

The culture of Vietnamese refusing: A mixed-methods multiperspectival approach

Du Trong Nguyen

BA in English, MA in AL

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences,
Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

December, 2016

Supervisors

Dr. Jill Murray (Emeritus Professor Christopher N. Candlin)

Professor Lynda Yates

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Abstract..... | xi |
| Statement of the candidate | xii |
| Acknowledgements..... | xiii |
| Transcription conventions (used in the transcripts) | xiv |
| Abbreviations of Vietnamese particles and function words used in the transcripts and examples) | xiv |
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 Statement of the problem | 1 |
| 1.2 The present research project..... | 3 |
| 1.2.1 The notion of refusing in this research project | 5 |
| 1.2.2 Focus of the research project | 6 |
| 1.3 Objectives and research questions..... | 6 |
| 1.4 Study 1: The ethnographic-based study | 7 |
| 1.4.1 Focus group interviews..... | 8 |
| 1.4.2 Individual interviews | 9 |
| 1.4.3 Analytical tools | 10 |
| 1.5 Study 2: The interactional study..... | 10 |
| 1.5.1 Data..... | 11 |
| 1.5.2 Analytical tools | 11 |
| 1.6 Study 3: The social psychological study | 12 |
| 1.6.1 Social psychological approach | 13 |
| 1.6.2 Data elicitation instrument, respondents, and statistical tools..... | 13 |
| 1.7 Organisation of the thesis | 13 |
| Chapter 2: The Vietnamese and their culture..... | 15 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 15 |
| 2.2 Ideologies, philosophies and religions | 16 |
| 2.2.1 Animism | 17 |
| 2.2.2 Taoism | 17 |
| 2.2.3 Buddhism..... | 18 |
| 2.2.4 Confucianism..... | 18 |
| 2.2.5 Christianity | 21 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 2.2.6 Western ideologies | 22 |
| 2.2.7 Marxism-Leninism and Hồ Chí Minh's ideology | 22 |
| 2.3 The Vietnamese cultural values | 23 |
| 2.3.1 Hierarchical system | 24 |
| 2.3.2 Collectivism..... | 25 |
| 2.3.3 The Vietnamese man | 25 |
| 2.3.4 The Vietnamese woman | 26 |
| 2.3.5 Family oriented..... | 28 |
| 2.3.6 Ancestral veneration and deity worship | 29 |
| 2.4 The Vietnamese characteristics..... | 30 |
| 2.4.1 Personal traits | 30 |
| 2.4.2 Social life..... | 31 |
| 2.4.3 Person reference forms and politeness in Vietnamese | 33 |
| 2.5 Conclusion..... | 39 |
| Chapter 3: Review of studies on refusing | 41 |
| 3.1 Introduction | 41 |
| 3.2 The speech act of refusing..... | 41 |
| 3.2.1 Definition and characteristic features | 41 |
| 3.2.2 Studies on refusing | 43 |
| 3.3 Refusing in Vietnamese | 54 |
| 3.3.1 T. V. Q. Phan (2001) | 54 |
| 3.3.2 P. C. Nguyễn (2004b)..... | 55 |
| 3.3.3 C. M. Trần (2005c)..... | 57 |
| 3.3.4 T. M. P. Nguyễn (2006)..... | 59 |
| 3.4 Summary and conclusion | 60 |
| Chapter 4: Towards an interactional approach to pragmatic research | 61 |
| 4.1 Introduction | 61 |
| 4.2 Pragmatics and speech act theory | 61 |
| 4.2.1 Pragmatics: The study of language in interaction | 61 |
| 4.2.2 Pragmatics: A rapidly and diversely growing field..... | 63 |
| 4.2.3 Speech act theory: the cornerstone of pragmatics | 64 |
| 4.2.4 Drawbacks of classic speech act theory | 64 |
| 4.3 Face, facework and politeness..... | 67 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 4.3.1 Western view of politeness: A strategic approach..... | 67 |
| 4.3.2 Eastern view to politeness: A normative approach..... | 72 |
| 4.3.3 Synthetic approach to politeness: An attempt to combine Western and Eastern views..... | 76 |
| 4.3.4 Towards an interactional approach to politeness..... | 78 |
| 4.4 Face, facework and impoliteness..... | 84 |
| 4.4.1 Why an impoliteness framework is necessary..... | 84 |
| 4.4.2 Definition of impoliteness | 85 |
| 4.4.3 Impoliteness strategies..... | 86 |
| 4.4.4 Types of responses to impoliteness: | 88 |
| 4.5 Summary and conclusion | 89 |
| Chapter 5: Methodology..... | 90 |
| 5.1 Introduction | 90 |
| 5.2 Mixed methodology as a new research paradigm | 90 |
| 5.2.1 The philosophical underpinnings of mixed MMR..... | 91 |
| 5.2.2 Types of mixed methods research in terms of purposes..... | 95 |
| 5.2.3 Types of MMR in terms of designing techniques | 96 |
| 5.2.4 Types of MMR in terms of the relationship of the samples. | 99 |
| 5.3 Multiperspectival approach | 99 |
| 5.3.1 Theoretical underpinnings of the multiperspectival approach..... | 99 |
| 5.3.2 The model of multiperspectival approach | 103 |
| 5.4 Design of my research project: Both mixed methodological and multiperspectival. | 106 |
| 5.4.1 The analyst's perspective: | 108 |
| 5.4.2 The participants' perspective..... | 110 |
| 5.4.3 The semiotic resource perspective..... | 110 |
| 5.4.4 The social practice (or social action) perspective..... | 111 |
| 5.4.5 The social/institutional perspective | 111 |
| 5.5 The three studies..... | 112 |
| 5.5.1 Study 1: Ethnographic-based approach (participants' and social practice perspectives)..... | 112 |
| 5.5.2 Study 2: Interactional approach (social practice and semiotic resource perspectives)..... | 116 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 5.5.3 Study 3: Social psychological approach (another participants' perspective).... | 117 |
| 5.6 The organisation of the findings | 124 |
| Chapter 6: Analytical frameworks..... | 126 |
| 6.1 Introduction | 126 |
| 6.2 Narrative analysis..... | 126 |
| 6.3 Conversation analysis..... | 128 |
| 6.4 Membership categorisation analysis | 131 |
| 6.5 Participation framework..... | 133 |
| 6.5.1 Goffman's (1981) initiation of participation framework..... | 133 |
| 6.5.2 Levinson's (1988) explorations of Goffman's concepts in linguistics..... | 137 |
| 6.5.3 Sarangi's (2010) reconfiguration of roles..... | 143 |
| 6.6 Nexus of practice..... | 145 |
| 6.7 Multimodal interactional analysis | 146 |
| 6.7.1 Embodied vs disembodied modes | 149 |
| 6.7.2 Lower-level action vs higher-level action | 149 |
| 6.7.3 Frozen action vs fluid action | 149 |
| 6.7.4 Modal density, modal intensity and modal complexity..... | 150 |
| 6.7.5 Attention vs awareness | 150 |
| 6.7.6 Foreground-background continuum | 151 |
| 6.8 Summary and conclusion | 151 |
| Chapter 7: Socio-cultural affordances conditioning and constraining Vietnamese | |
| refusing | 153 |
| 7.1 Introduction | 153 |
| 7.2 Affordances: socio-cultural values and practices conditioning and constraining refusing | 155 |
| 7.3 Collectivism | 157 |
| 7.4 Responsibility..... | 161 |
| 7.5 Harmony..... | 165 |
| 7.5.1 Delay as a way of avoiding disharmony..... | 166 |
| 7.5.2 Telling lies as a strategy of avoiding embarrassment..... | 169 |
| 7.6 Trust | 172 |
| 7.6.1 Trust/mistrust with colleagues..... | 172 |
| 7.6.2 Trust/mistrust with bosses | 174 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| 7.6.3 Trust/mistrust with relatives | 176 |
| 7.7 Patriarchy..... | 180 |
| 7.8 Corruption | 184 |
| 7.8.1 Give vague responses as a signal of asking for bribes | 184 |
| 7.8.2 Intentionally giving bribes | 187 |
| 7.8.3 Bribery and corruption in the past and at present | 190 |
| 7.9 Summary and conclusion | 192 |
| Chapter 8: Modes of refusing and related/mediated actions | 196 |
| 8.1 Introduction | 196 |
| 8.2 The story of getting divorced | 197 |
| 8.3 The first conversation (Episode 22: 30'04-33'10) | 199 |
| 8.3.1 Story telling as a way of recipient design..... | 202 |
| 8.3.2 Refusing by requesting and explaining accompanied by paralinguistic and non linguistic modes..... | 204 |
| 8.3.3 Refusing by exclaiming and crying | 206 |
| 8.3.4 Other modes of communication | 206 |
| 8.4 The second conversation (Episode 22: 50'13-51'32)..... | 209 |
| 8.4.1 Refusing by rejecting to do an invited action | 212 |
| 8.4.2. Refusing by acting in a non-affiliative ways to the requester's ongoing actions..... | 213 |
| 8.4.3 Refusing by disagreeing | 214 |
| 8.4.4. Refusing by producing a vocative turn which is neither rejecting nor complying with the request | 215 |
| 8.4.5 Objects as embodied modes of communication | 215 |
| 8.4.6 The cult of ancestors as a communication tool..... | 216 |
| 8.5 The third conversation (Episode 25: 04'00-05'51) | 217 |
| 8.5.1 Refusing by passing the responsibility to another person and keeping silence..... | 220 |
| 8.5.2 Refusing by gazing with resentment and remaining silent..... | 222 |
| 8.5.3 Refusing by begging | 223 |
| 8.5.4 Seat arrangement as a means of assigning participant role. | 224 |
| 8.5.5 Gaze as selection of addressee..... | 225 |
| 8.6 The last conversation (Episode 32: 26'05-28'30) | 225 |
| 8.6.1 Refusing by ignoring | 229 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| 8.6.2 Refusing by shaking head accompanied by a statement of regret..... | 229 |
| 8.6.3 From refusing to accepting | 230 |
| 8.7 Recapitulation and conclusion | 233 |
| 8.7.1 Refusing and related speech acts are mediated by different modes of communication..... | 233 |
| 8.7.2 Refusing is a process of negotiation | 234 |
| 8.7.3 Cultural affordances | 235 |
| Chapter 9: Face, Facework and Impoliteness | 237 |
| 9.1 Introduction | 237 |
| 9.2 The story for analysis | 238 |
| 9.3 Conversation 3 (Episode 18: 29'55 – 30'32) | 245 |
| 9.3.1. Ngô's response to Hằng's impoliteness – a potential refusal..... | 247 |
| 9.3.2 Ngô's reactions after the conversation – a basis for his later refusal to Hằng's request..... | 249 |
| 9.4 Conversation 6 (Episode 20: 52'34 – 55'00) | 250 |
| 9.4.1 Nha's indirect refusals | 252 |
| 9.4.2 Nha's crying as a defensive response (a sign of refusal) to Hằng's impolite request | 253 |
| 9.5 Conversation 14 (Episode 28: 31'35 – 33'47) | 254 |
| 9.5.1 Pre - refusing by warning that functions as an indirect request..... | 257 |
| 9.5.2. Refusing by threatening | 259 |
| 9.6 Conversation 15 (Episode 29: 29'45-31'36)..... | 260 |
| 9.6.1 Refusing by criticising offensively | 263 |
| 9.6.2 Refusing by non-linguistic counter-attack..... | 264 |
| 9.7 Conversation 16 (Episode 30: 11'58-13'51)..... | 266 |
| 9.7.1 Indirect requests and refusals | 267 |
| 9.7.2 Nha's firmness in her refusals | 269 |
| 9.8 Conversation 17 (Episode 30: 51'15 – 55'02) | 269 |
| 9.8.1 Indirect request and refusal | 270 |
| 9.8.2 Nha's rigid counter-attacking refusal | 271 |
| 9.8.3 Change of person reference terms in the process of refusing..... | 275 |
| 9.8.4 Joint counter-attacking refusals | 276 |
| 9.9 Summary and conclusion | 276 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Chapter 10: Vietnamese refusing from NNSs' perspective..... | 280 |
| 10.1 Introduction | 280 |
| 10.2. Assumptions of the study | 281 |
| 10.3 Results and discussion..... | 283 |
| 10.3.1 Central tendency (Assumption) | 283 |
| 10.3.2 Categorical tendency and individual assumptions..... | 285 |
| 10.4 Discussion, summary and conclusion | 301 |
| 10.4.1 Cultural affordances highly supported by NNSs | 301 |
| 10.4.2 Cultural affordances still debatable | 302 |
| Chapter 11: Summary and conclusion..... | 304 |
| 11.1 Introduction | 304 |
| 11.2 How the research project answers the research questions..... | 304 |
| 11.2.1 Research question 1 | 304 |
| 11.2.2. Research question 2 | 308 |
| 11.2.3. Research question 3 | 312 |
| 11.2.4. Research question 4 | 314 |
| 11.3 Conclusion and reflection on methodology..... | 318 |
| 11.3.1 Reflections on the multiperspectival approach..... | 318 |
| 11.3.2 Reflection on mixed methods research..... | 319 |
| 11.3.3 Reflection on the analyst's perspective | 319 |
| 11.3.4 Reflections on analytical frameworks | 320 |
| 11.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research | 320 |
| 11.5 Significance of the research | 321 |
| References | 322 |
| Appendices..... | 352 |
| Appendix 1 | 352 |
| Appendix 2 | 355 |
| Appendix 3 | 357 |
| Appendix 4 | 359 |
| Appendix 5 | 363 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table 2. 1: Personal pronoun use in Vietnamese | 37 |
| Table 3. 1: Summary of empirical studies on refusing | 43 |
| Table 5. 1: Types of designs using Morse's (1991) notation system | 97 |
| Table 5. 2: Matrix crossing purpose of MMR by time orientation..... | 98 |
| Table 6. 1: A system of basic and derived categories (Levinson, 1988, p. 170) | 138 |
| Table 6. 2: Production roles (Levinson, 1988, p. 172) | 140 |
| Table 6. 3: Reception roles (Levinson, 1988, p. 173)..... | 141 |
| Table 9. 1: List of conversations about the story of Nha and Ngô | 239 |
| Table 10.3.1. 1 | 284 |
| Table 10.3.2. 1 | 285 |
| Table 10.3.2. 2 | 286 |
| Table 10.3.2. 3 | 288 |
| Table 10.3.2. 4 | 289 |
| Table 10.3.2. 5 | 291 |
| Table 10.3.2. 6 | 291 |
| Table 10.3.2. 7 | 292 |
| Table 10.3.2. 8 | 292 |
| Table 10.3.2. 9 | 294 |
| Table 10.3.2. 10 | 294 |
| Table 10.3.2. 11 | 296 |
| Table 10.3.2. 12 | 296 |
| Table 10.3.2. 13 | 298 |
| Table 10.3.2. 14 | 299 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure 4.1: P. Brown and Levinson's (1987, p. 60) five politeness strategies | 71 |
| Figure 4.2: Summary of response options (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1563) | 88 |
| Figure 5.1: Research map (source: Layder, 1993, p. 72) | 101 |
| Figure 5.2: A multiperspectival research model (Crichton, 2010, p. 34) | 104 |
| Figure 5.3: The multiperspectival model of my research project | 108 |
| Figure 7. 1: Socio-cultural affordances conditioning and constraining Vietnamese refusing..... | 155 |
| Figure 11. 1 The relationships among the three studies..... | 315 |

Abstract

This research project aims at exploring the cultural values which condition and constrain Vietnamese refusing from different perspectives (Candlin, 1997, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011a, 2013b; Crichton, 2010). Accordingly, the project is composed of three separate but interrelated studies exploring Vietnamese refusing from ethnographic-based, interactional and social psychological perspectives.

The first study, drawing predominantly on interviews as the data collection tool, aims at exploring whether different native speakers of Vietnamese have different views on whether or not they would refuse in some given specific situations, and the reasoning behind such choices. The interviews were treated as social practices (Talmy, 2010; Talmy & Richards, 2011) and analysed using Sacks' Membership Categorization Analysis (Sacks, 1974) and Goffman's Participation Framework (Goffman, 1981). The second study seeks to explore how refusals are realised in interactions by investigating conversations taken from a Vietnamese television series. Film excerpts were subjected to Multimodal Interactional Analysis (Norris, 2004), Conversation Analysis (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008), and examined using Scollon's Nexus of Practices (Scollon, 2001). The final study looks at the phenomenon in question from a social psychological perspective, using a Likert-scale questionnaire to explore how non-native speakers of Vietnamese perceive Vietnamese refusals.

Analyses show that Confucian ideological and philosophical values still exert a great influence on Vietnamese people's refusals. One important Confucian value is the hierarchical order in the family as well as in society in which each member has to fulfil his/her expected role. In addition, collectivism, patriarchy, and indirectness are also characteristics of Vietnamese society. However, in recent times the Vietnamese culture has also witnessed some degree of divergence from the traditional norms. For example, the four Confucian virtues expected for women are no longer strictly observed as before. Also, directness and rudeness have become common in everyday interactions in contemporary Vietnam. The possible impact of these social changes on the pragmatics of Vietnamese is also considered.

Statement of the candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled *The culture of Vietnamese refusing: A mixed methods multiperspectival approach* has not been submitted for a degree or part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research written by me. All sources of information used are indicated in the thesis, and any help and assistance that I have received in my research work have been appropriately acknowledged.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee; reference numbers are 5201100836 (dated 17th November 2011), 5201200833 (dated 21st November 2012), and 5201300805 (dated 10th December 2013).



Du Trong Nguyen (student number: 42535034)

Dec, 2016

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the supervision of my former principal supervisor, Emeritus Professor Christopher N. Candlin. Having him as my supervisor is one of the luckiest opportunities I have ever had in my life. His encyclopaedic knowledge in applied linguistics has greatly broadened and enriched my mind through his ‘preaching’ during the times we met to discuss my research theme. His guidance, encouragement, and support for more than three years before he died were very beneficial to my research process. More importantly, his multiperspectival research orientation, with its support for a mixed methodological approach, has provided me with an important route forward. Although he could not go with me to the final stage of my thesis completion, he was truly a great supervisor whom I feel exceptionally privileged to have been guided by.

I am also indebted to Dr. Jill Murray who was my associate supervisor and then became my principal supervisor after Professor Candlin passed away. Her suggestion of analysing film and TV series conversations has become crucial in my thesis. Especially in the final stage of my thesis writing, her endless support in proofreading, guiding, and giving useful comments on the drafts of my thesis have made the completion of this thesis possible. My thanks also go to Professor Lynda Yates, my associate supervisor in the final stage, who has also given me useful feedback which has gone into the thesis.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to the many anonymous participants in my research project, who generously spent their time to generate the data for this research project. Special thanks would go to my friends, colleagues, former students at Thai Nguyen University, and my relatives and neighbours in Thai Nguyen who enthusiastically took part in the interviews to share their ideas with me. I would also like to acknowledge all the 43 non-native speakers of Vietnamese working and studying in Hanoi and Thai Nguyen for their time and willingness to fill in the questionnaire. My thanks also go to the administrative staff at the Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University for their assistance.

Finally, I am grateful to all my family members for their continued support, patience and understanding throughout my candidature. I am particularly indebted to my wife and my two sons who have had to stay back home without my frequent support and with a lot of difficulties. This thesis is dedicated to them.

Transcription conventions (used in the transcripts)

| | |
|-------------|--|
| [| Left square bracket indicates the point at which a current speaker's utterance is overlapped by the talk of another. |
| = | Equal signs indicates that the second followed the first with no discernible silence between them. |
| (0.5) | Numbers in parentheses indicate the length (measured in second) of silence. |
| (.) | A dot in parentheses indicates a micro pause that is hearable but not measurable. |
| :: | Colons indicate prolongation or stretching of the sound, the more colons the longer the sound. |
| <u>Word</u> | Underlining indicates stress or emphasis by increased loudness or higher pitch. |
| >fast< | More than, less than signs indicate words between these signs being said more quickly |
| hhh | Out-breath |
| .hhh | In-breath |
| ((word)) | Double parentheses indicate the transcriber's/analyst's description. |
| ? | Question mark shows a rising intonation. |

Abbreviations of Vietnamese particles and function words used in the transcripts and examples)

| | | | |
|--------|--------------------|-------|--------------------|
| AffM | Affirmative marker | PluM | Plural marker |
| AlignM | Alignment marker | PolM | Politeness marker |
| Class. | Classifier | PosM | Positive marker |
| CondM | Conditional marker | Prog. | Progressive marker |
| DisM | Discourse maker | QuesM | Question marker |
| EmM | Emphasis marker | StaM | Stance marker |
| NegM | Negative marker | TopM | Topical marker |
| Past. | Past tense marker | Voc | Vocative word |

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Statement of the problem

Pragmatic research has undergone rapid development since the appearance of Austin's (1962) theory on how people use language. The significant growth in this research area has manifested itself in a number of ways. First, there has been research on a variety of speech acts such as requesting, complimenting, complaining, apologising, and refusing among others. Second, a large number of languages and cultures have been explored, the most common of which has been English and its different varieties, but also other languages such as Spanish, Persian, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese¹. Third, pragmatic phenomena such as face, facework, and politeness have been investigated from the point of view of different disciplines including anthropology, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics (Sbisà & Turner, 2013). Fourth, pragmatic studies have taken different perspectives; namely, post-positivism and constructionism (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). These two opposing worldviews have usually been explored using different methodologies: quantitative and qualitative, respectively. Finally, pragmatic research has developed rapidly across a range of different domains: intra-cultural, cross-cultural and inter-cultural studies.

A review of the research literature on speech acts reveals that studies of cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatic speech acts outnumber intra-cultural research projects (see chapter 3). One of the earliest empirical studies of speech act behaviour is the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) conducted by a number of researchers in the field all over the world (e.g., Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, (1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). This study compared the speech act behaviours of native speakers representing a range of different languages with the speech act behaviours of novice

¹ For a relatively full reference of speech act types and languages explored in pragmatics, see the website of the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), University of Minnesota; available at <http://www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/bibliography/topics/focusarea.html>

learners of the respective languages. The fact that cross-cultural studies have formed the lion's share of speech act research reflects the fact that language users need to interact with people from other cultures, especially in the era of globalisation in which English is the main means of communication. Accordingly, a number of languages are compared and contrasted to English through studies that investigate specific speech acts such as complimenting, requesting, and refusing. Although CCSARP initially focuses on only two speech acts, namely requesting and apologising, it has opened the way for studies to focus on other speech acts. As a natural consequence, the speech act of refusing has also been investigated cross-culturally and interculturally with English as a central language for comparison with other languages (see table 3.1 for a more detailed description of these studies).

In general, the most prominent feature of the studies of speech acts is that most were conducted by researchers working in the field of language teaching. As such, the aim of the research was primarily to examine ways to improve the abilities of language learners to use the target language in a way that reflected how native speakers use the language. The need to compare learners' inter-language with native norms was most likely associated with a post-positivist worldview which seeks to explore the conventional, generalised rules of using a language. This view resulted in a large number of cross- and inter-cultural studies of speech acts at the expense of in-depth studies conducted *within* a culture. In turn, cross- and inter-cultural studies share a range of common features: First, they generally draw on the *etic* perspective² (Pike, 1954) to explain the strategies used by language users; second, they mainly focus on linguistic forms rather than the underlying cultural factors; third, they mainly draw on quantitative methods of data collection and analysis; and fourth, they mainly explore the phenomenon from a single perspective even though they may triangulate the collection and analysis of data (see section 3.2.2 for further discussion).

² The neologisms 'emic' and 'etic' were coined by the linguistic anthropologist Kenneth Pike (1954) in his book; *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behaviour*. In order to explain the cultural system of a society, he created two terms based on the analogy of the two concepts used in the human language sound system: 'phonemic' and 'phonetic'. He claims that the emic perspective focuses on the intrinsic cultural distinctions that are meaningful to the members of a given society; and the *etic* perspective relies upon the extrinsic concepts and categories that have meaning for scientific observers.

Studies of refusing in Vietnamese share these characteristics and are mostly based on refusals taken from literature such as novels, short stories and so on (P. C. Nguyễn, 2004b; C. M. Trần, 2005c). Analyses from those sources cannot explore the paralinguistic and non-linguistic modes of communication, and the material objects or layout of the setting in which refusals occur in real life (Norris, 2004 also see section 3.3 for more detail review of studies of refusing in Vietnamese).

1.2 The present research project

In an attempt to bridge this gap in the literature, the present research project approached the study of Vietnamese refusing³ from different perspectives (Candlin, 1997, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011a, 2013b; Crichton, 2010). Specifically, a constructionist worldview which posits multiple perspectives of reality was applied (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Accordingly, three separate but interrelated studies were undertaken. The first two studies investigated Vietnamese refusing qualitatively, and these were complemented by a third study using quantitative approach. The present research project is therefore a *Mixed-Methods Multiperspectival* study. Although it is mixed-methods research, my stance as a researcher is still that of a constructionist⁴.

From a constructionist perspective, whether or not an utterance or a non-verbal, or even a non-vocal action is a refusal is not only based on the speaker's intention, but also the receiver's reaction. Accordingly, the main part of the project (study 2) employs a discourse analysis approach to investigate refusals in talk-in-interaction. As the name implies, the analyses are of speech acts in general and refusing in particular that occur in long fragments of authentic interactions (i.e., discourse) between speakers. This approach contrasts with previous research which was based predominantly on brief examples of interactions often structured by the researchers (Kádár & Mills, 2011). Within longer discourse fragments, the discursive approach focuses not only on the speaker's production

³ From this point, I intentionally use the term *Vietnamese refusing* rather than *refusing in Vietnamese* because it refers to refusals by Vietnamese people, but does not necessarily mean the refusals are always made using the Vietnamese language.

⁴ It should be noted here that this position is different from what Cresswell and Clark (2011) presented in their book where they argued that mixed-method research (MMR) is often conducted by a combination of two worldviews or by the transition from one to the other.

of certain utterances, but also on the hearer's evaluation of those utterances. This approach also makes a connection between the interactants', or first-order, interpretations of refusals and the researcher's, or second-order, explanations. This connection thus deals with the ongoing debate of whether sociolinguistic analysts should objectively describe the phenomenon under study or simply explain data from their own perspective. As Sarangi and Candlin (2001, p. 377) argued, fully objective descriptions of the phenomena are not possible because "analysts do have a pre-understanding of what they are describing and do not come naïve to data".

In the same vein, when dealing with discursive research in politeness, a central issue in speech act research, Haugh (2011) argued:

The ultimate aim of the discursive approach to politeness is not to simply reify *emic* or lay understandings of politeness, thereby elevating them to the level of theory. The aim instead is for the analyst to theorize about politeness so that we may better understand *emic* or lay understandings *and practices* of politeness, the latter not necessarily being synonymous with the former (p. 258, *original emphasis*).

The present research project will therefore examine the speech act of refusing from both *emic* and *etic* positions. It places emphasis on the need to analyse lay or first-order interpretations of refusals when drawing second-order conclusions. As such, this research project will follow an approach that focuses on *emic* or participants' evaluations of interaction, which is grounded in a constructionist epistemology and interpretive ontology. Then, it draws on the macro socio-cultural values to explain and conclude on the performances of refusals.

In order to achieve a deeper understanding of Vietnamese refusals informed by the multiperspectival discourse analysis (Candlin, 1997, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011a, 2013b; Crichton, 2010), the speech act of refusing in the present research is explored using three different approaches corresponding to three separate studies: ethnographic-based (study 1); interactional (study 2); and social psychological (study 3). According to Candlin and Crichton (2011b, 2013a), and Crichton (2010), a discursive practice can be explored from the following four perspectives: participants; semiotic resource; social practice; and social/institutional (see section 5.3.2 for the definitions of these perspectives). The multiperspectival approach to research in Applied Linguistics suggests any research theme (i.e., discursive practice) may be explored from at least two of the four perspectives, and

that the analyst has his/her own overarching voice (the analyst's perspective, see section 5.3.2).

In this research study, Vietnamese refusing is explored from the perspectives of two different groups of participants (study 1 and 3), from the social practice perspective (study 2), and the semiotic resource perspective (study 2). The three studies are further introduced in sections 1.4, 1.5, and 1.6, and were conducted separately, but in an interrelated way.

1.2.1 The notion of refusing in this research project

Speech act researchers have been familiar with such nouns as 'request', 'complaint', 'thank', 'refusal' so on and so forth as technical terms to refer to what people do with language, which are often referred to as 'speech acts'. Speech act theorists (e.g., Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979) make a distinction between different speech acts based on their 'surface' communicative functions. By 'surface' I mean the distinction is made mainly based on the wording level rather than on implicature level. On this basis 'thank you' for example is classified as expressing gratitude, or 'can you turn the fan on?' is a request. However, in real life, this is not always the case. For example, an expression of thanks (of course in wording) may function as saying goodbye, or as dismissing the speaker when used at the end of a discussion (Archer, Aijmer, & Wichman, 2012). As such, classic speech act theory seems to be unable to deal with such indirect speech acts, as they have the form of a certain speech act (in the wording) but have the illocutionary force of another speech act. Searle (1975) defines indirect speech acts as cases in which one illocutionary force is performed indirectly by means of performing another. However, though classic speech act theorists could see the existence of these indirect speech acts, they did not have the opportunity to investigate them (see section 4.2.4 for detail discussion of the drawbacks of classic speech act theory). In my research project, therefore, I deliberately use the term 'refusing' instead of 'refusal' for several reasons. First, refusing can covers the actions (verbal or non-verbal) that do not seem to be a refusal (according to traditional classification) but in fact have the function of a refusal. In other words, it refers to refusals that are so indirect that analysts may not see them as refusals. Second, I explore this speech act as a process rather than a product. As such, the action of refusing (see Sbisà & Turner, 2013 for the distinction between 'speech action' and 'speech act') may consist of only one refusal, or it may include several refusals. What is more, during the process of negotiation,

refusing can be changed; that is, a person may want to refuse at first, but then decide to accept or vice versa. Third, refusing is explored not only from the speaker's intention but also from the hearer's interpretation, not only from the speaker's words but also from his or her actual non-verbal actions that he or she performs later. In other words, he or she may not refuse in words but refuse in his or her later actions. Finally, exploring refusing as a process can better reveal the full vivid picture of the sociocultural affordances underlying it.

1.2.2 Focus of the research project

There are two components of pragmatics: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Whereas pragmalinguistics refers to resources for conveying communicative acts and relational or interpersonal meaning (Leech, 1983), sociopragmatics is described as social perception underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communication actions. As the title of this research project implies, I focus on the cultural underpinnings of refusing; that is, I focus more on the sociopragmatic aspect of refusing than on the pragmalinguistic component although in order to do so, we also need to analyse communication tools, or resources, used to convey the message of refusing.

It should also be noted here that although the focus of the study is refusing, it cannot be fully understood without analysing related speech acts such as requesting, advising and so on because a refusal is usually the second pair part of an adjacency pair in which those related speech acts are the first pair part. In other words, in order to explain what strategies participants draw on to refuse and accordingly what cultural affordances affect their use of such strategies, it is necessary to also understand how the first pair part is produced. This is because we explore refusing in interaction where each turn may be shaped by previous turns and may shape the next turn. It is also because refusing often occurs as part of long negotiation sequences in which there are disagreements, criticisms, insults and so on. These are considered as parts of the refusing process, even though they are not specific refusals themselves.

1.3 Objectives and research questions

The present research project aims at (1) exploring Vietnamese people's perceptions and differentiations on refusing in order to explore the underlying factors that impact on

whether they would refuse or accept/agree and, if they refuse, what strategies they use; (2) describing how refusals are negotiated in talk-in-interaction; (3) investigating how Vietnamese refusing is perceived by non-native speakers (NNSs) of Vietnamese; and (4) contributing to the description, interpretation, and explanation of speech acts in general in interaction. To achieve these four aims the project seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What socio-cultural values condition and constrain Vietnamese refusing?
2. How is Vietnamese refusing manifested in filmed talk-in-interaction as represented in television scripts?
3. How do non-native speakers of Vietnamese perceive, interpret and react to Vietnamese people's refusing?
4. How can the results of this overall study contribute to describing, interpreting and explaining interaction among Vietnamese people?

The first three questions will be directly dealt with by the three studies respectively. The fourth question will be answered as a conclusion of the whole thesis.

1.4 Study 1: The ethnographic-based study

This is the fundamental study in the sense that it aims at exploring the Vietnamese sociocultural values underlying the speech act of refusing, which are the basis for the implementation of the latter two studies. In other words, the latter two studies were conducted based on the findings of this study. This study relies on an ethnographic approach. Ethnography usually involves participant observations or a combination of observations, recorded naturally-occurring conversations, and interviews (see for example Talmy, 2004, 2008, 2009). However, as it was beyond the scope of the study to conduct participant observation and to record naturally-occurring conversations, I used one of the techniques of ethnography - ethnographic interviews - as the tool of data generation. The reason for using only interviews is that it is difficult and very time consuming to observe cases of refusals and in practical terms virtually impossible to gain access to the ones relating to such sensitive issues as divorces, corruption, and bribery. Moreover, since this study aims at getting to know the cultural values conditioning and constraining Vietnamese refusing based on Vietnamese people's perception and differentiation of this speech act rather than on what they actually say in real life, interviewing was considered to be suitable for data generation. The technique is described and justified in more detail in section 5.5.1.

As such, this study should be considered as an ethnographic-based rather than a fully ethnographic study.

Following Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, and Karlsson (2002) and Layder (1993) (see chapter 5) who emphasised the importance of conducting an ethnographic study and then supporting it with other methods of analyses, this study applied linguistic ethnography (Creese, 2008; Maybin & Tusting, 2011; Rampton, 2007; Rampton, Tusting, Maybin, & Barwell, 2004) as the starting point. The objective of linguistic ethnography is to fuse *language* – the object of linguistics – and *culture* – the object of ethnography on the basis that the use of language is influenced and shaped by cultural conventions. It should be noted that the linguistic ethnography applied in this study is different to the traditional discipline in North America of linguistic anthropology. American anthropologists attempt to comprehend exotic cultures by “*trying to get familiar with the strange*” (i.e., looking at a phenomenon in a strange distant country) from an ‘outside’ view; whereas linguistic ethnography researchers explore their own language and culture by “*trying to get analytic distance on what’s close-at-hand*” (Rampton et al., 2004, p. 12, *original emphasis*). This approach was applied drawing on the experience of insider informants and the researcher’s own experience and knowledge as a member of the culture.

As such, this study aims to explore what underlying socio-cultural factors determine the choice between refusing and accepting/agreeing, and what strategies speakers use to refuse. In other words, the objective of this study is to explore native speakers’ views, through their opinions and especially their real stories, towards what they say in relation to what they intend to mean. Accordingly, focus group interviews, supplemented where possible and appropriate with individual interviews, are the main data collection method in this study.

1.4.1 Focus group interviews

Focus groups were used to elicit data because, like interviews, they are advantageous in exploring people’s opinions, attitudes and experiences toward specific topics. As Myers and Macnaghten (1999) wrote, “The great strength of focus groups as a technique is in the liveliness, complexity and unpredictability of the talk, where participants can make sudden connections that confuse the researchers’ coding but open up their thinking.” Marková, Linell, Grossen, and Orvig (2007) also argued that focus groups can provide researchers

with essential data for research into “socially shared knowledge” (p. 47) and that they should be seen as “socially situated interactions” (p. 45). As Marková et al. (2007) asserted, during the speakers’ interactions the meaning is contingently negotiated and co-constructed as:

Participants think together and talk together and are stimulated in their thinking when listening to other people’s ideas. It is as if the ‘strange perspectives’ of others stimulate individuals to mobilise their own potentials to develop new insights and associations, and recall those which they have encountered on previous occasions (Marková et al., 2007, p. 46).

There are different views on whether or not participants are pre-existing groups (i.e. whether they have some shared experience) or come from different backgrounds. Participants who have some shared experience can yield deeper understandings of the topic, but differences between participants are illuminating (J. Kitzinger, 1994). The participants in this study are varied in that some have shared experiences (i.e., the same occupation); whereas others have different backgrounds (i.e. profession or place of work). However, all participants are acquainted in some way, either as workmates in the same institution, or as classmates in an English course. Given that Vietnamese people tend to be reserved and unwilling to talk to strangers (Vuong, 1976), the use of pre-existing groups was expected to be more effective.

1.4.2 Individual interviews

Given that some participants do not like to work in groups, and that some participants like to work in groups but cannot due to their free time for focus group discussion not coinciding with the free time of others, individual interviews were used as an alternative means of collecting data. However, in accordance with constructionist paradigms, interviews in the present research are regarded as “a site of, and occasion for, producing reportable knowledge” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 68). Sarangi (2003) also views interviews of this type as “not only a resource of social inquiry, but also an object of analysis in its own right” (p. 79). Data are therefore considered as representations or accounts of truths, facts, attitudes, beliefs, and mental states which are co-constructed by both the interviewer and the interviewee. In other words, meaning is obtained through the active roles of both parties in the interview process.

1.4.3 Analytical tools

Data from both focus groups and individual interviews, and the narratives thereof were analysed via *Narrative Analysis* (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008; de Fina, 2008; de Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Fasulo & Zuccheromaglio, 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2006; A. Johnson, 2008), *Membership Categorization* (Sacks, 1972b, 1974), and *Participation Framework* (Goffman, 1981; Levinson, 1988).

Following de Fina and Georgakopoulou (2008) *inter alia*, participant narratives in this study are considered as social practices rather than texts. A narrative is defined not as “a way of representing past experience by a sequence of ordered sentences that present the temporal sequence of those events by that order” (Labov & Fanshel, 1977, p. 105). Rather, narratives are defined as social activities by which the contents of the stories rely not only on the storytellers but also on the recipients. For instance, when exploring clients’ narratives in psychotherapy, Bercelli, Rossano and Viaro (2008) claimed that the therapists, in order to pursue their inquiring strategies, can make further requests and occasion a narrative expansion of the segments of the clients’ prior talk that need to be further investigated.

In the individual interviews, the recipient is the researcher/interviewer, and in the focus group interviews, the recipients are the researcher/interviewer and the other participants. The narrative is thus not considered as storytelling provided by the storyteller only, but as storytelling co-constructed by that participant with other participants and/or with the researcher/interviewer (more detail of this study will be presented in section 5.5.1).

1.5 Study 2: The interactional study

If the first study is the fundamental one that gives basis for this and the third study, this is the main study in the sense that it explores refusing in real interactions (by ‘real’ I mean the actual interactions that contain turns of refusals rather than the interactions that are retold by the participants in their narratives in study 1), which is the focus of the overall research project (data in studies 1 and 3 are based on what participants can remember from real interactions only). Participants’ perceptions and differentiations obtained from the analysis of interview data in the first study were further explored in situations that emulate real life. To do this, conversations containing refusals as performed in a Vietnamese TV

series were collected and described. Although there have been several works showing how constructed conversations deviate from what actually happen in real life (Gilmore, 2004; Holmes, 1988; T. H. Nguyễn & Ishitobi, 2012; T. T. M. Nguyễn, 2011; Scotton & Bernsten, 1988; Uso-Juan, 2008; Wong, 2002), and this has been taken into account in the analysis, there are several reasons for the use of TV data. First, although refusals in TV series are not naturally-occurring data, they are nevertheless considered in the literature as the “most representative of naturally-occurring speech from the pragmalinguistic perspective” (Rose, 2001, p. 309). Second, collecting this type of data is in line with the resources available at the researcher’s own ‘disposal’ (Layder (1993, p. 107), that is my time, funding, equipment, and assistance available to me as a PhD student. Given that this study is only one of the three studies, practical constraints make it impossible to collect sufficient naturally-occurring data to adequately investigate a low frequency speech act. Third, and also the most important, the objective of our research project is to explain the socio-cultural values (the sociopragmatic aspects) underlying the performances of refusals rather than just simply to describe how refusals are made (the pragmalinguistic aspects). Thus I do not claim that how the characters in TV conversations refuse is real, but that their actions (linguistic, paralinguistic, or non-linguistic) are nevertheless revealing about what happens in real life.

1.5.1 Data

Data in this study consist of excerpts from a recently produced TV series entitled *Những công dân tập thể* (lit. Citizens living in the same apartment building). This is a 36-episode TV series produced in 2011 (see section 5.5.2 for the reasons of selecting this TV series). Two high-stake stories (i.e., stories about important issues in people’s life) in this TV series were selected. One is about a woman who decides to get divorced from her husband and the other about a love affair between two old people. Each of these stories contains a number of conversations between people involved, in which refusing takes place. The former is analysed in chapter 8 and the latter in chapter 9.

1.5.2 Analytical tools

The analytical tools drawn on to analyse data in this study are *Conversation Analysis* (CA) (Antaki, 2011; Hutchby, 2007; Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008; Liddicoat, 2007) and *Multimodal Interactional Analysis* (MIA) (Norris, 2004). CA is used to study “the

interactional organization of social activities” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 12) and is useful to analyse different conversational features such as turn-taking, recipient design, stress, intonation, and more importantly the emic realisations of talks. As such, CA is designed for studying naturally-occurring conversations. Thus, in using CA to analyse TV conversations, which are scripted, I bear in mind that these CA features are not actual realization of real life, but are what the film makers think to be representation of real life. Thus, this study should be considered as CA-informed or CA-assisted only (see my further explanation in section 6.3 as well).

In addition to the use of CA, MIA is also used to capture the non-linguistic behaviour of the participants such as postures, gestures, eye contact, stares, and even the objects used by the participants and the layout of the setting, providing an additional dimension to the study of refusing. Since I draw on movie conversations, using MIA as a complementary tool to CA is necessary because I not only analyse the emic realization of refusals but also the top-down thinking of the filmmakers. Although only selected aspects of MIA have been used in the analyses of the movie conversations, it is still necessary for the explanation of such conversational features as embodied/disembodied modes; lower-level/higher-level actions; modal density, intensity and complexity; and attention/awareness etc. (see section 6.7 for a more detail distinction between CA and MIA; more detail of this study will be presented in section 5.5.2)

1.6 Study 3: The social psychological study

If the first study is fundamental and the second is the main one, this is the complementary study. This study is designed to explore the perceptions and attitudes of NNSs of Vietnamese residing in Vietnam towards Vietnamese refusing and to determine the extent to which they understand Vietnamese culture. It aims at extending the findings of the first two studies by providing a perspective from another group of participants. Exploring Vietnamese refusing from the perspective of NNSs can enhance the ‘ecological validity’ of our research project (Cicourel, 2007) because it may either complement or challenge the results of the first two studies.

1.6.1 Social psychological approach

Although the study of language in social psychology emerged in the observational work of language conducted in 1930s (see Ball, Gallois, & Callan, 1989; Markel, 1998), language, communication and discourse have been separated from social psychology for a long time (Weatherall, Gallois, & Watson, 2007). Recently, however, linguists and psychologists have recognised the interrelationship of language, discourse and communication and their contributions to the study of social psychology. This tie has become necessary and indispensable because language and communication – issues in sociolinguistics – are central features of social behaviour, an issue within the domain of social psychology. Indeed, bringing a psychological perspective into language, discourse and communication can help sociolinguistic researchers gain a more comprehensive analysis of social factors such as status, identity and cultural values.

1.6.2 Data elicitation instrument, respondents, and statistical tools

Forty-five Likert-scale statements were designed for use in this study based on the findings from studies 1 and 2, on the literature on Vietnamese culture, and on my own observations as insider-researcher. The first 35 statements were grouped into six categories corresponding to six constructs representing cultural affordances that condition and constrain the speech act of Vietnamese refusing (Gibson, 1977). These constructs are **Relationships, Responsibilities, Harmony, Identities, Purposes, and Strategies**. The final 10 statements were put into a section that synthesised the participants' perceptions, attitudes and evaluations of the constructs.

This 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire was delivered to 43 NNSs of Vietnamese living and/or working in Vietnam. The participants derive from nine countries: United Kingdom (UK), United States (US), Australia, Canada, Cuban, Japan, China, Korea, and Thailand. The scores obtained from the questionnaire were imported into SPSS for statistical analysis. More detail of the methodology is provided in section 5.5.3.

1.7 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is divided into 11 chapters. Chapter 1 - *Introduction* provides readers with the rationale and design of the research project, and the organisation of the thesis. Chapter 2 -

The Vietnamese and their culture includes a brief description of the Vietnamese people and their cultural values and characteristics. Chapter 3 - *Literature review* provides a detailed review of studies on refusing with particular focus given to the methodologies employed. Chapter 4 – *Towards an interactional approach to pragmatic research* deals with such issues as the development of pragmatics and speech act theory, and theories of (im)politeness and face. Chapter 5 - *Methodology* describes the ontological and methodological issues drawn on in the project. In particular, this thesis argues for the use of the multiperspectival approach proposed by Candlin and Crichton (Candlin, 1997, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011b, 2013b; Crichton, 2010) and discusses the relevance of the mixed methods drawn on in this research project. Chapter 6 - *Analytical frameworks* presents the analytical tools used in this project. Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10 are the four analytical chapters. Chapter 7 presents the socio-cultural values, or affordances (Gibson, 1977), conditioning and constraining Vietnamese refusing drawn from the analysis of the interviews in study 1. Chapters 8 and 9 present the results of study 2, with chapter 8 focusing on the different means of communication drawn on for refusing and related speech acts, and chapter 9 documenting impoliteness strategies. Chapter 10 reveals the NNSs' perceptions, attitudes and evaluations of Vietnamese refusing. The final chapter, chapter 11 - *Summary and conclusion* summarises the findings and presents some reflections on methodology, limitations, implications, and suggestion for further studies.

Chapter 2: The Vietnamese and their culture

2.1 Introduction

To understand how people use language, for example what strategies they use in refusing and why they rely on such strategies, one must get to know about their cultural backgrounds. This chapter provides readers with an overview of the Vietnamese people and the cultural values and norms that influence Vietnamese people's personal traits, their social life, and characteristics including linguistic, paralinguistic and non-linguistic behaviours. However, it does not try to convince readers that cultural values and norms are homogeneous, static, or perceived the same by different groups of Vietnamese people. Instead, it provides a brief description of the general socio-cultural norms and conventions which form the basis for the explanation of the real discursive practices (i.e., refusals) which may not conform to those norms and conventions.

Vietnam lies along the eastern edge of the peninsula of mainland Southeast Asia at the crossroads of the Sinitic world of East Asia and of the more Indianised world of mainland Southeast Asia. It borders with China in the north, Laos and Cambodia in the west, and the East Sea in the east and south. Thus, Vietnamese culture is the product of an interaction between Sinitic customs, institutions and values, and those emanating from the native soil of Southeast Asia (Duiker, 1995b).

In order to get to know the Vietnamese values and characteristics, a description of the influence of ideologies, religions and religious philosophies of Vietnamese people throughout history is necessary. As Vương (1976) says, “[religion] and religious philosophies have played a very important role in influencing the Vietnamese culture” (p. 7).

The state of religion in Vietnam is more complex than one may think. According to the 2009 national population census conducted by the General Department of Statistics, most Vietnamese people (81.7%) do not practice a religion. This leaves only 18.3% of the

population who do practice a religion. These findings suggest to people from other cultures that Vietnamese people are typically atheists and that Vietnam does not have a state religion. A survey conducted by Pew Research Center⁵, on the other hand, presented quite different results. The survey reported more than 16% of the Vietnamese population identify as Buddhist, 8% as Christians, and 0.5% who practice other religions. The survey also reported that Vietnamese people who claim not to practice a religion make up only 29.6% of the population, with more than 45% practicing indigenous folk religions.

Despite the conflicting findings, Vietnamese people tend not to follow just one religion. In fact, a Buddhist may also observe Confucian rituals and follow Taoist teachings, or s/he may even believe strongly in Animism. On the other hand, a Catholic might worship his ancestors and believe in the existence of spirits (Vuong, 1976). Although this argument is potentially controversial given some authors may argue that Catholics do not worship their ancestors, it demonstrates that the practice of religious beliefs in Vietnam is complicated. It is true, however, that most Vietnamese people have the custom of worshipping their ancestors, which has been named *Đạo ông bà* or ancestorism.

The following sections describe the main religions, religious philosophies and ideologies both indigenous and imported (section 2.2), Vietnamese values (section 2.3), and Vietnamese characteristics (section 2.4).

2.2 Ideologies, philosophies and religions

The present cultural values and beliefs that shape the Vietnamese character and way of life are greatly influenced by a number of religions and religious philosophies and ideologies. The most prominent are Animism (or indigenous folk religion), Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, Marxism-Leninism, and Hồ Chí Minh's ideology.

⁵ The **Pew Research Center** is a non-partisan American think tank based in Washington, D.C.. It provides information on social issues, public opinion, and demographic trends shaping the US and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis, and other empirical social science research (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pew_Research_Center, retrieved 8th June, 2015)

2.2.1 Animism

Animism is probably the world's oldest belief system and one of the earliest forms of religious practices in Vietnam. It is the worldview that souls or spirits exist not only in humans, but also in some other non-human entities such as animals, plants, rocks; in some geographic features such as mountains or rivers; or in other entities of the natural environment including thunder, wind, and shadows. Vietnam is an agrarian country and most Vietnamese people are peasants who cultivate their land. For thousands of years, the peasants have experienced disasters that have destroyed their fields. In order to avoid damage they worship the spirits of natural phenomena such as storms, thunder, rain, and so on. Animism, often regarded as a superstition, therefore influences the beliefs and practices of the majority of Vietnamese people. Although Animism, a belief in spirit, is regarded as superstitious practice, it has a central position in the majority of Vietnamese people's life. As such, it may explain why many superstitious practices and rituals are still held in every aspect of life such as weddings, funerals, and doing business.

2.2.2 Taoism

Taoism, also known as Daoism, was founded by Laozi (or Lao-tze, Lao-tzu, or Lao-tse) in China. The core principle of Taoism is that all things exist as they are and thus people should attempt to attune their thinking and actions to things as they are and not fight against them. Therefore, most Taoist worship rituals and ceremonies are attempts to assist humans to attune themselves to the universe. Taoism, or centring on people's oneness with the universe, encourages Taoists to live purely, simply, and in harmony with nature. Although Taoism also worships the spirits of nature, it differs from Animism in that Taoists believe that God's spirit can animate inanimate objects, while animists believe that these objects have spirits of their own.

Taoism was introduced into Vietnam at the beginning of the first Chinese domination marked by the invasion by Chinese General Triệu Đà (Chao T'o) in 207 B.C. Until the end of the Trần dynasty (1225-1400) Taoism was appreciated as much as Buddhism and Confucianism by Vietnamese people, and the three religions together formed the so-called *Tam Giáo* (i.e., three religions). From the end of the Trần dynasty however Taoism began to degenerate into a kind of polytheism with innumerable gods, with the supreme one being *Ngọc Hoàng*, or Emperor of Jade. Under the government of *Ngọc Hoàng*, other

deities such as *Diêm Vương* (King of Hell), *Long Vương* (King of Waters) and the household gods were worshipped along with *Táo Quân* (God of the Kitchen).

Like animism, Taoism left Vietnam with many superstitious practices and religious cults including sorcery, witchcraft, horoscopy, chiromancy and geomancy (K. K. Nguyễn, 1972, p. 21). Its teachings have been passed on from generation to generation through literature, education and traditional practices. It has a strong hold over Vietnamese thinking and culture as well as the Vietnamese way of life (Vương, 1976).

2.2.3 Buddhism

Buddhism is one of the three great religions (Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism) to have contributed to the moulding of Vietnamese culture and the character of the nation over the centuries. Buddhism was imported into Vietnam both indirectly via Chinese monks and directly by Indian monks who travelled to Vietnam by sea in the second century A.D. Chinese and Indian monks then spread the religion throughout Vietnam over the next four centuries.

Buddhism was brought into the north of the present Vietnam, where Vietnamese people originated, by missionaries who travelled between China and India during the early stages of Chinese rule (Duiker, 1995b, p. 168). Many Chinese Buddhist monks (commonly known as bonzes) stayed in North Vietnam for a certain period of time on their way to India. The core teachings of Buddhism are that people should reject the material environment and their desires in favour of quiescence, try to escape from the evils of everyday human existence, and should believe in an afterlife.

From the 15th century Buddhism was victim to its own limitations as a potential ideology of the state. Buddhism today retains a deep influence on the Vietnam population although it has lost its privileged position at court and among the educated. However, its effects go far beyond religion, touching on human behaviour, the arts, and craft forms. Buddhism presented to Vietnam a new look at the universe, the individual and life. It has had a particularly strong effect on morals and behaviour.

2.2.4 Confucianism

Like other countries in East and Southeast Asia such as China, Japan, and Korea, Vietnam

is profoundly influenced by Confucian ideology, first introduced in 111 B.C (Duiker, 1995a). The key elements of Confucianism are summarised by Bond and Hwang (1986):

[T]he essential aspects of Confucianism [...] are the following: (a) man exists through, and is defined by, his relationships to others; (b) these relationships are structured hierarchically; (c) social order is ensured through each party's honouring the requirements in the role relationship (p. 216).

Confucianism is a political ideology propagated by Kong Fu-tzu (551-479 B.C), transliterated into English as Confucius in the 6th-5th century B.C in China, and then spread to other East and Southeast Asian nations such as Japan, Korea and Vietnam. It was first introduced to Vietnam by Triệu Đà, the ruler of Nam Việt – an ancient Kingdom comprised of parts of the present Chinese provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, and the present northern Vietnam.

There are different perceptions on the status of Confucianism. Sometimes it is viewed as a religion and sometimes as a philosophy. In Vietnamese history, it was once considered as one of the three main teachings, or doctrines, (*Tam giáo*) including Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. As such, it was viewed as a religion. However, for many scholars it is better regarded as a social, ethical and political philosophy, or a worldview, rather than a religion. This is because there is no church or clergy (Vương, 1976), and because it does not include the spiritual dimension or the afterlife. Whatever its status is, it has had a long-lasting influence on Vietnamese people's way of life.

Living in the strife and anarchy of the Zhou dynasty, Confucius' teachings called for good government and harmonious relations between people in society; the two key tenets of Confucianism. In order to achieve good government Confucius placed emphasis on the importance of education. He then proposed the central notion of *Quân tử* (Junzi), which literally means gentlemen, or 'superior persons' or exemplary persons. A *Quân tử* is an ideal man whose character embodies the virtue of benevolence and whose acts are in accordance with the rites and rightness. In the *Analects*⁶ translated by Lau (1979), Confucius spent much time defining the contrast between *Quân tử* and *Tiểu nhân*

⁶ *Analects* is a book written by Confucius' followers that collects saying and ideas attributed to him and his contemporaries.

(Xiaoren), or small and petty persons. *Quân tử* is used to refer to men in authority and *Tiểu nhân* to those who are ruled. As *Quân tử* is the ideal moral character it is not expected that a man can achieve it without a great deal of hard work, or cultivation. Thus, self-cultivation and education is a lifelong process.

Self-cultivation and education is the first and crucial step in the four steps in a man's life; namely, cultivating oneself (*Tu Thân*), ruling one's family (*Tề gia*), governing one's country (*Trị quốc*), and pacifying the world (*Bình Thiên hạ*). That is, only by cultivating himself, in terms of both knowledge and ethics, can he rule his family and only by being able to rule his family can he govern the country and pacify the world. Confucianism also emphasises the importance of harmonious relationships among people within society. In order to have harmonious relationships, however, each person must fulfil their role and duty in accordance with their status or position, referred to as *Chính danh* (or Zhengming) (see section 4.3.2 for further discussion of Zhengming).

Confucius and his disciples also teach the Five Relations (*Ngũ luân*). Indeed, these are the five foundational relations in a Confucian society: ruler-subject (*quân-thần*); father-child (*phụ-tử*); husband-wife (*phu-phụ*); elder brother-younger brother (*huynh-đệ*); and friend-friend (*bằng hữu*). While the fifth is a relation among equals, the first four are hierarchical relations whereby the person mentioned on the left has a higher status than the person mentioned on the right. Among the five relations, three are family relations (father-child, husband-wife, and elder brother-younger brother). Therefore, the hierarchical ordering of familial relations plays a crucial role in, and forms the foundation for, the construction of other human relations. Apart from the fifth relation for friends of equal status, Confucianism emphasises filial piety and loyalty; that is, the subordination of subject to ruler, children to father, wife to husband, and younger brother to elder brother. These values have influenced greatly the Vietnamese way thinking, values and social practices. It is when these relations are conducted in an improper manner that disorder ensues in the social group and man is thrown out of harmony with the universe.

Confucianism also emphasises Five Constant Virtues: benevolence or humaneness (*Nhân*), righteousness or justice (*Nghĩa*), proper rite or propriety (*Lễ*), wisdom or knowledge (*Trí*), and faithfulness or trust (*Tín*). The Virtues combine to form the nucleus of Confucian ethics. The first virtue, benevolence, is the most important in Confucius' doctrine, with

him stating, “do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you” (The Analects, translated by Lau, 1979). The second, righteousness, refers to what is appropriate and right, and determines the proper way in which one should conduct oneself. The third virtue, rite or propriety, concerns social conduct and interactions; that is, how to behave properly in accordance with rites, rituals and customs. The fourth virtue, wisdom, refers to know-how and good judgements of the consequences of actions and moral intelligence. Finally, trust is associated with doing what one has said, and implies the importance of credibility.

Nowadays, East and Southeast Asian cultures are not as ‘Confucian’ as they used to be. Nonetheless, the profound impact of Confucianism is still felt at different levels across cultures and within countries. As Cheng (1990) suggested, “Confucianism is not only alive and well but has also been increasingly revived by the countries in the region” (p. 510).

2.2.5 Christianity

Christianity was first introduced into Vietnam in the 16th century when the first Roman Catholics came to Vietnam (Vương, 1976). Roman Catholicism flourished in the 17th and 18th centuries, particularly when Jesuit missionary Alexandre de Rhodes, who created the alphabet for the Vietnamese language (now known as *Quốc ngữ* or National language), stayed in Vietnam in early 17th century. After some time suffering from persecution and suppression in the early 19th century (Vương, 1976), Catholicism flourished again during the French rule in Vietnam from the late 19th century to 1954. Although Catholicism has only a relatively brief history in Vietnam and the number of Vietnamese Catholics is quite small, its influence on the Vietnamese way of life cannot be ignored (Vương, 1976).

Since arriving in Vietnam, Catholicism has filled a spiritual and moral vacuum left by the inability of traditional religions such as Animism, Buddhism, and Taoism to satisfy the needs of people tired of warfare and chaos (Q. A. Trần, 2011). However, some elements of the traditional religions were incompatible with Christian monotheism. Monotheism – the worshipping of only one God – contradicts the Animistic belief that there exist different national and local deities. Christianity does not support the cult of tutelary deities which is central to the religious life of the Vietnamese village. Influenced by Confucian filiality, most Vietnamese people regardless of class and religion practice ancestral worship manifested in funeral rituals and memorial ceremonies. According to Christianity, the

belief that spirits of the dead continue to reside in the natural world and influence the lives of the people is not scriptural.

2.2.6 Western ideologies

The introduction of Western culture into Vietnam, particularly during its colonisation by France in the 19th century, had a traumatic impact on Vietnamese traditional ways of life. There were big gaps between Western ideologies and Confucian teachings deeply embedded into the minds of the Vietnamese people. As Duiker (1995b) wrote; “[n]owhere was this more true than in Vietnam, where Confucian institutions and values often conflicted in basic respects with those introduced by the French” (p. 175) In fact, the Confucian principle of subordination to family and community was challenged and gradually replaced by the French revolutionary trinity of liberty, equality and fraternity and its emphasis on individual freedom. Another clash emerged between the Confucian hierarchical relationship and its emphasis on the dominant role of the man and the Western egalitarian value regarding equality of the sexes. In particular, Western ideologies greatly influenced the Vietnamese culture in terms of education, the social role of females, and life style.

The role of Vietnamese women changed significantly during the period of French colonialism. Women from elite or educated affluent families could go to school and get access to jobs usually reserved for their male counterparts. As a result, girls from these families were given more freedom to choose their partners and when to get married.

2.2.7 Marxism-Leninism and Hồ Chí Minh’s ideology

From 1954 to 1975 there emerged two contradictory ideologies in North and South Vietnam. After the Geneva Conference of 1954, Vietnam was divided into two separate governments, one in the north and one in the south. South Vietnam was influenced by American culture resulting in the breakdown of traditional values. American economic and technological assistance stimulated the rise of an affluent middle class increasingly influenced by social and cultural trends in the US (Duiker, 1995b). The American capitalist culture brought about a materialistic way of life.

In contrast, North Vietnam was influenced by China (with Confucianism) and the USSR,

and tried to create a new society and culture based on the principles of national independence, people's democracy, and socialism. In order to build a socialist society the Communist Party in Vietnam knew that the emergence of new cultural and ideological values was as crucial as economic development. Therefore, under the influence of Marxism-Leninism, socialist ideology was taught in schools so as to train students to become the future 'pillars' of the socialist state. However, this was not an easy task because "the vast majority of the Vietnamese people, whether peasants or urban bourgeoisie, had little understanding of Marxism-Leninism" (Duiker, 1995b, p. 181).

North Vietnam culture during 1954-1975 was also influenced greatly by Hồ Chí Minh, founder of the Vietnamese Communist Party, leader of the Vietnamese revolution, and regarded as a quintessential national hero of the country. Hồ Chí Minh's patriotism, selflessness and dedication, and his matchless sense of personal ethics were highly admired by the Vietnamese people (Duiker, 1995b), and are integral to what is now referred to as Hồ Chí Minh's ideology.

Reunited in 1975, Vietnam continues to be influenced by Marxism-Leninism and Hồ Chí Minh's ideology; both of which are taught in tertiary institutions. Hồ Chí Minh's ideology is an adaptation of the values of Confucianism and Marxism-Leninism with some radical changes so as to align with Vietnamese culture and tradition. One of the radical advancements is the enhancement of women's role in society. Hồ Chí Minh (2000) argued that women make up half of all human beings and thus if they are not liberated, then half of the population, and half of the socialist society, is not liberated. Thus, Vietnamese women must be equal to men in all spheres of life including the political, economic, cultural, social and familial. This equality was clearly stated in Article 24 of the 1959 Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (T. V. Nguyễn, 2014). However, in reality in contemporary Vietnam many practices of inequality such as family violence can still be heard and read on mass media.

2.3 The Vietnamese cultural values

Each of the above-mentioned ideologies, philosophies and religions has contributed in different degrees to the Vietnamese way of life. Buddhism, for example, teaches people to live kindly and to suffer so as to have a better afterlife, and to live harmoniously with the universe. Taoism similarly places emphasis on the importance of living in harmony with,

and in adjustment to, the natural world. Catholicism has also impacted the Vietnamese although the number of Catholics in Vietnam is quite small.

If these religions and beliefs influence only one group of people, Confucian ideology has penetrated deeply and widely into the lives of the majority of Vietnamese people. It is hard to find a Vietnamese person who does not follow one or some of the Confucian teachings. This fact is explainable. Instead of referring to spirits or gods people cannot see, as in other religions, Confucianism focuses on human beings, their cultivation and education, their role in society, and their relationships with others. All these aspects are basic and practical to every social member and thus they have a life-long effect.

The following sub-sections describe the Vietnamese cultural values to have emerged from the ideologies, philosophies and religions over thousands of years, the most prominent of which is Confucianism.

2.3.1 Hierarchical system

Hierarchical relationships in Vietnamese society are the product of Confucianism. The hierarchy can be seen in four out of the five relations mentioned by Confucius (see section 2.2.4). At the society level, the ruler is of a higher status than the subjects. As a result, the subjects have to respect the ruler and in return the ruler must show affection to the subjects. In a broader sense, those of lower position or status must respect and obey those of higher status. In institutions, for example, there exists inequality between a boss and a subordinate. The boss is seen as a mentor who gives guidance and advice, and the employee is expected to execute orders and to perform his tasks quietly (Đ. L. Nguyễn, 1994). Superiors are people who have the privilege to make their own rules and to initiate contact with subordinates. Employees are thus expected to do as they are told and therefore expect their ideal boss to be a “benevolent autocrat or a ‘good father’” (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 73). In other words, a boss is usually someone who is superior and has the right to impose orders and to bestow privilege on their employees, and the employees must have the responsibility to fulfil those orders.

In the family, rank is based on age and status and must be strictly observed. As such, one basic virtue is that children respect and obey their parents and other elders. This virtue is demonstrated to the extent that children do not have the same level of freedom and

independence as children in western countries. In fact, Vietnamese children are not supposed to discuss or negotiate freely with their parents, and if they do, they tend to let their parents make the final decision even if their parents' opinions are not always right. In return, parents and older children are expected to treat younger children with warmth and care. Indeed, in the minds of most parents, children are of a lower status and hence always need help. In general, Vietnam is a large-power-distance culture in which whoever holds the power tends to be regarded as right and good (Hofstede et al., 2010).

2.3.2 Collectivism

Collectivism is also the product of Confucianism. While encouraging individual improvement, it does so in order to improve how the community functions. Confucianism teaches that the individual has little value beyond the family and society. Under the influence of Confucianism, Vietnamese people tend to be in-group oriented. There are different types of groups ranging from familial to professional to gender to regional and so on. People in the same group are supposed to live harmoniously, help one another, and share their resources. In the family for example children are taught to think in terms of 'we' rather than 'I' and thus what belongs to 'me' can be used by others. In other words, the 'self' is secondary in everyone's thoughts and considerations because it implies individualism - a strange construct to the majority of Vietnamese people. In a family, the bedroom is therefore not considered the most important room because it contradicts the notion of family wholeness and group feelings (X. T. Nguyễn, 1994). The most important one is the sitting-room where the altar is usually placed and where people can sit and talk together.

Outside the family setting, collectivism is demonstrated in groups of friendship and among people who have the same or similar benefits. In these groups, members tend to help each other at any expense. In fact, they may be ready to violate rules, regulations, and even laws to assist their friends.

2.3.3 The Vietnamese man

Confucian societies are patriarchal: in the family the husband is of a higher status than his wife; he is considered to be the head of the family and descendants are reckoned in his line. According to Confucian teaching, in order to rule a man must take four important steps: *Tu*

thân (cultivating oneself), *tề gia* (ruling one's family), *trị quốc* (governing one's country), and *bình thiên hạ* (pacifying the world - see section 2.2.4). Furthermore, in order to achieve the first step of self-cultivation a man is expected to develop five important qualities: *Nhân* (benevolence or humaneness), *Lễ* (righteousness or justice), *Nghĩa* (proper rite or propriety), *Trí* (wisdom or knowledge), and *Tín* (faithfulness or trust - see section 2.2.4). These teachings have a positive influence on Vietnamese men as they often try their best to study in order to acquire a better job or a higher position at work.

Despite the recent impact of Western culture and feminist movements on Vietnamese society, Confucian ideology has imprinted in the Vietnamese man the idea that a husband has a higher status than a wife in the family. As a result, many Vietnamese husbands are not always willing to help their wives do the housework or look after the children.

However, most Vietnamese husbands live harmoniously with their wives. They go out to work and make money, but then hand the money over to their wife so that she can buy food and pay bills. In Vietnam, it is not normal for the husband and wife to have separate bank accounts or properties (Vuong, 1976); or if they have separate bank accounts (as a requirement for salary payment in contemporary society), the wife usually have access to both. Issues relating to finance such as buying valuable properties or lending a relatively large amount of money to friends or relatives are usually discussed by the husband and wife, although the husband, for the most part, makes final decision.

These examples illustrate that there is now a constant conflict between traditional Confucian ways of thinking and modern Western principles of gender equality. This conflict makes the issue of sex equality somewhat problematic due to the different, even contradictory, viewpoints.

2.3.4 The Vietnamese woman

Confucian teachings require women to respect and obey their male counterparts. At home, daughters are taught to implement *tam tông* or the three obediences congregated in the lesson *tại gia tông phụ, xuất giá tông phu, phu tử tông tử*. Hence, while daughters remain under their parents' protection they must be obedient to their fathers (*tại gia tông phụ*); when they get married, they have to be submissive to their husbands (*xuất giá tông phu*); and when their husbands die, they must listen to their grown-up sons (*phu tử tông tử*).

The three obediences have however been adapted to Vietnamese mores. First, Vietnamese people have had a tradition of respecting women for thousands of years. It is manifested in the cult of Mother Goddesses. For example, *Âu cơ*⁷ was worshipped as *Quốc Mẫu* (National Mother). Moreover, the Vietnamese worship many other female goddesses and sages such as the Lady of Storehouse (*Bà Chúa Kho*)⁸, *Princess Liễu Hạnh*⁹, the *Trung Sisters* (Hai Bà Trưng)¹⁰, and *Lady Triệu* (Bà Triệu)¹¹. As a result, all religions brought to Vietnam are modified so as to show respect to the female sages. For example, when Buddhism was widespread in Vietnam, people were more concerned with worshipping *Quan Âm* (Mother Buddha) than with the philosophical theory of the religion. The same thing happened to Christianity. For example a great character *Mẫu* (Mother Goddess) was carved on the main window of the cathedral of Bùi Chu in Ninh Bình province. Contemporary Vietnamese culture has in turn softened the three obediences enforced on Confucian women. As a result, the Vietnamese woman is said to have more freedom and independence than her Chinese counterpart (T. V. Nguyễn, 2014). In fact, Vietnamese women have the right to worship their ancestors on behalf of their male counterparts, which Chinese women do not have (T. V. Nguyễn, 2014), or they have more freedom than Chinese women in choosing their spouse (N. T. Trần, 1999)

Confucian teaching also requires women to have *tứ đức*, or four virtues: *công, dung, ngôn, and hạnh*:

- 1) she must be good at housework, needle work, or any work peculiar to woman (*Công*); 2) she must have feminine deportment and appearance (*Dung*); 3) she must

⁷ According to legend, *Âu cơ*, who descended from fairies, married King *Lạc Long Quân* of *Van Lang* (2793 B.C), who descended from dragons. She then gave birth to 100 eggs from which 100 children were born. The 100 children are said to be ancestors of Vietnamese people.

⁸ The Lady of Storehouse, whose name is *Lý Thị Châu*, was a woman in charge of the national storehouse during the *Trần* Dynasty. She made a great contribution to the fight against Mongolian troops during the 13th century.

⁹ *Princess Liễu Hạnh* is one of the most important legendary Gods in Vietnamese religious beliefs. She is a leading figure in the mother goddess cult and is one of the Four Immortals.

¹⁰ The *Trung Sisters* are *Trung Trắc* and *Trung Nhị* - two Vietnamese military leaders in 40 A.D. Together they liberated *Nam Việt* – the first nation of Vietnam – and became the queens of the country for 3 years. They are regarded as national heroines of Vietnam.

¹¹ *Lady Triệu*, or *Triệu Thị Trinh*, was a female warrior in the 3rd century who managed to resist the Chinese state of *Eastern Wu* during its occupation of ancient Vietnam. She was also regarded as a national heroine.

... speak gently and be careful with her speech (Ngôn); and 4) she must show good conduct and act in a virtuous way (Hạnh)” (Vương, 1976, p. 25).

The three obediences and four virtues have both positive and negative effects on Vietnamese women. On the positive side, T. V. Nguyễn (2014) claimed the teachings enhance the woman’s awareness of respecting state laws as well as family regulations so as to achieve social stability. If every woman is aware of her role in the family as defined by the three obediences, and if she fulfils her role with the proper four virtues, then the family remains in harmony and social order can be achieved. In addition, the teachings help women improve their mental and physical ‘beauty’ in accordance with the demand of social development (T. V. Nguyễn, 2014, p. 92). Vietnamese women today can fulfil not only their role in the family, but also at work because they are now better educated.

In contrast, the three obediences and four virtues negatively impact Vietnamese women both in relation to family and society. In terms of the family, Confucian beliefs respect the man and disrespect the woman. Although Vietnamese women have obtained greater freedom and independence as they can worship the ancestors on behalf of their husband (T. V. Nguyễn, 2014), they are still considered to be of lower status than their male counterparts. In addition, the teachings prevent women from marrying freely and instead encourage arranged marriages, many of which result in family violence. In terms of the society, Vietnamese women are also restricted from taking part in social activities, being promoted at work, and obtaining social benefits (T. V. Nguyễn, 2014). In sum, the role of the modern Vietnamese woman is still restricted although much improvement has been made.

2.3.5 Family oriented

The family rather than the individual is the basic unit of Vietnamese society. As such, it occupies a very important place in the hearts and minds of Vietnamese people. Writing about this, Vương (1976) noted:

For the majority of Vietnamese, the family is the center of an individual’s life. Not only do the Vietnamese feel deeply attached to their families, but they are also extremely concerned with their family’s welfare, growth, harmony, pride, prestige, reputation, honor, filial piety, etc. The family claims first allegiance (p. 17).

Vietnamese people are deeply attached and loyal to their family and this engenders a strong sense of duty and responsibility towards maintaining the pride, reputation and honour of the family.

In the family, *đạo hiếu* or filial piety is one of the most important norms advocated by Confucius. This refers to the teaching that:

Pious children are required to obey absolutely their parents, to look after them when they are getting old and, by every means, to protect the pride and honour of the family. This norm aims to maintain family and social order and to acknowledge contributions of wisdom spoken by the elderly. (X. T. Nguyễn, 1994, p. 75).

A Vietnamese person will thus readily and proudly forget himself for the sake of his family welfare and harmony.

However, many children today do not conform fully to the obligations of filial piety. One reason for this is that children now are frequently exposed to, during their school education or through the media, Western-style living and the promotion of independence and individualism. Another reason may be attributed to parents not rearing their children properly. There have been many stories on mass media about parents satisfying all their children's needs without being aware that they are spoiling them by developing their selfishness. The subsequent results may be that children do not obey their parents.

2.3.6 Ancestral veneration and deity worship

The cult of ancestors is regarded in Vietnam as a religion and is one of the culture's most unifying aspects. This is because it has been practiced widely throughout history and because most Vietnamese people (may except Christian followers) have an ancestor altar in their home. It is therefore referred to by some scientists as 'Ancestorism'.

Ancestor veneration started from the Animistic belief that every human being and object has a soul that exists in another realm after death. It is also influenced by the teaching of filial piety in Confucianism. For the Vietnamese, death does not mean termination as the spirit is thought to survive the body. Vietnamese people believe that upon death the spirit wanders in space as an exile and must be brought back to the family altar to be worshipped. They also believe the deceased have the power to bring good fortune to the

living and that they can protect them from unluckiness or accidents. On all solemn occasions the ancestral spirit is invoked and offered liquors, flowers and fruit, accompanied with prayers and incense. In practice, the Vietnamese regularly worship ancestors on particular days such as festivals, the first and fifteenth day of the lunar month, the death day of the ancestor, or on important occasions such as a family member's coming home from overseas, moving house, starting a new business, wedding ceremonies, or when they have to make important decisions or need guidance or counsel.

If ancestorism started from Animism and Confucianism, the practice of worshipping deities of nature was influenced by Animism and Taoism. Both Animism and Taoism worship the spirits of nature, although they differ in that Taoists believe God's spirit can animate inanimate objects and Animists believe objects have spirits of their own. Two important Gods worshipped by Vietnamese people at home are Land God and Kitchen God. In many Vietnamese homes there are separate altars for the cult of ancestors and these gods. The practice of worshipping the Land God is often performed on occasions such as moving into a new house.

2.4 The Vietnamese characteristics

2.4.1 Personal traits

Inwardness is said to be one of the most prominent traits of Vietnamese people (Vuong, 1976) and many tend to keep their true feelings hidden. This conclusion, however, seems to be only true when they interact with strangers or people who they do not know well. In fact, there is a contrast between in-group conversation and out-group interaction: they are quite open and talkative with familiar people such as their friends and colleagues, but rather timid with strangers (C. Nguyễn, 1994; Đ. L. Nguyễn, 1994; K. K. Nguyễn, 1972; N. T. Trần, 1999). This timidity results in the fact that understanding them is usually less dependent on language and more dependent on para- and non-linguistic forms such as their voice pitch, facial expressions, and smiling. In other words, understanding Vietnamese people's message needs more empathy than solely the surface meaning of the sentences they utter.

In contrast, when they are familiar with the person they are talking to they are fairly open (N. T. Trần, 1999). Therefore, in order to have an enthusiastic talk, Vietnamese people

want to establish from the beginning of the conversation a kind of relationship that can condition their feelings and emotions; that is, they prefer to know the specific role of the interlocutor. According to Bửu (1994), Vietnamese people:

can hardly keep the listener at a distance, they prefer to consider the listener as an uncle, an aunt, a brother, or a sister; they prefer to show they know you are a spiritual religious leader, their teacher, their doctor, or that you are an engineer, a pharmacist, etc. (p. 82).

This conversation style explains why the Vietnamese system of person reference (see section 2.4.3) is very intricate, comprising different lexical items such as common nouns (including kin and non-kin terms, status terms, and occupational terms), proper nouns, and personal pronouns; among which common and proper nouns are used more frequently than personal pronouns (Lương, 1990).

Another important characteristic of the Vietnamese people is that they are highly harmony-oriented. As such, they may reluctantly accept to do something which deep in their heart they would want to refuse to do. They nonetheless accept to do it for the sake of pleasing their interlocutors or avoiding disharmony or embarrassment.

Regarding Vietnamese women, speaking softly is desirable. Being one of the four virtues, namely, *công, dung, ngôn, and hạnh* taught by Confucianism, gentle and careful speech is essential for a Vietnamese woman. Thus, a raised voice or speaking with excessive gestures is not a desirable mode of communication for a woman and is generally considered as rude.

Finally, Vietnamese people expect cordiality and sincerity in their conversation. In an invitation-acceptance interaction for example the invited person usually refuses once or twice before accepting for either one or two reasons: first, he is being politic because if he accept the invitation on record he is likely to be regarded as greedy or too easy in communication; and second, by his strategic refusal(s) he can get to know whether the inviter is sincere or not.

2.4.2 Social life

For Vietnamese people, friendship is important (Duiker, 1995b; K. K. Nguyễn, 1972; N. T. Trần, 1999). Classmates, roommates, colleagues, mates, companions, and acquaintances

may all be called *bạn* (or friend) in Vietnamese. In general, however, Vietnamese people distinguish between friends and acquaintances. Whereas a friend often refers to someone who is close enough that one can share many personal things or is often willing to help, an acquaintance refers to a person one knows, but does not have a close relationship. Thus, whenever they call someone *bạn* they may refer to a close friend rather than an acquaintance. For Vietnamese people it is important to build good relationships with friends because friendship is not only necessary for their emotional needs, it is also important for mutual assistance (N. T. Trần, 1999).

Vietnamese people often bring gifts when visiting friends with small children or when visiting older people such as parents or grandparents. When offering gifts they usually disparage the gift, pretending it is of no great value, and the offeree, for the most part, refuses once or twice before accepting the gift (Đ. L. Nguyễn, 1994; P. C. Nguyễn, 1997, 2004b). However, if the gift is really valuable, the Vietnamese tend to refuse because they do not want to ‘owe’ the gift giver. Indeed, because they are taught to be grateful for what is done for them, which can last a lifetime, many are reluctant to accept help because of this fear of gratitude.

Also due to Confucian influence, Vietnamese people often show their respect to the elderly and people of higher-status such as parents and grandparents, uncles or aunts, teachers, and bosses. *Tết* (or New Year) is a most important occasion when they offer these people best wishes and gifts. In my observation, today, the practice of offering gifts to relatives or senior people such as one’s bosses is often carried out some days before *Tết*. This is convenient for two reasons. First, offering gifts before *Tết* helps offerees know what other things they need to buy. Second, because people tend to stay with their own family during *Tết* or go to pagodas, pre-*Tết* gift offering can free them from visiting important people during *Tết*.

Vietnamese people also contribute financially when friends or relatives are having ‘big’ things done such as buying a valuable property, buying or having a house built, or getting married. Vietnam is an agrarian country and what people consider most important in life is to buy a buffalo, to get married, and to build their own house. In order to accomplish these things they need financial help, i.e., loan, from relatives and close friends. In an agricultural country with a poor economy, people do not often borrow money from the

bank. Rather, they rely more on assistance from others. Today, the goal to buy a buffalo may have been replaced by the goal to buy a car, but getting married and having a house built are still two important goals for which Vietnamese people tend to ask for financial help.

The traditions of providing financial assistance and gift offering during *Tết* demonstrate the notions of filial piety and mutual assistance. However, they have recently been used as an opportunity for bribery by some people, especially officers working in administrative institutions of different levels who want to have some sort of promotion. That is why I have used these practices as the basis for designing the interviewing questions in study 1 and the questionnaire for study 3.

2.4.3 Person reference forms and politeness in Vietnamese

In order to explicate how language users perform a speech act such as refusing, it is crucial to not only understand the cultural values and norms underlying the use of language, but also to get to know the semiotic system of that language. Among the typical features of the Vietnamese language such as its tones or monosyllabic nature, the person reference system may be the most sophisticated and thus is the focus of this section.

In Vietnamese, person reference forms constitute an intricate system that includes common nouns (including kin and non-kin terms, status terms, and occupational terms), proper names, and personal pronouns (see Cooke, 1968; Lương, 1990; Đ. H. Nguyễn, 1995; Sidnell & Shohet, 2013; Thompson, 1965). Vietnamese people tend to address their interlocutors using a term that indicates their relationship. Because the system is sophisticated (especially kin terms):

appropriate use of person reference terms forms an integral part of one's communicative competence ... [and] [i]nappropriate use of person referring forms or address forms can constitute a violation of social norms of politeness, thus a loss of face for both the addressor and addressee (Đ. H. Nguyễn, 1995, pp. 81-82).

The following sub-section demonstrates the use of each type of Vietnamese person reference form; namely, kin terms, proper nouns, personal pronouns and non-kin common nouns.

2.4.3.1 Kin terms

In Vietnamese, kin terms constitute the most important subset of person references and knowing how to use them appropriately is quite tricky. Kin terms are widely used when addressing and referring to a person regardless of whether or not the speaker and addressee are genealogically related.

First, in the family or clan, kin terms must be used appropriately because they serve to mark the role relationships in the hierarchy. According to Confucianism, members in a family or a clan are organised in an asymmetrical hierarchy. Thus, parents have higher status than children, uncles/aunts than nephews/nieces, elder brothers than younger brothers. Accordingly, kin terms are used in self-reference and address to identify those roles.

When using kin terms Vietnamese people draw not only on the addressor or the addressee's perspective as in the example above, they also draw on the third party's perspective. Accordingly, the utterance (taken from Luong, 1990, p. 11) *Mẹ đã mua cho bố cái mũ hôm qua rồi* (Mother PAST buy for father CLASSIFIER hat day past already (i.e., Mother already bought the hat for father yesterday) can be mapped onto the seven interactional situations below. In each case the referents of *mẹ* (mother) and *bố* (father) have different speech participant roles based on who is speaking to whom:

- 1) Father speaking to mother: Mother [i.e., addressee] already bought the hat for father [i.e., addressor] yesterday
- 2) Child speaking to mother: Mother [i.e., addressee] already bought the hat for father [i.e., third party] yesterday
- 3) Mother speaking to father: Mother [i.e., addressor] already bought the hat for father [i.e., addressee] yesterday
- 4) Mother speaking to child: Mother [i.e., addressor] already bought the hat for father [i.e., third party] yesterday
- 5) Father speaking to child: Mother [i.e., third party] already bought the hat for father [i.e., addressor] yesterday
- 6) Child speaking to father: Mother [i.e., third party] already bought the hat for father [i.e., addressee] yesterday

- 7) Child speaking to child: Mother [i.e., third party] already bought the hat for father [i.e., another third party] yesterday

In these seven cases the child's perspective is used because both *mẹ* and *bố* refer to the child's mother and father. The use of another's perspective for address and/or vocative is referred to as teknonymy and is defined as "a denominal device which enable a person to address others taking his/her descendant's perspective in address" (Đ. H. Nguyễn, 1995, pp. 99-100). Đ. H. Nguyễn (1995, p. 95) argued that teknonymy, used both for kin and non-kin relationships, is also a means of *xưng khiêm, hô tôn* (i.e., humbling in self-reference and raising others in address). For example, a wife may speak to her husband and draw on their child's perspective to refer to herself and to address her husband. In this way, teknonymy shows both greater deference and greater solidarity.

Second, kin terms are used extensively in relation to non-relatives as a strategy for family solidarity extension. This usage points to the volitional use of social markers to adjust social distance according to the perceived relative age difference between the addressor and the addressee. The general rule is to address the non-kin as if he/she were a member of the speaker's family. Thus if a speaker is talking to a man who is a few years older than his/her father or mother, he/she is expected to call the addressee *bác* (senior uncle) and refer to him/herself as *cháu* (nephew/niece). If the man is a few years younger than his/her father and/or mother, he/she will call him *chú* (junior uncle) and also refers to himself as *cháu*.

In general, the use of kin terms in Vietnamese is complicated and requires people to have good knowledge of social relationships. "Without appropriate address forms, any utterance in Vietnamese may become a face-threatening act (FTA) and address behaviour becomes part and parcel of polite verbal behaviour in Vietnamese culture" (Đ. H. Nguyễn, 1995, p. 85). This is because "the use of addressor-addressee referring pairs can fully capture the social meanings of person referring forms in relation to the power and solidarity dimensions of social interaction" (Đ. H. Nguyễn, 1995, p. 86)

2.4.3.2 Proper nouns/names

In general, calling someone by name is avoided except in reference to children or to people who are much younger than the addressor (Đ. H. Nguyễn, 1995). Throughout history the

use of personal names to refer to the emperor and members of the royal family is strictly forbidden. Today, in face to face interactions, avoidance of the use of names when referring to people of high-status such as government leaders of different levels, or senior relatives in family settings is still applied. In such face-to-face conversations, titles or role terms are used instead.

In the family context, names are usually used in combination with kin terms for address or for third person reference; for example, *Bác An* ([Senior] uncle An), *Chú Tiến* ([Junior] uncle Tiến), *Ông Cảnh* (Grandfather Cảnh). However, if the addressee is very old, his/her child's name may be used. In non-kin relationships, names alone (i.e., used without any other form of reference) can be used as vocative or address forms towards children or people who are not older than the addressor. Names alone, however, are not used to address senior people, both in terms of age and status, and it is considered a serious violation of social norms to do so. With respect to seniors, their names must be preceded with a title, status term, professional term, or a kin term. Even so, it should be avoided for vocative and an alternative kin term, title, status, or a professional term alone should be used.

Among young peers who are familiar with each other such as school or university classmates or those who are newly acquainted, the use of personal names is to “defeat inferences about relative age, rank, or generational difference” (Sidnell & Shohet, 2013, p. 626). Although the use of names is an effective way to convey parity, it is somewhat distancing and conveys a lack of intimacy because proper names do not encode a kinship relationship or any significant social bonds (Sidnell & Shohet, 2013).

2.4.3.3 *Personal pronouns*

Many European languages including English use personal pronouns such as ‘I’, or ‘you’ for self-reference and address in all contexts. The Vietnamese language however lacks a closed system of personal pronouns that can be pragmatically used as noun substitutes in all situational contexts (Luong, 1990; Đ. H. Nguyễn, 1995). In other words, Vietnamese personal pronouns have limited use because they do not connote deference, status, and hierarchy; values which are important in Vietnamese culture as influenced by Confucianism. Table 2.1 lists the personal pronouns in Vietnamese.

Table 2. 1: Personal pronoun use in Vietnamese

| | | | |
|---------------|----------|--|--------------------------|
| First person | Singular | <i>Tao/ta</i> | I/me |
| | Plural | <i>Chúng tao/bọn tao</i> | We (addressee exclusive) |
| | | <i>Chúng ta</i> | We (addressee inclusive) |
| Second person | Singular | <i>Mày/mi/bay</i> | You |
| | Plural | <i>Chúng mày/mi/bay</i> | You |
| Third person | Singular | <i>Nó</i> | He/she/it |
| | | <i>Hắn/y/gã</i> | He |
| | | <i>Thị/mụ/ả</i> | She |
| | Plural | <i>Chúng/chúng nó/ bọn chúng/bọn nó/ tụi nó/họ ...</i> | They |

In a monolexemic language like Vietnamese, the plural forms of personal pronouns are prototypically marked by adding plural markers such as *chúng*, *bọn*, *tụi*; for example, *nó* is singular and *chúng nó/bọn nó/tụi nó* are the plural forms.

Pragmatically, the use of personal pronouns in speech interactions implies informality, and sometimes therefore rudeness. As Lương (1990) observes, the use of *tao* and *mày* is considered rude even among friends. While this may be the case with those who are from big cities such as Hanoi and Hồ Chí Minh, in rural and highland Vietnam, *tao* and *mày* are still used among friends who have grown up together as childhood; and class mates may think that their use of these two pronouns reflects intimacy (see also Sidnell & Shohet, 2013).

Third-person pronouns are also avoided when referring to a person of higher social status or age. The use of *Nó* (he/she/it) for example is considered to be rude and may only be used by a person of senior status to refer to their junior, or used casually among young people of equal status. There are other more polite ways to refer to a third person of higher

social status and age including the use of kin-terms combined with the demonstrative marker *ấy*: *ông ấy* (he), *anh ấy* (he), *chị ấy* (she), *cô ấy* (she), *các bác ấy* (they) and so on.

2.4.3.4 Non-kin common nouns

Like kin terms, non-kin common nouns are used extensively as substitutes for personal pronouns. They consist of a relatively large number of status, occupational and other relational terms such as *Thủ tướng* (Prime Minister), *giáo sư* (professor), *đại tá* (colonel), *thầy giáo* (teacher), *bác sĩ* (doctor), *nghệ sĩ* (artist), *ngài* (sir/your excellency), *tôi* (subject of the King/servant), *mình* (body), *đồng chí* (comrade), and *quý vị* (esteemed guests).

Some non-kin common nouns are classified as personal pronouns such as *tôi*, *mình* (e.g. Cooke, 1968; Sidnell & Shohet, 2013; Thompson, 1965; V. M. Y. Trần, 2010). Etymologically, *tôi* means ‘subject of the King’ or ‘servant’ and thus should be classified as a common noun rather than a personal pronoun as argued by Lương (1990) and Đ. H. Nguyễn (1995). However, its original meaning has been lost in modern Vietnamese usage and therefore its personal pronoun categorisation is understandable. As such, many Vietnamese people today do not know its original meaning and hence think that it is a personal pronoun (e.g., Ngo, 2006; V. M. Y. Trần, 2010)

Within the family context, *tôi* is generally avoided among young husbands and wives (it is only used when they are having quarrels as discussed above) because it implies a lack of intimacy. It may however be used by elderly married couples. Among non-kin people, *tôi* is also avoided as self-address by social juniors when speaking to seniors.

Mình (self/body) is another common noun arguably regarded as a true pronoun (Sidnell & Shohet, 2013) due to its pronominal function. It can be used to claim one’s age status when two interlocutors do not yet know each other. That is, in some situations where the addressor thinks that he/she is not younger than the addressee, and where it is not convenient to ask the addressee’s age, he/she may use *mình* to claim that ‘I’m older or at least at the same age as you’. In short, non-kin common nouns are also a useful resource of person-reference. Occupational terms can be used with full names to refer to a third person, or they can be used alone for second person reference.

2.4.3.5 Some remarks on the use of person reference terms

The use of Vietnamese person reference terms, including the use of kinship terms for non-relatives, the change in referential perspectives, and the choice between alternatives, either pronouns or personal names, reflects two aspects. On the one hand, it must follow the rules of discernment; that is, conform to the conventions markedly influenced by Confucianism including *Luật tôn ti*, or the rule of hierarchy, and *Chính danh*, or name rectification (see section 2.2.4). Both require Vietnamese people to use the correct person reference term to address self and other so as not to violate the norms of social order. On the other hand, the speaker may also creatively use a term that applies to a specific context or situation; that is, he/she may manipulatively choose between the alternatives as goal-directed action to restructure interactional situations if he/she is entitled. In fact, this volitional and strategic use of person reference forms has been developing in contemporary Vietnamese and has become a theme of interest for researchers in sociolinguistics and pragmatics research.

Getting to know how to use the terms appropriately is never an easy task, not only for learners of the Vietnamese language but also for the native speakers. Vietnamese children are therefore frequently reminded which term they should use in each context. Even some adults may find it difficult to choose the terms they want, and care must be taken because inappropriate use of person reference terms may cause serious troubles for both the addressor and the addressee.

2.5 Conclusion

Chapter 2 presents a description of Vietnamese culture. Based on what have been written in literature, Vietnamese cultural values can be summarised as follows:

First, the Vietnamese foreground hierarchy. In accordance with Confucianism, social order may only be obtained when it is organised into non-equal relationships in which each member recognises and fulfils his or her role (or proper rectification of names). The popular use of kin terms and non-kin common terms instead of proper nouns is one of the realisations of hierarchical social order.

Second, Vietnamese people tend to be collectivistic. As such, they assign high priority to their responsibilities towards other members in their group. Thus, parents' responsibilities

are to take care of and love their children, children's responsibilities are to respect and obey their parents or seniors. Family members and relatives are responsible for helping each other by giving advice, lending money and so on to contribute to the prosperity and development of the family or clan. Harmony is also a manifestation of collectivism. In turn, Vietnamese people may reluctantly accept to do things requested by their friends or relatives so as to maintain a harmonious relationship.

Third, Vietnamese people tend to be superstitious. Influence by Animism and Taoism, most Vietnamese people believe in the existence and influence of spirits of different kinds. In particular, Ancestorism is a popular practice which many Vietnamese people think helps to explain their successes as well as their faults.

Fourth, conflict exists between traditional Confucian values and western cultural values, especially when it comes to women's status. On the one hand, women are still expected in Vietnam to follow *tam tông* (three obediences) and to possess *tứ đức* (four virtues). On the other hand, many women are taking advantage of the independence and freedoms offered by the western way of life.

Another main point is that there is a clash between men's thoughts and their patriarchal practices. They may be patriarchal in their mind, but less so in their everyday life practices. All these cultural values were the basis for me to design the interview questions/scenarios in study 1 (see appendix 2). More importantly, they were used as the cultural affordances (i.e., the macro level, (Layder, 1993) that can help us to explain the way Vietnamese people refuse in everyday interaction (i.e., the micro level). The explanation of these cultural values will be displayed in the four analytical chapters (chapters 7-10).

However, as I have emphasised in the beginning of this chapter, I do not see these cultural values as homogeneous or static. Rather, I take Kádár & Mills' (2011) point of view that cultural values are varied, dynamic, perceived differently by different groups of people, and are subject to change.

Chapter 3: Review of studies on refusing

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the studies of the speech act of refusing in different languages. First, it defines refusing and describes its characteristic features (section 3.2.1). It then provides a list of studies on refusing and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of those studies (section 3.2.2). This is followed by a more detailed review of the studies on Vietnamese refusing (section 3.3), before ending with a summary and conclusion (section 3.4)

3.2 The speech act of refusing

3.2.1 Definition and characteristic features

By nature, a refusal functions as a response to an initiating act such as a request, giving advice, an offer, an invitation, or a suggestion. It is thus typically the second pair part in an adjacency pair in interaction. Refusing is regarded as a speech act by which the speaker indicates s/he will not “engage in an action proposed by the interlocutor” (X. Chen, Ye, & Zhang, 1995, p. 121). As such, it belongs to the category of commissives because they commit the refuser to performing or, in this case, not performing an action (Searle, 1977). However, as we have discussed in section 1.2.1, how a speaker’s disengagement in the action proposed by the interlocutor is realised in his/her actions, linguistic or non-linguistic, is so diverse that one may not perceive it as a refusal. In other words, a refusal can be difficult to recognise just by relying on its semantic formulas; in fact, it may have the linguistic form of a non-compliance, a blame, a criticism, a request and so on.

Refusing has different characteristic features as a result of its face-threatening nature. Although some scholars (e.g. Arundale, 2006; O'Driscoll, 2007b) claimed there is no speech act that is inherently face-threatening, refusing is still widely acknowledged as an act of high threat to the hearer because it contradicts the hearer’s expectation (Al-Eryani, 2007; Al-Kahtani, 2005; P. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Campillo, Safont-Jordà, & Codina-Espurz, 2009; H. J. Chen, 1996; Eslami, 2010; Ewert & Bromberek-Dyzman, 2008; Félix-

Brasdefer, 2008a; Kitao, 1998; Kwon, 2004). Thus, how one says ‘no’ is more important than the answer itself. As such, sending and receiving ‘no’ messages are both tasks that need special skills, and are sometimes very complex. Félix-Brasdefer (2008a, 2014) for example claims refusing is so complex that it requires long sequences of negotiation and cooperation that in turn require the interlocutors to have a high level of pragmatic knowledge and competence. Interlocutors must know when to use the appropriate form, its function, and social elements embedded in it based on each group and their cultural-linguistic values; otherwise they will offend their conversation partner (Ramos, 1991). Similarly, Kwon (2004) agrees that refusing can be a difficult speech act to perform appropriately both linguistically and psychologically because the possibility of offending the interlocutor is inherent in the act itself and a failure to refuse appropriately can risk the interpersonal relationship. Refusing, therefore, usually includes various strategies which aim to avoid offending the other interlocutor.

The face-threatening nature of refusing also results in the use of indirect strategies. Al-Eryani (2007, p. 21) wrote, “[r]efusal is a face-threatening act to the listener/ requester/ inviter, because it contradicts his or her expectations, and is often realised through indirect strategies”. H. J. Chen (1996) also claimed a direct refusal as a simple negative is not a common strategy for communicators, regardless of their language background. This feature is documented in a number of empirical studies on refusing (see table 3.1). Indirectness is a highly-used strategy in Vietnamese refusing (see section 3.3). T. M. P. Nguyễn (2006), T. V. Q. Phan (2001), and C. M. Trần (2005c) for example all argue that indirectness is a preferred refusing strategy to avoid confrontation. The indirectness of refusing results in the fact that the message of a refusal is often hidden in another speech act such as a blame, a complaint, a topic switch, a joke, a statement of principle so on and so forth (see Beebe et al, 1990).

The face-threatening nature of refusing means it is a dispreferred turn in terms of conversation analysis. Sacks (1973, cited in Atkinson & Heritage, 1984, p. 53) used ‘preference’ to refer to “alternative but non-equivalent courses of action ... available to the participants (in a conversation)”. It should be noted here that preference is a social concept that reflects social expectations rather than psychological states (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Pomerantz, 1984). Preferred actions are often performed according to five characteristics: (1) with little delay within or across turns; (2) with little or no qualification

or prefacing; (3) directly, without mitigation; and (4) without explanation. The four characteristics of dispreferred action, on the other hand, include: (1) delay within the turn or across turns; (2) qualification or prefacing within the turn; (3) mitigation or indirectness; and (4) an explanation of why the performance of the dis-preferred action is necessary.

Although Hua, Wei, and Yuan (2000) concluded that refusing a gift is a preferred turn in Chinese – which I also assume in Vietnamese – the refusals they mention are only an initial response to a gift offering in the negotiation process which often results in a substantive acceptance. That is, refusals are performed once or twice before acceptance with the aim to indicate that the recipient is not too greedy, which may be the interpretation if the gift is accepted straightaway. This kind of strategic (or politic, unreal) refusal is referred to by X. Chen et al. (1995) as *ritual* to distinguish with *substantive* (or real) refusal. In Vietnamese, P. C. Nguyễn (2004b) refers to this as *từ chối biểu kiến* (lit. opinion-showing refusal). Following X. Chen et al. (1995), I will refer to strategic refusals as *ritual* because they are often performed ritually or just like a habit.

3.2.2 Studies on refusing

A list of empirical studies on refusing in different languages and cultures is presented in Table 3.1. Details of the different research objectives and hence the different approaches and methodologies for each study are also provided.

The studies listed in this table fall into different types: most are cross-cultural; some are interlanguage pragmatic; and the others are instructional/developmental. However, since the aim of my research project is to explore the cultural values underlying the performance of refusals rather than to make a distinction between these types, it is not necessary to put them into separate tables each of which displays studies of one type.

Table 3. 1: Summary of empirical studies on refusing

| No | Author(s)/year | Method(s) | Language(s) used | Focus of study |
|----|--------------------|--|---|--|
| 1. | Shigeta (1974) | Role-play | Japanese compared with American English | Cross-cultural comparison of refusing strategies |
| 2. | Ueda (1974) | Intuition/natural data, dialogue questionnaire | Japanese as L1 | Japanese strategies of saying ‘no’ |
| 3. | M. J. Smith (1975) | Natural, | American English | Assertiveness in refusals |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--|---|
| | | observational data, role play | | |
| 4. | Labov and Fanshel (1977) | Natural, therapeutic discourse | American English | Refusal sequences |
| 5. | Wootton (1981) | Natural data of Parent-child interactions | Scottish English | How parents grant or reject a request |
| 6. | Kinjo (1987) | Role-play | American English as L1, Japanese as L1 | Cross-cultural comparison of refusals to invitations and requests in English and Japanese |
| 7. | Takahashi and Beebe (1987) | Written refusals | English as L2 compared with American English as L1 and Japanese as L1 | The development of pragmatic competence of Japanese learners of English. |
| 8. | Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990) | DCT | English as L2 compared to American English as L1 and Japanese as L1 | Pragmatic transfer in refusals by learners of English |
| 9. | Moriyama (1990) | Questionnaire | Japanese as L1 | Refusing strategies by native speakers of Japanese |
| 10. | Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1991) | Natural data | English as L2, American English | Interlanguage in rejections to advice |
| 11. | Ramos (1991) | DCT | English as L2 compared with American English, and Puerto Rican Spanish as L1 | Pragmatic transfer in refusals by Puerto Rican learners of English |
| 12. | Tickle (1991) | DCT | Japanese as L1 | Japanese refusals in business setting |
| 13. | García (1992) | Role-play | Peruvian Spanish | Comparing politeness strategies of Peruvian males and females in their refusals to invitation |
| 14. | Lyuh (1992) | DCT | American English, Korean | Cross-cultural comparison between Korean and American cultures in terms of refusals |
| 15. | Robinson (1992) | Think-aloud DCT, interview | Japanese as L1, American English as L2 | Interlanguage of Japanese speaking females in US. |
| 16. | Ikoma and Shimura (1993) | DCT | Japanese as L2 | Pragmatic transfer by American learners of Japanese |
| 17. | Kanemoto (1993) (a review article) | Existing publications on refusals | American English compared with Japanese | Cross-cultural comparison of the two cultures in refusing strategies |
| 18. | K. A King and Silver (1993) | Pre- and post-experimental DCTs, post-experimental telephone | English as L2 | Effect of pragmatic instruction on NNS refusal strategies |
| 19. | Margalef-Boada (1993) | DCT, Role-play | Spanish as L2 compared with | Cross-cultural comparison in terms of choice and content of |

| | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| | | | German as L1 and Spanish as L1 | semantic formulas in refusals |
| 20. | Stevens (1993) | DCT | English as L2, American English, Arabic | Cross-cultural comparison of refusal strategies in English and Arabic, interlanguage of learners of English |
| 21. | Saeki and O' Keefe (1994) | DCT | American English, Japanese | Cross-cultural comparison of American and Japanese cultures in terms of refusal messages |
| 22. | Shimura (1995) | DCT (same data used in Ikoma and Shimura, 1993) | Japanese as L1 | The use of incomplete sentences by native and non-native speakers of Japanese as indirect and polite refusals. |
| 23. | X. Chen et al. (1995) | Questionnaire | Chinese as L1 | Refusal strategies, frequency of semantic formulas in substantive and ritual refusals by Chinese people |
| 24. | Hussein (1995) | Natural data | Arabic as L1 | Indirectness in Arabic |
| 25. | Laohaburanakit (1995) | Refusals in textbooks, telephone conversation | Japanese as L1 | Comparison of refusals from textbooks and from authentic telephone conversations in Japanese |
| 26. | Morrow (1995) | Pre- and post-intervention role-play | English as L2 | Pragmatic effects of instruction on ESL learners' production of complaints and refusals |
| 27. | H. J. Chen (1996) | Questionnaire | English as L2, American English | Cross-cultural comparison, interlanguage |
| 28. | Kitao (1996) | DCT | British English as L1 | Refusal strategies by British English speakers |
| 29. | Kodama (1996) | DCT, Role-play | Japanese | Japanese refusing strategies |
| 30. | Liao and Bresnahan (1996) | DCT | American English as L1 and Taiwanese Mandarin as L1 | Cross-cultural comparison of refusal strategies in these two cultures |
| 31. | Al-Shalawi (1997) | DCT | American English, Arabic | Cross-cultural comparison refusal strategies in Saudi and American cultures |
| 32. | Cramer (1997) | Role play | English as L2 and as L1 | How Japanese and Americans differ in their expression of refusals in business setting |
| 33. | Frescura (1997) | Natural | Italian as L1 | Italian refusal strategies |
| 34. | Laohaburanakit (1997) | Authentic telephone conversation | Japanese as L1 and L2 | Comparison of linguistic forms used by native and NNS of Japanese |
| 35. | Nakajima (1997) | Questionnaire, DCT | American English as L2, Japanese | Politeness strategies in the workplace by Japanese businessmen |
| 36. | Turnbull and Saxton (1997) | Telephone conversation | Canadian English as L1 | Expressions of modality in doing facework |
| 37. | Widjaja (1997) | Role-play | English as L1 and | Cross-cultural comparison |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--|---|
| | | | L2 | between Taiwanese and American females |
| 38. | Al-Issa (1998) | DCT | English as L2 | Sociocultural transfer in refusals by Jordanian EFL learners |
| 39. | Sameshima (1998) | DCT | Japanese as L2 | Linguistic performance of Taiwanese speakers of Japanese |
| 40. | Kitao (1998) | Questionnaire | British English as L1 | Conversational constraints in refusals by British speakers |
| 41. | Sasaki (1998) | DCT, Role-play | English as L2 | Differences between production questionnaires and role-plays as two data elicitation tools |
| 42. | C. Smith (1998) | DCT, questionnaire | American English | How gender, status, and social goals affect refusals |
| 43. | Beckers (1999) | DCT | American English as L1 compared with German as L1 | Cross-cultural comparison of refusal strategies between Americans and Germans |
| 44. | Bresnahan, Ohashi, Liu, Nebashi, and Liao (1999) | DCT | Singaporean Chinese compared with Taiwanese Chinese | Differences between Singaporean and Taiwanese people in their responses to requests |
| 45. | García (1999) | Role-play | Venezuelan Spanish | Deferential and solidarity politeness |
| 46. | Gass and Houck (1999) | Role-play | English as L2 | Refusal sequences, pragmatic transfer in refusals by Japanese learners of English |
| 47. | Iwata (1999) | DCT | Japanese | Japanese refusing, male/female differences |
| 48. | J. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) | Young women's talk about doing refusals | English | How young women refuse sex |
| 49. | Guidetti (2000) | Observation | French as L1 | Gestural and verbal forms used by French children |
| 50. | T. V. Q. Phan (2001) | DCT | Vietnamese as L1 compared with English as L1 | Cross-cultural comparison of refusing strategies between Vietnamese and English-speaking people |
| 51. | Sadler and Eröz (2001) | DCT | English as L2 compared with English L1 | Cross-cultural comparison of semantic formulas in refusals |
| 52. | Félix-Brasdefer (2002) | Role-play, retrospective verbal reports | Mexican Spanish as L1, American Spanish as L1, Spanish as L2 | Cross-cultural comparison of politeness strategies and pragmatic transfer |
| 53. | Furumura (2002) | Role-play | Japanese | Refusal strategies in Japanese, status differences |
| 54. | Kawate-Mierzejewska (2002) | Telephone conversations | Japanese as L1 and L2 | Comparison between native and NNS of Japanese |
| 55. | Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, and El | Oral DCT | Egyptian Arabic as L1, American | Cross-cultural comparison of direct and indirect strategies, and |

| | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Bakary (2002) | | English as L1 | the effect of interlocutor status on strategy use |
| 56. | Al-Issa (2003) | DCT, semi-structured interview | English as L2 compared with English as L1 and Arabic as L1 | Sociocultural transfer and its motivating factors in refusals by Jordanian EFL learners |
| 57. | Da Silvia (2003) | Role-play (control and treatment groups) | English as L2 | Influence of explicit instruction on L2 pragmatic development |
| 58. | Félix-Bradesfer (2003) | Open role-play | American English, Latin American Spanish | Pragmatic and politeness strategies |
| 59. | Henstock (2003) | DCT, retrospective reports | Japanese as L2 compared with Japanese and American English as L1 | Refusing strategies by NNS of Japanese in different developmental stages |
| 60. | Félix-Bradesfer (2004) | Role play, verbal report | Spanish as L2 | Influence of length of residence in the target community on the ability to negotiate and mitigate refusals by learners of Spanish |
| 61. | Kwon (2004) | DCT | Korean compared with American English | Cross-cultural comparison in terms of semantic formula sequences |
| 62. | P. C. Nguyễn (2004b) | Data from literary works | Vietnamese, English | Cultural factors influencing refusal strategies by Vietnamese compared to English |
| 63. | Al-Kahtani (2005) | DCT | Arabic, Japanese, and English as L1 | Compare people from these 3 cultures in terms of their refusing strategies |
| 64. | C. M. Trần (2005c) | Data from literary works, DCT | English, Vietnamese | Refusal strategies in English compared to Vietnamese |
| 65. | Vinkhuyzen and Szymanski (2005) | Interactions between employees of a business and their customers | English | How non-granting responses to service requests were shaped by the ways customers produced those requests |
| 66. | Félix-Brasdefer (2006) | Role-plays, retrospective verbal reports | Mexican Spanish as L1 | Linguistic politeness strategies used by Mexican people |
| 67. | Jungheim (2006) | 3-point scale questionnaire | Japanese as L2 and L1 | How native speakers and learners of Japanese interpret refusal gestures |
| 68. | T. M. P. Nguyễn (2006) | DCT | English as L2, Australian English as L1 | Similarities and differences in refusals of requests between Australian native speakers of English, and Vietnamese learners of English |
| 69. | Al-Eryani (2007) | DCT | American English as L2 compared with Arabic as L1 | Pragmatic competence of Yemeni EFL learners |
| 70. | García (2007) | Role-play | Argentinean | Politeness strategies in refusals to |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|--|---|---|
| | | | Spanish as L1 | invitation and the underlying cultural factors |
| 71. | D. I. Johnson (2007) | Telephone questionnaire | American English as L1 | Association between threats to the interlocutors and effectiveness and appropriateness of refusals |
| 72. | Bardovi-Harlig, Nickels, and Rose (2008) | Computer-delivered aural-oral DCT | American English as L2 | The influence of first language and level of development on the use of conventional expressions of gratitude, apologies and refusals by learners of English |
| 73. | Ewert and Bromberek-Dyzman (2008) | DCT | Polish as L1 English as L2 | The influence of frequent use of L2 upon pragmatic linguistic behaviour of L1 |
| 74. | Félix-Brasdefer (2008a) | Role-plays, retrospective verbal reports | Mexican Spanish compared with American English | Cross-cultural differences in the notions of face, politeness and relational work |
| 75. | Félix-Brasdefer (2008b) | Role-plays | Mexican and Dominican Spanish as L1 | Sociopragmatic variation in Mexican and Dominican Spanish |
| 76. | D. I. Johnson (2008) | Likert scale questionnaire | American English as L1 | Relationship between modal expressions and politeness |
| 77. | Kondo (2008) | Pre-/post-test oral DCT | English as L2 | Effects of awareness-raising instruction on refusals by Japanese EFL learners |
| 78. | Placencia (2008) | Naturally-occurring data by field notes and recordings, interviews | Quitenos language (Spanish) in Ecuador | Quitenos' rapport management style in dealing with tensions |
| 79. | Wannaruk (2008) | DCT | Thai as L2 compared with American English as L1 | Pragmatic transfer in refusals by Thai EFL learners |
| 80. | Yang (2008) | TV series analysis | Chinese as L1 | Refusal strategies and linguistic forms used by Chinese people |
| 81. | Bella (2009) | Role-plays | Greek as L1 | Politeness strategies in invitations and refusals by the Greek of different age groups |
| 82. | Chang (2009) | DCT | English as L2 | Pragmatic transfer in refusals by Chinese learners of English |
| 83. | Hei (2009) | Observation | English, Malay, Mandarin and Hokkien | Politeness, language and identity realised in refusals by Malaysian people of different ethnic groups |
| 84. | Jansen and Janssen (2010) | Likert-scale Questionnaire | Dutch | Effects of positive politeness strategies in business refusal letters |
| 85. | Sattar, Lah, and Suleiman (2010) | DCT | Iraqi Arabic | Strategies frequently used in refusing suggestions |
| 86. | Soler and Pitarch (2010) | Pre-test and post-test interviews, verbal reports | English as L2 | Benefits of instruction on learners' attention and awareness during the performance of refusals |
| 87. | Allami and Naeimi | DCT | English as L2 | Frequency, shift, and content of |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--|---|
| | (2011) | | compared to English as L1 and Persian as L1 | semantic formulas in refusals by Iranian EFL learners |
| 88. | Bella (2011) | Role-plays | Greek as L1 and L2 | Politeness strategies and mitigation devices |
| 89. | Ebsworth and Nobuko (2011) | Open Role-plays, Post hoc interviews | Japanese, American English | Refusal negotiation and comprehension |
| 90. | Umale (2011) | DCT | Omani Arabic as L1 compared with British English as L1 | Mitigating strategies in refusals by Omani and British people |
| 91. | Abdolrezapour and Vahid Dastjerdi (2012) | Role-play, verbal reports, questionnaire | Persian as L1 compared with American English as L1 | Mitigation devices used by Iranians and Americans in their refusals |
| 92. | Kent (2012) | Video-recordings of family mealtimes | English | Children's responses (compliance or resistance) to directives |
| 93. | H. Lee (2013) | Role-play, retrospective verbal report | English as L2 | The impact of social factors on fluency in refusals by Korean EFL learners |
| 94. | Bella (2014) | Role-play, verbal report | Greek as L2 compared with Greek as L1 | Developmental patterns in the ability of Greek FL learners to refuse a request |
| 95. | Morkus (2014) | Role-play | Egyptian Arabic as L1 compared with American English as L1 | Differences between native speakers of Egyptian Arabic and American English in terms of their refusing strategies |
| 96. | Grainger, Kerkam, Mansor, and Mills (2015) | Participant observation, audio-recordings of observed conversations, oral reports | Arabic as L1 compared with English as L1 | Comparing conventional expressions used in offers and refusals in Arabic and English |
| 97. | Siebold and Busch (2015) | Role-play, post-interview | Spanish as L1 compared with German as L1 | Comparing the culture-specific realisation of different types of refusals in Spanish and German |

As noted in chapter 1, studies on refusing share common features: (1) They generally draw on the *etic* perspective (Pike, 1954) to explain the strategies used by language users (Except some, for example Kent, 2012; C. Kitzinger & Frith, 1999; Vinkhuyzen & Szymanski, 2005); (2) they mainly focus on linguistic forms rather than the underlying cultural factors; (3) they mainly draw on quantitative methods of data collection and analysis; and (4) they mainly explore the phenomenon from a single perspective, even though they may triangulate the collection and analysis of data.

Most studies are cross- and inter-cultural, and as a result an effort is made to distinguish language-specific norms in two or more cultural groups to identify differences in choice of strategies used by speakers of two or more languages in question. Thus, they often draw on an *etic* ideology rather than an *emic* perspective to explicate the findings¹². Other studies aim to explore the use of refusing strategies in one language, but then compare their findings to the refusing strategies used in another language.

Studies that apply the *etic* perspective to draw conclusions typically generalise the findings to the whole population of the culture as this allows them to compare them with the norms of another culture. For example, Liao and Bresnahan (1996) note that Mandarin Chinese speakers expressed a mitigating positive opinion much less frequently than did native speakers of American English when they wanted to refuse a request. The authors explained this lack of positive opinion as the consequence of Chinese informants being concerned that if they ever expressed positive opinions they would be forced to comply.

With regards to Vietnamese, T. M. P. Nguyễn (2006) stated Vietnamese native speakers were more careful than Australians about the way they refused and that Australians were more direct than the Vietnamese. While these findings are valuable for making general comparisons between the two cultures in question, the conventionalised and ‘conservative’ norms may not necessarily provide adequate explanation for the varied practices in real life (Mills & Kádár, 2011). Indeed, cultures should not be understood as homogeneous but as contested in nature because within each culture people may have different views on what constitutes norms and values. According to Mills and Kádár (2011, p. 27), “[w]e [...] need to be extremely careful about the claims that we are making which suggest that certain cultures tend towards certain styles of [...] behaviour” (p. 27). This is because “[t]he problem with such a view is that individuals are unwittingly treated as ‘cultural dopes’ who employ certain politeness forms or strategies simply because they are Chinese, Vietnamese or Japanese, for instance” (Haugh, 2011, p. 256). In consequence, Eelen (2001, pp. 236-237) proposes that norms and culture should be explored as discursive phenomena which

¹² See Triandis (1994, p. 67) and Matsumoto and Juang (2004, p. 67) for further conceptualizations of *emics* and *etics*

are considered as “social practices” that have their own “social effects, purposes and motivations”.

Recent speech act studies also place more emphasis on pragmalinguistic and less emphasis on sociopragmatic phenomena¹³ although sociopragmatic knowledge is as, if not more, important as pragmalinguistic skill (Thomas, 1983), and ‘pragmatic competence’ requires the acquisition of both elements. Accordingly, semantic formulas developed by Beebe et al. (1990) are widely used as basic units of analysis¹⁴. Apart from those coined by Beebe et al. (1990), researchers have discerned other semantic formula categories during data analysis (e.g. Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Kwon, 2004; T. M. P. Nguyễn, 2006). For instance, Kwon (2004) names new semantic formulas such as ‘passive negative willingness’ when one says *It will be difficult*, or ‘statement of solidarity’ as expressed by *As you and I have always known*.

Although this focus on linguistic resources is important in cross-cultural studies, the socio-cultural factors underpinning the use of semantic formulas are also worth examining. Thomas (1983), when dealing with students’ pragmatic failures in cross-cultural communication, takes this point even further, arguing that pragmalinguistic failure can be easier to fix than sociopragmatic failure. She claimed this is because the linguistic conventionalised forms “can be taught quite straightforwardly as ‘part of the grammar’ whereas sociopragmatic failure “involves the student’s system of beliefs as much as his/her knowledge of the language” (p. 91)

As demonstrated in Table 3.1, the third feature, and also the consequence of the other two features, is the frequent use of Discourse Completion Tests/Tasks (henceforth DCTs) as a

¹³ According to Leech (1983 p. 11), pragmalinguistics is “the study of the more linguistic end of pragmatics”; whereas sociopragmatics is “the socio-logical interface of pragmatics”. In other words, pragmalinguistic studies are language-specific and sociopragmatic studies are culture-specific.

¹⁴ A semantic formula refers to “a word, phrase, or sentence that meets a particular semantic criterion or strategy; any one or more of these can be used to perform the act in question” (Cohen, 1996, p. 265). For example, a mother may refuse her daughter when the child requests her to buy a doll by producing three separate semantic formulas: (1) an expression of regret; *I’m sorry dear!*, followed by (2) an excuse/reason/explanation; *I don’t have enough money*, and followed by (3) an expression of alternative; *We’ll buy it later when you’re a bit older*.

method of eliciting data. DCTs¹⁵ were originally developed by Blum-Kulka (1982) during her comparison of speech act realisation between native and non-native Hebrew speakers. In the DCTs participants are required to fill in the blanks indicating what they think they would say in a given situation. Response data are normally coded into semantic formulas and analysed by quantitative tools. Although DCTs help researchers obtain a great deal of comparable data in a short period of time (Al-Eryani, 2007; Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Félix-Brasdefer, 2006, 2008a; Kwon, 2004), they reveal a number of drawbacks¹⁶. In real life people may not refuse in some of the situations given in the DCTs. T. V. Q. Phan (2001), for example, admits that some informants in her study did not provide refusals to the request given in the DCTs because they said they would not refuse such a request. Moreover, they reported that if they were to refuse then a number of turns and negotiations would likely occur rather than just the one-to-one response provided in the DCTs. Thus, by asking participants to produce oral or written refusals, researchers using DCTs may unintentionally ‘force’ participants to refuse in situations in which they may not actually do so in real life.

The second most frequently used means of data elicitation is role-play; either independently or in combination with other methods such as interview or retrospective verbal reports. Role-plays have certain advantages over DCTs because they represent an approximation of spoken discourse (Cohen, 1998, 2004; Kasper, 2000, 2008). Félix-Brasdefer (2006, p. 2164) mentions three main benefits of a role-play: (1) it enables the researcher to obtain complete conversational interactions, that is, data include openings

¹⁵ DCTs are originally “written questionnaires including a number of brief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialog with an empty slot for the speech act under study” (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 221) (see Parvaresh and Tavakoli (2009) for other types of DCTs).

¹⁶ When comparing and contrasting the results obtained from DCT data and natural spoken data collected from telephone conversations, Beebe and Cummings (1996, p. 80) concluded that DCTs are effective for the researcher to: (1) gather large amount of data quickly; (2) create an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will likely occur in natural speech; (3) study the stereotypical, perceived requirements for a socially appropriate response; (4) gain insight into social and psychological factors that are likely to affect speech and performance; and (5) ascertain the canonical shape of speech acts in the minds of speakers of that language. However, the authors also argued that DCTs do not accurately reflect natural speech with respect to: (1) actual wording used in real interaction; (2) the range of formulas and strategies used; (3) the length of response or the number of turns it takes to fulfil the function; (4) the depth of emotion that in turn qualitatively affects the tone, content, and form of linguistic performance; (5) the number of repetitions and elaborations that occur; and (6) the accurate rate of occurrence of a speech act – e.g., whether or not someone would refuse at all in a given situation .

and closings of conversations; (2) it allows the researcher to exert some degree of control over the conversation; and (3) it reflects a consciousness of the appropriateness of language use. However, role-play data are still considered inauthentic because participants tend to say or do what they think the researcher wants to obtain as stated in the consent form. Both DCTs and role-plays may not yield authentic/natural data because “in a constructed scenario with fictitious relationships, there is likely to be a significant lack of participant involvement” (Placencia, 2008, p. 321). Beebe and Cummings (1996) refers to this involvement as “depth of emotion” which would “qualitatively” affect “the tone, content, and form of linguistic performance” (p. 80)

Only a small number of the studies collected data on refusals as they occurred naturally. However, ‘naturalness’ in most of these studies is understood in the sense that the interactions occur without a pre-scripted scenario, but not that the observed people do not know about the objectives of the research in question. As such, the data obtained are not completely natural. Labov (1972) referred to this problem as the observer’s paradox, stating, “the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation” (Labov, 1972, p. 209).

Moreover, collecting natural data “through observation and participation in a great variety of spontaneously occurring speech situations” (Wolfson, 1981, p. 9) has its own disadvantages. Although this data is considered ideal, Félix-Brasdefer (2006) suggested there are three main problems associated with its collection: “(1) age and gender may be difficult to control; (2) data may not yield enough or any examples of target items (e.g., selection politeness strategies in responding to a refusal; and (3) collecting and analysing data is time consuming” (2006, pp. 2163-2164). These are the major reasons preventing researchers, especially in the field of language teaching, from attempting to gather natural speech act performance.

Finally, speech act studies by and large approach the phenomenon from a single perspective. Because the main focus of the studies is linguistic forms or semantic formulas, the perspective used in the studies is semiotic resource one (see section 5.3.2 for different perspectives). As discussed above, the focus on linguistic forms is beneficial for comparing languages, but it may not explain the underlying socio-cultural factors that influence

people's use of language. Moreover, exploring a speech act from a single perspective may not produce *ecological validity* (Cicourel, 1992, 2007) and identify the interrelation between macro and micro analyses (e.g. Cicourel, 1981; Giddens, 1993; Layder, 1993, 1997, 2005; Sarangi & Candlin, 2001) (see section 5.3.1 for further discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of the multiperspectival approach).

3.3 Refusing in Vietnamese

Despite the fact that there are a large number of empirical studies on refusing in different languages as shown in Table 3.1 (see section 3.2.2) the research theme is underexplored in relation to the Vietnamese language. There are a few articles on *Ngôn Ngữ* (Language) and *Ngôn ngữ và Đời sống* (Language & Life) – two most famous journals of Vietnamese language (e.g., Luu & Trần, 2008; P. C. Nguyễn, 1997, 2004a; C. M. Trần, 2005a, 2005b, 2005d; Vũ & Nguyễn, 2009). However, these articles are either too narrow in their scope of research (from 4 to 7 pages long) or just the publications of one of the findings from a bigger study such as an MA or PhD dissertation (e.g., P. C. Nguyễn, 1997, 2004a; C. M. Trần, 2005a, 2005b, 2005d). Therefore, in this section I will only review such MA and PhD theses.

To my knowledge there are two MA theses and two PhD dissertations investigating the speech act of Vietnamese refusing (P. C. Nguyễn, 2004b; T. M. P. Nguyễn, 2006; T. V. Q. Phan, 2001; C. M. Trần, 2005c). These academic papers are discussed below.

3.3.1 T. V. Q. Phan (2001)

In 2001, Phan conducted a cross-cultural study comparing strategies and semantic formulas of refusals by Vietnamese people in Vietnamese and their English-speaking counterparts (including Australian, American and English) in English. Her MA thesis, entitled *Some English-Vietnamese cross-cultural differences in refusing a request*, focuses on cultural differences relating to the speech act of refusing. Phan recruited 100 Vietnamese people living in the north of Vietnam and 100 *Anglicist*¹⁷ citizens of Australia, the US and the UK

¹⁷ The term *Anglicist* is used in her study to refer to Anglo-Saxon people and their language, i.e., the British-based dialect of English.

to respond to a questionnaire. The questionnaire was in the form of written DCTs that included three scenarios for refusals: refusing to fill out a questionnaire; refusing to go to the post office to send a parcel for somebody; and refusing to lend one's motorbike. Each situation was subdivided into 10 specific circumstances corresponding to 10 types of interlocutor relationships. Examples include a requester who is a dear friend, a person who the refuser does not like, a person who is five years older, or an uncle. The data collected were analysed quantitatively and the results showed both Vietnamese and Anglicist people draw on indirectness, but Vietnamese people use it more frequently (84.97%) than their Anglicist counterparts (58.48%). In addition, Anglicists recorded a higher frequency of directness in refusals compared to their Vietnamese counterparts.

Phan's MA thesis is one of the earliest studies in refusing in Vietnamese and has certainly contributed to the development of later research into the field. However, because the questionnaire as the only means of data collection her study falls short of investigating refusals in interactions where refusing is constantly negotiated and co-constructed between the interlocutors.

3.3.2 P. C. Nguyễn (2004b)

Unlike in Phan's (2001) study, P. C. Nguyễn's PhD dissertation explores refusing in Vietnamese and compares it with refusing in English. The comparison is conducted through an analysis of refusals taken from literary works such as novels, short stories and course books in both Vietnamese and English. In this work, P. C. Nguyễn investigates the frequency of 22 refusing strategies in Vietnamese, explains the cultural values underlying the strategies, and compares the frequency of those strategies with that in English. She found refusals in both Vietnamese and English adopt indirectness as the main refusing strategy, but at a higher rate in Vietnamese (76.1%) than in English (64.4%). Although the percentages of indirectness in this study are different from those presented by T. V. Q. Phan (2001), the trend is similar in that it was found to occur more in Vietnamese than in English. On the other hand, Vietnamese people rarely use directness whereas English people are more open to using this kind of refusing.

In fact, refusing by giving an on-record response, what she calls *nói thẳng thừng* (lit. speak directly) in Vietnamese, was more preferred in English (10.7%) than in Vietnamese (4.3%). The author referred to this type of refusing as rigid, cold, and face-threatening (p.

131). The high frequency of this type of refusing in English leads P. C. Nguyễn (2004b) to conclude that English people¹⁸ are less hesitant than Vietnamese people in using on-record refusals.

P. C. Nguyễn (2004b) also compared the frequency of modal markers the speakers embedded in their refusals. She classifies modal markers into nine categories:

1. Hedges: *loại, dạng, kiểu như, đại để như, đại loại là* - *kind of, sort of, some kind of, some sort of*
2. Downtoners: *Có thể, có lẽ, có khả năng, chỉ vừa mới, đơn giản* - *maybe, perhaps, possibly, just, simply*
3. Understaters: *Một ít, một chút, chỉ một chút/một ít* - *a little, a bit, just a bit, just a little*
4. Subjectivisers: *Tôi nghĩ (rằng), tôi e (rằng), tôi cho (là), theo ý tôi (thì)* - *I think, I'm afraid, I suppose, In my opinion*
5. Intensifiers: *Thật/thật sự (là), cực kỳ, tuyệt đối, thế/như thế, vô cùng* - *Really, extremely, absolutely, such, enormously*
6. Commitment upgraders: *Chắc, chắc chắn* - *Sure, certain*
7. Cajolers: *Anh/chị/ông/bà/bạn/cậu... biết đấy, anh/chị/ông/bà/bạn/cậu... thấy đấy, như anh/chị/ông/bà/bạn/cậu... biết đấy* - *you know, you see, as you know*
8. Appealers: *Được không? Được chứ? Anh/chị/ông/bà... có nghĩ/cho là vậy không? OK? Right? - Don't you think? Is it?*
9. Politeness markers: *Xin, xin vui lòng, làm ơn* - *please*

P. C. Nguyễn (2004b) found the most prominent differences lay in the frequency of the use of subjectivisers, downtoners, and politeness markers, with higher percentages by

¹⁸ However, the authors of the books from which she extracts examples of refusals are not all English

Vietnamese participants compared to their English counterparts. With regards to subjectivisers, the author concludes that by using them more often, Vietnamese people tend to give more careful consideration to their refusals and try to avoid imposing. The frequent use of downtoners by Vietnamese people also shows they tend to behave with modesty and careful consideration, and that this can reduce face threats (P. C. Nguyễn, 2004b). Similarly, politeness markers also function as a means of enhancing face, or reducing face threats to the hearers. The author argued that because Vietnamese people appreciate hierarchical systems, expressing respect to the interlocutors in these ways is really important (P. C. Nguyễn, 2004b).

3.3.3 C. M. Trần (2005c)

C. M. Trần (2005c) finished her PhD dissertation one year after P. C. Nguyễn's (2004). Based on the taxonomies by Blum-Kulka (1987), P. Brown and Levinson (1987), and Searle (1975), C. M. Trần (2005c) classifies three types of refusals: direct, conventional indirect, and non-conventional indirect refusals, each of which is presented in one chapter. A direct speech act refers to the act that achieves its communicative objective via the surface meaning of linguistic forms, whereas the illocutionary force of an indirect speech act is often manifested by another speech act. An indirect refusal is expressed in a semantic form from which the addressee has to infer the implicature based on his/her linguistic and practical knowledge. Indirectness can be conventional or non-conventional, with Blum-Kulka (1987) suggesting conventional indirect speech acts refer to the realisation of "the act by systematic reference to some precondition needed for its realization," and that non-conventional indirectness is "open-ended both in terms of propositional content and linguistic form, as well as of pragmatic force" (p. 141). Therefore, an indirect refusal can be realised via a request for clarification for example, or an expression of thanks which requires the hearer to infer in order to understand.

In the chapter on non-conventional indirectness, C. M. Trần (2005c) presented what she calls 'vague refusals'. Such refusals are very indirect in that the literal meaning of the utterance is an acceptance or agreement, but the true message is a refusal, or vice versa, the literal meaning is a refusal but the true message is an acceptance. Therefore, vague refusals are classified according to two types: (1) *Từ chối-chấp nhận*, or refusing-like acceptance, and (2) *Chấp nhận-từ chối*, or accepting-like refusal. The former refers to cases where an

utterance appears as a refusal according to the surface meaning of the words, but is, in fact, an acceptance. This type of refusal is often referred to as *ritual* (or unreal, strategic, politic) refusal (Hua et al., 2000) or *Từ chối có tính biểu kiến* – opinion-conveying refusal (P. C. Nguyễn, 2004). The second type of refusal, refusing acceptance, is in fact a refusal, but its propositional content is an acceptance. C. M. Trần (2005c) posited these types of refusals help to avoid threatening the hearer's face and simultaneously help to save the speaker's face.

In another case study incorporated into the thesis, C. M. Trần (2005c) implemented a DCT comprising of five request scenarios with native speakers (NS) of English living in London and Vietnamese NNS of English living in Hà Nội. Participants were asked to indicate their refusals for each situation. After classifying participants' refusals as direct, conventional indirect, or non-conventional indirect, and counting the frequency of each type, C. M. Trần (2005c) found some similarities and differences between the NS and NNS participants. One similarity was that the more the refusal cost the hearer the more indirect they were. This finding aligns with Leech's (1983) point of view. As such, C. M. Trần (2005c) argued that indirectness is a means of avoiding posing a threat to the hearer's face, and of achieving politeness. Another similarity related to the relationship between the speaker and the addressee: the closer the relationship, the more direct the refusals.

However, English and Vietnamese people also differ in a number of ways when performing refusals. C. M. Trần (2005c) found that when the distance between the refuser and the refusee is small, Vietnamese NNS of English tended to avoid direct refusals; whereas they were often performed by the English NS. The reason cited for the difference is that the Vietnamese speakers thought a direct refusal was very likely to affect their relationship negatively. If the threat to their relationship was higher, they may choose to keep silent or even to use gestures.

There are some differences between the two studies by P. C. Nguyễn (2004b) and C. M. Trần (2005c). The first is that P. C. Nguyễn (2004b) investigates the semantic formulas of refusals in Vietnamese and compares them to those used in English whereas C. M. Trần (2005c) takes refusing strategies in English as the main source for comparison to those in Vietnamese. The second difference is that P. C. Nguyễn (2004b) investigates all types of refusals whereas C. M. Trần (2005c) narrows the scope of her study to one type of refusing

only - refusing a request. The two studies have a number of points in common however. Both researchers primarily draw on data elicited from literary works and identify similarities and differences between Vietnamese and English cultural norms and conventions in terms of refusing. As such, neither explores the para- and non-linguistic aspects of the speech act of refusing such as intonation, voice pitch, gestures and facial expressions among others.

3.3.4 T. M. P. Nguyễn (2006)

T. M. P. Nguyễn's (2006) MA thesis compared the realisation of the speech act of refusing a request performed by Australian native speakers (AEs) and Vietnamese learners of English (VEs). Based on CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), the study implemented a questionnaire in the form of a DCT comprised of 18 refusal scenarios. The design of each scenario was based on three socio-cultural factors relevant to the participants; namely, social status (Low, High, Equal); social distance (Intimate, Acquaintance, Stranger); and gender (Same, Opposite). The data elicited were coded in terms of the semantic formulae developed by Beebe et al. (1990), and the frequency of each semantic formula was counted by the Simple Concordance Program developed by Alan Reed.

T. M. P. Nguyễn (2006) concluded that VEs “are apt to express refusals with caution and/or care” (p. 69) by the high frequency of such semantic formulae as *statements of regret*, *statements of sympathy*, *adjuncts to refusals-addressing term* and *reasons/ excuses/ explanations*. The author claimed that VEs’ frequent use of *statements of regret* implies they are unwilling to refuse, and are carefully observing face-saving practices. Second, VEs use statements of sympathy to show their love and sympathy to the hearer, both of which are desirable in Vietnamese culture. Third, using addressing terms is a way of showing affection for the addressees, or ‘feeling’ for them (see section 2.4.3 for person reference terms). Finally, the VEs’ greater use of *reasons/ excuses/ explanations* compared to AEs (i.e., giving a rationale for their refusals) suggests the VEs wanted to avoid disappointing the hearer.

In contrast, Australians were more direct in the ways they refuse as demonstrated in the way they employed more “No” phrases, more *statements of principles*, and more *statements of unwillingness/doubt* compared to the Vietnamese learners of English. T. M. P. Nguyễn (2006) argued that a “No” phrase is a direct non-performative speech act, “only

slightly less confronting than the explicit performative ‘I refuse’” (p. 66), and thus is also a FTA. Moreover, AEs tended to refer to social principles such as law and order compared to VEs who tended to behave on the basis of social harmony grounded in principles of morality and reasonability.

With regards to the three social variables of social status, social distance and gender, T. M. P. Nguyễn (2006) concluded both AEs and VEs were more assertive towards people of lower status, and more respectful towards people of higher status in relation to their use of addressing terms. Both AEs and VEs were also sensitive to the opposite gender and thus used more *statements of regret*. With regard to distance however VEs were more careful than AEs when they refused intimate addressees because, as the author explains, they highly value intimacy between friends and relatives (T. M. P. Nguyễn, 2006).

3.4 Summary and conclusion

This chapter reviewed empirical studies of refusing in different languages including Vietnamese. There remains however a need to explore refusing from different perspectives in the interest of ecological validity (Cicourel, 1992, 2007) and to integrate the macro and micro analyses (e.g. Cicourel, 1981; Giddens, 1993; Layder, 1993, 1997, 2005; Sarangi & Candlin, 2001). Further research is also needed in exploring refusing in interaction to identify how refusing is negotiated and what strategies are used in refusing, especially those performed by paralinguistic and non-linguistic forms.

For these reasons this research project sets out to scrutinise Vietnamese refusing using a mixed methods multiperspectival approach which has been introduced in chapter 1 and will be further discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Towards an interactional approach to pragmatic research

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 provides an overview of preliminary theories that support, shape, and underlie this research project. First, a brief account is given of the origin and development of pragmatics and speech act theory, as well as a discussion of the important issues related to each (section 4.2). A review is then conducted of the issues of face, facework, and politeness, particularly the different views of politeness (section 4.3). Next, this chapter discusses impoliteness theory and explores why it has developed into a field of study independent from politeness theory (section 4.4). This chapter ends with a summary of the main arguments and an outline of the main conclusions drawn (section 4.5).

4.2 Pragmatics and speech act theory

4.2.1 Pragmatics: The study of language in interaction

The term *pragmatics* was first used as early as the late nineteenth century. However pragmatics as an independently institutionalised discipline was established by Charles Morris (1938) as one of three branches of semiotics along with syntax and semantics. Whereas syntax is the study of how signs are combined together, and semantics deals with the relationship between signs and the objects/concepts that the signs denote, pragmatics refers to the relationship between signs and their users.

It was not until the 1970s, however, when linguists began to explore the performance of language users that pragmatics made its way into modern linguistics (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010, p. 4). Linguists at this time adopted the ideas developed by three distinguished philosophers: Austin (1962); Searle (1969); and Grice (1975) who were interested in utterance meaning rather than sentence or word meaning. The emergence of pragmatics as a branch of linguistics in its own right was a reaction to Saussure's structuralism and Chomsky's generative-transformational grammar, both of which failed to

explain the complexity, ambiguousness, and sometimes ‘error’ of language in real use. In an attempt to explain this failure, Mey (1993, p. 4) presented this example:

‘I brought some sushi home and cooked it; it wasn’t bad.’

Given that sushi is eaten raw, this sentence makes no sense according to Chomskyan linguistics because the semantics of ‘the sushi’ contradicts with the semantics of ‘the cooking’. However, this silly sentence is pragmatically meaningful when it is understood that it was used as a joke to advertise a downtown cocktail lounge called ‘Sweet Alice’. The joke “invokes the silly state of mind that becomes our privilege after a couple of drinks” (Mey, 1993, p. 4). This example demonstrates that in real life, utterances can be nonsense semantically, but completely meaningful pragmatically. Thus, it is no exaggeration to claim that pragmatics helps us have a “fuller, deeper, and generally more reasonable account of human language behaviour” (Mey, 1993, p. 7).

For this reason, pragmatics has been variously defined as “the study of language in use” (G. Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 27), the study of meaning in interaction (Thomas, 1995), “the study of both speaker meaning and contextual meaning” (Yule, 1996), or the “science of language as it is used by real, live people, for their own purposes and within their limitations and affordances” (Mey, 1993, p. 5). Although the various definitions imply pragmatics is the study of language in real use, only Crystal (1997) made clear the importance of ‘interaction’ in pragmatics by defining it as:

The study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication (p. 301).

Crystal’s (1997) definition makes explicit the importance of social interaction which, I argue, is the overarching term covering a wide range of factors contributing to the flow of communication. Through interaction, different kinds of communicative components are revealed: from the norms and principles of society at large to the micro contextual emergences; from the identities of the participants to their current psychological state; from the verbal resources to non-verbal and even non-vocal means of communication; and from the co-construction of meaning between speaker and hearer to the influence of third parties on performance of speech acts.

However, whether pragmatic theories or empirical studies on speech acts have explored language in talk-in-interaction effectively is debatable. In fact, even Austin did not develop his theory based on data embedded in interaction (i.e., the use of language that takes into account a number of contextual factors apart from linguistic forms alone), although he recognised the importance of elucidating “the total speech act in the total speech situation” (Austin, 1975, p. 148). As a result, subsequent studies of speech act theory have mainly focused on the formal, ritual linguistic forms at the expense of the non-linguistic aspects that underlie the choice of those forms.

4.2.2 Pragmatics: A rapidly and diversely growing field

Pragmatics looks not only at language itself, but also its users and the surrounding environment (context) in which the language is used. As a result, it touches upon a wide variety of phenomena including the linguistic, psychological, or cultural. Pragmatics has thus become a multi-, trans-, and inter-disciplinary field of inquiry. Since its appearance as an independent branch of linguistics, “pragmatics has developed more rapidly and diversely than any other linguistic discipline” (Bublitz, Jucker, & Schneider, 2013, p. v).

Studies of how people use language approach the phenomena from a range of different disciplines including language teaching, anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics, and social psychology (Sbisà & Turner, 2013). Among these disciplines, language teaching is by far the most frequently considered in which different speech acts such as requesting, advising, complaints, apologising, inviting, and disagreeing are investigated. The fact that hundreds of empirical studies on those acts are listed on the website of the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)¹⁹ – University of Minnesota – clearly demonstrates the ongoing influence of speech act theory (SAT) on language usage studies. In particular, the refusing speech act receives much attention by language teachers, sociolinguists and pragmatists all over the world, although research into the speech act is relatively rare in Vietnam (see table 3.1 in chapter 3).

The diverse development of speech act empirical research in general and refusing in particular is also manifested in the wide range of data collection methods and tools of

¹⁹ See www.carla.umn.edu/speechacts/bibliography/index.html

analysis. As shown in table 3.1, data can be collected from existing corpora; elicited via DCTs, role-plays, and interviews; or be observed from naturally-occurring interactions. The tools used to analyse data types are also varied, ranging from descriptive statistics to conversation and discourse analysis.

4.2.3 Speech act theory: the cornerstone of pragmatics

The core objective of pragmatics is to deal with linguistic performance (i.e., what language users actually do with language). Pragmatics thus owes a great deal to philosophical speech act theory in that “speech acts have become one of the cornerstones in pragmatics” (Archer et al., 2012, p. 35). As the founding father of speech act theory, Austin (1962) was particularly interested in how to ‘do things’ with language based on the view that “the uttering of the sentence is, or is part of, the doing of an action” (Austin, 1962, p. 5). Austin put forward the concept of ‘speech act’ as part of his counter-argument against the common philosophical claim that language is used mainly to describe some state of affairs or to constating facts. To Austin (1962), language helps people do many different things in addition to constating facts such as naming, thanking, and requesting. For example, the sentence ‘I [hereby] apologise for that’ does not describe an event, but constitutes an apology. Searle (1969) further confirms Austin’s point of view on what people do with language by stating, “speaking a language is doing speech acts”, and that speech acts “are the basic or minimal units of communication” (p. 16).

4.2.4 Drawbacks of classic speech act theory

Austin was aware of the importance of examining speech acts in interaction when he claimed the need to elucidate “the total speech act in the total speech situation” (Austin, 1975, p. 148). Nonetheless he and his collaborator, Searle, developed speech act theory based primarily on single sentences and on the speaker’s point of view. On this point their theory has received much criticism for the following reasons.

First, the same sentence may have different meanings/functions (Hatch, 1983) when said in different situations. Consequently, it has different illocutionary forces on the interlocutor, or in more general terms, on the surrounding environment. Thus, ‘It’s hot in here’ may represent a variety of illocutionary acts. It may be a statement describing the weather at a specific place, it may also mean a complaint to a hotel receptionist, or it may even convey

an indirect request to turn on the fans. Therefore, which speech act the sentence is doing depends on such elements as who says it to whom and where, who else is present, and what prosodic and non-vocal features are used by the speaker. On the other hand, a speech act, or a communicative purpose, may be expressed in a number of linguistic forms and/or behaviours (Hatch, 1983). For instance, in order to have the fans turned on, the teacher in a classroom may use a number of sentences such as 'It's hot in here', 'Do we have fans in this room?' or as a direct request 'Tom, turn the fans on, please!' The teacher may even make some gesture or action such as looking up at the ceiling fans or using a notebook to fan him or herself.

Similarly, Archer et al. (2012, p. 40) argued 'Thank you', traditionally regarded as the speech act of thanking, can have different illocutionary forces. For instance, it may imply an act of saying goodbye; be used at the end of a discussion to dismiss the speaker; or be used to transition to a new speaker in the debate. Thanking is also an important part of other speech acts such as acceptance and rejection of offers (Archer et al., 2012, p. 41). As such, different speech acts may have the role of a refusal, and often referred to as indirect refusals.

Second, speech acts are not only analysed from the speaker's point of view as in the work of Austin and other classic theorists. They are also analysed from the hearer's perception and response. In classic speech act theory, less attention was paid to how an utterance related to the preceding and following utterance; for example, an invitation is followed by an acceptance or declination, which is in turn followed by another invitation. In talk-in-interaction, however, a turn is shaped by the previous turn and then shapes the following turn. Hence, a speech act cannot be fully understood in isolation from its surrounding acts and thus can only be correctly perceived when investigated in interaction. For this reason, the notion of speech acts is often replaced by *discourse act* or *communicative act*. The description of a discourse act is based on where it occurs in the interaction and focuses on what is to be achieved by the act (Archer et al., 2012, p. 41). Sbisà and Turner (2013) go further by employing a new term - *speech actions* - rather than speech acts to refer to the total speech event. They claim speech actions imply a wider sense compared to speech acts, arguing an action may consist of preceding acts and subsequent acts. Thus, an action is seen as the process of negotiation and co-construction between the interlocutors and therefore what type it is depends not only on the speaker's intention, but also the hearer's

perception and response. In this thesis however the term ‘speech act’ is retained because of its traditional use in the literature. Nonetheless, it is borne in mind that a speech act should be investigated in the whole process of interaction.

Third, speech act performance differs greatly across languages, cultures and ethnic groups (Wierzbicka, 1985). The same speech act may be realised by different linguistic forms in different cultures. Greetings, for example, are often realised in Vietnamese culture by ‘Where are you going?’ ‘Have you had lunch?’ or ‘What are you doing?’ In many Western cultures however such utterances are considered as too ‘nosy’ and personal to be greetings. A revealing example of cross-cultural misunderstanding is found in the interaction between US President Nixon and Japanese Prime Minister, Saito. When asked by Nixon if Japan would agree to curtail its fabric export to the US in exchange for the return of Okinawa, Saito answered, ‘Zensho shimasu’ – ‘I’ll take a proper step’. Nixon assumed this response as a commitment, but from Saito’s perspective, it was in fact a polite way of refusing (T. M. P. Nguyễn, 2006, p. 1). In turn, misunderstanding between the two leaders was an unavoidable consequence. Similarly, in investigating the pragmatics of Vietnamese, Chew (2005) includes an interesting investigation of the functions of ‘được’ (‘OK’, ‘possible’, ‘can’, ‘all right’, ‘agreed’). The author suggested that ‘được’ is a non-committal, conflict-avoidance and face-saver device rather than an outright agreement.

Finally, only by exploring utterances in situated interaction can we ascertain their indirect messages. Indirectness encapsulates the notion that we do not always say literally what we mean. Indirect speech acts are cases in which an illocutionary force is performed indirectly by way of performing another (Searle, 1975). Thus, rather than making a direct request which may be perceived as face-threatening, one may provide a hint to the other interlocutor so that he or she may recognise a potential request and in turn make an offer. As Liddicoat (2007) wrote, “many potential requests are usually ‘headed off’ by their recipients, who convert them into offers” (p. 123) Although hearers do not normally have difficulty interpreting what is said on the basis of inference drawn from the cultural knowledge shared with the speaker, there is no shared knowledge common to every context or situation. Therefore, the message of an utterance or behaviour, direct or indirect, may only be perceived correctly when it is investigated in specific situated contexts.

4.3 Face, facework and politeness

Politeness is one of the main sub-disciplines of pragmatics and is thus often deeply explored in speech act studies. However, there are different, if not contrasting, approaches to politeness and these are reviewed below.

4.3.1 Western view of politeness: A strategic approach

This view is also referred to as the *strategic approach* (Kasper, 1990) because it attempts to work out individual strategies to avoid conflicts in social interactions, whether by following conversational principles or avoiding or mitigating face-threatening acts. There are two corresponding theoretical approaches: conversational maxims which are represented by Lakoff (1973); (Leech, 1983), Grice (1975), and Leech (1983); and face-saving strategies proposed by P. Brown and Levinson (1987).

4.3.1.1 Conversational maxims

The conversational maxim perspective of politeness has its roots in the Gricean Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975). The main premise of this principle is that what speakers in a conversation say is expected to be truthful, appropriately informative, relevant, and clear.

Adopting Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) construct, Lakoff (1973) proposed a set of 'rules of politeness' to complement the CP that emphasised the need to avoid offense. Specifically, the author suggested two overarching rules of polite co-operation: (1) be clear; and (2) be polite. Rule 1, which Lakoff (1973) renames the 'rules of conversation', is essentially the Gricean CP. Rule 2 consists of 3 sub-rules: (1) don't impose; (2) give options; and (3) make the hearer feel good. The two overarching rules, however, seem incompatible in that whenever one follows the rules of politeness by not imposing, giving options, and making the hearer feel good, he / she is certain to violate the rules of conversation. Lakoff (1973) was fully aware of this paradox and thus claimed the two overarching rules should be assigned different weights depending on the nature of conversation. If the main aim of the conversation is to provide information, then clarity is prioritised. Conversely, if the main purpose is to maintain a good relationship, politeness is

prioritised. In turn, Lakoff (1973) believed the purpose in a conversation is more often to maintain a good relationship than to provide information, as she wrote:

Politeness usually supersedes: it is considered more important in a conversation to avoid offense than to achieve clarity. This makes sense, since in most informal conversations, actual communication of important ideas is secondary to merely reaffirming and strengthening relationships (pp. 297-298).

Each of the three sub-maxims of the 'rules of politeness' aims at making the hearer 'feel good' or at making social interaction harmonious. Lakoff (1973) claimed the pragmatic sub-rules do polite work in different ways depending on the requirement of the situation. For instance, sub-rule 1 is to be used when formal/impersonal politeness is required, sub-rule 2 when informal politeness is required, and sub-rule 3 when intimate politeness is required. As such, the part of an utterance; 'I'm sorry to disturb you, but...' is an example of formal politeness; 'Do you mind passing me the salt?' is as an example of informal politeness; and 'Hey, what the hell are you doing, mate?' is an example of intimate politeness. With regard to the latter utterance, the use of casual language 'what the hell' in conjunction with the use of the word 'mate' to show closeness conveys to the hearer a sense of intimacy which makes the hearer feel good.

Leech (1983) is another notable linguist who developed a politeness model on the basis of the Gricean CP. Recognising that Grice's CP "...cannot explain (i) why people are often so indirect in conveying what they mean, and (ii) what the relation is between sense and force when non-declarative types of sentences are being considered" (p. 80), Leech (1983) proposed the Politeness Principle (PP) as a more detailed model of politeness and as a necessary complement to the CP. It is acknowledged that in everyday conversations, especially chats between friends, Grice's CP Maxims are often violated. Politeness Principles (PP), according to Leech (1983), can explain such violations. He wrote:

It must be admitted that the CP is in a weak position if apparent exception to it cannot be satisfactorily explained. It is for this reason that the PP can be seen not just another principle to be added to the CP, but as a necessary complement, which rescues the CP from serious trouble (p. 80).

Leech (1983) proposed six interpersonal maxims:

(I) TACT MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)

(a) Minimise cost to *other* [(b) Maximise benefit to *other*]

- (II) GENEROSITY MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)
 - (a) Minimise benefit to *self* [(b) Maximise cost to *self*]
- (III) APPROBATION MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)
 - (a) Minimise dispraise of *other* [(b) Maximise praise of *other*]
- (IV) MODESTY MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)
 - (a) Minimise praise of *self* [(b) Maximise dispraise of *self*]
- (V) AGREEMENT MAXIM (in assertives)
 - (a) Minimise disagreement between *self* and *other*
 - [(b) Maximise agreement between *self* and *other*]
- (VI) SYMPATHY MAXIM (in assertives)
 - (a) Minimise antipathy between *self* and *other*
 - [(b) Maximise sympathy between *self* and *other*]

Leech (1983) argued the maxims should be observed “up to a certain point” (p. 133); that is, they should be treated within their own domain. For example, a person who is too modest will be judged as tedious and insincere and thus the CP Maxim of Quality takes its role to restrain him or her from being too modest, or too tactful. This is the reason why Leech (1983) regards his PP as complementary to CP rather than an alternative.

Leech’s view on politeness is compatible with East Asian cultural values in general and Vietnamese cultural values in particular. According to the author, to make an offer appear that the offerer makes no sacrifice is a polite action and “can become less impolite for *h* [i.e., hearer] to accept the offer”. However, Leech’s model is incomplete because no assessment scales are offered for the maxims of the PP. Also, the author does not indicate how his maxims may interact in determining the degree of politeness needed and consequently the linguistic form needed.

Another problem with each of the models developed by Lakoff and Leech is that it is unclear whether politeness is explained in terms of the limited maxims or whether it depends solely on the speaker’s calculation. The maxims are induced from introspection and logical analysis rather than from the qualitative and quantitative analysis of data based on rigorous procedures. As a result, new maxims may be added.

4.3.1.2 Face-saving

The most influential politeness theory to date is no doubt that proposed by P. Brown and Levinson (1987). The authors built their politeness theory on the assertion that every speech act is potentially face-threatening to either the speaker/writer or the listener/reader, or to both. To be polite is thus to reduce the face threat to the interlocutors. P. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined face as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (p. 61) and claimed that every social person is endowed with two universal types of face: positive and negative. Positive face refers to the interactant’s desire that his self-image be appreciated and approved of; whereas negative face represents “the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction - i.e. freedom of action and freedom from imposition” (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). During social interaction, a social person will want his self-image to be recognised, but not to the extent that his independence is lost. Naturally, an interactant often finds it difficult to obtain a balance between the two face-wants and thus his face is constantly at risk.

Face-threatening acts (FTAs) are therefore regarded as pivotal in P. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory. FTAs are characterised according to two parameters: (1) which type of face (positive or negative) is being threatened; and (2) whose face (speaker or addressee) is being threatened. Accordingly, the FTAs may be categorised as one of the following four types of face threats:

- (a) the speaker’s negative face such as thanking or accepting an offer
- (b) the speaker’s positive face such as apologising or confessing
- (c) the hearer’s negative face such as ordering, inviting, or complimenting
- (d) the hearer’s positive face, such as denying or criticising

P. Brown and Levinson (1987) posited what they call a Model Person (MP); that is, “a willful fluent speaker of natural language” (p. 58), who is rationally capable of assessing the possible face-threatening nature of the move s/he is about to make. They then asserted the seriousness of a FTA can be calculated via the following formula:

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

In the above formula: W_x refers to the weightiness of the FTA; $D(S, H)$ the social distance or the degree of familiarity and solidarity the speaker (S) and hearer (H) share; $P(H, S)$ the power H has over S; and R_x the “culturally and situationally defined ranking of imposition by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent’s wants of self-determination or of approval” (P. Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 77). P. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory suggested that speakers assess the weightiness on the basis of certain contextual factors, particularly the relations between the speaker and the addressee, and the potential imposition of the act in order to choose appropriate linguistic forms to realise the speech act. This rationalisation aims at mitigating the potential threat so as to protect both the speaker’s and the hearer’s self-image and also preserve the socio-cultural norms appropriate to the situation.

Accordingly, P. Brown and Levinson (1987) outlined five possible politeness strategies from which the speaker may choose when she or he wants to commit a FTA (see Figure 4.1). The strategies are represented hierarchically based on the degree of threat a FTA has on the hearer’s face (one being the lowest threat level and five being the highest). In turn, the strategy chosen by the speaker will depend on the greater or lesser degree of the threat the act poses to the hearer’s face. It is assumed that the MP, upon assessing the weightiness of the face threat, will commit to one or more rational decisions.

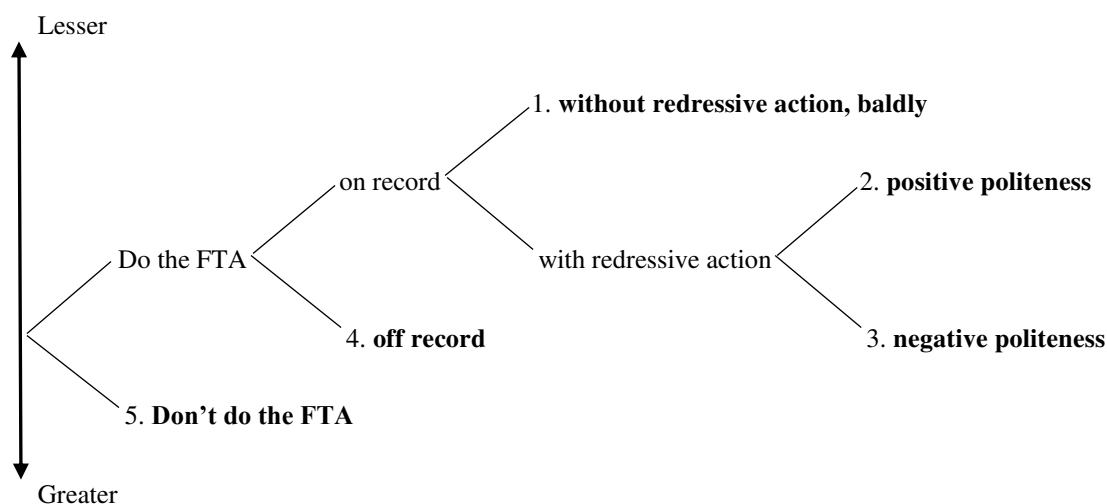


Figure 4.1: P. Brown and Levinson’s (1987, p. 60) five politeness strategies

First, the speaker will have to decide whether or not to do the FTA. If the risk of face threat is too high the speaker may decide not to commit the FTA (strategy 5). If the speaker has no option but to risk the FTA then he or she is confronted with the second decision; that is, whether to go on record or off record. Off record (strategy 4) refers to very indirect ways of doing a speech act by, for example, giving hints and letting the hearer infer the real message. However, if the speaker decides to commit the FTA on record, the third rational decision has to be made; whether or not to do so with redressive action or to just carry it out baldly (strategy 1) without an attempt to mitigate the face threat. If the speaker chooses redressive action then the final decision to make is whether to address the addressee's positive (strategy 2) or negative face (strategy 3).

It can be inferred from the P. Brown and Levinson's (1987) model that strategies 2 (positive politeness) and 3 (negative politeness) comprise the core of their politeness theory. According to the authors, positive politeness is appropriate for equal and intimate interlocutors, which aligns with Scollon and Scollon's (1983) notion of "solidarity politeness" in which participants' common and in-group ground is emphasised. In contrast, negative politeness, also defined by Scollon and Scollon (1983) as "deference politeness", is the index of hierarchy and distance.

4.3.2 Eastern view to politeness: A normative approach

In the above two views of politeness (i.e., conversational maxim and face-saving approaches), politeness strategies are regarded as instruments to avoid conflict (Kasper, 1990). In contrast, Eastern scholars favour the view that politeness is determined by social factors rather than by individual wants (Gu, 1990; Ide, 1989; Y. Matsumoto, 1988; Nwoye, 1989, 1992). Their argument is based on the belief that each society has a particular system of social norms, and that one is considered as polite if his or her actions are congruent to the norms, and impolite if the actions violate the social norms. Politeness therefore is culture-specific and generally associated with speech style "whereby a higher degree of formality implies greater politeness" (Fraser, 1990, p. 221). Kasper (1990, p. 196) referred to this politeness form as social indexing because it focuses on "macro-social properties". This perspective is often based on ethnographic and linguistic evidence from Far-Eastern cultures traditionally collected by American anthropologists. Geertz (1968, p. 282), for example, claimed, "[i]n Javanese it is nearly impossible to say anything without indicating

the social relationship between the speaker and the listener in terms of status and familiarity” (p. 282). However, the most prominent representatives of this approach to politeness are Matsumoto, Ide, Gu and Nwoye.

Y. Matsumoto (1988) questioned P. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) universality of face and claimed their theory proposed “wrong predictions for Japanese politeness phenomena” (p. 403). Specifically, Y. Matsumoto (1988) stated that P. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) assumption that “the basic unit of society is the individual” (p. 403) cannot explicate polite behaviour in Japanese culture. He asserted that in Japanese culture, people’s polite behaviour is not derived from individual calculation, but rather from social constraints on individual behaviour. As such, negative politeness plays a negligible role. What is important for polite behaviour in Japanese culture argued Y. Matsumoto (1988) is the recognition of one’s position to others. One must understand where they stand in relation to other members of the group or society, and “[a]cknowledgement and maintenance of the relative position of others, rather than preservation of an individual’s proper territory, governs all social interaction” (Y. Matsumoto, 1988, p. 405). Y. Matsumoto (1988) provided a list of “relation-acknowledging devices” as realisations of polite behaviour such as formulaic expressions, honorifics, and verbs of giving and receiving. She concluded that politeness phenomena are socially motivated and so knowing the socio-cultural patterns is important to produce polite behaviour. Moreover, Y. Matsumoto (1988) asserted that “a universal theory of linguistic politeness must take into account at a more fundamental level the cultural variability in the constituent of ‘face’” (p. 403).

Echoing Y. Matsumoto (1988), Ide (1989) also criticised Western scholars for over-emphasising individual face. She stated that Japanese politeness does not revolve around this type of face, but rather it revolves around the notion of place marking the interpersonal relationships between the interlocutors according to which the speaker is required to acknowledge his/her status and the status of others. Ide (1989) wrote:

In a western culture where individualism is assumed to be the basis of all interactions, it is easy to regard face as the key to interaction. On the other hand, in a society where group membership is regarded as the basis for interactions, the role or status defined in a particular situation rather than face is the basis of interaction (p. 241)

Given that China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam are influenced greatly by a Confucian ideology that endorses social hierarchy (see chapter 2), social constraints around individual behaviours are also a distinctive feature of Vietnamese culture (see section 2.4).

A similar conceptualisation of face and politeness is found in Chinese culture. The Chinese concept of face is associated with the social evaluation of prestige and the moral quality of a person through the notion of *Lien* and *Mien-tzu* (Hu, 1944). With regards to politeness, Gu (1990) made a historical survey on the origin of ‘face’ and confirmed that it equates with *Limao*, a term derived from the old Chinese word *Li* formulated by Confucius (551 B.C – 479 B.C). At this time, Confucius used *Li* not as a reference to politeness, but to refer to the Zhou Dynasty’s (1,100 B.C) social hierarchical order within the slavery system, which he regarded as an ideal model for society. When Confucius was alive the social hierarchy was shattered by wars between feudal states and the social chaos that ensued. In order to ‘repair’ this chaotic state, Confucius proposed to restore *Li*. In order to restore *Li* it is necessary to *zhengming*²⁰ (i.e., rectify names). *Ming* refers to the sociological recognition of an individual’s social role and status and thus to rectify names is to put each individual in his/her place according to his/her social position. According to Confucius (translated and italicised by Gu (1990):

If *ming* is not properly rectified, *speech* cannot be used appropriately; if speech is not used appropriately, nothing can be achieved; if nothing is achieved, *li* cannot be restored; if *li* is not restored, law and justice cannot be exercised; and if law and justice are not exercised, people will not know how to behave (p. 238).

In other words, if citizens do not understand their role and status they will not know how to behave appropriately. Not until two or three hundred years after the death of Confucius did the word *Li* adopt the sense of politeness that is based on humbling oneself and showing respect to others. This new sense however does not negate the former sense of the word (i.e., social hierarchy). Indeed, they are closely interconnected as evidenced in Gu’s (1990) claim “that it is *li* (i.e., social hierarchy) that gives rise to *li* (i.e., politeness), and that it is *li* (i.e., politeness) that expresses and helps maintain *li* (i.e., social hierarchy and order)” (p. 239).

²⁰ Zhengming has also been mentioned in chapter 2 (2.2.4).

Gu (1990) believed that denigrating self and respecting other remained at the core of the modern Chinese conception of *limao*, or politeness, and its four underlying elements: respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth, and refinement. Respectfulness refers to one's positive appreciation or admiration of other concerning the latter's face and social status; modesty carries with it self-denigration; attitudinal warmth implies one's kindness, consideration, and hospitality to others; and refinement is concerned with one's behaviour to other in accordance with certain standards. The four notions operate in accordance with two essential principles: sincerity, which requires that polite behaviour be genuine; and reciprocity, which calls for polite behaviour in return by others. An example of each of the two principles in action is found in the case of an invitation. The inviter demonstrates his or her sincerity by insistently inviting, and the invitee thinks of the acceptance of the invitation as a debt and will therefore find a way to 'pay back' the debt by inviting the inviter on a later occasion. To my best knowledge, this type of transaction also occurs frequently in Vietnamese society.

The four basic notions of *limao* are developed into four politeness maxims: self-denigration, address, tact, and generosity. The self-denigration maxim consists of two sub-maxims: denigrating self and elevating other. On the one hand, if the speaker denigrates the addressee, he / she will be perceived as impolite or rude. On the other hand, if the speaker elevates his or herself, he / she will be considered arrogant, boasting or self-conceited. The address maxim requires the appropriate use of address term. The appropriateness is dependent on a number of variables such as political or professional status, age, and gender. The address system in modern Chinese includes five categories: governmental titles, occupational titles, proper names, kinship terms, and address politeness markers. Gu's (1990) tact maxim and generosity maxim are similar to Leech's tact and generosity maxims mentioned in the previous section. However, although Gu (1990) admits that in modern Chinese the roles of politeness are "to enhance social harmony and to defuse interpersonal tension or conflict" (p. 239), he nonetheless believes that "politeness is a phenomenon belonging to the level of society, which endorses its normative constraints on each individual" (p. 242).

Nwoye (1989, 1992) is another researcher who strongly advocated normative views of politeness in his exploration of politeness phenomena among the Igbo of Southeast Nigeria. Nwoye's (1989) argument for socially required norms of behaviour also targets P.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness individualism. In line with Y. Matsumoto (1988), Ide (1989), and Gu (1990), Nwoye (1992) argued that the notion of face "should be further sub-classified into 'individual face' and 'group face'" (p. 313). For him, group face is ranked higher than individual face in non-Western cultures, and most inappropriate acts and behaviour threaten group face rather than individual face (Nwoye, 1992). The author supported his argument using the following two questions as examples: (1) 'Whose child stole the chicken?' and (2) 'Who stole the chicken?' Nwoye (1992) claimed that in Igbo society (1) is preferred to (2) as a question about who has committed an anti-social act because (1) carries the implication of the responsibility of the child's parents which is more important than the responsibility of the child himself.

Another counter-argument made by Nwoye (1989, 1992) in opposition to P. Brown and Levinson's (1987) model is that most of the speech acts the authors claim to be impositions and hence face-threatening are in fact not impositions in Igbo society. Nwoye (1992) investigated four speech acts: requesting, offering, thanking, and criticising and concluded that in many cases the acts are far from face-threatening even when performed directly. For example, the author made the following direct request to two men (a man and his son whom he had not met before) to ask for help when his car had broken down on a lonely road: '[M]y car has suddenly stopped, come and help me push it.' Nwoye (1992) mentioned that the utterance, which did not contain redressing devices and would thus be regarded by P. Brown and Levinson (1987) as imposing, was not considered by the two men as face-threatening. On the contrary, the conventional indirect utterance; '[C]an you help me push this car?', which is less imposing than a direct one, is not usually expected in this situation. This is because by saying it the requester may underestimate the two men's willingness to help (i.e., the hospitality of the Igbo people).

4.3.3 Synthetic approach to politeness: An attempt to combine Western and Eastern views

The synthetic perspective of politeness is so called because it is characterised by an attempt to work out an alternative to both the individualism of the instrumental strategic perspective and the social determination of the normative approach. The representatives of this approach are Fraser (Fraser, 1975, 1990; Fraser & Nolen, 1981) who posited the

conversational contract view, and Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki, and Ogino (1986) who posited the notions of *Discernment* and *Volition*.

In the conversational contract view, politeness is constrained and determined by social conventions and conditions (Fraser, 1990). By linking the two in this way, Fraser attempted to combine the factor of individual choice with the conditioning perspective of social constraints on human behaviour. Upon entering into a conversation, each party brings an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations that will determine, at least for the preliminary stages, what each participant can expect from the other. This understanding comes with the provision that during the course of time there is always the possibility the conversational contract will be renegotiated. Fraser (1990) wrote:

Being polite does not involve making the hearer ‘feel good,’ à la Lakoff or Leech, nor with making the hearer not ‘feel bad,’ à la Brown & Levinson. It simply involves getting on with the task at hand in light of the terms and conditions of the conversational contract (p. 233).

For Fraser (1990), the terms and conditions of the conversational contract do not exist outside speech communities and their members, and may be imposed through conventions applicable to all ordinary conversations or by institutions. The structural and institutional requirements are seldom renegotiated. In contrast, the terms determined by previous encounters or the actual particulars of the situation are often renegotiable in light of the participants’ perceptions and/or acknowledgements of factors such as the status, power, and role of each speaker, as well as the nature of the circumstances. Thus, both first-order and second-order²¹ politeness strategies are manifested in interactions. This is applicable to Vietnamese refusing in that interlocutors are constrained by social norms (e.g., the use of addressing forms etc.) at the preliminary stage, but they may later renegotiate the situational conditions.

²¹ The distinction between first-order and second-order was first made by Watts, Ide, and Ehlich (1992a) who defined first-order politeness as “the various ways in which polite behaviour is perceived and talked about by members of sociocultural groups” and second-order politeness as “a term within a theory of social behaviour and language usage” (1992a, p. 3).

Other researchers of the synthetic perspective consider politeness to be the unification of elements: social norms, and situational contexts. Because these two elements differ in function and practice, the interrelationships between them are necessarily culturally and socially specific. Hill et al. (1986), for example, argued that “a system for polite use of a particular language will exhibit two major aspects: the necessity for speaker Discernment and the opportunity for speaker Volition” (p. 349). Discernment refers to a set of rules which “define one’s minimal obligations within the polite-use sub-system” (Hill et al., 1986, p. 351). Volition is understood as the “aspect of politeness which allows the speaker a considerably more active choice, according to the speaker’s intention” (Hill et al., 1986, p. 348). The authors argue that while the rule of Discernment must be observed because failure to do so will offend others, Volition may or may not be used.

4.3.4 Towards an interactional approach to politeness

Given that P. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory falls short of explaining polite behaviour in many Far-Eastern cultures, some scholars have argued for the return to Goffman’s (1967) original conceptualisation of face to develop a more satisfactory model of politeness (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003; Locher & Watts, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2005, 2007; Watts, 2003).

Bargiela-Chiappini (2003), for example, claimed P. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) conceptualisation of face is “weaker than Goffman’s, precisely with respect to cross-cultural validity” (p. 1462). The author posited that Goffman’s face is closer to the Chinese construct of face which is not an individual want, but is enabled and constrained by social conventions and rules (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003). In P. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model, the cognitive and rational concept of face does not fit into Goffman’s (1967) conceptualisation because Goffman’s notion is social, not individual. As such, Goffman (1967) sees face as realised in interaction, not in the sense of “the individual and his psychology, but rather the syntactical relations among the acts of different persons mutually present to one another” (p. 2). Thus, what needs to be analysed, wrote Goffman (1967), is “[n]ot [...] men and their moments. Rather, moments and their men” (p. 3). This then endorses the view that the individual’s social psychological properties can only be recognised through and in interaction.

Watts (2003) also stated that although P. Brown and Levinson (1987) draw on Goffman’s

notion of face to build their theory, they “significantly change” (p. 85) it in that they regard face as “a stable core of values lodged somewhere in the individual” (p. 85) rather than negotiable, renegotiable and changeable as Goffman suggested. For Watts (2003), Goffman’s ‘face’ does not already reside in or on the person. Rather, it is loaned to him during the interaction in accordance with the *line*; that is, “a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself” (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). As such, a person’s face – “the positive social value” (Goffman, 1967, p. 5) – may differ from one interaction to another or even from one part of the same interaction to the next depending on the lines that have been chosen. This does not mean however that this concept of face is completely dependent on the context of real interaction. Rather, as Goffman (1967) claimed, it is socially determined:

One’s own face and the face of others are constructs of the same order; it is *the rules of the group and the definition of the situation* which determine how much feeling one is to have for face and how this feeling is to be distributed among the faces involved (p. 6, *my emphasis*).

With this view, both the strategic approach and the social – norm view of politeness can be combined: face is determined by socio-cultural rules and conventions, but it must be investigated in interaction. Bargiela-Chiappini (2003) argued that Goffman’s conceptualisation of facework as of “self-presentation in social encounters which is dynamically realised in the interactional order” (p. 1464) makes clear “the central rôle played by ‘face’ in the ritual dynamics of a rule-governed moral order” (p. 1464). As such, she (2003) suggested a return to Goffman’s concept of face.

Goffman’s interaction order presents a framework for the interpretation of social exchanges. During interaction interlocutors will apply the system of practices, conventions and procedural rules to project positive value, support the other’s face, and preserve the equilibrium of the encounter. In support of Goffman, Watts, Ide, and Ehlich (1992b) noted:

Politeness is thus a dynamic concept, always open to adaptation and change in any group, in any age, and indeed, at any moment of time. It is not a socio-anthropological given which can simply be applied to the analysis of social interaction, but actually arises out of that interaction (p. 11).

Echoing the call for a return to Goffman’s interaction order, researchers have recently tried to investigate face, facework and politeness in a relational network, the most prominent of

whom are Haugh (Haugh, 2005, 2007, 2009) and Arundale (Arundale, 1999, 2006, 2009, 2010).

4.3.4.1 Haugh's support for politeness research in interaction

Haugh (2009) claimed that face, the central issue in most politeness studies, should be seen within a network of relationships, and may be given or gained as well as sacrificed rather than simply lost or saved. Haugh (2009) proposed placing interaction in the centre of the analysis of face and politeness because, as claimed by Bargiela-Chiappini (2003), only by doing so can new insights be gained into the old debates. For Haugh (2009), face is an interactional phenomenon for several reasons. First, it presupposes evaluation of one's (individual or group) behaviour. He (2009) wrote, "[w]ithout interaction there can be neither behaviour to evaluate nor others to make those evaluations" (p. 6). Second, as documented by many researchers, face emerges through interaction as a joint accomplishment of interlocutors. For example, Lerner (1996) defined face as "the ongoing and ever-changeable level of regard that accrues to person engaged in interaction" (p. 303) and facework as "recognizable not only by reference to individual desire but by reference to common practices that demonstrates that desire" (p. 319). As such, face is constituted in interaction. Third, face is also constitutive of interaction because it constrains language use. That is, in order to maintain or enhance face, participants will choose appropriate linguistic forms or behaviours. Furthermore, face is also the subject of meta-pragmatic discourse often associated with East Asian societies. For example, advice is often directed to Western people about the importance of saving face in Asia by using appropriate language. This is primarily because face is often presupposed by the interlocutors as part of the interpretive frame brought to interactions. For example, a teacher and a student may have presupposed their own role/identity/face and thus the language use should be appropriate.

According to Haugh (2009), regarding face as both co-constituted in and constitutive of interaction can address the gap between first-order and second-order perspectives on face. First, it avoids divergence between the analyst's (second-order) and the participants' (first-order) interpretation. Second, it helps reconcile etic or cross-culturally applicable frameworks (second-order) with emic or culture-specific perspectives (first-order). Haugh (2009), thus, proposed that research on face and facework be shifted to an epistemology

grounded in social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Garfinkel, 1967), and an ontology grounded in interpretivism (Goffman, 1967, 1974; Sacks, 1992a, 1992b).

Accordingly, a number of researchers have attempted to develop alternative theoretical conceptualisations of face which accommodate cross-cultural variation. Examples include Relative Face Orientation by Lim and Bowers (1991) and Mao (1994), Face Dualism Theory by O'Driscoll (O'Driscoll, 1996, 2007a), and Face Constituting Theory by Arundale (Arundale, 1999, 2006, 2009, 2010). Among the alternative frameworks, Arundale's Face Constituting Theory is considered the most radical and thus is thoroughly reviewed below.

4.3.4.2 Arundale's Face-Constituting Theory

Arundale's (1999, 2006, 2009, 2010) co-constituting model of communication emerged as an alternative conceptualisation of politeness. As such, it takes interaction as the central and starting point for any research on politeness, face and facework. Although P. Brown and Levinson (1987) acknowledged the importance of interaction in their admission that "work on interaction as a system thus remains a fundamental research priority, and the area from which improved conceptualisations of politeness are most likely to emerge" (p. 48), they did not have the opportunity to build their politeness theory pursuant to this orientation. Arundale (1999) argued that like other theories, his Face Constituting Theory also starts from academic talk and scholarly writing/reading comprised of certain ideologies. However, he (1999) also claimed that "an ideology is not an abstract structure residing in an individual's consciousness" (p. 120), but is instead "co-constituted in the material practices of persons as they inter-act with another in particular situations at particular times" (p. 120)

Another reason Arundale (1999) developed his theory was to oppose the two traditional models of communication; namely, the 'information transmission model' and the encoding/decoding model. For him (1999), the two models failed to take specific factors of interactions such as the properties of the sender or encoder and the receiver or decoder into account. Thus, he formulated the co-constituting model based on the view that communication is "a phenomenon that emerges in dynamic inter-action as participants produce adjacent utterances and in so doing mutually constrain and reciprocally influence one another's formulating of interpretations" (Arundale, 1999, p. 126). Different from the

information transmission model and the encoding/decoding model, Arundale's (1999) model treated the "dyad, rather than the individual, as the minimum, irreducible unit of analysis" (p. 126), thus asserting "communication cannot be explained in terms of the properties of single individuals" (p. 126).

Whereas most theories of face are grounded in a broadly Gricean approach to communication, Arundale's (1999) Face Constituting Theory is grounded in a radically different conceptualisation of communication. It is radical in that face is considered as both relational and interactional. On the one hand, face is relational because it emerges through the dialectical relationship between the social and the self-role. Social selves are not considered as separate, monadic persons but as persons in relation to other social selves. In other words, "social selves exist only in relation to other social selves" (Arundale, 2006, p. 200) or individuals should be defined as "persons-in-relationship-to-other-persons" (Arundale, 2006, p. 202). With the relational state of Face Constituting Theory, power and distance can be considered as relational phenomena because they can only operate in a specific relationship. They are not abstract factors in an exogenous context, but are specific, local factors generated endogenously in context.

On the other hand, face is interactional in that it can only be interpreted when put in interaction. A relationship is, as stated by Simmel (1950, cited in Arundale, 2006, p. 201), "inseparable from the immediacy of interaction" (p. 126), and through and via interaction, relationship is created, re-established, sustained and modified over time. Arundale (1999) pointed out that an inter-action has two characteristic dialectics. First, the co-constituting model claims the Gricean individual/cognitive aspects or the social aspects in conversation analytic approach should be considered as "inseparable, mutually constitutive contradictories of a dialectic" (Arundale, 1999, p. 128). Second is that the co-constituting model emphasises producing and interpreting an utterance are "intimately related and mutually defining" (Arundale, 2006, p. 128). As such, producing an utterance requires consideration of how the listener will interpret it; and vice versa, interpreting an utterance requires taking into account the other's activities in producing it. The interpreting process is explicated by the Sequential Interpreting Principle (Arundale, 1997, cited in Arundale, 1999, p. 130) and the producing process is realised by drawing upon the Recipient Design Principle (Arundale, 1999; Heritage, 1984; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974).

The core premise in Arundale's (2006) theory is that underlying face is the dialectical opposition of connectedness and separateness. Borrowing terms from Baxter and Montgomery (1996), Arundale (2006) declared the dialectic of connectedness and separateness is important for the re-conceptualisation of face. Connectedness refers to the features of face apparent as unity, interdependence, solidarity, association, congruence and so on. These features imply the need to be acknowledged within a group, similar to the conceptualisation of positive face proposed by P. Brown and Levinson (1987). Separateness indexes meanings and actions regarded as differentiation, independence, autonomy, dissociation, divergence and so on, similar to P. Brown and Levinson's (1987) negative face. The two notions have a dialectical relationship in that one is reflexively linked with the other. "Any new interpreting of separateness is seen in view of the existing interpreting of connectedness and has implications for it, and vice versa, because each state involves and defines the other" (Arundale, 2006, p. 204).

Arundale (2006) also argued that face is both culture-general and culture-specific. It is culture-general in the sense that the two states of face (connectedness and separateness) exist in all cultures. It is culture-specific because those two features are realised by different notions in different cultures. In the US for example separateness is realised by autonomy of action, and connectedness is manifested in the form of reciprocal approval (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). In Japan, on the other hand, *Uchi* (place one belongs) is similar to connectedness and *Tachiba* (place one stands) similar to separateness; opposing but dialectically interrelated concepts (see Haugh, 2005). Arundale (2006) suggested that before analysts begin to explore face and facework in language, culture, or social group they must get to know how people in that group interpret the dialectic of connection-face and separation-face by employing careful, ethnographically grounded research. Following his suggestion, as well as Layder's (1993) and Danermark et al.'s (2002) recommendation, this research project starts with an ethnographic-based study (study 1) in order to find out how Vietnamese people perceive and interpret refusals.

Given that face is relational and interactional "it is the participants' interpretations, not the analyst's, that comprise the evidence in studying face work" (Arundale, 2006, p. 209). However, argued that the analyst's theoretical concepts may be used to frame or understand the findings. This aligns with Arundale's (2006) claim that the relational/interactional model does not eschew theoretical concepts.

4.4 Face, facework and impoliteness

In early work, impoliteness was often regarded as a marginal element in politeness theory. Its modern incarnation as an independent framework however establishes it as a new field of study (Culpeper, 2011). Although Lachenicht (1980) touched upon impoliteness and developed a preliminary framework; his paper “almost disappeared without trace” (Culpeper, 2011, p. 6). It was not until the 1990s that impoliteness was again brought to the fore by researchers such as Culpeper (1996, 2005); Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann (2003); Bousfield (2008); and Bousfield and Locher (2008). It was also foregrounded in the special issue of the *Journal of Politeness Research* (2008) edited by Bousfield and Culpeper. The following sub-sections briefly review impoliteness as an independent theory.

4.4.1 Why an impoliteness framework is necessary

Politeness theories provide language users with communicative strategies to maintain and promote social harmony in interaction. The theories however seem unable to account for the conflictive talk which is not “marginal to human linguistic behaviour in normal circumstances” (Leech, 1983, p. 105). Nonetheless, they are found to play a central role in many social contexts (Culpeper et al., 2003). According to Culpeper et al. (2003), politeness theories cannot explain the impolite strategies one deliberately uses to threaten the interlocutor’s face. Moreover, the authors asserted the argument that “Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness framework already postulates a category, i.e., bald on record, which accommodates ‘impolite’ phenomena” (p. 1547) is misleading (Culpeper et al., 2003), because this super strategy is only associated with some specific contexts. In P. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) work a bald on record FTA, (which might be considered as impolite) is used when there is an emergency, or the face want is very small, or the speaker is much more powerful than the hearer.

In reality however a range of impolite behaviours are performed in situations other than those described. Culpeper et al. (2003) and Bousfield (2008) argued that a politeness framework can only explicate the incidental and accidental face threat and cannot explain the intended one. The three types of face threat discussed in Goffman (1967) are as follows. First, incidental offences refer to actions “the offender performs in spite of its offensive consequences, though not out of spite” (Goffman, 1967, p. 14). This type of

offence is associated with the three contexts identified by P. Brown and Levinson's (1987) above in which bald on record may be used. Second, accidental offences are unintended and unwitting face threats performed innocently and mistakenly (i.e., by accident) because the speaker does not know the action is a face threat. Thus, Goffman (1967) referred to these threats as "*faux pas, gaffes, boners or bricks*" (p. 14). Finally, Goffman (1967) asserted intended offences are "acted maliciously and spitefully with the intention of causing open insult" (p. 14). In reality, there are many contexts in which the speaker deliberately threatens the hearer's face and this type of face threat needs to be explained by an impoliteness framework rather than a politeness framework (Culpeper, 1996, 2005; Culpeper et al., 2003).

4.4.2 Definition of impoliteness

There have been several attempts to define impoliteness, but it seems "there is no solid agreement [...] as to what 'impoliteness' actually is" (Locher & Bousfield, 2008, p. 3). Culpeper (2011) provided a list of 13 definitions of impoliteness by different scientists in the field. For example, Culpeper et al. (2003) defined impoliteness as "communicative strategies designed to attack face, and thereby cause social conflict and disharmony" (p. 1546). This definition was made to show a contrast with Leech's (1983) notion of politeness when he defined the role of politeness as "to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place" (p. 82). Later, however, Culpeper (2005) acknowledged the early definition of impoliteness was problematic for two reasons: "it is not clear what this social conflict and disharmony consists of, and it is not a necessary condition of impoliteness" (p. 38); and it "fails to take adequately into account what the hearer is doing" (p. 38). This argument is significant because in interaction the hearer plays a crucial role in the co-construction of the perception of impoliteness.

Accordingly, Culpeper (2005) proposed a revised definition which emphasised impoliteness as being constructed in interaction: "Impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2)" (p. 38).

Culpeper (2005) also claimed there are four types of offence that should not be considered impoliteness. First, his definition excludes what Goffman (1967, p. 14) called incidental offences (see 4.3.1 above). This kind of face threat is in the domain of politeness theory. Second, impoliteness is not unintentional; that is, it excludes the innocent, unintended and unwitting offences as discussed in Goffman (1967, p.14). Third, impoliteness is not *banter* (or *mock impoliteness*) because this type of impoliteness is not genuine (i.e., it is not intended to cause offence (Culpeper, 1996). Finally, impoliteness is not bald on record politeness. As P. Brown and Levinson (1987) argued, a bald on record action is usually performed in specific contexts such as in emergency situations, when the face threat is small, or when the speaker has great power over the hearer. However, Culpeper (2005) argued impoliteness does not fit the definition of bald on record politeness because a bald on record impolite action does not occur in those contexts.

Culpeper (2011) was not fully satisfied with his 2005 definition because he recognised it “tacks the notion of impoliteness on the notion of ‘face-attack’” which “simply transfer the explanatory load on to another notion that is itself controversial [...] and may not cover all cases of impoliteness” (p. 23). Accordingly, Culpeper (2011) proposed the following definition which covered all cases of impoliteness:

Impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organization, including, in particular, how one person’s or a group’s identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively – considered ‘impolite’ – when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive and impolite behaviour is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behaviour to be strongly intentional or not (p. 23)

Culpeper (2011) intended with this definition to cover all synonyms of impoliteness some of which are bad manners, boldness, and boorishness.

4.4.3 Impoliteness strategies.

Both based on and in contrast to the politeness super-strategies proposed by P. Brown and Levinson (1987), Culpeper (1996, 2005) and Culpeper et al. (2003) proposed the following five impoliteness super-strategies:

1. Bald on record impoliteness: typically deployed when there is much face at stake; it is deliberately used to attack face.

2. Positive impoliteness: typically deployed to damage the addressee's positive face wants and includes *ignore, snub the other; exclude the other from the activity; disassociate from the other; be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic; use inappropriate identity markers; use obscure or secretive language; seek disagreement; make the other feel uncomfortable; use taboo words, and call the other names* etc.

3. Negative impoliteness: typically deployed to damage the addressee's negative face wants and includes *frighten; condescend, scorn, or ridicule; invade the other's space; explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect; put the other's indebtedness on record; and hinder or block the other physically or linguistically* etc.

4. Off-record impoliteness: introduced by Culpeper (2005) as a replacement to sarcasm. This superstrategy refers to FTA that "is performed by means of an implicature but in such a way that one attributable intention clearly outweighs any others" Culpeper (2005, p. 44). It is the type of impoliteness "where the offence is conveyed indirectly by way of an implicature and could be cancelled" (Bousfield, 2008, p. 93).

5. Withhold politeness: Refers to "the absence of politeness work where it would be expected. For example, failing to thank somebody for a present may be taken as deliberate impoliteness" (Culpeper, 2005, p. 42). P. Brown and Levinson (1987) also touched upon this type of impoliteness when they wrote, "... politeness has to be communicated, and the absence of communicated politeness may, *ceteris paribus*, be taken as the absence of polite attitude" (p. 5)

Bousfield (2008) later suggested that the distinction between positive and negative impoliteness is "superfluous" (p. 94). Accordingly, he restructured the five super-strategies into two overarching tactics:

1. On record impoliteness: the use of strategies designed to *explicitly*: (a) attack the face of an interactant; (b) construct the face of an interactant in a non-harmonious or outright conflictive way; (c) deny the expected face wants, needs, or rights of the interactant, or

some combination thereof. The attack is made in an unambiguous way given the context in which it occurs (Bousfield, 2008, p. 95).

2. Off record impoliteness: is the same as ‘off-record impoliteness’ classified by Culpeper (1996, 2005); that is, it refers to the use of strategies where the threat or damage to an interactant’s face is conveyed indirectly by way of an implicature. As such, it also includes *sarcasm*. In addition, Bousfield (2008) states that the *Withholding of Politeness* where it is expected also comes under this heading (p. 95).

4.4.4 Types of responses to impoliteness:

Culpeper et al. (2003) provided options for potential use by a recipient of an impoliteness act as shown in Figure 4.2 below.

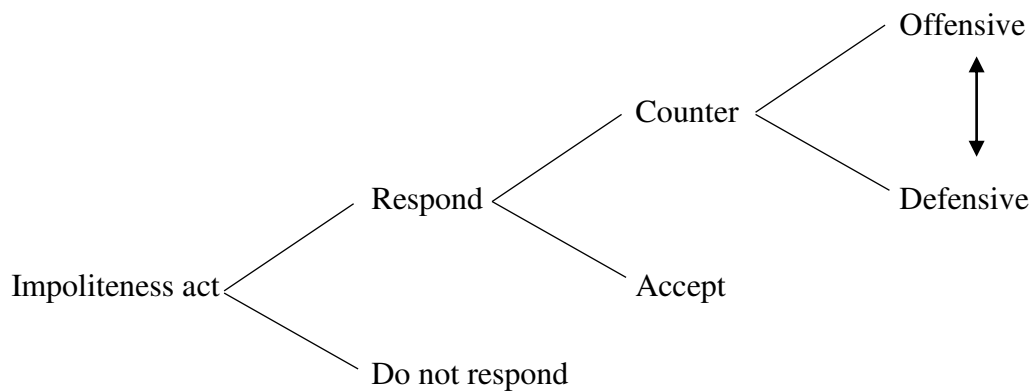


Figure 4.2: Summary of response options (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1563)

First, upon being threatened, a recipient of impoliteness may either *respond* or *not respond* to the face threat. The authors noted that *not respond* is often realised by keeping silent, but they do not develop this option further (e.g., the non-verbal behaviour or actions) because it did not occur in their data. On the other hand, if the recipients respond they may either *accept* the face attack or *counter* it. The acceptance may be in the form of an apology. The option of countering the face attack may consist of a number of strategies which can be grouped into *offensive* and *defensive* categories. Offensive strategies refer to the response to face attack via face attack; whereas defensive strategies refer to countering face attacks by defending one’s own face.

Culpeper (2003) argues that *offensive* and *defensive* strategies are not mutually exclusive. In other words, the secondary goal of offensive strategies is to defend one's face, and the secondary goal of defensive strategies may be to offend the other participant.

4.5 Summary and conclusion

Chapter 4 presented the major theoretical issues in the field of pragmatics comprising the bases for this research project. It expressed support for the following four points which guide this research study:

First, Austin's call for the elucidation of "the total speech act in the total speech situation" (1975, p. 148) represents the main focus of this study. As such, it draws on the social practice perspective (see chapter 5) to explore Vietnamese refusing in talk-in-interaction.

Second, this study focuses on the interactional approach to (im)politeness. Following Goffman's (1967) conceptualisation of face, Haugh's (2009) argument that face is both co-constituted in and constitutive of interaction, and Arundale's (1999, 2006, 2009, 2010) Face Constituting Theory, this study investigates face, facework and (im)politeness by reconciling participants' (or first-order) perspective with the analyst's (second-order) perspective. Thus, this research is grounded in social constructionism and interpretivism.

Third, this study attempts to realise Arundale's (2006) suggestion that prior to exploring face and facework in a culture the analyst must get to know how people in that culture perceive and interpret those phenomena by employing careful, ethnographically-grounded research. This point of view aligns with Layder's (1993) and Danermark et al.'s (2002) suggestions to start with an ethnographic study (see chapter 5); and study 1 in this research project, conducted as a starting point, is the manifestation of their orientation.

Finally, the ethnographic stance in this study aligns with Haugh's (2009) and Arundale's (2006) position on the analyst's role and follows Rampton et al.'s suggestion to "*get analytic distance* on what's close-at-hand" (2004, p. 12).

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used for data collection and analysis. It begins with a review of the development of mixed methods research (MMR) as a new research paradigm, and a discussion of its relevance to the current research project (section 5.2). In particular, the philosophical bases underpinning the emergence of MMR are briefly presented (section 5.2.1), followed by a description of the different types of MMR (sections 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4). This chapter then introduces the recently-developed multiperspectival (MP) approach (section 5.3) and presents both similarities and differences between a MP approach and mixed methodology. An argument is then developed as to why this study design should be classified as both MMR and MP (section 5.4). Following this, further details are presented of the processes undertaken to conduct the three studies in terms of designing statements, collecting data, and planning the analyses (section 5.5). This chapter concludes with a brief outline of how the findings are organised (section 5.6).

5.2 Mixed methodology as a new research paradigm

Although qualitative and quantitative research paradigms have been recognised in the literature for many decades, only recently has MMR emerged as a research design in a number of disciplines including Applied Linguistics. The appearance of the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* in 2007 attests to this trend. As Tashakkori and Cresswell (2007, p. 3) remarked, the first issue of the journal started “a new era in the conceptualization and utilization of integrated approaches across the social and behavioural sciences” (p. 3). One may pose the question as to why it is useful to conduct MMR studies given the qualitative and quantitative paradigms have often been regarded as incompatible.

However, as stated by King (2008, p.xiii) in reference to Melzi and Capse’s (2008) perspective on the combination of the two methodologies, there are philosophical

underpinnings for “the need to draw on, and in some cases, integrate both quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to gain a more complete understanding” (p.xiii). In the following sub-sections a review of three philosophical bases for the emergence of mixed methodology as a research paradigm is provided and different types of MMR studies are presented.

5.2.1 The philosophical underpinnings of mixed MMR

Mixed methods research is founded upon three philosophical paradigms: critical realism, the transformative-emancipatory perspective, and pragmatism (Riazi & Candlin, 2014). Each of these three paradigms has its own worldview which is discussed below.

5.2.1.1 Critical realism

The first philosophical foundation for MMR is critical realism which emerged from a critique of the positivist approach. The core ideology of critical realism is a switch from epistemology to ontology as demonstrated when Danermark et al. (2002) argued that the fundamental question in the philosophy of Science is the ontological question rather than the epistemological question. In turn, the starting point of critical realism is the ontological question “what properties do societies possess that might make them possible objects of knowledge for us?” (Bhaskar, 1998, p. 206) rather than the epistemological question how is knowledge possible? Accordingly, Danermark et al. (2002) claimed that practical research in Social Science should go from ontology to methodology because “[i]t is primarily the nature of the object under study which determines what research methods one may use” (p. 11). This viewpoint (i.e., the focus on ontology to determine methodology) aligns with the MP approach (Candlin, 1997, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011a, 2011b, 2013b; Crichton, 2010) which is discussed in section 5.3.

Danermark et al. (2002) further argued that within ontology critical realism advocates a switch from events to mechanisms. To switch from events to mechanisms means to switch the researcher’s attention to what produces the events rather than the events themselves. As such, this perspective regards reality as a process rather than a product and hence the starting point of critical realism is “that the world is structured, differentiated, stratified and changing” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 5). On the basis of this view, Danermark et al. (2002) claimed the dichotomy between the qualitative and quantitative approaches is

fruitless and misleading for several reasons. First, polarisation “leads to its obscuring fundamental metatheoretical problems” (p. 151) including those that concern the stratification of reality or the relationship between structure and agency. Second, the ‘war’ between qualitative and quantitative paradigms does not reflect the practical research process, which often contains elements from both approaches. Accordingly, Danermark et al. (2002) proposed that “a particular method cannot be excluded beforehand” and that “it is profitable to combine methods in practical research work” (p. 151)

In proposing the MMR approach, which they termed ‘critical methodological pluralism’, Danermark et al. (2002) reiterated the importance of the link between ontology and methodology. They argued that MMR “must be governed not only by the research question but, and more fundamentally, also by the ontological perspective from which you [i.e., the researchers] proceed.” (p. 153). This emphasis aims to oppose the pragmatic view of MMR that conceptualisations of the nature of reality can be separate from methods.

5.2.1.2 Transformative-emancipatory perspective

The transformative-emancipatory perspective was developed by Mertens (Mertens, 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007) into one philosophical framework for MMR. Mertens (2003) argued there are three conceptual models of people’s worldview: (post)positivist; interpretive-constructivist; and transformative-emancipatory paradigm. According to the author, the transformative perspective does not consider knowledge to be neutral. Rather, it is influenced by human interest, reflects power and social relationships, and helps people to improve society (Mertens, 1999).

As such, the transformative-emancipatory ontological assumption holds that there are diverse viewpoints of social realities. This ontological stance is similar to that of the constructivist paradigm in that both acknowledge multiple realities. Based on this ontological assumption, scientists in support of this paradigm propose their own epistemological view. The epistemological assumption of the transformative-emancipatory paradigm is that there must be an important and interactive link between the researcher and the participants. Moreover, the emphasis must be on the social and historical factors in the relationship, and on the impact of those factors on the construction of knowledge. This point of view aligns with Candlin and Crichton’s (2011b) view of the connection between the analyst and the participants in their MP approach (section 5.3). However, unlike

Candlin and Crichton (2011b), Mertens (1999) did not make clear the researcher's *motivational relevancies* (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001) in that relationship.

5.2.1.3 Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a philosophical movement that began in the US in late 19th century. Pragmatism aims to bridge the divide between positivist and constructivist paradigms by focusing on practical problems and including multiple perspectives. Researchers such as Creswell (1995), Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), R. B. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), and (Morgan, 2007) considered pragmatism as the philosophical foundation for MMR. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) provided a comprehensive historical overview of the philosophical debates associated with MMR and the key positions of 'paradigm war'. The authors concluded that pragmatism is the best foundation for MMR and argued it "offers a third choice that embraces superordinate ideas gleaned through consideration of perspective from both sides of the paradigms debate [i.e., between qualitative and quantitative] in interaction with research question and real-world circumstances" (Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 73).

Morgan (2007) further described the development of pragmatism by comparing pragmatism with the qualitative and quantitative approaches in terms of three elements: (1) the connection of theory and data; (2) the relationship to research process; and (3) the inference from data. In terms of the connection of theory and data, pragmatism relies on abductive reasoning. Abduction refers to the kind of connection that moves back and forth between induction and deduction; first converting observation into theories and then assessing those theories through action. One use of abduction is "to further the process of inquiry that evaluates the results of prior inductions through their ability to predict the workability of future lines of behaviour" (Morgan, 2007, p. 71). Therefore, the abductive process may develop as a sequential fashion of MMR where the inductive goals from a qualitative approach may serve as inputs to the deductive goals of a quantitative approach. However, one may pose the question of how this reasoning addresses the fact that many MMR studies conduct the qualitative and quantitative strands independently and concurrently.

In terms of the relationship between the researcher and the research process, Morgan (2007) claimed pragmatism is not like qualitative subjectivity or quantitative objectivity as

it emphasises intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity refers to “mutual understanding with not only the people who participate in our research but also the colleagues who read and review the products of our research” (Morgan, 2007, p. 72). Morgan (2007) also argued intersubjectivity implies both the belief in a single ‘real world’ and that individuals have their own interpretation of that world are no longer problematic. This pragmatic view aligns with critical realism because both perspectives acknowledge an external world independent of human consciousness and an internal world dependent on people’s perceptions.

Finally, in terms of the issue of inference from data, pragmatism once again rejects the polarisation between the two extremes of context-specificity in qualitative results and generality in quantitative outcomes. Pragmatism emphasises the transferability of research results; that is, whether the findings are transferable to other settings. Morgan (2007) rightly posited that research results cannot be either so unique that they have no implications in other settings or so generalised that they may be applied to any setting. Therefore, generality of research results is a matter of degree and the researcher needs to investigate the factors that determine whether the results are transferrable.

In summary, the three philosophical foundations for MMR; namely critical realism, the transformative-emancipatory perspective, and pragmatism set out the basic underpinnings for the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Nevertheless, the approaches have yet to clarify the ontological issues that determine the methodologies used in a specific research project. In particular, scientists advocating these philosophical perspectives have not been fully able to expatiate the requirement of ecological validity (Cicourel, 1992, 2007) of social science research, the relationship between the macro theoretical issues and the micro phenomena (Cicourel, 1981; Layder, 1993), the researcher’s motivational relevancies (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001), the ‘practical relevance’ (Roberts & Sarangi, 1999) of the study, and the relationship between the analyst and the researched (Rampton et al., 2004; Sarangi & Candlin, 2001). These relevant issues are further discussed in section 5.3 on the MP approach.

5.2.2 Types of mixed methods research in terms of purposes

There are five types of studies designed to meet the purposes of MMR: TRIANGULATION, COMPLEMENTARY, DEVELOPMENT, INITIATION, and EXPANSION (see Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

First, TRIANGULATION is used in MMR to enhance the research validity by confirming the emerging findings (Denzin, 1978, 1989; Merriam, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1984). It was originally applied as a theoretical base in MMR to counteract biases through the use of multiple forms of qualitative methods (Denzin, 1970). However, Triangulation now often refers to the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods and diverse sources of data. It aims to identify “convergence and corroboration between the results obtained from different methods, [and] thereby eliminates bias inherent in the use of single method” (Riazi & Candlin, 2014, p. 144).

Second, COMPLEMENTARY MMR is research that employs different methods to examine the similar and different aspects of a phenomenon (Greene et al., 1989). The authors stated that conducting research is like “peeling the layers of an onion” (Greene et al., 1989, p. 258), that is, the researcher needs to draw on both qualitative and quantitative methods to interpret different aspects of the research topic. Therefore, the qualitative and quantitative components are used to address different research questions relating to different aspects or layers of the phenomenon under study. This is different from triangulation because triangulation aims to assess the same aspect of the phenomenon in question. To some extent, my research project represents a MP approach with a complementary purpose²² because it seeks to investigate both the similar and different aspects of Vietnamese refusing.

Third, studies with a DEVELOPMENT purpose seek to further develop the findings of one method by using another method. For example, the results from interviews with a group of participants are used to develop a questionnaire to collect data from a broader and larger sample of that group. This research project partly reflects this characteristic because the

²² I also agree with Riazi & Candlin (2014) who argue that a multiperspectival study has the purpose of INITIATION. That is, my research project has features of some of those purposes.

results of the ethnographic-based interviews were used to develop the questionnaire for the quantitative study. However, it only partly reflects this type of MMR because the participants for the quantitative study did not come from the same population as the participants in the interview study. This difference can be explained by the MP approach, which is discussed in section 5.3.

Fourth, INITIATION research seeks to uncover both consistencies and discrepancies in the findings of the qualitative and quantitative components (Greene et al., 1989). “Any observed contradiction encourages the researcher to initiate further data collection and analysis from the other method so as to gain new perspectives on the nature and origin of such contradictory results” (Riazi & Candlin, 2014, pp. 144-145). Initiation research therefore advocates an iterative process of both methods because the non-convergences found in the findings can, as Rossman and Wilson (1985; cited in Greene et al., 1989) stated, “initiate interpretations and conclusions, suggest areas for further analysis or recast the entire research question” (p. 268). Riazi and Candlin (2014) argued the initiation purpose in MMR could be likened to the MP approach recommended by Candlin and Crichton and Crichton (2010) which requires the researcher to investigate different dimensions of the research topic using a range of methods and perspectives.

The final type of MMR study, EXPANSION, seeks to extend breadth and depth of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components (Greene et al. 1989, p. 259). Furthermore, Greene et al. (1989) claimed Expansion is the most flexible of the five types of MMR and that this accounts for its frequency of use. The two phases may be conducted sequentially or concurrently, but the different elements must be kept separate to allow “each element to be true to its own paradigmatic and design requirements” (Bazeley, 2004, p. 3, quoted in Riazi & Candlin, 2014, p. 145).

5.2.3 Types of MMR in terms of designing techniques

Mixed methods research may also be classified in terms of time order in data collection and paradigmatic emphasis and dominance. In terms of time order, (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003) divided MMR designs into two types: sequential or concurrent. In sequentially designed MMR studies, either qualitative or quantitative data is collected first and the results inform the collection of the other type of data. In other words, the collection of one type of data is dependent on the analysis of the other type of data. On

the other hand, concurrent MMR involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data concurrently and independently. This MMR research project belongs to the sequential type because the design of the questionnaire for the quantitative psychological study was based on the results of the qualitative ethnographic interviews.

Mixed methods research may also be classified in terms of paradigmatic emphasis and dominance. In either the sequential or concurrent approach, the emphasis may be placed on one of the two strands, or both equally. The method given emphasis is often labelled with the upper case letters of its abbreviation, hence ‘QUAL’ or ‘QUAN’. In contrast, the lower case letters, ‘qual’ or ‘quan’, represent the strand given the secondary role. The plus sign (+) indicates concurrent collection of qualitative and quantitative data and the arrow (→) designates that one form of data collection follows the other.

Based on these two criteria, Morse (1991) divided MMR into four types as illustrated in Table 5.1. The author pointed out that one method needs to provide the theoretical drive for the study (i.e., either the qualitative or quantitative method must be given priority), and thus the methods cannot be equal in their level of importance (Morse (1991).

Table 5. 1: Types of designs using Morse’s (1991) notation system

| Approach | Type |
|-------------|--------------|
| QUAL + quan | Simultaneous |
| QUAL → quan | Sequential |
| QUAN + qual | Simultaneous |
| QUAN → qual | Sequential |

Other MMR scientists however (Creswell et al., 2003; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007) have argued that it is possible to have both strands equally designed. Accordingly, Cresswell et al. (2003) mentioned that when a researcher wants to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate the findings he/she may use a concurrent triangulation design in which the priority is ideally given to both methods (hence QUAN + QUAL). The authors further their argument that even in a sequential design where priority is usually given to either the

qualitative or quantitative strand it is possible to balance importance of the two methods if sufficient resources are available (hence QUAN → QUAL or QUAL → QUAN) (Cresswell et al., 2003). Also, a review of MMR studies in the field of language teaching and learning (see Riazi & Candlin, 2014) shows that the method drawn on first in sequential designs is not necessarily the one that takes primary role, as maintained by Morse (1991). As such, there are MMR studies where the main paradigm is conducted in the second phase (hence quan → QUAL or qual → QUAN).

When matching the two time order types (i.e., concurrent and sequential) with the five purposes of MMR (i.e., triangulation, complementary, development, initiation and expansion) different possibilities emerge. According to Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007), while some MMR purposes may be achieved by both concurrent and sequential designs, others may only be obtained by either time orientation type. The authors argued for example that if the purpose of the MMR is triangulation, which aims to compare the results of the qualitative and quantitative approaches, only a concurrent design is appropriate. A sequential design is not appropriate because the findings from the first approach might influence those from the second and thereby bias any comparisons (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). On the other hand, if the MMR purpose is development, a sequential design is appropriate because development, by nature, involves using the methods sequentially so that the findings from the first phase can inform the application of the second phase. Table 5.2 below summarises the matches:

Table 5. 2: Matrix crossing purpose of MMR by time orientation

| Purpose of MMR | Concurrent design appropriate? | Sequential design appropriate? |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Triangulation | Yes | No |
| Complementary | Yes | Yes |
| Development | No | Yes |
| Initiation | Yes | Yes |
| Expansion | No | Yes |

5.2.4 Types of MMR in terms of the relationship of the samples.

In terms of the relationship between qualitative and quantitative samples, Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007, p. 292) contended there are four types: *identical*, *parallel*, *nested*, and *multilevel*. Identical relationships imply the participants of the two methods are exactly the same. Parallel relationships specify that the samples for the qualitative and quantitative components of the research are different, but come from the same population of interest. Nested relationships specify that the participants selected for one phase of study represent a smaller group of those participants chosen for the other phase. Finally, multilevel relationships refer to the use of two or more sets of samples from different populations for the different phases of study.

5.3 Multiperspectival approach

The MP approach differs to MMR and its requirement to combine qualitative and quantitative strands (Candlin, 1997, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011, 2013; Crichton, 2010) by focusing on the need to explore the theme in question from different perspectives. The sub-sections below explain the theoretical basis for the MP approach and provide a detailed description of each perspective.

5.3.1 Theoretical underpinnings of the multiperspectival approach

5.3.1.1 The call for ‘ecological validity’

Proponents of the MP approach (e.g. Candlin, 1997, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011a, 2011b, 2013b; Crichton, 2010) have posited that it arose in response to Cicourel’s (1992, 2007) call for ‘ecological validity’ in the Social Sciences (Cicourel, 2007). Ecological validity is the requirement for researchers to convince readers of the viability and authenticity of their claims. In turn, the key is “the extent to which data are congruent with systematic time samples of events and activities within local institutional or organizational settings” (Cicourel, 2007, p. 735). This issue brings to the fore the need to explore ethnographically the phenomenon in question that takes place in specific local

environments. As such, this need advocates the deeper investigation into the participants', or emic, perspectives.

5.3.1.2 The interrelation between macro and micro analyses

The rationale for using the MP approach is also based the need to integrate the macro and micro levels of analysis (Cicourel, 1981; Giddens, 1993; Layder, 1993, 1997, 2005). Cicourel (1981), for example, posited that macro social facts emerge from the micro routine practices of everyday life; that is, the macro structures are typical products of the micro organisational and interactive procedures which transform micro phenomena to macro theories. For instance, the micro study of, say, Vietnamese refusing, may help construct such macro issues as *politeness norms*, *hierarchical relationships*, or *collectivism* etc. Conversely, such macro social concepts are manifested in everyday interactions which often reveal the ways social members refuse. Thus, Cicourel (1981) pointed out that “micro- and macro-levels of analysis are integrated in everyday settings as a routine feature of all cultural or social organisation” (p. 65). The challenge for a researcher is how to maintain what he calls “the tacit interrelationship of micro- and macro-research” (Cicourel, 1981, p. 56). According to Cicourel (1981), “the challenge is to sustain one level while demonstrating that the other is an integral part of the discussion of the findings and the theoretical propositions advanced” (p. 56). This point of view implies a MP approach to social science research which “does not assume in advance particular relationships between analytical perspectives, but which may be guided by and linked to social theory in accordance with the analyst’s prior knowledge and emergent understanding of the social setting under scrutiny” (Crichton, 2010, p. 25).

The need to integrate the micro and macro perspectives is echoed by Layder (1993) in his recommendation that the Social Science researchers adopt a multi-strategy approach which “principally involves making as many analytical ‘cuts’ into the data at one’s disposal as possible” (p. 107) to produce robust and firmly grounded theory. By disposal Layder (1993) means the funding, time, equipment and assistance available to the researcher. However, Layder (1993) reminded us that this approach should not be understood as a call for an “anything goes” or anarchic, eclectic approach. Rather, it is to provide the researcher with theoretical elements that encourage a “disciplined attitude towards research strategy” (p. 108), or a “disciplined flexibility” (p. 109). As such, the multi-strategy approach

involves a disciplined ontology which informs flexible methodologies in the research. Figure 5.1 below shows different levels and dimensions of social reality which form the basic elements of Social Science research.

| | | Research element | Research focus |
|---------|--|-------------------|---|
| HISTORY | | CONTEXT | <i>Macro social organization</i> Values, traditions, forms of social and economic organization and power relations. For example, legally sanctioned forms of ownership, control and distribution; interlocking directorships, state intervention. As they are implicated in the sector below. |
| | | SETTING | <i>Intermediate social organization</i> Work: Industrial, military and state bureaucracies; labour markets; hospitals; social work agencies, domestic labour; penal and mental institutions. Non-work: Social organization of leisure activities, sports and social clubs; religious and spiritual organizations. |
| | | SITUATED ACTIVITY | <i>Social activity</i> Face-to-face activity involving symbolic communication by skilled, intentional participants implicated in the above contexts and settings. Focus on emergent meanings, understandings and definitions of the situations as these affect and are affected by contexts and settings (above) and subjective dispositions of individual (below). |
| | | SELF | <i>Self-identity and individual's social experience</i> As these are influenced by the above sectors and as they interact with the unique psycho-biography of the individual. Focus on life-career. |

Figure 5.1: Research map (source: Layder, 1993, p. 72)

With this research map, Layder (1993) called for “organic links” (p. 8) between macro and micro levels of analysis which are understood as follows: “The micro processes of everyday life as reflected in the situations and identities of the persons involved can only be understood properly when seen in conjunction with more macro features” (p. 10). The important point made by Layder (1993) is that the research map “expresses the importance of strategies of research which explicitly attend to the links between macro and micro

aspects of social life, without undervaluing or overstressing either of them” (p. 108). This point aligns with Cicourel’s (1981) discussion of the challenge for the Social Science researchers to take different analytical perspectives into account.

Layder (1993) further argued that in order to avoid “anything goes” eclecticism, “the multi-strategy approach does not ‘impose’ a theory on the data being researched” (p. 108). He suggested that “while allowing theory to *emerge* from the data itself, it does so in the context of the more general theoretical assumptions about the nature of the links between macro and micro aspects” (pp. 108-109, *original emphasis*).

In dealing with the potential to combine qualitative and quantitative methods, Layder (1993) also asserted that qualitative and quantitative data are complementary. He pointed out that the use of qualitative data is an essential requirement of field research and that many theoretical schools have suggested qualitative analysis and data are better able to capture the ‘emergent’ nature of meaning in fieldwork process (Layder, 1993, p. 110). However, Layder (1993) argued the qualitative data should be complemented with quantitative data wherever possible and regards the use of quantitative data as integral in the generation of theory. Indeed, Layder (1993) asserted that “the principal interest of this book [i.e., Layder, 1993] is with theory-generating fieldwork” (p. 110) and thus what he wants to identify is the contribution of quantitative analysis and data to the research.

However, how quantitative analysis is embedded into the research is an important question. Layder (1993.) pointed out that there have been a good number of studies using both qualitative and quantitative strands, but the two paradigms are merely mixed in the form of what he called “fixed-choice questionnaires” (p. 110). As such, the results lack links between the macro and micro phenomena. In addition, Layder (1993) asserted that the relation between the macro and micro is such that “features conventionally thought of as macro are also integrally involved with a rounded understanding of any episode of social activity” (p. 113). This is because “social activity itself is inextricably bound up with the settings and contexts in which it takes place” (Layder, 1993, p. 113). The lack of association between the macro and micro in MMR scholarship may be regarded as a significant difference between the MMR and MP approaches. For this reason I have argued that MP scholars provide researchers with a broader and deeper account of the rationale for MP approach compared to what MMR scientists do for MMR.

In order to make full use of the quantitative strand, Layder (1993.) posited that the role of quantitative analysis should be potentially complementary rather than merely supplementary in the emergence of theoretical ideas. The quantitative component acts as “satellites around the central axis of qualitative fieldwork” (p. 112). As such, the “quantitative data should be drawn upon as a resource *where necessary* to complement findings from qualitative research” (Layder, 1993, p. 112, *my emphasis*).

5.3.2.3 The intertextuality and interdiscursivity of discursive practices

Two theoretical reference points for the MP approach were presented above; namely, the call for ecological validity (Cicourel, 1992, 2007) and the need to bring macro and micro analyses closer together. The third point to discuss is the inherent link between texts and discourses which also requires discourse analysts to collect data for discursive practice research from different semiotic resources. The link is referred to as intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992; Kristeva, 1986) and interdiscursivity (Candlin & Maley, 1997; Foucault, 1984). Drawing on the work of Foucault (1984), Candlin and Maley (1997) suggested, “functional correlations across discourses suggest the value of incorporating linguistic elements of various kinds from one text type to another or from one socially situated discourse type to another” (p. 203). In exploring the discourse on the commercialisation of education for example Crichton (2010) incorporated different types of data including promotional brochures of the college, diaries kept by teachers, and the institution’s newsletter, regulatory documents and training materials.

5.3.2 The model of multiperspectival approach

Taking those theoretical underpinnings as the starting point, Candlin and Crichton (2011a, 2013b), and Crichton (2010) designed their MP model as shown in Figure 5.2 below:

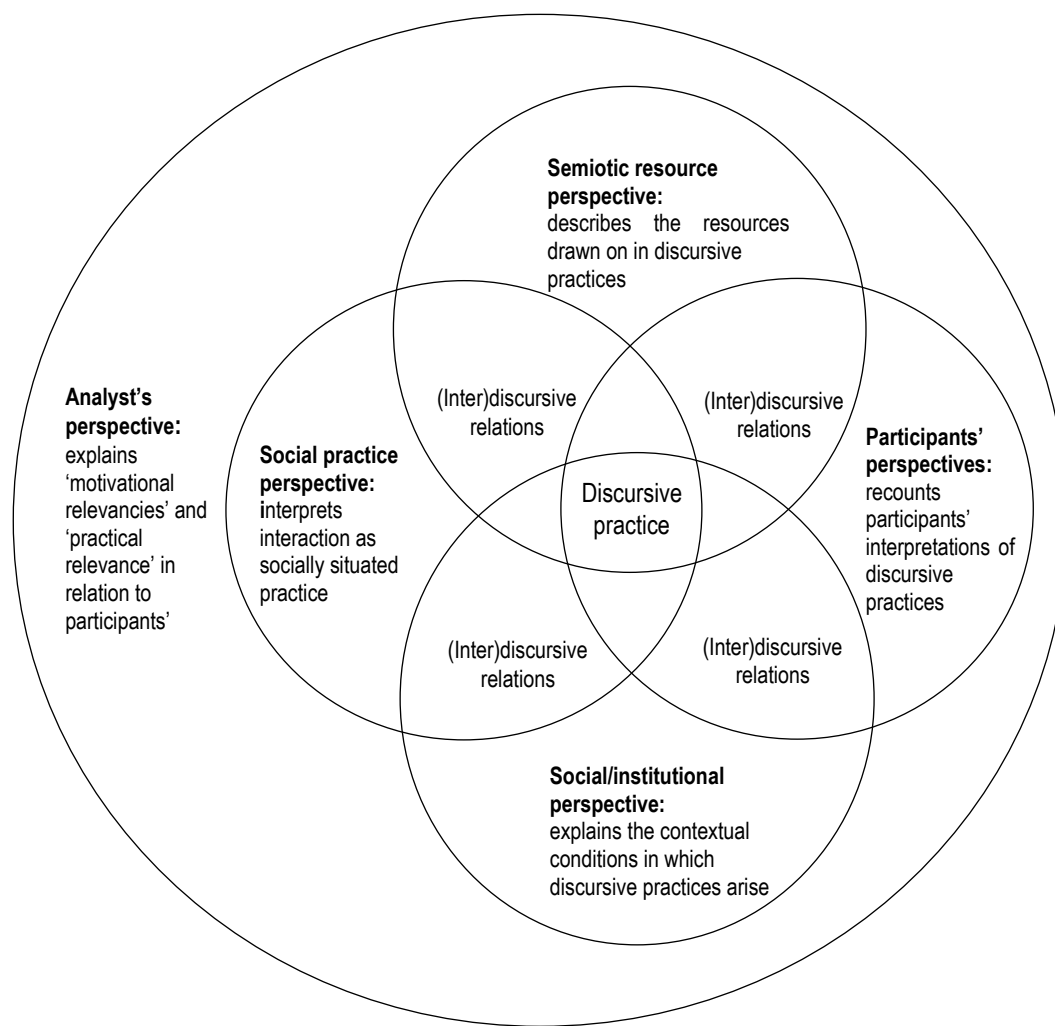


Figure 5.2: A multiperspectival research model (Crichton, 2010, p. 34)

As can be seen on the right of the Venn diagram, there are four overlapping circles representing four distinctive but mutually implicating analytical domains: participants' perspective; semiotic resource perspective; social practice perspective; and social/institutional perspective. To the left of the diagram is the analyst's perspective. The different perspectives foreground different descriptive, interpretive and explanatory modes of analysis that may be brought to bear in the investigation. Apart from the fact that MP scholars explicate the underlying bases for the emergence of MP as starting from ontological assumptions and moving to methodological choices, the diagram illustrates another radical advancement in the MP approach compared to the MMR approach. In

MMR the combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies may not necessarily be MP. In contrast, MP proponents emphasise the use of different perspectives in social research irrespective of whether or not they are using qualitative or quantitative methods, or a combination of the two strands. These perspectives, as foreshadowed by Candlin (1997), represent different ways of understanding and investigating the discursive practice under study, for example Vietnamese refusing.

First, the participants' perspective portrays their perceptions of what is going on in relation to the interpretations of the discursive practices under scrutiny. This perspective takes into account the subjective experience of the participants so as to develop a shared understanding of the world of the people being studied.

Second, the semiotic resource perspective focuses on recounting the resources drawn upon by the participants to create meaning in interaction. The resources may be any type of mediational means (in mediated discourse, Scollon, 2001), or modes of communication (in multimodality, Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Norris, 2004, 2009; Scollon & Scollon, 2009), both linguistic and non-linguistic such as written texts, pictures, images, gestures, and postures.

Third, the social practice perspective focuses on how people contribute to research practice through their participation in interaction (Crichton, 2010). This focus is exemplified in interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959, 1967, 1981) where the way in which the participant presents himself in interaction is evidenced. Goffman (1959) coined the theatrical metaphor, the 'dramaturgic' role of human beings, to explain the way each person presents himself to another or others based on cultural values and norms. Each individual's identity is understood as constantly remade in the process of interaction rather than as stable and independent.

A person's interaction is also manifested in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), a research tradition that views interaction as less predictable than Goffman's interactionism. Ethnomethodology posits that the meaning of social action is contingent on the interaction in which the participants are regarded as continuous creators and arbiters. Within those roles, the participants' actions are not determined by rules, but by the 'methods' they employ as they interact with others. Therefore, in order to analyse and interpret each participant's role or identity at a specific point of time (both in Goffman's terms and

according to Garfinkel's view), it is necessary to give an account of how they categorise themselves and, accordingly, how they participate in each moment of interaction (see chapter 6 for Membership Categorisation and Participation Framework).

Fourth, the social/institutional perspective explains the "already established character" (Layder, 1993, p. 90) of social practices within institutional and broader social conditions. Layder (1993) stated that researchers must not only deduce participants' experiences and involvement in the practices, they must also draw on social-theoretical resources to explain how institutions and societies have "an ongoing life that is identifiable apart from specific instances of situated activity" (p. 90). As such, the social/institutional perspective addresses the issue of how social change may take place in the contemporary world.

It should be noted that any single theme under study, for example Vietnamese refusing, may be approached from one perspective only, or from a combination of two, three, or all the four perspectives, and that the perspectives are inter-discursively related. It should also be noted that, as Layder (1993) and Cicourel (1981) claimed (see section 5.2), there is no primacy among the perspectives; that is, no perspective is a priori subordinate to any other. The Venn diagram also emphasises that data analysis from any perspective may be open to further data collection and analysis from other perspectives. This stance aligns with the MMR type of INITIATION discussed in section 5.2.2 where contradictory results may initiate further data collection and analysis. The overlap in the perspectives highlights the *interdiscursive* nature of research that seeks to combine the perspectives in the exploration of discursive practices at a particular site.

5.4 Design of my research project: Both mixed methodological and multiperspectival.

As discussed in chapter 3, adopting and developing an ontology echoes the challenge of employing a methodology in a way that "theory and method are intricately intertwined" (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001, p. 351). In reviewing the MMR and MP research traditions the question emerged: Is MP research necessarily MMR in the sense that it combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies? MP proponents do not explicitly state the approach must make use of both qualitative and quantitative components. Nor do they exclude this combination. In other words, the MP approach may only employ qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis, which MP researchers often do, just as triangulation originally referred to the use of different forms of qualitative methods

(Denzin, 2012, p. 82). Alternatively, it may draw on both qualitative and quantitative paradigms.

It may also be inferred from discussions by MP proponents that a study drawing on this approach may or may not be defined as MMR. In general, this approach requires an exploration of the research topic from different perspectives without claiming that it must employ both qualitative and quantitative methods. As previously indicated, however, their model provides a broad and deep discussion of ontological issues by focusing on the relevant theoretical reference points mentioned in section 5.3.1. It also presents the need to make clear the close relations between language and its context, which is potentially vast and undifferentiated, and between the social organisation and processes associated with society at large and the micro interactions. More importantly, it highlights the importance of the analyst's overarching perspective. Discussion on the nature of MMR in contrast does not place sufficient emphasis on the context and the inter-connection between different perspectives, and on the analyst's stance. Greater focus is given to the utilisation of both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis, and the integration of results. Therefore, a MMR design may not be regarded as MP if the qualitative and quantitative components are drawn on to look at the research from a single perspective. An example may be a research design in which the researcher uses questionnaires to elicit data from a sample and then conducts interviews with some participants from that sample in order to gain a better understanding.

To put it differently, the MP approach on the one hand aims to draw a relatively complete picture of the research theme by looking at it from different perspectives and may or may not be MMR. The MMR design on the other hand, although drawing on both qualitative and quantitative methods, may or may not be MP. Therefore, this present research project may be referred to as a mixed methods MP design.

Although a constructivist worldview is adopted in this research – which was once thought of as the stance for qualitative methods – the importance of quantitative data is acknowledged and necessary to complement the qualitative findings (see Layder, 1993, p. 112). As such, the stance in this current research project is similar to Layder's (1993) in that the use of qualitative data is deemed essential, but it may be complemented by quantitative data and its analysis wherever possible. This also aligns with the position of

critical realists that “a particular method cannot be excluded beforehand” (Danermark, 2002, p. 151).

This research project has the following MMR design features: it is *exploratory*, *sequential*, and *multilevel* with an emphasis on the qualitative strand. Hence, it is QUAL → quan. In addition, the design features which represent the MP approach are shown in the Venn diagram in Figure 5.3 below, based on Crichton’s (2010) model:

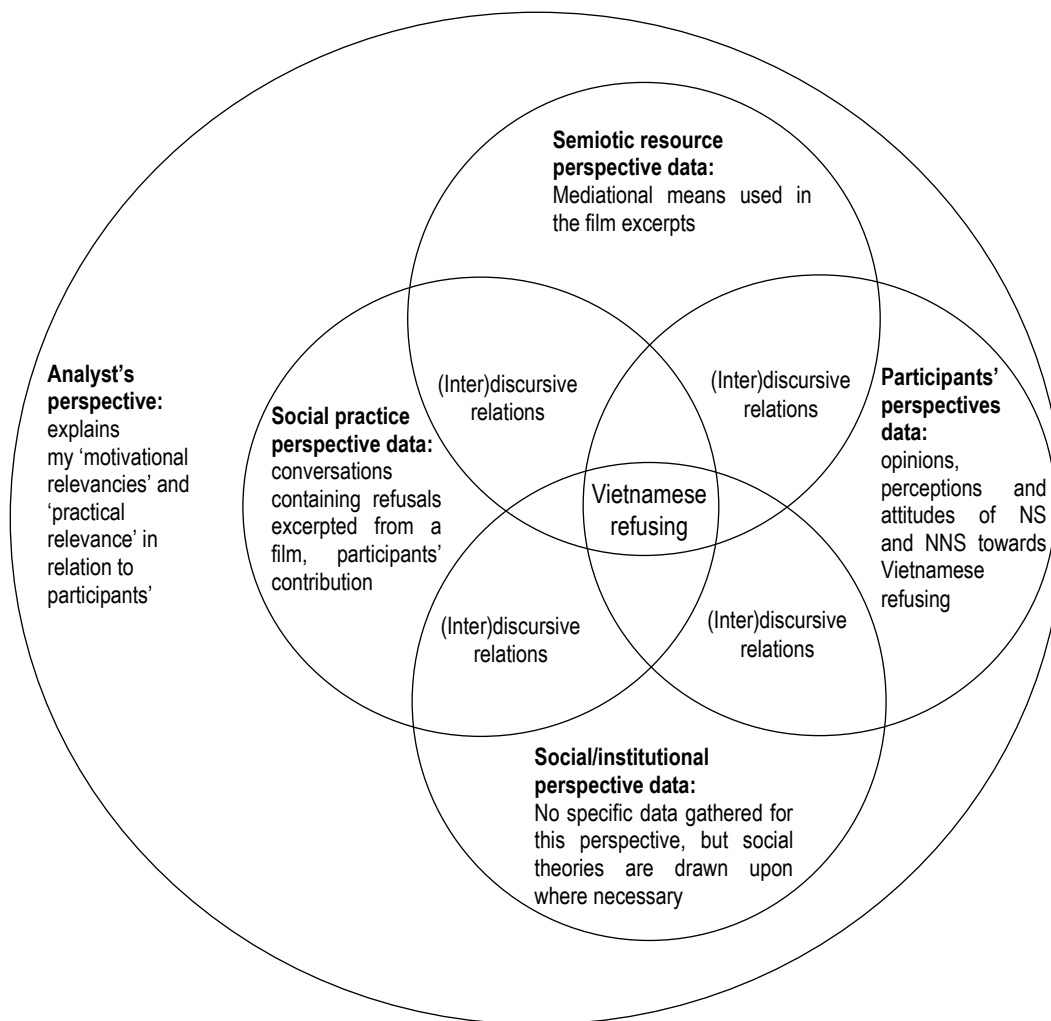


Figure 5.3: The multiperspectival model of my research project

5.4.1 The analyst’s perspective:

The analyst’s perspective identifies the researcher’s *motivational relevancies* (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001) and the *practical relevance* of the study (Roberts & Sarangi, 1999; Sarangi

& Roberts, 1999). First, what motivation the researcher brings to the study is a key question. The researcher's a priori assumptions and decision making about relevant methodology have been discussed by some authors (e.g. Cicourel, 1992; Hak, 1999; Sarangi, 2007) who all raise an important question: "how is the analyst situated in relation to the context studied" (Crichton, 2010, p. 27). In this exploration of Vietnamese refusing I am placed "at the heart of the research" (Tusting & Maybin, 2007, p. 578) and have become part of the nexus that makes the action (i.e., refusing) possible (Scollon & Scollon, 2007). Indeed, as a Vietnamese native speaker I have experienced a number of situations where I had to refuse and was refused by my friends, colleagues, relatives and others. Thus, this question is relevant to my research because I am both the analyst and the 'stakeholder' of my research theme given I often encounter Vietnamese refusing in my everyday life. My motivational relevancies include an interest in the research theme, background knowledge both as the analyst and the stakeholder of the research results, and an understanding of the ontological assumptions and methodological decisions.

In addition to having relevant motivations, the analyst also needs to take *practical relevance* of the research into account. The notion of practical relevance refers to the contribution of the research results to the solution of social and institutional problems. As such, it raises the question of whether theoretical research results may serve practical purposes or solve practical problems. Sarangi and Roberts (1999) advocate the view that "researchers have a responsibility to contribute to social change and to working towards better and more equitable work practices" (p. 40). As such, the authors call for "a joint enterprise" (p. 40) between research and its applications (Sarangi & Roberts, 1999). This requirement underlies the need for a research methodology that 'nurtures' the joint problematisation between the researcher and the researched throughout the research process.

The difficulty of disseminating findings is referred to as the "analyst's paradox" by Sarangi (2007, p. 567). The paradox refers to the difficulty an analyst may encounter in explaining the data and obtaining participants' insights, particularly when the insights are tacit and layered in different levels of manifestation. Thus, Garfinkel (1974) drew our attention to the analytic conundrum which requires a balanced steering between "what we're entitled to say" and 'what the evidence show' and 'what can be demonstrated' and 'what actually was said' as compared with 'what you only think he said' or 'what he seemed to have

said''' (p. 16). To solve this problem Sarangi (2002, p. 122) suggested discourse researchers must remain "for the most part, peripheral but legitimate participants, eager to rely on our subjects' insights so that we may align (rather than transform) analyst and participant perspectives" (p. 122). Acknowledging the active role of the analyst, Sarangi (2007) also posited that "[a] 'thick description' without 'thick participation' may lead to a fly-on-the-wall account" (p. 579). This implies the researcher/analyst cannot have a deep understanding of the researched if he does not align his perspective with the participants' perspective. Sarangi's (2007) call for the analyst's role to be both peripheral and legitimate aligns well with the views of those ethnographic researchers who claim the analyst/researcher relevant role is "*trying to get analytic distance* on what's close-at-hand" (Rampton et al., 2004, p. 12, original emphasis). Indeed, the "analytic distance" referred to by Rampton et al. (2004) corresponds to Sarangi's (2002) notion of the "peripheral", and "what's close-at-hand" is similar to "legitimate" participation of the researcher. Therefore, in this research project, although I am a legitimate participant (i.e., one who is frequently involved in Vietnamese refusing), I will try to explain the phenomenon in an objective manner by drawing on the macro socio-cultural affordances.

5.4.2 The participants' perspective

The term 'participants' in the MP approach has a broad sense: it refers not only to people who produce data for the study, but also to the whole population involved in the speech act of refusing (or the stakeholder). Thus, participants can be anyone who refuses or is refused. The participants' perspective in this research is generated from two groups: native speakers of Vietnamese and non-native speakers of Vietnamese. Data for this perspective therefore consist of two corpora collected in two phases of the fieldwork. The group of native speakers revealed their perspectives during a discussion about the given situations and scenarios, and more importantly through their own real stories of refusals. The group of non-native speakers revealed their perspectives by responding to the questionnaire.

5.4.3 The semiotic resource perspective

In this research project the semiotic resource perspective focuses on exploring different modes of communication used by participants including spoken language to convey intended messages, as well as the prosodic features and non-linguistic mediational tools

(Scollon, 2001). These resources are documented in excerpts of conversations from film interactions where refusals take place.

This perspective employs a multimodal analysis to develop an account of how an illocutionary meaning (i.e., the speaker's intended message) is expressed in linguistic forms as well as non-verbal and non-vocal tools. Previous studies on Vietnamese refusing have focused on verbal refusals only and thus on only one part of the whole picture of mediational tools (for details see the analysis of the film excerpts in chapters 8, 9).

5.4.4 The social practice (or social action) perspective

The social practice perspective focuses on interpreting how people in the interviews and in chosen film contribute to social practices through their interactions. Informed by interactionism (Goffman, 1959, 1967, 1981) and ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), a significant portion of this research project (i.e., studies 1 and 2) investigates social practices, including interviews, where participants and the interviewer/analyst demonstrate their contribution. The analysis of the interactions interconnects the semiotic resources and the social practice perspectives. That is, the participants (including the interviewer/analyst) contribute to social practices via a number of mediational tools.

The question arises however as to how we may get to know the participants' contribution to social practices. Drawing on Membership Categorisation (Sacks, 1972b, 1974, 1992a, 1992b) and the Participation Framework (Goffman, 1981; Levinson, 1988; Sarangi, 2010) as analytical tools for the first and second studies, it was possible to expound the participants' role in each speaking moment. As a result, their contribution to the construction of relative social norms and expectations was revealed; with 'relative' meaning the norms and expectations are true for certain group of people, but not for others. For instance, some refusals, verbal or non-verbal, are regarded as polite by some participants, but not so by others.

5.4.5 The social/institutional perspective

This research project did not collect data for the institutional perspective. As explained above, the MP approach does not require data collection for all the perspectives, nor the need to draw on all perspectives.

5.5 The three studies

A research project methodology invariably calls for the collection of certain type(s) of data at the researcher's "disposal" (Layder, 1993, p. 107), as well as certain analytical tool(s) to scrutinise the data. The data types collected for this study were determined by the resources at the researcher's disposal (i.e., funding, time, equipment and assistance) and the nature of the theme under study (i.e., Vietnamese refusing).

As previously explained, observing participants to collect examples of refusals is very time-consuming, as is capturing participants' behaviours from which to expound the cultural factors underlying the verbal and non-verbal actions. Ethnographic interviewing is a most suitable tool for data generation pertaining to participants' perspectives and social practices (study 1). The findings from the interviews with Vietnamese people were used to design a questionnaire to access data on the perspectives of another group of participants (study 3). Data for the semiotic resource perspective and the social practice perspective were collected from film conversations. In the sub-sections below a brief description of the three studies is provided.

5.5.1 Study 1: Ethnographic-based approach (participants' and social practice perspectives)

The aim of study 1 was to explore how native speakers of Vietnamese perceive and differentiate refusing in interaction (see section 5.5.1.1 below for the characteristics of the participants). In doing so, this study sought to answer the first research question: **'What socio-cultural values condition and constrain Vietnamese refusing?'** As stated in section 1.4, this should be considered as ethnographic-based study since it only used ethnographic interviews as the single tool of data generation.

5.5.1.1 *The participants*

All the 30 participants in this study originate from provinces in the North of Vietnam²³. Most of them are my friends, colleagues, former students, or neighbours, and some are

²³ Vietnam is divided into three regions; namely, North, Central and South. Each region is different, socio-culturally.

relatives with whom I have a close relationship. The ‘snowball’ technique (Morgan, 2008) was used to recruit some more non-acquaintance participants. These participants are all from Thái Nguyên, and thus I could meet them after the interviews if I wanted to clarify some unclear discussion. Among these 30 participants, 18 are males and 12 are females; 23 are from Thái Nguyên where I currently work and the others from adjacent provinces such as Cao Bằng, Nghệ An, Hà Nội, and Vĩnh Phúc. The participants represent different occupational backgrounds including five forest wardens, two retired workers, three university lecturers, three school teachers, one kindergarten teacher, three vocational school teachers, three doctors, three soldiers, one self-employed trader, one workshop foreman, two accountants, one tax collector, one co-operative consultant, and one veterinarian. The age range of the participants is 23 to 66 years.

5.5.1.2 The interview (focus group or individual)

Semi-structured informal interviews were conducted with the participants (Kvale, 1996; Mason, 2004). They were invited to discuss about how they understand and react in given situations and scenarios from which they were encouraged to tell about their own stories of refusing or being refused. Thus, there are two volumes of the data generated. One was built up from the participants’ playing the role of the person in each of the situations/scenarios. This type of data is imaginary because the participants had to imagine they were the person in the situations/scenarios to react (i.e., accept or refuse) to the request or offer made by an interlocutor. The other volume of data is generated from the participants’ narratives of their real refusals; and thus this type of data is considered to be authentic. In general however, the whole set of data collected in this study is not naturally occurring because it is only the participants’ account of what they think they would respond in those situations/scenarios and their retelling of what happen in real life. Given that even conducting participant observation may not obtain completely naturally occurring data since the presence of a video or audio recorder may affect the participant’s behaviour – see, for example, Bousfield [2008], Félix-Brasdefer [2008a], and Labov [1972]), I hope that the data generated from these scenarios/situations will not reduce the validity of the overall study for some reasons. First, they are for the most part treated as triggering scenarios, that is, they are the basis for the participants to tell their own stories. Second, this study is only one of the three studies, and its results will be complemented by the results of the two subsequent studies. Third, there have been a number of speech act studies, especially those

using DCT (see table 3.1), which successfully draw on this type of scenarios/situations to generate data.

The interviews were conducted like a friendly discussion between the interviewer (i.e., myself) and the participants. In order to create this type of atmosphere the interviews were conducted at a venue where the participants would feel most comfortable such as in a café, a restaurant (with private rooms for each group of customers), in the researcher's living room, or the participant's living room. The friendly atmosphere was also created with frequent encouragement and suggestions to participants that there were no right or wrong answers to the given questions.

This reflects an ethnographic interview style in the sense that a close rapport was established between the interviewer and the participants that allowed the participants to feel free to raise their opinions. It also allowed the interviewer to contact the participants after the interview to seek clarification about a response or to ask for further information required for the analysis. Also, the interviews were ethnographic in style because they focused on cultural meanings (Fielding, 2006; Spradley, 1979). Heyl (2001) defined ethnographic interviewing as:

those projects in which the researchers have established respectful, on-going relationships with the interviewee, including enough rapport for there to be a genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interviews for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds (p. 369).

For Heyl (2001), the time factor (i.e., the duration and frequency of contact) and the quality of the rapport between the researcher and the interviewees make ethnographic interviewing different from other types of interview.

5.5.1.3 The interview as a social practice

In chapter 1, the interview as social practice rather than an instrument of data generation was discussed briefly. It is high time now to go back to this issue in more detail. Researchers who engage in interviews as social practice – also referred to by Holstein and Gubrium (2003) as 'active interviews' – treat interviews themselves as topics for investigation. This is different to the conventional view of interviews as simply instruments of data collection that focus only on what participants say. Active interviews in

fact place emphasis on both the “What” and the “How”. Interviews are seen as “a site of, and occasion for, producing reportable knowledge” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003: 68). In turn, Sarangi (2003) regarded interviews of this type as “not only a resource of social inquiry, but also an object of analysis in its own right”.

For constructionists who view interviews as social practice, data content is co-constructed by both the interviewer and the interviewee. As such, it is not predetermined or fixed, but contingent through the interaction. In other words, meaning is obtained through the active roles of both sides of the interview. Thus, interviews of this type should not be seen as *one-off* tellings, but rather as *one in a series* (Prior, 2011). Holstein and Gubrium (1995a, p. 4) defined interviews as social practice as follow:

Both parties to the interview are necessarily and unavoidably active. Each is involved in meaning-making work. Meaning is not merely elicited by apt questioning nor simply transported through respondent replies; it is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter. Respondents are not so much repositories of knowledge – treasures of information awaiting excavation – as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviews (p. 4).

In this approach “the interviewer figures more prominently in the shaping of the story” (Prior, 2011: 71). As Roulston (2011) wrote; “The interviewer’s contributions are subject to the same kind of analytic focus as that of the interviewee, and both structural and topical features of talk are examined” (pp. 80-81). For her, what are considered as ‘problems’ by neo-positivist researchers such as repeated questions may be of benefit to the co-construction of data content. For example, some question types seen by conventional interviewers as drawbacks have their own usefulness. Thus, Roulston (2011) claimed an interviewer may use three kinds of questions: closed questions; questions with possible responses; and questions that include assumptions about participants’ life-worlds.

The role of the interviewer is further discussed by Richards (2011). According to the author, the interviewer’s minimal responses or utterances, which he calls ‘continuers’, are of great importance not only to encourage the respondent’s further talk, but also to better understand previous responses (Richards, 2011). Jefferson (1983, p. 17) regarded minimal responses as “deployable *devices* with consequences for the shape of the interaction” (p. 17, *original emphasis*).

5.5.1.4 Interview analysis

Narrative analysis was the method used to analyse the data generated from the ethnographic interviews. Narrative is considered both an instrument for generating data and a means of analysis (see chapter 6). To reveal the cultural values underpinning Vietnamese people's refusals an attempt was made to refer to participants' role, status and identity in each moment of their talk. To facilitate this process both Sacks' Membership Categorisation (Sacks, 1972, 1974, 1992a, 1992b) and Goffman's Participation Framework (Goffman, 1981) were utilised. Awareness of the participants' characteristics is crucial to interpreting their viewpoint and hence their contribution to the construction of social norms and values.

5.5.2 Study 2: Interactional approach (social practice and semiotic resource perspectives)

The aim of this interactional study was to document how Vietnamese people express their message of refusing. It aims at answering the second research question namely '**How is Vietnamese refusing manifested in talk-in-interaction?**' However, as noted earlier, collecting naturally-occurring data via participant observation was beyond the resources at the researcher's "disposal" (Layder, 1993, p. 107), and unlikely to be feasible even if this were not the case due to the sensitivity and low frequency of the speech act under study (i.e., Vietnamese refusing). Thus, instead of collecting naturally-occurring data, excerpts of conversations from a Vietnamese TV series were collected for analysis. It has been shown that useful information can be gleaned from this type of data (Rose 2001). Although Rose (2001) explored film data from pragmatic approach rather than from CA, it could be a good source for reference in this study.

The TV series chosen for analysis in this study is titled *Những công dân tập thể* (lit. Citizens living in the same apartment building). It is a 36-episode TV series produced in 2011. There are good reasons for selecting this film. First, it is about everyday life phenomena occurring in contemporary Vietnamese society, specifically the north of Vietnam. The phenomena range from family troubles such as divorce, inheritance, and drug addition, to conflicts between neighbours and love affairs at the work place. Second, because it is a multi-episode film, all the problems are negotiated through time, which may reveal the characters' psychological state and movement, as well as provide the audience

with a relatively full picture of the problems. As such, cultural norms and values are manifested vividly through the characters' interactions.

5.5.3 Study 3: Social psychological approach (another participants' perspective)

The aim of study 3 was to explore the perspectives of non-native speakers of Vietnamese regarding Vietnamese refusing and how they evaluate the cultural affordances conditioning and constraining Vietnamese refusing as discussed in studies 1 and 2. In particular, it was conducted to answer the third research question namely '**How do non-native speakers of Vietnamese perceive, interpret and react to Vietnamese people's refusing?**' In answering this question, the study would be able to support, as well as challenge, the findings from studies 1 and 2. As a social psychological study, it employed quantitative methods to analyse data collected from NNSs' responses to a questionnaire.

5.5.3.1 The respondents

The respondents in this study comprise a convenience sample of 43 foreigners living and/or studying in Vietnam. Since the aim of the study is to explore Vietnamese refusing from a different perspective – the NNSs' perspective – which is used to complement the findings from studies 1 and 2 rather than to investigate the pragmatic knowledge of a specific population, respondents were recruited randomly (i.e., without being based on a specific set of criteria). The respondents taking part in this study, therefore, vary in terms of job, age, ethnicity, length of stay in Vietnam, and level of Vietnamese proficiency.

More than half of the respondents were attending a Vietnamese course in Hanoi University. Most of them (except 3 from Cuba) are from Eastern countries and are relatively young (between 20 and 28 years old). The Western NNSs were older and were working in Vietnam. Some respondents were English teachers at Thai Nguyen University, some were working for different companies and NGOs in Hanoi, and some were self-employed businessmen. The sample also included Australians who had been living in Vietnam for over 12 years and were married to Vietnamese women (in fact, when the researcher had some informal talks with 3 Australian respondents after they had filled in the questionnaire, they revealed that they had been living in Vietnam for over 20 years, and two of them got married to Vietnamese women).

5.5.3.2 *Questionnaire design*

A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was designed for study 3 (Appendix 4). The data analyses for studies 1 and 2 revealed important cultural affordances underlying Vietnamese refusing which were presented in chapters 7, 8, and 9. These findings were used in this study as assumptions to design the questionnaire. Also, some statements in the questionnaire were based on the literature on Vietnamese culture, as well as on the researcher's observations as a member of that culture.

The findings of studies 1 and 2, the broader literature, and the researcher's observation suggest Vietnamese people are, by and large, **collectivistic, hierarchical, patriarchal, indirect, implicit, and harmonious**. If respondents have a total score of the questionnaire higher than the theoretical mean score then there may be general agreement that Vietnamese people possess those characteristics, although the respondents may not support the content of some specific individual statements in the questionnaire.

Because this research project aims to explore the act of refusing in general rather than a specific type of refusing (e.g., refusing a request or an invitation etc.), the description of refusal in a statement may represent any of these types, except when the type is clearly stated. In order to clarify this to the respondents it is stated at the beginning of the questionnaire (see Appendix 4).

The statements were grouped into the following 7 headings.

Relationships

The analyses of data from chapter 1 (see chapter 7) revealed that Vietnamese people respect or highly evaluate a close relationship between them and their interlocutors before they decide whether to refuse or accept/agree. Close relationship presupposes frequent personal contacts between them; accordingly, if they do not hear about or do not have frequent contact with their interlocutors, their trust they have on them will decrease. For example, Huỳnh and Hoa (see chapter 7) say that it is strange if a person makes a phone call to a friend to borrow money without having any contacts for the past 10 years. Statements 1 and 5 were made to address these assumptions.

Another assumption under the heading of Relationships is that Vietnamese people are highly family-oriented. Family, not individual person, is the basic unit that builds up the Vietnamese society (Đ. L. Nguyễn, 1994). Accordingly, Vietnamese people tend to try to help other relatives in their extended family especially in terms of financial matters. These traditional values have also been discussed in the interviews with participants conducted in study 1, for example, with Hoa. Statements 3 and 4 were set up to further test this assumption.

Vietnamese people also have the tradition of showing respect and obedience towards elderly or higher ranked family members (see 2.3.5). This tradition explains why Vietnamese people tend to follow their parents or relatives of higher status where they have to make an important decision. However, there are also examples of some children who do not have sufficient filial piety (like the case of Hằng in chapter 9). Thus, obedience is an assumption that needs further evidence, and thus statement 8 was designed to check this assumption.

Interactions between bosses and their employees as well as between administrative authorities and the citizens invoke another type of relationship. Through a number of interviews in the first study (for example the interviews with some forest wardens and other participants in chapter 7), it is assumed that employees tend to ‘toady’ to their bosses; citizens tend to fawn upon the administrative authorities so as to have some sort of privilege from those people. Statements 2 and 6 were designed to check this assumption. However, it is another story if the boss has retired, that is, s/he may no longer have any important impact on his/her former employees. Thus, whether his or her former employees are willing to help him/her or not depends on how close a relationship they have with him/her (interviews with forest wardens in chapter 7), and question 7 will help to examine this assumption.

Responsibilities²⁴

²⁴ It could be relevant here to say that relationships and responsibilities have a close interconnection in the sense that a specific relationship entails a certain responsibility and a responsibility presupposes a certain relationship. Accordingly, there is not a clear-cut distinction between the questions that fall in these two categories. In other words, a question made to examine how responsibilities condition/constrain Vietnamese Refusing can also be used to trace the impact of relationship on that speech act.

As mentioned above and in chapter 2, Vietnamese people are very family-oriented, which invokes some familial relationships, and thus helping other relatives is considered as their responsibilities. It is because they think that the success of a family member is the pride of the whole clan (see chapter 2). Thus, statements 9 and 10 were designed to test the assumption that Vietnamese people highly appreciate their responsibilities towards other members in their family or their clan including both their higher and lower ranked relatives.

Another responsibility refers to that of a daughter, especially the eldest child, towards their younger siblings and their parents. This type of responsibility has been documented in studies 1 and 2 (see chapters 7 and 8). Thus, statement 11 was designed to get NNSs' views of this issue.

Statement 12 was based on the interview with Huyền who told a story of going to the doctor. On that day her son had a quite high fever so she had to take him to a doctor who ran a private clinic at home. Unluckily for her, when she came, the doctor was about to close the door since the allotted time had finished. As a result, the doctor refused to perform an urgent check on her son. This shows that the situation where a doctor refuses to conduct an urgent check-up for a patient does exist in reality although it is rare.

Harmony

Vietnamese people highly value harmony and often avoid conflict or humiliation. These assumptions are made based on the results of studies 1 and 2, and on the readings about traditional cultural values.

In the interview with Huỳnh (see section 7.5.1), harmony is also highly appreciated. For example, he said that he could not refuse his friend directly, although the friend had not contacted him for 10 years, since he wanted to keep a harmonious relationship. Statements 13, 14 and 15 were designed to validate these arguments.

Due to the need for a harmonious relationship, some Vietnamese have broken their institutional rules and principles, and even state law in order to help their friends or relatives. This fact can be seen in the interview with Quang when he said some students now often take a course or a test for their friends. That is, some students may go to class to

claim attendance for their friends when those friends are absent; this claim is made due to the requirement of regular attendance in a course. More seriously, they may also take the exam for their friends if their friends cannot for some reason. By doing so, those students have committed serious violations; and statement 16 was designed to clarify this tendency.

Identities

Traditionally, Vietnamese people highly evaluate paternalism (see chapter 2), which was highlighted in the interview with forest wardens one of whom - Binh - said a husband has his own power over his wife. He claimed that if he intended to lend money to his friend, he did not have to consult his wife because by doing so he can be regarded as henpecked by his friends. It is interesting that his argument was echoed by a female in the group when she revealed that her husband sometimes did not let her know of his lending money to his friend. Therefore, statement 17 was designed to examine this practice.

Also, children are supposed to support or devote to or obey their parents or their higher ranked relatives. They tend to strictly follow the advice of their parents and higher status relatives (see chapter 2, 7 and 8). Statement 18 was made to check this assumption.

Another assumption, from my own observation and knowledge, is that urban people tend to accept gifts more directly than people in the countryside where people tend to maintain the tradition of refusing once or twice before receiving the gift, and thus statement 19 was designed. In the same vein, statement 20 was designed based on the assumption that changes can be more evident in the work setting than in family setting due to the fact that people in work settings tend to have more opportunities to work with different types of people and thus they tend to adapt to the more modern way of life. Similarly, younger people - representatives of contemporary Vietnam - seem to adapt to new way of living more easily than old people, and thus statement 21 was set up.

Purposes

There is a relatively large percentage of corruption and bribery which was revealed through the interviews in study 1 (see chapter 7). Thuyên, for example, said that since he had not bribed the civil servants who worked at the local council, his application for the transference of land ownership was delayed for one year. Statement 22 was designed to

check whether NNSs agreed with this view or not. Similarly, in another interview, Hoàng said his boss – the general director of his corporation – refused his proposal several times since he had not signalled that he would ‘thank’ (i.e., bribe) the boss after his proposal was approved (see chapter 7). Statement 23 was designed to further examine Hoàng’s case. Statement 24 is seen as a complementary item for statements 22 and 23 since corruption take its root from the desire for personal well-being. Statement 25 was based on my own observation and experience.

Strategies

Statements 26 and 27 were designed based on interviews with the participants in study 1 when most of them agreed that *Ừ được rồi để tôi xem* (OK, let me see) in the context of a person responding to his friend’s borrowing money surely implied a refusal. Hoàng, for example, also gave vivid examples of how his boss refused him: *Ừ được rồi, cái này để tôi xem, tôi gọi vật tư lên* (Yes OK let me see, I will call the person in charge of materials) or *thế anh về anh lấy cho tôi xem cái mẫu của nó cái* (Can you bring me a sample to check?)

Statement 28 was based on the interview with a primary school teacher when she said *Sao phải quà cáp làm gì, chúng mày làm gì có tiền* (why do you have to bring me a gift, you must not have money). This type of utterances, the surface meaning of which is a refusal, is often, if not always, produced without hesitancy. This way of responding to an offer is referred to as a *Từ chối-chấp nhận* (refusing-like acceptance) by C. M. Trần (2005c) or as a *Từ chối biểu kiến* (an opinion-indicating refusal) by P. C. Nguyễn (2004b). Though using different terms, these two scholars mean the same strategy: refusing in what they say but accepting in what they actually do. The aim of this strategy is to convey strategic politeness; that is, one will be considered impolite, or greedy, if he or she accepts the gift baldly.

Statements 29, 30, and 31 were based on my own observation and on the published literature on culture. Specifically, statement 30 was designed based on Đ. L. Nguyễn’s (1994) argument that the Vietnamese “possess an inwardness, a well-developed ability to keep their true feelings hidden. Desires are expressed indirectly, by hinting, and ‘talking around’ the subject.” (p. 47). Statements 29, 31 were based on the argument that Vietnamese people tend to attach longer explanations to their refusals than English people (P. C. Nguyễn, 2004b, p. 158).

Statement 32 was based my observation and on Chew's (2011) claim that there is a lack of politeness in everyday interactions. Statement 33 was based on Vưong's (1976) argument:

Politeness is considered a must for good social conduct. The Vietnamese do not look straight into the eyes of the person with whom they conduct a conversation; doing so is considered very impolite and might cause uneasiness on the other's part if he is Vietnamese. In the United States, however, such behaviour is completely acceptable and regarded as a sight of straightforwardness. (p.34)

Statements 34, 35 take their root from some literature which argues that due to the avoidance of confrontation and humiliation, Vietnamese people tend to show that they feel sorry about their refusals and avoid a direct refusal.

Respondents' perceptions, attitudes and evaluation

This final part of the questionnaires was designed to examine the general understandings of NNSs towards the above six affordances. However, there are also some bases for the statements in this part. Statement 36 was based on the interview with Huệ in study 1 when she acknowledged that there existed situations in which a person tried to pay for his or her friend.

Due to the tendency to avoid confrontation and humiliation, it is also my assumption that Vietnamese refusals are so indirect and implicit that NNSs may not recognize, and thus, statement 37 was designed.

In interactions a refusal may be conveyed by extra-linguistic and paralinguistic forms such as gestures, laughter, or even silence (Đ. L. Nguyễn, 1994; findings in study 2). Thus, statement 38 was designed to check this assumption.

Statement 39 was based on Đ. L. Nguyễn's (1994) claim: "In Indochina, one does not come directly to the point. To do so is, for an American or Australia, a mark of honesty and forthrightness while someone from Indochina sees it as a lack of intelligence or courtesy." (p.48)

Statement 40 was designed to check the so-called ritual (Hua et al., 2000) or unreal refusal, or a refusing-like acceptance as defined by C. M. Trần (2005c), or opinion-indicating refusal as defined by P. C. Nguyễn (2004b) (as mentioned above). Statement 41 aims at finding out the respondents' attitudes toward the reluctant acceptance that has been

referred to in statements 13, 14, 15, and 16. Statement 42 was based on articles on Vietnamese culture (Đ. L. Nguyễn, 1994; X. T. Nguyễn, 1994; Vương, 1976) and on the interviews with Huỳnh, some forest wardens, and college teachers in study 1 (see chapter 7).

Statement 43 can be said to be another version of question 32. Statement 44 is quite similar to question 24 in the sense that a good interpersonal relation can bring about personal well-being. Statement 45 was based on interviews with Huỳnh and Hoa when they both agreed that *Tự nhiên không liên lạc mà gọi điện thì nghe nó...* (a sudden call without any contact in advance sounds...) meaning that it is weird when a friend suddenly calls to borrow money without having any contact before. Another reason for Vietnamese people's trying to know their conversant's background in advance is that they will know how to address that person (see chapter 2).

5.6 The organisation of the findings

In the domain of discourse analysis, Roberts and Sarangi (2005), and Candlin and Crichton accounted for the ways in which the theme-oriented approach may provide the analyst with analytic themes drawn from sociology and linguistics to investigate discursive phenomena such as refusing. Roberts and Sarangi (2005) referred to this approach as “theme-oriented discourse analysis” and suggested it centres the research on focal themes linked to analytic themes. According to the authors, the link is such that “both the detail of moment by moment inferencing and larger rhetorical patterns are analysed to shed light on how meaning is negotiated and judgements made in interactions” (pp. 632-633). In Vietnamese refusing for example, how refusals are negotiated is documented by how micro actions (e.g., producing an utterance, shaking head, crying, laughing etc.) are done under the ‘umbrella’ of broader social expectations (e.g., relationships, responsibilities, identities etc.).

Similarly, Candlin and Crichton (2012), while drawing on the concept of the macro focal theme, maintained that “discourse phenomena are always about, and motivated by, particular themes” (p. 290). Following this approach, the research findings in this research project are presented around the analysis of conceptual constructs in chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10. However, as suggested by Candlin and Crichton (2013a), individual concepts “may be referenced to each other and interconnected in different combinations” (p. 10). Thus the

analytic themes in this study are interrelated not only in individual chapters, but also across chapters. For example, the constructs analysed in chapter 7 such as collectivism, responsibility, harmony and so on are closely related to one another. In turn, these constructs form the bases for the analyses of the other two corpora of data; namely, film conversations and survey questionnaire.

Accordingly, chapter 7 presents the results of study 1. It provides an analysis of how socio-cultural values, or affordances, shape and ‘steer’ the strategies and, as a result, the choice of communicational tools (linguistic, paralinguistic, or non-linguistic) in Vietnamese refusing and related speech acts. Although the conceptual constructs are presented separately (under the names of Collectivism, Responsibility, Harmony, Patriarchy, Trust, and Corruption), they are analysed in an interconnected way.

Chapter 8 presents the results of study 2. In particular, it gives an account of different modes of communication used in the conversations. It is widely accepted that language is the main, but not the only, means of communication (Norris, 2004). In this chapter, how different modes of communication are combined in conveying the speaker’s communicative intention is documented.

Chapter 9 also expounds the results of study 2, but focuses on the impoliteness aspect. In particular, this chapter examines what linguistic impoliteness strategies (Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper, 1996, 2005, 2011; Culpeper et al., 2003) are used. Also, it deals with prosodic features such as voice pitch and loudness, and non-linguistic actions performed by the characters which may be regarded as impolite.

Chapter 10 presents the results of study 3. First, the chapter uses descriptive statistics to explore the central tendency of the participants’ attitudes towards Vietnamese refusing. Then, it focuses on each category one by one and on individual statements.

Chapter 6: Analytical frameworks

6.1 Introduction

Following the presentation in chapter 5 of the ontological and methodological orientation of this research project, this chapter continues with a detailed discussion of the tools used to analyse data in studies 1 and 2.

Study 1 – the ethnographic-based study – takes participants’ narratives and their perceptions and differentiations of Vietnamese refusals as the main object of analysis. Accordingly, *Narrative Analysis* (de Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008), *Membership Categorisation* (Sacks, 1972; 1974), and *Participation Framework* (Goffman, 1981; Levinson, 1988; Sarangi, 2010) were used to frame the thick description of the collected data.

Study 2 took a Vietnamese TV series as a source for data from which interactional excerpts containing refusing were extracted for analysis. In this study Sacks’ *Membership Categorisation* and Goffman’s *Participation Framework* were applied to explain the status and role of the participants in each speaking moment. Also, *Conversation Analysis* (CA) (Sacks, 1992a; 1992b; 1974), *Multimodal Interactional Analysis* (Norris, 2004; 2009; Norris & Johns, 2005; Scollon & Scollon, 2003; 2009), and *Nexus Analysis* (Scollon, 2001) were drawn on because the tools have been proved to be effective in facilitating the analysis of talks-in-interaction.

All of the above mentioned analytical tools are reviewed in the following sections.

6.2 Narrative analysis

In Social Sciences research since the late 1960s and early 1970s, narratives have been drawn on both as an instrument for generating data and as a tool for analysis across such disciplines as psychology, anthropology, sociology, and sociolinguistics (Pavlenko, 2007). Narratives as instrument for generating data were used in study 1 (see chapter 1 and 5). In

this section, however, the use of narratives as an analytical tool (i.e., Narrative Analysis) is reviewed.

An investigation of the literature on narratives revealed two different approaches to using narratives as an analytical means: structural-textual, and interactional. The structural-textual perspective defines narrative as a way “of representing past experience by a sequence of ordered sentences that present the temporal sequence of those events by that order” (Labov & Fanshel, 1977, p. 105). In this sense, a narrative is a text that tells a story; that is, it relates a connected series of events in an orderly manner, and the content of the narrative is solely provided and determined by the narrator. This does not fit the analytical orientation of this research study because the interviews in which narratives took place were treated as social practices (i.e., meaning is co-constructed between the interviewees and the interviewer).

In line with the treatment of interviews as social practice (Talmy, 2010; Talmy & Richards, 2011), there has also been a shift from narrative as text to narrative as practice within social interaction (de Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008). Narrative as practice within social interaction is the interpretation applied during the analysis of the interview data in this study. Informed by CA and ethnomethodology, narrative as talk-in-social interaction is studied “both for the ways in which its tellings are shaped by large sociocultural processes at work and for how it provides organization for the interactive occasions on which it occurs”. Accordingly, narrative should be regarded as being both constituted in situated contexts and constitutive of context. In other words, a narrative has both contextualised and contextualising aspects, with context to be understood not as “a static surrounding frame but a set of multiple and intersecting processes that are mutually feeding with talk” (de Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008).

Thus, narratives as social practice are considered as “social activities whose launch, development and conclusion rely not only on story tellers but also on recipients” (Bercelli et al., 2008, p. 284). In fact, the listeners play a very important role in the co-construction of the outcome of the narrative. Rather than telling what they want to tell, the narrators may talk about what the listeners want to know. Or the listeners’ backchannel questions may help the narrator remember information that otherwise they would not be able to recall. Also, recipients may pose questions at certain points where they want to clarify or

challenge the authenticity of the story. In turn, this may lead the narrator to provide genuine information instead of inventing a story.

Because Narrative Analysis explores how the story is co-constructed between the narrators and recipients it utilises transcription conventions traditionally used in CA. As a result, Narrative Analysis is sometimes equated with CA, which, I think, is not right. CA (see section 6.3) focuses on the sequential utterances in the conversation by, for example, investigating the turn-taking, adjacency pairs, or recipient design rather than exploring the underlying factors that constrain and condition the production of those utterances. Alternatively, narrative analysis takes socio-cultural elements into account in explaining the talk in question. Given the process of interviewing in which story telling may take place is ethnographical work, the distinction between Narrative Analysis and CA is similar to the distinction between ethnography and CA. Markee (2000) argued that while ethnographers takes members' cultures and biographies into their thick description, conversation analysts make no appeal to such information. In study 1 with its ethnographic orientation and use of Narrative Analysis as an analytical tool an attempt is made to explain what socio-cultural affordances underpin the speech act of Vietnamese refusing.

6.3 Conversation analysis

CA was developed in early 1960s as an approach to the study of social interaction (ten Have, 1999). It was developed first by Harvey Sacks and later by his close associates Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Sacks, 1992a, 1992b; Sacks et al., 1974). CA was inspired by Garfinkel's ethnomethodology which sought to develop our understanding of "how the structures of everyday activities are ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained" (Garfinkel, 1967, pp. 35-36), and by Goffman's conception of the interaction order which supports to study of ordinary daily life activities. Accordingly, CA is an amalgamation of the interactive and phenomenological/ethnomethodological traditions; that is, "interactional materials would be used to investigate the procedural bases of reasoning and action through which actors recognize, constitute, and reproduce the social and phenomenal worlds they inhabit" (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, p. 287). As such, it focuses on the organised, recurrent, and structural features of talk-in-interaction. Moreover, CA as a paradigm in sociology contradicts earlier views (e.g., Chomsky's) that ordinary conversations are chaotic and disorderly. For conversation analysts however ordinary

conversations are orderly (i.e., there are systematic patterns and structures in every talk) and sequentially organised (i.e. turns at talk are produced on the basis of the conversant's interpretation of prior turns). Thus, CA seeks to investigate how people actually speak rather than how they should speak.

The development of CA is based on the assumption that social interactions are thoroughly structured, sequentially organised, and orderly at "minute level of detail" (Stivers & Sidnell, 2013, p. 2). The structure of an interaction is realised in the rules of turn taking that Sacks et al (1974) outlined. Following these rules, a current speaker initially produces a *turn constructional unit*, and the other participant(s) in the interaction orient(s) to the completion of this unit as a *transition-relevance place* where s/he can take his or her turn. The speaker change may occur when the current speaker selects the next, or if s/he does not do so, any participant in the interaction can self-select at the transition-relevance place. If no participant selects him-/herself the current speaker may continue his/her turn. The analysis of these procedural rules is important because, according to CA, all human social actions are produced, perceived and responded following these rules.

From this assumption, the goal of CA analysis is structural - "the analysis of the practices of reasoning and inference that inform the production of and recognition of intelligible courses of action" (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, p. 287) - that is, how overall structure of an interaction is coherently and collaboratively constructed by participants, and how a participant's action is understood and responded by another participant. To do that, CA develops a theory of context that links processes of interpretation to action within a reflexive, time-bound process.

CA's focus on how participants actually speak entails an emic approach of analysis which is the key principle in CA. In other words, it starts with the talk and asks what some particular stretches of language and para- and non-linguistic modes could be doing in a specific moment in the interaction based on the participants' actual orientations (Schegloff, 2007). Accordingly, conversation analysts deal with an utterance, or a non-linguistic action, in its explicit sequential and interactional environment. Therefore, CA "adopts an indexical, context-bound understanding" of everyday and insitutional interaction (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 36); that is, it does not treat sentences and utterances as isolated, but as forms of action situated within specific contexts and designed with specific attention to

these contexts (Schegloff, 1984); thus the point of departure for analysis of any utterance is the talk, or other actions, that it emerges from. As such, CA does not assume that an utterance has an overt indication of what it is doing; rather, what it is doing must be documented in the data; that is, it must be interpreted based on what is hearable or visible (Maynard, 2013). This explains why CA views that every action is simultaneously context shaped (i.e., the framework of action from which it emerges provides primary organization for its production and interpretation) and context renewing (it helps to constitute the frame of relevance that will shape subsequent action). Context is not a static field surrounding the sentence, speech event, or other actions; time and transformation are essential constituents of context.

Indeed, in building sequential order of their interaction, participants display their knowledge about the structure of the speech exchange system. The concept of interactional sequence is premised on the recognition that each “current” conversational action embodies a “here and now” definition of the situation to which subsequent talk will be oriented. Thus, sequential organizations are not pre-scripted structures, but they are collaboratively constructed by the participants; that is, they are achievements rather than a priori structure.

One of the elementary specifications of the interactional sequence is the adjacency pair, which is characterised by the fact that current action (a first pair part) requires the production of a reciprocal action (or second pair part). However, the scope of this organisation (i.e., adjacency pair) also covers the fact that the second pair part is not made as required by the first one, which is referred to by Schegloff (1968) as noticeably absent; this absence can become the object of remedial efforts and justifiable negative inferences. Through the justifiable negative inferences, speakers can influence, or even constrain the conduct of their coparticipants. Therefore, CA does not describe adjacency pairs as statistical regularities in the patterning of action, or a specification of an internalised rule that drives behaviour; instead, it describes a procedure through which participants constrain one another, and hold one another accountable, to produce coherent and intelligible courses of action (Heritage, 1984). Adjacency pair organization is thus an elementary framework through which conversational participants will inevitably display some analysis of one another’s actions; within this reciprocal conduct, actions and

interpretation are inextricably intertwined. Each participant must analyse the developing course of others' actions in order to produce appropriate reciprocal action

The participants' ability to collaboratively and smoothly construct flow of an interaction shows their competence. Participants' competence in interaction does not mean the ability to fit in the preconfigured structures or schemata, but the ability to (a) "use our knowledge to better interpret and respond to the ensuing talk"; (b) "become creative in the ways we choose to participate"; and (c) "become adept at realizing our individual goals within the larger practice-related goals [...]" (Hall, 1999, p. 140). In this field, CA has two kinds of contribution to the analysis of participation frameworks. First, it focuses on how participant roles such as speaker, hearer, overhearer, target etc., are categorised, constituted, deployed, and transformed. As such, the recipients of actions are treated as active participants. Second, it "focused on the multifaceted ways participation in an ongoing course of action demonstrates in fine detail an understanding (or misunderstanding) of what others are engaged in, while helping to shape the future course of those same events." (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990, pp. 294-295)

The conversation analysis (CA) used in Study 2 examines Vietnamese refusing through a description of filmic conversations. However, as I have already stated in section 1.5.2, this analytic approach **should be considered as CA-informed rather than a true CA** for several reasons. First, the conversations in the TV series under study were scripted although the actors and actresses may sometimes act in a 'natural' way (i.e., without depending too much on the words written for them) when they can fully become the characters they are playing. Second, and also a consequence of the first, I will not see how the conversants conduct their conversations (i.e., how they interpret and respond to previous turns, how their turns project to subsequent turns etc.) as actually what happen in real life. Instead, I will consider it as approximation of authentic interactions since it is only what the filmmakers (including the screenwriter, director, actors, actresses, and others involved in the production of the movie) think as representatives of everyday interactions.

6.4 Membership categorisation analysis

As discussed in the previous sections, Narrative Analysis and CA would produce both more insightful results if informed by ethnographic background information about the participants. Drawing on ethnographic information in the analyses of interviews and movie

excerpts in this research project entailed the use of Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) and Participation Framework.

Though Sacks initiates both CA and MCA, his later development of MCA as well as only a small number of subsequent studies applying this method give scientists in the field the feeling that MCA has been put aside (see Housely & Fitzgerald, 2002; Stokoe, 2012). They may think that Sacks has abandoned the study of categorisation to concentrate on sequential organization. In fact, whilst there are numerous CA journal articles, books, textbooks, graduate courses, workshops and conferences, there are far fewer MCA publications. Referring to this unequal status of CA and MCA, Stokoe (2012, p. 278) writes, “CA is the ‘juggernaut’ to MCA’s ‘milk float’” and “[t]he juggernaut may run the milk float off the road. However, as argued by Housely & Fitzgerald (2002), the view that Sacks (Sacks, 1972a, 1972b, 1974, 1992a, 1992b) abandoned the study of categorisation is inaccurate because he maintains an interest in MCA throughout his work.

Membership categorisation, developed by Sacks (Sacks, 1972a, 1972b, 1974, 1992a, 1992b) refers to the process of classifying people and things into groups of similar characteristic features. It is “a meaning-making activity deeply embodied in human experience and understanding” (Sarangi & Candlin, 2003, p. 115). In his famous example “The baby cried. The mommy picked it up” (Sacks, 1972b, 1974) the mother, by picking up the baby, is displaying her role as the mother of that baby. One normally understands this phrase in terms of the ‘mommy’ picking up her baby in response to the baby’s crying. Using the definite article ‘the’ in ‘the baby’ and ‘the mommy’, Sacks helped readers to understand the story because they associated the two categories - ‘baby’ and ‘mommy’ - with the membership categorisation device (MCD) ‘the family’. Although both ‘baby’ and ‘mommy’ may be categories of other collections such as ‘the stage of life’ device, this is the particular common-sense reading that one usually makes when reading this sentence. Sacks (1972b, 1994) referred to the mother’s action of picking up the baby as the methodical process of categorisation

In Vietnamese, one of the explicit ways of doing membership categorisation in interaction is the use of terms of address or other linguistic forms that refer to certain groups of people. As mentioned in chapter 2 (section 2.4), Vietnamese people tend to establish a specific type of relationship by using a specific person-reference term to address the hearer

and to refer to themselves. The use of person-reference term can be done at the beginning of the interaction or it may also be negotiated during the interaction. The Vietnamese system of person reference is highly intricate, comprising such lexical items as kinship terms, proper nouns, personal pronouns, and non-kin common terms (see section 2.4.3). Therefore, membership categorisation can be a useful tool to show one's identity in relation to gender, profession, and status among others. The interview data collected for this ethnographic study document explicitly the processes of categorisation.

One of the foci of MCA is recognising category-bound activities. Category-bound activities are actions, statements, performances which may routinely be expected from members of this or that category. For example, it is widely acknowledged that 'cry' is bound to the category of 'baby', which is a member of the collection from the 'stage of life' device. In addition, teachers share common responsibilities such as marking students' assignments which lawyers may not share. The interview data collected for study 1 and the film conversations for study 2 contain many examples of activities closely related to certain specific categories of people.

6.5 Participation framework

Section 6.4 gave an account of Membership Categorisation as a framework to incorporate ethnographic information into narrative and conversation analyses. This section will continue with a review of the emergence and development of the Participation Framework and how it is utilised in study 1 and study 2. It will begin with an overview of Goffman's (1981) initiation of participation (section 6.5.1), continue with a discussion of Levinson's (1988) re-conceptualisation of Goffman's concepts (section 6.5.2), and end by introducing Sarangi's (2010) reconfiguration of participant roles (section 6.5.3).

6.5.1 Goffman's (1981) initiation of participation framework

Participation Framework is a model developed by Goffman (1981) to differentiate people's roles while participating in an interaction. Goffman (1981) recognised the inadequacy of the traditional terms 'speaker' and 'hearer'. As such, the author proposed the need to access the underlying forms of participation "by re-examining the primitive notions of speaker and hearer" (pp.128-129) and "decomposing them into smaller, analytically coherent elements" (Goffman, 1981, p. 129). In any specific moment of interaction when a

language user uses a stretch of language, Goffman (1981) argued the speaker may play one of a number of potential roles embedded in that utterance: He may be speaking for himself, but may also be speaking on behalf of another; the stretch of language may be composed by the speaker, but also use another person's words; or the speaker may direct his words to one person, but another may be listening to the words in an inadvertent or 'engineered' way. In other words, in any specific moment of communication, each participant has a specific role.

The term participation refers to those actions performed by participants that reveal their form of involvement within the talk. Participants take on their status in terms of the speaker or hearer role and thereby assume their stance or 'footing' in the talk for each moment of speech. The relation of a participant to his or her own utterance in each moment of speech is referred to as 'participation status', and the combined relation of participation statuses for all participants in the gathering is called 'Participation Framework' for that moment. During the talk each participant's footing – realised in the way he or she speaks – is constantly changed to suit their role in different moment of talk. As Goffman (1981, p. 128) expressed it:

A change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or repetition of an utterance. A change in footing is another way of talking about a change in our frame for events (p. 128)

The analytical framework developed by Goffman focuses on the construction of typologies to categorise different types of participants. For example, categories for types of speakers which he collectively termed production format may include 'animator', 'author', and 'principal'. The set of categories for different hearer's roles, which he called Participation Framework²⁵, is classified into two main types: ratified recipients, and unratified recipients. Ratified, or official, hearers are further categorised into addressed and unaddressed participants whereas unratified, or unofficial hearers, who he referred to as bystanders, include eavesdroppers and over-hearers. Goffman's (1981) participation roles may be summarised as below:

²⁵ It should be noted here that although Goffman used the term 'participation framework' to initially refer to the set of hearer's roles only, he then used it to denote the roles of all participants in an utterance event.

Production format (speaker's roles)

1. Animator: the animator is what Goffman (1981) termed “the sounding box” (p. 226) through which an utterance is produced. In this role the speaker gives voice to the words; “he is the talking machine, a body engaged in acoustic activity, or if you will, an individual active in the role of utterance production” (p. 144).
2. Author: the author is “the agent who scripts the lines” (p. 226). In this role the author is “someone who has selected the sentiments that are being expressed and the words in which they are encoded” (p. 144). In other words, the author is an individual who composes the words uttered by the animator.
3. Principal: the principal is “the party to whose position the words attest” (p. 226). In this role he or she is “someone whose position is established by the words that are spoken, someone whose beliefs have been told, someone who is committed to what the words say” (p. 144). In other words, the principal is the individual or party whose beliefs and viewpoint are represented by the words uttered by the animator and who is socially responsible for what is said.

Participation Framework (hearer's roles)

A. Ratified (p. 226): the official hearers

1. Addressed recipient: “the one to whom the speaker addresses his visual attention and to whom, incidentally, he expects to turn over his speaking role (p. 133)
2. Unaddressed recipient: an additional “official hearer” who may or may not be listening (p. 133).

B. Unratified:

1. Over-hearers: “inadvertent”, “non-official” listeners (p. 132) who are within the hearing range of the utterance event, but are not considered part of the encounter and do not have the participation rights of those who are ratified.
2. Eavesdroppers: “engineered”, “non-official” followers of talk (p. 132)

An example of the production format that demonstrates participants as animator, author, and principal is a politician giving a speech. The politician is the person who actually utters the words and is therefore the animator; the author is the speechwriter who has written the words for the politician to speak; and the principal is the governing political party for whom the politician and the speechwriter work. Goffman (1981) also conceptualised the character described in one's reported speech as the 'figure', although he did not include this role in the production format.

Goffman's (1981) Participation Framework is significant to an analysis of talk-in-interaction because it accommodates the specific participation role a speaker, as well as a hearer, plays at a particular moment in talk-in-interaction. If Sacks' Membership Categorisation (see section 6.4) identifies the participant's status role (e.g. as teacher, student, husband, or wife), Goffman's Participation Framework further specifies the participant's discourse role in each speaking moment (see section 6.5.3 for Sarangi's distinction between social role and interactive role). In discourse analysis it is important to know both the status role and discourse role of the relative to the hearer because it may shape what and how they talk. For example, in a court of law the judge will speak, as defined by his status as a judge, in a way that is different to the way the witness or the accused person speaks. Nonetheless, as the interaction moves on, at a certain moment the judge may speak on behalf of the jury, or the witness may speak on behalf of the accused; that is, they play a new role that emerges contingently within the talk.

Goffman's (1981) Participation Framework provided basic concepts for discourse analysts to describe the language user's role in interaction. The concepts however remain unexplained and insufficient to deal with the wide range of roles a participant may play, and thus fall short of interactional analysis (Goodwin, 2007; Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004; Levinson, 1988; Rae, 2001). For example, Goodwin (2007) critiqued Goffman and stated that "[w]hat he provides is a typology of participants rather than analysis of how utterances are built through the participation of structurally different kinds of actors within ongoing courses of action" (p. 17). More specifically, Goffman (1981) did not clarify the underlying features of the participant roles. For example, it is not clear whether the author and the principal are present at the talk-in-interaction or what category should be used to refer to an individual who speaks and is responsible for his own words (i.e., he plays the role of animator, author and principal simultaneously). Levinson (1988) also discovered

Goffman's categories to be insufficient and thus left some participant roles undesignated, especially when explored through a linguistics lens.

6.5.2 Levinson's (1988) explorations of Goffman's concepts in linguistics

Levinson (1988) proposed a systematic re-categorisation of the terms to denote those involved in the talk-in-interaction. He identified the inability of both traditional schemes and Goffman's Participation Framework to identify certain participant roles, or 'footings' in Goffman's terminology.

In what Levinson (1988) referred to as the 'traditional' approach, the distinction was made in the interaction between first, second and third person in terms of presence and absence. The first person may be 'speaker' if he or she is present or 'source' if he or she is absent. The second person may be 'addressee' if present or 'target' if absent. Lastly, the third party may be 'audience' if present or not considered as part of speech event if absent (Levinson, 1988, p.166). Another traditional approach often referred to as the Communication Theory Model (Lyons, 1977; cited in Levinson, 1988; Shannon & Weaver, 1949), distinguishes 'sender' (source of message) from 'transmitter', and 'destination' (goal of message) from 'receiver'. Accordingly, the model frames the communication process as follows:

sender → transmitter → (via channel) → receiver → destination

Levinson (1988) asserted that both the traditional schemes and Goffman's categories provided insufficient distinctions for certain roles of participants; that is, they left some roles undesignated. He (1988, p.166) re-used the following talk taken from Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974, p. 717) as an example to prove his argument:

- | | | |
|-----|--------|---|
| (1) | Sharon | You didn' come tuh talk tuh Karen? |
| | Mark | No, Karen – Karen 'n I're having a fight, (0.4) after she went out with Keith an' not with (me) |
| | Ruthie | Hah hah hah hah |
| | Karen | Wul Mark, you never asked me out. |

As Levinson (1988) pointed out, Mark's utterance is a reply to Sharon's question and thus makes Sharon the addressed recipient, or addressee in the traditional model of conversation. Moreover, Ruthie is understood as an unaddressed ratified participant or audience. What Karen's role is in this interaction however is undesignated in both the traditional and Goffman (1981) models. In the traditional scheme she is not the audience because she is targeted by Mark's remark. She is also not the target because she is present at the talk. In Goffman's model, because Karen is targeted by Mark's remark she is neither the over-hearer nor the eavesdropper nor the unaddressed recipient. She is also not the addressed recipient because she is referred in the third person (e.g., Karen), which rules her out as an addressee. According to Levinson (1988), Karen in this utterance event should be categorised as an indirect target.

As a result of these deficiencies in the traditional and Goffman (1981) models, Levinson (1988) proposed a more fully developed set of categories in order to cover all participants' roles in the ethnography of speaking. He (1988) classified them into basic and derived categories as follows:

Table 6. 1: A system of basic and derived categories (Levinson, 1988, p. 170)

| |
|--|
| <p>Basic categories:</p> <p>source = informational/illocutionary origin of message</p> <p>target = informational/illocutionary destination of message</p> <p>speaker = utterer</p> <p>addressee = proximate destination</p> <p>participant = a party with a ratified channel-link to other parties</p> |
| <p>Derived categories</p> <p>producer = sources or speakers</p> <p>recipients = addressees or target</p> <p>author = source and speaker</p> <p>relayer = speaker who is not the source</p> <p>goal = an addressee who is the target</p> <p>intermediary = an addressee who is not the target</p> <p>etc.</p> |

Levinson (1988) stated that even though the scheme was quite adequate for most purposes it would be more satisfactory if the categories were broken down into more specific terms, and if an understanding of the underlying categorical dimensions was obtained. Accordingly, he offered a more elaborate set of participant role categories and a set of underlying concepts that defined the features of those roles. For the production end, he coined a number of specific roles, listed in the first column of Table 6.2, such as author, ‘ghostee’, spokesman etc. He also identified a number of underlying dimensions including PARTICIPANT, TRANSMITTER, MOTIVE, and FORM as shown in the first row of Table 6.2.

PARTICIPANT features the state of being present (+PARTIC) or absent (-PARTIC) at the utterance event. As such, Levinson (1988) divided Goffman’s production notions into more elaborate categories. For example, although both ‘ghostor’ and ‘formulator’ are the individuals who construct the words, ‘ghostor’ is the one who is present and ‘formulator’ is the one who is absent. TRANSMITTER refers to the person who actually speaks. A transmitter may speak for him/herself and is thus called the author (source and speaker at the same time); but a transmitter may also speak for another in which case he or she is categorised as a spokesman or simply a relayer. A spokesman has a partial role in the origin of the message in his or her indirectly quoted message; whereas a relayer has no such role because he or she simply quotes the message directly. MOTIVE refers to the desire to communicate a particular message. Goffman (1981) identified only one category – principal – to refer to the person with this desire whereas Levinson (1988) revealed how other production roles also have the desire to communicate (+MOTIVE) such as an author, a ‘ghostee’, a deviser, or a sponsor.

The fourth underlying feature shown in Table 6.2 is FORM and denotes the format of the message. A distinction between +/-FORM is evident when we compare the role of a spokesman and a relayer. As mentioned above, a spokesman may use his own words to indirectly quote one’s speech, so he is said to have his own form (+FORM); but a relayer has to report ‘verbatim’ what another person wants to say without adding his own words. Hence, he does not have his own form of conveying the message (-FORM).

Table 6. 2: Production roles (Levinson, 1988, p. 172)

| Term | PARTIC | TRANS | MOTIVE | FORM | Examples |
|--|--------|-------|--------|------|----------------------------|
| (a) Participant producer roles | | | | | |
| author | + | + | + | + | ordinary speaker |
| ‘ghostee’ | + | + | + | - | ghosted speaker |
| spokesman | + | + | - | + | barrister |
| relayer | + | + | - | - | reader of statement |
| deviser | + | - | + | + | statement maker |
| sponsor | + | - | + | - | defendant in court |
| ‘ghostor’ | + | - | - | + | co-present ghost writer |
| (b) Non-participant producer roles | | | | | |
| ultimate source | - | - | + | + | source of military command |
| producer | - | - | + | - | delegate’s constituents |
| formulator | - | - | - | + | absent ghost writer |
| <p>Redundancy rule: + TRANSMITTER \longrightarrow (implies) +PARTIC corollary: -PARTIC \longrightarrow -TRANSMITTER</p> <p>Useful superordinate categories (unspecified for other features): speaker = +TRANS (Goffman’s animator) composer = +FORM (Goffman’s author) motivator = +MOTIVE (Goffman’s principal) source = (+MOTIVE, +FORM)</p> | | | | | |

As shown in Table 6.2, the role of transmitter (+TRANSMITTER) such as an author, ‘ghostee’, spokesman, or relayer will naturally be a participant (redundancy rule). Consequently, those who are not participants will not be transmitters (corollary of redundancy rule), for example an ultimate source such as a producer or a formulator. In contrast, being a participant does not always presuppose being a transmitter or ‘sounding box’ in Goffman’s (1981) terms. For example, a deviser, a sponsor, and a ‘ghostor’ are participants who produce a message, but do not speak the message.

On the reception end, Levinson (1988) put forward what he called “underlying discriminations” (p. 171); namely, ADDRESS, RECIPIENT, PARTICIPANT, and

CHANNEL-LINK to describe reception role characteristics. ADDRESS refers to the act of picking out a recipient by means of either verbal or non-verbal forms such as second-person pronouns, vocatives or gaze, or a combination thereof. Therefore, an interlocutor is different from an indirect target in that the former is addressed (+ADDRESS) whereas the latter is not (-ADDRESS). RECIPIENT denotes the person at whom the message is targeted. An indirect target for example is thus the person for whom the message is intended (+RECIPIENT), while an intermediary or an audience does not have that characteristic (-RECIPIENT). A PARTICIPANT is characterised by what Goffman (1981) called a “ratified role”, and presupposes a CHANNEL-LINKAGE or the ability to receive the message (Levinson, 1988, p. 174).

Table 6. 3: Reception roles (Levinson, 1988, p. 173)

| Term | ADD- RESS | RECIP -IENT | PARTICI -PANT | CHANNEL -LINK | Examples |
|---|--------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| (a) Participant reception roles | | | | | |
| interlocutor | + | + | + | + | ordinary addressee |
| indirect target | - | + | + | + | see Karen in (1) |
| intermediary | + | - | + | + | committee chairman |
| audience | - | - | + | + | see Ruthie in (1) |
| (b) Non-participant reception roles | | | | | |
| over-hearer | - | - | - | + | By-stander |
| targeted over-hearer | - | + | - | + | Barbadian ‘butt’ |
| ultimate destination | - | + | - | - | |
| Redundancy rule: +PARTICIPANT \longrightarrow +CHANNEL-LINK (Corollary: -CHANNEL-LINK \longrightarrow -PARTICIPANT) +ADDRESS \longrightarrow +PARTICIPANT Useful superordinate classes: recipient = +RECIPIENT addressee = +ADDRESS participant = +PARTIC hearers = +CHANNEL-LINK etc. | | | | | |

According to Levinson (1988,) an incumbent of a reception role who is ratified in an utterance event (+PARTICIPANT) (e.g., interlocutor, indirect target, or audience) automatically has the ability to receive the message (+CHANNEL-LINK). As a result, those who do not have the ability to receive the message (-CHANNEL-LINK) will not be a participant (-PARTICIPANT) as in the case of a person who is the ultimate destination. It is impossible however to infer that if a person is able to get the message he or she will be the one who is ratified. For example, an over-hearer and a targeted over-hearer have the ability to receive the message, yet they are not participants. A similar rule of the relationship between ADDRESS and PARTICIPANT are shown in Table 6.3: A person who is addressed (e.g., by vocative or gaze etc.) is, as a matter of course, a participant in the utterance event. Nonetheless, being a participant does not guarantee one's being addressed. For example, both an interlocutor and an indirect target are participants, but only the former is addressed.

Unlike Goffman (1981), Levinson (1988) also drew a distinction between utterance-event and speech-event. Using an interactive seminar as an example, Levinson (1988) represented the entire seminar process as the speech event and the specific talk in the seminar as the utterance event. Thus, the guest speaker at the seminar may be designated speaker in the speech event sense even when the person referred to as speaker in the utterance event sense is doing the talking. As such, he claimed Goffman's (1981) categories were only applicable to conversation and not to other kinds of activities such as podium talk that requires other activity-specific and culturally-relative categories (Levinson, 1988, p. 170). For example, there may be a moment of talk "when the speaker with the current turn is not to be thought of as the source of the message, or when there is no other party being addressed, or where who is addressed is not the intended destination or target" (Levinson, 1988, pp.175-176). Another example is when "a speaker may seek a particular individual (e.g., by gaze) as an addressee, but that party may choose not to attend in that capacity; meanwhile another party may attempt to usurp the role of addressee by displays of reciprocity" (p. 176).

For Levinson (1988), the difficulties related to the general applicability of Goffman's Participation Framework also presented in the fact that his categories were inadequate for languages that require special grammatical categories to denote participant roles. Some languages are without third-person pronouns because 'third person' is a residual category –

neither speaker nor addressee. Indeed “some languages appear to lack proper pronouns, using third person titles for reference to speaker and hearer” (Levinson, 1988, p. 183). In Vietnamese for example person deixis may denote participant role or be directly encoded by kinship terms or common non-kin terms (see chapter 2). In other languages, person deixis may be encoded in ways other than pronouns such as vocative forms or verb agreement.

The final issue raised by Levinson (1988) is that a speaker may speak not only for himself (author), but also for other like-minded principals. He quotes Schegloff (1982(1988, p. 203) when stating that linguistic, philosophical and psychological traditions treat the utterance as:

the product of a single speaker and a single mind whereas the conversation-analytic angle of inquiry does not let go of the fact that [...] more than one participant is present and relevant to the talk, even when only one does any talking (1988, p. 203).

Moreover, adopting Goodwin’s (1979) argument, Levinson (1988) wrote, “a single unit, whether sentence token or turn, may have different persons in the same participant roles throughout the course of its production” (p. 205).

6.5.3 Sarangi’s (2010) reconfiguration of roles

The fact that an utterance may represent different participant roles, different occupations, or incumbents, as Levinson (1988) terms them, of a role is echoed by Sarangi (2010). In his insightful article, Sarangi (2010) makes a distinction between those often interchangeably used notions namely self, identity, status and role among which role is the central notion often explored in relation to one or all of the other. For example, using Linton’s (1971, p. 112) words, the author distinguished between status and role: status referring to “the position of an individual in the prestige system of a society” (p. 36), and role designating “the sum total of the culture patterns associated with a particular status” (Sarangi, 2010, p. 36). Sarangi (2010) posited, also using Linton’s (1971, p. 112) words, “a role is the dynamic aspect of a status: what the individual has to do in order to validate his occupation of the status” (p. 36). We may note also that a distinction between identity and role is made by Goffman (1974): personal identity referring to an individual or a person, and role referring to “a capacity, namely, a specialised function which the person may

perform during a given series of occasions” (p. 128). Role may thus be understood as a specific realisation of an occupation or status, or a specific function of identity. In addition, status or identity may entail different roles in different contexts. In turn, Sarangi (2010) developed a figure-ground²⁶ metaphorical comparison between role and the other three notions namely identity, status and self, stating, “role can be said to be the figure while identity, status and self remain the ground” (p. 53). Moreover, the author asserted that role is “more operationalisable at the social interactional level; particularly in the institutional / professional domains than in the notions of self, identity and status” (Sarangi 2010, p. 54). As such, identity, status and self are established in interaction by participants via Sacks’ Membership Categorisation (section 6.4) and roles are determined within Goffman’s Participation Framework (section 6.5.1). It may be concluded therefore that the Participation Framework helps to identify a specific participant role (or figure) from the already-established identity, status, and self (background).

Sarangi (2010) also offered a useful and comprehensible review of the types of roles: activity roles vs. discourse roles; social roles vs. interactive roles; and multiple roles vs. role-set. First, activity roles are those assigned to participants on the basis of the activity-type in which the individuals are participating. For example, in a meeting a participant is a chairperson, another is a minute taker, some others are committee members and so forth. The roles are thus usually defined in relation to other participants. A chairperson for example is not legitimate in the meeting without the co-presence of other committee members, and the activity role of chairperson terminates after the meeting. Within an activity, the chairperson may also change his or her footing at a certain moment to articulate his or her own view as a committee member rather than as chairperson. Discourse roles, on the other hand, refer to the relationship between the participants and the message; that is, the roles played on behalf of another. For instance, a committee member may speak for all other present and absent members. A social role may be understood as the role inherent to an incumbent of status or identity; whereas an interactive role refers to one that has been adjusted due to the presence of another or other participants; that is, the role in a specific context.

²⁶ Figure-ground organization, in Gestalt psychology, is known as identifying a *figure* from the *background* ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Figure-ground_\(perception\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Figure-ground_(perception)))

Role-set refers to the different roles associated with the same status. As Merton (1968) declared:

the single status of medical student entails not only the role of a student in relation to his teachers, but also an array of other roles relating the occupant of that status to other students, nurses, physicians, social workers, medical technicians, etc. (p. 423)

With regard to multiple roles, Merton (1968) stated:

Multiple roles refer to the complex of roles associated, not with a single social status, but with various statuses (often, in differing institutional spheres) in which individuals find themselves – the roles, for example, connected with the distinct statuses of teacher, wife, mother, Catholic, Republican and so on. We designate this complement of social statuses of an individual as his status-set, each of these statuses in turn having its distinctive role-set (pp. 423-424).

The important point made by Sarangi (2010), Goffman (1981) and Levinson (1988) is that one's roles are continually and situationally transformed and constructed in close relation to the presence of other participants. Sack's Membership Categorisation and Goffman's Participation Framework are closely inter-related in the sense that when a speaker takes a specific participant role, of course in relative relation to the hearer(s), he is categorising himself and those hearer(s).

6.6 Nexus of practice

The concept of the nexus of practice emerged from Scollon's Mediated Discourse Theory which he referred to as "a theory about social action with a specific focus on discourse as a kind of social action as well as upon discourse as a component of social action" (p. 6). Scollon posited that discourse is only one of many tools language users draw upon to take actions; and all social actions occur within a nexus of practice. For example, the social action – or mediated action – of having a cup of coffee occurs in a nexus of practice which may include ordering practices, pricing practices, discursive practices, drinking practices, and physical spacing practices among others (Scollon, 2001). The nexus of practice concept implies that most social practices "can be linked variably to different practices in different sites of engagement and among different participants". For example, the practice of handing an object to another person may be linked to practices which constitute the action of someone's borrowing a notebook from a classmate, or it may be linked to

practices which constitute the action of giving a gift to an old parent when someone visits a friend's house for the first time.

Assertions that the speech act of refusing occurs in a complex nexus of practice are based on three explicit factors. First, refusing is by nature the second pair part in an adjacency pair. As such it is always preceded by an initiating act such as requesting or inviting. Second, refusing is by and large a face-threatening act. In turn, the person who wants to refuse tends to do other things – linguistically or non-linguistically – such as request back for clarification, or shoulder shrug or smile in order to mitigate the threat and this often results in several turns. Third, the person who makes the request also tends to reduce the imposition (face-threatening aspect) of the request by engaging in a number of pre-request actions.

The important point to clarify is how the nexus of practice aligns with Membership Categorisation and Participation Framework. The nexus of practice makes implicit or explicit claims to the social groups and positions of all participants, arguing that any action is likely to reproduce or claim the identities of prior actions as well as negotiate new positions among the participants within this nexus of practice. In other words, participants produce and claim their identities through their social actions, and as a consequence, they simultaneously produce 'others' who are identified by not being members of their own nexus of practice.

6.7 Multimodal interactional analysis

A speaker's meaning is conveyed by words in addition to other means of communication such as images, gaze, gesture, posture and so on. Accordingly, modes of communication other than language have increasingly been explored in recent research, due in no small part to the development of technologies for visual representational and communicational possibilities. In turn, multimodality has emerged as a new field of application.

Multimodality is defined by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) as "[T]he use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event" (p. 20). It is an approach that assumes communication always draws on a multiplicity of modes or ways of meaning-making. It aims to analyse and describe the full repertoire of meaning-making resources people use in their communication including verbal, non-verbal, non-vocal, and material

layout, and objects brought to the interaction. As such, communication modes such as gaze, gesture and posture are no longer only considered as means to support or modify speech. Rather, they are regarded as having the potential to create meaning in its own right. This perception of multimodality does not imply that language would be sidelined as sometimes being misunderstood (Scollon & Scollon, 2009) because, as Jewitt (2009b) explained, “[a] key aspect of multimodality is indeed the analysis of language, but language as it is nestled and embedded within a wider semiotic frame” (Jewitt, 2009b, p. 2). Norris (2004) also claimed that multimodal analyses “step away from the notion that language always plays the central role in interaction, without denying that it often does” (p. 2).

According to Jewitt (2009a), there are three main approaches to multimodality. The first is the Social Semiotic approach represented by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001). This approach is based on Halliday’s theories of social semiotics and systemic functional grammar. The second is Systemic Functional Grammar represented by O’Halloran (2004, 2005; cited in Jewitt, 2009a, p. 29). The third is Multimodal Interactional Analysis (or MIA for short) represented by Scollon and Scollon (2003), Norris (2004), and Norris and Jones (2005). Since study 3 explores Vietnamese refusing in a TV series (i.e., refusing in interactions) MIA is a suitable tool of analysis, and thus a brief review of this approach is provided in the following paragraphs.

MIA emerged from the ethnographic study of everyday interactions in which language is viewed as only one of the many modes of meaning-making. Scollon’s (2001) mediated discourse and Nexus Analysis, Goffman’s (1983) interactional sociology, Gumperz’s (1982) interactional sociolinguistics, and Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2001) multimodality are the foundations of this approach (Jewitt, 2009a). As such, it inherits from interactional sociolinguistics its focus on real time interaction and language in use, from mediated discourse and Nexus Analysis its emphasis on mediated action, and from multimodality its analysis of semiotic sources other than language (Norris, 2004, p. 10). In other words, MIA places considerable emphasis on the notion of context and situated interaction to explore how a variety of modes are brought into and constitutive of social interaction.

The emergence of MIA also benefitted from the development of visual communication technologies that enable researchers to collect video recordings via either ethnographic

fieldwork or ready-made products such as TV programmes and movies. Analysis of the images, sound, gesture, posture, gaze, music, and movement elements in those sources represents radical progress compared to the two alternative approaches to multimodality in which the objects of study are mainly printed texts.

The object of study in MIA is the mediated action. In turn, because all actions are mediated (Norris, 2004, p. 13), the unit of analysis in MIA is referred to as *the action*. The conversation in which refusing occurs may be called an action comprised of a number of smaller actions such as uttering a stretch of language, performing gestures, or preparing the material objects. Each smaller action is mediated by a system of representation including body parts such as tongue, lips for spoken language, or hands and fingers for manual gestures (Norris, 2004).

It should be noted here that CA has been used to analyze how participants use different modes of communication other than language such as gaze, embodiment, space, and objects (e.g., Goodwin, 2014a, 2014b); however, MIA has further developed a detail and systematic description of types of linguistic, paralinguistic and non-linguistic actions, and established a framework of such notions as embodied and disembodied modes, lower-level action and higher-level action among others (see below). Therefore, MIA is used in this research project as complementary to our CA-informed analyses of interactions in a TV series.

CA approach to multimodality is different from MIA in two fundamental ways areas (Mortensen, 2013). First, the latter often analyse each semiotic mode in its own right whereas CA approach to multimodality does not describe each mode independently, but as an interplay between various semiotic fields. Second, although MIA assumes that every mode is relevant and affects the ongoing interaction, it does not adopt an emic approach as CA does. In other words, it does not necessarily include a social (i.e., the participants' understanding of prior turn and taking next turn) interactional perspective in the analysis. As such, whereas MIA assumes that every semiotic mode is relevant, CA assumes that "everything *might* be relevant, but is not necessarily made relevant by the participants." (Mortensen, 2013, p.2)

Since I draw on movie conversations, I need to analyse both how the participants (i.e., the actors and actresses) make relevant the communication modes at hand (more exactly, how

the movie makers direct them to make use of those modes) and how the film makers make relevant other modes independent from the job of the actors and actresses. That is the main reason why I draw on both CA and MCA in this study.

In order to apply MIA it is necessary to understand the following basic concepts reviewed below.

6.7.1 Embodied vs disembodied modes

According to Norris (2004), although language has great informative and expressive value and is often the main tool of meaning-making, it is not the only means of communication in interaction. There are other modes such as gaze, gesture, and posture which are no longer considered as merely embellishments to language. They are now regarded as potentially playing an equal, or even superordinate, role to the mode of language in many interactions. For Norris (2004), modes that have equal value and which may play the main role in a particular interaction are called embodied modes. Disembodied modes, on the other hand, are the modes of the material world that people use in interaction such as print, music, and layout. Disembodied modes may become embodied however when they take a superordinate role in interaction. For example, music may be embodied when people use their musical instruments to express their thoughts or feeling. It may also be disembodied when individuals simply over-hear and react to the music being played by others.

6.7.2 Lower-level action vs higher-level action

A lower-level action is the smallest interactional meaning unit of communicative modes; whereas higher-level action is action at a large scale which is bracketed by an opening and a closing, and composed of a chain of lower-level actions (Norris, 2004, p. 11). A high-level action may comprise higher-level actions and thus it may be referred to as an overarching higher-level action.

6.7.3 Frozen action vs fluid action

According to Norris (2004), frozen actions are actions performed at an earlier time; that is, prior to the real-time moment of the interaction being analysed. Fluid actions, on the other hand, are actions that occur during the interaction.

6.7.4 Modal density, modal intensity and modal complexity

Density is a concept borrowed from physics and refers to “ mass per unit volume, which is the ratio of the amount of matter in an object compared to its volume (i.e., density = mass/volume)” (Norris, 2009, p. 82). Norris (2009, p. 82) wrote; “the density of a piece of lead is higher than the density of a piece of cork of the same size ... [and] the amalgamation of various metals has greater density than a ball of paper” (p. 82). Analogously, modal density refers to the number of specific modes utilised in a specific interaction. High-modal density may be achieved by modal intensity and/or modal complexity.

Modal intensity may be compared to the piece of lead above, which refers to the weight or the importance of specific modes at certain points of time in the interaction. In other words, communicative modes may take on particular intensity when they play the main meaning-making role at certain points of the interaction. For example, when an individual is talking on the phone, the most important mode being used is language even though the person is utilising other modes as well such as his or her posture and gesture. As such, spoken language as a communicative mode takes on a high intensity.

Modal complexity, on the other hand, may be compared to the amalgam above, referring to the intricately intertwined multiple modes an individual uses. For example, during a dinner-time conversation, participants, or social actors, may draw on a number of communicative modes such as spoken language, gesture, gaze, object and layout inter alia.

6.7.5 Attention vs awareness

The distinction between attention and awareness is necessary given a participant in an interaction may simultaneously engage in several higher-level actions. Imagine, for example, a mother talking on the phone while looking after her baby playing on the floor. In this situation the mother is involved in two higher-level actions simultaneously; namely, talking on the phone and taking care of the baby. The latter action may require some gesture or even verbal mode to control the baby. According to Norris (2004), the mother is attentive to the talking, but also aware of the baby and its need for some sort of communication. Norris (2004) called this type of dual engagement two levels of

attention/awareness. There are also three levels of attention/awareness when a participant is involved in three higher-level actions simultaneously.

6.7.6 Foreground-background continuum

The foreground-background continuum refers to the degree of attention/awareness a social actor pays to each higher-level action. Foregrounded actions are higher-level actions “that a participant highly attends to and/or highly reacts to, and/or highly acts upon” (Norris, 2004, p. 97). Conversely, backgrounded actions are those in which a higher-level action is performed with only a small level of awareness and/or reaction. Actions that receive only a medium degree of attention/awareness are referred to as mid-grounded actions (Norris, 2004, p. 97).

Norris (2004) posited that the distinction between foregrounded, mid-grounded and backgrounded actions is heuristic; that is, there is no clear-cut difference between them and they are used for explanatory reasons only. Therefore, a higher-level action may be placed at any point on the foreground-background continuum depending on the level of attention/awareness and, accordingly, on the degree of modal density. Moreover, there may be more or less than the three types (i.e., foregrounded, mid-grounded and backgrounded). A participant in interaction is usually aware of several higher-level actions concurrently, but with different levels of awareness and thus employing different degrees of modal density. To illustrate his point Norris (2004, pp. 101-106) discussed the example of interaction in which six higher-level actions were performed simultaneously: two foregrounded actions, one mid-grounded action, two actions lying between mid-ground and background, and one background action.

6.8 Summary and conclusion

Chapter 6 briefly reviewed the analytical tools drawn on for the analyses of the interview data in study 1) and the TV series conversations (study 2). Although each of the tools had its own role in the analyses, they were in fact mutually supportive.

Narratives were used in study 1 both as a tool for data collection (because it is an important part of the interview) and as a tool of analysis. Narrative as an analytical tool was also

considered as social practice (de Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008), and this is reflected in the method used to analyse the interviews (Talmy, 2010, Talmy & Richard, 2011),

Although Narrative Analysis is informed by CA and ethnomethodology, it differs from pure CA in that it takes socio-cultural elements into account. As such, Membership Categorisation analysis and Participation Framework make their way. Membership Categorisation analysis is undertaken to reveal how participants (both native speakers of Vietnamese in study 1 and television characters in the chosen film in study 2) construct their status and identity; whereas Participation Framework is utilised to document what specific role(s) they have in each speaking moment.

Echoing this orientation, the CA used in study 2 was complemented by ethnographic information provided by Membership Categorisation and Participation Framework analyses (Antaki, 2011; T. H. Nguyễn, 2009). Conversations being analysed in study 2 are extracted from a TV series, which are not naturally-occurring data; therefore, we bear in mind that how the participants (i.e., the actors and actresses in the series) interact in those conversations should not be taken for granted as how real people do in their everyday life, but as the reflection of how they tend to do in reality.

Finally, Nexus Analysis and Multimodal Interactional Analysis facilitated the investigation and explication of filmic data. Refusing is the second pair part in an interaction and is potentially face-threatening and as such it often occurs in a complex nexus of practice in which a number of modes of communication may be used to convey the message of refusing.

Chapter 7: Socio-cultural affordances conditioning and constraining Vietnamese refusing

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the ethnographic-based study (study 1). It explains the affordances²⁷ (Gibson, 1977) – socio-cultural factors and resources – which influence the choices between refusing and accepting/ agreeing.

Vietnamese native speakers were recruited for this study to take part in semi-structured interviews, either individually or as part of a focus group, to discuss a set of situations and scenarios (Appendix 2) in which refusing is likely to occur. The situations and scenarios were based on the findings in previous research on Vietnamese refusing and on my own experiences and observations. As such, although they seem to be imaginary, they can be said to be authentic in the sense that they reflect what usually really happen in real life (see the explanation of ‘imaginary’ and ‘natural’ in section 5.5.1.2). Moreover, in this study, they are treated as ‘triggers’ for the participants to recall and tell about their own real cases of refusing.

Throughout the data analysis process the interviews were regarded as social practices (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995b, 1997; Talmy, 2010; Talmy & Richards, 2011). As such, not only the content of the interview but also how it was expressed were analysed, (see section 5.5.1.3). To facilitate this process, Narrative Analysis (de Fina, 2008; de Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008; Georgakopoulou, 2006), Sacks’ (Sacks, 1972b, 1974, 1992a, 1992b) Membership Categorisation, and Goffman’s (1981) Participation Framework

²⁷ The construct of affordance was coined by the American psychologist James Gibson (1977, 1979) to refer to a particular quality of an object, or of an environment, that allows an organism to perform an action. In this study, this notion is adopted to refer to socio-cultural factors that condition or constrain the speech act of refusing.

(including Levinson's [1988] further development of Goffman's framework, and Sarangi's [2010] discussion on role/status/identity/self) were utilised as analytical tools.

It should be noted here that the interview data is huge but only a small part of it was selected for analysis and most of this small part is related to the scenario of borrowing money. During the process of interviewing, transcribing and analysing the data, I found out that this scenario was discussed more enthusiastically than the others, and the participants could relate it better to their own cases of lending or borrowing money. This fact shows that the practice of lending and borrowing money is rather popular in the contemporary Vietnamese society. Thus the emphasis on analysing data generated from this scenario reflects my categorisation work. According to Candlin & Sarangi (2003), the analyst's categorisation work refers to the selection of the research theme, recruitment of participants, selection and application of analytical tools, and the dissemination of data. This categorisation work, in turn, reflects my motivational relevancies (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001) in that being a member of Vietnamese culture I can ascertain which aspect of the researched should be emphasized. One may argue that the emphasis on one or two scenarios may bias the results since it curtails the objectivity of the data. However, as Sarangi & Candlin (2001) argue, an objective description in a qualitative study is not possible because the analyst has already had a pre-understanding of the research theme and never comes naïve to the data.

The following sections give a brief account of the socio-cultural values or 'affordances' coined by Gibson (1977) (section 7.2). They also explicate specific affordances that condition and constrain Vietnamese refusing; namely, collectivism (section 7.3), responsibilities (section 7.4), harmony (section 7.5), trust (section 7.6), patriarchy (section 7.7), and corruption (section 7.8). Section 7.9 provides a summary of the findings and the main conclusion drawn.

7.2 Affordances: socio-cultural values and practices conditioning and constraining refusing



Figure 7. 1: Socio-cultural affordances conditioning and constraining Vietnamese refusing

Figure 7.1 displays six socio-cultural affordances revealed from the analysis of the interview data. In fact, the participants mentioned a wide range of socio-cultural factors that may influence their decision of whether to refuse or accept/agree, but they could be grouped in the six categories identified above. For example, some participants said that they refused to lend some amounts of money because they were afraid the borrower could

not pay it back. This reason for refusing can be put under the category of *Trust*. The grouping of these affordances is itself, as Sarangi and Candlin (2003) argued, categorisation work of the researcher. In this study, it is based on the researcher's knowledge of the culture of Vietnam and as such it reflects his perspective (see chapter 5).

It should be mentioned that although the affordances are discussed separately in the following sections for the sake of analytic convenience, they are by no means separate. That is, they may presuppose or entail one another. For example, responsibilities may presuppose some kind of relationship with collectivism and may influence the harmony strategies used.

Accordingly, Figure 7.1 shows circles representing the affordances arranged around the focal theme – refusing. This figure demonstrates that refusing is influenced by all of these factors, but the degree of impact of each factor differs, depending on the specific context in which the refusal takes place. Thus, there are refusing situations in which the refuser is influenced more by the need to fulfil his/her responsibilities than by other factors, even though the other factors may also have an effect on him/her.

In the following paragraphs a brief definition of the affordances is provided.

First, *Collectivism* is a prominent cultural feature of Eastern countries including Vietnam. It is defined by Triandis (1995) as:

a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribe, nation); are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by, those collectives; are willing to give priority to the goals of these collectives over their own personal goals; and emphasize their connectedness to members of these collectives (p. 2).

As such, Vietnamese people are expected to think in terms of 'we' rather than 'I' (see chapter 2).

Second, *Responsibility* involves liability and obligation. Each type of relationship evokes one or more types of responsibilities. For example, in a family the parents have to provide their children with care and love, and the children are expected to obey their parents and take care of them when they get old. In general, pursuant to Confucianism, everyone must fulfil his/her own role (see chapter 2).

Third, *Harmony* refers the state of being in agreement, concord, and peaceful mutual existence. It is generally regarded as essential in everyday interactions and thus often entails of number of strategies such as indirectness to avoid conflict and humiliation. Harmony may refer to long-term intimate relationships, or it may only denote the relationship state at the moment of speaking. In other words, harmony may be evident in the peaceful face-to-face interactions between people, but it does not necessarily mean they have a good long-term relationship.

Fourth, *Trust* foregrounds the credibility one possesses. A trustworthy person is deemed to have a number of qualities such as being honest, well-behaved, promise-keeping, and especially financially reliable. Such qualities can be revealed through everyday rituals, behaviours, and interactions with others. For example, a person who is lazy and often plays around cannot be regarded as trustworthy.

Fifth, *Patriarchy* foregrounds the higher status of men over women in Vietnamese society. Influenced by Confucian ethics, men in Vietnam are regarded as superior to women and thus a husband/father has absolute authority in the household. Women have limited rights and take a secondary role in the family. Their role is dictated in the three obediences and four virtues (see chapter 2).

Sixth, *Corruption* is the abuse of a position of trust, especially by people with authority. One of the most common realisations of corruption is bribery; either the action of giving or taking bribes.

Each of the affordance categories is documented in detail in the following sections, and illustrated with examples from the data.

7.3 Collectivism

As mentioned in chapter 2 (section 2.3.2), Vietnamese people are collectivistic; that is, they are motivated and constrained by the norms or principles of the collective, or group, to which they belong. There are different types of collectives ranging from familial to professional to regional and so on. In this section, we would like to present one type of collective namely family/clan.

The following excerpt is extracted from a focus group interview with three female secondary school teachers whose pseudonyms are Thơm, Hoa, and Duyên. The conversation prior to this excerpted section involved the women giving their opinions about how to refuse a nephew or a niece who wanted to borrowed money from them. They all argued that they would refuse directly by saying they did not have cash at that time. In this excerpt, Thơm talks about whether or not she would lend money to her senior relatives.

Excerpt 7.3.1: Borrowing money

1. Int: *nhưng nếu mình là bề dưới thì chắc là không thể nói như thế ?*
but if body be lower-ranked then perhaps not able say like that
But if you are a lower-ranked person, perhaps you can't say like that?
2. Thơm: *vâng nếu là bề dưới thì ví dụ như nhà em thì nếu mà sống ở*
yes if be lower-ranked then example house younger sibling then if live in
No. I can't, if I am a lower-ranked person, for example, like my family, if we live
3. *cái vùng (.) nếu mà đi làm dâu ở cái vùng nông thôn nó vẫn còn có cái*
region if go do daughter-in-law in Class. region rural it still have Class.
in (.) if I become a daughter-in-law in the rural area where village customs still exist,
4. *lệ làng một chút ý thì ví dụ như là bác hoặc là chú hoặc kể cả là*
rule village a little then example be senior uncle or be junior uncle or even be
so if an uncle or a grandfather asks to borrow money, even though
5. *ông họ nếu mà hỏi cho vay dù không có vẫn phải đi vay để cho vay*
grandfather outer if ask borrow though not have still have to go borrow to lend
we don't have enough, we have to borrow from somewhere else to lend to them
6. Int: *ừ à thế à trong dòng họ á*
yes that QuesM in clan QuesM
yeah uh really? In your clan?
7. Thơm: *vâng ở Phú Bình em là như thế*
yes in Phú Bình younger sibling be like that
Yes, it's true in Phú Bình, my hometown.
8. Int: *à thế á*
oh that QuesM
Oh. Really?
9. Thơm: *thực ra thì nó cũng không phải là lên một cái lịch hoặc là lên một cái giấy tờ*
in fact then it also not have to be make a Class. calendar or be make a Class. paper
In fact, it's not like we established a schedule or a document to make it that way
10. *để mà phải như thế nhưng bởi vì cái lệ của gia đình nó như thế rồi*
so as have to like that but because Class. rule of family it like that already

- but it's an existing custom in the family .**
11. *thế cho nên mặc dù mình không có nhiều chẳng hạn người ta vay*
so although self not have much example they borrow
So, although we don't have a lot, but for example they ask to borrow money
12. *ý là người ta vay như thế này nhưng mình không có nhiều*
mean they borrow like this but self not have much
like they want to borrow this much but we don't have enough, we still
13. *mình cũng vẫn phải góp một phần kia hoặc mình đi vay một chút ở kia*
self also still have to contribute one part or body go borrow a little there
have to lend to them one part of that sum, or we have to borrow from somewhere
14. *để mình bù cho người ta đấy đôi lúc không phải là do mình muốn*
so that body compensate for them that sometimes not be because self want
else to lend them the money. So, sometimes it's not because we want to do so but it's,
15. *mà là do một cái nếp sống của gia đình nhà mình nó như thế*
but be because one Class. life style of family house self it like that
because our family's norms are like that.

In responding to the interviewer's question (line 1), Thom introduced herself as a daughter-in-law in a family living in a rural region where the principles of her husband's clan (also the village's principles) should be strictly observed (line 3, 10). Her membership categorisation as a daughter-in-law implies that once she became a member of her husband's family and clan, she had to follow its rules although she may not agree with these rules. Indeed, as she said in lines 14 and 15 -"it's not because we want to do so but it's because our family's norms are like that"- she seems to be presenting these norms as "their" (i.e., her husband's family) norms rather than "my" norms, and the fact that she has to reluctantly follow these norms is her responsibility as a daughter-in-law rather than of a daughter. As such, she is indicating her category as a non-immediate family member.

In mentioning "rural area where village customs still exist" (line 3), Thom was also categorising that a village in a rural region is a membership categorisation device (or MCD), the rules of which determine certain category-bound activities (Sacks, 1974, see section 6.4). Traditionally, a clan's principles tend to become the village rules because most members of the clan tend to stay and live in the same village. Thus, a village may consist of people from only one or two clans, and the rules of the clan then become the rules of the whole village. Thom did not identify the village rules explicitly, but it may be inferred that the rules related to her husband's responsibilities to help senior relatives,

especially in terms of financial issues (i.e., her husband's category-bound activity). These responsibilities are embedded in the filial piety every child is expected to demonstrate. To follow these rules, she and her husband would have to spare no expense to lend money to their uncles or grandfathers²⁸ (line 4), even if they had to borrow the money from others (line 5).

The interview is a social practice since the interviewer has his own role in the co-construction of the meaning in the talk. Basing on his own knowledge that these principles do not seem to be popular among Vietnamese people in the present market economy, the interviewer challenged Thom by making a confirming question on line 6 (i.e., the question to require her to confirm her point of view). She responded to the question by reaffirming that it was true in Phú Bình – her hometown (line 7). By saying this, she is speaking for herself as well as for the people of Phú Bình – a rural district where the traditional norms of helping senior relatives are still strictly observed as she admits that her husband's hometown - Phú Bình – is a “rural area where village customs still exist”. In doing so, she is acting as both an *author* and a *spokesman* in Levinson's (1988) terms, and the people of Phú Bình can be referred to as the *figure* according to Goffman (1981) (see 6.5.2). When the interviewer showed his surprise by repeating the question (line 8), Thom made some sort of repair (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977) by explaining that the principles were not necessarily recorded in written form; rather they existed as implicit moral codes (line 9) that every family member must know. The interviewer's doubt demonstrates that not all the content of the narratives is taken at face value by the interviewer.

Although the principles are only ethical codes and are not determined by state laws, it appears Thom had no way to refuse her uncles' or grandfathers' requests, even though she did not really want to lend money to them. It may be concluded that she agreed to lend them money, not because she willingly wished to do that (line 14), but because she had to reluctantly fulfil her filial duty (line 15). As such, Thom and her husband in this excerpt “are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by” their clan, and “are

²⁸ Uncles and grandfathers do not necessarily have immediate relationship with the child. For example, one's grandfather's or grandmother's brother is also referred to as his/her grandfather.

willing to give priority to the goals of” their clan (Triandis, 1995, p. 2). In doing so, they “emphasize their connectedness to members of” their clan (Triandis, 1995, p. 2).

7.4 Responsibility

Responsibility raises issues of liability and obligation. It may bring into focus a person’s liability towards his or her relatives, brothers and sisters, and parents.

The excerpt below is extracted from a narrative told by Huyền, a 39-year-old woman who divorced her husband several years before the interview took place. It is an example of a refusal that took place because a daughter wanted to implement her mother’s wish before the mother died.

Excerpt 7.4.1. A narrative by Huyền

1. Huyền: *thì trong gia đình em cái hoàn cảnh của gia đình em*
TopM in family younger sibling CLass situation of family younger sibling
so in my family, the situation of my family is very different from
2. *nó (.) rất là khác với các gia đình (1.5)*
it very different from PluM families
that of other families:
3. Int: *ừ*
Uh/yes
Uh/yes
4. *mẹ em thì mất sớm mà em thì là chị cả (1.0)*
mother younger sibling EmM die early and younger sibling TopM be sister eldest
my mother died young and I am the eldest sister.
5. *cho nên là thực ra trước cái giai đoạn mất mẹ mất*
so be in fact before Class. Period died mother died
In fact, before my mother died,
6. *thì cũng là (.) vô tư không nghĩ ngợi gì cả nhưng từ lúc mẹ mất*
TopM also be happy-go-lucky not think what all but since time mother die
I had been quite happy-go-lucky. Since my mother died however,
7. *thì cái suy nghĩ với lại cái (0.5) hành động của mình nó cũng lớn hơn*
TopM Class. thought and Class. action of self it also mature more
I have become more mature with my thoughts and behaviours.
8. *thì lúc đấy thì em cũng đã lấy chồng được một năm*
TopM time that TopM younger sibling also already marry husband for one year
At that time, I had been married for one year. During that that time,
9. *thì cái giai đoạn ấy chồng em nhất quyết bắt em*
TopM Class. period that husband younger sibling firmly force younger sibling

my husband insisted that I

10. là ‘xuất giá tòng phu và xuất phu tòng phụ’
be “get married submit to husband and go out husband support father”

submit to him and his family.

11. là phải đi theo chồng lấy chồng là phải về phục vụ nhà chồng
be have to follow husband get husband be have to go serve house husband

That is, I had to submit to him, once married I must go serve the husband’s family;

12. chứ không có chuyện là ở trên này để mà lo toan thì lúc đấy thì
but not have story be at above here so as to take care then time that TopM

It’s out of the question that I would stay up here to take care of my family.

13. em cũng (.) nhà thì một em nó rất là (.) hư
younger sibling also house TopM one younger sibling it very be naughty

At that time, I had a younger sibling who was very spoiled,

14. Int: em [trai của em á
younger sibling male of younger sibling QuesM

Your younger brother?

15. [em trai em nó rất là hư vâng thì
younger brother he it very be naughty yes TopM

Yes, my younger brother was very spoiled, so

16. nguyện vọng của em là em cũng muốn là mẹ em
wish of younger sibling be younger sibling also want be mother younger sibling

my desire was to implement my mother’s wish. Before my mother died

17. trước lúc mất thì mẹ em cũng “bây giờ mẹ mất rồi thì còn
before die TopM mother younger sibling also now mother die already TopM have
she said to me, “when I have passed away, please

18. các em con cố gắng bảo ban các em bởi mẹ
PluM younger sibling child try educate Class. younger sibling because mother
think of your brothers. I have

19. đã lo cho em học đại học xong rồi (1.0) và nhà cửa
already take charge of younger sibling study university finishe already and houses
supported them to finish their university study and I have also provided them with

20. xe cộ thì mẹ cũng đã lo hết cho em” ((sniff)) đến khi mà xảy ra chuyện
vehicles TopM mother also buy all for younger sibling until when happen thing
houses and vehicles.” So, when this happened,

21. như thế thì em cũng chỉ có suy nghĩ là ((sniff)) mình đã có
like that TopM younger sibling also only have thought be body already have

I thought that I had been educated well

22. học có ăn có học thì mình cũng không thể nào hư hỏng
study have eat have study TopM body also not able naughty

should not become spoiled

23. *hay đi sai đường được nữa (0.8) thì em cũng từ chối cái việc là*
or go wrong way PosM more TopM younger sibling also refuse thing be
or go the wrong way like my brother. For this reason I refused
24. *em (1.0) xuống dưới Hà Nội ở đoàn tụ với chồng*
younger sibling go down Hà Nội stay united with husband
to go to Hanoi to unite with my husband.

In this excerpt, Huyền is speaking as the eldest daughter whose parents have died. She recounted her story of what happened following the death of her mother some years before the interview took place. In the story Huyền tells of how she refused to go to Hà Nội to live with her husband and her parents-in-law (lines 23, 24) because she had to look after her younger brothers. She considered taking care of her brothers to be a responsibility she had to take on behalf of her parents because it was what her mother wished. She also implied her resistance to her husband's requirement of supporting him and serving his family.

Traditionally, a Vietnamese family is usually large with many children. When the parents die, the eldest child will take on the responsibility of looking after the younger siblings. Influenced by Confucian teachings of filial piety, this responsibility has become a category-bound activity (Sacks, 1974) in Vietnamese society that the eldest child is supposed to do. When Huyền said "my mother died young and I am the eldest sister" (line 4), she categorised herself as the eldest child who had to do the category-bound activity (i.e., look after her younger siblings). It is easier for the eldest son than the eldest daughter to look after the younger siblings because when the eldest daughter gets married, she has to stay with and take care of her husband's family; she thus has few opportunities to take care of her own siblings. Accordingly, if the eldest daughter wants to look after her younger siblings, she has to sacrifice her own happiness. There are many real-life examples (see also chapter 8) of eldest daughters who have sacrificed their own wants in life to take care of younger siblings, and Huyền in this excerpt is vivid evidence of this kind of sacrifice.

It is noticeable in the quote she narrated in lines 17-20 that she shifted from the plural addressing term *các em* (younger siblings - line 18) to singular term *em* (sibling – lines 19, 20). This shift may lead to the interpretation that when using *các em*, she was referring to her two younger brothers (i.e., her mother wanted her to take care of her younger brothers), and when using *em*, she was addressing herself to the interviewer (i.e., she was expected to

take care of her brothers because her mother had already supported her [i.e., *em*] to get a college education and had also provided her with a house and a vehicle). However, this is not the correct interpretation because I got to know that she did not have a college education. In fact, upon talking to the man who introduced her to me, I learnt that she had two younger brothers and one of them died of AIDS just some years after her mother died (the one she referred to in line 13 as very spoiled and in need of being taken care of). He had graduated from a famous university but then got addicted to drugs. Therefore, the interpretation of the quote in lines 17-20 should be ‘when I have passed away, please educate your younger brothers especially the one who was spoiled, but you don’t have to worry about financial problem because I had already supported him to have a college education (which means he could earn his living with it) and provided him with a house and a vehicle.’ As such, ethnographic information plays an important role in helping the analyst to have correct interpretation where multiple understandings may occur.

Huyền had to decide between two responsibilities: one associated with the role of a daughter-in-law who is expected to be submissive to her husband and his family; and one associated with the role of an eldest daughter to take care of her younger brothers after her parents had passed away. By refusing to stay with her husband in Hà Nội, Huyền chose the latter. She sacrificed her chance of living with her husband in order to take closer care of her younger brothers.

Huyền constructed herself as a typical Vietnamese daughter. Under the influence of Confucian ethics, Vietnamese women are taught to observe three basic practices: while still under their parents’ protection, they must be obedient to their fathers (*tại gia tòng phụ*); when they get married, they have to be submissive to their husbands (*xuất giá tòng phu*); and when their husbands die, they must listen to their adult sons (*phu tử tòng tử*). The three lessons read *tại gia tòng phụ, xuất giá tòng phu, phu tử tòng tử* which Huyền quoted in her talk (line 10). However, only the first part of the quotation; namely *xuất giá tòng phu* is correct. The second part, *xuất phu tòng phu*, was incorrectly quoted. She may have forgotten this old Confucian lesson because the Sino-Vietnamese words she used are derived from Chinese and thus are not part of regular usage. Her turn in lines 11, 12 shows she understood the strictness of this Confucian teaching; that is, wives must follow and support their husbands rather than look after their own family (i.e., the family having her

parents and siblings). This demonstrates that she actually misquoted the teaching rather than deliberately changed it to show her rejection of it.

Because Huyền thought she had to take on the responsibility of looking after her younger brothers following the death of her mother, she refused to live with her husband. Indeed, she decided to get a divorce, although this was not necessarily however because Huyền no longer loved her husband. She is an example of Vietnamese women, especially eldest daughters, who have to sacrifice their own happiness due to burdens in their family. In this case, Huyền could not accomplish one of the Confucian teachings; namely *xuất giá tòng phu* (i.e., to be submissive to her husband) because her responsibility to care for a troubled brother was more important and more urgent.

The interviewer's role in this excerpt is realised in his questions, particularly question one. This is a sad story and as such Huyền felt reluctant to tell it at first. Even after she decided to narrate it to the interviewer she still had some hesitations. Thus, the interviewer's turn (line 3) after Huyền's 1.5-second pause aimed to encourage her to keep narrating the story. Indeed, with this pause Huyền may have wanted to see if the interviewer knew what her situation was, or she could have been thinking that she should not tell such a sad and big story straight away because if she did so, she would be seen as too easy-going to tell personal issues to strange people (she and the interviewer had not known each other before the interview). Either way, she was expecting a response from the interviewer. However, given that the interviewer did not know what exactly her situation was (he only got to know her situation after the interview), his turn in line 3 functions as a discourse 'continuer' (Richards, 2011; Schegloff, 1982) rather than an acknowledgement of what he knew. Schegloff (1982, p. 81) defines the function of a continuer as "an understanding that an extended unit of talk is underway by another, and that it is not yet, or may not yet be (even ought not yet be), complete. It takes the stance that the speaker of that extended unit should continue talking."

7.5 Harmony

As stated in section 7.2, harmony refers to the state of being in agreement, concord and mutual existence. It may appertain to a long-term intimate relationship, but some instances may also foreground only the superficial concord. These two types of harmony may not necessarily coincide; that is, people may be harmonious in face-to-face interactions, or

superficially harmonious, but they may not have a good long-term relationship. To maintain superficial harmony, people utilise a number of strategies for refusing such as delay, or telling lies.

7.5.1 Delay as a way of avoiding disharmony

The following excerpt is from an interview with Huỳnh, a 66-year-old retired man. In this excerpt he is talking about the way he would refuse his friend who phoned him to borrow money (scenario II in **Triggering situations/scenarios and narrative questions**, see Appendix 2).

Excerpt 7.5.1: (Borrowing money)

1. Huỳnh: ...tự nhiên không gặp nhau mà gọi điện đến thì thì nghe nó (1.0)
...suddenly no meet each other but phone to EmM EmM sound it
If he suddenly phoned when we hadn't met for a long time, then it sounds... (1.0)
2. phải tôi tôi cũng từ chối
if I I also refuse
If I were him, I would refuse
3. Int: vắng
yes
Yes
4. Huỳnh: tôi cũng từ chối
I also refuse
I would also refuse
5. Int: nhưng mà nếu bác từ chối thì bác sẽ nói như thế nào có nói giống=
but if uncle refuse then uncle will say how have say like =
But if you refused, how would you express the refusal? Would you say like
6. Huỳnh: = có lẽ cũng cũng đẩy cái trường hợp đẩy để xem xét lại xem từ từ để từ từ
= maybe also also that Class. case that let consider again see slowly let slowly
In this case, I would also say 'let me consider', 'let me see'
7. xem thế nào chỉ nói thế cũng không phải là có ngay không ai
see how only say that also not true be have immediately nobody
I would say like it that, I cannot agree immediately. Nobody
8. trả lời ngay được đúng không
answer immediately possible right QuesM
would answer immediately, right?
9. mình phải có ý từ tức là từ từ xem xét lại xem xem thế nào đã
body must have sense means slowly consider again consider how Past
We must be sensible; that means, "let us consider it later".

10. *kiểm tra lại xong đúng là mình cũng phải từ từ xem thế nào*
 check again finish right be body also have to slowly consider how
“We have to check our money.” It’s right that “we have to consider it later”.
11. *chứ không bảo là không cho vay không thể nói thẳng với bạn như thế được*
 and not say be not lend not able say direct with friend like that possible
And we cannot say directly to our friend that we cannot lend money to him
12. *là bạn bạn học (1.0) bạn học học đại học chứ có phải học ấy đâu*
 be friend friend study(1.0) friend study study university StaM have be study that StaM
because he is our university friend, not friend of other types of study.
13. *không thể nói sỗ sàng là ấy không được đâu để từ từ xem xét xem xem*
 not able say rude be that not possible StaM let slowly consider see see
So we cannot rudely say to him that it’s impossible. “Give us time to
14. *tiền gia đình thế nào có kế hoạch gì đấy chứ không thể là là là*
 money family how have plan what that but not able be be be
check if we have had any plan with our savings.” So we cannot...

At the beginning of the excerpt (line 1) Huỳnh implied that it’s odd to receive a sudden call from a friend to borrow money after 10 years of no contact. Although at the end of line 1 the utterance ‘then it sounds’ is left unfinished with a pause of one second, his point of view is manifested in line 2 where he commented that if he played the role of B in the scenario, he would also refuse. His intended refusal can be attributed to a lack of trust in his friend because they have not been in contact for so long. In Vietnamese, there is the idiom ‘*xa mặt cách lòng*’, which is equivalent to ‘out of sight, out of mind’ in English. Huỳnh must have thought that because the two friends had not been in contact for such a long time there would be a lack of mutual trust.

However, the way Huỳnh refused suggests he wanted to avoid hurting the hearer by giving a ‘delay’ refusal. He said he could not refuse directly and immediately (lines 7, 8) because the borrower was his former friend at university (line 12). In other words, he would definitely refuse his friend (lines 2, 4), but in the form of a delay so as to avoid hurting his friend, and as such, to avoid embarrassment.

In the excerpt, Huỳnh positions himself as a polite person in the sense that he tried not to hurt his friend by avoiding a direct refusal. Indirectness and delay in one’s response to a request are considered as face-saving, and thus polite, strategies not only in Vietnamese but also in other cultures (e.g. Félix-Brasdefer, 2006; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008a; P. C.

Nguyễn, 2004a; Q. Nguyễn, 2004; T. M. P. Nguyễn, 2006; T. T. M. Nguyễn, 2005; T. V. Q. Phan, 2001; C. M. Trần, 2005a). His positioning is realised in a long sequence from line 6 to 11 after the interviewer asked, in line 5, if he would refuse like B in the scenario. For Huynh, no one can accept such a sudden request, even though they have the money to lend. “I cannot agree immediately” and “Nobody would answer immediately” (lines 7, 8), presuppose he was financially capable of lending money to his friend, but he would not do so because the mutual trust between his friend and him was no longer guaranteed as the consequence of there being no contact for 10 years. By his response to the interviewer’s question in line 5, Huynh constructed himself as a financially capable, but cautious person. Thus, the question in line 5 and the answer in lines 6-11 support the argument that categorisation is constituted in the organization of talk (Housely & Fitzgerald, 2002; Watson, 1997).

Categorisation was further displayed in line 12 where Huynh put a heavy stress on *bạn* – friend – as underlined. With this emphasis he categorised that friendship is something very sacred, especially the kind of friendship one develops during tertiary education. As such, Huynh represented himself to the interviewer as a person who greatly appreciates and treasures friendship. Yet, as demonstrated by Huynh, the friendship must be gradually and jointly co-constructed and strengthened by both parties in order to retain the trust. Therefore, Huynh could not accept the request straight away because the friendship in question had been weakened by 10 years ‘out of sight’. He could not refuse directly either and rudely claim he did not have money to lend his friend because he still placed a high value on the importance of harmony. Here, he constructed himself as a skilful and tactful old man who made a double-purposed delay. ‘Let me consider’, ‘Let me see’, ‘Let us consider it later’ or ‘Give us time to check if we have had any plan with our saving’ (lines 6, 9, 13, 14, respectively) are the responses he claims he would use to reply to his friend. Although these utterances have dual purposes; that is, there is still, in the literal meaning of these utterances, a possibility that he would lend the money it is very likely that they are signals of refusal. In fact, the expressions should be understood as a refusal because Huynh had already alleged in the beginning of the excerpt; ‘If I were him, I would also refuse’ (lines 1, 2)

7.5.2 Telling lies as a strategy of avoiding embarrassment

Telling lies is considered as good way to avoid hurting the other's feelings. As such, it can achieve superficial harmony. The excerpt below is extracted from a focus group discussion with five forest wardens and one veterinarian. In the excerpt, Bình, a forest warden working in Vĩnh Phúc province in the north of Vietnam, was telling his own story. In the story, a friend from Quảng Ninh who studied with him and his wife 10 years earlier phoned his wife to ask for money.

Excerpt 7.5.2: A narrative by Bình

1. Bình: *đúng tình huống này của mình hôm trước đây hahah*
exactly situation this of body day previous here hahah
This is exactly my case the other day, hah hah
2. Int: *thế à tình huống của anh á*
that QuesM situation of elder brother QuesM
Really? Was it your case?
3. Bình: *đúng tình huống của em đây đứa bạn đúng 10 năm tự nhiên*
exactly situation of younger brother here Class. friend exactly 10 years suddenly
This is exactly my case when a friend after exactly 10 years of no contact suddenly
4. *điện vay không phải làm nhà mà kiểu như là bị siết nợ hahah*
phone borrow not be build house but kind like be NegM due loan hahah
phoned to borrow money, not to build house, but it seemed his bank loan was due
5. *bây giờ ngân hàng nó siết nợ vay để heheheh=*
now bank it request loan borrow in order to hehheh
Yes, his bank loan was due then, so he wanted to borrow in order to
6. Học: *=đáo nợ*
pay loan
pay the bank loan.
7. Bình: *đáo nợ thế là vợ thì mới đầu cũng đồng ý cho vay thế xong bắt đầu*
pay loan then wife TopM at first also agree lend then start
Yes, pay the bank loan. At first, my wife agreed to lend money to him, but then
8. *về thì bàn bàn mới bảo bây giờ thì nợ nần các thứ thì hỏi qua*
come TopM discuss discuss then say now TopM debt something TopM ask via
after some discussion we said well how much is he in debt. We asked a friend of
9. *một người bạn thì bây giờ nợ nhiều lắm bắt đầu thì thôi thế là*
one friend TopM now owe much very start TopM cancel
ours who knew that he owed a lot of money. So my wife started to back out; "I
10. *"mình thì mình cũng đồng ý đầu tiên mình cũng đồng ý cho cậu vay*

“body TopM self also agree at first self also agree give you borrow

agreed, I previously agreed to lend you the money because my husband and I had

11. *vợ chồng mình cũng có ít tiền gửi trong ngân hàng thế nhưng vừa rồi*
wife husband self also have some money put in bank but recently

a little savings in the bank. But when I got home my husband had already

12. *về đến nhà thì ông xã mình vừa ôm tiền đi mua hết cái chung cư*
come home TopM husband self just hold money go buy all Class. apartment unit

taken all the money to buy an apartment unit,

13. *rồi đặt tiền đặt cọc cái chung cư thế bạn thông cảm”*
already deposit money deposit Class. apartment unit so friend sympathize

to put a deposit on an apartment unit, so please understand.”

When the participants started to read the scenario in which a former friend phoned and borrowed money (see Appendix 2), Bình immediately recalled his own case. He said it was very similar to the scenario in terms of length of time they had not been in contact. The only difference was the reason for the friend wanting to borrow the money. In Bình’s friend’s case it was not to have a house built as stated in the scenario, but rather to pay his bank loan (lines 4, 7). In fact, his friend may not have told his real purpose (given that to pay a bank loan as a reason for borrowing money is not convincing because it means the borrower is in financial difficulty and thus will not be likely to be able to return the money). However, Bình could learn that his friend was in financial difficulty (line 9) by asking a mutual friend for information (line 8).

Knowing that his friend owed a lot of money, Bình and his wife decided not to lend to him by telling him a lie (lines 9-13). It is noticeable here that Bình’s wife did not refuse the friend right at first (line 7), even though refusing a friend who has not been in contact for such a long time would be considered by most Vietnamese as acceptable. However, her promise must have been accompanied by a condition that she had to discuss it with her husband (i.e., Bình) before she could give her final decision. Thus, a promise plus a condition become a delay. This leaves the situation open to both agreeing and refusing, though the latter is often more likely. In this excerpt, Bình’s wife made such a delay (i.e., a promise + a condition) and with the accompanying condition her commitment to that promise would become weaker (i.e., the promise would be very likely become unaccomplishable due to the condition being unmet). That is why a delay of this kind is a popular strategy often used by people who want to refuse.

The refusal made by Bìn̄h and his wife is in fact one realisation of delay mentioned by Huỳnh in excerpt 7.5.1 above. In that excerpt, Huỳnh did not have his own real story to tell, so we do not know what his real refusals would be like. He simply gave his opinion on the strategy he would use to refuse. His strategy was not to tell the borrower directly that he could not lend him the required money, but to tell him that he needed to check with his wife as to whether they had any plans for their savings. Semantically, his comment means there was still a chance that they had not made any plans to use their savings and thus they could lend money to him. Pragmatically, however, the result of that check is usually that they had already planned to use their savings.

Bìn̄h and his wife constructed themselves as very experienced and smart people in terms of refusing because they gave their friend hope by using a delay. During this delay he and his wife had time to get to know his friend's real financial situation. After getting to know that his friend was in financial difficulty with his bank loan they decided to tell a lie. Bìn̄h's statements to the interviewer in lines 10-13 were actually the words his wife used to reply to their friend. Thus in Goffman's terms, Bìn̄h is the *animator* and his wife is the *author* (see section 6.5.1). However, Bìn̄h must have had some role in the co-construction of the words because he had discussed with his wife the issue of how she would reply to the friend. Thus, to use Levinson's (1988) more exact expression of "linguistic on a proper footing" (p. 161), Bìn̄h performs the roles of both *author* and *ghostee* in this quote (see section 6.5.2). In other words, his wife's refusing strategy (i.e., telling a lie and mitigating as shown in the quote he narrated) was not solely constructed by her, but mutually co-constructed by both of them. This means that a refusing strategy, especially with regards to high-stakes issues, tends to be very carefully prepared.

From the analyst's perspective, the lie was a little implausible however. Given that buying a new house or an apartment unit is a big issue about which both husband and wife must agree, it seems unreasonable that Bìn̄h's wife would come home to her husband (i.e., Bìn̄h) to learn he had taken their savings to place a deposit on a new apartment unit. Of course, Bìn̄h's wife's comments had already been discussed with Bìn̄h, and this means that they were self-contradictory. This is because Bìn̄h himself said in later talk (see excerpt 7.7.1) that a husband and a wife usually know how much money they have and what plans they have for their savings.

Therefore, even though Binh's wife's comments could be easily recognised by the friend as a lie, this kind of lie is quite common in contemporary Vietnamese society. It seems that everyone who is refused can interpret this kind of refusal as a lie, but people do not challenge it; accordingly, many people still keep using it as a strategy to avoid embarrassment so as to maintain their harmonious relationship. However, because the hearer can always conclude that the reason given is a lie, the harmonious relationship is only superficial.

7.6 Trust

Trust foregrounds the issues of diachronic interactions between the interlocutors involved in the speech act of refusing. Through past interactions trust – as well as mistrust – is built up, and this acts as one of the decisive factors determining an acceptance or a refusal.

7.6.1 Trust/mistrust with colleagues

In the following narrative, Duyên, a 32-year-old secondary school teacher, explains that the reason for her refusing a colleague is related to feelings of mistrust due to the colleague's frequent violation of promises to return borrowed money.

Excerpt 7.6.1. (A narrative by Duyên)

1. Duyên: *chỗ: em làm việc có một em đấy thì em này*
place younger sibling work have one younger sibling that TopM younger sister this
At my work place there is a young female colleague
2. *cũng không được sòng phẳng lắm (0.5)*
also not PosM fair very
who is not always financially fair
3. *cũng thì thoảng hay hỏi vay tiền vay nong (.) nhưng mà mỗi lần hỏi vay (.)*
also sometimes often ask borrow money borrow but each time ask borrow
and who sometimes borrowed some money from me. Sometimes she borrowed
4. *hoặc là vay (.) ư 1-2 chỉ vàng thì mới đầu em cũng cho vay*
or borrow 1-2 ten of a tael gold then at first younger sibling also lend
1 or 2 tenths of a tael²⁹ of gold. At first, I often lent the money to her, but
5. *nhưng mà (.) nói (.) khi bảo trả thì không không bao giờ đúng hẹn cả và cứ (.)*
but say when say return then not never on time StaM and often

²⁹ In fact, the Vietnamese measurement unit of gold is *chỉ* which is equivalent to 3.75 gram.

6. **she never kept her promise to pay it back on time. She often took advantage of my**
thấy chị dễ tính thì cứ thỉnh thoảng lại “em cần vay nóng
 see elder sister easy-going so EmM sometimes “younger sister need borrow hot
easy-going nature and kept asking “I want to borrow 1-2 million for a short time.”
7. *1-2 triệu” thì chị cũng cho vay*
 1-2 million” then elder sister also lend
Then, I often lent money to her
8. Int: *ừ*
 yes
Yes
9. *nhưng mà đến (.) một (.) biết cái tính như thế rồi mình cũng không muốn*
 but come one know Class. character like that already self also not want
But since then, when I got to know her trait, I didn’t want
10. *cho vay nữa*
 lend any more
to lend money to her anymore.

This excerpt reveals the history of interactions between Duyên and one of her younger colleagues. In the excerpt, Duyên was depicting, or *animating* (Goffman, 1981) her colleague as an untrustworthy person. In lines 2 and 5, Duyên referred to her colleague as a person who was not financially trustworthy because she did not keep her promises to return the borrowed money on time. The colleague’s identity as a person who did not appear to have self-respect was constructed because she kept borrowing money (one or two million VND, line 6) after having broken her promises several times. As such, the colleague was described as a person possessing a very negative trait; that is, someone who often breaks promises, but who does not feel ashamed and regards doing so as normal.

On the other hand, Duyên constructed herself as an easy-going and kind person. This was accomplished by saying that her colleague often took advantage of her easy-going nature (lines 5, 6), and also by the revelation that she had lent to the colleague on several occasions (lines 4, 7) even though the colleague had not kept her promises to return the money on time. This shows that Duyên had a certain degree of patience and tolerance; that is, she expected her colleague’s behaviour to improve. Only after recognising that her colleague would not change did she decide to not trust her any more, and to refuse her requests.

7.6.2 Trust/mistrust with bosses

If in the above excerpt, Duyên's mistrust in her colleague is built up through her direct interactions with that colleague. Trust/mistrust can be obtained through examining one's contacts with other people or through observing his or her everyday actions. The following excerpt exemplifies how Hoa, a secondary school employee in charge of school facilities, may examine her boss' history before deciding whether or not to refuse to lend money to him or her.

Excerpt 7.6.2. (Hoa's opinion)

1. Hoa: *nếu như mình có khả năng cho vay và mình cảm thấy rằng là*
if self have ability lend and self feel that be
If I have enough to lend money and I feel that
2. *sếp của mình cũng là người rất là đáng tin tưởng và rất là sòng phẳng*
boss of self also be person very reliable and very be fair
the boss is a reliable person and is financially fair,
3. *thì mình cũng cho vay không vấn đề gì cả nếu như mình có khả năng,*
so self also lend no problem at all if self have ability
then I will lend to him. It's not a problem if I have money.
4. *tất nhiên là khi mình sống với sếp thì mình hiểu tính sếp mình thấy*
of course be when self live with boss so self understand character boss self see
Of course, when I work with the boss I can get to know his traits and if I see
5. *sếp mình là một người cũng rất là sòng phẳng trong tiền nong*
boss self be one person also very be fair in finance
that he is a person who is very fair financially
6. *và cái việc sếp cần là cần thực sự thì mình sẵn sàng cho vay*
and Class. thing boss need be need indeed so self ready lend
and the fact that his need for money is real, I will be willing to lend to him.
7. *còn nếu trong trường hợp mà mình thấy sếp của mình là một người mà*
but if in case self see boss of self be one person who
But If I see that the boss is a person who
8. *có nghĩa là về tài chính là không được minh bạch lắm rồi cứ hay đi vay*
mean be about finance be not clear very and often go borrow
is not very clear in terms of his finance situation, or who often borrows money
9. *lung tung nhưng mà không giả thì chắc chắn là mình sẽ từ chối*
extensively but not return so sure be self will refuse
from different people and does not pay them back, then I am sure I will refuse

Hoa is one of three participants (along with Thơm, excerpt 7.3.1, and Duyên, excerpt 7.6.1) in the focus group. In the conversation preceding the excerpt the women had been discussing how to refuse their boss' request for money. They all agreed that they would refuse their boss directly by saying they were young school teachers and staff members and thus were not financially capable of lending him an amount of 20 million VND. These women's response could be heard as portraying themselves as people who act on their own terms and do not try to earn favours from the boss.

The excerpt reveals the interviewer's attempt to put the participants in a situation in which they did not have to refuse, in contrast with the previous part of the interaction. The purpose was to identify their natural reactions to their boss' request and to check if they thought they must lend to their boss with the purpose of obtaining the boss' help at a later point in time. This purpose was undertaken by the interviewer because in the interviews with other participants (e.g., with the agricultural and forestry personnel), lending money to the boss was revealed as one's strategy to obtain some sort of promotion or economic benefit (see excerpt 7.8.2). In the excerpt featuring Hoa, however, it is evident she did not think lending money to her boss was a must. For her, the boss' character – which is very likely to be revealed through his interactions and contacts with the people around him – is the most important factor underlying whether or not she would refuse. In other words, her refusal or not depended on the trust she had built with her boss through her historical encounters with him.

Accordingly, in lines 5 and 6, Hoa confirmed that if the boss were financially reliable she would be willing to lend him money. She also confirmed she could get to know the traits of her boss over time (line 4). In contrast, if he revealed himself as a person who was not dependable financially and who often borrowed money from different people which he did not return by the due date, then she would be sure not to lend money to him (line 9).

Different from the agricultural and forestry personnel group who argued that they would be certain to lend money to their current boss if he asked them, Hoa saw her boss as any other normal person whom she knew and thus she did not have any mercenary purposes in lending to him. Her decision of whether or not to lend them money would not depend on an expectation of getting some privilege or priority from the boss, but on whether or not the boss was trustworthy. Although Hoa might be trying to portray herself a person who does not try to earn favours from her boss, with this argument, she established herself as a

representative of school teachers whose position and financial income have little to do with her boss' potential privilege. Teaching, especially at schools, is quite a stable job in the sense that the workload for each teacher is more or less the same every year, and the principal is unlikely to be able to create more jobs for the teachers to earn extra money. That is one of the reasons why most teachers, at least those who Hoa represents, do not see the principal as so important that they have to subjugate themselves to him/her by lending money at any cost.

By saying the boss might be a person who often borrowed money from different people (line 9), Hoa categorised secondary teachers, including principals, as people who are naturally poor. Normally, a person who is not poor will not be likely to borrow money from different people, although this argument does not exclude the possibility that wealthy people also have to borrow money. The categorisation of a boss at a secondary school as a person who might be quite poor is contradictory to other participants' view. For example, Huỳnh in excerpt 7.8.3 argued that being a boss nowadays means being wealthy.

7.6.3 Trust/mistrust with relatives

With regard to relationships with relatives, knowing about their background is also very important to a person who is deciding whether to accept or refuse. In the following excerpt drawn from the focus group interview the agricultural and forestry personnel are discussing on how to respond to a relative's request for money. In the first part of the excerpt (lines 1-5), each participant talks about whether or not he would lend money to his nephew, and in the second part (lines 6-27), they discuss whether or not to lend money to their uncles.

Excerpt 7.6.3: Borrowing money

1. Hoàn: ...*đấy nhưng mà cũng phải tùy ông cháu nếu như ông cháu [này]*
 ...that but also have to depend nephew if nephew this
 ...**That's it. But it depends on the nephew himself.**
2. Hạnh: *[đúng rồi]*
right
Right
3. Hoàn: *ông ấy lại suốt ngày cờ bạc hoặc ông ấy chơi bời lêu lổng*
 he StaM all day gamble or he wander around idly
If he is always gambling or wandering around idly,
4. *thì cũng sẽ không cho vay tiền (1.0) đấy không cho vay tiền thì*
 so also will not lend money that not lend money then

- then I will not lend money to him. If I don't want to lend the money**
5. với cháu mình thì chắc là nói thẳng (1.0) là không có (1.0) đấy (2.0)
with nephew self then sure be say directly be not have that
- I will tell him directly that I don't have money. That's it.**
6. Int: nhưng nếu mà lại chú bác mà đi vay cháu thì thì =
But if again uncle StaM go borrow nephew then then
But if an uncle borrows from his nephew, then
7. Toán: = lại nói còn khéo hơn nữa
again say have tactful more even
I would say it more tactfully
8. Thăng: cấp trên
higher rank
Because he is a higher-ranked person
9. Toán: nói còn khéo hơn cả nói với bạn
say have tactful more than say to friend
I would say it to him even more tactfully than I would to a friend
10. Thanh: bề trên
higher rank
He is a higher-ranked person
11. Hoàn: rồi thế nhưng mà chú bác thì cũng phải lật lại cái tình huống (.) bác
ok but uncle then also have to go back Class. situation uncle
Okay. But even though he is an uncle we still have to critically consider the situation.
12. suốt ngày say rượu chẳng hạn (.) đấy
all day drunk alcohol for example that
That is, if he is drunk all day
13. Hạnh: đúng rồi
right
Right
14. Hoàn: hay cũng lại chơi bời=
or also indulge in debauchery
or is always indulging in debauchery
15. Hạnh: =cũng lại cờ bạc chẳng hạn=
also again chess gamble for example
or gambling
16. Hoàn: =hay cờ bạc (1.0) [thì cái điều đó thì lại (.) nếu là chú mình chú chồng
or chess gamble then Class. thing that then if be uncle self uncle husband
Gambling is a different matter. If he is my uncle, the husband's uncle
17. Thanh: [trường hợp này thì bảo đang đi học chi phí nhiều
Case this then say Prog. go study expense many

In this case we have to say we are attending a costly course

18. Hoàn: *thì phải bảo là “hỏi vợ vợ cháu ý”*
then have to say be “ask wife wife nephew EmM”
then I will say “you should ask my wife”
19. Int: *ừ*
yes
Yes
20. Hoàn: *ấy (1.0)*
that
That’s it
21. Int: *ừ*
Yes
Yes
22. Hoàn: *thì vợ cháu thì chắc chắn rằng là cũng không bao giờ có*
then wife nephew then sure be also never have
Then my wife will be sure never to agree to let it happen,
23. *cái chuyện đó không bao giờ cho vay vợ cháu lại bảo là*
Class. story that never lend wife nephew will say be
that is, she will never lend it to him. My wife will say
24. *“cháu hết rồi” hay là cháu vừa có ít tiền nhưng mà cháu vừa*
“niece run out of” or niece just have some money but niece just
“I have run out of money” or I have some money, but I have just
25. *đem [đi chỗ nợ chỗ kia*
take go here there
paid it to this place and that.
26. Hạng: *[cháu mua cái nợ mua cái kia chẳng hạn thế*
niece buy this buy that for example that
I’ve bought this and that.
27. Hoàn: *đấy thì là từ chối khéo*
that the be refuse tactful
That is a tactful refusal

At the beginning of the excerpt Hoàn (lines 1, 3) confirmed that whether or not to lend money to a nephew depends on the nephew’s way of living. If the nephew was not a hard-working person and was always gambling or wandering around idly, then he would refuse to lend to him money. Recognising that Hoàn and the other participants had sufficiently talked about lending money to a nephew (in lines 1-5 and in the previous part of the

conversation), the interviewer chimed in (line 6) to ‘steer’ them to talk about lending money to an uncle. Some other participants (Toán, Thắng, and Thanh) also contributed to the co-construction of meaning with their own turns. For example, Toán took his turn by continuing the interviewer’s turn in line 6 to say that they would refuse the uncle in a more tactful way than they would refuse a friend (lines 7, 9). Both Thắng and Thanh echoed Toán’s view of treating the uncle tactfully by giving the reason for their tact: the uncle is a higher-rank person (lines 8, 10). These examples show the importance of the interviewer involvement in co-constructing the discourse.

Similarly to the case of his nephew, Hoàn said if his uncle was always drunk or gambling or indulging in debauchery (lines 12, 14, 16) then he would also refuse to help. At this moment, Hạnh contributed to the discussion of the group by agreeing with Hoàn’s turn in line 12 (line 13) and giving an example – gambling (line 15) – of indulging in debauchery which Hoàn mentioned in line 14. On his part, Hoàn continued by saying how he would deal with a specific uncle: his own uncle (rather than his wife’s uncle). With this uncle Hoàn would refuse tactfully by referring the uncle to his wife (line 18). Since there is a pause of 1 second (line 20), the interviewer’s ‘yes’ in line 21 is produced as a reminder for him to continue his talk about what he was going to tell his wife. It is interesting that Hoàn was sure his wife would refuse to lend money to him (lines 22, 23). His belief can explain his assumptions as follow. First, he must have thought that traditionally wives in Vietnam tend to be more careful and less open-handed than husbands in terms of lending money to their friends. Second, he must have assumed that the wife can usually easily understand her husband’s intention to refuse when he gives her the floor because if he agrees to help, he will not have to ask her (see excerpt 7.7.1 below). In addition, because Hoàn is aware that his uncle occupies a higher position (lines 8, 10) in the clan, he has to draw on this indirect strategy.

It is quite a complex picture in this excerpt in terms of Participation Framework. In lines 24 and 25 for example, Hoàn was performing the roles of different speakers: both a *relayer* of his wife’s words (when she talked to his uncle) and an *author* (Levinson, 1988, see section 6.5.2) talking to other participants in the group (including the interviewer). As such, he presented himself as a wise person when he ‘kick the ball’ to his wife, and with this refusing strategy he would not be blamed by his higher-ranked relatives as selfish or irresponsible.

Hoàn and other members in his group revealed the fact that in some clans there are idle members. In my experience and through my observation, this phenomenon is quite common in some regions in Vietnam, especially in mountainous areas where many people are often drunk and playing around idly due to their being unemployed (stories of cases are numerous on mass media). The participants' argument that they would not lend money to their uncles if they were not trustworthy differs from the point of view expressed by Thom's in excerpt 7.3.1. She admitted that she had to lend to her uncles, although reluctantly, due to her and her husband's responsibility towards the clan members.

7.7 Patriarchy

The following excerpt is drawn from a focus group discussion about a friend borrowing money from a former university friend. The group comprised five forest wardens and one veterinarian. Except for Hạnh, the only woman in the group who is working as a veterinarian in a suburb of Hanoi, the five forest wardens come from different mountainous provinces in North or Central Vietnam.

Excerpt 7.7.1: Borrowing money

1. Bình ...mà người ở mình mà đã nói ví dụ bạn trai với nhau
CondM person in self CondM Past. say for example friend male with each other
And in Vietnam, if we are male friends talking to each other,
2. mà để về Việt Nam mình bao giờ nó cũng có cái sỹ diện nó có cái
CondM let come Vietnam self always it also have Class. self-pride it have Class.
we often have our own self-pride,
3. sỹ diện trong người (.) ấy đã mà xác định có tiền đã cho vay rồi thì
face in body that Past. CondM determine have money Past. lend already then
so if we have determined that we have money to lend
4. [không phải hỏi ai cả cho vay luôn
not have to ask whoever lend immediately
we don't have to ask anybody for permission
5. Hạnh [không phải hỏi ai cả đúng thế thật
not have to ask whoever right true
It's right, we don't have to ask anybody
6. Bình đấy mà đã ừ xem đã hỏi vợ đã thì chắc chắn là =
that CondM Past. OK see StaM ask wife StaM then sure be
So if he says "Okay, let me ask my wife", then it's sure
7. Hạnh = kiểu gì thì kiểu chắc là từ chối khéo rồi
type what EmM type sure be refuse skilful already

8. Bình: lấy ví dụ em mà gọi điện cho bác ((towards the interviewer))
take example younger sibling StaM phone to uncle
For example, if I phone you (towards the interviewer) and you say it like that,

9. mà bác bảo thế thì cũng nghĩ là không vay được của bác rồi (.)
but uncle say that then also think be not borrow possible of uncle AlignM
I will know that I will never be able to borrow from you

10. đấy người ta bảo ừ về hỏi vợ
that people say OK come ask wife
So when people say; “Okay, let me ask my wife”

11. Hạnh: chính xác
exactly
Exactly.

12. Bình: anh em mình có tiền thì cóp luôn lúc ấy có khi nó lại bảo
siblings self have money then lend immediately time that maybe it StaM say
If we (men) have money, then, snap, we can lend it to him right there because if not

13. ừ cái thằng này sơ vợ đấy ví dụ như thế hiểu chưa cái tính
uhm Class. guy this henpecked that example like that understand QuesM character
he may think we are henpecked. Right, like that, you see? It’s male’s self-pride.

14. sỡ diện mà heh heh heh đã câu “ừ được rồi để tớ về hỏi vợ” thì là (1.0)
face StaM heh heh heh already sentence “OK let me go ask wife” then be
So when he says; “Okay, let me go home to ask my wife”, then

15. Thăng: [đã nhất trí ừ cho mượn là cho
aready agree OK lend be lend
If we decide to lend we will lend

16. Bình: [cái xác xuất cái phần trăm cho vay ít lắm
Class. possibility Class. percentage lend little very
He is unlikely to lend

17. Thanh: đúng rồi đã cho [là cho vay luôn
right AffM Past. lend be lend immediately
Right, if we have decided to lend we will lend immediately

18. Thăng: [đã cho là cho vay luôn không bao [giờ
Past. lend be lend immediately never
we will lend immediately, never

19. Bình: [bởi vì nhà mình
because house self
because in our home

20. có tiền là mình biết rồi mà có bao nhiêu tiền là mình biết
have money be self know AffM StaM have how much money be self know

we know how much money we have

21. *tầm tiền ở đâu như thế nào cho vay là cho vay luôn*
 money where how lend be lend immediately
 and where we keep it. So we can lend to him immediately

At the beginning of the excerpt there is a generalisation. When Bình said *người ở mình* (line 1) in reference to Vietnamese people, and *Việt Nam mình* (line 2), which also means Vietnamese people, he wanted to generalise that all Vietnamese men tend to have their own face over their wife. As such, he implied that they tend to be patriarchal. Thus, he said that if a husband decided to lend money to his male friend he did not have to ask his wife (lines 3, 4).

The members in this group discussed the issues so enthusiastically that there were a number of overlapping utterances (lines 4 and 5, 15 and 16, 17 and 18, and 18 and 19). Although Bình took the floor to give his opinion about the given scenario, other members in the group contributed actively to the co-construction of the meaning. In fact, when Bình just finished giving the conditional clause that if the husband in the scenario has decided to lend the money (line 4), Hạnh could guess what the result clause is. Thus, both of them concurrently uttered the same result clause that that husband would not have to ask his wife (lines 4, 5). Then, right after Bình made another conditional clause (i.e., if the husband says ‘Ok, let me ask my wife’ – line 6), Hạnh again produced the result clause (i.e., it is definitely a refusal –line 7). This time, Bình did not co-produce the result clause with Hạnh, but he took her turn as on behalf of what he really wanted to say. That is why he did not make any repair to her turn but continued by giving an example of such kind of refusal. He turned to the interviewer and said to him that if he received from him the same response as the husband makes, he would know that he would never be able to borrow the wanted money (lines 8, 9).

Other members in the group such as Thăng and Thanh also agreed with Bình and Hạnh that if the husband has decided to lend the money, he would lend it immediately without having to ask his wife. Thus, they all conceded that the husband’s response “Yes, okay. Let me ask my wife” is definitely a sign of a refusal. Bình confirmed that men often try to maintain their own face, or self-pride, when talking to their male friends, and thus they do not want to be disparaged by those friends as being characterised as henpecked (lines 12, 13). Bình uttered the phrase *sợ vợ* (i.e., henpecked) on line 13 with a heavy stress by the increased loudness of his voice (as underlined).

Traditionally, Confucianism has had a strong influence in Vietnam and it posits a patriarchal society. According to Confucian teaching, to be a man one must take four important steps: *Tu Thân*, *Tề Gia*, *Trị Quốc*, and *Bình Thiên Hạ* (see section 2.2.4). Under this practice, Vietnamese husbands are expected to be the breadwinner of the family and make the important decisions without having to consult their wives. Hạnh supported the men's point of view when she admitted that men do not have to consult with their wives when making such decision.

Throughout this excerpt the male participants position themselves as patriarchal husbands, which was also supported by the female participant. However, the degree of patriarchy to which they adhere may have been subject to change. They admitted that asking their wives was a way of refusing by conceding that the utterance "Okay, let me ask my wife" did exist in real life (line 6). Bình even turned to talk to the interviewer (lines 8, 9) and indicated that if he phoned the interviewer and the interviewer replied to him like that (i.e., by saying; "Okay, let me ask my wife"), he would understand he would not be able to borrow money from the interviewer. By turning to and selecting the interviewer as hearer, Bình changed the interviewer's reception role from an *indirect target* to an *interlocutor* (Levinson, 1988, see section 6.5.2). It should be noted that Bình's use of kin terms – *em* and *bác* for self and second person reference respectively – demonstrates his wish to create intimacy with the interviewer (even though this was the first time they had met) so that he was more likely to obtain the interviewer's concord. In Vietnamese, the teknonymous use of *bác* (senior uncle) to address a hearer shows both deference and intimacy (see section 2.4.3).

The fact that all participants in this group conceded that asking one's wife as a way of refusing is not unusual demonstrates that they are not completely patriarchal in their actions. Where a large amount of money is concerned the men tend to consult their wives. They can only decide to lend their friends a small amount of money insofar as that amount does not affect greatly the financial security of the family.

As discussed in chapter 2, the Confucian teaching that privileges the role of husbands over the role of wives is still well observed in Vietnam, but more so in rural and highland areas than in cities. Under the influence of Confucianism, Vietnamese men have higher status than women. Although contemporary society has been influenced greatly by western lifestyles (during French colonisation) and by Hồ Chí Minh's call for women's liberation

(see section 2.2.7), men are still assigned a higher status, especially in the family. Due to the dual influence of Confucianism and modern ideologies, clashes have emerged between men's practices in real life and their thoughts. On the one hand, many husbands in their real-life practices may be willing to help their wife with housework or confer with them about important issues, especially financial ones. On the other hand, they still want to show that they have more power, at least in their thoughts. Therefore, many husbands in Vietnamese culture tend to display a paternalistic role in front of their male friends. They do not want to be seen as not having the right to decide financial issues in their family.

7.8 Corruption

7.8.1 Give vague responses as a signal of asking for bribes

The following excerpt is extracted from the interview with Hoàng, a 55-year-old director of an enterprise belonging to a steel corporation in Thái Nguyên. In the excerpt, Hoàng was telling his experience of being refused by the General Director of the corporation. He said in the conversation preceding this excerpt that one of the trading jobs of his corporation was to buy second-hand steel products at a low price and sell them at a higher price to make profit. The procedures of this job however are quite complex: the corporation will buy the second-hand products and re-sell them to one of its enterprises (in this case, his enterprise) at a higher price. After selecting the still-good-to-use products, Hoàng's enterprise will then re-sell them to manufacturing factories at an even higher price to make a profit. The procedures have been approved by the management committee and have become a policy of the corporation.

Excerpt 7.8.1: Hoàng's narrative

1. ...*thế là chủ trương thì rất rõ rồi nhà ai cũng là nói rằng là họp hành*
 Then policy be very clear AffM AlignM everybody also be say be meetings
 ... **so the policy is very clear and has been unanimously agreed in meetings**
2. *các thứ đồng ý thế nhưng lên toàn khát lần*
 PluM thing agree but go up always delay
 but when I met him he kept delaying
3. Int *khát lần*
 delay
 delaying
4. Hoàng *khát lần bằng những câu từ chối rất là khéo*

- delay by PluM sentence refuse very be skilfull
delaying by skilful refusals
5. Int *thế ông ấy nói như thế nào*
 then he say like how
What did he say?
6. Hoàng *thí dụ như “ừ được rồi cái này để tôi tôi tôi xem tôi gọi vật tư lên” này*
 example “OK AffM Class. this let me me me see I call the head of the materials
For example; “Yes, okay. Let me see, I’ll have to call the person in charge of
 7. *hoặc “tôi gọi kế hoạch lên” này thế thì lần thì bảo*
 or “I call plan up this” that TopM time be say
department,” or “Let me call the head of the planning department.”
8. *“thế thế anh về anh lấy cho tôi xem cái mẫu của nó cái!”*
 “then elder brother go back elder brother bring for me see sample of it AlignM”
Another time he said “Can you go and fetch me the sample of the products?”
9. *thế lấy xem rồi lại cất đi mà cuối cùng thời gian nó cứ trôi đi*
 then take see then again put away then finally time it keep flow go
But he took them and put them away. I finally felt time was passing by uselessly
10. int: *vâng*
 yes
Yes
11. *thế thì sau những cái đấy thì cuối cùng (.) không phải là từ chối*
 TopM after PluM thing that then finally not be refuse
All those things didn’t mean he wouldn’t help,
12. *là không giúp cũng không bảo là sẽ được ngay*
 be not help also not say be will possible straight away
but neither did he say it would be OK.
13. Int *ừ thế nhưng bảo “ừ được rồi” nhưng mà =*
 Uhm but say “Yes OK” but
Yes. But he said; “Yes, okay”
14. Hoàng *= “ừ được rồi” thế [nhưng mà*
 “Yes, OK” but
“Yes, okay” but
15. Int *[không không hẹn một ngày nào đó =*
 not not appoint a day
but didn’t make any appointment
16. Hoàng *= ừ đấy nó không cụ thể (.) ấy thế thì những cái đấy là cuối cùng mình phải*
 yes right it not specific that TopM PluM thing that be finally self have to
No. He didn’t say anything specific. So from those incidences I had to
17. *tự suy nghĩ tức là mình còn phải làm những động tác gì đấy*

self think mean self have to do PluM act what here

think of what action I need to take

18. *thì việc của mình mới được thế về sau chú phải làm*
so that thing of self can possible so after uncle have to do

to have my proposal approved. So in the end I had to take

19. *một cái động tác luôn (1.0)*
one Class. act immediately

this action

Hoàng had previously said that he had made a written proposal to the General Director requesting him to permit his enterprise to sell the second-hand steel products. He thought it would be easy to get the proposal approved because re-selling the products had become the policy of the corporation. However, the General Director kept delaying his request (line 2). The interviewer contributed to his narration by repeating his word ‘delaying’. This minimal response by the interviewer, referred to as ‘continuers’ by Richards (2011), shows that he was listening attentively and wanted to hear more about what Hoàng meant by ‘delaying’. Hoàng understands this and thus he said the General Director kept delaying by saying that further steps needed to be taken into careful consideration. Such considerations included the need to have his proposal checked by the head of materials department or of the planning department (lines 6, 7), along with the need to have a sample of the products submitted (line 8). All these delays will be further analysed in the following paragraphs.

Hoàng took on the role of a *relayer* (Levinson, 1988), or *animator* (Goffman, 1981) (see section 6.5) when he narrated (lines 6-8) what the General Director said to him. Although what had actually happened were told by him in only three lines (lines 6-8), it could be inferred that the negotiation process between him and the General Director was very long because, as Hoàng said, the director delayed his proposal three times. First, the director said he would have to call the head of the materials department (line 6). This meant Hoàng had to leave his written proposal in the director’s office and wait for his reply following his call to that person to come to his office to ask him if he had checked or approved Hoàng’s proposal.

On the second occasion, the General Director drew on a similar strategy when he said he would have to ask the head of the planning department. Again, Hoàng had to wait for his reply. In companies dealing with goods and products (manufacturing or selling or purchasing) in general, and in his corporation in particular, there is typically a department

of materials. This department is in charge of managing the sales and purchases of products. There is also a department of planning which is responsible for making plans. Usually, the heads of the respective departments are required to approve (i.e., to sign in) all selling or buying proposals prior to final approval by the General Director. However, the director has the right and power to approve a proposal without the prior approval of these departments' managers. As stated by Hoàng at the beginning of the excerpt (lines 1, 2), all leaders (the General Director, the persons in charge of materials and planning, and all others involved) have already agreed to the policy of selling the second-hand materials. Thus, Hoàng thought that getting the General Director's approval (i.e., getting his signature in the written proposal) was only a procedural step of an approved process, and thus it would be approved straight away.

However, the General Director kept making it difficult for Hoàng. The third time he delayed was when he asked Hoàng to submit a sample of the material for him to check. The problem was that when Hoàng gave the director the sample, he simply put it away without any comments being provided (line 9). The fact that Hoàng satisfied all of the director's requirements, but still could not get his approval lead him to think that he had to bribe the General Director (lines 16-18). In fact, Hoàng said in the latter part of the interview that he would "thank" the director after he sold the materials because this practice had become the implicit 'rule' in the company. However, as he also remarked, the director was being too "cautious" because he wanted to be offered a bribe before approving the proposal.

Once Hoàng understood that the director's delays, which were neither a refusal nor an agreement (lines 11, 12), were an indirect request for a bribe, he had to urgently do one thing (lines 18, 19): to bribe the director. He narrated how he did this in the next part of his talk.

7.8.2 Intentionally giving bribes

In excerpt 7.8.1 above a boss' corruption is realised in the form of deliberately causing difficulties for a lower-ranked staff member. In the following case, the lower-ranked staff members themselves intentionally find opportunities to bribe their boss so as to gain some sort of privilege or priority. The participants in the focus group interview included five

forest wardens and one veterinarian. They were discussing whether or not they would lend money to their current boss.

Excerpt 7.8.2. (Borrowing money)

1. Toán: *cái này có rất nhiều tình huống xảy ra sếp này là sếp cũ*
Class. this have very many situation happen boss this be boss former
There may be different ways of responding because this is a former boss.
2. *nhưng trường hợp mà là sếp đương nhiệm mình thì không có*
but case CondM be boss current self then not have
But if he is our current boss, then in the case that we don't have money
3. *cũng phải đi vay gần như là thế*
also have to borrow almost be that
we have to borrow it to lend money to him. It's almost like that
4. Int: *nếu là sếp đương nhiệm*
If be boss current
Yes. If he is your current boss
5. Toán: *sếp đương nhiệm thì gần như là người Việt nam mình là gần như là*
boss current then almost be people Vietnam self be almost be
With a current boss, Vietnamese people are very likely
6. *[có mà vay cho sếp]*
try borrow for boss
to try to borrow from others for him
7. Hạnh: *[đúng thế thật đấy]*
right true AffM
It's totally right
8. Toán: *thật [đấy]*
true AffM
It's true
9. Hạnh: *[nhiều người=]*
many people
Some people
10. Hoàn: *=nức là 'thả con săn sắt bắt con cá rô' nhiều vấn đề lắm*
means 'release macropodus catch anabas' many issues very
It means we invest a small thing, but we can make a big profit from it.
11. *đấy: muốn nịnh sếp thì làm thế nào chả được*
that want flatter boss then do how will possible
That's it. If we want to brown-nose the boss we can do everything.
12. *không có tiền đi vay ngân hàng*
not have money go borrow bank
So, if we don't have money we can borrow it from the bank and then lend it to him.

13. sau ông ấy lại mở cho một cửa làm lại lấy cái số tiền ấy đập ra
 then he will open for one door do again take Class.amount money that break out
 Then, he will give you an opportunity to make money so as to get back the amount
14. mà còn kéo theo nhiều nữa chứ (.) chẳng hạn như thế Việt nam nó là thế đấy
 and also draw along many more SatM for example like that Vietnam it be like that
 you lent him and more. That's an example. Vietnam is like that

The comments made by the participants in this excerpt show they were playing the roles of both an *author* and a *spokesman* (Levinson, 1988, see section 6.5.2) As such, they spoke not only for themselves, but also for other employees and personnel, at least in their job sector (i.e., in the field of agriculture and forestry), who tended to do everything to flatter and bribe their boss (line 11). Thus, not refusing to lend money to their boss is one way of pleasing him, the purpose of which is to have his future privilege or priority (line 13). It is clear that this is a form of opportunism because the participants admitted that if they did not have enough cash they would borrow from somebody else (lines 3 and 6), or even from the bank (line 12), to lend money to their present boss. They made a distinction between the present boss and former boss. During the conversation preceding this excerpted section the participants argued that if it was a former boss they were very likely to refuse because he could no longer give them any privileges due to having no power or rights.

Through the arguments of the participants a negative image of a boss in present society is created. Being a boss means being powerful enough to grant employees opportunities to earn money, but also to cut off those opportunities. It is due to this type of power that there is bribery and corruption, both of which are further described by Mr. Huỳnh in the following excerpt.

Although bribery and corruption are relatively common in contemporary Vietnam, the analyses of excerpts 7.8.1 and 7.8.3 reveals the participants in this group tended to overgeneralise when they remarked “Vietnam is like that” (line 14), meaning all Vietnamese people are corrupt. In fact, during the focus group interview, they repeated this conclusion several times (lines 5, 14), which give the researcher, also the interviewer, the feeling that they must have thought the researcher (also the interviewer) wanted a generalisation about Vietnamese culture to compare it to other cultures (because they knew the researcher was doing his PhD about Vietnamese culture at an Australian university, and accordingly, they must have inferred that the researcher needed some generalisation about how Vietnamese people refuse). As a consequence they tended to overgeneralise not only

in this excerpt, but also in others such as in excerpt 7.7.1. By categorising themselves as members of a membership categorisation device (Sacks, 1972b, 1974) – Vietnamese people – they wilfully implied that their bribery action was licensed. Therefore, my role of an ethnographic researcher to “*get analytic distance* from what’s close at hand” (Rampton et al., 2004, p. 12, original emphasis) must be taken into account. That is, in order to have a reliable conclusion, their generalisation should be compared with the findings in studies 2 and 3, and with my own experience and observation.

7.8.3 Bribery and corruption in the past and at present

Excerpt 7.8.3: Huỳnh’s opinion

As mentioned in the previous example, Huỳnh is a 66-year-old retired man who holds quite a negative view towards present institutional relations. During his talk he frequently drew a comparison between the good old times and the present time.

1. Huỳnh: *thực tế mà nói thực tế mà nói nhà theo tôi nghĩ tâm tư tôi nghĩ thật nhá*
reality StaM speak in fact StaM speak AlignM for me think heart I think truly
Practically speaking, I truly think that
2. *cách đây cái giai đoạn của mình cách đây 10, 20 năm về trước*
ago Class. period of self ago 10, 20 years before
during my time 10 or 20 years ago, or before that,
3. *nếu một ông cán bộ làm nhà có thể thiếu thật và đồng thời người ta*
if one personnel do house may lack true and simultaneously person that
when a boss had his house built, he may truly lack money
4. *cũng vay chân tình thật bằng thật thì người cấp dưới người ta cũng*
also borrow sincerely truly by truly then person lower ranked person that also
and so he would sincerely borrow from his lower-ranked personnels.
5. *cho vay bằng chân tình thật*
lend by sincerely
Those employees would also sincerely lend money him.
6. *nhưng bây giờ thì như giai đoạn hiện tại các sếp có thể nói là không thiếu*
but today EmM like period present PluM boss may speak be not lack
In present society however I can say that a boss does not lack money.
7. *nhưng khi làm nhà rồi sẽ có bảo vay vì thiếu thì không có*
but when do house already will have say borrow because lack EmM not have
Thus, he may borrow from his employees, not because he really lacks money,
8. *nói thật bảo vay bây giờ làm nhà sếp thiếu thì không có mà có vay*
speak truly say borrow now do house boss lack EmM not have CondM borrow
but because he may want to have some additional or spare amount.

9. *chỉ là gợi ý để thêm bớt thôi chứ còn gợi ý đây là cái cơ hội*
only be suggest to add only so suggest this be Class. opportunity
This is an opportunity for him (to raise money).
10. *cưới xin là một*
weddings be one
weddings are one opportunity.
11. Int: *vâng làm nhà*
yes do house
Yes, having a house built.
12. Huỳnh: *thời đại bây giờ cưới xin là một có cơ hội thậm chí có những ông*
Era today weddings be one have opportunity even have PluM grandfather
Today, weddings are one opportunity. There are even bosses who are
13. *ốm ít thì mẹ cũng đi nằm viện để nhân viên đến thăm mẹ*
sick little then fuck also go lie hospital so as employee come visit fuck
slightly sick and who want to be hospitalised so that their employees will come to see
14. Int: *vâng*
yes
Yes
15. Huỳnh: *phong bì lớn phong bì bé chứ còn thì*
envelope big envelop small so
them with envelops of different amount of money.
16. *hoặc là làm nhà thì mẹ thông báo cho các cấp dưới để chúng mày*
or be do house then fuck inform to PluM lower ranked so as you
Or when they are going to have their house built, they will indirectly inform
17. *đến thăm thăm thì phải có quà như bây giờ nó là thế*
come visit visit EmM have to have present like now it like that
their courtiers so that they will have to visit them with financial presents.
18. *sếp từng giai đoạn một giai đoạn trước không nói giai đoạn này nó khác.*
boss each period one period before not say period this it different
Thus, bosses in the past are different from those today.

Huỳnh started the excerpt by stating that he would give his true point of view about financial situation of bosses in the past. For him, at the time he was working, when a boss borrowed a certain amount of money, he truly and honestly lacked it (line 3). Thus, his employees also truly and honestly lent money to him without mercenary motives (lines 4, and 5). With these utterances Huỳnh constructed bosses of his time as people who were not much richer than their lower-ranked colleagues. He also implied that the relationship between the boss and his employees at his time was rather close and sincere. As such, he categorised himself as an elderly person who would often recall the good old days. He

appreciated the sincerity and honesty in the relationships between a boss and his employees in his time.

In contrast, bosses today were demonstrated by him as a matter of course wealthy (lines 6, 7, and 8), which is similar to the arguments recounted by the focus group in excerpt 7.8.2 above. Thus, if a boss today borrowed money from his employees he just wanted to have some spare amount to spend on additional or more luxurious items to be built (line 9). Also, he just wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to raise money because he knew that most of his ‘courtiers’ would flatter him with financial support. Huynh added two additional circumstances in which a boss may have some mercenary motives to raise money such as organising the wedding of his/her child (lines 10, 12) or pretending to be seriously ill (line 12, 13). As Huynh pointed out, having a house built as the reason for one to borrow money as given in the **Triggering situations/scenarios and narrative questions** (Appendix 2) is only one of many reasons a boss may give. Although the interviewer tried to keep him on track by reminding him to talk about situations in which the boss wanted to borrow money to have his/her house built (line 11), he could still successfully add those two circumstances. He implied that the boss today often knows that his/her employees, especially those who want to get some sort of promotion, will bring him/her envelopes of various amount of money (line 15).

Huynh’s negative view towards bosses at the present time was also realised in the vulgar words he used to describe them. His use of the swear word *mẹ*, or fuck (line 13), revealed his hatred and disrespect towards contemporary bosses. As such, he represented old people who appreciate sincere personal and institutional relationships and human dignity, and who know about, but are unable to change, situations of bribery and corruption.

7.9 Summary and conclusion

Chapter 7 presented the results of the ethnographic study, the first and also the main study in this research project. It is the main study in the sense that it aimed to identify the socio-cultural factors underlying the performance of Vietnamese refusing. As such, it provides the basis for conducting the following interactional and social psychological studies. In other words, the results of this study would be examined, complemented and further developed in the subsequent two studies (see chapter 5).

Participants taking part in the individual or focus group interviews in this study categorised numerous socio-cultural factors that conditioned and constrained their choice between refusing and accepting/agreeing, and if they refused, what strategies they would draw on. The factors include the need to fulfil their responsibilities, the trust they had in the people who they would refuse or accept, the risks of acceptance, and many others. All of the factors are grouped into six affordances categories: collectivism, responsibilities, harmony, trust, patriarchy, and corruption. This grouping is itself the categorisation work of the researcher/analyst. The analyses of the affordances reveal major findings which are summarised as follows.

First, the analyses of the interview data show the family (including extended family or clan) is the central unit of Vietnamese society. Typical socio-cultural values in Vietnamese culture and the Eastern world more broadly are the high value placed on 'we' rather than 'I', the hierarchical relationships in one's family and also in society, and men's desire to demonstrate their power over their female counterparts. These socio-cultural values are all centred on the family collective. Throughout Vietnamese history, the family has been the basic social unit and corner stone of culture and society. The family or clan's principles may be more important than state laws or institutional regulations. An essential principle is that children show filial piety. Children are taught they must be thankful to their parents for the debt of birth, for their rearing and education. In turn, they are expected to think of their parents and the family first, to make sacrifices for them, to take responsibilities to take care of younger siblings, and help senior relatives. The narrative and discussion by Thom (excerpt 7.3.1), Huyền (excerpt 7.4.1) and many other participants whose narratives and opinions are not analysed in this chapter are vivid examples of the importance of the family unit in Vietnam.

Second, different groups of people – and even different individuals – have different perceptions and opinions about the socio-cultural affordances. In terms of occupations for example there is a clash between the group of secondary school teachers and the group of agricultural and forestry personnel. The secondary school teachers (Thom, Duyên, and Hoa) construct themselves as having poorly paid jobs and construct their bosses who are also not very wealthy either. Therefore, lending money to their boss in order to gain privilege and priority is not what they think about (excerpt 7.6.2). The only concern for them is whether or not the boss is trustworthy. On the other hand, the forest wardens and

the veterinarian in the agricultural and forestry group are materialistic and pragmatic. They are ready to insinuate themselves into their current boss's favour by lending him money, but they are also ready to refuse to give financial support to their former boss whom they think will no longer be of benefit to them.

The difference between the secondary school teachers and the forest wardens is also realised in the way they behave towards their relatives. It seems however that this is not a difference related to occupation, but rather to living region and ethnicity. Thom in excerpt 7.3.1 commented that she was a daughter-in-law in a family in a rural district where traditional norms and principles of the village were still widely observed. In accordance with these norms and principles, she and her husband are expected to help their senior relatives such as uncles, grandparents and son on. The norms and principles are the products of traditional rice-growing villages centred in and near the Red River delta. Thom's husband's family is from a district near this delta which represents the tradition of cultivating rice fields. The forest wardens on the other hand all belong to an ethnic minority group. They come from the mountainous regions where the rules and principles of the family and village relating to assisting other members in their clan seem to be, as far as my knowledge goes, not as strictly observed as in traditional agrarian villages in the Red River delta. This may explain why during their talk about whether or not they should lend money to their senior relatives (excerpt 7.6.3) they did not say anything about the norms and principles of their family or clan.

Third, the economic reforms initiated in Vietnam in 1986 with the aim to create a socialist-oriented market economy have some negative impact on Vietnamese people's way of life (Boothroyd & Pham, 2000). The analyses of the interviews with Quang and Huỳnh also show that the many serious problems of contemporary society rarely existed prior to the economic renovation. The problems of bribery and corruption appear to be so common that most participants admitted their existence. Apart from Huỳnh (excerpt 7.8.3) and the agricultural and forestry personnel (excerpt 7.8.2), most participants in this study also revealed that bribery and corruption is a contemporary social problem.

Finally, the influence of the market economy has resulted in some Confucian values still observed in present Vietnamese society being changed or perceived in a different way by contemporary Vietnamese citizens. Patriarchy for example is less apparent in practice than it is in men's thoughts. In other words, Vietnamese men still think and want to show –

especially to other men – that they have absolute power over their wife, but in practice they can be less patriarchal than they often claim to be (excerpt 7.7.1). Another effect of the market economy is the changes to values such as harmony or trust. Harmony for example used to refer to long-term concord and peaceful existence. Now it may indicate only a superficially peaceful relationship. The notion of trust has also changed. That is why the lady in Duyệt's story (excerpt 7.6.1) who regularly broke her promises to return the borrowed money on time did not think her promise-breaking was serious, and as such, stop asking to borrow money.

In conclusion, the analyses of participants' discussion and narratives indicate that Vietnamese culture is contested. That is, cultural norms and values can be perceived differently by different groups of people or even individuals in terms occupations, regions, age, and so on. This contested nature is not only because of the influence of different religions, philosophies and ideologies, but also because of the impact of the economic reforms over the past several decades.

Chapter 8: Modes of refusing and related/mediated actions

8.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses how Vietnamese refusing and related speech acts are mediated by different *mediational means* (Scollon, 2001), or *modes of communication* (Norris, 2004, 2009). Drawing on conversations excerpted from a recently produced TV series, the chapter describes how refusals are negotiated and co-constructed through a series of interactions between family members. In other words, the chapter explores the speech act of refusing performed by Vietnamese people from an interactional perspective. As such, it describes: (1) the way refusing is sequentially negotiated, especially how it is shaped by previous turns and how it shapes subsequent turns; (2) how refusing as an action is mediated by different modes of communication in which language is only one (Norris, 2004; Scollon, 2001; Scollon & Scollon, 2009); and as a conclusion, (3) how the cultural affordances discussed in chapter 7 constrain and condition refusing.

Adopting the constructionist view influenced by Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology, Goffman's (1983) interaction order, and Gumperz's (1982) interactional sociolinguistics, refusing is seen as a process rather than a product in which language is only one of a number of communication tools. In order to investigate the sequence of talk during the negotiation, as well as the use of nonverbal modes of communication, this chapter will draw on Conversation Analysis (CA) (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008; Sacks, 1992a, 1992b), and Multimodal Interactional Analysis (MIA) (Norris, 2004) as analytical tools.

The reason for combining CA and MIA to analyse TV series data in this chapter is that CA alone, without the assistance of visual technology, can hardly adequately capture non-language modes. Influenced by mediated discourse analysis (Scollon, 2001), MIA acknowledges that every action is mediated either by language or other modes of communication, or by a combination of modes (Norris, 2004). Thus, refusing as an action is mediated by a number of mediational tools among which language is only one. CA and MIA can be mutually supportive in that CA can help to explore the sequential organisation, turn taking, or repair, and MIA can help the analyst to investigate modes of communication other than language such as posture, gesture, material objects and so on.

This chapter is organised into eight sections. In addition to this introduction (section 8.1), section 8.2 briefly describes the selected TV series and, more particular, the five excerpts that make up a story of divorce. The following four sections (from section 8.3 to section 8.6) present a detailed analysis of the four excerpts in chronological order. Section 8.7 then summarises the modes of communication used in the excerpts.

8.2 The story of getting divorced

The data used in this chapter are conversations excerpted from a TV series, *Những công dân tập thể* (lit. the citizens living in the same apartment building) produced in 2011. The 36-episode series – which can be downloaded free from YouTube – is about everyday matters occurring in a small community of people living in the same apartment building. The TV series depicts casual, mundane encounters between family members or neighbours that take place in their daily life. Many of the encounters involve problems and conflicts such as getting divorced, quarrelling between neighbours, and the issues of inheritance. Thus they are all instances where refusing is very likely to occur.

The four excerpts selected for analysis in this chapter pertain to the issue of divorce. They were chosen because they include a relatively high frequency of refusals. The main character is Dương – a well-educated woman – who has just completed her PhD in sociology. She is married to Kinh, a driving instructor at a driving school, and they have a pre-school aged son. Because Kinh originated from the countryside he has to live with Dương's family; that is, her mother and her younger brother. Her mother is a retired schoolteacher who divorced her husband (Dương's father) a long time ago. Dương's father left the family to marry another woman and her mother has remained single. In total, there are five people living in the apartment unit: Dương; her husband, Kinh; her son, Tít; her mother, Mai; and her younger brother, Hoàng.

The four conversations take place after Dương decided to divorce her husband because she discovered him having a love affair with another woman, one of his students at the driving school. Knowing about this problem, her mother tries to advise and persuade her to abandon her decision to get divorced because the mother has endured the consequences of having made that decision herself. Her husband also begs for her forgiveness. The four conversations relating to her decision to get divorced take place between Dương and the family members and are analysed sequentially in the following sections.

It should be noted that the analysis in this chapter is not organised into sections under the headings of communication modes (as the chapter title may imply). In other words, each communication mode (e.g., language, gaze, crying, or silence etc.) is not documented in a separate section because it will make it difficult for readers to understand the plot of the story. Given that the four conversations between Duong and other family members are connected coherently in order of time, it is easier for readers to follow the whole story if the conversations are analysed one by one according to chronological order. As such, different modes of communication used by the characters are analysed in each conversation from the first to the last one. To follow this analytical order is also because a person may perform different actions, using different communicational tools, simultaneously in a conversation: he or she may cry, gaze and hug the interlocutor all at the same time. Thus, it is far more reader-friendly to analyse the actions in one conversation after another. A summary of the communicational tools used in the conversations will also be provided in the final section of the chapter.

As we have clarified in section 1.2.2, although the focus of our research project is refusing, we will also explore how related speech acts such as requesting and advising, and mediated actions such as pre-advice, pre-request, and pre-refusal impact on refusing. As we have discussed earlier, we see refusing as a process and accordingly examining refusals in interaction in which how the participants refuse depends greatly on how they are requested or advised. Accordingly, before making a refusal, a participant may make some disagreement or complaints. Also, how a person refuses is influenced by his or her interlocutor's attitude, their relationship, their distance and so on. Therefore, there are some sections in this chapter that do not directly explore refusals; they deal with related and/or mediated actions (Scollon, 2001) that impact the way the participants refuse.

In analysing the filmed data, I bear in mind that how the conversations are sequentially constructed is not naturally occurring, but is prepared by the film makers (including the director, the screen writer, the actors and actresses and others involved in the production of the TV series). Thus, the concluding section in this chapter will also display that the sequential order reflects the film makers' attempt to approximate naturally occurring conversations.

The conversations were transcribed using transcription conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (2004). The first line is the Vietnamese version, the second is the word by word gloss and the third line is the translation. For reader-friendliness purposes, the translation lines are in bold.

8.3 The first conversation (Episode 22: 30'04-33'10)

The conversation below takes place between Dương and her mother, Mai. They are both sitting on Dương's bed (image 8.3.1), Mai is holding a bracelet (images 8.3.1, 8.3.2) and Dương is holding some photos. In front of them is the box used to store the bracelet, photos, and other objects. All of the possessions are souvenirs that remind them of the time before Mai divorced her husband.



Image 8.3.1



Image 8.3.2



Image 8.3.3

Knowing that Dương has decided to divorce her husband, Mai is trying to advise her to reverse her decision. First, Mai is telling a story about her past and Dương is listening attentively.

01. Mai: ((looks at the bracelet)) (4.0)
 02. hôn nhân nào cũng xuất phát từ tình yêu
 marriage any also start from love
Every marriage results from love,
 03. (0.5) thậm chí: là tình yêu mãnh liệt con ạ
 even be love vehement child StaM
even passionate love, you know.
 04. (2.0) bố mẹ (.05) cũng đã từng có những giai đoạn rất vất vả
 father mother also already ever have PluM period very hard
Your father and I used to have hard times, and sometimes
 05. (1.5) cơm không đủ ăn (0.5) áo không đủ mặc (1.0) nhưng (.)
 rice not enough eat clothes not enough wear but
we did not have enough food and clothes, but we still
 06. =tình cảm không hề giảm sút (1.5) bữa cơm gia đình (.) tuy chỉ có: (.)

- sentiment not at all decrease meal family although only have
loved each other very much. The daily meal may have only had some
07. rau luộc chấm nước muối (1.0) nhưng vẫn đầy ắp tiếng cười
 vegetable boiled dip water salt but still full laughter
boiled vegetables with salted sauce, but there was lots of laughter.
08. Dương: ((gazes at Mai in a sympathetic manner, starts to cry)) huhu
09. Mai: (3.0) nhưng rồi(h) (0.5)
 but then
But then...
10. Dương: =con còn nhớ .hh (1.5) hồi mẹ đẻ cậu hoàng .h (1.5) bố mẹ
 child still remember time mother give birth uncle Hoang father mother
I still remember when you gave birth to Hoàng, you had to
11. (0.5) đã phải nhường cơm cho bọn con(h) ((crying voice, sniff))
 already have resign rice for Plum child
give up your portion of rice.
12. Mai: (2.0) hình như có thêm em (0.5) thêm áp lực
 seem have more younger brother more pressure
It seemed that from the time Hoàng was born there appeared more pressure,
13. (1.0) thêm sự nghèo đói (1.0) nên (.) tính tình mẹ thay đổi
 more poverty so disposition mother change
more poverty that made my temper change.
14. (0.5) mẹ ít cười (0.5) hay cáu giận hơn
 mother less smile often angry more
I smiled less and became angry more easily.
15. (2.0) bố con (0.5) cũng bắt đầu đi nhiều (3.0)
 father child also start go more
Your father also went out more often.
16. đành rằng ông ấy là người có lỗi (1.0) nhưng nếu mẹ
 although he be person have fault but if mother
It's true he's the one at fault, but if I
17. không cố chấp (1.0) đừng tự ái ((turns towards Dương))
 not intolerant not self-esteem
had not been too intolerant or had too high self-esteem,
18. (1.0) và quan trọng hơn là gạt bỏ sĩ diện
 and important more be eliminate self-pride
and more importantly, if I hadn't tried to save my self-pride,
19. (2.0) ((with gentle voice)) chắc nhà mình (0.5) đã không tan đàn sẻ nghé
 perhaps house our already not disperse herd divide cow
then our family might not have been parted.

20. Dương: ((crying, sniff)) *huh*
21. Mai: ((turns to Dương, gazes at her, and rubs her shoulder))
22. (2.5) *con ạ (1.0) đánh kẻ chạy đi (0.5) không ai đánh kẻ chạy lại*
 child Voc beat person run away no who beat person run back
My daughter , one beats the one who runs away, not the one who's running back to us.
23. Dương: ((slightly shakes her head, glimpses at Mai, still crying)) *huh .h*
24. (2.0) *thôi mẹ ạ (2.0) con thấy mình bị tổn thương .hh*
 leave off mother StaM child feel self NegM hurt
Please say no more. Mother. I feel really hurt.
25. Mai: ((looks down sadly))
26. Dương: (1.5) *chắc mẹ cũng hiểu (1.5) vết thương lớn nhất (0.5)*
 perhaps mother also understand wound big most
Mum, you must also understand that the worst pain,
27. và cũng là vết thương khó lành nhất
 and also be wound difficult heal most
and also the most difficult to heal,
28. (1.5) *chính là nỗi đau tâm hồn*
 be pain soul
is the pain in one's soul
29. Mai: ((turns up and gazes at Dương))
30. (1.5) *mẹ hiểu (0.5) lòng con luôn trong sạch (1.0) nhưng (.) khi*
 mother understand heart child always pure but when
I know that you have a pure mind, and thus when
31. ((turns away))
32. nó đã bị hoen ố (0.5) thì khó lòng lấy lại được (1.0)
 it already NegM stained then difficult get back possible
it has been stained you will find it difficult to get it pure again
33. Dương: ((crying voice))
34. Mai: ((turns up to gaze at Dương, hold her hand tightly))
35. Nhưng (.) mẹ chỉ mong con hãy vì cu Tít
 but mother only expect child please for lad Tít
But I still hope you will, for Tít's sake,
36. (1.0) *mà đừng dẫm chân vào (.) vết xe đổ (0.5)*
 so not step foot on trace vehicle collapse
not follow the track of a fallen cart
37. đừng sai lầm như mẹ
 not faulty like mother
not make the same mistake I made.
38. Dương: ((bows her head onto Mai's shoulder crying))

39. *mẹ huh huh ((sniff))*
 mother huh huh
 Mum! huh huh
40. (5.0)
41. Mai: ((takes the box up))
42. (6.0) *mẹ giao những vật này lại cho con*
 mother give Plum thing this again for child
 I give these things to you
43. Dương: ((turns up from Mai's shoulder))
44. (3.0) ((pushes the box back)) *kìa mẹ(h)*
 there mother
 Oh mum!
45. Mai: ((grasp Dương's hand and put the box on it))
46. (1.0) *cả đời mẹ thanh sạch (.75) mẹ cũng chẳng giàu có gì*
 whole life mother pure clean mother also not rich what
 I have lived my whole life in an upright way. I am not rich,
47. (2.0) *mẹ chỉ có bài học này tặng lại cho con*
 mother only have lesson this present to child
 so I only have this lesson as a gift for you.
48. Dương: ((keeps crying))
49. Mai: (2.0) *mẹ hy vọng (0.5) con hãy giữ lấy*
 mother hope child will keep
 I hope you will keep it
50. Dương: ((cries louder and bows onto Mai's shoulder)) *huhuh*
51. (2.5) *mẹ(h)*
 mum
 Oh mum!
52. ((non-diegetic music for 13 seconds))
53. Mai: ((silent crying – streams of tear flowing down from her eyes))

8.3.1 Story telling as a way of recipient design

Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008), following Sacks and Schegloff (1979), referred to recipient design as “the way in which all turns at talk are in some way designed to be understood in terms of what the speaker knows or assumes about the existing mutual knowledge between him or her and the recipient” (p. 130). It is evident that prior to giving such indirect advice (line 22) Mai provided a long preparation, or pre-request (Leech, 1983). She begins the conversation by recounting a story comprised of cause-and-effect information. First, Mai says every marriage is the result of love (lines 2-3), which seems too good to be true. In

fact, what this utterance implies is that if a husband and a wife love each other they can overcome all difficulties they encounter in their life together. Thus, this utterance propels her towards what she is going to say next. In lines 4-7 Mai says that although they were so poor that they did not have enough food to eat and clothes to wear (line 5), she and her husband still loved each other (line 6) and that there was a lot of laughter. Upon hearing about these difficulties, Dương shows her *display of reciprocity* (Heath, 1984); that is, demonstrating that she actually has some stake in the story, by gazing at Mai in a sympathetic manner and starting to cry (line 8). At the time being recounted Dương was a small child, but old enough to remember what happened. Thus, when Mai utters the phrase *nhưng rồi* (but then) to continue the story, she chimes in to mention the birth of her younger brother, Hoàng. Up to this point, Mai has been recounting the family's hardship, and Dương's turn (lines 10-11) orients to this aspect of the narrative to indicate shared knowledge and mutual understanding with her Mai. As such, both of them display their mutual understanding, or harmony, in talk. Mai then pivots (see Jefferson, 1993 for 'pivot') on the detail of Hoàng's birth to move on to her next point in the story (lines 12-19).

Following the birth of her second child (line 10, 12) Mai experienced further difficulties at home which made her feel stressed and get easily angered (line 14). In turn, this made her husband go out more often (line 15) and he ended up having an affair with another woman. Mai does not tell Dương what her husband's fault is, but by saying, 'although he was the person at fault' (line 16), she presupposes that Dương already knows his fault. This presupposition is made because she and her daughter are two members of the same family, which is a membership categorization device (Sacks, 1972b, 1974), and thus they must both know about his affair.

Lines 17-19 reveal Mai's advice to Dương. In the final stage of telling her story, she admits that her intolerance and high self-esteem (lines 17, 18) resulted in her divorce (line 19). She uses an idiomatic expression - *tan đàn sể nhể*, or being departed - to refer to this state of family breakdown. Though *tan đàn sể nhể* literally denotes the state of a herd of buffalo calves being dispersed, it is often adopted to refer to the separation of a group of people or the state of being divorced. In Vietnamese culture, it usually connotes the difficulties of being departed. Mai imports it to her talk at the right time given that she knows Dương has witnessed the difficulties of her being a single mum. She uses it as a

warning to Dương that if she got divorced, she would meet a lot of difficulties, which projects her to her later actual advice in line 22.

Stories are not produced in vacuum and “from CA perspective, the production of a story in fact always occurs in some specific interactional context” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 123). As have been discussed above, the narrative plays the role of a pre-advice. Being Dương’s mother, Mai knows that Dương is a well-educated, respectful, and serious daughter who will not easily forgive her husband’s infidelity. Thus, Mai understands that she cannot advise Dương in a bald-on record manner; rather, she should have some sort of lead-in expression and should advise Dương in a sympathetic way. In telling the story as a pre-advice, Mai has put herself in Dương’s position (in fact she used to be in similar situation) so as to empathize with her in this difficult time. The story, together with some loving actions such as turning to Dương, gazing at her, and rubbing her shoulder (line 21), has contribute to the importance of the advice Mai is going to make. On the one hand, the narrative helps Mai to give a gentle and empathetic advice, and on the other hand, it strengthens the persuasiveness as well as the urgency of the advice.

Indeed, in telling her story Mai implicates Dương as someone who actually has some stake in the story. Dương is thus not just any recipient, but one the story should be told to. As such, Mai’s story is purposefully embedded to this context as one type of recipient design (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979). In this specific context, Mai supposes that Dương knows what she is talking about because Dương is also part of the story. This knowledge results in Dương chiming in to talk about the difficult time her parents had (lines 10-11). This interruption does not, however, flout the turn-taking rules (Sacks et al., 1974). Rather, Dương’s turn-taking is totally ordered and sequentially organised, and shows the momentous nature of the story (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). In fact, in such instances the storyteller tends to engage the co-interactant in a number of ways such as providing opportunities for him or her to react, display understanding, or become involved.

8.3.2 Refusing by requesting and explaining accompanied by paralinguistic and non linguistic modes

After telling the story of the time prior to getting divorced from her husband (i.e., Dương’s father), Mai gives her first piece of advice in line 22 using the proverb *đánh kẻ chạy đi không ai đánh kẻ chạy lại* (lit. to beat the person who runs away and not to beat the person

who runs back). This advice is made at the point of time when Mai recognizes that Dương has been involved sufficiently enough into the story she has been telling; that is, Dương has shown she knows the story very well, and takes part in the story telling by mentioning the birth of her younger brother-Hoàng-and more difficulties they have to experience after Hoàng was born. Dương's full involvement in the story is also realized by her sad mood (sympathetic gaze and crying – lines 8, 10, 11). Upon seeing Dương's full involvement in the story Mai thinks that it is high time for her to give her advice to Dương and Mai decided to use that proverb to advise Dương to forgive her husband.

In Vietnamese culture, 'the person who runs away' denotes the one who commits a fault, but does not admit his or her wrongdoing. On the other hand, 'the person who runs back' refers to the one who recognises his or her fault and feels regretful about it. The verb 'beat' metaphorically means to punish somebody who commits a wrongdoing, and hence 'not to beat' means to forgive him or her. The proverb, therefore, teaches people to forgive those who acknowledge their wrongdoing and who want to correct it. In saying this Mai indirectly advises Dương to forgive her husband because he, as far as Mai can see, regrets his infidelity.

However, Dương refuses her mother by requesting back that she should not advise her (line 24) and then she gives her explanation. If in the narrative Mai draws on the fact that divorce can make a woman's life really difficult to advise Dương, Dương draws on another aspect of the story, i.e., the serious hurt a woman would get from being betrayed by her husband, to refuse Mai's advice. She performs a number of actions: shaking her head, glimpsing at her mother, and crying (line 23); then, she provides her explanation in a mitigating way: she seeks her mother's sympathy by saying *chắc mẹ cũng hiểu* (you must also understand, line 26), as the reason for her refusal. Seeking sympathy from Mai reveals Dương, too, is performing a perfect recipient design because she knows that she and her mother have "the existing mutual knowledge" (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 130) about how a woman feels when she is betrayed by her husband. Apart from the fact that every woman would feel very hurt if her husband was unfaithful, Mai knows exactly what the hurt feels like because she was betrayed by her husband a long time ago (as she reveals in her story). Therefore, by seeking her mother's sympathy Dương can make her reason for not forgiving her husband more convincing and hence her refusal stronger.

8.3.3 Refusing by exclaiming and crying

Upon interpreting Dương's verbal turns (lines 23-28) and non-verbal behaviour as a refusal, Mai continues with her advice by outlining another reason why Dương should not consider getting a divorce: *vì cu Tít* (for Tít's sake, line 35). Mai advises Dương to reconsider her decision to divorce her husband for the sake of the happiness of her son. It is widely observed that children are greatly impacted when parents decide to separate. Thus in practice, many couples choose not to divorce for the sake of their children. Through this further negotiation Mai is highlighting to Dương the responsibility she has for the happiness of her son. Moreover, by so doing Mai thinks she is providing Dương with a more convincing reason to reconsider her plan to get a divorce. However, Dương again refuses, this time by crying (lines 38, 48) and uttering only one word *mẹ* (mum!) (line 39).

The third adjacency advice-refusal pair occurs when Mai picks up the box (line 41) used to store the bracelet, photos, and some letters. She decides to give those things to Dương with the hope that they will remind Dương of her own sad story and thus help her to change her mind. At first, Dương does not want to receive them, as evidenced by her pushing the box back (line 44). Because Mai insists, however, by grasping Dương's hand and putting the box in it (line 45), Dương has to receive it reluctantly. Mai's action of giving the box, together with her words (lines 42-49), reveals that she is very insistent to advise Dương to forgive her husband. What happens in the conversation show that Mai may have prepared to give it to Dương before the conversation starts; and if so, she must have known in advance that advising her daughter is not easy and her advice is very likely to be refused. It is because if Dương explicitly accepts her advice right at the beginning, she may not have to give it to her. Therefore, the fact that Dương does not explicitly accept is understood by me as an indirect refusal, and she also interprets Dương's later actions (crying on her shoulder [line 50] and repeating the exclamation *mẹ* [line 51]) as another refusal. Thus, she keeps advising and requesting Dương in later conversations.

8.3.4 Other modes of communication

Dương's response to her mother's advice is mediated by different communication tools, referred to as modal complexity (Norris, 2004, see section 6.7.4). First, she shakes her head slightly (line 23), then glimpses at her mother (image 8.3.4), and gently states the reasons for her refusal (lines 24-28).



Image 8.3.4



Image 8.3.5



Image 8.3.6

The actions of shaking her head, glimpsing at her mother and then looking down (image 8.3.5), and crying are all lower-level actions (Norris, 2004) that play very important roles in Dương's refusal. Although she does not directly refuse her mother by saying 'No', her utterance *Thôi mẹ à* (Mom, please say no more) is quite a bald on record refusal because it is a request back to her mother not to try to advise her. In Brown and Levinson's (1987) model, this type of bald on record refusal may be regarded as rude because of its high degree of face threat. However, in this interaction it is mitigated by not only the long explanation that follows, but also by Dương's gentle voice (lines 24, 26, 27, 28) and by the actions described above.

Upon hearing Dương's utterances in line 24, Mai looks down and away from Dương sadly (line 25, image 8.3.6). This reveals that she perceives Dương's verbal and non-verbal actions to constitute a refusal. Therefore, in her second attempt (lines 35-37) Mai intensifies her advice with a number of other actions and by giving a further reason: 'for Tít's sake' (line 35). She turns to Dương again, grasps her hand, holds it tightly, gazes at her, and then pleads to her (image 8.3.7).



Image 8.3.7

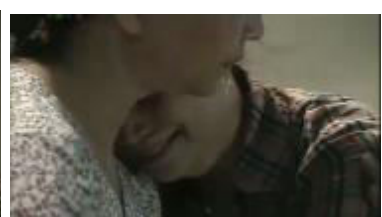


Image 8.3.8



Image 8.3.9

At this time Dương bows her head onto Mai's shoulder, cries louder (images 8.3.8, 8.3.9), and utters just one exclamation *mẹ* (line 39). At this moment, these non-linguistic actions take the main role of conveying her feelings and thus become embodied modes of

communication (Norris, 2004, see section 6.7.1). The verbal and non-verbal actions suggest Dương feels sorry for both her mother and herself because they share a similar experience. The actions do not, however, constitute her agreement with her mother's advice nor a refusal. However, Mai interprets Dương's actions, linguistic, paralinguistic and non-linguistic, as the realisation of another refusal because she goes further in her attempt to advise Dương in her next turns.



Image 8.3.10



Image 8.3.11



Image 8.3.12

Mai's third attempt to persuade Dương begins when she picks up the box (image 8.3.9) containing the souvenirs and gives it to Dương in the hope that the objects will 'teach' her a lesson (line 47). At this moment, therefore, the box has become the main tool of communication and becomes the embodied mode. As we have stated earlier, although giving the box is the third attempt in this conversation, it has been prepared as the purpose of the whole event. Before the conversation happened, Mai must have prepared it very carefully so that her advice would become more convincing. It is because being Dương's mother she knows that Dương is a relatively firm woman who is very serious in her actions, and that it is not easy to advise her to reverse her decision she has already made. This knowledge is realized in the conversation when Mai admits that Dương has a pure mind and when it has been stained, she will find it difficult to get it pure again (lines 30-32). This utterance in lines 30-32 also shows that Mai perceives Dương's reply (in lines 24, 26, 27, and 28: 'Mom, please say no more. You must also understand that the worst pain, and also the most difficult to heal, is the pain in one's soul') to her previous advice as a refusal. In fact, what Dương says shows that she is not committing to either acceptance or refusal, but Mai's insistence on giving further advice (lines 35-37) shows that she sees Dương's binary response as an indirect refusal.

Dương refuses Mai's attempt to give her the box by pushing the box back (image 8.3.10); this action is not only a rejection of the box, but more importantly a refusal to Mai's advice that she has been trying to make since the beginning of the conversation. Indeed, the box is

a material object that helps Mai to make her advice more convincing; thus, refusing it means refusing her advice. However, since Mai has prepared to give it to Dương, she insists by grasping Dương's hand and placing the box in it (image 8.3.11). Unable to refuse, Dương starts to cry louder, bows her head onto Mai's shoulder, and, like the second refusal (line 39), utters the word *mẹ* (Oh mom!) again (line 51). Mai also cries silently with her eyes filled with tears (image 8.3.12).

The last three images show the final moments of their conversation. Although Dương's verbal and non-verbal actions do not constitute a direct refusal, Mai would perceive them as the performance of a rejection. This interpretation may not be drawn from what happen in this conversation but it can be documented in the next conversation analysed below.

8.4 The second conversation (Episode 22: 50'13-51'32)

Dương is sitting on her bed looking at the box (image 8.4.1) her mother gave to her during the previous conversation. She is crying silently (8.4.2) when she hears the sound (image 8.4.3) of her mother wiping the altar in the living room.

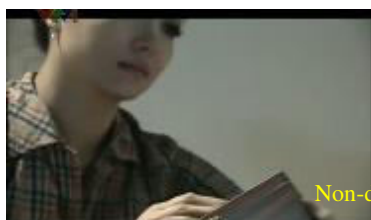


Image 8.4.1

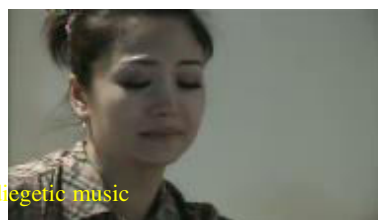


Image 8.4.2



Image 8.4.3

Images 8.4.4 to 8.4.9 below show the beginning part of the conversation between Mai and Dương the translation of which is provided on the images. Following this part is the excerpt transcribed below (lines 1-31). In the initial part, upon hearing the sound from the living room Dương goes out to ask what Mai is doing (image 8.4.4). Dương is surprised with Mai's action of cleaning the altar and with what she replies to her question which is displayed on image 8.4.5 below. She is surprised because Mai normally forbids anyone in

the family from cleaning the altar³⁰, as her complaint is shown on image 8.4.6 below. Mai may believe Dương's complaint to be true because she replies with an utterance of uncertainty 'Er, uhm' (image 8.4.7). The fact that Mai's actions contradict her previous rules shows she has been so worried about Dương and her decision to get divorced that she has done some unusual actions.



Image 8.4.4

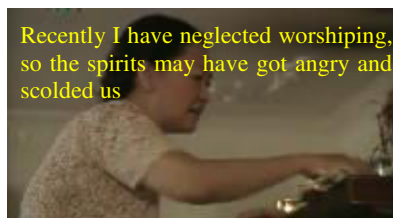


Image 8.4.5

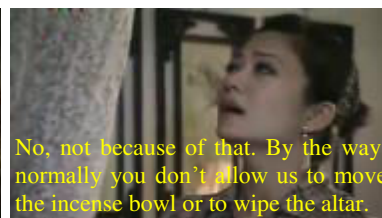


Image 8.4.6



Image 8.4.7



Image 8.4.8

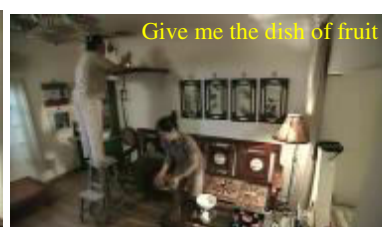


Image 8.4.9

After cleaning the altar Mai asks Dương to put down the bowl of water and give her the bowl of fruit to put on the altar (image 8.4.8, 8.4.9). Mai then burns an incense stick and asks Dương to pray with her, which starts the following excerpt.

01. Mai: *con lạy các cụ đi*
child pray PluM ancestor AlignM
Please pray to the ancestors
02. Dương: *ơ nhưng mà thắp hương giờ này=*
er but burn incense hour this
Oh but burning incense at this time
03. Mai: *=hư giờ nào mà chẳng được miễn là lòng thành*
uhm time what StaM not possible provided heart sincere
Any time is okay, provided we have a good will
04. Mai: ((put two hands together for praying, looks up to the altar

³⁰ Vietnamese people abstain from cleaning the altar or moving the incense bowl since they assume that doing so will disturb the spirits which may become angry and cause harm to them.

05. and talks to the ancestors))
06. *con lầm thì các ngài tha lỗi các ngài thương*
child mistaken then PluM sir forgive faulty PluM sir love
If I have been at fault, please kindly forgive me.
07. *nếu con gây nghiệp lớn*
if child commit karma big
If I have created a bad karma,
08. *thì để mình con gánh chịu ((crying voice))*
then let only child incur
just punish me.
09. Dương: ((gazes at Mai))
10. Mai: *đừng bắt gia đình các cháu phải ly tán*
don't force family PluM offspring have to separate
Please don't break my daughter's family down.
11. Dương: ((keeps gazing at Mai surprisingly))
12. Mai: ((turns to Dương but looks down))
13. *con ạ lâu nay mẹ ăn ở không nên không phải với*
child Voc so far mother live not good not right with
My daughter! So far I have behaved badly with
14. *các cụ nên mới bị quả báo*
PluM ancestor so NegM retribution
our ancestors, so now we have been punished.
15. ((looks up to gaze at Dương))
16. *nhưng mẹ đã sám hối rồi sẽ không sao đâu*
but mother Past. do penance already will no problem StaM
But I have already done penance, so you will not have any problems
17. Dương: ((gazes at Mai))
18. *kìa chuyện chúng con không phải lỗi do mẹ đâu*
there matter PluM child not be mistake because mother StaM
Oh mum, our problem is not because of you
19. Mai: ((gazes at Dương and cries))
20. *có có tại mẹ tại mẹ mẹ ăn ở không ra gì*
have have because mother because mother mother live not good
It is. It's because I haven't lived in good manner,
21. *không dạy dỗ các con đến nơi đến chốn*
not teach PluM child carefully
I haven't taught you carefully.
22. Dương: *mẹ đã rất vất vả với chúng con*
mother Past. very hard with PluM child

- Mum, you have been working very hard to bring us up.**
23. Mai: *Dương à hứa với mẹ hứa với mẹ đi con*
 Dương Voc promise with mother promise with mother AlignM child
Dương, please promise me, promise me
24. *con sẽ không ly hôn nhé*
 child will not divorce AlignM
you will not get divorced, will you?
25. *con có khinh nó thế nào không nói chuyện với nó cũng được*
 child have disdain him how not talk with him also possible
Even though you may despise him, and won't talk to him,
26. *nhưng đừng bỏ nhau đừng ly hôn con nhé*
 but not separate not divorce child AlignM
please don't separate, don't divorce
27. *kìa mẹ*
 there mum
Oh mum!
28. ((depart her hands from Dương's))
29. *hình như là vẫn chưa được sạch*
 seem be still not PosM clean
It seems that the altar is still not clean enough,
30. *hết tuần hương này mẹ mẹ phải lau lại mới được*
 finish round incense this mother mother have to swab again only possible
I will have to re-swab it after this incense round.
31. Dương: ((looks up the altar and gazes at Mai))

8.4.1 Refusing by rejecting to do an invited action

As concluded in the last paragraph of section 8.3.4, Dương's reply in the first conversation is understood by Mai as a refusal although Dương did not refuse directly, and thus in the second conversation Mai continues to persuade her to cancel her decision of getting divorced (we have displayed in chapter 4 that an utterance may be perceived as a refusal from the hearer's perspective). Similar to the talk during the first conversation, before Mai gives an official request, she prepares it carefully by doing a number of frozen actions (Norris, 2004, see section 6.7.3). Then, she burns an incense and asks Dương to pray with her to the ancestors (line 1). In fact, before the excerpt occurs, she told Dương that she had not been worshipping the ancestors properly and that it was her fault that may have made

the spirits angry, and as a result, the spirits may have punished them (image 8.4.5). Mai thinks that the kind of punishment that the angry spirits have imposed on her family is to make Duong to decide to get divorced.

Responding to Mai's request to pray in line 1, Duong however expresses her rejection by complaining to her that it is not the usual time to burn incense to pray (line 2). In fact, this complaint continues to express her surprise she has revealed a moment ago (in the first part of the conversation, she said to her mother: 'normally, you don't allow us to move the incense bowl or to wipe the altar' - image 8.4.6). Her complaint shows her rejection to what her mother is doing and asking her to do, which she thinks unusual. Although Duong then reluctantly does what her mother asks her to do (i.e., to pray), this rejection is part of the refusing process she performs in this whole conversation.

8.4.2. Refusing by acting in a non-affiliative ways to the requester's ongoing actions

After Mai asks Duong to pray (line 1), she starts to pray by begging the gods and ancestors to forgive her fault (lines 6-8). As we have stated above, she thinks the fact that Duong decided to get divorced is the consequence of her neglect of worshipping those spirits. Taking her own responsibility, Mai begs the spirits to punish only her for her fault (line 8) and not to punish Duong by causing her and her husband to separate (line 10). At this moment, Duong is treated as the target of Mai's praying. She then turns to Duong to select her as the interlocutor (line 12) and explains that she has been at fault so far but that she has been trying to do penance (i.e., to clean the altar and pray to the ancestors), so she believes that with her doing penance, Duong's problem can be solved.

Mai's perturbations (Goodwin, 1981), that is, her strange actions of swabbing the altar and of requesting Duong to pray (line 1, image 8.4.10), take Duong by surprise. Her surprise is displayed in her reply to Mai's request in the form of a complaint (analysed above) accompanied by a direct gaze at her mother (image 8.4.11). Moreover, when Mai says 'whatever time is okay' (line 3, image 8.4.11) Duong has to pray reluctantly, but still gazes at Mai in a curious and disappointed way (image 8.4.12). When Mai prays and begs for the spirits' mercy (lines 6-8 and 10, image 8.4.13), Duong becomes even more surprised (line 11, image 8.4.14). We can see her increasing surprise by comparing her facial expressions at images 8.4.12 and 8.4.14. The gaze in image 8.4.14 shows Duong's growing surprise at Mai's mention of her divorce during the prayer - 'don't force my children to separate'.

Dương does not expect that her mother will draw on the ancestor spirits to bring her problem to the fore, and her gaze of surprise shows her objection to her mother's unusual actions which her mother has done to prepare for her later request (i.e., pre-request actions). Dương's gaze of surprise and objection can therefore also be understood as a pre-refusal action.



Image 8.4.10



Image 8.4.11



Image 8.4.12



Image 8.4.13



Image 8.4.14



Image 8.4.15

8.4.3 Refusing by disagreeing

After begging the gods and ancestors to forgive her and her family, Mai turns to Dương (line 12) to tell her that she has done penance (by worshipping and praying those spirits) and thus Dương will not be punished by those spirits anymore (line 16). The action of turning to Dương shows a shift from talking to the spirits to talking to Dương, which is the purpose of this interaction Mai has set out. In other words, Mai is leading the conversation from talking to the spirits to talking about Dương's problem of getting divorced.

However, Dương again rejects her mother's self-blaming by expressing her disagreement in words in lines 18 and 22. She states that her problem is not caused by her mother's neglect of worshipping and that her mother has been working very hard to bring up her and her brother. With this disagreement, she implies that her own problem has nothing to do with her mother and she wants to solve it by herself, which means an indirect refusal to her mother's involvement in her problem.

8.4.4. Refusing by producing a vocative turn which is neither rejecting nor complying with the request

If Mai's turn in line 12 shows a shift from talking to the spirits to talking Dương, her turn in line 23 displays a shift from pre-request actions to an official request. In this turn, she asks Dương to promise not to get divorced to her husband (lines 23 – 26). It is noticeable that Mai asks Dương not to get divorced even though Dương may despise him and will not talk to him. This shows an example of Vietnamese women's virtue of sacrifice: they tend to sacrifice her own happiness for the well-being of other family members.

However, once more, Dương refuses her mother's request by saying *kìa mẹ* – Oh mum (line 27). Again, Dương does not say directly that she will follow or reject her mother's request, but the exclamation *kìa mẹ* is interpreted by her mother as a non-compliance which is a 'symptom' of a refusal or a pre-refusal. That is why in responding to Dương's utterance Mai says she must clean the altar again once the incense stops burning (line 30). The sequential logic Mai may think of in the final turn is that Dương's non-compliance of her request means the family breakdown; the family breakdown results from the punishment by the ancestors, at least as she perceives; and the punishment means that she is still faulty; and in order to correct her fault, she has to re-clean the altar to show penance. This example illustrates how refusal can be inferred in talk-in-interaction without having to be explicitly stated.

8.4.5 Objects as embodied modes of communication

Before the conversation above takes place, Dương is looking at the box her mother gave her as a 'lesson' in the first conversation. The box contains the souvenirs (some photos, letters, and a bracelet) and they all have a 'lesson' on her. In other words, these objects have had a significant influence on her psychological process of considering between refusing and accepting her mother's advice. During the time she is looking at these objects, which lasts for 17 seconds (from 48'52 to 49'10), there is no dialogue, but the audience can infer her sad mood from her facial expressions (she is crying), and from her careful way of holding and touching the box (see image 8.4.1, 8.4.2, 8.4.3 above). All these non-linguistic actions in this short period express the fact that the souvenirs have had a great effect on her: they make her think of her mother's advice during the previous conversation

(see section 8.3), which may change her decision of getting divorced. Therefore, at this moment the souvenirs take their primary role in expressing her feeling.

Other material objects and non-linguistic actions in this second conversation also play an important role in communicating Mai's message. In the first part of the conversation (images from 8.4.4 to 8.4.9), which is not transcribed, Dương comes out of the bedroom to talk to Mai. Objects such as the altar, the bowl of fruit, the incense, Mai's actions of swabbing the altar, burning the incense, and even her frozen actions (Norris, 2004) of preparing the bowl of fruit and getting a bowl of water etc. prepare the scene for Mai to make her request. Indeed, all of the objects and actions play an important role because they can make her request more convincing which can limit the possibility of refusing.

8.4.6 The cult of ancestors as a communication tool

In conversation 1 Mai tried to advise Dương not to get divorced, but she realises that Dương does not seem to agree. As a result, Mai decides to talk to Dương the second time. If in conversation 1 Mai takes the strategy of telling her own story of divorce to advise Dương, in this conversation she uses another strategy to convince her. She draws on the practice of worshipping the spirits of their ancestors and gods as a tool to make her request more persuasive. She burns an incense stick and asks Dương to pray with her. At the beginning of the pray, they are the *author* and the spirits are the *interlocutor* (Levinson, 1988, see section 6.5.2), and Mai speaks to the spirits (i.e., to beg for their tolerance – lines 6-8) on behalf of Dương. It is noticeable, however, that while she is praying, she actually targets her message to Dương by telling the spirits Dương's problem of divorce (line 10). Then, when she recognizes that Dương has involved herself into the praying by gazing at her surprisingly (line 11), she turns to and talks directly to Dương. As such, she has changed Dương's participation role from an *indirect target* to an *interlocutor* (Levinson, 1988), and the spirits have become the *intermediary* of the conversation. In other words, although the participation role of the spirits is the *interlocutor*, Mai purposefully uses them as an *intermediary* to advise and request her daughter. As such, the practice of worshipping plays the role of an important communication tool.

Vietnamese people believe that the spirits of dead ancestors and gods (e.g., Land God or Kitchen God) can do harm to the living if they are not worshipped properly (see chapter 2). Mai believes that Dương's decision to divorce her husband is the punishment the spirits

impose on her family because she has neglected worshipping them. Therefore, by worshipping the spirits properly and pray for their tolerance, Mai hopes they will forgive her by withdrawing the punishment.

In fact, Mai is so worried about Dương's situation that she does many things which are considered by Dương and Hoàng to be unusual, as evidenced when they later talk with each other about her actions and behaviour. Even after her decision not to talk about Dương's situation any more in conversation 3 (see 8.5 below), she even acts in a number of unusual ways such as buying a cat, which is often considered as bringing bad luck (In fact, when she is bringing the cat home, she is hit by a motorbike; her head bumps against the hard surface of the road, which is the cause of her death some weeks later). Thus, what Mai does in this excerpt should not be considered as an attempt at manipulation to request Dương to change her decision to get divorced. Rather, it should be explained in the way that her actions and behaviour are sincere, but in a non-conventional way because Dương's problem has changed her psychological and mental state. All these abnormal actions performed by Mai seem to have nothing to do with Dương's refusal, but in fact they have greatly influenced on her thoughts that will be revealed in later conversations because they make Dương think of her responsibility towards her mother. That is, if she keeps refusing her mother, she will make her more foolish and will make more unusual things.

8.5 The third conversation (Episode 25: 04'00-05'51)

The excerpt below is taken from a meeting of Dương's family members – excluding her son, Tít, who is too young to attend. Thus, the meeting includes four members: Dương sitting on the sofa; Mai sitting to her right; her husband, Kinh, sitting to her left across the table; and her younger brother, Hoàng, sitting to Mai's right (image 8.5.1). The first part of the meeting can be summarised as follows: Mai says that she recently learnt her children (i.e., Dương and Hoàng) saw her as mentally unstable (one symptom is that she worships and prays to the ancestors on unusual days as shown in conversation 2 above). When Hoàng rejects her assertion, Mai says she is not mentally unstable, but has been depressed and worried because her children have been leading their life in the 'wrong direction' (one of the wrongdoings she implies is Dương's decision to divorce her husband). Thus Mai has organised the meeting to give her children the opportunity to present their opinions. When

Dương asks Mai what issue she wants them to talk about, she starts the conversation excerpted below.



Image 8.5.1

01. Mai: ((Gazes at Dương))
02. *Tôi chỉ muốn hỏi anh chị một câu* ((gazes at Kính))
 I only want ask elder brother elder sister one sentence
I only want to ask you both one question: Can you,
03. (2.0) ((gazes at Dương again))
04. *anh chị có thể vì tôi* ((gazes at Kính)) *mà bỏ qua*
 elder brother elder sister can because me CondM forgive
for my sake,
05. *cho nhau mọi lỗi lầm được không*
 each other every fault possible QuesM
forgive each other?
06. Dương: ((a quick glance at Kính then looks down))
07. Hoàng: (4.0) ((quick gaze at Dương)) *oai nhà mình hôm nay mở phiên tòa xét xử à*
 DisM house ours today open court judge QuesM
Oh, today we bring the court to our home;
08. *công tố viên mà hỏi thế thì nguyên đơn với bị đơn*
 public prosecutor CondM ask that then plaintiff and defendant
If the public prosecutor asks such a question, how can the plaintiff and
09. *có mà khóc ra tiếng mán à hehehe*
 StaM cry out language Man QuesM
the defendant be able to answer?

10. Mai: ((look at a middle space)) hỏi là hỏi vậy thôi (1.0) chứ (1.0) tôi biết trước
Ask be ask that DisM but I know in advance
It's only a rhetorical question because I already know
11. câu trả lời là như thế nào rồi
sentence answer be how already
the answer.
12. Kinh: (3.0) con (1.0) thực lòng (1.0) thực lòng con không hề muốn (1.5)
Child truly truly child not at all want
I truly don't want (to get divorced) at all,
13. Dương: ((gazes at Kinh with resentment))
14. Kinh ((looks at Dương quickly))
15. nhưng (1.5) ((looks down, away from Dương)) con làm gì có quyền quyết định
but child do what have right decide
but how can I have the right to decide
16. Mai: ((gazes at Kinh)) (1.5) tôi hiểu rồi ((looks away)) (4.0) cuối cùng chỉ có
I understand already finally only have
I understand. Finally, it's only me, this old woman,
17. cái thân già này là khổ thôi công sức một đời để gìn giữ gia đình
Class body old this be miserable DisM effort one life to maintain family
who has to bear the unhappiness. My whole life's effort to maintain the family
18. vậy là đổ xuống sông xuống biển hết rồi ((crying voice))
then be pour down river down sea all already
has been worthless
19. Dương: ((moves closer to Mai, holds her arm))
20. con xin mẹ ((crying)) (1.0) mẹ đừng như thế nữa
child beg mother mother not like that more
I beg you; please don't be like that.
21. (3.0) con hiểu mong muốn của mẹ nhưng con xin mẹ hãy nghĩ
child understand wish of mother but child beg mother please think
I understand what you want, but please think of me;
22. cho con con không thể làm khác được nhất định=
for child child cannot do different possible surely
I can't act differently. I will definitely
23. Mai: ((remove Dương's hand from her arm))
24. =anh chị không phải trình bày
elder brother elder sister not have to present
you don't have to explain.
25. nếu anh chị đã quyết tôi cũng mặc (2.0) tôi chả sống được
if elder brother elder sister already decide I also ignore I not live possible

- If you have already decided, I will not bother you. I am not going to live**
26. *bao lâu nữa thiên hạ có cười cũng ít lâu là hết*
how long more people have laugh also a while be stop
- much longer, and even if people laugh at us, it won't last long,**
27. *nhưng việc anh chị làm con cái anh chị*
but thing elder brother elder sister do children elder brother elder sister
- but what you do now will have consequences on your child**
28. *sẽ hứng chịu đấy ((moves her hand to wipe out her tear))*
will bear AffM
- of what you do today.**
29. *(6.0) chuyện anh chị Dương coi như*
story elder brother elder sister Dương seem
- Dương's family problem should be considered done,**
30. *xong không nhắc lại nữa*
finish not repeat more
- we will not talk about it any more**
31. Dương: *(2.0) kìa mẹ*
There mum
- Oh mum!**
32. Mai: *tôi còn một tâm nguyện (1.5) mong các anh chị không từ chối*
I have one inner wish hope PluM elder brother elder sister not refuse
- I still have another wish which I hope you will not refuse.**

8.5.1 Refusing by passing the responsibility to another person and keeping silence

The above interaction occurs in the context of Mai having already privately requested Dương twice, as seen in conversations 1 and 2 analysed above. On this occasion Mai officially takes Dương's problem on board in the presence of the whole family (except for Tit). This interaction is different from the previous two in which Mai prepared a careful pre-request (i.e., telling a story in the first, and praying and the accompanying actions such as preparing the offerings, swabbing the altar etc. in the second). In this interaction, she makes a direct request to Dương and her husband (lines 2, 4, 5), i.e., without any pre-advice or pre-request as in the first two conversations.

It is noticeable that this time Mai uses person reference terms for self and second person reference that are different from the ones she used in the first two conversations. Instead of addressing Dương *con* (or child) as she did in the first two conversations, in this interaction

she calls her *chị* (elder sister), and she calls her son-in-law *anh* (elder brother). Thus, in lines 2 and 4 she addresses both of them *anh chị* (elder brother, elder sister) and calls herself *tôi* (subject of the King, see section 2.4.3). This change of person reference terms makes a significant change in membership categorization of the same members in the family. As have been discussed in section 2.4.3, the system of person reference forms in Vietnamese is sophisticated, and the use of those forms can fully indicate the roles of the addressor and the addressee. Since the kin terms *anh chị*, used to address one's adult children, and the common noun *tôi*, used for self-reference of a parent, imply a lack of intimacy, by using these forms, Mai is deliberately distancing herself from her daughter and son-in-law. The reason for this change in membership categorisation can be explained by the fact that Mai has become angry after she felt that Dương did not comply with her advice and request in the first two conversations, and as a result she thinks that this time she does not have to show her concern, sympathy and empathy with Dương as she did in previous conversations. By using those forms to make a direct request (line 4, 5), she constructs herself as a mother who has absolute power over her children to give such a strong request. Also, with this plural address term *anh chị* and the reciprocal pronoun *nhau* (each other - line 5) the request Mai makes is not just for Dương, but in fact is a reminder for her that the decision to cancel the divorce is a shared decision between her and her husband - Kinh. As such, Mai elevates Kinh's fair role in the decision.

Since Mai addressed both her and her husband at the same time, it is unclear who is responsible to answer her request. However, it could be interpreted that she is selecting Kinh as the next speaker for two reasons. First, she gazes at him at the end of her request (lines 4, 5 and image 8.5.2), which has been demonstrated as an explicit way of selecting next speaker (Goodwin, 1981; Lerner, 2003). Second, there is a pause of 4 seconds (line 7) after Mai's request, which is alternative way of selecting next speaker (Goodwin, 1981). Third, Dương shows her understating of her mother's target by displaying a quick glance to Kinh as a reminder that he must be responsible for answering her mother's question.

The silence lasts for four seconds (line 7) and thus Hoàng selects himself as the next speaker with the aim to break such a long silence (line 7, 8, 9, images 8.5.3, 8.5.4). Her glance at Kinh and this silence are again another refusal to her mother's request. Mai understands these actions as a refusal so she takes her turn to say that she has already known the answer (lines 10, 11). She perceives Dương's silence as another refusal because

before this meeting she had requested her twice (conversations 1 and 2) but she refused as shown in the previous excerpts, and also because Duong seemed to be very consistent and firm in maintaining her decision.



Image 8.5.2



Image 8.5.3



Image 8.5.4

8.5.2 Refusing by gazing with resentment and remaining silent

For his part, Kinh understands Mai's utterance in lines 10 and 11 as a blame to Duong's refusal and also a blame to him for not attempting to persuade Duong to maintain the marriage. Since Duong remains silent he thinks it is the transition-relevance place (Sacks et al., 1974) to take his turn to express his point of view. By saying 'I truly don't want (to get divorced) at all' and by having a quick look at Duong (line 14), Kinh is designing participation roles for Mai and Duong. He is responding to Mai's request and thus she is selected as the *interlocutor*. Nonetheless, he wants to send Duong a message by glancing at her, so she becomes his *indirect target*. Duong must have understood his message sent to her even before he looks at her. This is because upon hearing his utterance in line 12, Duong gives him a gaze with resentment (line 13). She must have been able to 'read' his mind that by saying 'I truly don't want (to get divorced) at all', he implies she is the only person who can decide to maintain the marriage and thus he is going to pass the responsibility of answering Mai's request back to Duong. Therefore, her gaze with resentment is a prevention of, or refusal to his intention of doing so.

What Duong thinks about Kinh's intention is correct because just after her gaze, he looks at her quickly (line 14) after saying the final words in 'I truly don't want (to get divorced) at all' (line 12, image 8.5.9). In other words, his quick gaze towards Duong (line 14) and the utterance 'but how can I have the right to decide?' (line 15) are a sign of passing the responsibility back to Duong. He pauses for 1.5 second after the word 'but' with the aim of waiting for her reaction. By doing this, he must have thought that Duong could have inferred his intention (in fact, as we analysed above, she has been able to guess his

intention). However, she remains silent and thus he has to continue with the rhetorical question ‘how can I have the right to decide?’ After this utterance, there is another 1.5 second silence (line 16), which, together with her gaze in line 13, form a refusal to his intention and thus to her mother’s request. Mai understands this silence as a refusal and thus she takes her turn in lines 16-18.



Image 8.5.5



Image 8.5.6



Image 8.5.7



Image 8.5.8



Image 8.5.9



Image 8.5.10

8.5.3 Refusing by begging

Mai does not have to wait for long to take her turn (lines 16, 17, 18) to express her deep disappointment with Dương’s decision. She blames Dương and Kinh for making her disappointed and for making her whole life’s effort to maintain harmony in the family become pointless. However, although Mai’s turn is about attributing blame, it can be understood as her last effort to make her request indirectly. In fact, she implies that if the divorce happens she will be one of the people to suffer. Thus, she wants to send Dương a message that if Dương does not want to hurt her (i.e., to let her suffer), she should not get divorced. Dương is able to pick up this message which is demonstrated by her begging (line 20), but she presents herself as very determined by refusing her mother’s wish once again. Although she projects herself as someone who loves and sympathises with her mother by grasping her arm (line 19) and saying ‘I’m terribly sorry, please don’t be like that’ (line 20), she then rejects her mother’s wish by begging her mother to empathise with her because she can’t act differently (line 22). What she wants to convey is that she is so

hurt that she cannot forgive her husband. Upon hearing this Mai immediately understands that her final attempt to persuade Dương has been unsuccessful and so she takes her turn without waiting for Dương to complete her utterance (a latch between lines 22 and 24). It seems that grumbling about herself is her preferred response to a refusal. Her turns in lines 16-18 and lines 24-27, which are taken immediately after the refusals are made, display her actions of sulky moaning at herself in a sulky manner.

It can be seen that Mai gets desperately angry with her daughter because she keeps refusing her requests. Her anger is manifested in line 23 when she removes Dương's hand from her arm (image 8.5.10) and in line 24 when she rejects Dương's explanation. Mai's desperation is also shown in line 25 when she reluctantly lets things go without being controlled. The final strategy Mai uses is to associate the divorce with the negative consequences it may have on their child in the hope that Dương will re-think her decision. Again, a six-second silence (line 29) is perceived by Mai as another refusal, and it prompts her to conclude the discussion about Dương's issue and to begin a new topic (lines 29, 30, 32).

8.5.4 Seat arrangement as a means of assigning participant role.

With regards to MIA, it is evident the director of the TV series has arranged the seating (see image 8.5.1) in such a way as to evoke the role of each participant and his/her relationship with the others in the interaction. The fact that Dương is sitting next to Mai on the same sofa shows that she has, by nature, the closer relationship to her mother compared to Hoàng and Kinh. In a Vietnamese family, a daughter tends to have a closer relationship to the mother than a son because she finds it easier to share her feelings and thoughts with her mother than the son does (Truong, Nguyen, & Tran, 2015). This adjacency has its role in shaping the way Dương refuse her mother: she can refuse in a begging manner by moving closer to her mother, grasping her arm, and asking the mother for her empathy (lines 19-22, image 8.5.10).

On the other hand, Kinh is sitting on a chair opposite to the women and this implies a certain distance from his mother-in-law. In Vietnamese culture, there is the saying *dâu con rể khách*, which means a daughter-in-law is treated as a daughter, but a son-in-law is treated as a guest. As such, a son-in-law is often treated with certain respect but also with some distance by his parents-in-law. In this interaction, Kinh is one of the two main

‘characters’ of the story in question, and thus he is seated on the same side (i.e., on Mai’s left-hand side) as the other character, Dương. In addition, it would be more convenient for Mai to address, by gaze for example (image 8.5.2), both Dương and Kinh when they are located on the same side.

That Hoàng is sitting on an ‘unofficial’ chair (a chair which is added, thus not belonging to the set), demonstrates that he is seen as a ratified unaddressed recipient, or an audience in Levinson’s (1988) term (see section 6.5). Thus, it would be unreasonable if Kinh and Hoàng exchanged seats because Mai would find it difficult to talk to Dương and then turn all the way round to talk to Kinh.

8.5.5 Gaze as selection of addressee

In sections 8.5.1 and 8.5.2, gaze has been analysed as a communication mode of refusing. In this section it is explored with another function. In face to face interactions, gaze is a useful means for selecting the addressee; that is, the participant(s) the speaker expects a response from. According to, gaze and naming (the use of vocatives and address terms) are explicit methods of addressing. In this interaction, Mai constantly moves her gaze between Dương and Kinh (images 8.5.5-8.5.8) when she makes the request to them. With the use of address forms *anh chị* (elder brother, elder sister), together with her gazes, Mai is inviting the next speaker, either Dương or Kinh, to respond to her request.

Kinh’s gaze (line 14) at Dương is also his selection of her as the next speaker. It can be interpreted as an implicit, or indirect, request to her to forgive him. That is, ‘I don’t want to get divorced, but I am at fault so I cannot decide; only you have the right to decide (to forgive me)’. Therefore, in terms of participation framework, by responding to Mai’s request and gazing at Dương, Kinh is the *author* who is selecting Mai as an *interlocutor* and Dương as an *indirect target* (Levinson, 1988; see section 6.5.2).

8.6 The last conversation (Episode 32: 26’05-28’30)

The excerpt below is the final part of the conversation between Dương and her husband. In this excerpt Kinh is trying to beg for Dương’s forgiveness.

01. Kinh: ... mẹ không muốn con cái ly hôn
 ... mother not want children divorce
 ... Our mother did not want us to get divorced,

02. (3.0) *hãy vì mẹ (.5) mà em tha thứ cho anh*
 please for mother so sister forgive for elder brother
so for her sake, please follow her wish to forgive me.
03. (1.5) *anh xin em (4.0) anh có nói gì lúc này (.)*
 elder brother beg younger sister elder brother have say what now
I beg you. I know whatever I say now
04. *em cũng không nghe*
 younger sister also not listen
you will not listen to;
05. (1.5) *anh (.) có hối hận cũng không kịp*
 elder brother have regret also not in time
it is too late for me to regret;
06. Dương: *huh.hh (keeps looking at the altar of her mother)*
07. Kinh: (1.0) *anh biết mà*
 elder brother know StaM
I know that already.
08. (2.0) *anh chỉ còn có (0.5) một cách duy nhất (1.0) là*
 elder brother only remain have one way only be
The only thing I can do now is
09. *xin em bỏ qua cho anh*
 beg younger sister forgive for elder brother
to beg you to forgive me
10. Dương: ((shakes her head)).hhh huh
11. (1.0) *hhuh rất tiếc (0.5) trong mắt tôi (1.5) anh không còn tồn tại .h*
 very pity in eye my elder brother no longer exist
Too bad. in my eyes, you no longer exist
12. Kinh: ((looks down disappointedly)) (4.0)
13. Dương *nhưng anh nói đúng (2.0) khi mẹ còn sống (1.0) mẹ luôn*
 but elder brother speak right when mother still alive mother always
But you are right. When our mother was still alive she always
14. *phản đối chuyện ly hôn (1.0) bà (.) không muốn con cái*
 oppose matter divorce grandmother not want children
protested our divorce matter. She didn't want her children
15. *dẫm vào vết xe đổ*
 step into trace vehicle fall
to follow the track of a fallen cart
16. Kinh: ((grasp Dương's hand))
17. (1.5) *ơ ơ em (0.5) > em hãy làm theo mong muốn của mẹ<*
 uhuh younger sister younger sister please do follow wish of mother

Please, do as she wished;

18. Dương: .hhh ((pulls her hand back, stands up and looks at the altar))
19. (4.0)
20. Kinh: ((looks up to Dương)) >em hãy để cho cu Tít có bố< (2.0)
younger sister please let for lad Tít have father
please let our child have his father
21. Dương: ((walks slowly to the altar))
22. Kinh: anh ((stands up)) (1.5) anh xin em đấy (1.0)
elder brother elder brother beg younger sister AffM
I hereby beg you
23. ((moves to the front of Dương, kneels down and grasp Dương's hands))
24. em (0.5)
younger sister
You
25. Dương: uhuh
26. Kinh: em hãy tha cho anh (0.5) đúng một lần này thôi (1.0)
younger sister please forgive for elder brother right one time this only
Please forgive me (0.5) just this time;
27. một lần này thôi mà
one time this only StaM
just only this time
28. Dương: ((shakes her head))
29. (3.0) tôi vừa gặp mẹ trong mơ ((sniff)) (3.0)
I just meet mother in dream
I have just met our mother in my dream;
30. mẹ vẫn phản đối chuyện ly hôn(h)n ((sniff))
mother still oppose matter divorce
she still objected to our divorce
31. (3.0) nếu mẹ tôi còn sống ((looks at Kinh)) (1.5) dứt khoát
If mother my still alive definitely
If she were still alive I and you would definitely
32. >tôi và anh sẽ ra tòa .hhh< ((looks at the altar)) nhưng vì mẹ
I and elder brother will go court but because mother
go to court, but because she
33. ((gazes at the altar)) (1.0) ((sniff)) uhuh huh huh .hhh huh huh huh
34. ((steps back and sits down)) (7.0)
35. Kinh: ((still kneels down and looks at Dương with begging eyes))
36. Dương: nhưng vì mẹ không còn (2.0) uhuh huh .hhh
but because mother not alive uhuh huh .hhh

but because she has passed away

37. *nên tôi không không nỡ làm trái ý nguyện của bà(h)*
so I not not have the heart do against wish of grandmother

I don't have the heart to go against her wish

38. Kinh: ((looks at Dương with hope))
39. *uhuh huh huh (3.0) tạm thời anh vẫn là chồng tôi .hhh (1.5)*
uhuh huh huh temporarily elder brother still be husband my

Temporarily you are still my husband

40. *trên danh nghĩa*
on title

on paper

41. Kinh: ((moves towards Dương, knees down and grasps her hand again))
42. *cảm ơn em (1.0) anh hứa*
thank younger sister elder brother promise

Thank you. I promise

43. Dương: *(3.0) tôi nhắc lại (1.0) chỉ là trên danh nghĩa (3.0)*
I say again only be on title

I say it again: only on paper.

44. *chúng ta (0.5) sẽ chính thức ly thân*
we will officially separate

We will officially separate

45. Kinh: *(1.5) anh hiểu mà (1.0) hy vọng thời gian sẽ giúp anh*
elder brother understand StaM hope time will help elder brother

I understand. Hopefully, time can help me

46. *chứng minh (2.0) thật lòng (0.5) anh rất ân hận (0.5)*
prove truly elder brother very regretful

to prove myself. I am really regretful

47. *và muốn sửa sai*
and want repair fault

and want to correct my fault

48. Dương: *(2.0) tôi muốn yên tĩnh ((looks at the altar))*
I want quiet

I want to stay alone

49. *(2.0) chắc mẹ cũng thế*
perhaps mother also that

our mother may also wants that

50. *(2.5) anh đi làm đi ((stands up and goes into the bedroom))*
elder brother go work AlignM

You'd better go to work now.

8.6.1 Refusing by ignoring

In this conversation, Kinh begs Duong to follow her mother's advice. He knows that Duong loves her mother very much and that her mother advised her twice (in the first two conversations); thus he expects she will do what her mother wanted. For this reason, he begs her to follow her mother's wish (line 2). He admits that his fault is so serious that Duong will not accept any excuse (lines 3, 4), and thus he draws on what his mother-in-law wanted as the reason Duong will most likely consider. As such, he touches upon Duong's weakest point in her psychology; that is, she loves her mother very much and thus she will be very likely to follow her advice even though she does not want to forgive him. Therefore, he is putting Duong in the context that her forgiveness is for her mother's sake (line 2) and not for his regretful behaviour.

However, although Duong is listening to him, her non-linguistic actions show that she ignores him. Her ignorance is realised in several ways. First, she keeps silence at different potential transition relevance places, with 'potential' meaning that she could take her turn if she wanted but she does not do so. For example, there are points of silence in lines 2 (3 seconds), line 3 (1.5 and 4 seconds) and line 5 (1.5 second). Second, while listening to him, she does not have any eye contact with him; instead, she keeps looking at the altar where her mother is worshipped (line 6), and keeps crying without saying any words although he has had a long explanation from line 1 to line 5. It seems that she is talking to her mother's spirit on the altar rather than talking to him. As such, she is sending him a message that she does not want to talk to him and will not forgive him; that is, she refuses his begging.

8.6.2 Refusing by shaking head accompanied by a statement of regret

Duong's tears (line 6) and ignorance (i.e., maintaining silence after Kinh pauses several times in lines 2, 3, and 5) are interpreted by Kinh as a signal of a refusal and thus he continues to beg for her tolerance (lines 8, 9). Until this point, Duong keeps refusing by shaking her head while crying (line 10) and saying that in her eyes he no longer exists (line 11). Kinh also perceives these actions as a refusal, which is evidenced by his looking down disappointedly not being able to utter a word for four seconds (line 12).

8.6.3 From refusing to accepting

The conversation would end with a refusal by Dương if she did not continue her turn. After a pause for 4 seconds, which makes Kinh think she is refusing, she continues her turn with the word ‘but’ in line 13. This word is noticeable here because it introduces a big change in her attitude. By acknowledging that her mother did not want her to get divorced (lines 13-15), she goes back to the point Kinh made earlier in line 2 in which he begs her to forgive him for the mother’s sake. This acknowledgement gives him new hope because it means she may follow her mother’s advice and request to forgive him. The thought that she will obey her mother’s wish seems to be the only reason that can make her change her mind.



Image 8.6.1



Image 8.6.2



Image 8.6.3



Image 8.6.4



Image 8.6.5



Image 8.6.6

Seeing that Dương seems to be convinced by that reason (i.e., for the mother’s sake), Kinh takes this opportunity to make another request, this time with higher verbal density (Norris, 2004, 2009) and a complexity of actions. The verbal density is realised in the different reasons he produces to ask for Dương’s forgiveness. The first reason is the one he has made earlier, that is, to follow the mother’s wish (line 17). The second reason is to let their son have his father (line 20). He makes these two sentences with fast speed, which contributes to the urgency of his begging. Until this moment, Dương still seems to be reluctant to accept: when he grasps her hand (line 16, image 8.6.3), she pulls it back in a forceful manner (line 18, image 8.6.4), then she stands up (line 18-image 8.6.5), keeps looking at the altar, and then walks towards the altar (line 21). Normally, these non-verbal actions would be interpreted as a refusal, but in this interaction, they are performed after she has given him a hope as analysed in the paragraph above, and thus they would be

regarded not as a real refusal but as a challenge she wants to give him. In other words, with these actions she may want to transmit to him a message that “you made a really serious mistake that hurts me a lot, and so I will not forgive you easily unless you beg me more”. In fact, Kinh perceives Duong’s actions in that way, so he continues to convince her by a complexity of other actions, verbal or non-verbal. He speaks with a faster speed (as shown by the more than and less than signs > < on line 17); begs her - ‘I hereby beg you’ (line 22); stands up and moves to her front (lines 22, 23-image 8.6.7); kneels down in front of her and grasps her hand (line 23-image 8.6.8); and gives a heavy stress on the word *đúng* (just this time-line 26).

Again, Duong shakes her head (line 28) but it does not seem to be a refusal either because after that she returns to talk about her dream of meeting her mother (line 29) for whose sake she is most likely to forgive him. This narrative shows that she has always been thinking of her mother’s request and of her responsibility to obey her mother. It is this responsibility and Kinh’s mention of her mother’s wish (lines 1 and 2) that project her to change her mind from refusing to accepting. However, her head-shaking here (line 28) means she is not going to forgive him because of his repentance, but she forgives him because of her responsibility towards her mother. Therefore, in line 30 she repeats the fact that her mother still objected their divorce (she has said this in lines 13, 14), which is the only reason that can make her change her decision. It is noticeable here that she only fulfills her responsibility in order to satisfy her mother after she has passed away, and if she was still alive, she would not do so (lines 31, 32). This conditional shows that the Confucian teaching of women’s responsibility to do what their parents want has strongly imprinted in Vietnamese daughters’ mind to the extent that they tend to do something as a privilege for their passed-away parents which they could not have been able to do when their parents were still alive.

Therefore, before the conversation takes place, Duong has prepared to reconsider her decision to divorce Kinh after her mother died although she does not let him know her true intention at the beginning of the conversation. This is revealed by the fact that she keeps looking at the altar when talking to him, and keeps refusing him. The result of this reconsideration is that in lines 31, 32, 36, 37, 39 and 40 she officially declares to cancel the decision in order to meet the demands of her mother.



Image 8.6.7



Image 8.6.8



Image 8.6.9



Image 8.6.10



Image 8.6.11



Image 8.6.12

Dương's turn in lines 31 and 32 is an unreal condition because her mother has already passed away. When saying this condition, her gesture and posture show her anger and hatred. She bows forward slightly and stares at him (image 8.6.9) while he is still kneeling on the floor, just like the actions of a high-powered person granting a privilege to a low-powered person. In this specific interaction, Kinh is the guilty person so he feels he is, rationally, in a lower position than her. This unreal condition implies the real outcome is that she and her husband will not go to court (i.e. they would not get divorced). However, Dương does not say this real message until she goes back to her seat and takes a pause for seven seconds (line 34). Dương does not officially say that she will forgive him although what she says at the beginning reveals that she will follow her mother's advice. Therefore, Kinh feels confused by her actions and thus remains on his knees, looks at Dương with anxiety (image 8.6.10), and waits for the result part of Dương's conditional sentence. Only after Dương officially announces that he is still her husband (line 39) does he stand up and move towards her (image 8.6.11). Dương's acceptance in line 39 is delayed for 3 seconds, by which she wants to send Kinh a message that she has to think of their problem carefully and that forgiving him is not an easy job. Although Dương repeats that their husband and wife status is only on paper (line 43) and sends a very hateful gaze to Kinh (image 8.6.12), he understands that she has decided to partly forgive him, at least allowing him to maintain the status of a husband in name. Therefore, it is a happy ending because, as Kinh says in lines 45-47, time will heal their pain.

8.7 Recapitulation and conclusion

Chapter 8 presents the results of study 2 that was designed to answer the research question 2 namely ‘How is Vietnamese refusing manifested in talk-in-interaction?’ Upon analysing how Vietnamese people use different tools of communication to perform their refusals and related speech acts, the chapter has been able to make an ‘organic link’ (Layder, 1993) between the micro processes (i.e., the use of different communication modes) and the macro features (i.e., the socio-cultural affordances conditioning such usage). As such, the results of this chapter (study 2) further document the results of chapter 7 (study 1).

It should be noted here once again that the following conclusion on how Vietnamese people refuse is the approximation to naturally occurring talks rather than true naturally occurring practices. Similarly, the conclusion on what cultural values constrain and condition Vietnamese people’s refusals reflects the opinion of a group of film producers.

8.7.1 Refusing and related speech acts are mediated by different modes of communication

Drawing on CA and MIA, this chapter demonstrated that refusals and related speech acts such as advice and request may be performed via a number of communicational modes. Language is an important means of communication, but not the only one. It can play a major role at certain moments, but minor role at other times. As documented throughout this chapter, modes other than language become embodied in different stages of an interaction (Norris, 2004).

Material objects, often referred to as disembodied modes of communication (Norris, 2004), play a very important role in conveying the intended message. In the second conversation, for example, the bracelet, the photos, and the letters reminded Dương of her mother’s advice. All of these things contributed to Dương’s change of mind; that is, from initially refusing her mother’s advice and requests to later accepting both of these. In the last conversation, the altar used to worship the spirit of her mother also reminds her of the responsibility she must take (i.e., to obey her mother). For this reason, when Dương is talking to Kinh during this conversation she always faces and gazes at the altar as if she is talking to her mother, who is already dead.

Gaze is another prominent means of communication. It is often used as supplementary to language so as to strengthen the illocutionary force of a speech act. Thus, when Mai advises Dương in the first conversation or makes a direct request in the second, she turns to Dương to look straight at her. Gaze alone (i.e., without accompanying language) also expresses its own message. Dương's gaze at her mother in the second excerpt conveys her surprise when her mother is performing unusual actions. Kinh's gaze at Dương in excerpt three even conveys an implicit request. That is, his reply to his mother-in-law's request also sends Dương, when he gazes at her, the message that 'I don't have the right to decide so could you please decide to forgive me?'

In short, refusing and its related speech acts are performed not only by language, but also by other communication tools either supplementary to language or functioning independently. Very often, these modes are used concurrently with different degrees of complexity and intensity (Norris, 2004).

8.7.2 Refusing is a process of negotiation

Through the analysis of the divorce story a vivid picture was provided of how Vietnamese people refuse advice or a request related to a high-stakes (potentially life-changing in this case) issue. Due to the high degree of face threat, refusing may occur several times in one interaction (like in the first conversation where Dương refuses three times), or it may take place through several interactions (the four conversations in this story).

During the negotiation, refusals are context-shaped and context-renewing (Heritage, 1984); that is, they are shaped by previous turns and they shape subsequent turns. The conversational features are based on the mutual understandings of the interlocutors. For example, upon interpreting that Dương's utterance *kìa mẹ* in the second conversation (line 27) as a refusal, Mai says that she will re-swab the altar, which implies that she will make another attempt to persuade Dương. Or in the story-telling in the first conversation, Dương's reference to the birth of her younger brother is as a result of Mai's previous turn about the difficulties their family experienced. It also results in the subsequent turn when Mai says that it is one of the reasons her husband (i.e., Dương's father) committed his wrong-doing.

The refusing process is not only realised in one conversation, but also across conversations. Thus, there is both new and old information introduced and developed throughout the four interactions. For example, in the first conversation Mai takes her own story of getting divorced and the need to give Duong's son a happy life as reasons to advise Duong. In the second conversation, however, she introduces a new reason; that is, the impact of the ancestor spirits. However, in the third and fourth conversations she returns to the first two reasons (i.e., to take her own case as a lesson and to avoid causing Tít to suffer), to persuade Duong.

The connection between the five conversations is also manifested in the increasing imposition of Mai's request. In the first conversation, Mai's initiating act is more like advice than a request, and she prepares for it very carefully (by telling a story). In the second conversation, Mai also prepares the talk carefully, but this time her request seems to be more imposing because it is performed with an intensity of different modes (she looks straight into Duong's eyes, grasps her arms, and utters the words in a begging way). In this manner, her request in the third conversation is more direct and without any pre-request prepared.

8.7.3 Cultural affordances

The whole story reveals a number of the cultural affordances discussed in chapter 7.

First, the issue of responsibility is highlighted throughout the story. The child has a responsibility to make their older generations happy by obeying them or following their advice. The duties are not only voluntarily implemented by the children (Duong's final decision to forgive her husband), but also requested by the parents or grandparents, directly or indirectly (Mai's request that Duong has to be responsible to keep the unity of the family that Mai has tried her best to maintain).

On the other hand, parents also have to take responsibility for the happiness of their children. When parents get divorced their children will be negatively impacted. This is why Mai warns Duong and Kinh that if they get separated their son, Tít, will have to suffer the consequences. Of course, giving consideration to the children's well-being before getting a divorce is a practice every couple in all countries must do. However, the

Vietnamese parents' responsibility to their children is so great that many couples agree to maintain their marriage even though they no longer love each other.

In addition, sacrifice and the notion of collective relationship can be worked out here. With the superstitious element embedded in the interaction, it may be conceded that Vietnamese people live not only for themselves, but also for others including deceased people. The tradition of worshipping ancestors demonstrates the practice of respecting and obeying past generations. Deceased ancestors are regarded as having frequent supervision rights over living family members, and thus the altar is the most important place in everyone's house (see chapter 2). Collectivism is also manifested by the fact that the success of a person is the success of the whole family, and the fault of one person is the fault of the whole family. Therefore, Mai considers Duong's problem as being her fault.

The need to protect the reputation of the family is another realisation of collectivism. Getting divorced is considered a serious problem that entails serious face-threat to family members. People tend to laugh at not only the couples themselves, but also other members in the extended family, especially their parents. For this reason, Mai comments that people may laugh at them if Duong and Kinh get divorced (line 26 – conversation 3)

Another cultural value is that harmony in personal relationships in the family is valued more than personal achievement and competitiveness. The fact that Duong is a successful woman – at least in terms of her high level of education and position at work – does not free her from the duty to keep the conversations between herself and her mother harmonious.

In sum, the events in Duong's family show that Confucian teachings have considerable impact on family members. Throughout the story traditional values such as filial piety and the four virtues of the woman (see chapter 2) are highly observed. For example, among the four virtues of the Vietnamese woman namely *công*, *dung*, *ngôn*, and *hạnh* (see section 2.3.4), *ngôn*, or the careful and gentle way of speaking, is documented in Duong's speech to her mother: she always speaks gently with soft voice when she disagrees and refuses her mother.

Finally, traditional practices influenced by Animism and Taoism are also found in the story, one of which is the superstitious belief in dead persons.

Chapter 9: Face, Facework and Impoliteness

9.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on analysing facework (Goffman, 1967) and impoliteness strategies (Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper, 1996, 2005; Culpeper et al., 2003) used by participants in interactions that include refusing. Drawing on conversational excerpts from a story in the same TV series as the one analysed in chapter 8, the chapter describes impoliteness in interaction; that is, it follows a discursive approach to impoliteness. As such, it explores conflictive talk as performed not in isolated utterances, but in a process that includes elements which trigger impoliteness (Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper, 1996, 2005), pre-sequences, responses to face-attacks, and resolutions to face-threats. Also, the face-attacks and the responses to them may occur and be resolved not only in one interaction, but through a series of interactions.

The discursive approach to impoliteness drawn on in this analysis also implies impoliteness strategies are to be investigated not only in their linguistic forms, but also by non-verbal and non-vocal actions such as posture, gesture, gaze, stare etc. Impoliteness in interaction also implies the speakers and hearers have choices to make at each stage of the interaction. These choices are about how they will react and how impolite they will be in relation to the context of the interaction. The degree of face-threat in a particular interaction also depends on, and is influenced by, previous interactions. Impoliteness is thus dynamic; that is, it has potential for change as a result of negotiation between conversants.

One question that may arise is why the chapter does not focus on politeness strategies. There are two reasons for the focus on impoliteness. First, compared to politeness, impoliteness has been paid less attention to by Vietnamese researchers. This scarcity of research in Vietnamese impoliteness is understandable because it has been argued that impoliteness phenomena have already been accommodated in P. Brown and Levinson's (1987) bald on record category (Culpeper, 1996, 2005; Culpeper et al., 2003). Indeed,

scientists of politeness have argued that impoliteness is in fact the absence of politeness. Thus, P. Brown and Levinson (1987) for example claimed that a bald on-record strategy – which is considered as impolite – is used when there is emergency, when the face want is very small, or when the speaker is much more powerful than the hearer. As such, impolite actions are performed because there are no other choices for politeness actions. Similarly, Leech (1983) also pointed out that “conflictive illocutions, tend, thankfully, to be rather marginal to human linguistic behaviour in normal circumstances” (p. 105). However, in reality, many impolite behaviours are not performed in those conditions as listed by P. Brown and Levinson (1987), nor they are marginal.

Second, as Culpeper et al. (2003) argued, conflictive talk has been found to play a central role in many contexts. This is because impoliteness is not always avoided as shown in politeness theory, but it is performed purposefully (see section 4.4 for the discussion of the deliberate use of impoliteness strategies). Whereas Culpeper et al.’s (2003) study investigated impoliteness in a Western country, namely Britain, this phenomenon has also been documented in some East Asian cultures such as China (Kádár & Pan, 2011), Singapore (C. L. Lee, 2011) and Vietnam where there is a “lack of politeness” (Kádár & Pan, 2011, p. 140). However, while non-natives of these countries may consider this lack of politeness as impolite, people from these cultures do not evaluate it as such (Chew, 2011, p. 225; Kádár & Pan, 2011). Regarding Vietnam, Chew (2011) claimed that Vietnamese people often flout maxims of politeness in contemporary communication, and the norm of ‘politic behaviour’ {i.e., the “behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the ongoing social interaction” (Watts, 2003, p. 20)} employed by Vietnamese people in their everyday conversations may be construed as rudeness rather than politeness.

The chapter is organised into 9 sections. In addition to this introduction (9.1), it briefly describes the story taken for analysis in section 9.2. Following are the analysis of the six conversations from this story from section 9.3 to section 9.8 Finally, a summary and conclusion are provided in section 9.9.

9.2 The story for analysis

As previously mentioned, the TV series chosen for analysis is about everyday problems such as quarrels between neighbours, getting divorced, having love affairs etc. In chapter 8,

how different modes of communication are used in refusing and related speech acts was explored, drawing on a story about Dương and her intentions to divorce her husband. In this chapter the story of Ngô and Nha is explored to work out how impoliteness strategies are performed.

Ngô is a writer of drama and poetry. He is aged in his early sixties and is a single father of an adult son named Khôi. Because Khôi is not married he lives with his father in the same apartment unit. Nha is a single mother aged in her late fifties. She has an adult daughter named Hằng. Different from Khôi, Hằng is not living with her mother because she is married and living with her husband. Nha is a doctor and works from her own clinic at home (i.e., the sitting-room of her apartment unit is used as a clinic), in the same apartment building as Ngô's. She is living with a servant named Chanh who is in her last year at school and about to sit the university entrance exam.

Ngô and Nha often meet in Nha's clinic or make appointments to go jogging with each other in the evenings, and they fall in love with each other. Hằng sometimes comes to visit Nha and she discovers that Ngô is dating her mother. She strongly objects to this relationship and tries to protest and prevent it. Accordingly, she makes a number of requests to both Ngô and her mother to stop this love affair; however, they both keep refusing her requests by different strategies and finally get married. The table below shows a list of a number of conversations centring around this story that take place between people directly and indirectly involved in it. Some of these conversations were selected for analyses in this chapter.

Table 9. 1: List of conversations about the story of Nha and Ngô

Conversation 1: (Episode 15: 53'04-53'42)

The conversation happens in Nha's clinic with the presence of four people: Ngô, Nha, Hằng, and Hằng's son – Bi. Ngô is talking to Nha in the clinic when Hằng and her son come in. However, Hằng does not greet Ngô as if he is not there. It is because she thinks he is flirting her mother and she does not agree with that. Nha has to remind Bi to greet Ngô as a normal social etiquette. As such, she implies that Hằng is impolite not to greet him. Hằng shows her anger by throwing Bi's bag hard onto the bed and tells Nha she wants to let Bi stay with her because she and her husband are going away on business. Recognising that being not welcomed, Ngô decides to say goodbye to Nha and Hằng. Hằng replies to him without looking at him. **This interaction reveals Hằng's protest against the relationship between Ngô and Nha, which results in the fact that in later conversations she requests them to stop it.**

Conversation 2: (Episode 18: 10'30-13'07)

This conversation involves Ngô and Nha. After going jogging together round a lake, they sit down on a bench. Nha tells Ngô that Hằng asked her to look after her son in order that she does not have time to meet him. Ngô says he also recognised this purpose when he saw Hằng brought her son to Nha's house in conversation 1. Nha complains that Hằng does not think for her, and she worries about what other actions Hằng will do next. Ngô relieves her by saying that Hằng did so because she may have not believed in the faithful love he offers Nha, and that when she understands, she will not protest their relationship. He also advises Nha to keep calm to persuade Hằng and says he has enough patience to wait. They do not know that Hằng has followed them and is observing them from behind. She is very angry. **This scene once again shows Hằng's disagreement with the relationship.**

Conversation 3: (Episode 18: 29'55 – 30'32)

The conversation involves Ngô and Hằng. Ngô and Nha have just finished going jogging together and are standing on the walkway in front of their apartment. After saying goodbye, he is looking at her going back to her unit when Hằng approaches him from behind. She asks him to 'stay away' from her mother. Ngô cannot say anything except some pause fillers (Beebe et al, 1990) such as 'uhh', 'well', 'oh', 'ah'. **This conversation will be analysed in this chapter because it contains a request made by Hằng and Ngô's reactions to this request which are neither an explicit refusal nor an acceptance**

Conversation 4: (Episode 19: 23'00-24'40)

This conversation is between Ngô and his son – Khôi in their sitting-room. Ngô narrates the meeting with Hằng (in conversation 3) to Khôi. He feels really disappointed after Hằng requested him to stop meeting her mother. He criticises her as being impolite, impertinent and insolent. Khôi advises him to be brave to protect their love. **Some images of this conversation will be displayed in this chapter to show how angry Ngô becomes after being rudely requested by Hằng in conversation 3.**

Conversation 5: (Episode 19: 26'30-30'20)

This conversation occurs between Ngô and Nha in Ngô's sitting-room. He also retells the meeting with Hằng to her. He says that Hằng pointed into his face and forbade him to meet her. Nha admits that she used to indulge Hằng because she is her only daughter and as a result Hằng sometimes misbehaves. Ngô reveals that he is really sad and disappointed after Hằng forbade him to contact her mother. He tells Nha that it is difficult for him not to meet her because he loves her. Nha also admits that she loves him and thus she says she will step by step persuade Hằng to accept their relationship. **This conversation does not contain any requests and refusals, but it shows their thoughts about Hằng's behaviour, which have certain influence on their later reactions towards Hằng's impoliteness.**

Conversation 6: (Episode 20: 52'34 – 55'00)

This conversation happens in Nha's clinic between Hằng, Nha, and Chanh. When Nha and Chanh are talking, Hằng comes in and asks if Bi - her son - has been picked up from the kindergarten. Nha suddenly recognises that it is a bit late so she asks Chanh to go and pick him up. Hằng blames

Nha for being absent-minded as she forgot to remind Chanh earlier. She accuses her of spending time thinking of Mr. Ngô rather than taking care of her son. As such, she implies that her mother should not have a close relationship with Ngô, **which could be understood as either an indirect request or a pre-request. Parts of this conversation will be analysed in this chapter because it shows how Nha reacts to Hằng's pre-request.**

Conversation 7: (Episode 21: 23'15 – 26'35)

This conversation takes place in Ngô's unit between Hằng, Ngô, and Khôi. Hằng comes to Ngô's unit and makes another request that he must stop the love affair with her mother. Whereas Ngô cannot say much because he still feels embarrassed and guilty, Khôi criticises Hằng for being impolite, uneducated when she attacks his father's face. He also blames her of not understanding her mother who needs love and care from his father. Hằng, however, ends the conversation by declaring that she will never accept the relationship, which makes Ngô really shocked. **This conversation shows another request made by Hằng and Ngô's reactions to it.**

Conversation 8: (Episode 21: 26'40 - 29'30)

This conversation takes place in Nha's clinic right after conversation 7. After being requested by Hằng in a very rude way, Ngô ran to Nha's clinic to inform her about this incidence. However, he is so shocked that he cannot say any words except '*Cái Hằng*' (lit. Class+Hằng). Upon hearing this phrase, Nha understands that Hằng has made another rude request to him. She laments that she and he have love but no fate implying that they love each other but their fate does not allow them to live together. Then she advises him to go and says she will persuade Hằng. **It could be interpreted from this promise that Nha will not accept Hằng's later request.**

Conversation 9: (Episode 22: 07'42 - 08'20)

The conversation takes place between Hằng and Nha in Nha's clinic. Seeing that Nha is going jogging, Hằng advises her to stay at home because she has not been feeling well. Nha refuses Hằng's advice by saying that going jogging would make her healthier. Hằng knows that Nha will go jogging with Ngô so she insists by kneeling down and begging her mother to stay at home. **By begging her mother not to go jogging with Ngô, Hằng is making another indirect request that her mother stops the relationship with Ngô.**

Conversation 10: (Episode 22: 33'45-36'12)

This conversation is between Ngô and Hằng and occurs by the lake around which Ngô and Nha often going jogging together. Ngô is sitting by the lake to wait for Nha (but she does not come because she accepted Hằng's begging in conversation 9) when Hằng approaches from behind. She apologises him for having been rude and impertinent to him. Thinking that Hằng's apology means that she has recognised her fault and accepted his love affair with her mother, he enthusiastically explained that old people like him and her mother also need love and care from each other. Hằng seems to agree with Ngô's explanation but she suddenly kneels down and begs him to 'release' her mother. Ngô again feels too embarrassed and shocked to be able to say anything. **This begging could be understood as another strong request.**

Conversation 11: (Episode 23: 02'28-04'36)

This conversation occurs between Ngô and Khôi in their unit. Ngô is sitting in the sitting room

when Khôi comes in from outside. Ngô is really sad and disappointed after Hằng begged him (conversation 10) to stop the relationship with her mother. He tells Khôi that Hằng was really spiteful when she used the strategy of kneeling down and begging him, and thus he does not know what to do. Khôi encourages him to become stronger since the situation of his relationship with Nha has not been so bad. He also advises him to think of a strategy to struggle against Hằng's protesting actions, for example by meeting Nha secretly. **This conversation again shows the advice of a third party which has a big effect on Ngô's later reactions.**

Conversation 12: (Episode 23: 25'03-29'02)

The conversation takes place in Ngô's sitting room between Ngô and Nha. Nha comes to Ngô's unit to share her feeling after Hằng knelt down to beg her to stop the relationship with him (conversation 9). She does not know that Hằng also knelt down and begged him as well (conversation 10). She says that since Hằng has been very determinedly resisting their relationship, she and Ngô may have to stop it. She also says that she feels ashamed to be in love at the age of a grandmother because a widow at this age is not socially expected to re-marry (under the influence of the Confucian three obediences – see section 2.3.4). Ngô soothes her by sharing his own feelings. He reveals to her that Hằng also knelt down and begged him to 'release' her (conversation 10) and so he also felt so disappointed that he wanted to die. However, he thinks that Khôi's encouragement and advice (conversation 11) are useful and thus he also advises her to become stronger. In particular, he suggests that they secretly go to the local council to register their marriage. **This conversation reveals the fact that Ngô has become 'stronger' due to Khôi's encouragement and he advises Nha to protect their love affair, which means they will refuse Hằng's request in later conversations.**

Conversation 13: (Episode 26: 47'50-51'25)

The conversation takes place in Ngô's sitting room between Ngô and Nha. Following what Ngô suggested in the previous conversation, he shows her a number gold rings which he has bought by his saving money and says that these rings will become their shared fortune. Nha is happy and apologise him for not having been more determined in dealing with Hằng's misbehaviour, that is, explicitly refused her. She explains that it is difficult for her because Hằng is her only child. However, she is so moved and happy with his actions because she can see the true love he gives her, and thus she promises that she will try her best to protect their love. **The conversation shows how Nha has become stronger after being encouraged by Ngô, which means she will firmly refuse Hằng's request in later conversations.**

Conversation 14: (Episode 28: 31'35 – 33'47)

This conversation takes place in Nha's clinic between Hằng, Nha, and Chanh. Nha is having a patient to examine when Hằng comes in. She asks her mother where Bi is, and Chanh comes out from the bedroom to say Bi is playing in the playground downstairs. Hằng is angry and blames Chanh and Nha of not having responsibility for taking care of her son. Nha reminds Hằng that she is having a patient, which implies that Hằng must not have such misbehaviour. **The next part of this conversation will be analysed in this chapter because it contains Hằng's requesting actions and Nha's refusing actions.**

Conversation 15: (Episode 29: 29'45-31'36)

This conversation happens in Ngô's sitting room. Hằng comes to Ngô's unit the second time (the first time in conversation 7) to make another request, but she is counter-attacked and banished by him. **This conversation will be analysed in this chapter because it contains Ngô's strong counter-attack to Hằng's impolite request.**

Conversation 16: (Episode 30: 11'58-13'51)

This conversation occurs in Nha's clinic between Nha and Hằng. After being counter-attacked and expelled by Ngô in conversation 15, Hằng comes to Nha's unit to inform her that Ngô has 'declared war' with her. Thus, she makes another request by forcing her to choose between her and Ngô. **Part of this conversation will be analysed in this chapter because it shows Nha's strong reactions to Hằng's impolite request.**

Conversation 17: (Episode 30: 51'15 – 55'02)

This conversation occurs in Nha's clinic between Nha, Hằng, and Ngô. The first part of the conversation is between Nha and Hằng. Hằng is crying and accusing Nha of treating her like that (i.e., in conversation 16 Nha said she may choose Ngô), and when Ngô comes in, Nha is explaining that Ngô is not the person who will take Nha's unit which Hằng is entitled to inherit. Upon hearing this, he swears he will never take anything that belongs to Hằng and says that he will get married to her mother. **Parts of this conversation will be dealt with in this chapter because it contains the answers to Hằng's queries which are also the reasons for Ngô to refuse Hằng's request.**

Conversation 18: (Episode 31: 28'14-30'15)

The conversation happens in Nha's clinic between Nha, Chanh and Hằng. Nha asks Chanh to ask Hằng what she wants to have for dinner but Hằng says she will not have dinner because she is going to take her son back to her own home. When Chanh has left, Nha asks Hằng to let her son stay with her, but Hằng accuses her of being in love with Ngô and of treating her as a non-kin person. Nha says she needs both Ngô and Hằng, but Hằng again insists that she has to stop the love affair. However, this time Nha is very rigid and firm; she says she will not feel ashamed (as she used to) because Ngô and herself are two single persons and thus their love is not forbidden by law. Upon being unable to make her mother change her mind, Hằng decides to leave and declare that it is her mother who decides to disown her and thus later must not blame her of having no filial piety. **This conversation shows Hằng's insistence on protesting her mother's love affair by threatening her mother of rejecting any filial piety she is suppose to do.**

Conversation 19: (Episode 31: 47'40-51-25)

This conversation is between Ngô and Nha in Ngô's sitting room. Nha comes to narrate the argument she had with Hằng in conversation 18 in which Hằng decided to take her son back home. She cries and says she did not expect that action and behaviour. However, upon being soothed by Ngô she feels more relieved and then they discuss about when to hold the wedding. **This conversation shows Nha's psychological state and her determination of not paying any attention to Hằng's threat.**

Conversation 20: (Episode 35: 49'08-51'15)

This is the final conversation about this story occurring in Nha's clinic with the presence of Nha,

Chanh, Ngô, and then Hằng. Chanh informs Nha and Ngô that she has passed the university entrance exam and thanks Nha for seeing her – a servant – as a daughter. In the talk Ngô and Nha reveal quite by chance that they have officially registered to become husband and wife. When Chanh is congratulating them, Hằng comes in and hears about it. She is very surprised and asks Nha to confirm about the registration. Nha declares that it is true. Hằng questions her if she knows Khôi has been addicted to drug, by which she implies that he will become a burden for her if she gets married to Ngô. When Nha acknowledges that she knows and is helping him to quit it, Hằng mocks her by saying she is such a great person. And only after Ngô declares that he and her mother have prepared legal documents to transfer to her all what she is entitled to inherit does she feel a little relieved. She finally says that if Nha has decided to get married to Ngô, she has nothing more to say and then leaves the room. Although she does not explicitly say she will welcome this marriage, she finally seems to accept it. **This conversation reveals that Hằng has no other choices but accepts her mother's love affair with Ngô.**

It should be noted once again that both requesting and refusing are potentially face-threatening, and thus they often require a long process of negotiation in which speech acts other than requesting and refusing may occur as pre- and post-actions of those two speech acts. For example, before officially and directly requests her mother to stop the love affair, Hằng takes a number of impolite protesting actions such as arguing, disagreeing, quareling, squabbling, accusing, threatening and insulting (see Vuchinich, 1986, 1987; Vuchinich, Emery, & Cassidy, 1988) which cause a big conflict with his mother. In a similar vein, after requesting Ngô to 'stay away' from her mother but receiving his non-compliance responses, she also performs many rude actions against him to protest the love affair. Although the present study focuses on refusing, some of these closely-related actions will be touched upon if they can help to illustrate refusing strategies.

Also, as we have emphasised earlier, the action of refusing is explored in interaction so it cannot be considered as an isolated action. Instead, it must be investigated in close connection with its first pair part actions such as requesting or begging; that is, how a refusal is made is greatly influenced by how the request is produced. Also, refusing must not be solely seen as a pre-intended action; rather, it should also be seen as what the recipient perceives it. Thus, a certain response to a request may not have the surface linguistic meaning of a refusal, but it may be interpreted by the interlocutor as a refusal. This interpretation may be realised in the same interaction but may also be revealed in subsequent interactions/conversations. Also, what an utterance or a non-verbal, non-vocal action in a specific interaction does cannot be fully interpreted without tracing back to what has happened in previous interactions/conversations. It is, therefore, necessary to look at all

the interactions between the people involved as a coherent story rather than separated and isolated interactions.

9.3 Conversation 3 (Episode 18: 29'55 – 30'32)

The conversation takes place immediately after Ngô and Nha were saying goodbye to each other after returning from jogging together. Nha is moving towards her apartment unit and Ngô is looking at her from behind.

01. ((Ngô is looking at Nha to whom he has just said goodbye,
02. Hằng comes from behind))
03. Hằng: *bác ngô*
Uncle Ngô
Excuse me!
04. Ngô: ((turns round)) *ừ à*
Uh ah
Uh ah
05. Hằng: *cháu muốn nói chuyện với bác được không ạ*
niece want speak with uncle possible QuesM PolM
I want to talk to you, is that possible?
06. Ngô: *ừ à cũng được cô hằng*
Uh ah also possible aunt Hằng
It's fine, Hằng
07. Hằng: *mẹ cháu và bác đều đã tuổi ông tuổi bà rồi*
mother niece and uncle both already age grandfather age grandmother already
My mother and you are both at the age of a grandfather and grandmother
08. *bác là văn nghệ sỹ sống thế nào cũng được*
uncle be artist live how also OK
You are an artist so you can live in whatever way you like
09. *nhưng mẹ cháu không thể để thiên hạ đàm tiếu được*
but mother niece not able let people gossip possible
But my mother can't be gossiped about by people
10. *bác hãy tha cho mẹ cháu*
uncle please release for mother niece
Please don't flirt my mother!
11. Ngô: *tôi (0.5) ừ (.) ừ cô hằng ạ*
I uh uh aunt Hằng Voc
I (0.5) uh (.) uh well Miss Hằng
12. Hằng: *bác ạ cháu sẽ không bao giờ đồng ý cho*
Uncle Voc niece will never agree let

I will never agree to let

13. *mẹ cháu quan hệ với bác cháu nhắc lại*
mother niece contact with uncle niece say again

my mother have a relationship with you. I say it again,

14. *không bao giờ trừ khi mẹ cháu từ cháu*
never unless mother niece disown niece

never, unless my mother disowns me

15. ((walks away))

16. Ngô: ((looks at her anxiously, then put two hands on his head)) *ơ ưi giời ưii::*

uh uh god

uh uh oh my God



Image 9.3.1



Image 9.3.2



Image 9.3.3



Image 9.3.4



Image 9.3.5



Image 9.3.6

This conversation takes place in the context that Hằng has known that Ngô has been flirting her mother – Nha – by finding opportunities to talk with her (for example, coming to her house to chat, or going jogging with her). Hằng strongly protests this relationship and has already shown her disagreement by doing different things to prevent this relationship. For example, she brought her son to her mother's house³¹ and asked her to look after him for several days because she said she and her husband had to go away on business (conversation 1). In fact, going away on business is not the real reason for asking her mother to look after her son; the real reason is that her mother will be so busy taking

³¹ We use 'house' with its broad sense which refers to where people live in. With this sense, there is no distinction between a house, a villa, an apartment unit etc.

care of the grandson that she will not have time to meet and talk to Ngô. Another series of actions Hằng did to show her attitude to the relationship between her mother and Ngô happened when she met him at her mother's house. She did not greet him, which she is expected to do with a senior person; she threw her son's bag hard on the bed; and she did not bother to look at him when she replied to his goodbye (conversation 1).

9.3.1. Ngô's response to Hằng's impoliteness – a potential refusal

After doing a series of actions to show her protesting viewpoint, in this interaction Hằng for the first time officially requests Ngô to 'stay away' from her mother. She approaches him from behind and gets his attention by calling his name (line 3). Calling a senior person's name used to be considered as impolite (see section 2.4.3), but today many people see it as neither polite nor impolite. However, there are ways to speak politely to a senior person. In conversation 10 of this story for example, when Hằng wants to display herself as a polite person, she approaches Ngô from behind and greets him by saying *cháu chào bác ạ* (niece greet uncle polite marker – i.e., I greet you politely).

In this conversation, Hằng's impoliteness is shown in her non-linguistic actions – posture, facial expressions etc. Hằng's facial expression of anger, her posture and her gestures contribute to her deliberate face attack. First, as can be seen in images 9.3.1 and 9.3.2, her 'cold' face shows she is angry and scornful. Second, Hằng's posture as shown in images 9.3.3 and 9.3.4 also displays her disrespect towards Ngô. In Vietnamese culture, Hằng should not, as a junior woman (in terms of age), stand with two arms hanging straight down and gaze at a senior man. Third, as a member in Vietnamese culture, I could say her action to jerk her chin towards her mother who is walking away when she says *mẹ cháu* (my mother) in line 7 (image 9.3.5) is also considered extremely insolent.

Upon hearing Hằng's calling, Ngô turns round and feels a bit surprised and embarrassed which is revealed by his clumsy hands and gesture (image 9.4.4) and verbal action in line 4. His embarrassed behaviour is understandable since he already knows that she protests the affair between him and her mother, but has not found a suitable way to explain to her.

After he turns round, she suggests talking to him (line 5); and after he agrees to listen (line 6), she makes an official request that he must stop flirting her mother (lines 7-10). What Ngô responds (line 11) to this request is vague in the word meaning, that is, it is not clear

whether it is a refusal or not because he does not directly say ‘no’. However, the phrase *ừ cô hằng ạ* (well Miss Hằng-line 11) is noticeable here since it is only the initial part of a turn. In Vietnamese, the word *ạ* is not only a politeness marker but also a vocative word to get the interlocutor’s attention when it is used with a person reference term (here the combination of a kin-term *cô* and a proper name *Hằng*). Therefore, following this phrase, there tend to be another stretch of language. By uttering this, Ngô is going to give further talk which maybe about his explanation of the love affair he has with Hằng’s mother. There are some possibilities of the message of his intended explanation: he may say that “Yes, I and your mother are both at the age of a grandfather and a grandmother, but there’s no law to forbid old people to love, so why can’t we love each other?” or that “Yes, I and your mother are both at the age of a grandfather and a grandmother, but we love each other. However, since you don’t like that, I will seriously think of stopping this relationship.” The former explanation, which means he refuses her request, is likely to occur for some reasons. First, right before this excerpt takes place, Ngô wanted to hold Nha’s hands to say goodbye. Nonetheless, Nha felt shy and said she was afraid people may see and laughed at them because they were both old. Ngô, however, said he was not afraid because there is no law to forbid old people to love. Second, and more importantly, Hằng herself perceives Ngô’s utterance in line 11 as a potential refusal and thus she does not give him an opportunity to explain. As stated above, Ngô’s utterance in line 11 is only the initial part of his turn, so it cannot be a transition relevance place (Sacks et al., 1974). However, Hằng interrupts him by making a stronger statement of disagreement (lines 12, 13) and even a threatening (line 14). Third, in practice (i.e., in later interactions) Ngô does not engage in the action proposed by Hằng’s request to stop the relationship with her mother (as the definition of a refusal by X. Chen et al., 1995), which means that he refuses her request; on the contrary, he keeps dating with and flirting her mother.



Image 9.3.7



Image 9.3.8



Image 9.3.9

9.3.2 Ngô's reactions after the conversation – a basis for his later refusal to Hằng's request

Ngô cannot say anything because Hằng does not give him a chance to explain. She hinders him from speaking (Bousfield, 2008; Culpeper et al., 2003) by way of her imposing actions – linguistic and non-linguistic – as analysed above. Ngô wants to say something (line 11), but this intention is immediately hindered by Hằng's turn with a *bald on record impoliteness* strategy (lines 12, 13, and 14), and by her face-threatening action of walking away without saying goodbye.

Ngô's inability to say anything is also because he understands that dating Nha is not accepted by many people, particularly those who still think that, under the influence of Confucianism (see section 2.3.4), old people are expected to take care of their children and grandchildren, and not to spend their time dating other people. Thus, his behaviour is very clumsy (images 9.3.4, 9.3.6) as if he is at fault. When Hằng leaves, he feels offended and angry, but he cannot counter her face-attack (images 9.3.8, 9.3.9).

Although Ngô cannot counter-attack Hằng's actions he nonetheless perceives her to be impolite and insolent, and that her behaviour is unacceptable. Thus, when he re-tells this incident to his son – Khôi (conversation 4 – see table 9.1) - he uses a number of negative adjectives to describe Hằng such as fiendish, cruel, impolite, impertinent and insolent (images 9.3.10 - 9.3.15 below). As he says “I have never in my life met such a girl like her who is fiendish, cruel and impolite. You know, her eyes are as big as this, and she glared directly at my face”, and “Then she said to me, ‘You and my mother have been at the age of grandfather and grandmother; I want you not to have any contact with my mother any more. I don’t agree that’. Insolent, too insolent, impertinent!” (illustrated by images 9.3.10-9.3.15)



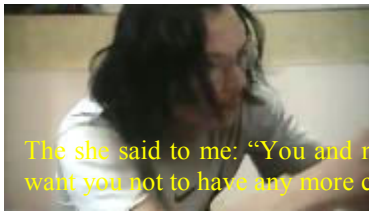
Image 9.3.10



Image 9.3.11



Image 9.3.12



The she said to me: “You and my brother have been at the age of a grandfather and grandmother. I want you not to have any more contact with my mother; I don’t agree that. Insolent, too insolent!

Image 9.3.13

Image 9.3.14

Image 9.3.15

What he talks in this narrative can be interpreted as the basis for his later refusals to Hằng’s request. Normally psychologically, people tend not to do what another asks them to do if they do not like him/her.

9.4 Conversation 6 (Episode 20: 52’34 – 55’00)



Image 9.4.1

Image 9.4.2

Image 9.4.3



Image 9.4.4

Image 9.4.5

Image 9.4.6

The conversation takes place between Hằng and Nha in the context that Nha has been told by Ngô (conversation 5) that he was requested by Hằng to stop the relationship. In the first part of the conversation, which is not transcribed below, Hằng blames Nha for being too absent-minded to remind Chanh to pick up her son from the kindergarten. Then she accuses her of always thinking of Ngô and that is the reason of her absent-mindedness. Responding to her criticism, Nha asks what Hằng wants her to do, which starts the following excerpt.

[...]

24. Nha: ((gazes at Hằng, speaks with soft voice)) vậy con muốn mẹ phải làm gì?
so child want mother have to do what
So what do you want me to do?
25. Hằng: ((stares at Nha) không phải là muốn (1.0) mà con đề nghị mẹ (0.5)
not be want but child request mother
It's not a want, it's a request.
26. mẹ hãy chấm dứt với ông ngô đi
mother please stop with grandfather Ngô AlignM
You must stop your relationship with that Mr. Ngô
27. Nha: ((Gazes at Hằng)) huh
Huh
Huh
28. Hằng: sang tuần tới con sẽ về thu dọn đồ đạc (1.0) con sẽ đón mẹ
next week child will come pack up things child will pick up mother
Next week, I will come and pack up everything;
29. về ở với chúng con (0.5) còn căn nhà này á (0.5) cho thuê
come stay with PluM child and Class. house this EmM rent out
you will come and stay with us. We will rent out this unit.
30. Nha: còn phòng khám
and clinic
How about the clinic?
31. Hằng: dẹp đi mẹ có lương hưu rồi (0.5) mà cái phòng khám này á
stop mother have pension already and Class. clinic this EmM
Just forget it. You have your own pension. This clinic does not
32. có mang lại cho mẹ thêm bao nhiêu đâu (3.0)
have bring to mother more how many StaM
bring you much income
33. Nha: ((look away)) đúng là mẹ đẻ ra con mẹ nuôi con khôn lớn (2.0)
true be mother give birth to child mother rear child mature
I have given birth to you and brought you up, but
34. nhưng con không hề hiểu mẹ (0.8) con cũng chưa từng nghĩ cho mẹ
but child not even understand mother child also not ever think for mother
you never understand me and think of me.
35. Hằng: ((Gazes at Nha)) con xin lỗi (1.0) nhưng con phải bảo vệ hạnh phúc
child sorry but child have to protect happiness
I'm sorry, but I have to protect our happiness;
36. gia đình mình mẹ ạ (0.5) con phải giữ gìn sự trong sạch
family body mother PolM child have to keep Class. cleanness

37. **I have to maintain your virtue,**
cho mẹ mẹ ạ
 for mother mother PolM
mum.
38. Nha: *((a bit anger, shakes her head with crying face)) mẹ chưa bao giờ*
 mother not ever
I have never
39. *làm cái gì vẫn đục*
 do what turbid
done anything bad.
40. Hằng: *((Stands up and stares at Nha)) con sẽ tranh đấu đến cùng*
 child will struggle till final
I will keep protesting.
41. *không bao giờ con chấp nhận ông ngô ((go away))*
 never child accept grandfather Ngô
Never will I accept Mr. Ngô
42. Nha: *((looks down and crying bitterly then look up and down again))*

9.4.1 Nha's indirect refusals

As have been analysed above, Nha has already known that Hằng disagrees with her relationship with Ngô, and that she has met Ngô and requested him to stop that relationship (conversation 3), so she knows that with such disagreeing attitude, Hằng will sooner or later make a direct request to her. So in this second part of the excerpt, Nha directly asks Hằng what she wants (line 24).

Upon being given a chance to raise her voice, Hằng officially requests her mother to stop the relationship with Ngô (lines 25-26). However, Nha just produces a sound *hư* (huh) and gazes at her (line 27). These two modes of communication constitute a message of disagreeing and not 'engaging in the action proposed by the interlocutor' (X. Chen et al., 1995, p. 121); thus, although they do not contain words of an explicit refusal, they should be perceived as an indirect refusal. In fact, Hằng also perceives them as a potential refusal, so she strengthens her request by suggesting that her mother sells the apartment unit and come to live with her (lines 28-29). This suggestion leads to Nha's unavoidable question in line 30 which is another indirect refusal. Indeed, Nha is using the sitting room of her own

unit as a private clinic, and thus, selling the house means she has to stop doing her medical job. Even though she knows that consequence, she still asks Hăng what to do with the clinic (line 30). Her question, therefore, aims at, on the one hand, delaying to give a direct refusal, and on the other hand, checking how unsympathetic and inconsiderate Hăng is in dealing with her situation; that is, if Hăng insisted on selling the unit and terminating the clinic, she would be regarded as unsympathetic and inconsiderate to her mother.

When Hăng says that the clinic should be closed (lines 31-32), Nha's presumption, i.e., Hăng is unsympathetic and inconsiderate, has become true, which leads her to explicitly blame Hăng for not understanding her (lines 33-34). Though this statement is a blame, it implies a refusal as well because it can be interpreted this way: 'I am your mother who has brought you up well, but you never understand me; the clinic brings me a stable job that I like, and I also have the right to love, so I am not going to do what you want'.

Being accused of not understanding her mother, Hăng admits it by apologising to her mother (line 35), but she maintains her point of view by providing other reasons for her request: to protect her family's happiness (line 35) and to maintain her mother's virtue (line 36) meaning that her mother's love affair with such a 'flowery' writer, who has been gossiped and laughed at by neighbours, is a violation of women's virtue. As such she is rejecting her mother's refusals. Upon hearing this, Nha becomes bitterly angry which is realised by her non-verbal actions of shaking her head and crying (line 38), and she protests against Hăng's idea by ensuring that she has never done anything 'turbid' (lines 38, 39) that people can gossip and laugh at. Again, this protest is a strong sign of a refusal, or more exactly another way of refusing, and Hăng also perceives it as another refusal because she continues her turn (lines 40, 41) saying that she will keep protesting this love affair.

9.4.2 Nha's crying as a defensive response (a sign of refusal) to Hăng's impolite request



Image 9.4.7



Image 9.4.8



Image 9.4.9



Image 9.4.10



Image 9.4.11



Image 9.4.12

Nha experiences different states of emotion at different moments during the interaction. She goes from surprise (image 9.4.7) to disappointment (images 9.4.8, 9.4.9) to depression (images 9.4.11, 9.4.12). During the conversation, Nha's turns show her refusing intention (as we have analysed above), but she cannot make her refusals direct and explicit; instead, she just gives some disagreement with Hằng's request.

The action of crying at the end of the above excerpt displays her disagreement with her daughter as well as her inability to do anything against her daughter's offence. Nha's crying showing her inability to gain Hằng's sympathy seems to be her preferred response to the request. Like Ngô in conversation 3, in the end of the excerpt, Nha cannot say anything about the insolent behaviour of her daughter. As she admitted to Ngô (conversation 5 – see table 9.1), she has indulged Hằng for too long, which has made her a selfish, impertinent daughter. As a result, she is the person who has to receive such bad behaviour from her. However, Nha's crying in the end of the conversation (line 42) without being able to say anything again signifies a refusal rather than a concession or agreement to her daughter's request. It is because she keeps meeting Ngô and says she will persuade Hằng to accept the love affair (conversation 8)

9.5 Conversation 14 (Episode 28: 31'35 – 33'47)

The following conversation takes place in Nha's house. At the beginning of the conversation Nha is examining a patient when Hằng enters. Hằng asks Nha where her son is, and Chanh comes out from inside the room to say that Bi is playing in the playground downstairs. Hằng scolds Chanh for letting him play alone. When Chanh explains that both Nha and she are busy, Hằng accuses them of not loving her and her son, of not wanting to take responsibility for looking after her son, and of wanting to send them back home (in fact, she scolds and criticises Chanh, but she targets at her mother). Recognising that Hằng

is going too far with her face-threatening actions, Nha reminds her that she is having a patient to examine, thus implying that Hằng should not behave badly in front of the patient. After the patient exits, Hằng continues to scold Chanh as transcribed in the following excerpt.

01. Hằng: ((goes out from the room)) *chanh sao mày để nhà cửa bẩn thế hả*
Chanh why thou let house door dirty such QuesM
Chanh, why did you leave the room so dirty?
02. *cả ngày mày chỉ đủ đờn thôi à*
all day thou only frolic only QuesM
Did you frolic amorously all day?
03. Nha: *sức chịu đựng của con người có giới hạn thôi đấy*
degree bear of people have limitation only StaM
I have to tell you that my tolerance is limited,
04. *con đừng để cho mẹ phải nặng lời*
child not let for mother have to heavy word
so don't force me to say strong words.
05. Hằng: ((sits down onto a chair)) *mẹ nhà bẩn chẳng lẽ con lại phải khen*
mother house dirty no reason child have to praise
Mum, when it is dirty how can I praise?
06. *sạch hả mẹ chả nhẽ để cu Bi chơi nguy hiểm một mình dưới kia*
clean QuesM mother no reason leave lad Bi play dangerous alone down there
When you let Bi play down there alone which is dangerous,
07. *con phải vỗ tay hoan hô hả mẹ*
child have to applause QuesM mother
how can I applaud?
08. Nha: *nhưng mẹ đang có khách*
but mother Prog. have guest
But I was seeing a guest..
09. Hằng: *vâng con biết nhưng mà ngứa mắt thì con phải nói*
yes child know but itch eye then child have to say
Yes, I know, but those things annoy me, and thus I have to raise my voice.
10. *tính con vốn đã thế rồi mẹ ạ*
character child already Past. that already mother StaM
Raising voice against annoying things is my character, mum.
11. *mà mẹ sỡ diện với khách sao những thứ cần giữ thì*
TopM mother save face with guest why PluM thing need keep then
By the way, you want to save face in front of the patient, so why are there

12. mẹ không giữ đi
mother not keep AlignM
other things about which you don't want to save your face?
13. Nha: ((looks tired and disappointed))
14. Hằng: mà con đã nói rồi mẹ dẹp ngay cái phòng khám này đi
TopM child Past speak already mother stop immediately Class. clinic this AlignM
And as I have already told you, you'd better close this clinic;
15. con đủ sức nuôi mẹ
child enough strength feed mother
I am completely capable of taking care of you.
16. Nha: mẹ nhắc lại lần thứ hai con đừng để sức chịu đựng của mẹ
mother say again time second child not let degree bear of mother
I say it again, don't make my tolerance
17. vượt quá giới hạn
exceed limitation
overloaded.
18. Hằng: thế thì mẹ đừng làm những việc trái với luân thường
then mother not do PluM thing against with normality
If you stop doing things which are against social conventions
19. đạo lý thì con sẽ ngoan ngoãn nghe lời mẹ
morality then child will obediently listen word mother
and morality, I will obey you.
20. Nha: ((stand up)) hư con im ngay đi nếu con không tôn trọng mẹ
huh child shut up immediately AlignM if child not respect mother
Shut up! If you do not respect me
21. mà vẫn tiếp tục hỗn hào thì mẹ sẽ =
and still continue impertinent then mother will
and if you keep behaving impertinently, I will
22. Hằng: ((stands up)) = mẹ sẽ từ con và đi chăm sóc ông ngô chứ gì
mother will abandon child and go take care grandfather ngô QuesM
you mean you will abandon me and go with Mr. Ngô, right?
23. Chanh: ((goes out from a room))
24. Hằng: ((grasp Chanh's hand)) con chanh mày lại đây
Class. chanh thou come here
Hey Chanh, come here!
25. mày làm chứng nhá hôm nay bà đòi từ tao
thou witness AlignM today grandmother want abandon me
You hereby witness, today she wants to abandon me
26. để về chăm sóc ông ngô đấy

- so as go take care grandfather ngô AffM
so as to go with and take care of Mr. Ngô
27. Nha: *hằng ((sits down)) mẹ cấm con*
 Hằng mother forbid child
Hằng! I forbid you;
28. *con đừng làm mẹ thất vọng nữa*
 child not do other disappointed more
don't make me disappointed any more!

9.5.1 Pre - refusing by warning that functions as an indirect request

In the beginning of this part of the conversation, Hằng scolds Chanh of leaving the room dirty and accuses her of just frolics (lines 1, 2). Upon hearing this, Nha takes her turn to warn Hằng that because her tolerance is limited, she might have to say strong words to her if she keeps behaving improperly (lines 3, 4). This warning is the response to, and also the consequence of, not only Hằng's rude words in lines 1 and 2 but also of her blame at the beginning of the conversation as well as her rude actions and behaviour she has had in previous conversations. It can be inferred that this warning functions as an indirect request: 'you must [i.e., I request you to] behave and act in a good manner; otherwise, I will have strong words with you.' This request reveals that Nha has become more rigid to deal with Hằng's impolite actions. She must have known that Hằng is angry with Chanh because she does not agree with the relationship between her and Ngô and has tried to prevent it (in all the conversations between Hằng and Nha or Ngô before this one Hằng has requested them, directly or indirectly, to stop it - see the descriptions of these conversations in table 9.1). She must also have known that Hằng is doing the so called *giận cá chém thớt* (lit. be angry with the fish but chop the chopping board) in which Chanh is only the scapegoat of her anger and that sooner or later she will request her to stop the relationship with Ngô. Thus, Nha makes this indirect request in order to prevent Hằng from making the same request she has made before. What project her to make such an indirect request are based not only on Hằng's insolent behaviour realized in this transcribed part but also in the beginning of the conversation, and, more importantly, on her impolite actions she has performed in other conversations she has had with both Ngô and her. In conversations 5 and 8, for example, Nha has promised Ngô that she would persuade Hằng not to be that impolite. Therefore, in

this specific conversation, Nha's indirect request can be understood as her pre-refusal, or prevention, to the request that she thinks her daughter is going to make.

Hằng responds to this indirect request by making two rhetorical questions (lines 5-7) which can be understood as an indirect refusal. By saying how she can praise Chanh when she leaves the room dirty and how she can applaud the situation in which her son has to play downstairs without being looked after, she implies that she is not going to do what her mother has indirectly requested. It should be noticed here that throughout the whole story, Hằng is the person who makes requests and Ngô and Nha are the ones who refuse her. Nevertheless, in some specific moments, Ngô and Nha are the persons who make requests and Hằng is the one who refuses, and this moment in the conversation is an example. This change of role continues in the next turns in this conversation. First, Nha takes her turn to give the reason that she was seeing a guest (i.e., she was having a patient to examine) – the reason that she has stated in the first part of the conversation (which is not transcribed here but is mentioned above). By giving this reason, Nha once again indirectly request Hằng to stop doing inappropriate things because if she keeps doing so, the guest may think that Nha has not taught Hằng properly which results in her misbehaviour. In consequence, the guest may laugh at them, which can make Nha lose her face for not having educated her daughter well.

Nha's second warning takes place in lines 16, 17 after Hằng keeps refusing her indirect request. Hằng's turn in lines 9-12, 14, 15 consists of two parts performing two actions: one is a refusal of Nha's request, the other is the request which she has tried to make since the day she got to know that her mother is dating with Ngô. The first part (line 9) demonstrates that she understands her mother's utterance in line 8 as an indirect request her mother makes to require her to stop misbehaving. Understanding that way, she denies the request by explaining the reason that Chanh's actions (i.e., leaving the room dirty and leaving her son play alone downstairs) are so annoying that she has to raise her voice (line 9). She also does not forget to give another reason for her impolite actions (linguistic and non-linguistic): it is her innate character (line 10). After refusing by stating these reasons, she deliberately leads the talk to her mother's love affair (line 11). The word *mà* (line 11) in Vietnamese, when used at the initial position of an utterance, is a topic marker; that is, it is used to start a new topic. Here Hằng changes the topic by going back to her mother's relationship with Ngô by implying that this relationship can make her mother lose face too.

In the question *sao những thứ cần giữ mẹ không giữ đi?* (why are there other things about which you don't want to save your face? – lines 11, 12), although she uses the plural form *những thứ* (things), she in fact implies one thing: the relationship between her mother and Ngô. As such, she is sending her mother an indirect request to stop it; her utterance in lines 11 and 12 implies that 'if you want to save your face in this situation, you have to stop the love affair as well because it has also made you lose your face since you have been laughed at by the neighbours.' Nha understands this implicature and thus she feels tired and disappointed (line 13); and when Hằng really returns to the point that she made in conversation 6 – to close the clinic (by which she requested her mother to stay away from Ngô) - she has to repeat the warning (lines 16, 17) that she has made in lines 3, 4, the warning that functions as a request that Hằng must stop misbehaving.

It can be seen from this analysis that a pre-refusal and a refusal can be performed indirectly by a request: Both Nha and Hằng refuse each other by making an indirect request. While Nha's indirect request has the semantic formula of a warning, Hằng's indirect request has the linguistic form of a question.

9.5.2. Refusing by threatening

Hằng perceives her mother's warning as a request, but she gives a condition for her acceptance of the request by making a counter-request that her mother must stop doing things that are against social conventions and morality (lines 18, 19). If this counter-request is accepted by her mother, it will become the condition for her acceptance of her mother's request; on the other hand, if it is rejected by her mother, it will become the reason for her refusal. In other words, this exchange can be interpreted this way: I will accept your request if you accept my request and vice versa. Nha's next turn shows that the latter interpretation is true. She is really offended by and angry with Hằng's accusation of her doing things against social conventions and morality (lines 18, 19). Her anger is realised by a series of actions, or modal complexity (Norris, 2004, 2009): she stands up, gazes at Hằng, asks her to shut up, and gives her a threat (lines 20, 21). All these actions concurrently form her refusal to Hằng's request.

Nha has not been able to state what her threat (lines 20, 21) is because Hằng interrupts her and says what she thinks the threat is: it is that her mother would disown her to take care of Ngô (line 22). It is noticeable here that the name Ngô is mentioned here as an unavoidable occurrence, and by mentioning his name Hằng has been successful in leading the conversation to the love affair between her mother and Ngô which she has been protesting.

By asking Chanh to witness her mother's threat to disown her, though it is not what her mother has actually said, Hằng is pressurizing her mother by forcing her to think of a mother's responsibility towards a child. However, since she knows that her mother loves and indulges her, she believes that her mother will not have the heart to disown her, which means that her turn in lines 24-26 is only a challenge to her mother. In other words, by intentionally revealing what her mother may have thought of but has not explicitly declared, and by asking Chanh to witness, she implies that her mother would become a bad mother if she disowned her and took care of Ngô, which she is sure her mother would not dare to do.

However, the linguistic and non-linguistic actions Nha performs in this conversation shows that there is a significant change in her attitude towards Hằng's impolite behaviour as compare to her attitude in the first few conversations. In conversation 6, for example, she chose 'defensive' (Culpeper, 1996, 2005) as her strategy to respond to Hằng's face-attack whereas in this conversation she draws on an 'offensive' strategy to counter attack. As Nha says in lines 3, 4, 16, 17, her tolerance is limited and thus when it is exceeded she will have no other choice than to deliver an offensive response. This change of her attitude and action is understandable given that Hằng has become more and more impertinent. In between conversation 6 and this one, there have been 7 others taking place in different places and involving different people. In all the interactions that involve Hằng, she has behaved in an increasingly rude manner, which makes both Ngô and Nha offended. Therefore, in this interaction, Nha decides to strongly counter-attack her.

9.6 Conversation 15 (Episode 29: 29'45-31'36)

This conversation takes place between Ngô and Hằng in Ngô's house. Ngô is standing at the door of the bedroom with his back towards the main door of the apartment unit (see

image 9.6.1 below) looking at his son, Khôi who is sleeping. Hằng enters and knocks on the door to get Ngô's attention and the conversation proceeds as transcribed below.

01. Ngô: *thôi cô đi đi nhà tôi không có ý định tiếp cô đâu*
DisM aunt go go house my not have intention welcome aunt StaM
You'd better go away since I don't have an intention to welcome you.
02. *((goes towards a chair and sit down))*
03. *nói chung là cũng không nên trông mặt mà bắt hình dong*
speak general be also not should see face StaM guess character
General speaking, people shouldn't guess one's quality through his/her appearance.
04. *nhìn thì cũng mặt hoa da phấn đấy nhưng mà tâm địa*
look TopM also face flower skin powder AffM but mind
You look rather beautiful, but you have an
05. *thì ác hơn quỷ dữ*
TopM cruel more devil
evil mind
06. Hằng: *((moves closer towards Ngô)) bác nói ai đấy*
uncle speak who QuesM
Who are you talking about?
07. Ngô: *thế ở đây ngoài cô với tôi ra thì còn có ai không*
DisM here besides aunt with me then still have who QuesM
Hey, is there another person here except you and me?
08. *đúng là nghịch tử bất hiếu*
right be impious child filial impiety
such an impious child without filial piety.
09. Hằng: *này bác bác ăn nói cho có văn hóa*
DisM uncle uncle eat speak for have culture
Hey, you should speak politely!
10. Ngô: *văn hóa không dùng cho đứa mất dạy hỗn hào*
culture not use for Class. insolent impertinent
Politeness should not be used for an uneducated, impertinent person
11. *không biết trên dưới không biết cao thấp*
not know above under not know high low
who does not know social order.
12. Hằng: *bác mới là người thiếu đạo đức ngần ấy tuổi rồi*
uncle StaM be person lack morality that age already
It's you who lacks morality. How can such an old person like you
13. *còn đi quyến rũ người phụ nữ đứng đắn*
StaM go entice person woman serious

entice a serious-minded woman?

14. Ngô: *hư cô là con cũng là phụ nữ nhưng không bao giờ*
huh aunt be child also be woman but never
You are her daughter and also a woman, but you've never tried to
15. *cô hiểu cho mẹ cô cả không nhìn thấy bà ấy*
aut understand for mother aunt StaM not see grandmother that
understand her. Why can't you see how
16. *cô đơn như thế nào à không thấy bà cũng cần phải có*
lonely how QuesM not see grandmother also need have
lonely she feels and that she also needs to have
17. *nhu cầu chia sẻ như thế nào à hả*
demand share how QuesM
the right to share her feelings?
18. *hư để con như cô thật là uổng phí*
huh bear child like aunt really be waste
Giving birth to you is a waste.
19. Hằng: *miệng của bác ý bác muốn nói gì thì kệ bác*
mouth of uncle EmM uncle want say what then let uncle
With your mouth, you can say whatever you like
20. *cháu không cần phải bận tâm nhưng cháu lên đây*
niece not need have care but niece come here
and I don't care, but I come here
21. *để nói với bác rằng cháu không bao giờ đồng ý*
to say with uncle that niece never agree
to tell you that I will never agree with
22. *cho mẹ cháu quan hệ với bác cháu sẽ ủng hộ*
for mother niece relationship with uncle niece will support
my mother having relationship with you. I will support
23. *cho mẹ cháu đi bước nữa nhưng với điều kiện*
for mother niece go step more but with condition
her to re-marry provided that
24. *người ấy không phải là một nhà thơ một nhà biên kịch*
person that not be one poet one play-writer
he is not a poet or a playwright
25. *nửa mùa xuân ngô ạ*
half season xuân ngô PolM
who is half-baked like you.
26. Ngô: *((stands up and walks towards Hằng's left side))*
27. *ừ tôi cũng nói để cho cô biết tôi và mẹ cô sẽ lấy nhau*

- yes I also speak so as for aunt know I and mother aunt will marry each other
Okay, I will also let you know that I and your mother will get married.
28. Hằng: *ư*
 huh
huh
29. Ngô: *tôi người mà cô vừa gọi là nhà văn nhà biên kịch*
 I person who aunt just call be writer play-writer
I, the person who you call a half-baked writer,
30. *nửa mùa xuân ngô này ý sẽ là bố dượng của cô đấy*
 half season xuân ngô this EmM will be step-father of aunt AffM
will become your step-father.
31. Hằng: *ư .hhh*
 uh
uh
32. Ngô: *thôi tôi nói xong rồi bây giờ mời cô ra khỏi nhà tôi*
 DisM I speak finish already now invite aunt out house my
Okay. I finish my turn, now please get out of my house
33. Hằng: *((walks out))*
34. Ngô: *((looks at Hằng)) láo thật đấy*
 Insolent really AffM
How insolent you are!
35. Khôi: *((gets up from the bed, claps his hands and goes out to the living room))*
36. *bố đúng là number one*
 father right be number one
Hey, my father is number one.

9.6.1 Refusing by criticising offensively

Right at the beginning of the conversation Ngô refuses to let Hằng in by asking her to go away and stating that he is not welcoming her. However, this does not seem to be a real rejection because he continues his turn without insisting on dismissing her. In fact, in saying so he is sending her a message that he refuses her request she has made so far. Experiencing from previous conversations, he learns that her purpose of coming to his house is nothing except requesting him again to stop the relationship with her mother, so he decides to attack her in advance. This time his anger has reached such a high point that he uses very strong words with her. This anger accumulates through a series of

conversations he has had with her before, especially the most recent one when she met and talked to him by the lake around which he and her mother often go jogging (conversation 10). In that conversation, she at first pretended to be polite and seemed to accept his relationship with her mother, but in the end she knelt down and begged him to stop that relationship. It is this action that really made him shocked and angry, and he thus decides to attack her in a rude manner in this conversation.

As such, this conversation marks a significant change in Ngô's attitude towards Hằng's rudeness. Like Nha whose tolerance is limited, Ngô can no longer stand the offences which Hằng has caused to him. Therefore, in this conversation he criticises offensively. For example, he scolds her by comparing her personality to her appearance (line 3-5). In Vietnamese, the proverb *trông mặt mà bắt hình dong* (line 3) teaches people to judge one's character and personality via his or her appearance. It implies that a person, especially a woman, who is good looking tends to have a good character and personality. This is in fact the realisation of the four Confucian virtues a woman must have: *công, dung, ngôn, and hạnh* in which *dung* refers to appearance and *hạnh* refers to character and personality (see section 2.3.4). However, as Ngô says, although Hằng's appearance is *mặt hoa da phấn*, or good looking, she does not have a good character. Rather, she has *tâm địa thì ác hơn quỷ dữ* or evil mind (lines 4, 5).

Ngô then keeps attacking Hằng by describing her as a person who has no filial piety (line 8), who is uneducated and insolent (line 10), who does not know what hierarchical relationships mean (line 11), and who does not understand her mother (lines 14-18). All these criticisms are parts of an indirect refusal because they imply "you are a bad person and thus why should I do what you have been requesting". Ngô even declares that he will marry Nha (lines 27, 29, 30). Another notable moment in this interaction is that, for the first time, Ngô is the person who decides to end the conversation by banishing Hằng from his house (line 32).

9.6.2 Refusing by non-linguistic counter-attack

Ngô's non-verbal actions in this interaction are also very different from those in previous conversations. Whereas in earlier conversations Ngô played a passive role receiving the face-threats and had no opportunity to defend himself, in this conversation he plays a very active role as demonstrated in his posture, gestures and facial expressions in the following

images. This change results not only from the fact that Hằng is becoming more and more impertinent and insolent, but also from the encouragement he has received from his son and the trust Nha has placed on him, which are revealed in a number of previous interactions between them (see table 9.1)



Image 9.6.1



Image 9.6.2



Image 9.6.3



Image 9.6.4



Image 9.6.5



Image 9.6.6

Upon hearing Hằng's knock on the door (image 9.6.2), Ngô goes out to stand in front of her with a posture of a senior person. Unlike in previous interactions when he had clumsy hands and arms, in this interaction he leaves his two arms straight down (image 9.6.4). Then he moves to a chair (image 9.6.5) and sits down (image 9.6.6), actions that reveal he is asserting his rights as a senior person. In Vietnamese culture, only the senior person is expected to sit when talking to a junior.

Ngô sits on the chair with his head leaning to one side. He looks towards Hằng, but not at her eyes (image 9.6.6). He chooses not to keep constant eye contact with her and when he does he stares at her with 'angry' eyes (image 9.6.8). When Hằng says that she will let her mother to re-marry, but not with him, he stands up (image 9.6.10) and explicitly declares that he will become her stepfather (image 9.6.11). All of these actions display a big change in his behaviour: from being clumsy in previous conversations he has had with her to being strong and confident, from being attacked by her to counter-attacking her. He then hinders her from any further argument by asking her to leave the room (line 32, image 9.6.12). When she is exiting the room he even continues to look at her from behind and utters 'How insolent you are!' (line 34, images 9.6.13-9.6.15).



Image 9.6.7



Image 9.6.8



Image 9.6.9



Image 9.6.10



Image 9.6.11



Image 9.6.12

9.7 Conversation 16 (Episode 30: 11'58-13'51)

Due to Ngô's proclamation to marry Nha in conversation 15 analysed above, Hằng goes to her mother's clinic to talk to her. The following is an excerpt from this conversation. Before this conversation occurs, Nha anh Chanh were sitting at the table in the clinic talking to each other; when Hằng comes in Chanh stopped the conversation and went away, and Nha stood up and was about to go into her bed room.

01. Hằng: *mẹ (1.0) con muốn nói chuyện với mẹ một lát*
 mother child want speak with mother one moment
 Mum, I want to talk to you for a moment.
02. Nha: *((with gentle voice)) mẹ bận lắm*
 mother busy very
 I am very busy.
03. Hằng: *mẹ bận đến mức >không có thời gian nói chuyện với*
 mother busy to degree not have time speak with
 Are you so busy that you don't have time to talk to
04. *đứa con gái độc nhất à<*
 Class. daughter only QuesM
 your only daughter?
05. Nha: *(5.0) ((sits down, looks down)) (6.0) ((with gentle voice)) mẹ nghe đây*
 mother listen AffM
 Okay, I am listening.
06. Hằng: *mẹ (1.0) có biết lão ngô đã chính thức tuyên chiến với con không*

- mother AffM know old ngô Past. officially declare war with child QuesM
Do you know that Mr. Ngô has officially declared war with me?
07. *con không thể chịu đựng được nữa rồi mẹ nói đi*
 child not able bear possible more already mother speak AlignM
I can no longer stand it. Now please tell me,
08. *giữa con và ông ấy mẹ chọn ai (3.0)*
 between child and grandfather that mother choose who
between me and him, who will you choose?
09. *kìa mẹ mẹ nói đi đây là lần cuối cùng con nhắc đến*
 that mother mother speak AlignM this be time final child refer
Please mum, tell me! This is the final time I
10. *ông ấy đấy (2.0) mẹ:*
 grandfather that AffM mother
mention him, mum.
11. Nha: *(8.0) ((looks up and gazes at Hằng, with gentle voice)) nếu mẹ chọn bác ngô*
 if mother choose uncle ngô
What if I choose Mr. Ngô?
12. Hằng: *mẹ (1.0) mẹ nói thật à*
 mother mother speak truth QuesM
Are you telling the truth?
13. Nha: *(2.0) ((looks down again))*
14. Hằng: *đã thế con sẽ phá đến cùng không bao giờ con để*
 so child will destroy until end never child let
If so, I will protest until the end. Never will I let
15. *bố con nhà ấy chiếm những gì thuộc về con*
 father child house that take PulM what belong to child
him and his son take what belong to me.
16. *đừng hòng bố con nhà ấy lấy được cái nhà này*
 not ever father child house that take possible Class. house this
They will not be able to take this unit.

9.7.1 Indirect requests and refusals

In the beginning of the conversation, Hằng's request to talk to Nha (line 1) is quite direct because it contains the verb *muốn*, or 'want' (Blum-Kulka, 1987), but Nha refuses her indirectly by just saying that she is busy (line 2). According to Beebe et al. (1990), an indirect refusal is the one that does not contain the performative verb 'refuse' or the 'No/not' element. Although Nha does not explicitly say 'No/not', it is not difficult for Hằng to understand it as a refusal since it is often referred to as conventional indirect

refusal (Blum-Kulka, 1987). Thus, Hằng insists by asking Nha a rhetorical question (lines 3, 4) which is a question that is produced to make an effect – here a request – rather than to get an answer. Thus, the question ‘Are you so busy that you don’t have time to talk to your only daughter?’ (lines 3, 4) can be understood as ‘I want you to talk to me and I think you won’t refuse because I am your only daughter.’ By attaching to the question the fact that she is the only child of her mother, Hằng is forcing her mother to accept her request. She knows that her mother has always been indulging her and so she will not have the heart to refuse her this time. Her knowledge is true because then her mother has to accept, though reluctantly, to listen to her (line 5).

It seems that the remaining part of the conversation does not contain any request and refusal; but if we see this conversation within the whole story in which Hằng has tried many times to require her mother and Ngô to cancel their relationship and they have also tried to refuse her requests, we can interpret Hằng’s turn in lines 6-10 as an indirect request and Nha’s turn in line 11 as a refusal. In her turn, Hằng informs her mother that Ngô has ‘declared war’ with her which refers to the fact that in conversation 15, Ngô officially refused her request in an impolite way. Due to that refusal, she can no longer stand the situation and thus she has to ask her mother whether she will choose her or Ngô (lines 7, 8). Again, although this is a question in linguistic form, it functions as an indirect request because it implies that if her mother chooses her, she has to accept her request to cancel the relationship with Ngô, which she has tried to make so far.

Nha responds to this indirect request by a 3-second silence (line 8) which is understood by Hằng as a refusal; and thus, she insists on by saying ‘this is the final time I mention him’ (lines 9, 10). Again, there is another silence of 2 seconds (line 10) which projects Hằng to utter the word *mẹ* (mum – line 10). This second-person reference term is pronounced with a stress and a prolonged vowel, which reveals that she is urging her mother with a vocative utterance. However, what Hằng receives after making this vocative is also a rhetorical conditional question ‘What if I choose Mr. Ngô?’ (line 11). It is a rhetorical question because it does not aim at getting unknown information but making an indirect refusal. In making this question Nha implies ‘I will choose Ngô, which means I refuse your request to stop the relationship with him’. Hằng definitely understands this question as a refusal, so she takes her turn to ask if her mother is telling the truth (line 12) – i.e., if her mother really wants to choose Ngô. She asks this question with the hope her mother will re-think of her

decision to choose Ngô, but her mother keeps silence for 2 seconds and looks down (line 13). Hằng perceives this silence as another indirect refusal, so she threatens her mother that she will keep protesting the relationship between her mother and Ngô (lines 14-16).

9.7.2 Nha's firmness in her refusals

In this conversation Nha continues to display herself as a firm and decisive person although she speaks with gentle voice. In the beginning, she refuses to talk to Hằng by saying she is very busy (line 2); she must have known that what Hằng is going to talk is nothing new than the request she has been trying to make so far. The strategy she uses to refuse at this moment was described by Culpeper (1996) as to be *disinterested*, *unconcerned*, or *unsympathetic*. Although she then reluctantly accepts to talk to Hằng, she keeps refusing her indirect requests. First, when Hằng urges her to choose between her and Ngô, she declares she will choose Ngô (line 11). This declaration marks a significant change in the strategies she uses to refuse her daughter. While in the first few conversations between her and Hằng (e.g., conversation 6 analysed in section 9.4) she could only use some *defensive* strategies to respond to her daughter's impoliteness, in conversation 14, she started to use offensive responses (Culpeper et al, 2003) to her daughter's impoliteness, and this strategy is maintained in this conversation. Although she speaks with gentle voice, the fact that she explicitly, for the first time, declares she will maintain the relationship with Ngô shows that she has become much more rigid and firm.

Second, when Hằng ask her to confirm her decision to choose Ngô, her silence (line 13), which is understood by Hằng as a refusal, once again proves that she is very firm and decisive this time.

9.8 Conversation 17 (Episode 30: 51'15 – 55'02)

The following conversation is between Hằng and Nha. Following Nha's declaration in conversation 16 above that she will choose to marry Ngô rather than abide by Hằng's demands, Hằng is really disappointed. She is crying when she says:

01. Hằng: ((crying)) nhà có một mẹ một con mà mẹ nữ đối xử
house have one mother one child StaM mother have the heart behave
How can you have the heart to treat me, your only daughter,
02. với con như thế ((crying)) nhục quá nhục thế này thì còn sống làm gì

like this? How dishonoured I feel! Why should I have to live with this dishonour!

I have never treated anybody with cruelty,

wash face AlignM

Even if you roll down on the floor to protest, I will not be touched.

270

she is sending her mother a message that if her mother still loves her, she must stop that relationship, which is the request she has made so far.

On the other hand, Nha's action of giving Hằng a tissue and verbal response (lines 5, 7) can be understood as a refusal because when she says she will not be touched by Hằng's crying, she indirectly confirm that she will still maintain the relationship with Ngô, which implies that she is not going to do what Hằng has requested.

9.8.2 Nha's rigid counter-attacking refusal

In this conversation Nha becomes even more rigid. Although Hằng cries and accuses her (lines 1-4) of not treating her well, Nha appears to be very firm as evidenced in line 5 when she gives Hằng a tissue and asks her to clean her face, and in line 7 when she says, in a cold manner, that even if Hằng rolls on the floor to protest, she will not feel touched and will not change her mind.

The next part of the conversation, which is not included here for analysis, continues with Nha talking about how short a life is. She mentions the sudden death of Mai (Dương's mother in the story analysed in chapter 8) to implicate that life is short. Thus, Nha explains that she would like to live with a man whom she loves for the remainder of her life, and that she hopes Hằng will agree with her decision. However, Hằng insists that if life is so short Nha should spend the time to take care of her children and grandchildren rather than get married to Ngô. Hằng argues that if Nha marries Ngô there will be two serious consequences: she will feel ashamed, and she will lose the unit (as she mentioned in the end of conversation 16 analysed above).

The following excerpt continues from that point.

[...]

20. Nha: *mẹ nhắc lại ((walks to the chair and sits down)) (5.0)*
 mother repeat

I repeat

21. *bác ngô không phải là người như thế (2.5) tại sao con lại nghĩ (1.0)*
 uncle ngô not be person like that why child StaM think

Mr. Ngô is not that type of person. Why do you think

22. Ngô: *((comes in))*

23. Nha: *bác ngô chiếm nhà (0.5) chiếm tài sản của mẹ con mình chứ*

Uncle ngô invade house invade property of mother child body StaM

he will take over our unit, our property?

24. Ngô: *trời ơi (1.0) tôi là dân nghệ sỹ (0.5) tiền bạc là vật ngoài thân (1.5)*

sky Voc I be profession artist money be thing out body

Oh my god! I am an artist who doesn't care about money.

25. *Sao (.) cháu nở lại nghệ về tôi như vậy*

why niece have the heart think about me like that

Why do you think of me like that?

26. Nha: *ơ ông (1.0) đừng (1.0) uh*

oh grandfather not

Oh don't ...

27. Ngô: *bà (.) cứ để cho tôi (.) có đôi câu phải trái với con*

grandmother AffM let for me have two sentence right wrong with child

Just let me have some words about what is right and wrong with her.

28. Hằng: *((stands up and stares at Ngô)) cháu sẽ không thay đổi đâu*

niece will not change StaM

I will never change my mind,

29. *bác đừng mất công*

uncle not lose labour

so don't wast your time.

30. Ngô: *tôi: đã mất công đến tận đây (1.0) thì (.) chẳng còn gì*

I already lose labour come here then not have what

Because I have taken the time to come here, there's nothing

31. *đáng để tôi phải sợ nữa đâu ((sits down)) (3.5)*

worth for me have to fear more StaM

I would be in fear of.

32. *hóa ra (0.5) cháu sợ mất nhà (0.5) chứ không phải sợ mẹ cháu đi bước nữa*

turn out niece fear lose house StaM not be fear mother niece go step more

It turns out that you are afraid of losing your unit, not of

33. *để cháu bị mang tiếng phải không (2.5)*

make niece NegM suffer bad fame right QuesM

losing your family's reputation, right?

34. *vậy thì hôm nay bác cũng nói rõ quan điểm của mình (1.0)*

so then today uncle also speak clear opinion of body

So, today I will tell you clearly my point of view.

35. *xuân ngô này là nhà văn nhà biên kịch suốt đời*

xuân ngô this be writer play-writer all life

I am a writer, and a playwright who has lived my whole life

36. *sống thanh đạm đơn giản (1.5) bác vì đã trót mang nghiệp cầm bút vào thân*

- live pure simple uncle due to already bear profession hold pen into body
in a pure and simple way. It's because I have chosen the writing profession
37. *cho nên (0.5) dù có nghèo (1.0) chứ nhất định không bao giờ hèn cả*
 so though AffM poor but definitely never lowly StaM
that, even though I am poor, I will definitely not be lowly.
38. *dù có phải ăn mì sống uống nước lã cảm hơi đi chẳng nữa (1.0)*
 though have to eat noodle raw drink water live AffM
Even though I have to eat raw noodles or drink only water,
39. *cũng không bao giờ tơ hào đến tiền bạc của người khác (2.0)*
 also never take money of people other
I will never desire other people's money,
40. *nhất là một người mà mình yêu thương mình quý mến (2.5)*
 especially be one person StaM body love body like
especially the person who I love and admire.
41. *((stands up)) hôm nay (1.0) xuân ngô này xin thề cùng nhật nguyệt*
 today xuân ngô this swear with sun moon
Today, I hereby swear, with the witness of the sun and moon, that
42. *là sẽ không tơ hào của mẹ con cháu hằng (0.5) dù là một cái kim*
 be will not take of mother child niece hằng even be one Class. needle
I will never take property, not even a needle, that belongs to Hằng's family.
43. Hằng: *nhưng ...*
 but
But...
44. Ngô: *bác và mẹ cháu sẽ cưới nhau*
 uncle and mother niece will get married.
I and your mother will get married
45. Hằng: *ơ hự .hhh*
 oh hu
oh huh
46. Ngô: *bác sẽ đón mẹ cháu về bên nhà bác (1.0) dù là giải tỏa*
 uncle will bring mother niece to house uncle though be clear away
I will welcome your mother to my unit. Even though this building is dismantled
47. *hay là tái định cư gì gì đi chẳng nữa (0.5) nhưng chúng tôi*
 or be re-settlement what what AffM but we
and we have to re-settle in a new apartment, we
48. *sẽ nhất quyết ở bên nhau (1.0) sẽ cùng nhau đi nốt quãng đời còn lại*
 will definitely stay together will together go finish Class. life remaining
will definitely live with each other for the remainder of our lives.
49. Hằng: *ơ .hhh nhưng mà cháu phản đối*

uhm but niece protest

But I protest.

50. Nha: *((walks towards Ngô, grasp his arm)) (6.0)*

51. *mẹ sẽ sống với bác ngô dù con đồng ý hay phản đối*
mother will live with uncle ngô though child agree or protest

I will live with Mr. Ngô even if you agree or protest.

52. Hằng: *mẹ hh .hhh*

mother

Mum!

53. Ngô: *bác sẽ chiến đấu đến hơi thở cuối cùng (1.0) để bảo vệ tình yêu của mình*
uncle will fight until breath final so as protect love of body

I will fight until my final breath to protect our love.

54. Hằng: *mẹ (1.0) me:*

mother mother

Mum!

In this excerpt, Nha takes her turn by stating Ngô is not the kind of person who will ‘occupy’ the apartment unit which Hằng is expected to inherit. By saying this she indirectly refuses Hằng’s request to cancel the relationship with Ngô. That is, she sends a message to Hằng that ‘if you take Ngô’s occupation of the unit as the reason for your request, you should not be worried because Ngô will not occupy it, and accordingly I will not have to stop the relationship with him.’

When Nha and Hằng are talking, Ngô comes in and he can hear what Nha is talking to Hằng. Upon learning of the true reason for Hằng’s protest against her mother’s relationship with him, he shows his surprise by uttering an exclamation ‘Oh my god’ (line 24) and asks Hằng why she could think of him like that (line 25). As such, he wants to tell Hằng that he is not the person who will take over the unit because he is a poet who, by nature of the job, does not care much about money (line 24). Though Nha asks him not to say anything (line 26), he still decides to explain to Hằng (line 27). Hằng perceives Ngô’s intention to explain as another attempt to persuade her to withdraw her request, which is understood by her as a refusal to her request, so she denies to let him explain (lines 28, 29). However, upon hearing the true reason of her request, Ngô insists that he must tell her his views. Thus, he decides to reveal his own opinions and attitudes which he has not previously had the opportunity to express. He takes a long turn (lines 30-42) to explain that although he is a writer who is poor, he swears he will not take any property, even something as small as a

pin, that belongs to Nha and Hằng. He gives the word *xin thề* (or swear - line 41) and *kim* (or pin – line 42) a very heavy stress (as underlined). By giving this explanation, he also indirectly refuses Hằng's request that she has been trying to make so far. Like Nha, he implies 'I will not take any property that you are entitled to inherit, and thus I am not going to stop my relationship with your mother.'

It is notable in this interaction that Ngô speaks with confidence as he admits that he no longer fears Hằng (lines 30-31) as he once used to. Therefore, he keeps blocking Hằng's turn (Bousfield, 2008); that is, he does not let her talk (lines 44, 46-48). This again shows a big change in his attitude towards Hằng: He is no longer the person being frequently attacked and insulted due to his love affair socially-regarded as wrong, but the one who has his own confident voice.

9.8.3 Change of person reference terms in the process of refusing

Ngô's use of kin terms for self and second person reference to counter-attack Hằng in this conversation is also notable. In the second part of this conversation (from line 20 to 54), Ngô uses *bác* (uncle) for self-reference and *cháu* (niece) to address Hằng. This reveals an intimate relationship with Hằng even though he is trying to counter-attack her impoliteness. The intimacy makes his counter-attack less face-threatening and he continues to use kin terms in conversation 20.

The change of kin terms from *tôi – cô* in previous conversations to *bác – cháu* in this and conversation 20 shows that Ngô no longer wants to be in conflict with Hằng after the long and tiring negotiation process. He and Nha have already decided to live with each other and both see Hằng as a member in a united family (it should be noted that he also uses the kin terms – and behaves in a courteous way – in conversation 10 when Hằng talks to him politely). The use of *bác – cháu* is totally different from the use of *tôi* (subject of the king) and *cô* (aunt) for self-reference and addressing respectively. Whereas both *tôi* and *cô* show distance, *bác* and *cháu* imply intimacy. Thus, Ngô's deliberate use of different terms to address the same person (Hằng does that to Ngô as well) demonstrates once more the point made in section 2.4.3 that "the use of addressor-addressee referring pairs can fully capture the social meanings of person referring forms in relation to the power and solidarity dimensions of social interaction".



Image 9.8.1



Image 9.8.2



Image 9.8.3

9.8.4 Joint counter-attacking refusals

It should also be noted that in this conversation Nha and Ngô cooperate to counter-attack Hằng. Echoing Ngô's declaration in line 48 and hearing that Hằng still protests against this relationship, Nha in line 51 says that she will marry Ngô regardless of Hằng's rejection. Before she says this she walks towards Ngô and holds his hand (line 50, images 9.8.1-9.8.3). This cooperation makes their refusal of Hằng's request much stronger.

9.9 Summary and conclusion

Together with chapter 8, the present chapter tries to answer research question 2 – 'How is Vietnamese refusing manifested in talk-in-interaction?' – by focusing on impoliteness aspect. Before summarising the impoliteness strategies used in the story in question, I would like to have some notes on refusing strategies and the notion of refusing, which we have dealt with in section 1.2.1.

First, it should be re-stated that the whole story is about a love affair between Nha and Ngô. Throughout the story, Hằng - Nha's adult daughter - is the person who protests this relationship and tries to request her mother and Ngô to stop it; Nha and Ngô are the persons who refuse her requests. Whereas the speech act of requesting is performed both directly and indirectly, refusing is often indirectly realised by different other speech acts such as disagreeing, blaming, criticising, insulting, avoiding so on and so forth.

Second, since it is a longitudinal story that consists of a number of interactions/conversations, closely linked to each other, between the people involved, it is necessary to refer to previous conversation in order to have a full understanding of the content of a certain conversation. If we do not do so, it is hard to recognise which action or actions is or are requests or refusals. It is not only because the requests or refusals are hidden or implied

but also because a refusal may be made to a request that has been made in a previous conversation.

Third, and also because of the longitudinal story, some conversations may contain only one part of a refusal. As Beebe et al. (1990) classify refusing into different semantic formulae, and a refusal may contain one or some of these formulae. For example, a refusal can be performed by a statement of regret plus an excuse plus a reason. However, since this is a long story related to a high-stake issue, a refusal in a specific conversation may contain only one of those semantic formulae; the others may be performed in subsequent conversations. Therefore, the refusals made by Nha and Ngô in conversations 15, 16, and 17 are parts of the refusing process.

With regards to impoliteness, although refusing is the focus of the study, I summarise here the impoliteness strategies used by both the person who makes requests and the one who refuses. Drawing on 6 conversations selected from a TV series story as data for analysis, and using the impoliteness frameworks proposed by Culpeper (1996, 2005), Culpeper et al. (2003), and Bousfield (2008), a relatively complete picture of how face-attacks and the responses to them are performed in interactions of refusing and related speech acts has been provided. As a summary, the chapter made use of existing impoliteness theory while also significantly adding value to it.

First, all impoliteness superstrategies outlined in Culpeper (1996); namely *bald on record impoliteness*, *positive impoliteness*, *negative impoliteness*, *sarcasm or mock politeness*, and *withhold politeness* were documented in the TV series under analysis. *Bald on record impoliteness* strategies were used (e.g. in conversation 6) by Hằng when she imposes on her mother in a “direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way” (Culpeper, 1996, p. 356). Hằng also used *mock politeness* when describing her mother as a ‘great person’ in conversation 20, and *withhold politeness* when she does not greet Ngô in conversation 1.

Many *negative* and *positive impoliteness* strategies listed by Culpeper (1996) and Bousfield (2008) were also used by the characters throughout the 6 conversations analysed. They included *ignore/snub the other*, *disassociate the other*, *be disinterested*, *use inappropriate identity marker*, *use taboo words*, *frighten*, *scorn*, *invade the other space*, *criticise*, and *hinder/block the other*.

Second, the analyses of the conversations revealed the participants in this story draw on some impoliteness strategies not outlined by either Culpeper (1996) or Bousfield (2008). A popular strategy Vietnamese people often use is what is expressed in the Vietnamese idiom *đá thúng đựng nia* (lit. kick the basket and stamp the van). It is an indirect way of expressing one's anger, usually performed by a junior person towards a senior one. Hằng's action of throwing the bag hard onto the bed (in conversation 1 – see its description in table 9.1) is an example of this strategy. The second impoliteness strategy commonly used by Vietnamese people is referred to as *giận cá chém thớt* (lit. hate the fish but chop the chopping-board). This idiom is similar to the other in that in both cases something or somebody is treated as a scapegoat for one's anger. The fact that Hằng often scolds Chanh in order to show her protest against her mother's love affair is an example of this strategy. These two strategies can be added to the above-mentioned impoliteness frameworks.

Third, in addition to the above two strategies, other paralinguistic (e.g., stress, exclamatory sounds) and non-linguistic (e.g., posture, gestures, gazes, stares, facial expressions etc.) impoliteness strategies have also been documented in the 6 conversations under analysis. These modes of communication have not sufficiently illustrated in existing frameworks. For example, some paralinguistic (e.g., shouting, growling, giving heavy stress etc.) and non-linguistic (e.g., posture, distance, or eye contact) aspects of impoliteness have only been briefly described by Culpeper (1996, p. 363) in one short paragraph. No images or evidence of the participants' non-verbal actions are provided to illustrate those aspects. Similarly, although intonation was discussed in Culpeper et al. (2003) and Culpeper (2005), no examples were documented in the papers. Therefore, analyses of non-linguistic aspects such as posture, gesture, stares and so on with illustrating images in this chapter add strategies to the frameworks drawn upon.

How are the impoliteness strategies analysed in this chapter related to the findings of study 1 is also worth mentioning. It can be concluded that the use of all these impoliteness strategies reflects the socio-cultural affordances discussed in chapter 7. In general, the issue of women's responsibilities is vividly illustrated throughout the story where these Confucian duties have been reconsidered to be adapted to modern life. Nha's decision to refuse all her daughter's requests shows that she is trying to struggle against the requirement that a widow must stay single to look after her children and grandchildren rather than re-marry. Although her love affair might be laughed at by some people (as

Hằng often refers to as a reason for her to make her request), her decision is strongly supported by Ngô and Khôi, which means that the society has had a different view on Vietnamese women's role.

On the other hand, the impoliteness strategies used by Hằng also reveal the degradation of women's virtues. Throughout the story, she constructs herself as a selfish, impertinent and irresponsible woman, which is against the four women's virtues namely *công, dung, ngôn,* and *hạnh* (see section 2.3.4). She is totally different from Dương (in chapter 8) who displays herself as a well-educated, considerate, and responsible woman. This contrast supports our view we set out right in the beginning that cultural values are dynamic, heterogeneous, and subject to change.

Other sociocultural affordances mentioned in chapter 7 (except bribery and corruption) are also revealed in this chapter. First, collectivism is felt in the prejudice Hằng has on Ngô's career; for her, poets form a collective having flowery style of living. Collectivism is also reflected in the fact that a person's behaviour or decision is greatly influenced by other members in the family. For example, Ngô's attempt to protect his love with Nha is constantly encouraged by his son-Khôi. Second, harmony in conversations is frequently violated by the conversants. Whereas Nha and Ngô try to have peaceful and harmonious talks with Hằng, she always wants to create conflicts and troubles with them. That is, she does not use polite strategies of advising and requesting them to cancel their love affair. Third, trust is something rare in contemporary society especially among young people. The fact that Hằng does not trust Ngô (as she thinks he will take over the apartment unit that she is entitled to inherit) further strengthens the findings in chapter 7 where Vietnamese participants revealed that trust is difficult to obtain. Finally, the matter of patriarchy is also documented in this story. When Hằng says if Ngô got married to her mother, his son would be entitled to inherit the her mother's unit, she acknowledges that a son has more rights than a daughter especially in terms of inheritance. This patriarchal aspect is still widely practised in contemporary Vietnamese society.

In short, while the filmed conversations under study are designed in advance and directed by the film makers, the results in this chapter show that those conversations are highly close approximation to real practices in everyday life.

Chapter 10: Vietnamese refusing from NNSs' perspective

10.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the social psychological study (study 3) of how NNSs perceive and experience the pragmatic act of refusing. The aim of this study is to answer research question 3 namely 'How do non-native speakers of Vietnamese (NNSs) perceive, interpret and react to Vietnamese people's refusing?'

As discussed in chapter 5, this research project is both multiperspectival (Candlin, 1997, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011a, 2013b; Crichton, 2010) and mixed-methodological. It is multiperspectival in that it is comprised of three studies investigating the research topic from different perspectives. In study 1, the findings of which were presented in chapter 7, Vietnamese refusing was explored from the perspective of native speakers of Vietnamese and from social practice perspective as well because the interviews were treated as social practices (see section 5.4.4). In study 2, the results of which were displayed in chapters 8 and 9, the theme was investigated from semiotic resource and social practice perspectives. In this third study, Vietnamese refusing is explored from the perspective of NNSs.

This research project is also mixed methodological in that it combines qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. The first two studies used qualitative methodology whereas this study draws on quantitative data analysis. However, different from other mixed-method studies which combine two worldviews, namely, positivist and constructivist, or transfer from one worldview to the other, in this research project I adopt the constructivist worldview, so the ontological assumption is that reality, especially that of social phenomena such as cultural values and norms, is plural and potentially contested. As such, and following Danermark et al. (2002) and (Layder, 1993), this research project takes qualitative methodology as essential and complemented by quantitative data.

Accordingly, this research project began by prioritising the collection and analyses of qualitative data from studies 1 and 2. Then, building from the exploratory results, the

quantitative study was conducted to further explore the initial findings from these two studies. The 5-point Likert scale questionnaire in this quantitative study was designed on the basis of the results of the interviews in study 1, on the analysis of the TV series in study 2, and also on the literature as well as the researcher's knowledge and observation (see section 5.5.3.2). As such, this entire research project has an **exploratory sequential** design (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011) with the dual purpose of being **complementary** and **initiation** (Greene et al., 1989). This mixed-methods design is also referred to as **multilevel** in that the participants recruited for the two strands are from different populations, namely native speakers and NNSs of Vietnamese.

This chapter is organised into four sections. In addition to this introduction, section 10.2 describes the assumptions set out to conduct this quantitative study. Sections 10.3 presents the study findings and section 10.4 provides a summary and conclusion.

10.2. Assumptions of the study

Since this study was conducted to further strengthen or challenge the findings from the first two studies (i.e., to see if those findings would be widely or narrowly supported by the NNSs), those findings were treated as assumptions in this study. In order to make it easier for the explanation of the central tendency as well as specific phenomena of Vietnamese culture that comes in the next sections, there will be some conventions for the use of some terms namely 'Assumption' (in capital letter), 'categorical assumption', and 'individual assumption'.

First, **Assumption** refers to the most general hypothesis set out for this study. What was revealed in the first two studies, in the literature and from my own observation is that Vietnamese people were **collectivistic, hierarchical, patriarchal, indirect, implicit, and harmonious**. These characteristics, therefore, become the Assumption of this study. If the respondents have their total score higher than the theoretical mean score, we would say that on average they support the Assumption; that is, they agree that Vietnamese people generally have those characteristics, although they may not support some specific individual assumptions.

Second, **categorical assumption** refers to the hypothesis set out in each heading in the questionnaire namely Relationships, Responsibilities, and Harmony etc. In designing the

statements under each of these headings, I had more specific assumptions, which were based on the findings in studies 1 and 2, on the literature, and on my own observation, as shown below.

Relationships: I assumed that Vietnamese people tend to be influenced by hierarchical relationships in deciding whether to refuse or accept. In particular, they tend not to refuse higher – status people, and if they have to refuse, they tend to be rather indirect and tactful. On the other hand, they tend to be rather direct with lower – status interlocutors especially their relatives.

Responsibilities: I assumed that Vietnamese people tend to take helping other people in their family or clan as their responsibility (under the influence of Confucianism, see chapter 2).

Harmony: I assumed that Vietnamese people tend to avoid personal conflicts and humiliations even though in doing so they may have to do things reluctantly or they may even have to break the state laws or institutional regulations.

Identities: I assumed that there are differences between different groups of people in terms of their strategies of refusing.

Purposes: I assumed that Vietnamese people appreciate their personal well-beings, spiritual or material or both, more than institutional/public benefits.

Strategies: I assumed that compared to Native English Speakers, Vietnamese people are rather indirect, implicit, covert, and vague.

Respondents' perceptions, attitudes and evaluations: Finally, in designing the statements under this category, I assumed that NNSs would feel surprised and annoyed with the way Vietnamese people refuse.

Thus, when the respondents have their score of each category higher than the theoretical mean score of that category, we would conclude that they support that categorical assumption.

Finally, **individual assumption** refers to the specific assumption expressed by the semantic proposition of each statement in the questionnaire. Individual assumptions in one

category will build up that categorical assumption, and all categorical assumptions, in turn, will form the Assumption. Thus, the eight individual assumptions conveyed by eight statements in the heading of Relationships, for example, build up the categorical assumption of Relationships; and the seven categorical assumptions namely Relationships, Responsibilities etc. together form the Assumption.

10.3 Results and discussion

This section presents the findings of the study by commenting on the general tendency (Assumption), on each category (categorical assumption) as well as on individual statements (individual assumption).

It is important to note that statements 36 and 39 in the questionnaire were not included for analysis because they were interpreted differently by the respondents and received quite contradictory responses. In fact, some respondents indicated that each of the two statements may contain two propositions. For example, statement 36 (i.e., ‘Sometimes I am very surprised with the situation where a Vietnamese tries to pay for his/her friend in a bar or restaurant while the latter tries to refuse’) may refer to both the fact that when a Vietnamese tries to pay for a friend, the friend will usually refuse, and whether the NNSs was surprised or not by this. Statement 39 (i.e., ‘I don’t like the way they refuse when I make a proposal about a plan/project etc.’) also has two premises: (1) ‘that they do it’; and (2) ‘that I don’t like it’ which caused difficulties for the respondents. Thus, it was decided that excluding these two items could enhance both the reliability and validity of this study.

10.3.1 Central tendency (Assumption)

Descriptive statistics were drawn on to uncover whether the respondents support or reject the Assumption, and accordingly, whether they are in line with the findings in the previous two studies. A useful way of checking the central tendency is to compare the real score obtained by a respondent with the minimum, mean, and maximum scores a respondent can theoretically achieve. Each of the remaining 43 items was assigned a 5-point scale including ‘strongly disagree’, ‘disagree’, ‘not sure’, ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’. Each of the points was assigned a value of 1-5 respectively.

Thus, the lowest score a respondent may obtain is 43 points (i.e., 43 items x 1, supposing he or she chooses ‘strongly disagree’ for all items). In the same vein, the highest score a respondent may obtain is 215 points (i.e., 43 x 5, supposing he or she chooses ‘strongly agree’ for all items). The theoretical mean score is thus 129 (i.e., 43 items x 3).

Table 10.3.1.1 shows the real scores calculated from the NNSs responses. Following the formula for detecting outliers proposed by Hoaglin, Iglewicz, and Tukey (1986), the scores do not contain any outliers, or “values that differ totally from all the other observation and [...] can influence results substantially” (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014, p. 93). Thus, mean scores can be used here with certain reliability to explain the central tendency.

Table 10.3.1. 1

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid 126 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| 127 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 4.7 |
| 128 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 7.0 |
| 129 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 9.3 |
| 133 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 11.6 |
| 136 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 14.0 |
| 137 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 16.3 |
| 140 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 18.6 |
| 143 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 20.9 |
| 149 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 23.3 |
| 150 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 25.6 |
| 151 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 27.9 |
| 152 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 32.6 |
| 153 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 37.2 |
| 154 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 39.5 |
| 155 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 48.8 |
| 156 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 53.5 |
| 157 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 58.1 |
| 158 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 60.5 |
| 160 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 62.8 |
| 162 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 72.1 |
| 163 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 76.7 |
| 164 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 81.4 |
| 167 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 86.0 |
| 168 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 88.4 |
| 169 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 90.7 |
| 178 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 95.3 |
| 180 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 43 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Four respondents (9.3%) had their scores of 129 or lower than the theoretical mean. Hence, almost all respondents (39 out of 43 or 90.7%) received a score higher than the theoretical

mean, suggesting they generally supported the Assumption that Vietnamese people are **collectivistic, hierarchical, patriarchal, indirect, implicit, and harmonious**.

10.3.2 Categorical tendency and individual assumptions

Categorical assumptions and individual assumptions will be dealt with in the following sub-sections. In each of the following sub-sections, the categorical assumption will be discussed first, then the individual assumptions will be further analysed.

10.3.2.1. Relationships

Table 10.3.2. 1

| Relationships scores | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | 18 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| | 20 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 4.7 |
| | 21 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 9.3 |
| | 22 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 11.6 |
| | 23 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 14.0 |
| | 24 | 3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 20.9 |
| | 25 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 25.6 |
| | 26 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 34.9 |
| | 27 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 44.2 |
| | 28 | 6 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 58.1 |
| | 29 | 7 | 16.3 | 16.3 | 74.4 |
| | 30 | 3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 81.4 |
| | 31 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 86.0 |
| | 32 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 95.3 |
| | 33 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 97.7 |
| | 36 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 43 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

There are 8 statements in the category of Relationship, and thus the theoretical mean score would be 24 (=8 x 3). The table shows that there are 9 respondents or 20.9% who had the scores of 24 (the theoretical mean score) or lower, leaving the remaining 79.1% of the participants having their scores higher than the theoretical mean. It is therefore reasonable to say that the majority of the respondents support the assumption that hierarchical relationships are an important factor in conditioning and constraining the speech act of refusing. In particular, NNSs support the categorical assumption that Vietnamese people

tend not to refuse higher- status people, and if they have to refuse, they tend to be rather indirect and tactful. NNSs also agree with the assumption that Vietnamese people tend to be rather direct with lower - status interlocutors especially their relatives.

However, there are differences in the respondents' perceptions and attitudes across individual assumptions which are shown in the following table:

Table 10.3.2. 2

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|----|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| S1 | | 14 | 13 | 10 | 6 | 43 |
| S2 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 21 | 7 | 43 |
| S3 | | 6 | 11 | 24 | 2 | 43 |
| S4 | 1 | 5 | 21 | 16 | | 43 |
| S5 | 2 | 10 | 12 | 18 | 1 | 43 |
| S6 | 2 | 3 | 18 | 15 | 5 | 43 |
| S7 | 1 | 6 | 21 | 10 | 5 | 43 |
| S8 | | 3 | 10 | 20 | 10 | 43 |

In general, it can be seen in the table that the number of respondents who were in favour (either 'agree' or 'strongly agree') of the 8 items is larger than the number of people who were against (either 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with) those items. Especially, statements 2, 3, and 8 received the highest numbers of favourable responses by NNSs (27, 26, and 30 respectively). These figures support our assumptions that Vietnamese people tend not to refuse their boss in order to maintain a good relationship with him/her (statement 2), and that they tend not to refuse their higher-ranked relatives (statement 3). The NNNs' support for statement 2 is in agreement with the finding in study 1 where some forest wardens said they would try to satisfy their boss by lending him/her the amount of money s/he needed. In the same vein, the NNNs' support for statements 3 and 8 is also in line with the story of Dương (chapter 8) where she finally accepts her mother's advice to cancel her divorce although she does not want to do so.

It is noticeable, however, that quite a few people rejected statements 1 and 5 (14 and 12 respectively). First, the statement that Vietnamese people are very likely to refuse if they do not know the interlocutor well in advance (statement 1) does not appear to reflect the same experiences of the NNSs. As a result, the number of favourable and non-favourable responses are roughly the same (16 and 14 respectively). This result can be explained to some extent by the nature of the statement itself and the different ways it may be

interpreted. In fact, when designing this statement I drew on my own observation that Vietnamese people tend to refuse a stranger's request when it is related to high-stakes issues such as a business plan proposal or a request for permission to visit a particular location. However, several days after the completed questionnaires were collected I talked to two Australian men who had been living in Vietnam for more than 20 years and are married to Vietnamese women. One of them responded 'disagree' to statement 1 and told me that it was because he was thinking of a low-stakes request issue. He provided the example that Vietnamese people were willing to give directions to foreigners who they had never met before. However, the other Australian man responded 'strongly agreed' to statement 1 and revealed that he was running a private company and found it difficult to get some of his requests approved by Vietnamese civil servants because they did not know him well in advance. This is in line with my assumption. He concluded that in order to have his proposals approved he had to make himself known to the civil servants by, for example, asking a Vietnamese national to introduce him to them.

We may conclude from the contrasting responses by the Australian men that Vietnamese people's willingness to help a stranger is variable and may depend on the nature of the initiating act (e.g., the request). Thus, the issue needs to be further investigated with the specific type of initiating act clarified.

Similar to statement 1, statement 5 also received quite a high percentage of negative responses. This statement was designed to investigate whether having a close relationship with the requester is an important requirement for Vietnamese people to give financial help. As a number of participants in study 1 revealed, some Vietnamese people would even break the state laws or institutional regulations to help their close friends or relatives. However, when it comes to financial issues it is another story. With 10 'disagree' and two 'strongly disagree' responses, the assumption expressed in statement 5 was not largely supported by NNSs.

The figures reveal that a close relationship is not a sufficient requirement for lending out money. Thus, the NNSs may have thought there were other factors (in addition to close relationship) that may impact on the Vietnamese's decision of whether or not to lend money. One of those factors may be trust, as discussed by the participants in study 1 (e.g., some school teachers – see section 7.6).

Thus, although the number of NNSs giving positive answers to statement 5 is higher than the number who gave negative responses (19 vs. 12), whether close relationship is a decisive factor for a Vietnamese to lend money is debatable.

It is also apparent that quite many people chose the neutral scale – ‘Not sure’, especially with statements 4, 6 and 7. This may be because the statements refer to the contexts of situation they had never been in or witnessed, or it can also be that this choice can free them from giving their own opinions. Therefore, the assumption that Vietnamese people tend not to refuse to give financial support to their lower ranked relatives, to their friends and colleagues with whom they have close relationship can not be said to be largely supported by NNSs. Similarly, the assumption that they tend to refuse to give financial support to their former boss if they did not have a close relationship with him, as discussed by some forest wardens in study 1, did not receive high percentage of agreement by NNSs.

10.3.2.2. Responsibilities

There are 4 statements in the category of Responsibilities, which means that the theoretical mean score would be 12 (= 4 x 3). The table below shows that there are 12 respondents (27.9%) having their scores of 12 and lower, resulting in 72.1% of the participants supporting the categorical assumption. That is, NNSs generally support the categorical assumption that Vietnamese people tend to take helping other people in their family or clan as their responsibility.

Table 10.3.2. 3

| Responsibilities scores | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|-----------------------|-------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent | |
| Valid | 10 | 3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 |
| | 11 | 3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 14.0 |
| | 12 | 6 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 27.9 |
| | 13 | 6 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 41.9 |
| | 14 | 10 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 65.1 |
| | 15 | 10 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 88.4 |
| | 16 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 93.0 |
| | 17 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 95.3 |
| | 18 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 43 | 100.0 | 100.0 | | |

However, nearly half of the respondents (20 out of 43) had their scores of 14 and 15, just a bit higher than the theoretical mean score. This may be because respondents may not have witnessed or encountered the situations given in the statements.

The table below presents the number of respondents responding to the four statements under the heading of Responsibilities. It can be easily seen that no one chose ‘strongly disagree’ for all the four statements. It is also noticeable that the number of respondents who chose ‘Not sure’ for each statement is fairly big. This is one of the reasons that result in 20 respondents whose scores are only 14 and 15 (i.e., not much higher than the theoretical mean score) as shown in table 10.3.2.3 above.

Table 10.3.2. 4

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|-----|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| S9 | | 6 | 15 | 17 | 5 | 43 |
| S10 | | 10 | 11 | 18 | 4 | 43 |
| S11 | | 6 | 12 | 13 | 12 | 43 |
| S12 | | 14 | 13 | 14 | 2 | 43 |

Among the four, statement 11 got the highest number of favourable responses especially with 12 ‘Strongly agrees’. The higher percentage of support for statement 11 is conforming to the findings in study 1 and 2 (see chapters 7 and 8) where the female participants’ decision of whether they would get divorced or not was made mainly for the sake of satisfying their family members’ wish.

However, although the other three statements received more support than rejection, the number of NNSs who did not completely agree with them (including rejection and ‘Not sure’ option) is relatively high, with 21 for statements 9 and 10 and 27 for statement 12. These figures have some implications. First, the assumption that Vietnamese people tend to take giving financial support to their lower-status relatives as their responsibility (statement 9) is doubted by many NNSs. They may have thought that there would be more specific factors that may affect whether they would help their relatives or not. This is in line with some Vietnamese participants’ (e.g., some forest wardens in study 1) opinion as they stated that lending money to a lower status relative depends on how trustful that relative is rather than on their own responsibility.

Second, the assumption of statement 10, which was designed based on Thom's story in study 1 (in which she said that because her husband is the head of his clan he is expected to take on the responsibility to help his relatives of higher status, even though he may have to borrow money from the bank - see section 7.3.1), is not largely upheld by NNSs. The fact that there are 22 supporting and 21 non-supporting responses (including 'Not sure') to statement 10 is in conformity with the contrasting arguments given by the participants in study 1. For example, whereas Thom mentioned that such kind of responsibility did exist in her husband's clan, some forest wardens argued that it depended more on the higher-ranked relative's trustfulness rather than on their responsibility. Thus, the responsibility of the head of a clan to provide financial help to his poorer relatives is debatable. That is, it may be true for some people, but not for others; it may be true in some clans but not in other. Furthermore, it may have been true in the past, but be no longer true at present. Thus, it may not be typical of the present Vietnamese culture.

Third, the assumption that a doctor may refuse to arrange an urgent check-up for a patient only because the allotted examining time is over (statement 12), which was designed based on a story told by Huyền in study 1, is not widely consented by NNSs. With 27 non-supporting responses, this statement could not be seen as typical in contemporary society of Vietnam.

In sum, only the assumption that an adult daughter often feels responsible for other family members in deciding her marital status can be said to be broadly supported by NNSs; the other three individual assumptions are still doubted by many.

10.3.2.3. Harmony

Table 10.3.2.5 below shows the scores of the category of Harmony. Similar to Responsibilities, there are 4 statements in this category meaning that the theoretical mean score is 12 (= 4 x 3). Only 6 respondents (14%) had their scores of 12 and lower, leaving 86% of the NNSs supporting the categorical assumption of Harmony. It is interesting that there are 3 people who have the maximum scores of 20, which means that they strongly agree with all the four individual assumptions. This high percentage of agreement strongly proves my categorical assumption that Vietnamese people tend to avoid conflicts and humiliations when it comes to refusing or accepting.

Table 10.3.2. 5

| Harmony scores | | | | | |
|----------------|----|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | 7 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| | 10 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 7.0 |
| | 11 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 9.3 |
| | 12 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 14.0 |
| | 13 | 6 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 27.9 |
| | 14 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 37.2 |
| | 15 | 8 | 18.6 | 18.6 | 55.8 |
| | 16 | 9 | 20.9 | 20.9 | 76.7 |
| | 17 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 86.0 |
| | 18 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 88.4 |
| | 19 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 93.0 |
| | 20 | 3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | | 43 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The high percentage of supporting responses is further presented in table 10.3.2.6 below, which displays the number of respondents responding to each of the four statements.

Table 10.3.2. 6

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|-----|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| S13 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 27 | 7 | 43 |
| S14 | | 5 | 8 | 21 | 9 | 43 |
| S15 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 20 | 8 | 43 |
| S16 | 1 | 4 | 10 | 22 | 6 | 43 |
| | | | | | | |

It can be easily seen from the table that the respondents who were in favour of the 4 statements far outnumber the respondents who rejected them. In fact, all the statements received 28 or more favourable responses whereas only 6 or less unfavourable answers. Together with the category of Purposes as shown in section 10.3.2.5, Harmony has the highest percentage of participants who support the categorical assumption.

In conclusion, NNSs in the current sample widely agree that Vietnamese people tend to avoid personal conflicts and humiliations even though in doing so they may have to do things reluctantly or they may even have to break the state laws or institutional regulations

10.3.2.4. Identities

Table 10.3.2. 7

| Identities scores | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|-------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent | |
| Valid | 6 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| | 11 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 4.7 |
| | 12 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 9.3 |
| | 14 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 11.6 |
| | 15 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 16.3 |
| | 16 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 25.6 |
| | 17 | 7 | 16.3 | 16.3 | 41.9 |
| | 18 | 11 | 25.6 | 25.6 | 67.4 |
| | 19 | 5 | 11.6 | 11.6 | 79.1 |
| | 20 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 88.4 |
| | 21 | 3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 95.3 |
| | 22 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 97.7 |
| | 25 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 43 | 100.0 | 100.0 | | |

As can be seen in the table above, 7 people (16.3%) had their score equal to or lower than the theoretical mean (i.e., 15), and thus the remaining 36 NNSs (or 83.7%) had their scores higher than the theoretical mean. As such, it can be concluded that the NNSs under study generally agree with the categorical assumption that there are differences between different groups of people in terms of their strategies of refusing.

However, individual assumptions expressed by the 5 statements gained very varied responses. Some of them even received more non-supporting responses (i.e., including 'Not sure') than favourable ones. The table below displays the number of responses each statement obtained from the NNSs in this study.

Table 10.3.2. 8

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|-----|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| S17 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 14 | 14 | 43 |
| S18 | | 5 | 9 | 22 | 7 | 43 |
| S19 | 1 | 10 | 18 | 9 | 5 | 43 |
| S20 | 1 | 6 | 23 | 11 | 2 | 43 |
| S21 | 1 | 4 | 12 | 19 | 7 | 43 |

It can be easily seen that statements 17, 18, and 21 received quite a big number of supporters with 28, 29, and 26 respondents respectively. Although these numbers are more or less the same, it can be understood that statement 17 got the highest point since there are

14 respondents who strongly agreed with it. As such, it can be concluded that the NNSs widely agree with the individual assumption that Vietnamese men tend to show off their power over their wives. Similarly, with 22 ‘Agrees’ and 7 ‘Strongly agrees’, the assumption that children tend not to refuse their parents or grandparents since they regard their opinion as absolute is largely supported by the respondents. The case of statement 21 is a little different since it received more ‘Not sure’ responses than those for statements 17 and 18, which reduces the degree of the NNSs’ support to this assumption. In other words, although NNSs relatively widely consent with the assumption that young people refuse more directly and explicitly than old people do, their consent is less obvious than that with the individual assumptions of statements 17 and 18.

In contrast, the two remaining statements (19, 20) were only narrowly acknowledged by the respondents. It is noticeable that statement 19, the assumption of which is that urban people tend to accept gifts more easily and directly than rural people, received quite a few unfavourable (11 people) and ‘Not sure’ responses (18 people). These two figures make up 29 NNSs who did not agree with and only 14 people who support this individual assumption. These statistics show that the difference between urban and rural people in terms of their refusing strategies is not clear, and seems to be beyond the knowledge of the majority of the NNSs. In fact, among the 18 NNSs who chose ‘Not sure’, three are Australian men who had been living in Vietnam for more than 20 years. As such, although statement 19 received 9 ‘Agree’ and 5 ‘Strongly agree’ responses, it is nonetheless reasonable to conclude that the difference between urban and rural people in their refusing strategies is not easily perceptible.

Similarly, the number of people who neither agree nor disagree with statement 20 is quite large (23), and only 13 participants contend with the assumption that people in work settings seem to accept gifts more easily and directly than people in a family setting. Again, these figures prove that the difference between people at work setting and those at home is not discernible.

10.3.2.5. Purposes

Similar to Responsibilities and Harmony, the category of Purposes also consists of 4 statements, which means that the theoretical mean is also 12.

Table 10.3.2. 9

| Purposes scores | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|-------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent | |
| Valid | 10 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| | 11 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 4.7 |
| | 12 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 9.3 |
| | 13 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 14.0 |
| | 14 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 23.3 |
| | 15 | 9 | 20.9 | 20.9 | 44.2 |
| | 16 | 10 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 67.4 |
| | 17 | 7 | 16.3 | 16.3 | 83.7 |
| | 18 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 88.4 |
| | 19 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 93.0 |
| | 20 | 3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 43 | 100.0 | 100.0 | | |

As can be seen in the table above, there are only 4 participants having their score of 12 and below taking only 9.3% of the sample, and thus 90.7 % of NNSs are in favour of this categorical assumption. Among the 7 categories in the questionnaire, Purposes obtains the highest percentage of the supporting NNSs. It is even more noticeable that among those who support this categorical assumption, 3 respondents had their maximum score of 20. This high percentage shows that the infamous matters of bribery and corruption, and the need to show off one's power to his or her juniors have become well-known to non-Vietnamese. The following table further illustrates this conclusion.

Table 10.3.2. 10

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|-----|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| S22 | | | 11 | 17 | 15 | 43 |
| S23 | | 1 | 9 | 23 | 10 | 43 |
| S24 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 19 | 10 | 43 |
| S25 | | 2 | 10 | 23 | 8 | 43 |

Statement 22 did not receive any disagreements and the other statements received only a few negative responses (1 for question 23, 5 for 24 and 2 for 25), and the number of people who support these items is quite big (around 30 for each statement).

These statistics show that the particularly problematic matters of bribery and corruption in contemporary Vietnamese society were familiar to the NNSs participating in this study. The problems are expressed in statements 22, 23 and 24 (these three statements were designed based on the stories told by the participants in study 1 in which they revealed

bribery and corruption are rather common in contemporary Vietnam) and they received very high percentages of support from the NNSs respondents. Statement 22 received 15 ‘Strongly agree’ and 17 ‘Agree’ responses which make up 32 NNSs agreeing with them. With 15 ‘Strongly agree’ responses, this is one of the only two statements (the other is statement 26) in the questionnaire that obtained the highest number of ‘Strongly agree’ option. More notable is that this is the only statement in the questionnaire that did not get any unfavourable responses (including ‘Disagree’ and ‘Strongly disagree’).

Similarly, statements 23 and 24 that imply corruption also received very high percentage of positive responses with 10 ‘Strongly agree’ and 23 ‘Agree’ responses for statement 23, and 10 ‘Strongly agree’ and 19 ‘Agree’ answers for statement 24. As such, the NNSs widely support my assumption that Vietnamese people appreciate their personal well beings, spiritual or material or both, more than institutional/public benefits. Indeed, a former Minister in the Vietnamese parliament once referred to the problem at a National Assembly conference as the ‘envelope’ culture³².

Statement 25 was designed on the assumption that hierarchical relationship is the backbone of Vietnamese society. Hierarchy is realised in four out of five basic Confucian relationships (see section 2.2.4). In each of these four relationships, the junior person must respect the senior person, and the senior person tends to impose his or her opinion on the junior. For example, one of the strategies leaders often use is to exercise their power over their employees, staff, or colleagues under their leadership. Statement 25 was designed on the belief that Vietnamese people who have a leadership role (e.g., a director, a dean etc.) tend to explicitly display their power over their staff. The 31 positive responses (including 23 ‘Agrees’ and 8 ‘Strongly agrees’) to this statement demonstrate that the NNSs are familiar with this type of leadership behaviour.

10.3.2.6. Strategies

³² Traditionally, Vietnamese people have a common practice of offering money, which is often put in an envelope, to another person as a gift on special occasions. This way of offering has recently widely been employed to bribery, and the term ‘envelope’ culture is adopted to denote this infamous practice.

This category consists of 10 statements and accordingly its theoretical mean is 30 (= 10 x 3). As can be seen in the following table, only 5 NNSs (11.6%) have their score equal to or below this theoretical mean score.

Table 10.3.2. 11

| Strategies scores | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|-------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent | |
| Valid | 26 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| | 29 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 7.0 |
| | 30 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 11.6 |
| | 31 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 16.3 |
| | 32 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 20.9 |
| | 35 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 23.3 |
| | 36 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 32.6 |
| | 37 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 37.2 |
| | 38 | 7 | 16.3 | 16.3 | 53.5 |
| | 39 | 5 | 11.6 | 11.6 | 65.1 |
| | 40 | 5 | 11.6 | 11.6 | 76.7 |
| | 41 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 81.4 |
| | 42 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 86.0 |
| | 43 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 90.7 |
| | 44 | 3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 97.7 |
| | 46 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 43 | 100.0 | 100.0 | | |

88.4% of the respondents having their scores higher than the theoretical mean score demonstrate that in general the NNSs agree with the categorical assumption of Strategies that Vietnamese people are rather indirect, implicit, convert, and vague. This interpretation can be further illustrated in the following table.

Table 10.3.2. 12

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|-----|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| S26 | 2 | | 5 | 21 | 15 | 43 |
| S27 | | 1 | 7 | 22 | 13 | 43 |
| S28 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 19 | 12 | 43 |
| S29 | | 4 | 12 | 20 | 7 | 43 |
| S30 | | 8 | 3 | 29 | 3 | 43 |
| S31 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 25 | 4 | 43 |
| S32 | 1 | 1 | 16 | 18 | 7 | 43 |
| S33 | | 6 | 15 | 14 | 8 | 43 |
| S34 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 21 | 5 | 43 |
| S35 | | 3 | 8 | 23 | 9 | 43 |

The table shows that only a small number of participants, ranging from 1 (statement 27) to 9 (statement 34), denied the individual assumptions in the category of Strategies. It is

noticeable that positive responses to statements 26, 27, 28 far outnumber negative responses not only because of the number of people who agreed (21, 22, 19 respectively) but also the big number of those who strongly agreed (15, 13, 12 respectively). Together with statements 11, 17, and 22, these 3 statements are among the only 6 in the questionnaire that received more than 10 strong agreements. These figures show that most NNSs strongly support the assumption that Vietnamese people do not refuse in a direct and explicit way (statements 26, 27); and thus, such expressions as ‘OK, let me see’, ‘I’ll have a look’, or ‘I’ll consider it’ should not be considered as a promise that constrains them from doing those things, but very likely to be refusals. This strong support further strengthens the findings in studies 1 and 2 and what has been written in literature. In particular, it proves that Hoàng’s narrative about the general director’s vague refusal (see section 7.8.1) is common in contemporary Vietnamese society.

Statement 28 about unreal ritual strategy, which was designed based on the literature (e.g., C. M. Trần, 2005c) and my observation, also gained many supporting responses (12 ‘Strongly agrees’ and 19 ‘Agrees’). As presented in section 3.3.3, ritual refusals are unreal refusals often performed as a realisation of politeness rituals. Literature shows Vietnamese people tend to refuse an offer once or twice before accepting it, and that this strategic refusal is expected in society and is a preferred response to gift offering (Hua et al., 2000).

The remaining statements (except statement 32) were designed for the assumption that the Vietnamese see refusing as very face-threatening so they try to avoid hurting their interlocutors by a number of strategies such as mitigating with delay or long explanations (statements 29, 31), hiding their true feelings (statement 30), lacking sufficient eye contacts (statement 33), showing regret (statement 34), and giving indefinite promises (statement 35). All these statements also receive high percentage of agreement (ranging from 22 for statement 33 to 32 for statement 30), which proves that the NNSs tend to support the assumption expressed by each of those statements. However, it is also worth mentioning that the numbers of respondents chose ‘Not sure’ for statements 29, 33 were relatively high with 12 and 15 respectively. These figures demonstrate that the refusing strategies as expressed in these two statements (i.e., using mitigating expressions or delay and lacking sufficient eye contact) may not be common enough for the NNSs to encounter.

Statement 32 was designed to examine the contested nature of Vietnamese culture; that is, whereas most of them tend to avoid hurting their co-conversants, many others can be rather direct or even rude (Grace Chye Lay Chew, 2011) with their interlocutors of equal or lower status. This assumption is also supported by the NNSs. However, that 16 respondents were not sure about it means that the assumption given by this statement might not be very popular in the present Vietnam.

10.3.2.7. General perceptions, attitudes and evaluation.

Similar to the construct of Strategies, this final category also consists of 10 statements. However, as we have mentioned in section 10.3, statements 36 and 39 were not included here for analysis due to their dual meaning.

The statements were designed to get to know the NNSs' personal perceptions, attitudes and evaluations of Vietnamese refusing. In general, I assumed that NNSs would feel surprised and annoyed with the way Vietnamese people refuse; this assumption is based on my own experience and observation since I frequently have contacts with NNSs in my institution.

Table 10.3.2. 13

| Perceptions, attitudes and evaluation scores | | | | | |
|--|----|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | 18 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| | 21 | 3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 9.3 |
| | 22 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 11.6 |
| | 24 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 20.9 |
| | 25 | 4 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 30.2 |
| | 26 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 34.9 |
| | 27 | 5 | 11.6 | 11.6 | 46.5 |
| | 29 | 6 | 14.0 | 14.0 | 60.5 |
| | 30 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 65.1 |
| | 31 | 5 | 11.6 | 11.6 | 76.7 |
| | 32 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 81.4 |
| | 33 | 2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 86.0 |
| | 34 | 3 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 93.0 |
| | 35 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 95.3 |
| | 36 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 97.7 |
| | 37 | 1 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | | 43 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 10.3.2.13 above shows that 20.9% of the NNSs (9 respondents) had their scores of 24 (the theoretical mean score) or below which means that in general they did not agree with this categorical assumption that the NNSs would feel surprised and annoyed with

Vietnamese refusing. The remaining 79.1% of them feel surprised and annoyed with the Vietnamese refusing.

Table 10.3.2.14 below shows a more detailed frequency for each statement in this final category.

Table 10.3.2. 14

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|-----|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| S37 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 17 | 3 | 43 |
| S38 | 1 | 5 | 14 | 17 | 6 | 43 |
| S40 | | 5 | 14 | 23 | 1 | 43 |
| S41 | 1 | 4 | 12 | 21 | 5 | 43 |
| S42 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 27 | 2 | 43 |
| S43 | 1 | 8 | 12 | 13 | 9 | 43 |
| S44 | | 4 | 17 | 18 | 4 | 43 |
| S45 | | 3 | 12 | 19 | 9 | 43 |

In general, more NNSs support than reject the individual assumption expressed in each of the 8 statements. As can be seen in the table, all the statements received 20 or above positive responses and less than 10 negative responses. However, the numbers of the NNSs who chose 'Not sure' were not small. In fact, all the statements received more than 10 neutral responses, which results in relatively high percentage of non-supporting (i.e., negative and neutral) responses. For example, whereas 20 respondents were in favour of statement 37, 23 of them did not support it. This means that although Vietnamese people are indirect, implicit, and vague, only less than half of the NNSs find it hard to recognise whether they are refusing or accepting. This corresponds to the NNSs' opinion to statement 38 which received 23 positive and 20 non-positive opinions. In other words, although more NNSs agreed that they must rely on both the refuser's words and behaviour, those who did not think so (i.e., they may think they just need to rely on the refuser's words only) take nearly half of the respondents.

With regards to statement 40, which was designed to investigate the NNSs' understanding of the so-called unreal refusal, slightly more respondents (24) support it though the number of 'neutral' NNSs remains the same as for statements 37 and 38. These figures demonstrate that although unreal refusing does exist, it is no longer popular to a relatively big number of respondents (14).

The assumption expressed in statement 41, i.e., the NNSs may dislike a reluctant acceptance, is supported by the respondents though the percentage is not very high (with

26 positives responses) since there are still 5 respondents disagreeing with it and 12 people giving neutral responses.

Among the 8 statements in this category, statement 42 has the highest number (29) of supporting responses and the lowest numbers of non-supporting answers (including 'Not sure'). As such, the NNSs fairly widely agree with the assumption that Vietnamese people think that not to refuse explicitly is a politeness strategy. However, the NNSs also agree with the assumption that sometimes Vietnamese people are quite direct and even rude to lower status interlocutors (statement 43). Although those who support this statement do not highly outnumber those who do not (22 vs. 21), with 9 'Strongly agree' responses, it can be said that this assumption is relatively highly supported by the NNSs.

With regards to the assumption that Vietnamese people's decision to refuse or accept tend to be affected by their interpersonal relations rather than by the benefit or advantage that the request/advice can bring about (statement 44), the NNSs' responses mainly fell between 'Not sure' and 'Agree' options with 17 and 18 for each respectively. The remaining respondents were divided into two equal groups (4 members each) of 'Disagree' and 'Strongly agree'. With 22 positive responses, it can be said that the NNSs generally agree that Vietnamese people tend to be affected more by their interpersonal relations than by the benefits or well-being that the request/advice may bring about. However, with 17 'Not sure' responses' the NNSs' support is not very strong. Among the 8 statements in this final heading, statement 44 received the biggest number of neutral responses, which shows that its assumption is not very widely supported by NNSs.

Finally, statement 45 was built up with the assumption that Vietnamese people want to get to know about their interlocutors before they decide to refuse or accept their proposal or request. Like statement 43, this one gained 9 'Strongly agree' responses, and together with 19 'Agree' answers, this statement received 28 favourable opinions, a fairly high percentage. As such, the NNSs widely support the assumption that Vietnamese people tend to get to know the interlocutor's personal and professional information before they decide whether to accept or refuse his or her request or proposal.

10.4 Discussion, summary and conclusion

Chapter 10 presents the results of a quantitative study conducted to answer the third research question namely ‘How do non-native speakers of Vietnamese (NNSs) perceive, interpret and react to Vietnamese people’s refusing?’ The answer to this question is used to complement to the findings of the two initial qualitative studies.

As discussed in the introduction, although this study draws on quantitative tools of analysis, it not only reports the general tendency of the results (which a quantitative study often uses for generalisation), but also focuses on prominent and notable features which may not be in accordance with the general tendency. As such, the chapter discusses both the overall results as well as the results related to specific assumptions.

In terms of overall outcomes, the participating NNSs generally agree with the Assumption (capital letter), which was set out based on the findings of the first two studies, on the literature and on the researcher’s own observation, that Vietnamese people are in general collectivistic, patriarchal, hierarchical, indirect, implicit and harmonious. As such, the results of this study generally support the findings of first two studies.

Each of the seven categories in the questionnaire is also generally supported by the NNSs. However, when it comes to individual statements, differences can be found in the respondents’ perception, attitude and evaluation. The following paragraph will give some remarks on two opposing types of assumptions: one being most highly supported by the NNSs and one being still debatable.

10.4.1 Cultural affordances highly supported by NNSs

The assumptions that are most highly supported by the NNSs refer to cultural affordances namely ‘woman’s responsibilities’ (statement 11), ‘patriarchy’ (statement 17), ‘bribery and corruption’ (statement 22, 23), ‘harmony’ (statement 13), ‘indirectness, implicitness, and vagueness’ (statement 26, 27), ‘hierarchical relationships’ (statement 25), and ‘politeness rituals’ (statement 28). These affordances are typical of Vietnamese culture.

This high percentage of the NNSs’ support affirms the findings from study 1 and study 2 (see chapters 7, 8 and 9). It also further confirms what has been written in literature. For example, the high percentage of favourable responses to statements 13, 26, and 27 further

strengthens what Chew (2005) claims in her article when she discusses about the use of ‘Được’ (Okay, can, possible):

In Vietnam, as in some East Asia countries, the natural way to exercise tact in situations likely to disappoint or offend hearers is to manoeuvre replies crabwise. The shared meaning of ‘Được’s [Can, okay, possible] tentativeness enables it to fulfil emotional and emotive communications by way of establishing socio-pragmatic goodwill, i.e., achieving ‘tact’. [Thus saying] ‘Sorry, I don’t know’ would be offensive, widened ‘the distance’ in the relationship and [perceivably] immediate soured the deal. (pp. 245-246)

Similarly, ritual (or unreal) refusal has also been widely discussed in literature (e.g., C. M. Trần, 2005c). It is not only a Vietnamese cultural value, but also a shared heritage among many Asian countries such as China, Korea, Thailand and others. In Chinese culture for example Hua et al. (2000) pointed out ritual refusal is the preferred response to gift offering:

Preferred responses are unmarked - they occur as structurally simple turns, whereas dispreferred responses are marked by components of delay and various kinds of structural complexity. This structural characterisation of preference organisation in conversation allows for the possibility that in some linguistic cultures, negative responses - such as the declination to invitation or offer - may be 'preferred' in the sense that they are produced without any structural complexity. Analysis of our data corpus suggests that this is indeed what happens in the Chinese culture, where an initial declination to a gift offer is the preferred response, while an acceptance is generally dispreferred. (p. 94)

The high percentage results also demonstrate that those cultural values (although perhaps ‘bribery and corruption’ may not be considered a cultural value) are well-known and highly recognisable to people from other countries that both have similar or different cultural values to Vietnamese culture.

10.4.2 Cultural affordances still debatable

However, there are still some practices where debate remains as to whether or not they are typical in Vietnamese culture. Although there are more NNSs participants who acknowledge the existence of these practices than those who do not, the difference between them is not so significant that they could be regarded as typical of the current Vietnamese society. In other words, the practices may occur in some places but not others, more in the past but less at present, or within one group of people but not in others. Those practices (or affordances as the term we have been using in the thesis) refer to the need to know

someone in advance (statement 1), close relationships (statement 5), the role of the head of a clan (statement 10), doctor's responsibility (statement 12), and the difference between urban and rural people (statement 19).

In conclusion, the analyses of the individual statements reveal the potential for the notion of culture to be contested. As such, groups within a culture may have different or even opposite interpretations of cultural norms and values (as can be seen in chapter 7). As stated, the conventionalised and 'conservative' norms which are often determined by a group of governing cultural authorities may not necessarily provide adequate explanation for the varied practices in real life. If people within a culture have different interpretations of certain values, it is very likely that NNSs will also have different, if not contradictory, perceptions of those values. Thus, aside from the cultural values and pragmatic strategies easily recognised by the respondents, many others remain controversial.

Therefore, the aim in conducting this small-scale quantitative study was not to deliver generalisable findings to the extent that all cultural values and practices conveyed in the questionnaire are typical and unique to Vietnamese culture. In fact, some are typical, but many others are not necessarily so. Nor was it the intention to deliver a conclusion that all NNSs have the same perceptions, attitudes, and evaluations of the values and practices. Rather, the intention was to contribute another perspective related to participants' views of the cultural factors underlying Vietnamese refusing, and to examine the points of divergence among these views.

Chapter 11: Summary and conclusion

11.1 Introduction

This final chapter concludes the thesis by summarising how the research project answers each research question (section 11.2). The four research questions are to be dealt with one by one from sections 11.2.1 to 11.2.4. Then, this chapter provides some reflections on the methodology used in this research project (section 11.3), states the limitations and suggestions for further research (section 11.4), and presents the significance of the research project (section 11.5).

11.2 How the research project answers the research questions

In this section we are going to summarise the results of the three studies that deal with the first three research questions respectively. Then we will provide the findings of the overall study by answering question 4

11.2.1 Research question 1

What socio-cultural values condition and constrain Vietnamese refusing?

As we have mentioned in chapter 1, study 1 was designed to answer research question 1. The following sub-sections summarise the impact of socio-cultural affordances on Vietnamese refusing.

11.2.1.1 Collectivism

Analyses of the data from study 1 confirmed that collectivism remains a prominent feature of Vietnamese culture. The most important collective is the family or clan. Family members always think of their family and clan as a unit to which they must be attached to. They try to maintain the reputation of the family and to avoid being laughed at by neighbours. Therefore, their decision to refuse or accept is usually dependent on whether it will affect that reputation. As such, they may decide to sacrifice their own happiness for

the harmony of the whole family or clan, or the well-being of other family members. For example, as analysed in chapter 7 Thom's giving financial support to the higher-status relatives in her husband's clan is pursuant to the rules of the clan rather than to her own willingness. Similarly, Huyền's decision to get divorced is mainly because, apart from the responsibility of obeying her mother's request, she herself thought that she had to prevent her family (i.e., the one that includes her parents, herself and her younger brothers) from being broken. In doing so, she had to get divorced, which means that her own family (i.e., the one that consists of herself, her husband and her son) was broken.

As such, the fact that Vietnamese people are very family-oriented, which has been discussed in literature (e.g., H. L. Phan, 2006), is one of the major findings of this study, and it indicates that collectivism is still a major feature in contemporary Vietnamese culture .

11.2.1.2 Responsibility

Because family or clan is the most important collective in Vietnamese culture, taking certain responsibilities in relation to one's family or clan is a prominent cultural value. The analyses of Thom's and Huyền's stories in chapter 7 revealed there is still a cultural expectation for children to obey their parents and assist their relatives.

However, it also emerges that children's responsibilities have undergone significant changes in contemporary Vietnamese society. For example, although the culturally grounded expectation of woman's self-sacrifice was shown to be well-known, there are exceptions to this expectation. For example, the responsibility to give financial help to one's senior relatives is considered as an obligation in some regions, but more a matter of trust in others as documented by the contradictory arguments by Thom and the group of forest wardens.

11.2.1.3 Harmony

It may be said that living harmoniously is a human preference and thus some form of harmony is practiced in every culture and society. Certainly, how people perceive harmony and what strategies they use to obtain it varies across cultures. What is revealed from the analysis of the interviews in chapter 7 is that in Vietnamese culture there is a distinction

between genuine harmonious relationships and superficial face-to-face agreements. In other words, a Vietnamese person may be politic and harmonious in face-to-face interactions with friends, colleagues, or relatives, to maintain the harmony but not actually think well of them.

In order to maintain superficial harmony Vietnamese people may draw on a number of strategies in their refusing. The most frequently used strategy, especially when refusing to lend money, is telling lies. Interestingly, it emerges that the person who is refused can always recognise the lies, but because telling lies is so common they have to accept it as part and parcel of their life.

Another common strategy used by Vietnamese people to maintain superficial harmony when refusing is to give accepting-like, or non-committal, refusals. This is achieved by using such expressions as “Okay, let me see”, “I’ll have a look”, or “Okay, I’ll consider it”. It is interesting that many Vietnamese participants stated that by saying those expressions, the refusers are refusing tactfully.

11.2.1.4 Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a cultural value influenced by Confucianism (see also sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 for the role of men and women in Confucian society), and the fact that a Vietnamese man tend to show off his power over his wife is still rather common as discussed by a number of Vietnamese participants and as pointed out by some authors. Pham (2002), for example, writes:

In traditional Vietnamese society, and still in many parts of present-day Vietnam, husbands were masters in their families. They made all the important decisions and had great power over their wives. Women were supposed to obey their husbands in every situation. When guests came to visit or to dine, wives worked in the kitchen and were not allowed to eat at the same table with their husbands and their guests.

However, Vietnamese men’s wish to show off their power and what they really do in everyday practice are two different issues. In particular, there is a distinction between men’s purported beliefs and their practice in real life. Influenced by aspects of Western culture during the French colonisation, and as a result of feminist campaigns, Vietnamese men are more willing to help their wives with the housework or to involve them in discussions about important family issues. However, because Confucian teachings have

been embedded in their minds for long, they still feel that it is a loss of face to be seen as not having power over their wife.

11.2.1.5 Trust

The analyses of trust and mistrust in chapter 7 highlighted that trust is something rare in contemporary Vietnamese society and that the notion of trust has changed greatly. First, many native speakers participating in study 1 revealed that trust is important to them, but they believed many people in Vietnamese society are untrustworthy. Social problems such as drug addiction, bankruptcy, and unemployment contribute greatly to the loss of trust. Through my observations as a member in Vietnamese society, many Vietnamese families have members either addicted to drugs or unemployed, and as a result they lose the trust of their relatives and friends. For example, the forest wardens argued that they would not lend money to their higher ranked relatives if those people were always drunk, indulging in debauchery, or gambling. Similarly, some school teachers stated that they could only lend money to their boss if s/he is financially fair. This careful consideration demonstrates that many Vietnamese people may have lost money after lending it to one of those people.

Second, the notion of trust has also been undervalued by many Vietnamese people. That is, they do not always consider trust as a serious matter to be respected. The fact that a woman can borrow money several times, but fail to repay it on time as she has promised is no longer unusual in Vietnamese society. The practice of promise-breaking has also become more common due to the tolerance of the people who lend money. The story told by a secondary school teacher who lent money to her female colleague (see section 7.6.1) demonstrated that she contributed to her colleague's promise-breaking because she was not strict towards her right at the beginning to make her repay the money.

11.2.1.6 Corruption

A significant problem in contemporary Vietnamese society is corruption. The problem appears to be much more serious than that in the past (about 20 years ago) as stated by Huynh (see section 7.8.3). This problem may result from weak legal infrastructure, financial unpredictability, and conflicting and negative bureaucratic decision-making. The revised law on anti-corruption passed by the National Assembly in December 2012 indicated the Government's strong will to fight against corruption. However, it remains a

serious problem that presents obstacles to the economic development of Vietnam as well as to investment and business operations.

Corruption as a social problem in Vietnam was acknowledged by more than half of the 30 native speakers in study 1 (e.g., Huỳnh, the forest wardens, and many others whose interviews, for reasons of space, were not able to be included in chapter 7 for analysis). Their opinions revealed that corruption is very likely the reason for a civil servant or a person who has power to refuse a request (e.g., a proposal, a plan etc.). In addition, many Vietnamese people believe that in order to avoid being refused they have to bribe certain personnel in advance, or they have to ‘flatter’ their boss by bribing him or her in order to gain his or her priority.

11.2.2. Research question 2

How is Vietnamese refusing manifested in talk-in-interaction?

Research question 2 was dealt with by study 2 the results of which were discussed in chapter 8 and 9. The following sub-sections give a summary of how refusals and related speech acts were actually performed in talk-in-interaction as represented in the scripted film data.

11.2.2.1 Long process of negotiation and complex nexus of practice

The analyses of two stories in chapters 8 and 9 also reveal that refusing, especially related to high-stakes issues such as getting divorced, often requires a long process of negotiation with a number of interactions/conversations between the people involved. The story in chapter 8 contains 5 conversations (including 1 conversation not analysed in chapter 8) and the story in chapter 9 consists of even more (20 conversations 6 of which were analysed in chapter 9). That high-stakes refusing often occurs in a long process of negotiation is difficult to demonstrate if we do not analyse filmic data, as authentic examples are virtually impossible to obtain.

During the long process of negotiation, the decision of refusing (or requesting) may be changed partly because refusing, as in the two stories, is not a private matter. In other words, the refusers may be influenced by other family members, and they may change their decision. They may want to refuse at first but decide to accept in the end, or vice versa. For

example, Dương in chapter 8 decides to get divorced at first, but then, after her mother dies, she cancels her decision to fulfill her responsibility of following her mother's advice/request. On the other hand, Hằng in chapter 9 strongly requests her mother and Ngô to stop their love affair, but after a long process of negotiations and arguments, she seems to accept it.

Due to its face-threatening nature, the speech act of refusing also involves a complex nexus of practice in which discourse is considered as "a kind of social action [i.e., refusing] as well as ... a component of social action" (Scollon, 2001, p. 6). In fact, in order to avoid conflict and humiliation, the refuser usually does other things (i.e., practices), linguistically, paralinguistically, and/or non-linguistically. For example, when Dương refuses her mother (see section 8.3), she does a number of actions: she shakes her head, glances at her mother to seek for her sympathy, makes a request back to her mother ('Please say no more, mum'), and states the reason for her refusal.

The nexus of practice becomes even more complex when we explore refusing in the whole interaction in which it is only the second pair part. As I have emphasized several times in this thesis, refusing is by nature the second pair part and thus we cannot not fully understand it if we single it out from the whole interaction. Therefore, the nexus of refusing must include the nexus of advising or requesting which make the whole nexus of the practice really complicated. For example, Mai also makes a number of actions when she gives Dương her advice (see section 8.3): she prepares the souvenirs, tells a long story, gazes at Dương and rubs her shoulder when producing an utterance of advice. The complex nexus of the practice of refusing can also be seen in every conversation under analyses in chapters 8 and 9.

11.2.2.2 Varied modes of refusing

The complex nexus of refusing means that refusing in talk-in-interaction is often performed via different communicational modes, referred to as multimodality, which fall into three categories namely linguistic, paralinguistic, and non-linguistic.

Linguistic tools of communication refer to the use of language in refusing. They are usually classified into types of semantic formulae (see Beebe et al., 1990). In addition, the characters in the TV series drew on semantic formulas not listed in Beebe et al. (1990)

such as requesting back to the requester. That is, the refuser requests the requester not to make such a request or not to behave in that way (e.g., *Thôi mẹ ạ* - Please say no more, mum, *Con xin mẹ, mẹ đừng như thế nữa* - I beg you, mum, don't be like that).

Paralinguistic, or prosodic, features also play a very important role in conveying the message of refusing and related speech acts. Analyses in chapter 8 and 9 show that the most prominent prosodic features are the pitch, the speed, and stress with loudness of volume.

A number of non-linguistic modes of communication were also documented in chapters 8 and 9 such as *crying, silence, hugging, gaze, distance, holding one's hand, facial expressions, posture, gaze, stare, material objects, gesture, and layout of the setting*. It is worth noting that one single communication tool can perform a refusal, but it is rarely used independently; rather, different modes are often used in combination to express a message of refusing. When several modes are used, they are often performed concurrently.

11.2.2.3 Indirectness

As has been discussed in chapter 3 (section 3.3.3), indirectness refers to the performance of a speech act via another speech act. For example, a refusal can be performed by the linguistic form of a disagreement or a complaint etc. Chapters 8 and 9 have documented that Vietnamese refusing is rather indirect. The following semantic formulae, some of which are classified by Beebe et al (1990), are some examples of indirect refusals or parts of refusals occurring in the data analysed in these two chapters:

- Statement of regret + reason: *Con xin lỗi, nhưng con phải bảo vệ hạnh phúc gia đình mình mẹ ạ, con phải giữ gìn sự trong sạch cho mẹ mẹ ạ* (I'm sorry, but I have to protect our happiness, I have to maintain your virtue)
- Request back + explanation + seek for empathy: *Thôi mẹ ạ. Con thấy mình bị tổn thương. Chắc mẹ cũng hiểu, vết thương lớn nhất và cũng là vết thương khó lành nhất là nỗi đau tâm hồn* (Please say no more. I feel really hurt. You must understand the worst pain and also the most difficult to heal is the pain in one's soul)
- Exclamation: *Mẹ!* (Mum!), *Kìa mẹ!* (Oh mum!)
- Begging: *Con xin mẹ; mẹ đừng như thế nữa!* (I beg you; please don't be like that!)

- Criticise the requester (e.g., *Cô là con cũng là phụ nữ nhưng không bao giờ cô hiểu cho mẹ cô cả* - You are her daughter and also a woman, but you've never tried to understand her.)
- Self-defence (e.g., *Mẹ chưa làm điều gì xấu đâu* – I have never done anything bad)
- Blame: *Đúng là mẹ đẻ ra con, mẹ nuôi con khôn lớn, nhưng con không hề hiểu mẹ, con cũng chưa từng nghĩ cho mẹ* (I have given birth to you and brought you up, but you never understand me and think for me).
- Insult: *Nhìn thì cũng mặt hoa da phấn đấy nhưng tâm địa thì ác hơn quỷ dữ* (You look rather beautiful but you have an evil mind).
- Statement of reason: *Mẹ bận lắm* (I'm very busy).
- Conditional question: *Nếu mẹ chọn bác Ngô?* (What if I choose Mr. Ngô?)

These acts of refusing are so indirect that sometimes they are not recognised as refusals if they are not analyzed in the context of the whole story.

11.2.2.4 Impoliteness strategies

Impoliteness strategies may also be realised by linguistic, paralinguistic and non-linguistic forms. Linguistic impoliteness are realised by each of the super-strategies discussed in Culpeper (1996, 2005), and Bousfield (2008). In the following summary, most of the linguistic impoliteness strategies are performed in the refusing process. However, as I have stated earlier, refusing strategies are greatly dependent on the strategies of the initial speech acts such as requesting, protesting, or advising. Thus, impoliteness strategies employed in those initial actions are also listed (for example sarcasm or mock impoliteness, and withholding politeness). They include:

- Bald on record impoliteness in the form of a direct refusal with no politeness strategies applied (e.g., *Tôi và mẹ cô sẽ lấy nhau* – I and your mother will get married). The English translation of the latter may not reveal its impoliteness, but it is the choice of self and second person reference *tôi* and *cô* that makes this utterance face-threatening.
- Positive impoliteness (including *ignore/snub the other, disassociate the other, be disinterested, use inappropriate identity marker, use taboo words*)

- Negative impoliteness (including *frighten, condescend, scorn, invade the other's space, hinder/block the other*)
- Sarcasm or mock politeness (e.g., *Mẹ thật vĩ đại* – You are such a great person – in conversation 20, chapter 9)
- Withholding politeness (e.g., Not saying good bye to a senior person as socially expected – in conversation 1, chapter 9)

Other impoliteness strategies were also found in the data that were not presented in the frameworks developed by Culpeper (1996, 2005), or Bousfield (2008). They are called *đá thủng đụng nia* (which usually refers to the act of breaking things) and *giận cá chém thớt* (which usually refers to scolding the third party). All the linguistic impoliteness strategies were performed in combination with paralinguistic features such as stress, and non-linguistic modes of communication such as posture, gesture, facial expression, stares, throwing the bag so on and so forth.

11.2.3. Research question 3

How do non-native speakers of Vietnamese perceive, interpret, and react to Vietnamese refusing?

This research question is dealt with by study 3, the results of which have been displayed in chapter 10. The question consists of three components namely ‘How NNSs perceive Vietnamese refusing’, ‘How they interpret it’ and ‘How they react to it’ each of which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

With regards to their perceptions, the results of study 3 show that NNSs have similar perceptions of Vietnamese refusing as native speakers have. In general, NNSs concede that Vietnamese refusing is rather indirect, implicit, and vague especially when it is performed in response to a higher-ranked or unfamiliar interlocutor, or when the refuser has a purpose related to corruption. Therefore, almost all NNSs perceive that such utterances as ‘OK let me see, I’ll have a look’ or ‘OK I’ll consider it’ are refusals. On the contrary, NNSs also understand that Vietnamese people are also quite direct with lower-ranked addressees.

The results of study 3 also show most NNSs can discern that once Vietnamese people display some delay, make some long explanations, or give indefinite promises, they are very likely to refuse. However, some of these refusing strategies (e.g., using mitigating expressions and lacking sufficient eye contacts) are not perceived by NNSs as common although they do exist.

The analyses of the questionnaire data also reveal that a big number of NNSs do not see a big difference between urban and rural people, which might be explained by the fact that more and more people from rural areas have become city dwellers and have been adapted to the life style in the city. Similarly, many NNSs do not perceive the difference between people at work and at home setting in terms of their refusing strategies. Their perceptions of the ways these groups of people refuse demonstrate that there exist some differences but they are beyond the knowledge of a big number of NNSs.

Some other points are also beyond many NNSs' pragmatic knowledge since they did not receive the support of the majority of the NNSs although they were noted by native speakers. These points include the need to know the interlocutor in advance or to have a close relationship with the interlocutor, the role of the head of a clan, and the irresponsibility of a doctor. In addition, according to the NNSs' perception, ritual refusing, i.e., refusing for the sake of politeness, does exist but not very popular in contemporary Vietnamese society.

With regards to how NNSs interpret Vietnamese refusing, the question is answered by documenting how they understand the underlying socio-cultural affordances. First, with the indirect, implicit and vague refusals, most NNSs can infer that they are performed by Vietnamese people for the sake of maintaining personal harmony, avoiding conflicts and humiliations, and requiring some sort of bribery. Thus, most NNSs can understand that if a Vietnamese person says 'OK, let me see, I'll have a look', or 'OK, I'll consider it' and then does nothing, these utterances are in fact the so-called tactful refusals (tactful in the sense that they can help the refuser avoid face-to-face conflicts), or they are used to send the interlocutor the message that further steps (very likely a bribery) is needed. This conclusion is documented by the analyses of NNSs' responses to statements 22-24 (about bribery and corruption), which received very high percentage of agreement.

Second, NNSs can also deduce that Vietnamese refusing is constrained and conditioned by different socio-cultural affordances depending on different contexts of situation. For instance, many refusals are made, especially by a woman to her husband, due to some sort of responsibility in her family she has to fulfil. In another context, NNSs can also figure out the patriarchal element underpinning a husband's refusal to his wife, or they can infer the impact of hierarchy and collectivism when a Vietnamese person tends not to refuse his or her higher-ranked relative.

Finally, in terms of how NNSs react to Vietnamese refusing, it is interesting that although they perceive it is often performed indirectly, implicitly, and vaguely, which may cause difficulty for some NNSs to understand, many of them can still recognise whether an action or a series of actions (linguistic, paralinguistic, and non-linguistic) is a refusal or an acceptance. In other words, many NNSs do not feel annoyed with Vietnamese refusing.

11.2.4. Research question 4

How can the results of this overall study contribute to describing, interpreting and explaining interaction among Vietnamese people?

If the first three questions were answered by the three studies separately, RQ4 can be dealt with in a holistic way, by the results of the overall research project. As such, the results of the three studies will be considered together in order to explore the shared findings (see figure 11.1 below). The most important finding has to do with the influence of a number of sociocultural affordances on refusing. As stated in section 1.2.2 the focus of this research project is the sociopragmatic aspects of refusing rather than the pragmalinguistic ones; that is, its objective is to find out the sociocultural affordances underpinning Vietnamese refusing rather than the strategies and the actual performances of refusing (although I have also confirmed that in order to identify the sociocultural affordances, it has to investigate those strategies and actual performances). Therefore, those sociocultural affordances that were documented in the three sets of data as having great influence on Vietnamese refusing would be concluded as being prominent in contemporary Vietnamese society. In contrast, some sociocultural values would be regarded as existing in real life but not being salient if they were not salient in any of the three sets of data. Also, there are some sociocultural norms that were prominent in the past but no longer so at present.

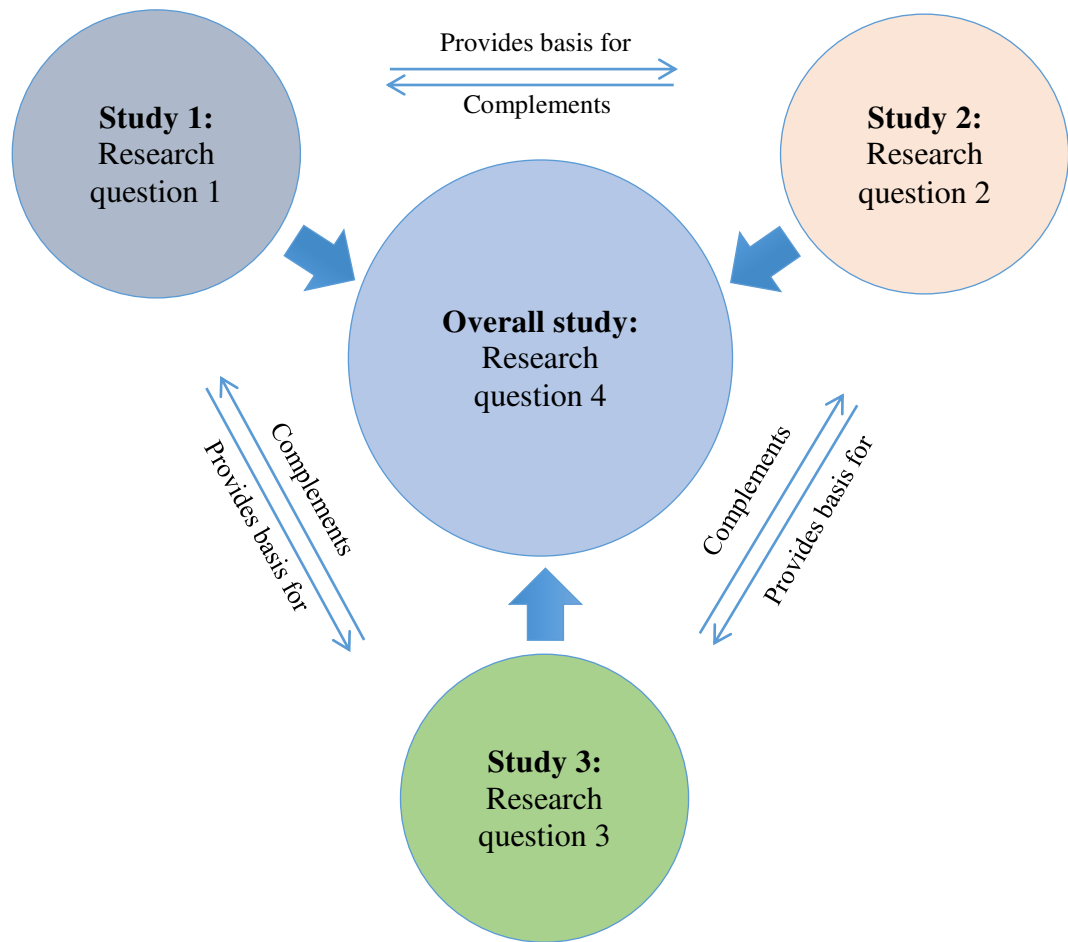


Figure 11. 1 The relationships among the three studies

Although real interactions are only explored in the study of movie data, the whole research project can still be considered as interaction-oriented because the other two studies are also interaction-based in the sense that the data are based on real interactions participants have already experienced in their life. Explored in interaction, the shared results of the three studies reveal that Vietnamese refusing in particular and speech acts in general are influenced by a number of cultural affordances. The most prominent one is women's responsibility to fulfil their duty in their family. The analyses of data in all the three studies show that Vietnamese women tend to obey their parents to the extent that they can sacrifice their own happiness for the well-being of their parents and siblings. Other sociocultural affordances such as patriarchy in the family, bribery and corruption, and the need to maintain superficial harmony are also influential in Vietnamese refusing.

In contrast, some sociocultural values are no longer prominent though they do exist in some region or in some type of collective. The responsibility of the head of a clan is an example. The fact that the head of a clan need to take responsibility to give financial support to his higher-ranked relatives seem to exist only in some traditional rural areas since it does not get high support from not only NNSs in study 3 but also Vietnamese participants in study 1. Also, the practice of ritual/unreal refusal has become more and more blurred in the present Vietnam.

Exploring Vietnamese refusing in interaction, we could also conclude that sociocultural values can be perceived differently or even contradictorily by different people. Women's responsibility is an example. Though it is documented in the three sets of data that a daughter may sacrifice her happiness for the well-being of her family, the fact that Hằng in chapter 9 is a selfish, conservative, and irresponsible daughter is a vivid example of this conclusion. In the same vein, the need to satisfy one's boss in order to receive some sort of privilege is debatable. There are contradictory viewpoints about this issue even by participants in study 1. Whereas the forest wardens and some others argued that it is usually the case, some school teachers did not think so.

The second important finding of exploring refusing in interaction is that refusing in particular and speech acts in general can be realised indirectly via the sematic formulae of other speech acts. Thus, refusing can be performed by criticising, begging, insulting etc., which support a number of scientists' (e.g., Mey, 1993, Archer et al, 2012) point of view that a speech act can be performed indirectly by means of other speech acts. Thus, this finding could bridge the gap in the literature of speech act studies which mainly focus on investigating the semantic formulae of a speech act at the expense of exploring the hidden message of an utterance under study.

Other important findings are drawn mainly from the study of real interactions in the TV series. The analyses of refusing in talks-in-interaction, especially high-stakes refusing as shown in the TV series, revealed a number of features not readily obtainable from non-interactional data such as DCTs or questionnaires. First, refusing often occurs in a complex nexus of practice and is usually performed via a number of practices including, but not limited to, the actions of vocalising words, moving hands, gazing, shaking heads so on and so forth. Even the initiating act is performed by a combination of different actions such as

telling a story and preparing the material objects. All the actions constitute the complex nexus of practice of the speech act of refusing.

Second, refusing is a long process of negotiation rather than just a product of linguistic action. In fact, refusals may be made several times in one interaction or be made several times across several interactions. This conclusion is evidenced not only in the TV series conversations, but also in interview data. During the process of negotiation, refusing may undergo changes in that a person may refuse at first, but may accept or agree in the end. The changes may be because of the increasing imposition or urgency of the initiating act, or because of the influence of a third party. Thus, it can be said that high-stakes refusing is not always a private, individual matter.

Third, drawing on CA to explore refusing in talk-in-interaction highlighted that the speech act both shape and renew the context. The way a person refuses (i.e., the words and other means of communication used) is influenced greatly by how the prior turn in the same conversation or in previous conversation is produced. In turn, the way of refusing renews the context and shapes the following turn. This feature of CA is well-documented in chapters 8 and 9. For example, the increasingly face-threatening degree of Hằng's impoliteness and impertinence (evidenced in chapter 9) results from the fact that Ngô and her mother keeps meeting each other, which means they refuse her by not engaging in what she requests. On the other hand, it also results in the increasing aggressiveness they pose on her. In fact, both Ngô and Nha are shown in the filmic data as feeling embarrassed at first, but later they become more and more determined in their counter-actions.

Fourth, the exploration of refusing in interaction enabled this research to demonstrate that language (often realised in the form of semantic formulas) is often "nestled and embedded within a wider semiotic frame" (Jewitt, 2009b, p. 2). As such, language is only one of many modes of communication, and modes other than language play an important role in conveying the message of refusing and related speech acts. In some specific moments non-linguistic modes such as silence or gaze even take on the primary role.

Finally, the analysis of refusing in interaction shows whether an action (linguistic, paralinguistic, non-linguistic, or a combination of those) is a refusal depends not only on the speaker's intention but also the hearer's interpretation. Many utterances, as well as

non-verbal actions, in the conversations analysed in chapter 8 and 9 may not be seen as refusals if we do not explore the addressee's reactions.

In conclusion, the findings of this overall research project show that Vietnamese refusing vividly reflects the contested nature of Vietnamese culture. Some traditional cultural values are still influential but some others may not be so. Also, some cultural values are perceived differently by different people or groups of people, and some have been changed in contemporary society. Another important point is that Vietnamese refusing is often performed indirectly by means of other actions and thus it must be investigated based on both the speaker's intention and the hearer's understanding. Also, Vietnamese refusing is often performed by a complexity of communication tools and in many circumstances, language plays only a minor role in conveying the message. Finally, it could be said that refusing itself, especially in high-stakes cases, is subject to change; that is, during the process of negotiation between people involved, a person may refuse at first but then decide to accept or vice versa.

11.3 Conclusion and reflection on methodology

11.3.1 Reflections on the multiperspectival approach

The MP approach employed in this research project maximised the study's ecological validity (Cicourel, 1992, 2007); that is, the viability and authenticity of the findings. Starting with an ethnography-assisted study to explore Vietnamese refusing in talk-in-interaction, this research project has affirmed that "data are congruent with systematic time samples of events and activities within local and organizational settings" (Cicourel, 2007, p. 734).

Furthermore, the MP approach has guaranteed good interrelation, or "organic links" (Layder, 1993, p. 8), between the macro and micro levels of analysis. Speech acts of refusing occurring in micro social settings such as the participant's family or company have been analysed on the basis of macro socio-cultural values. From this perspective the macro social facts emerged from micro routine refusing events of everyday life. The "organic links" between the macro sociocultural values and micro refusals are that the micro speech act of refusing may help to construct the macro issues such as collectivism, hierarchical relationships, or politeness norms. Thus, this research project has shown that

“the micro processes of everyday life as reflected in the situations and identities of the persons involved can only be understood properly when seen in conjunction with more macro features” (Layder, 1993, p. 10). In fact, refusing in a specific situation (the micro level) has been explained in conjunction with socio-cultural values in the way that neither of them is undervalued or overemphasised.

Finally, conducting a MP research project enabled the collection of data from different semiotic resources. As a result, intertextuality and interdiscursivity could be utilised. Each of the three sets of data is one type of text and discourse.

11.3.2 Reflection on mixed methods research

Based on the resources at the researcher’s disposal (Layder, 1993), study 3 – the quantitative study – was conducted. Although the study included a small sample, it is felt that it nonetheless enhances the validity of the research project findings. Conducting three studies has meant the whole project achieved more convincing ecological validity. In fact, the quantitative study made a significant contribution not only because it provided the researcher with another analytical “cut” (Layder, 1993, p. 108), but also because it helped to confirm some of the findings of the qualitative studies as well as challenge other findings. Indeed, the analysis of the quantitative data contributed to the conclusion that Vietnamese socio-cultural values are both static and dynamic.

In terms of the mixed methods design, this allowed the researcher to make use of critical realism (Danermark et al., 2002) and the MP approach (Candlin, 1997, 2006; Candlin & Crichton, 2011b, 2013b; Crichton, 2010) which focus on the association between ontology and methodology. Given that the speech act of refusing is perceived and performed in a variety of ways (i.e., the ontology), it may be explored via a multistrategic approach characterised by the use of ethnographic methods supported by quantitative analysis.

11.3.3 Reflection on the analyst’s perspective

In conducting this mixed methods multiperspectival research project on Vietnamese refusing, I have been able to implement my own *motivational relevancies* (Sarangi & Candlin, 2001). They include my background knowledge and interest in the research theme, and my understanding of the ontological assumptions and methodological

decisions. However, although I am a member of the culture under study, I have been “*trying to get analytic distance* on what’s close-at-hand” (Rampton et al., 2004, original emphasis) by aligning, not transforming, the analyst and participant perspectives.

I have also been able to explicate the “tacit interrelationship of micro- and macro-research” (Cicourel, 1981, p. 56). The speech act of refusing has been “guided by and linked to social theory [i.e., socio-cultural values] in accordance with the analyst’s prior knowledge and emergent understanding of the social setting under scrutiny” (Crichton, 2010, p. 25). My prior knowledge, part of which is presented in the review of Vietnamese culture, was used to explain my emergent understanding of refusing in specific situations

11.3.4 Reflections on analytical frameworks

As argued above, the analytical frameworks used in this research project are mutually complementary. Whereas *Narrative Analysis* incorporates ethnographic information and can expound the influence of social psychological factors on refusing on which pure CA does not rely, *Multimodal Interactional Analysis* can help the researcher to explore non-linguistic modes of communications. Similarly, if *Membership Categorisation Analysis* can help to identify how participants display their identity and status, *Participation Framework* can help to clarify how they make use of the specific role of in each speaking moment.

11.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research

Some limitations must be acknowledged. Although this research project conducted three studies, it was not possible to collect and analyse truly naturally-occurring data such as refusals happening in real life when the interlocutors were unaware they were being observed or recorded. To illustrate this point, let me repeat Labov’s (1972) observer paradox: “the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain these data by systematic observation” (Labov, 1972, p. 209).

The fact that no naturally-occurring data was collected is due both to the scope of this research and ethical constraints. As such, although the interviews and narratives in study 1 were treated as social practices in themselves, they contained metapragmatic commentaries

rather than actual refusals. In addition, although the conversations in the selected TV series were interactional and very close to natural data (Rose, 2001), they were nevertheless scripted.

Therefore, a suggestion for further research is to complement the findings of this research project with a study utilising naturally-occurring data. There are several ways to achieve this. Participant observation is the ideal method, but the development of the Internet and social network platforms now also facilitates the collection of natural data. ‘YouTube’ for example includes many authentic videos of real interactions of refusals, and as time goes by these are likely to increase in number and variety.

11.5 Significance of the research

Despite the limitations mentioned above, the present research project has made a not insignificant contribution to the field of pragmatics in general and Vietnamese speech act research in particular, as well as to research methodology. First, this research project provided readers with a detailed picture of Vietnamese culture realised in the performance of refusals and related speech acts by exploring the discursive practice of Vietnamese people from different perspectives. Previous studies on Vietnamese refusing focused more on pragmalinguistic elements (i.e., more on linguistic realisation) than on sociopragmatic elements (i.e., more on culture). The present research project bridges this gap however by providing a systematic discussion on the socio-cultural values underlying the speech act of Vietnamese refusing.

Second, although the present research includes elicited data due to the mixed methods multiperspectival approach, it advocates the need to elucidate “the total speech act in the total speech situation” (Austin, 1975, p. 148) by exploring refusing in talk-in-interaction. With this orientation it effectively demonstrated how refusing is negotiated in real and specific situations, which may not be achieved when using non-interactional methods.

Finally, the present research project has made a contribution to research methodology in Applied Linguistics by applying a multiperspectival approach to pragmatics research centring around refusing. This may serve to encourage the use of this approach in future studies and to encourage the emerging holistic context-centred research tradition.

References

- Abdolrezapour, P., & Vahid Dastjerdi, H. (2012). Examining mitigation in refusals: A cross-cultural study of Iranian and American speech communities. *Sociolinguistic Studies*, 6(3), 491-517.
- Al-Eryani, A. A. (2007). Refusal Strategies by Yemeni EFL Learners. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly*, 9(2), 19-34.
- Al-Issa, A. (1998). *Sociopragmatic transfer in the performance of refusals by Jordanian EFL learners: Evidence and motivating factors*. Unpublisheddoctoraldissertation. UniversityofPennsylvania, Pennsylvania.
- Al-Issa, A. (2003). Sociocultural transfer in L2 speech behaviors: Evidence and motivating factors. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27(581-601).
- Al-Kahtani, S. A. W. (2005). Refusals realizations in three different cultures: A speech act theoretically - based cross cultural study. *Journal of King Saud University - Language and Translation*, 18, 35-57.
- Al-Shalawi, H. G. (1997). *Refusal strategies in Saudi and American cultures*. UnpublishedM.A. thesis. Michigan State University, Lansing, MI.
- Allami, H., & Naeimi, A. (2011). A cross-linguistic study of refusals: An analysis of pragmatic competence development in Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43, 385–406.
- Antaki, C. (2011). *Applied conversation analysis: Intervention and change in institutional talk*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Archer, D., Aijmer, K., & Wichman, A. (2012). *Pragmatics: An advanced resource book for students*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge.
- Arundale, R. B. (1999). An alternative model and ideology of communication for an alternative to politeness theory. *Pragmatics*, 9(1), 119-153.
- Arundale, R. B. (2006). Face as relational and interactional: A communication framework for research on face, facework, and politeness. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 2, 193-216.
- Arundale, R. B. (2009). Face as emergent in interpersonal communication: an alternative to Goffman. In F. Bargiela-Chiappini & M. Haugh (Eds.), *Face, Communication and Social Interaction*. London/Oakville: Equinox.

- Arundale, R. B. (2010). Constituting face in conversation: Face, facework, and interactional achievement. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, 2078-2105.
- Atkinson, J. M., & Heritage, J. (Eds.). (1984). *Structure of social action: Studies in conversation analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Austin, J. L. (1975). *How to do things with words* (J. O. Urmson & M. Sbisà Eds. 2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ball, P., Gallois, C., & Callan, V. J. (1989). Language attitudes: Perspectives from social psychology. In P. Collins & D. Blair (Eds.), *Australian English: The language of a new society* (pp. 89-102). Brisbane: University of Queensland Press.
- Bamberg, M., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2008). Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis. *Text & Talk*, 28(3), 377-396.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Hartford, B. (1991). Saying "no" in English: Native and nonnative rejections. In L. Bouton & Y. Krachu (Eds.), *Pragmatics and Language Learning* (Vol. 2, pp. 41-57). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K., Nickels, E., & Rose, M. (2008). The influence of first language and level of development in the use of conventional expressions of thanking, apologizing, and refusing. In R. M. Bowles, S. P. Foote & R. Bhatt (Eds.), *Selected proceedings of the 2007 Second Language Research Forum* (pp. 113-130). Somerville, MA: Cascadia Proceedings Project.
- Bargiela-Chiappini, F. (2003). Face and Politeness: New insights for old concepts. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35(10-11), 1453-1469.
- Baxter, L. A., & Montgomery, B. M. (1996). *Relating: Dialogues and Dialectics*. New York: Guilford.
- Beckers, A. M. (1999). *How to say "no": A study of the refusal strategies of Americans and Germans*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Mississippi.
- Beebe, L. M., & Cummings, M. C. (1996). Natural speech act data versus written questionnaire data: How data collection method affects speech act performance. In S. M. Grass & J. Neu (Eds.), *Speech acts across culture*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Beebe, L. M., Takahashi, T., & Uliss-Weltz, R. (1990). Pragmatic Transfer in ESL Refusals. In R. C. Scarcella, E. S. Andersen & S. D. Krashen (Eds.), *Developing communicative competence in a second language*. New York: Newbury House Publishers.

- Bella, S. (2009). Invitations and politeness in Greek: The age variable. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 5, 243-271.
- Bella, S. (2011). Mitigation and politeness in Greek invitation refusals: Effects of length of residence in the target community and intensity of interaction on non-native speakers' performance. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43, 1718-1740.
- Bella, S. (2014). Developing the ability to refuse: A cross-sectional study of Greek FL refusals. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 61(0), 35-62.
- Benwell, B., & Stokoe, E. (2006). *Discourse and Identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Bercelli, F., Rossano, F., & Viaro, M. (2008). Different place, different action: Clients' personal narratives in psychotherapy. *Text & Talk*, 28(3), 283-305.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality*. New York: Doubleday.
- Bhaskar, R. (1998). Societies. In M. Archer, R. Bhaskar, A. Collier, T. Lawson & A. Norrie (Eds.), *Critical realism: Essentials readings*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1982). Learning to Say What You Mean in a Second Language: A Study of the Speech Act Performance of Learners of Hebrew as a Second Language. *Applied Linguistics*, 3(1), 29-50.
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1987). Indirectness and politeness in requests: Same or different? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11(2), 131-146.
- Blum-Kulka, S., House, J., & Kasper, G. (Eds.). (1989). *Cross-Cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies* (Vol. XXXI). Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Blum-Kulka, S., & Olshtain, E. (1984). Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns. *Applied Linguistics*, 5(3), 196-213.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bond, & Hwang. (1986). The social psychology of Chinese people. In M. H. Bond (Ed.), *The psychology of the Chinese people* (pp. 213-266). Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.
- Boothroyd, P., & Pham, X. N. (Eds.). (2000). *Socioeconomic renovation in Vietnam: The origin, evolution and impact of Doi Moi*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

- Bousfield, D. (2008). *Impoliteness in interaction*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Bousfield, D., & Locher, M. A. (Eds.). (2008). *Impoliteness in language*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Bresnahan, M. J., Ohashi, R., Liu, W. Y., Nebashi, R., & Liao, C. (1999). A comparison of response styles in Singapore and Taiwan. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 30, 342-358.
- Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bublitz, W., Jucker, A. H., & Schneider, K. P. (2013). Preface to the handbook series. In M. Sbisà & K. Turner (Eds.), *Pragmatics of speech actions* (Vol. 2). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Bửu, K. (1994). How to say 'You' in Vietnamese. In X. T. Nguyễn (Ed.), *Vietnamese studies in a multicultural world*. Melbourne: Brown Prior Anderson.
- Campillo, P. S., Safont-Jordà, M. P., & Codina-Espurz, V. (2009). Refusal strategies: A proposal from a sociopragmatic approach. *Revista Electrónica de Lingüística Aplicada*, 8, 139-150.
- Candlin, C. N. (1997). General Editor's Introduction. In B. L. Gunnarsson, P. Linell & B. Nordberg (Eds.), *The Construction of Professional Discourse*. London: Longman.
- Candlin, C. N. (2006). Accounting for interdiscursivity: Challenges to professional practice. In M. G. D. S. Giannoni (Ed.), *New trends in specialized discourse analysis*. Switzerland: Peter Lang.
- Candlin, C. N., & Crichton, J. (2011a). *Discourses of deficit*. Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan.
- Candlin, C. N., & Crichton, J. (2011b). Introduction *Discourses of Deficit*. London: Palgrave
- Candlin, C. N., & Crichton, J. (2012). Emergent themes and research challenges: Reconceptualising LSP. In P. Margrethe & J. Engberg (Eds.), *Current trends in LSP research: Aims and methods* (pp. 277-316). Berne, Switzerland: Peter Lang.
- Candlin, C. N., & Crichton, J. (2013a). From ontology to methodology: Exploring the discursive landscape of trust. In C. N. Candlin & J. Crichton (Eds.), *Discourses of trust*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Candlin, C. N., & Crichton, J. (Eds.). (2013b). *Discourses of trust*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Candlin, C. N., & Maley, Y. (1997). Intertextuality and interdiscursivity in the discourse of alternative dispute resolution. In B. L. Gunnarsson, P. Linell & B. Nordberg (Eds.), *The construction of professional discourse*. Lond & New York: Longman.
- Chang, Y. E. (2009). How to say no: an analysis of cross-cultural difference and pragmatic transfer. *Language Sciences*, 31(4), 477-493. doi: 10.1016/j.langsci.2008.01.002
- Chen, H. J. (1996). *Cross-cultural comparison of English and Chinese metapragmatics in refusal*. Indiana University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 408 860).
- Chen, X., Ye, L., & Zhang, Y. (1995). Refusing in Chinese. In G. Kasper (Ed.), *Pragmatics of Chinese as a native and target language* (pp. 119–163). Hawaii: University of Hawaii.
- Cheng, S. K. K. (1990). Understanding the culture and behaviour of East Asians - A Confucian perspective. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 510-515.
- Chew, G. C. L. (2005). The functions of “được” (OK; possible; can) in business communication in Vietnam. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 15(2), 229-256.
- Chew, G. C. L. (2011). Politeness in Vietnam. In D. Z. Kádár & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politeness in East Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chew, G. C. L. (2011). Politeness in Vietnam. In D. Z. Kádár & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politeness in East Asian*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cicourel, A. V. (1981). Note on the intergration of micro- and macro-levels of analysis. In K. D. Knorr-Cetina & A. V. Cicourel (Eds.), *Advances in social theory and methodology: Toward an integration of micro- and macro-sociologies* (pp. 58-80). Boston, MA: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Cicourel, A. V. (1992). The interpenetration of communicative contexts: Examples from medical encounters. In A. Duranti & C. Goodwin (Eds.), *Rethinking context: Language as an interactive phenomenon* (pp. 291–310). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cicourel, A. V. (2007). A personal, retrospective view on ecological validity. *Text & Talk*, 27, 735–752.

- Cohen, A. D. (1996). Developing the ability to perform speech acts. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 18, 253–267.
- Cohen, A. D. (1998). *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. London: Longman.
- Cohen, A. D. (2004). Assessing speech acts in a second language. In D. Boxer & A. D. Cohen (Eds.), *Studying speaking to inform second language learning*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Cooke, J. R. (1968). *Pronominal reference in Thai, Burmese, and Vietnamese*. Berkely: University of California Press.
- Cramer, P. K. (1997). *Refusals of Japanese business professionals in Japanese-American companies: An exploratory study*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Indiana University, Bloomington.
- Creese, A. (2008). Linguistic ethnography. In K. A. King & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Research Methods in Language and Education* (2nd ed., Vol. 10). New York: Springer.
- Cresswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. California: SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W. (1995). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M., & Hanson, W. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioural research* (pp. 209–240). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crichton, J. (2010). *The discourse of commercialization: A multi-perspectived analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crystal. (1997). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: CUP.
- Culpeper, J. (1996). Towards an anatomy of impoliteness. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 25(3), 349-367.
- Culpeper, J. (2005). Impoliteness and Entertainment in the Television Quiz Show: The Weakest Link *Journal of Politeness Research. Language, Behaviour, Culture* (Vol. 1, pp. 35).
- Culpeper, J. (2011). *Impoliteness: Using language to cause offence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Culpeper, J., Bousfield, D., & Wichmann, A. (2003). Impoliteness revisited: with special reference to dynamic and prosodic aspects. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 35(10–11), 1545-1579.
- Da Silva, A. J. B. (2003). The effects of instruction on pragmatic development: Teaching polite refusals in English. *Second Language Studies*, 22(1), 55-106.
- Danermark, B., Ekstrom, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlsson, J. C. (2002). *Explaining society: Critical realism in the social sciences*. London: Routledge.
- de Fina, A. (2008). Who tells which story and why? Micro and macro contexts in narrative. *Text & Talk*, 28(3), 421-442.
- de Fina, A., & Georgakopoulou, A. (2008). Introduction: Narrative analysis in the shift from texts to practices. *Text & Talk*, 28(3), 275-281.
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Denzin, N. K. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(2), 80-88.
- Duiker, W. J. (1995a). *Sacred war: Nationalism and revolution in a divided Vietnam*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Duiker, W. J. (1995b). *Vietnam: Revolution in transition*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Ebsworth, M. E., & Nobuko, K. (2011). The pragmatics of refusals in English and Japanese: alternative approaches to negotiation. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 208, 95-117. doi: 10.1515/IJSL.2011.014
- Eelen, G. (2001). *A critique of politeness theories*. Manchester and Northampton: St. Jerome Publishing.
- Eslami, Z. R. (2010). Refusals: How to develop appropriate refusal strategies. In A. Martínez-Flor & E. Usó-Juan (Eds.), *Speech act performance: Theoretical, empirical and methodological issues* (pp. 217-236). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Ewert, A., & Bromberek-Dyzman, K. (2008). Impossible requests: L2 users' sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic choices in L1 acts of refusals. *EUROSLA Yearbook*, 8, 32-51.

- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fasulo, A., & Zuccheromaglio, C. (2008). Narratives in the workplace: Facts, fictions, and canonicity. *Text & Talk*, 28(3), 351-376.
- Félix-Brasdefer, C. (2003). Declining an invitation: A cross-cultural study of pragmatic strategies in Latin American Spanish and American English. *Multilingua*, 22, 225-255.
- Félix-Brasdefer, C. (2004). Interlanguage refusals: Linguistic politeness and length of residence in the target community. *Language Learning*, 54(4), 587-653. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9922.2004.00281.x
- Félix-Brasdefer, C. (2002). *Refusals in Spanish and English: A cross-cultural study of politeness strategies among speakers of Mexican Spanish, American English, and American learners of Spanish as a foreign language*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Minnesota, Minnesota.
- Félix-Brasdefer, C. (2006). Linguistic politeness in Mexico: Refusal strategies among male speakers of Mexican Spanish. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 38(12), 2158-2187.
- Félix-Brasdefer, C. (2008a). *Politeness in Mexico and the United States: A contrasty study of the realization and perception of refusals*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Félix-Brasdefer, C. (2008b). Sociopragmatic variation: Dispreferred responses in Mexican and Dominican Spanish. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 4, 81-110.
- Félix-Brasdefer, C. (2014). *Pragmatic development in short-term study abroad: Refusing, mitigating and individual variation*. Paper presented at the Pragmatics and Language Learning, Indiana University.
- Fielding, N. G. (2006). Ethnographic interviewing. In V. Jupp (Ed.), *The SAGE dictionary of social research methods* (pp. 100-102). London: Sage.
- Foucault, M. (1984). The order of discourse. In M. Shapiro (Ed.), *Language and politics* (pp. 108-138). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Fraser, B. (1975). *The concept of politeness*. Paper presented at the the 1985 NWAVE Meeting., Georgetown University.
- Fraser, B. (1990). Perspectives on politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14(2), 219-236.
- Fraser, B., & Nolen, W. (1981). The association of deference with linguistic form. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 27(93- 109).
- Frescura, M. (1997). The ethnography of refusal. *Europe Plurilingue*, 12-13, 180-203.

- Furumura, Y. (2002). How can Japanese be considerate to their interlocutor in refusals? A study of pragmatic strategies in Japanese discourse. *Studies in Languages and Cultures*, 16, 147-164.
- García, C. (1992). Refusing an invitation: A case study of Peruvian style. *Hispanic Linguistics*, 5(1-2), 207-243.
- García, C. (1999). The three stages of Venezuelan invitations and responses. *Multilingua*, 18(4), 391-433.
- García, C. (2007). "Ché, mirá, vos sabés que no voy a poder": How Argentineans refuse an invitation. *Hispania*, 90(3), 551-564.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Garfinkel, H. (1974). The origins of the term 'Ethnomethodology'. In R. Turner (Ed.), *Ethnomethodology* (pp. 15-18). Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Gass, S. M., & Houck, N. (1999). *Interlanguage refusals: A cross cultural study of Japanese-English*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Geertz, C. (1968). Linguistic etiquette. In J. A. Fishman (Ed.), *Readings in the sociology of language* (pp. 282-295). The Hague, Paris: Mouton.
- Georgakopoulou, A. (2006). The other side of the story: towards a narrative analysis of narratives-in-interaction. *Discourse Studies*, 8(2), 235-257.
- Gibson, J. J. (1977). Theory of affordances. In S. Roberts & B. John (Eds.), *Perceiving, acting and knowing: Toward an ecological psychology* (pp. 67-82). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publisher.
- Giddens, A. (1993). *New rules of sociological method*. London: Hutchinson.
- Gilmore, A. (2004). A comparison of textbook and authentic interactions. *ELT Journal*, 58(4), 363-374.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday Anchor.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face behaviour*. London: Penguin Books.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Goffman, E. (1981). *Forms of talk*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Goffman, E. (1983). The Interactional order. *American sociological review*, 48(1), 1-17.
- Goodwin, C. (1979). The interactive construction of a sentence in natural conversation. In G. Psathas (Ed.), *Everyday language: Studies in ethnomethodology* (pp. 97-121). New York: Irvington.
- Goodwin, C. (1981). *Conversational organization: Interactions between speakers and hearers*. New York: Academic.
- Goodwin, C. (2007). Interactive footing. In E. Holt & R. Clift (Eds.), *Reporting talk: Reported speech in interaction* (pp. 16-46). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goodwin, C. (2014a). The intelligibility of gesture within a framework of co-operative action. In M. Seyfeddinipur & M. Gullbert (Eds.), *From Gesture in Conversation to Visible Action in Utterance* (pp. 199-216): John Benjamins.
- Goodwin, C. (2014b). Pointing as situated practice. In S. Kita (Ed.), *Pointing: Where Language, Culture and Cognition Meet*: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Goodwin, C., & Goodwin, M. H. (2004). Participation. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 222-244). Maldas: Blackwell.
- Goodwin, C., & Heritage, J. (1990). Conversation analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, 283-307.
- Grainger, K., Kerkam, Z., Mansor, F., & Mills, S. (2015). Offering and hospitality in Arabic and English. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 11(1), 41-70. doi: 10.1515/pr-2015-0003
- Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(3), 255-274.
- Grice, P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 3: Speech Act*. New York: Academic Press.
- Gu, Y. (1990). Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14, 237-257.
- Guidetti, M. (2000). Pragmatic study of agreement and refusal messages in young French children. . *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32(5), 569-582. doi: 10.1016/S0378-2166(99)00061-2
- Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies: Studies in interactional sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hak, T. (1999). 'Text' and 'con-text': Talk bias in studies of health care work. In S. Sarangi & C. Roberts (Eds.), *Talk, work and institutional order: Discourse in medical, mediation and management settings* (pp. 427-452). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Hall, J. K. (1999). A prosaics of interaction: The development of interactional competence in another language. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Culture in Second Language Teaching and Learning* (pp. 137-151). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hatch, E. (1983). Foreword. In N. Wolfson & E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers.
- Haugh, M. (2005). The Importance of "Place" in Japanese Politeness: Implications for Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Analyses. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 2(1), 41-68.
- Haugh, M. (2007). Emic conceptualisations of (im)politeness and face in Japanese: Implications for the discursive negotiation of second language learner identities. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39(4), 657-680. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2006.12.005>
- Haugh, M. (2009). Face and interaction. In F. Bargiela-Chiappini & M. Haugh (Eds.), *Face, communication and social interaction*. London: Equinox.
- Haugh, M. (2011). Epilogue: Culture and norms in politeness research. In D. Z. Kádár & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politeness in East Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hei, K. C. (2009). Moves in Refusal: How Malaysians Say 'No'. *China Media Research*, 5(3), 31-44.
- Henstock, M. (2003). *Refusals: A language and cultural barrier between Americans and Japanese*. Unpublished doctoral Dissertation. Purdue University.
- Heritage, J. (1984). *Garfinkel and Ethnography*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Heyl, B. S. (2001). Ethnographic interviewing. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Hill, B., Ide, S., Ikuta, S., Kawasaki, A., & Ogino, T. (1986). Universals of linguistic politeness: Quantitative evidence from Japanese and American English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 10, 347-371.
- Hồ, C. M. (2000). *Toàn tập, tập 10*. Hà Nội: Nxb Chính trị Quốc gia (National Politics Publishing House).
- Hoaglin, D. C., Iglewicz, B., & Tukey, J. W. (1986). Performance of some resistant rules for outlier labeling. *Journal of American Statistical Association*, 81, 991-999.

- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Holmes, J. (1988). Doubt and certainty in ESL textbooks. *Applied Linguistics*, 9, 21-44.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (1995a). *The active interview* (Vol. 37). California: Sage.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (1995b). *The active interview*: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (1997). *The active interview*: Sage Publications.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (2003). Active interviewing. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Postmodern Interviewing*. (pp. 67–80). California: Sage.
- Housely, W., & Fitzgerald, R. (2002). The reconsidered model of membership categorization analysis. *Qualitative Research*, 2(1), 59-83.
- Hu, H. C. (1944). The Chinese concepts of face. *American anthropology*, 46, 45-64.
- Hua, Z., Wei, L., & Yuan, Q. (2000). The sequential organisation of gift offering and acceptance in Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32, 81-103.
- Hussein, A. (1995). The sociolinguistic patterns of native Arabic speakers: Implications for teaching Arabic as a foreign language. *Applied Language Learning*, 6(1/2), 65-87.
- Hutchby, I. (2007). *The Discourse of Child Counselling*: John Benjamins.
- Hutchby, I., & Wooffitt, R. (2008). *Conversation analysis: Principles, practices and applications* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Ide, S. (1989). Formal forms and discernment: Two neglected aspects of linguistic politeness. *Multilingua*, 8, 223-248.
- Ikoma, T., & Shimura, A. (1993). Eigo kara nihongoeno pragmatic transfer: "Kotowari" toiu hatsuwa kouinitsuite (Pragmatic transfer from English to Japanese: The speech act of refusals). *Nihongokyoku* (*Journal of Japanese Language Teaching*), 79, 41-52.
- Iwata, M. (1999). *Implying "no" in Japanese: Sociolinguistic analysis of Japanese refusals*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Victoria, Canada.
- Jansen, F., & Janssen, D. (2010). Effects of positive politeness strategies in business letters. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, 2531-2548.
- Jefferson, G. (1983). Notes on a systematic deployment of the acknowledgement tokens "Yeah" and "Mm hm". *Tilburg Papers in Language and Literature* 30.

- Jewitt, C. (2009a). Different approaches to multimodality. In C. Jewitt (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Jewitt, C. (2009b). Introduction. In C. Jewitt (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Johnson, A. (2008). 'From where we're sat . . .': Negotiating narrative transformation through interaction in police interviews with suspects. *Text & Talk*, 28(3), 327-349.
- Johnson, D. I. (2007). Politeness theory and conversational refusals: Associations between various types of face threat and perceived competence. *Western Journal of Communication*, 71(3), 196-215.
- Johnson, D. I. (2008). Modal expressions in refusals of friends' interpersonal requests: Politeness and effectiveness. *Communication Studies*, 59(2), 148-163.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.
- Jungheim, N. O. (2006). Learner and native speaker perspectives on a culturally-specific Japanese refusal gesture. *IRAL*, 44, 125-143.
- Kádár, D. Z., & Mills, S. (Eds.). (2011). *Politeness in East Asia*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kádár, D. Z., & Pan, Y. (2011). Politeness in China. In D. Z. Kádár & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politeness in East Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kanemoto, M. (1993). A comparative study of refusal assertion in the United States and Japan. *Ryudai Review of Language and Literature*, 38, 199-212.
- Kasper, G. (1990). Linguistic politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14, 193-218.
- Kasper, G. (2000). Data collection in pragmatics research. In H. Spencer-Oatey (Ed.), *Culturally speaking: Managing rapport through talk across cultures* (pp. 316-369). London: Continuum.
- Kasper, G. (2008). Data Collection in Pragmatics Research. In H. Spencer-Oatey (Ed.), *Culturally speaking: Culture, communication and politeness theory* (pp. 279-303). London & New York: Continuum.
- Kasper, G., & Dahl, M. (1991). Research methods in interlanguage pragmatics. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13, 215-247.

- Kawate-Mierzejewska, M. (2002). *Request-refusal interactions in telephone conversation*. Paper presented at the Fourth Annual Conference of the Japanese Society for Language Sciences, Nogoya University, Japan.
- Kent, A. (2012). Compliance, resistance and incipient compliance when responding to directives. *Discourse Studies*, 14(6), 711-730.
- King, K. A. (2008). Introduction to volume 10: Research methods in language and education. In K. A. King & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education 2nd edition, volume 10: Research methods in language and education* (pp. xiii-xviii). New York: Springer.
- King, K. A., & Silver, R. E. (1993). "Sticking points": Effects of instruction on NNS refusal strategies. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 9(1), 47-82.
- Kinjo, H. (1987). Oral refusals of invitations and requests in English and Japanese. *Journal of Asian Culture*, 11, 83-106.
- Kitao, S. K. (1996). Communicative competence, preference organization, and refusals in British English. *Sougou Bunka Kenkyujo Kiyou*, 13, 47-58.
- Kitao, S. K. (1998). Conversational constraints and refusals in British English. *World Communication*, 27(3), 65-78.
- Kitzinger, C., & Frith, H. (1999). Just say no? The use of conversation analysis in developing a feminist perspective on sexual refusal. *Discourse & Society*, 10(3), 293-316.
- Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of Focus Groups: the importance of interaction between research participants. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 16(1), 103-121.
- Kitzinger, J., & Barbour, R. S. (1999). Introduction: Challenge and promise of focus groups. In R. S. Barbour & J. Kitzinger (Eds.), *Developing focus group research: politics, theory and practice* (pp. 1-20). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Kluckhohn, F. R., & Strodtbeck, F. L. (1961). *Variations in Value Orientation*. New York: Row, Peterson.
- Kodama, N. (1996). *Refusals in Japanese: Oral and written alternatives elicited by discourse completion task and role-play*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. New York University.
- Kondo, S. (2008). Effects on pragmatic development through awareness-raising instruction: Refusals by Japanese EFL learners. In E. A. Soler & A. Martínez-Flor (Eds.), *Investigating pragmatics in foreign language learning, teaching and testing* (pp. 153-177). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.

- Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Kristeva, J. (1986). Word, dialogue and novel. In T. Moi (Ed.), *The Kristevan reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. London: Sage.
- Kwon. (2004). Expressing refusals in Korean and in American English. *Multilingua*, 23, 339-364.
- Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press.
- Labov, W., & Fanshel, D. (1977). *Therapeutic discourse: Psychotherapy as conversation*. New York: Academic Press.
- Lachenicht, L. G. (1980). Aggravating language: A study of abusive and insulting language. *Papers in Linguistics: International journal of human communication*, 13(4), 607-687.
- Lakoff, R. (1973). The logic of politeness: Or minding your P's and Q's. In C. Corum, T. Smith-Stark & A. Weiser (Eds.), *Papers from the Ninth Regional Meeting of the Linguistics Society*. Chicago: Chicago Linguistics Society.
- Laohaburanakit, K. (1995). Refusal in Japanese: A comparison of Japanese textbooks and actual conversation data. *Nihongo Kyouiku (Journal of Japanese Language Teaching)*, 87, 25-39.
- Laohaburanakit, K. (1997). Forms of refusals: A comparison of refusal forms used by learners of Japanese and Japanese native speakers. *Japanese-Language Education around the Globe*, 7.
- Lau, D. C. (1979). *Confucius: The Analects*. London: Penguin Books.
- Layder, D. (1993). *New strategies in social research*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Layder, D. (1997). *Modern social theory: Key debates and new directions*. London: UCL Press.
- Layder, D. (2005). *Understanding social theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lee, C. L. (2011). Politeness in Singapore. In D. Z. Kádár & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politeness in East Assia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Lee, H. (2013). The influence of social situations on fluency difficulty in Korean EFL learners' oral refusals. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 50(1), 168-186.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Lerner, G. H. (1996). Finding "Face" in the Preference Structures of Talk-in-Interaction. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 59(4), 303-321.
- Lerner, G. H. (2003). Selecting next speaker: The context-sensitive operation of a context-free organization. *Language in Society*, 32(177-201).
- Levinson, S. C. (1988). Putting Linguistics on a Proper Footing: Explorations in Goffman's Concepts of Participation. In P. Drew & A. Wootton (Eds.), *Erving Goffman: Exploring the interaction order* (pp. 161-227). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Liao, C., & Bresnahan, M. I. (1996). A contrastive pragmatic study on American English and Mandarin refusal strategies. *Language Sciences*, 18(3-4), 703-727.
- Liddicoat, A. J. (2007). *An introduction to conversation analysis*. London: Continuum.
- Lim, T.-S., & Bowers, J. W. (1991). Facework Solidarity, Approbation, and Tact. *Human Communication Research*, 17(3), 415-450. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2958.1991.tb00239.x
- Locher, M. A., & Watts, R. J. (2005). Politeness Theory and Relational Work. *Journal of Politeness Research: Language, Behavior, Culture*, 1(1), 9-33.
- Luong, V. H. (1990). *Discursive practices and linguistic meaning: The Vietnamese system of person reference*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Luu, Q. K., & Trần, T. P. T. (2008). Nghi thức lời từ chối một đề nghị giúp đỡ trên cơ sở lý thuyết hành vi ngôn ngữ (tiếng Anh so sánh với tiếng Việt) [Forms of refusals to offers to help from a speech act perspective (comparison between English and Vietnamese)]. *Ngôn ngữ*, 2/2008, 13-21.
- Lyuh, I. (1992). *The art of refusal: Comparison of Korean and American Cultures*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. IndianaUniversity, Bloomington.
- Mao, L. R. (1994). Beyond politeness theory: 'Face' revisited and renewed. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 21, 451-486.
- Margalef-Boada, T. (1993). *Research methods in interlanguage pragmatics: An inquiry into data collection procedures..* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Indiana University, Bloomington.
- Markee, N. (2000). *Conversation analysis*. Mahwah: Erlbaum Associates.

- Markel, N. N. (1998). *Semiotic psychology*. New York: Peter Lang Press.
- Marková, I., Linell, P., Grossen, M., & Orvig, A. S. (2007). *Dialogue in focus groups : exploring socially shared knowledge*. London ; Oakville, CT: Equinox.
- Martínez-Flor, A., & Usó-Juan, E. (2010). Pragmatics and speech act performance. In A. Martínez-Flor & U.-J. Esther (Eds.), *Speech act performance*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Mason, J. (2004). Semistructured interview. In M. L. Lewis-Back, A. Bryman & T. F. Liao (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of social science research methods* (pp. 1021-1022). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Matsumoto, D., & Juang, L. (2004). *Culture and psychology* (3rd ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Matsumoto, Y. (1988). Reexamination of the universality of face: Politeness phenomena in Japanese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 12, 403-426.
- Maybin, J., & Tusting, K. (2011). Linguistic ethnography. In J. Simpson (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 515-528). New York: Routledge.
- Maynard, D. W. (2013). Everyone and no one to turn to: Intellectual roots and contexts for conversation analysis. In J. Sidnell & T. Stivers (Eds.), *The handbook of conversation analysis* (pp. 11-31). West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Melzi, G., & Caspe, M. (2008). Research approaches to narrative, literacy and education. In K. A. King & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education 2nd edition, volume 10: Research methods in language and education*. New York: Springer.
- Merriam, S. B. (Ed.). (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mertens, D. M. (1999). Inclusive evaluation: Implications of transformative theory for evaluation. *American journal of evaluation*, 20(1), 1-14.
- Mertens, D. M. (2003). Mixed methods and the politics of human research: The transformative-emancipatory perspective. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 135-164). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mertens, D. M. (2005). *Research methods in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Mertens, D. M. (2007). Mixed methods and the politics of human research: The transformative- emancipatory perspective. In V. L. P. Clark & J. W. Creswell (Eds.), *The mixed methods reader* (pp. 68–104). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social theory and social structure*. New York: Free Press.
- Mey, J. (1993). *Pragmatics: an introduction*. Oxford/Cambridge/Mass: Blackwell.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Mills, S., & Kádár, D. Z. (2011). Politeness and culture. In D. Z. Kádár & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politeness in East Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morgan, D. L. (2007). Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: Methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), 48-76.
- Morgan, D. L. (2008). Snowball Sampling. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 816-817). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Moriyama, T. (1990). ‘Kotowari’ no houryaku: Taijin kankei chouseito komunikeishon (‘Strategies of refusals: Interpersonal adjustments and communication’). *Gengo (Language)*, 19(8), 59-66.
- Morkus, N. (2014). Refusals in Egyptian Arabic and American English. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 70(0), 86-107.
- Morris, C. W. (1938). *Foundations of the theory of signs*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Morrow, C. K. (1995). *The pragmatic effects of instruction on ESL learners' production of complaint and refusal speech acts*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of New York at Buffalo, Amherst, NY. UMI Microform, UMI Number: 9603629.
- Morse, J. M. (1991). Approaches to qualitative-quantitative methodological triangulation. *Nursing research*, 40, 120-123.
- Mortensen, K. (2013). Conversation Analysis and Multimodality. In A. C. Carol (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Myers, G., & Macnaghten, P. (1999). Can focus groups be analysed as talk? In R. S. Barbour. & J. Kitzinger (Eds.), *Developing focus group research: politics, theory and practice* (pp. 173-185). London: SAGE.

- Nakajima, Y. (1997). Politeness strategies in the workplace: Which experiences help Japanese businessmen acquire American English native-like strategies? *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 13(1), 49-69.
- Nelson, G. L., Carson, J., Al Batal, M., & El Bakary, W. (2002). Cross-cultural pragmatics: Strategy use in Egyptian Arabic and American English refusals. *Applied Linguistics*, 23(2), 163-189.
- Ngo, T. (2006). Translation of Vietnamese terms of address and reference. *Translation journal*, 10(4). Retrieved from <http://translationjournal.net/journal/38viet.htm> website:
- Nguyễn, C. (1994). Barriers to communication between Vietnamese and non-Vietnamese. In X. T. Nguyễn (Ed.), *Vietnamese studies in a multicultural world*. Melbourne: Brown Prior Anderson.
- Nguyễn, Đ. H. (1995). *Politeness markers in Vietnamese requests*. (PhD Dissertation), Monash University, Melbourne.
- Nguyễn, Đ. L. (1994). Indochinese cross-cultural communication and adjunct. In X. T. Nguyễn (Ed.), *Vietnamese studies in a multicultural world*. Melbourne: Brown Prior Anderson.
- Nguyễn, K. K. (1972). *An introduction to Vietnamese culture*. Sai Gon: Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations.
- Nguyễn, P. C. (1997). Từ chối - một hành vi ngôn ngữ tế nhị (Refusing - a tactful speech act). *Ngôn ngữ & đời sống (Language and Life)*, 25(11), 12-13.
- Nguyễn, P. C. (2004a). Một số chiến lược từ chối thường dùng trong tiếng Việt (Some refusing strategies frequently used in Vietnamese). *Ngôn ngữ*, 3/2004, 22-29.
- Nguyễn, P. C. (2004b). *Một số đặc điểm ngôn ngữ - văn hóa ứng xử của hành vi từ chối trong tiếng Việt - Có sự đối chiếu với tiếng Anh (Some linguistic and communicative cultural characteristics of Refusing in Vietnamese - In comparison to English)*. (PhD Dissertation), Vietnam Institute of Social Sciences, Hanoi.
- Nguyễn, Q. (2004). *Một số vấn đề giao tiếp nội văn hoá và giao văn hoá (Some intra- and cross-cultural communication issues)*. Hà Nội: NXB ĐHQG HN (National University Publishing House).
- Nguyễn, T. H. (2009). The recommendation sequence in Vietnamese family talk: Negotiation of asymmetric access to authority and knowledge. In T. H. Nguyễn & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Talk-in-Interaction: Multilingual perspectives* (pp. 57-88). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

- Nguyễn, T. H., & Ishitobi, N. (2012). Ordering fastfood: Service encounters in real-life interaction and in textbook dialogs. *Japan Association for Language Teaching Journal*, 34(2), 151-185.
- Nguyễn, T. M. P. (2006). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Refusals of requests by Australian native speakers of English and Vietnamese learners of English*. (Master Thesis), University of Queensland, Queensland. (40884608)
- Nguyễn, T. T. M. (2005). *Criticizing and responding to criticism in a foreign language: A study of Vietnamese learners of English*. (Unpublished Ph.D dissertation), Auckland University. New Zealand.
- Nguyễn, T. T. M. (2011). Learning to communicate in a globalized world: To what extent do school textbooks facilitate the development of intercultural pragmatic competence? *RELC Journal*, 42, 17-30.
- Nguyễn, T. V. (2014). *Thuyết Tam tông, tứ đức trong Nho giáo và ảnh hưởng của nó đối với người phụ nữ Việt Nam hiện nay (The Confucian teachings of Three obediences and four virtues and their influence on the Vietnamese contemporary woman)*. (PhD dissertation), Học viện Chính trị Quốc gia Hồ Chí Minh (Ho Chi Minh National Institute of Politics).
- Nguyễn, X. T. (1994). The Vietnamese family moral code. In N. X. Thu (Ed.), *Vietnamese studies in a multicultural world*. Melbourne: Brown Prior Anderson.
- Norris, S. (2004). *Analyzing multimodal interaction: A methodological framework*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Norris, S. (2009). Modal density and modal configurations: Multimodal actions. In C. Jewitt (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Norris, S., & Jones, R. H. (2005). *Discourse In Action: Introducing Mediated Discourse Analysis*: Routledge.
- Nwoye, O. G. (1989). Linguistic politeness in Igbo. *Multilingua*, 8(2/3), 259-275.
- Nwoye, O. G. (1992). Linguistic politeness and socio-cultural variation of the notion of face. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 18, 309- 328.
- O'Driscoll, J. (1996). About face: A defence and elaboration of universal dualism. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 25(1), 1-32. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(94\)00069-X](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(94)00069-X)
- O'Driscoll, J. (2007a). Brown & Levinson's face: How it can and can't help us to understand interaction across cultures. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 4(4), 463-492. doi: 10.1515/IP.2007.024

- O'Driscoll, J. (2007b). What's in an FTA? Reflections on a chance meeting with Claudine. *Journal of Politeness Research: Language, Behavior, Culture*, 3(2), 243-268. doi: 10.1515/PR.2007.011
- Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Collins, K. M. T. (2007). A typology of mixed methods sampling designs in social science research. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(2), 281-316.
- Parvaresh, V., & Tavakoli, M. (2009). Discourse completion tasks as elicitation tools: How convergent are they? . *The Social Sciences*, 4(4), 366-373.
- Pavlenko, A. (2007). Autobiographic narratives as data in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 28(2), 163-188.
- Pham, H. (2002). Gender in addressing and self-reference in Vietnamese: Variation and change. In M. Hellinger & H. BuBmann (Eds.), *Gender across languages* (Vol. 2). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Phan, H. L. (2006). Research on Vietnamese village: Assessment and perspectives. In N. T. Trần & A. Reid (Eds.), *Vietnam: Borderless histories*. Wiscosin: The University of Wiscosin Press.
- Phan, T. V. Q. (2001). *Some English-Vietnamese cross-cultural differences in refusing a request*. (MA Thesis), University of Languages and International Studies - National University, Hanoi., Hanoi.
- Pike, K. L. (1954). *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behaviour*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Placencia, M. E. (2008). (Non)Compliance with directives among family and friends. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 5(3), 315-344.
- Pomerantz, A. (1984). Agreeing and disagreeing with assessments: Some features of preferred/dispreferred turn-shapes. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structure of social action: Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. 79-112). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Prior, M. T. (2011). Self-presentation in L2 Interview Talk: Narrative Versions, Accountability, and Emotionality. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(1), 60-76.
- Rae, J. (2001). Organizing participation in interaction: Doing participation framework. *Research on language and social interaction*, 34(2), 253-278.
- Ramos, J. (1991). *"No...because:" A study of pragmatic transfer in refusals among Puerto Rican teenagers speaking English*. (Doctor of Education), Columbia University.

- Rampton, B. (2007). Neo-Hymesian linguistic ethnography in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 11(5), 584-607.
- Rampton, B., Tusting, K., Maybin, J., & Barwell, R. (2004). *UK linguistic ethnography: A discussion paper*. Paper presented at the UK Linguistic Ethnography Forum. December 2004.
- Riazi, M., & Candlin, C. (2014). Mixed-methods research in language teaching and learning: Opportunities , issues and challenges. *Language Teaching*, 47(2), 135-173.
- Richards, K. (2011). Using Micro-Analysis in Interviewer Training: ‘Continuers’ and Interviewer Positioning. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(1), 95-112.
- Roberts, C., & Sarangi, S. (1999). Hybridity in gatekeeping discourse: Issues of practical relevance for the researcher. In S. Sarangi & C. Roberts (Eds.), *Talk, work and institutional order: Discourse in medical, medication and management settings* (pp. 473-503). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Roberts, C., & Sarangi, S. (2005). Theme-oriented discourse analysis of medical encounters. *Medical education*, 39, 632-640.
- Robinson, M. (1992). Introspective methodology in interlanguage pragmatics research. In G. Kasper (Ed.), *Pragmatics of Japanese as native and target language* (pp. 27-82). Honolulu, HI: Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center, U. of Hawaii.
- Rose, K. R. (2001). Compliments and compliment responses in films: Implications for pragmatics research and language teaching. *IRAL*, 39(4), 309-326.
- Roulston, K. (2011). Interview ‘Problems’ as Topics for Analysis. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(1), 77-94.
- Sacks, H. (1972a). An initial investigation of the usability of conversational data for doing sociology. In D. Sudnow (Ed.), *Studies in social interaction*. New York: The Free Press.
- Sacks, H. (1972b). On the analysability of stories by children. In J. G. John & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Sacks, H. (1974). On the analysability of stories by children. In R. Turner (Ed.), *Ethnomethodology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Sacks, H. (1992a). *Lectures on conversation* (Vol. 1). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

- Sacks, H. (1992b). *Lectures on conversation* (Vol. 2). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Sacks, H., & Schegloff, E. A. (1979). Two preferences in the organization of reference of persons in conversation and their interaction. In G. Psathas (Ed.), *Everyday language: Studies in ethnomethodology*. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E. A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language*, 50(4), 696-735.
- Sadler, R. W., & Eröz, B. (2001). "I refuse you!" An examination of English refusals by native speakers of English, Lao, and Turkish. *Arizona Working Papers in SLAT*, 9(53-80).
- Saeiki, M., & O' Keefe, B. (1994). Refusals and rejections: Designing messages to serve multiple goals. *Human Communication Research*, 21, 67-102.
- Sameshima, S. (1998). Communication task ni okeru nihongo gakusyusha no tenkei hyougen/bunmatsu hyougen no syuutokukatei: Chuugokugo washa no "ira" "kotowari" "shazai" no baai ('The acquisition of fixed expressions and sentence-ending expressions by learners of Japanese'). *Nihongo Kyouiku (Journal of Japanese Language Teaching)*, 98(73-84).
- Sarangi, S. (2002). Discourse practitioners as a community of interprofessional practice: Some insights from health communication research. In C. N. Candlin (Ed.), *Research and practice in professional discourse* (pp. 95-135). Hongkong: City University of Hongkong Press.
- Sarangi, S. (2003). Institutional, professional, and lifeworld frames in interview talk. In H. v. d. Berg, M. Wetherell & H. Houtkoop-Steenstra (Eds.), *Analyzing race talk: Multidisciplinary perspectives on the research interview* (pp. 64-84). Cambridge.
- Sarangi, S. (2007). Editorial. The anatomy of interpretation: Coming to terms with the analyst's paradox in professional discourse studies. *Text & Talk*, 27(5/6), 567-584.
- Sarangi, S. (2010). Reconfiguring self/identity/status/role: The case of professional role performance in healthcare encounters. In G. Garzone & J. Archibald (Eds.), *Discourse, identities and roles in specialized communication* (pp. 33-57). Bern: Peter Lang.
- Sarangi, S., & Candlin, C. N. (2001). 'Motivational relevancies' some methodological reflections on social theoretical and sociolinguistic practice'. In N. Coupland, S. Sarangi & C. N. Candlin (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and Social Theory*. Harlow: Longman.

- Sarangi, S., & Candlin, C. N. (2003). Categorization and explanation of risk: a discourse analytical perspective. *Health, Risk & Society*, 5(2), 115-124.
- Sarangi, S., & Roberts, C. (1999). The dynamics of interactional and institutional orders in work-related settings. In S. Sarangi & C. Roberts (Eds.), *Talk, work and institutional order: Discourse in medical, mediation and management* (pp. 1-60). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Sarstedt, M., & Mooi, E. (2014). *A Concise Guide to Market Research : The Process, Data, and Methods Using IBM SPSS Statistics* (2nd ed.). London: Springer.
- Sasaki, M. (1998). Investigating EFL students' production of speech acts: A comparison of production questionnaires and role-plays. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 30, 457-484.
- Sattar, H. Q. A., Lah, S. C., & Suleiman, R. R. R. (2010). A study on strategies used in Iraqi Arabic to refuse suggestions. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture*, LSC 2010(30).
- Sbisà, M., & Turner, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Pragmatics of speech actions* (Vol. 2). Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter.
- Sbisà, M., & Turner, K. (2013). Introduction. In M. Sbisà & K. Turner (Eds.), *Pragmatics of speech actions* (Vol. 2). Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1968). Sequencing in conversational openings. *American Anthropologist*, 70, 1075-1095.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1982). Discourse as an inter- actional achievement: Some uses of “uh huh” and other things that come between sentences. In E. A. Schegloff & D. Tannen (Eds.), *Analyzing Discourse: Text and Talk* (pp. 71-93). Washington: Georgetown University Press.
- Schegloff, E. A. (1984). On some questions and ambiguities in conversation. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action* (pp. 28-52). Cambridge: CUP.
- Schegloff, E. A. (2007). *Sequence Organisation in Interaction: A primer in Conversation Analysis* (Vol. 1). Cambridge: CUP.
- Schegloff, E. A., Jefferson, G., & Sacks, H. (1977). The Preference for Self-Correction in the Organisation of Repair in Conversation. *Language*, 53, 361-382.
- Scollon, R. (2001). *Mediated discourse: The nexus of practice*. London/New York: Routledge.

- Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (1983). Face in interethnic communication. In J. C. Richards & R. W. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 156-190). New York: Longman.
- Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2003). *Discourses in place: Language in the material world*. London: Routledge.
- Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2007). Nexus Analysis: Refocusing ethnography on action. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 11(5), 608-625.
- Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2009). Multimodality and language: A retrospective and prospective view. In C. Jewitt (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Scotton, M. C., & Bernsten, J. (1988). Natural conversations as a model for textbook dialogue. *Applied Linguistics*, 9, 372-384.
- Searle, J. (1969). *Speech Acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, J. (1975). Indirect speech acts. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 3: Speech Act*. New York: Academic Press.
- Searle, J. (1977). A classification of illocutionary acts. In A. Rogers, B. Wall & J. P. Murphy (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Texas conference on performatives, presuppositions, and implicatures* (pp. 27-45). Washington: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Searle, J. (1979). *Expression and meaning: Studies in the theory of speech acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shigeta. (1974). Ambiguity in declining requests and apologizing. In J. C. Condon & M. Saito (Eds.), *Intercultural encounters with Japan: Communication, contact and conflict* (pp. 193-195). Tokyo: Timul Press.
- Shimura, A. (1995). "Kotowari" toiu hatsuwa kouiniokeru taiguu hyougentshiteno syouryakuno hindo, kinou, kouzouni kansuru chuukanngengo goyouron kenkyu 'Frequency, function, and structure of omissions as politeness expressions in the speech act of refusal.' *Keiougijyuku Daigaku Hiyoshi Kiyoku (Keio University at Hiyoshi, Language, Culture, Communication)*, 15, 41-62.
- Sidnell, J., & Shohet, M. (2013). The problems of peers in Vietnamese interaction. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 19, 618-638.
- Siebold, K., & Busch, H. (2015). (No) need for clarity – Facework in Spanish and German refusals. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 75(0), 53-68.

- Smith, C. (1998). *Can adults 'just say no?': How gender, status and social goals affect refusals*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of South Florida.
- Smith, M. J. (1975). *When I say no, I feel guilty*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Soler, E. A., & Pitarch, J. G. (2010). The effect of instruction on learners' pragmatic awareness: A focus on refusals. *International Journal of English Studies*, 10(1), 65-80.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2005). (Im)Politeness, Face and Perceptions of Rapport: Unpackaging their Bases and Interrelationships. *Journal of Politeness Research: Language, Behavior, Culture*, 1(1), 95-119.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2007). Theories of identity and the analysis of face. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39(4), 639-656. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2006.12.004>
- Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Stevens, P. B. (1993). The pragmatics of 'no!': Some strategies in English and Arabic. *Ideal*, 6, 87-112.
- Stivers, T., & Sidnell, J. (2013). Introduction. In J. Sidnell & T. Stivers (Eds.), *The Handbook of Conversational Analysis* (pp. 1-8). West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Stokoe, E. (2012). Moving forward with membership categorization analysis: Methods for systemic analysis. *Discourse Studies*, 14(3), 277-303.
- Takahashi, T., & Beebe, L. M. (1987). The development of pragmatic competence by Japanese learners of English. *JALT Journal*, 8(2), 131-155.
- Talmy, S. (2004). *Lifers and FOBs, rocks and resistance: Generation 1.5, identity, and the cultural productions of ESL in a high school*. (PhD dissertation), University of Hawaii-Manoa.
- Talmy, S. (2008). The cultural productions of the ESL student at Tradewinds High: Contingency, multidirectionality, and identity in L2 socialization. *Applied Linguistics*, 29(4), 619-644.
- Talmy, S. (2009). Resisting ESL: Categories and sequence in a critically "motivated" analysis of classroom interaction. In T. H. Nguyễn & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Talk in interaction: Multilingual perspectives* (pp. 181-213). Honolulu, HI: National Foreign Language Resource Center, University of Hawaii Press.
- Talmy, S. (2010). Qualitative interviews in applied linguistics: From research instrument to social practice. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 30, 128-148.

- Talmy, S., & Richards, K. (2011). Theorizing qualitative research interviews in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics*, 32(1), 1-5.
- Tashakkori, A., & Creswell, J. W. (2007). The new era of mixed methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), 3-7.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (Eds.). (1998). *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed method research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- ten Have, P. (1999). *Doing conversation analysis: A practical guide*. London: SAGE.
- Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 91-112.
- Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Thompson, L. C. (1965). *A Vietnamese grammar*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Tickle, A. L. (1991). Japanese refusals in a business setting.. *Papers in Applied Linguistics Michigan*, 6(2), 84-108.
- Trần, C. M. (2005a). Cách biểu hiện hành vi từ chối lời cầu khiến bằng các phát ngôn lảng tránh (trên cứ liệu tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt) [Performing refusals to requests via avoidance utterances (in English and Vietnamese)]. *Ngôn ngữ*, 1/2005, 41-50.
- Trần, C. M. (2005b). Lời từ chối gián tiếp với đặc trưng tư duy văn hoá dân tộc (Indirect refusals - A characteristic of the nation's culture). *Ngôn ngữ & đời sống (Language and Life)*, 113(3), 6-8.
- Trần, C. M. (2005c). *Phương thức biểu hiện hành vi từ chối lời cầu khiến trong tiếng Anh - Liên hệ với tiếng Việt (Strategies of refusing a request in English - In comparison to Vietnamese)*. (PhD Dissertation), University of Social Sciences and Humanities - Vietnam National University, Hanoi, Hanoi.
- Trần, C. M. (2005d). Từ chối- chấp nhận và chấp nhận - từ chối (Refusing acceptance and accepting refusal). *Ngôn ngữ & đời sống (Language and Life)*, 111+112(1+2), 51-55.
- Trần, N. T. (1999). *Cơ sở văn hoá Việt Nam (Foundation of Vietnamese culture)*. Hồ Chí Minh: Nhà Xuất bản Giáo dục (Education Publishing House).
- Trần, Q. A. (2011). *Tam giáo chư vọng (The errors of the three religions): A textual analytical study of a Christian document on the practices of the three religious*

- traditions in eighteenth-century Vietnam*. (PhD Dissertation), Georgetown University.
- Trần, V. M. Y. (2010). Vietnamese expressions of politeness. *Griffith Working Papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication*, 3(1), 12-21.
- Triandis, H. C. (1994). *Culture and social behavior*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Truong, T. K. H., Nguyen, V. L., & Tran, J. R. (2015). Similarities and differences in values between Vietnamese parents and adolescents. *Health Psychology Report*, 3(4), 281-291.
- Turnbull, W., & Saxton, K. L. (1997). Modal expressions as facework in refusals to comply with requests: I think I should say 'no' right now. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 27, 145-181.
- Tusting, K., & Maybin, J. (2007). Linguistic ethnography and interdisciplinarity: Opening the discussion. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 11(5), 575-583.
- Ueda, K. (1974). Sixteen ways to avoid saying "no" in Japan. In J. C. Condon & M. Saito (Eds.), *Intercultural encounters with Japan: Communication, contact and conflict* (pp. 185-192). Tokyo: Simul Press.
- Umale, J. (2011). Pragmatic failure in refusal strategies: British versus Omani interlocutors. *Arab World English Journal*, 2(1), 18-46.
- Uso-Juan, E. (2008). A pragmatic-focused evaluation of requests and their modification devices in textbook conversations. In E. Alcón Soler (Ed.), *Learning how to request in an instructed language learning context* (pp. 65-90). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Vinkhuyzen, E., & Szymanski, M. H. (2005). Would You Like to Do it Yourself? Service Requests and Their Non-granting Responses. In K. Richards & P. Seedhouse (Eds.), *Applying Conversation Analysis* (pp. 91-106). Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vũ, T. D., & Nguyễn, T. T. T. (2009). Một số chiến lược từ chối lịch sự lời mời trong giao tiếp. *Ngữ học toàn quốc 2009*, 57-61.
- Vuchinich, S. (1986). On attenuation in verbal family conflict. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 49(4), 281-293.
- Vuchinich, S. (1987). Staring and stopping spontaneous family conflicts. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 49, 591-601.

- Vuchinich, S., Emery, R., & Cassidy, J. (1988). Family members as third parties in dyadic family conflict: Strategies, alliances, and outcomes. *Child Development*, 59(5), 1293-1302.
- Vuong, G. T. (1976). *Getting to know the Vietnamese and their culture*. New York: Frederick Ungar.
- Wannaruk, A. (2008). Pragmatic transfer in Thai EFL refusals. *RELC*, 39(3), 318-337. doi: 10.1177/0033688208096844
- Watson, R. (1997). Some general reflections on 'Categorisation' and 'Sequence' in the analysis of conversation. In S. Hester & P. Eglin (Eds.), *Culture in action: Studies in Membership Categorisation Analysis*. Washington: University Press of America.
- Watts, R. J. (2003). *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Watts, R. J., Ide, S., & Ehlich, K. (1992a). Introduction. In R. J. Watts, S. Ide & K. Ehlich (Eds.), *Politeness in language: Studies in its history, theory and practice*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Watts, R. J., Ide, S., & Ehlich, K. (Eds.). (1992b). *Politeness in language: Studies in its history, theory and practice*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Weatherall, A., Gallois, C., & Watson, B. (2007). Introduction: Theoretical and methodological approaches to language and discourse in social psychology. In A. Weatherall, B. Watson & C. Gallois (Eds.), *Language, discourse & social psychology* (pp. 1-12). Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Widjaja, C. S. (1997). A study of date refusals: Taiwanese females vs. American females. *University of Hawai'i Working Papers in ESL*, 15(2), 1-43.
- Wierzbicka, A. (1985). Different cultures, different languages, different speech acts. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 9, 145-178.
- Wolfson, N. (1981). Invitations, compliments and the competence of the native speakers. *International Journal of Psycholinguistics*, 25, 7-22.
- Wong, J. (2002). "Applying" conversation analysis in applied linguistics: Evaluating dialogue in English as a second language textbooks. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*, 40, 37-60.
- Wootton, A. J. (1981). The management of grantings and rejections by parents in request sequences. *Semiotica*, 37(1/2), 59-89.

- Yang, J. (2008). *How to say 'No' in Chinese: A pragmatic study of refusal strategies in five TV series*. Paper presented at the the 20th North American Conference on Chinese linguistics, Columbus, Ohio.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: OUP.

Appendices

All the following forms, interview questions (for study 1 – appendix 2), and survey questionnaire (for study 3 – appendix 4) were translated into Vietnamese. For some respondents participating in study 3 who were not good at either English or Vietnamese (some Chinese students), the questionnaire was translated verbally into Chinese by a Vietnamese teacher of Chinese.

Appendix 1



Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (0) 2 9850 8740
Fax: +61 (0) 2 9850 9199
Email: lingadmin@ling.mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: **Christopher Noel Candlin**
Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: **Emeritus Professor**

Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: **Refusing in Vietnamese: Sociopragmatic and Socio-psychological Perspectives.**

You are invited to participate in a study on how Vietnamese people refuse in their daily life. As part of the overall project, the purpose of this study is to explore how Vietnamese people perceive and differentiate their refusals, what strategies and linguistic forms they use to co-construct refusals in their everyday conversations, what cultural factors underpin the choices of such strategies and linguistic forms.

The study is being conducted by

Du Trong Nguyen: a doctoral student in linguistics, Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

Tel: 61 424 896 686

Email: trong-du.nguyen@students.mq.edu.au

to meet the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics under the supervision of

Principal Supervisor: Emeritus Professor Christopher Noel Candlin

Tel: 61 2 9850 9352

Email: christophercandlin@gmail.com

and

Associate Supervisor: Dr. Jill Murray

Tel: 61 2 9850 9605

Email: jill.murray@mq.edu.au

of the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview discussing about how you experienced refusals. The interview will be carried out individually or in the form a focus group of some participants at the same time. In the interview, I will be asking you to describe one or more of the most significant situations in your life in which you refused somebody or were refused by someone else. The refusal may have been made in response to a request, an invitation, an offer or a suggestion. Each individual interview will take approximately half an hour, and the focus group interview might last from one hour to one hour and a half. The interview will be audio-taped for later analysis. The study is funded by the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, and apart from a souvenir offered to you, any expenses you have to spend for your participation in this study will be reimbursed.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher and his supervisors will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request through academic and professional publications.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, _____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____

(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____

(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (61 2) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 2

Triggering Scenarios and Narrative Questions

I. What would you do in the following situations?

1. Imagine that you are an old peasant woman who lives in a small village. You live a traditional life and you don't have much to do with city life, but you have a daughter who is studying at a university in a big city. One day your daughter invites some of her friends to visit your home in the country during the weekend. They bring a sweater and offer it to you as a present.

How would you react to this offer of a present?

2. Imagine that you are a young staff member of a technical department who has recently been employed in a business company. One day you invite some of your more experienced colleagues to go out for a drink with them. When you are about to finish, one of them signals that s/he will pay for all the drinks.

How would you react to that? What might you say?

3. Imagine that you are a university student and you are about to take an important exam in two days' time. One of your classmates is quite lazy and has missed some classes. He wants to borrow your notebook for one day to copy your notes.

What might you say to him?

II. I'd like you to think about the following situation and let me know your reaction.

A and B are former friends when they were at university, but they have not been in contact since they graduated 10 years ago. One day A suddenly phones B.

After some greetings, they say:

A. Listen! I am having a private house built and it's nearly finished. But you know how it is; now I am running a bit short of money. Could you possibly lend me 20 million so that I can finish it off?

B. Uhm. OK. Let me check with my wife/husband if we have made any plans with our saving.

If you were A, what do you think B meant by his answer? How do you know that?

If you were B, what would you say if you want to refuse A?

Can you think of what A and B would say if A were...

+ B's nephew/niece

+ B' aunt/uncle

+ Or B's male/female boss

What is your opinion on the following statement?

Vietnamese people are very sensitive to the social and family status of their conversation partners when they refuse.

III. Now I would like you to think of one or more memorable situations in which you have to refuse somebody or you were refused by somebody.

Tell me about that situation. For example:

The setting

Where and when did it take place?

Was the interaction in oral or written form (for example email)?

The people involved in the interaction:

Who was that person?

How old was he/she?

Were there any other people?

The topic of the conversation

Were you talking about an invitation/ a request/ an offer/ or a suggestion?

Interaction process

How long did the interaction last? (How many turns of talk did you and the other have?)

Do you remember what you and the other person actually said?

What did you feel when you had to refuse or were refused? Any reasons for that?

How did you manage to end the conversation after this refusing?

And other questions that may come along during the interview/focus groups

Appendix 3



Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (0) 2 9850 8740
Fax: +61 (0) 2 9850 9199
Email: lingadmin@ling.mq.edu.au

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name: **Christopher Noel Candlin**
Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title: **Emeritus Professor**

Information and Consent Form

Name of Project: **Refusing in Vietnamese: Sociopragmatic and Social Psychological Perspectives.**

You are invited to participate in a study on how Vietnamese people refuse in their daily life. As part of the overall project, the purpose of this study is to explore how non-native speakers of Vietnamese perceive, receive and evaluate refusals by Vietnamese people.

The study is being conducted by

Du Trong Nguyen: a doctoral student in linguistics, Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

Tel: 61 424 896 686

Email: trong-du.nguyen@students.mq.edu.au

to meet the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics under the supervision of

Principal Supervisor: Emeritus Professor Christopher Noel Candlin

Tel: 61 2 9850 9352

Email: christophercandlin@gmail.com

and

Associate Supervisor: Dr. Jill Murray

Tel: 61 2 9850 9605

Email: jill.murray@mq.edu.au

of the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to respond to a number of statements in a questionnaire by ticking in a scale that has 5 numbered choices ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and a 7-point scale containing two opposite adjectives

which can be used to describe refusals by Vietnamese people. There is no right or wrong answer; we only need to know your feeling and opinion on each item. Your job is just to read each statement and decide which number you think shows your opinion. Completion of the questionnaire will take around 20 minutes. In order to complete the questionnaire, you may have to recall your experiences where you encounter refusals by Vietnamese people. The refusals may have been made in response to a request, an invitation, an offer, a suggestion or an advice which has been initiated by you or by another person. The study is funded by the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Human Sciences, Macquarie University, and apart from a souvenir offered to you, any expenses you have to spend for your participation in this study will be reimbursed.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only the researcher and his supervisors will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request through academic and professional publications.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, _____ have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (61 2) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(INVESTIGATOR'S [OR PARTICIPANT'S] COPY)

Appendix 4 Questionnaire

General Questions

1. Your Gender: Male _____ Female _____
2. Your Age: _____ years old
3. Your Current employment status in Vietnam: Full-time _____ Part-time _____
Unemployed _____
4. Your Race/ethnicity:
African/Black _____ Aboriginal/Torres _____ Asian _____ White/Caucasian _____
Indian _____ Middle Eastern/ North African _____ Other _____
5. Your Country of birth: _____
6. How well do you speak Vietnamese?
Very well _____ Well _____ Quite well _____ A little _____ Not at all _____
7. How long have you been living in Vietnam?
Less than 1 year _____ 1-4 years _____ 5-8 years _____ 9-12 years _____ More than 12
years _____

Please recall your experiences when you were refused by a Vietnamese person or when you witnessed (through personal contacts or through newspapers, television and films etc.) a Vietnamese person refusing another foreigner or another Vietnamese. The refusals can be made in response to a request, offer, invitation, suggestion or advice. In order to help you recall your own experiences, we outline below some typical situations where refusing might be expected, as follows:

1. You request a higher status Vietnamese person to approve a project/plan/proposal etc. you are going to conduct.
2. You invite a Vietnamese friend/colleague/boss to a party/to have a trip/sightseeing etc.
3. You visit a Vietnamese friend's/colleague's/boss' house and offer his or her parents/children a gift
4. You suggest or advise a Vietnamese colleague/boss/friend to change a plan which you and s/he have already made/to stop doing something/or to start doing something
5. You witness a Vietnamese person refusing your friend/colleague or another Vietnamese

Could you now respond to the items in the questionnaire by ticking an appropriate cell numbered from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

*** Note:**

- The pronoun ‘They’ in the following items refers to Vietnamese people who refused you or who you witnessed refusing another person.
- When a thing that people do with language (e.g. requesting, suggesting, offering, inviting or advising) is not mentioned in the items, you need to understand that the refusal or acceptance is made in response to any of those actions. (For example, ‘refuse me’ in the very first item implies refusing any of your request, suggestion, offer, invitation or advice)

| Relationships | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree |
| 1. They are very likely to refuse me if they do not know me well in advance. | | | | | |
| 2. They tend not to refuse their boss even though they are not willing to accept since they want to maintain a good relationship with the boss. | | | | | |
| 3. They tend not to refuse their higher-rank relatives (e.g. grandparents, parents, uncles) even though they have no intention of accepting. | | | | | |
| 4. They tend not to refuse to give financial support to their lower-rank relatives (e.g. nieces, nephews etc.). | | | | | |
| 5. They tend not to refuse to give financial support to their friends or colleagues with whom they have close relationship. | | | | | |
| 6. They tend not to refuse to give financial support to a person of higher social and administrative status no matter how close relationship they have with that person. | | | | | |
| 7. They tend to refuse to give financial support to their former boss if they did not have a close relationship with him/her | | | | | |
| 8. In the family setting, a person’s decision to refuse or accept is greatly influenced by their parents or higher-rank relatives even though such persons are themselves mature enough to have their own opinions. | | | | | |
| Responsibilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. They tend not to refuse to give financial support to their relatives of lower family status than themselves because they think that doing so is their responsibility. | | | | | |
| 10. If they are the head of a clan, they tend not to refuse to give financial support to their poorer relatives of higher status than themselves (e.g. uncles, grandparents etc.) even though to do so they would have to borrow money from other people. | | | | | |
| 11. Due to feeling responsible for other family members, a woman may refuse to live with her husband even though she still loves him; or vice versa, she may reluctantly agree to live with her husband although she no longer loves him. | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. A doctor may refuse to arrange an urgent check-up for a patient only because the allotted examining time is over. | | | | | |
| Harmony | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Sometimes persons do not refuse not because they want to accept, but because they want to maintain harmonious relationship. | | | | | |
| 14. Sometimes they accept your invitation in order to save your 'face' and not to make you feel humiliated. | | | | | |
| 15. Sometimes they may try to avoid saying 'No' to avoid unpleasantness and confrontation. | | | | | |
| 16. Sometimes they do not refuse because they want to maintain social harmony even though in doing so they are violating the rules, regulations, or principles. | | | | | |
| Identities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. A husband may tend to display his power by refusing or accepting something without consulting his wife. | | | | | |
| 18. Children tend not to refuse their parents/grandparents since they regard their parents'/ grandparents' words/opinions as absolute. | | | | | |
| 19. Urban people seem to accept gifts more easily and directly (i.e. without undertaking one or two turns of refusing at first) than do rural people. | | | | | |
| 20. People in work settings seem to accept gifts more easily and directly (i.e. without undertaking one or two turns of refusing at first) than people in a family setting. | | | | | |
| 21. Young people seem to refuse more directly and explicitly than do older people. | | | | | |
| Purposes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. Sometimes some civil servants refuse a person's request because they want some sort of bribe. | | | | | |
| 23. A boss/a chief accountant/an administrator tends to refuse a person's request if they don't see any benefit for themselves in accepting it. | | | | | |
| 24. When deciding between accepting and refusing, they tend to favour their personal well-being rather than any institutional/public benefit. | | | | | |
| 25. Sometimes a boss (e.g. director, head of department etc.) refuses his or her employee's request not because the request is wrong or inappropriate but because the boss wants to display his power over the employee. | | | | | |
| Strategies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. They often say 'OK, let me see', 'I'll have a look', or 'I'll consider it' but then they do nothing. | | | | | |
| 27. In many cases they don't say 'No' but they don't do what I request. | | | | | |
| 28. When I visit a family and offer a small gift, the host often refuses in what he says but still accepts the gift. | | | | | |
| 29. When I invite someone to go for a party or sightseeing, if they do not want to go, they seem to be very hesitant by offering a lot of mitigating expressions or displaying delay. | | | | | |
| 30. They don't usually express their true feelings when they refuse. | | | | | |
| 31. Their refusals to my invitation are often embedded with lengthy explanation or expressions of regret. | | | | | |
| 32. But I also see that sometimes they refuse their friends or people of lower family or social status quite directly without any explanation. | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 33. They do not maintain sufficient eye contact when speaking in general and when refusing in particular. | | | | | |
| 34. They often show that they feel sorry when they have to refuse. | | | | | |
| 35. They often refuse my invitation by giving indefinite promises such as “another time perhaps”, “sometime later please” etc. | | | | | |
| Your perceptions, attitudes, evaluation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. Sometimes I am very surprised with the situation where a Vietnamese tries to pay for his/her friend in a bar or a restaurant while the latter tries to refuse. | | | | | |
| 37. Sometimes I cannot recognize whether they are refusing or accepting. | | | | | |
| 38. I think I should rely on both the way they behave (e.g. their voice and gesture, posture etc.) and their words rather than relying solely on their words when I want to know whether they are refusing or accepting. | | | | | |
| 39. I don't like the way they refuse when I make a proposal about a plan/project etc. | | | | | |
| 40. Sometimes they refuse a gift just for the sake of politeness, i.e. it is not a real refusal. | | | | | |
| 41. I think it is better for them to refuse rather than accept doing something reluctantly. | | | | | |
| 42. I think they think that not to refuse explicitly is considered as a politeness strategy. | | | | | |
| 43. Sometimes they are very direct and even rude especially in refusing people whom they regard as lower status than themselves. | | | | | |
| 44. Their refusals or acceptances are affected more by interpersonal relations than by the benefits or well-being that my request/advice may bring about. | | | | | |
| 45. In both my business and personal contacts, they want to get to know my background, personality, expertise etc. before they can decide whether or not to accept my proposal/request. | | | | | |

Appendix 5

(Three ethics approval letters for three fieldworks)

Final Approval - Candlin (Ref: 5201100836)

17 Nov 2011

Dear Prof Candlin,

Re: "Refusing in Australian English and Vietnamese: A cross cultural study"
(Ref: 5201100836)

The above application was reviewed by The Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee wishes to thank you for a thorough and well prepared application. Approval of the above application is granted and you may now proceed with your research.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Prof Chris Candlin (Chief Investigator)

Dr Jill Murray (Co-Investigator)

Mr Trong Du Nguyen (Co-Investigator)

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports. Your first progress report is due on 1st November 2012.

If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy>

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Roger
Chair

Faculty of Human Sciences
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee

Faculty of Human Sciences – Ethics
Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C

Macquarie University
NSW 2109

Ph: +61 2 9850 4197

Fax: +61 2 9850 4465

Email: fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au

<http://www.research.mq.edu.au/>

RE: HS Ethics Final Approval (5201200833) (Condition met)

21 Nov 2012

Fhs Ethics fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au

Dear Prof Candlin,

Re: "Refusing in Vietnamese: Socio-pragmatic and Socio-psychological perspectives"(5201200833)

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and you may now commence your research.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Jill Murray
Mr Trong Du Nguyen
Prof Chris Candlin

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 21st November 2013
Progress Report 2 Due: 21st November 2014

Progress Report 3 Due: 21st November 2015

Progress Report 4 Due: 21st November 2016

Final Report Due: 21st November 2017

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University.

This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy>

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Roger
Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics Review Sub-Committee
Human Research Ethics Committee

Faculty of Human Sciences - Ethics
Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C
Macquarie University
NSW 2109

Ph: +61 2 9850 4197
Fax: +61 2 9850 4465

Email: fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au

<http://www.research.mq.edu.au/>

RE: HS Ethics Application - Approved (5201300805) (Con/Met)

10 Dec 13

Fhs Ethics fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au

Dear Prof Candlin,

Re: "Refusing in Vietnamese: Socio-pragmatic and Socio-psychological perspectives"(5201200833)

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and you may now commence your research.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Jill Murray
Mr Trong Du Nguyen
Prof Chris Candlin

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 21st November 2013
Progress Report 2 Due: 21st November 2014
Progress Report 3 Due: 21st November 2015
Progress Report 4 Due: 21st November 2016
Final Report Due: 21st November 2017

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).
4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms
5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.
6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University.

This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy>

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of Final Approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have Final Approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Roger
Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics Review Sub-Committee
Human Research Ethics Committee

Faculty of Human Sciences - Ethics
Research Office
Level 3, Research HUB, Building C5C
Macquarie University
NSW 2109

Ph: [+61 2 9850 4197](tel:+61298504197)
Fax: [+61 2 9850 4465](tel:+61298504465)

Email: fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au
<http://www.research.mq.edu.au/>