

## STUDY OF LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF NEGOTIATION CONVERSATIONS IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

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### ABSTRACT

*Negotiation conversations (hereafter NCs) are used much in human daily communicative process and widely applied for many speech acts. In this context, this analysis is made to discover syntactic features and pragmatic functions in English and Vietnamese negotiation conversations within this analysis comparison and contrast have been executed to find out similarities and differences of both languages. In order to obtain these aims, a quantitative method, a qualitative method and a descriptive method are taken into account. The study is based on data (180 NCs in English and 172 NCs in Vietnamese) collected from English and Vietnamese short stories and novels. The study suggests some implications of finding for the teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Vietnam.*

**Keyword:** *Negotiation conversations*

### 1. RATIONALE

In the age of global integration, it is important to communicate effectively. In the process of communication, negotiation has been one of the most popular kinds of language interaction, especially when economic and political life is becoming more equal and democratic.

Everyone negotiates something everyday. People negotiate even when they do not think of themselves as doing so. Negotiations and talks became the basic means to help a speaker achieve what he or she wants the hearer to do. Look at the following conversation:

A: Good morning. Can I help you?

B: Yes, can I make an appointment with Dr. Wall, please?

A: Yes. Can you come at ten to three on Wednesday afternoon?

B: No, I am sorry. I can't. What

about the evening?

A: Dr Wall isn't here in the evening on Wednesday, I am afraid. I can put you in at half past six on Thursday evening?

B: Yes, that's fine.

A: What name is it, please?

B: It's Tom Smith.

A: Thank you Mr. Smith. Goodbye.

In this conversation, speaker A wants to negotiate with the hearer B on arranging a meeting with a doctor.

It can be said that human life is a series of negotiations and whether in politics, business or family life, most decisions are made through bargaining and negotiations. In the market economy, as the relationship between buyers and sellers are based on specific benefits, all of the sophisticated business activities are closely related to negotiations.

## 2. CONTENT

### 2.1. The syntactic representation of NCs in Vietnamese and English

#### 2.1.1. The syntactic representation of NCs in English

##### a. Declaratives in English NCs

Affirmative statement in NCs is asserting that the fact is so or declaratory of what exists. Negative statements in NCs are showed by NOT or some adverbs such as NEVER, HARDLY followed by a modal finite or a finite operator. In negotiation the speakers usually use the conditional sentence to express their intention about some terms and ties of contract, or want to give warning or threatening or advice to the hearers.

*(1) Atticus: If you concede the necessity of going to school, we'll go on reading every night just as we always have. Is it a bargain?*

*Scout: Yes sir!*

Sometimes we see comparison in NCs. Although their appearing is not very large in NCs, it obtains high result.

*(2) The Don: Well, then I can't talk to you about how you should behave.*

*Don't you want to finish school, don't you want to be a lawyer? Lawyers can steal more money with a briefcase than a thousand men with guns and masks.*

*Sonny: I want to enter the family business. I can learn how to sell olive.*

##### b. Interrogative in NCs

Yes/No question, one of the most popular kinds of questions that have a reply

of "Yes" or "No" is used to confirm the propositional content of the question.

Wh-questions mainly have the form of statement with an interrogative Wh-word in their proper positions where the required information goes in declarative sentence.

*(3) The saloon-keeper: How much did the other mug get?*

*The kidnapper: A hundred, wouldn't take a sou less, so help me.*

*The saloon-keeper: That makes a hundred and fifty.*

Some indirect questions used in NCs with the phrase "I wonder if" combined with "You could/can V ...".

*(4) Edward: I heard you say you were going to Seattle that day, and I was wondering if you wanted a ride.*

*Bella: What?*

*Edward: Do you want a ride to Seattle?*

Another type of interrogative is declarative questions in NCs, they are also marked questions in English but the frequency of samples of declarative questions is not large.

Tag questions have the form of statement followed by a mini question (questions tag) and are usually used in negotiation.

*(5) Scarlett: Oh, Ashley, don't blame yourself! How could it be your fault? You will come to Atlanta and help me, won't you?*

*Ashley: No.*

An alternative question is a question that presents two or more possible answer and presupposes that only one is true, negotiators usually give some suggestions to resolve issues and they usually obtain their goal easily.

### c. Imperatives in English NCs

We can see the imperative structures are different from the declarative or interrogative ones because of the absence of subject and finite. They are begun with a verb or verb phrase and exist in both subtypes.

(6) *Melanie: Promise me?*

*Scarlett: Oh, anything!*

*Melanie: Beau-look after him. I give him to you. I gave him to you, one before-member? -before he was born.*

### 2.1.2. The syntactic representations of NCs in Vietnamese

#### a. Declaratives in NCs

Like English, the most typical form of NCs in declaratives in Vietnamese is affirmative. Affirmative statements are used for notifying information to hearers or expressing speakers' intension, feeling or giving some explanation or reasons.

Negative statements in Vietnamese NCs is typically formed with words having negative meanings such as "chả", "chẳng", "không", "chưa". We can see NCs as follow:

(7) *Ông Phan: Sao vậy?*

*Thu: Vì con không muốn lấy chồng.*

*Ông Phan: Cháu chẳng nên thế. Ngày nay, mẹ cháu đã già rồi, mà cháu thì đã lớn tuổi. Cháu nên nghe lời mẹ đi.*

Most of conditional sentences in Vietnamese are indicated by some words such as "nếu"; "nếu thì"; "vậy thì". "rồi thì"; "rồi....". Let us have a look at the example:

(8) *Người Tây: Ông thử nghĩ kỹ xem? Một cái độc quyền nước mắm ở Bắc Kỳ và ở Trung Kỳ thì phải là một việc lợi lắm chứ?*

*Nghị Hách: Phải, phải.*

*Người Tây: Vậy thì năm trăm cổ phần để dành cho ông đó, nếu ông giúp tôi được việc.*

In Vietnamese, sometime comparison sentence can be realized in NCs, they appear with the following expressions "thà.... còn hơn"; "còn hơn".

(9) *Thầy số: Hai hào! Hai hào một lá, có bằng lòng thì....*

*Xuân: Một hào đây! Bối rẻ còn hơn ngồi không.*

#### b. Imperative in Vietnamese NCs

Imperative in NCs have only the meaning of directing people to do or not to do things, let us consider the following example:

(10) *Mịch: Giời ơi, con lấy ông! Ông đừng làm hại một đời tôi!*

*Nghị Hách: Im ngay, quan sẽ cho nhiều tiền...*

*Mịch: Bỏ rai Ái!*

*Nghị Hách: Im cho ngoan nào...*

**c. Interrogative in Vietnamese NCs**

Yes/No questions to require their partner to confirm the contents of negotiation and we can realize them with the final particles: “không” or “chưa”.

(11) *Người Tây: Vậy ông có bằng lòng ra tranh cử nữa không?*

*Nghị Hách: Đã thế thì tôi phải ra nữa.*

Information questions is a statement with indefinite words in their proper positions where the required information goes in declarative sentences. For examples: “ai”, “bằng cách nào”, “bao giờ”, “tại sao”, “ở đâu”, “bao nhiêu”, “bao xa”; “bao lâu”; “cái gì”.

(12) *Lý trưởng: Mày định cây trà nhà tao bao nhiêu?*

*Chị Dậu: Con xin cây hầu ông một mẩu.*

We can find another type of interrogative which is declarative questions in NCs.

(13) *Nghị Hách: Còn tiền tranh cử thì tôi phải bỏ ra?*

*Người Tây: Phải, ta nên giao hẹn với nhau đích xác như thế.*

In NCs we can find a lot of tag questions with the phrase “có đúng vậy không”; “được không”; “được chưa”; “chứ gì”; “kia à” at the end of sentence.

(14) *Tú Anh: Thưa ông, ông là cha tôi, điều đó lúc nào tôi cũng nhớ lắm. Tôi chịu ơn ông đã nhiều lắm, nhưng mà ông*

*đã làm nhiều điều bỉ ổi lắm. Ông đề ra tôi thì ông có quyền cho tôi sống hoặc bắt tôi chết... Thưa ông, xin ông cho tôi chết. Ông giết tôi đi.*

*Nghị Hách: Sao mày dờ hơi thế? Thì tao mua con bé làm hầu là cùng chứ gì.*

An alternative question is a question that presents two or more possible answer and presupposes that only one is true.

(15) *Ông Huyện: Chúng mày muốn rút đơn ra hay chúng mày muốn ngồi tù nào? Ông đã thương hại ông bảo thật cho mà còn cứng cổ! Nào thế lão đồ kia muốn xin bồi thường mấy trăm bạc thì để ông phê vào đây rồi đưa mẹ nó lên tỉnh cho chúng mày khôn khổ cả đi nào.*

**2.2. The pragmatic features of NCs in English and Vietnamese**

**2.2.1. The pragmatic features of NCs English**

*Table 1. Summary of relative frequency (%) of pragmatic representation of NCs in English*

Types of Functions	Occurrence	(%)
Surveying	100	17.36
Explaining	110	19.10
Confirming	56	9.72
Advising	48	8.33
Warning and threatening	50	8.68
Bargaining	14	2.43
Compromising	56	9.72
Persuading	142	24.66
Total	576	100

**2.2.2. The pragmatic features of NCs in Vietnamese**

*Table 2. Summary of relative frequency (%) of pragmatic representation of NCs in Vietnamese*

Types of Functions	Occurrence	(%)
Surveying	44	12.09
Explaining	74	20.33
Confirming	40	10.98
Advising	40	10.98
Warning and threatening	15	4.12
Compromising	13	3.57
Persuading	106	29.13
Bargaining	32	8.79
Total	364	100

**2.3. Similarities and differences of syntactic representation and the pragmatic features of NCs in English and Vietnamese**

**2.3.1. Similarities and differences of syntactic representation**

**a. Similarities**

NCs in both languages may be in the form of one sentence or more than one sentence and can exist in many different structures such as Declaratives, Interrogatives and Imperatives.

**b. Differences**

Firstly, we can find out the structure in English is grammatically formed by the order of the subject and the finite. However, in Vietnamese NCs are lexically recognized by modal markers by typical words.

Secondly, the frequency of NCs with imperative structures in English is lower

than that in Vietnamese. From that, we can see that the Vietnamese prefer to use imperative structures. It means the direct negotiations seem to be more favored in Vietnamese.

Thirdly, although the syntax of tag question in English is clearer than that in Vietnamese but in Vietnamese it is more preferable than English. We can see that Vietnamese people use “có phải không”, “có đúng không”, “được chứ” in tag question as a polite strategy to affirm information that they want to negotiate and to avoid threatening the hearer’s face.

**2.3.2. Similarities and differences of pragmatic features of NCs in English and Vietnamese**

**a. Similarities**

There are some similar things in the frequency of occurrence of pragmatic functions of NCs in English and Vietnamese. Specifically, we can see that NCs as persuading are the most popular in both languages, the next position is explaining, the third position is surveying and the fourth position is confirming. From that we can see for both Vietnamese and English people, persuading is the main function in negotiation. Basing on this function, we can decrease strained negotiation.

**b. Differences**

NCs in Vietnamese with some functions occur more frequently than in English, for examples: NCs as advising and bargaining. The English people tend to use negative strategies in NCs. In contrast, the Vietnamese people prefer using the positive strategies for partners so that

partners can feel good and to feel that he or she is to highly appreciated.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 3.1. Summary of the main findings

This research focuses on investigating the syntactic and pragmatic features in NCs in English and Vietnamese. Because the syntactic features of the negotiation are very complicated and varied (consists of at least one Adjacency Pair) and the limitation of time and the ability of the researcher the paper just analyses the negotiation part (a negotiation conversation includes three parts: pre-negotiation, negotiation and post-negotiation) in NCs.

#### 3.2. Implications for language learning and teaching

Learners should know the purpose of NCs from that use appropriate structures as well as functions. It is very important to have a wide of off-record politeness strategy in communication to avoid threatening the hearer's face and avoid making shock for the H, and avoid imposing the conventional way of making direct negotiation and responding to negotiation in Vietnamese when speaking English.

Teachers should create negotiation situations for learners to practice as much as possible. For each purpose of negotiation, teachers encourage learners to speak out what they think.

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**NGHIÊN CỨU VỀ ĐẶC ĐIỂM NGÔN NGỮ  
CỦA HỘI THOẠI THƯƠNG LƯỢNG TRONG TIẾNG ANH VÀ TIẾNG VIỆT**

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**TÓM TẮT**

*Hội thoại thương lượng được sử dụng rất nhiều trong quá trình giao tiếp và được áp dụng rộng rãi cho nhiều hành vi ngôn ngữ. Vì vậy bài viết này đã được thực hiện nhằm khám phá các đặc điểm cú pháp và chức năng ngữ dụng trong hội thoại thương lượng Anh và Việt. Với việc phân tích so sánh, đối chiếu và sử dụng phương pháp định tính - định lượng, đề tài đã chỉ ra những đặc điểm giống và khác nhau của hai ngôn ngữ. Bài nghiên cứu này dựa trên dữ liệu (180 đoạn hội thoại thương lượng Anh và 172 đoạn hội thoại thương lượng Việt) được thu thập từ các truyện ngắn và tiểu thuyết Anh - Việt. Đề tài này cũng đưa ra một số gợi ý cho việc dạy và học tiếng Anh như một ngoại ngữ tại Việt Nam.*

**Từ khóa:** Hội thoại thương lượng



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