRVs	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Positive reviews	317	48.7 %	448	68.9%
Negative reviews	126	19.3%	78	12%
Positive and negative reviews	207	32%	124	19.1%

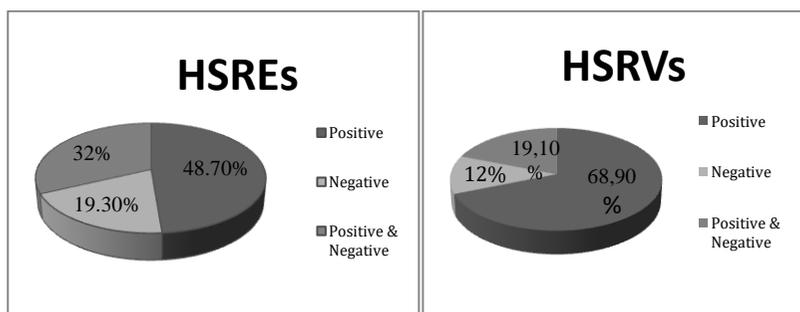


Figure 4.2: Positive reviews, negative reviews, both positive and negative reviews in HSREs and HSRVs

#### 4.7.3.1. Similarities in pragmatic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese

#### **4.7.3.2. Differences in pragmatic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese**

## **CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1. CONCLUSION**

*“An Analysis of Linguistic Features of Hotel Service Reviews in English and in Vietnamese”* is a study on linguistic features in English and Vietnamese hotel service reviews by analyzing lexical features, syntactic features and pragmatic features in both languages. In addition, the study is carried out with the aim to find out the similarities and differences in linguistic features of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese belonging to different cultures. This study is also aimed to make an original contribution towards using language in reviews in general and in hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese in particular.

In this thesis, 1300 hotel service reviews are collected in both English and Vietnamese. The study bases on traditional discourse analysis theory. There are some key points obtained as follow:

In term of lexical features, there is a range of similarities and differences in English and Vietnamese hotel service reviews. Both English and Vietnamese hotel service review writers have the same ideas on word uses including nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. In particular, personal nouns, common nouns and proper nouns are concerned in the study. All of them appear in both English and

Vietnamese hotel service reviews with the similar features mentioned above. Abbreviation and slangs are applied in English and Vietnamese. Besides, the emotional icons appear in both English and Vietnamese hotel service reviews. It remarks that a hotel service review is an informal form of writing. Besides the similarities, there are also some noticeable differences in lexical choices of two languages. Firstly, Vietnamese personal pronouns are more complicated than ones in English because the relationship between the readers or listeners and the writers or speakers is an important element concerned in communication in Vietnamese. Therefore, they change depending to each conversational situation. While borrowed words appear with a high frequency in Vietnamese hotel service reviews, there is no cases found in English. Especially, mixed language is a popular point in Vietnamese when the impact of English spreads to worldwide in general as well as to Vietnam in particular.

With the reference to syntactic features, structure of a review is an initial similarity of hotel service reviews in English and in Vietnamese. There are three main parts in each review. The first part including a title and some heading sentences of the review refers to general feelings or opinions of the writer. The second part shows all remarkable things making the writer's impression or disappointment of hotel service review. The last part is suggestion or recommendation. Almost types of sentences are applied in both English and Vietnamese hotel service reviews. It is noticeable that

conditional sentence, wishing sentence, exclamatory sentence and comparative sentence appear frequently in hotel service reviews.

With regards to pragmatic features, speech acts employed in English and Vietnamese are core in this part. They are speech act of compliment, speech act of complaint and speech act of suggestion. All speech acts mentioned appear in both English and Vietnamese hotel service reviews, even in both explicature and implicature in each speech act. However, from this study, one key point is that it is extremely hard to find any indirect suggestions in English hotel service reviews.

## **5.2. IMPLICATIONS**

In terms of using foreign language in general and English in particular, Vietnamese linguistic system becomes more diversified with borrowed words besides our native language. That is the reason why natural principles in Vietnamese are not easy to be completely maintained. However, it is considered as a valuable source for later studies relating to application of English into Vietnamese in general as well as into Vietnamese hotel service reviews in particular, especially for researches aimed to preserve the beauty and nature of Vietnamese language with newly imported linguistic features.

Focusing on the main aim of a review, it gives expression of good or bad feelings or opinions about hotel service reviews as well as suggestions for the hotel. Depending on the study, researchers have a basic aspect to enhance for some further studies concerned to

polite strategies in direct complaints and suggestions that cause face threat easily on the readers or listeners.

In addition, the study could be taken as a source for foreigners to have a desire to learn more about Vietnamese when language used in hotel service reviews is informal, which makes them easier to approach such a complex language as Vietnamese linguistic system.

### **5.3. LIMITATIONS**

Due to the researcher's limited reference materials and experiences, the study is not without any limitations. The number of reviews is fewer than the quantity anticipated because of the limitation of time. In term of syntactic feature, some typical types of sentences are not mentioned clearly. The research only focuses on lexical, syntactic and pragmatic features while other possible features might not concerned.

### **5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

- A Contrastive Analysis of Cultural Features in Vietnamese and English hotel service reviews
- An Investigation into Differences basing on gender in Linguistic Features of Hotel Service Reviews in English and in Vietnamese
- A Study of Degree of Linguistic Politeness in Hotel Service Reviews in English and in Vietnamese