

A contrastive study on expressing formulas of the speech act of direct refusal of invitations by the Vietnamese and native speakers of American English

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ABSTRACT

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Refusing an invitation is one of the most frequently performed speech acts in our daily lives. This act is commonly expressed through direct or indirect means of expression, including grammatical structures and semantic formulas in both languages. In this article, the author focuses on a contrastive study on expressing formulas of the speech act of direct refusal of invitations by the Vietnamese and native speakers of American English so as to point out the similarities as well as differences in both languages in terms of means of expression.

1. Introduction

Refusals are generally recognized face-threatening acts and face-saving strategies are required to perform them in an appropriate manner. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), the speech act of refusing has an adverse effect on the listener's positive face because it conveys that the speaker does not care about the hearer's interests or desires and that the speaker's wishes are different from those of the listener. Three additional factors are proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) as influences on the violent face-threatening speech acts (FTA). In terms of the relative power of the speaker over the hearer (Power), the social distance between the speaker and the hearer (Distance), and the weight, or rank, of the imposition, for instance, a conversation between a professor and a student differs from a conversation between two students. For instance, asking someone to pass the salt differs from asking them to lend you their car.

In fact, the listener has to adjust expressions of refusing in communities with different cultures. Each ethnic group, a cultural community has different refusal strategies. Declination requires the speaker to have tactful skills in choosing suitable strategies to express so that the listener does not misunderstand and accept the refusal, and at the same time save face for both the speaker and the listener. In many situations, the direct refusal strategies are effective solutions for speakers to achieve their communication goals chosen in both languages.

This study focuses on a contrastive study on expressing formulas of the speech act of direct refusal of invitations by native speakers of American English and the Vietnamese in order to find out the similarities and differences in two languages in terms of means of expression. All the examples are collected and selected from twenty - nine literary works in both languages.

2. Literature Review on the speech act of refusals

The speech act of refusal has been investigated in a number of languages in English speaking countries in the world and in Vietnam. Most of the research focuses on two main directions, as follow.

Firstly, describing expressing formulas, strategies and contrastive analysis on the speech act of refusal between two languages
Some typical authors are Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss Wertz (1990); Ikoma và Shimura (1994). Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss Wertz (1990, p.68) stated that refusal is a complex speech act to realize and it requires a high level of pragmatic competence to be performed successfully. It usually involves extended negotiation and the use of indirect strategies to minimize the offense to the hearer. This speech act is also sensitive to other sociolinguistic variables such as the status of the interlocutors relative to each other (e.g., refusing a request from a friend versus a supervisor at work). Beebe et al. (1990) further explain that this speech act reflects “fundamental cultural values” and involves “delicate interpersonal negotiation” that requires the speaker to “build rapport and help the listener avoid embarrassment”. Ikoma and Shimura (1994) claimed that in the situation of refusing an invitation, both Americans and American learners of Japanese use the direct strategies of refusal more than the indirect ones when rejecting the invitation of the person who has a higher, equal or lower status. However, when turning down invitations from people of higher status, the Japanese tend to use more indirect strategies than the American when refusing people that have a lower status. In Vietnamese, there are also some studies on refusal speech act, specifically Tran Chi Mai (2005); Ngo Huong Lan (2015); Vu Tien Dung (2003); Doan Thi Hong Lan (2010) ... Vu Tien Dung (2003) pointed out that there are 6 polite strategies in refusal speech act. Doan Thi Hong Lan (2010) compared the speech act of request between Japanese and Vietnamese. The research found out that the Japanese have a tendency of using more indirect strategies than the Vietnamese is lower than that of Japanese.

Secondly, investigating the factors influencing the choice of refusal strategy in two languages

Beckers (1999) examined refusal strategies in German and American English . The author has shown that Americans change their refusal strategies based on social status whereas Germans base on social distance. Felix-Brasdefer (2003), Honglin (2007, p.67) pointed out that cultural factor affects the choice of refusal strategy more than language proficiency. According to Honglin (2007, p.67), the Chinese are more inclined to use direct strategies than Americans. Social power was the most important factor influencing the choice of the refusal strategy of the Chinese, while social distance play the most important role in the choice of the refusal strategy of the Americans.

In Vietnam, Luu Quy Khuong (2010) and Nguyen Thi My Ngan (2010) indentified that face and politeness have much influence on choosing indirect strategies of refusal. Nguyen Thi Minh Phuong (2006)pointed out the similarities and differences between gender factors; social distance; and social status in the speech act of requests by Australians and Vietnamese learners of English.

3. Direct speech act and the speech act of refusing invitations

3.1. Direct Speech Acts

According to Searle (1969), there are various speech acts that are related to illocutionary force. While speech acts can stand alone, they can relate to other parts of sentences, which is how Searle connected them to illocutionary power. Searle pointed out that direct speech acts and indirect ones are the two categories of speech acts.

Directness is a communication style that the speaker tries to go right to the point. The speech conveys the speaker's words precisely and literally. The benefit of being straightforward is that the listener does not have to search for what the speaker might have mean by uttering such and such sentence. Everything they say to each other is communicated in full. Rarely do misunderstandings occur.

The speaker's utterances are expressed through direct speech acts when there is a clear connection between the utterance's form or structure and its intended meaning. This kind of speech act is related to the classification of speech acts as a whole, which was previously discussed. For instance, “Help yourself.” The sentence above serves as an illustration of a direct speech act. There is no preceding or following sentence and no context for that statement. Illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDS) are commonly used to identify direct Speech Acts. Yule (1991, p.54) also adds that when there is a direct connection between a structure and a function, this speech act might be referred to as direct speech.

Example 1: A conversation between two colleagues at a restaurant during lunch break

A. Do you want to eat more cake?

B. No, I don't eat anymore.

B refuses A's invitation directly through the use of the negative word "no" in the utterance " *No, I don't eat anymore.*".

3.2. *Invitations and the speech act of refusal of invitations*

An invitation is a statement that shows the speaker's friendly, polite, respectful and hospitable attitude and comes from the interests of both the speaker and the listener. According to Hornby (2003, p.685), *invite* is a verb which means "to call comes; invited attend (meetings, banquets, etc.)" Suzuki (2009, p.87) defined, "When inviting someone verbally, the inviter utters a speech to convey an aim of inviting. Therefore, speech acts of invitation arise when a speaker showed their intention to request the participation or presence of the hearer to the certain event, especially which being held by the speaker".

According to Searle's classification of speech acts (1969), invitations belong to the category of Directives. The illocutionary point of this type of speech act aims to get the hearer to do something. The direction of fit is world-to-words and the sincerity condition is want (or wish or desire). The psychological states are the speaker's wishes/ desires. The propositional content is always that the hearer (H) does some future actions.

Example 2: A conversation between the landlady and the young artist who rents her house

The landlady: ... Have dinner with us, guy.

(Bà chủ nhà trọ: ... Chúng tôi mời cậu ăn cơm tối.)

Young Artist: Thank you, ma'am. Let's another meal. Tonight, let me to invite her to a casual meal. Maybe, she would like to eat at a crowded restaurant more.)

(Họa sỹ trẻ tuổi: Cám ơn bà. Để bữa khác. Tôi nay cho phép tôi mời cô bé đi ăn cơm bình dân. Biết đâu ăn ở quán đông người cô bé sẽ thích hơn.)

(Đoàn, 2017, p.3)

According to Hornby (2003, p.675), "Refusing an invitation means you are not willing or reject to do something when someone invites you to do. It also means you don't accept the invitation of someone".

4. Research results and Discussion

Here are the results of syntactic structures and semantic formulas used to express the direct refusal of invitations by Americans and Vietnamese people, including: (i) semantic formulas with performative verbs, negative words used to express illocutionary act of refusing the invitation such as: No / not / can not...; and (ii) syntactic structures, with three typical ones such as: Subject + NOT + V; S + NEVER/NEVER and S + the central components and the extended one... in twenty - nine literary works in both languages.

4.1. *Expressing formulas of the speech act of direct refusal of invitations by American English*

4.1.1. *Semantic formulas of the speech act of direct refusal of invitations*

According to Bardovi- Harlig & Hartford (1991, p.48), semantic formulas represent "the means by which a particular speech act is accomplished, in terms of the primary content of an utterance"

a. *Performative verbs*

English has a few performative verbs that can be used to express declinations directly, such as refuse, decline, deny, and resist. Of examples we found out, it seems that Americans do not tend to use these kinds of performative verbs.

Example 3: The conversation between Alex and Annie when she dropped into the house.

Alex: Cake? Biscuit? All home made!

*Annie: Oh, very nice. I'm sure. But I'll have to **refuse**. I'll be putting on pounds.*

(Adeline, 1996, p.285)

Example 4: A conversation between Frankland and Doctor Watson at Frankland's house

Frankland: You'll help me to empty the decanter in honour of this great occasion!

*Watson: I **resist** all your solicitations...*

(Arthur, 1986, p.637)

b. *Semantic formulas containing negative word NO*

The word NO often occurs at the beginning of the utterance as an indicator of the speech act of refusal.

Example 5: A conversation between Dr. Judd and a female patient at the clinic

Judd: Would you like some water?

*Female patient: **No no!** I'm f-fine*

(Sidney, 1985b, p.64)

Example 6: Conversation between a couple, Tracy and Jeff in the dining room

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Tracy: *Sweet roll, Jeff? Coffee?*

Jeff: **No, thanks.**

(Sidney, 1985a, p.386)

c. Semantic formulas adding prefixes or suffixes

New words with negative meanings are formed by adding a prefix (UN-, IM-, DIS, IN-...) or suffix (-LESS...) to the root words/morphemes. It is called morphological formation.

Example 7: A conversation between Mrs. Benecke and the manager, Gregory Halston at a store

Benecke: *You gotta come up and have tea with us some afternoon. You'll love old P.J.*

Gregory Halston: *I am sure I would. **Unfortunately**, I work afternoons. Too bad.*

(Sidney, 1985a, p.232)

In the above situation, Gregory Halston flatly declined Ms. Benecke's invitation by using "Unfortunately" and added the reason "I work afternoons" to mitigate the threat to the inviter's face.

4.1.2. Syntactic formulas of the speech act of direct refusal of invitations

a. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT

Modal auxiliary verbs come before NOT (N'T) to create a complete semantic formula: *S + modal verb + NOT + V* or *S + do/does/ + NOT + V* or *S + BE + NOT + ...*

Example 8: A conversation between Dana and David Haynes when he is on the way to pick Dana up from the airport to the hotel on the occasion of her first business trip to Brussels.

David Haynes: *If you're free this evening, I'd like*

Dana: *I'm sorry. I'm afraid I **am not***

(Sidney, 2001, p.136)

b. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with extended components

b.1. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of agreement

Example 9: A conversation between John and his classmate

Mark: *How about going to a disco tonight?*

Friend: ***I'd love to**, but I **can't**. I've got to do some homework.*

(John, 2000, p.43)

Mark's friend refused an invitation by showing his agreement and willingness by saying "I'd love to", but for the reason "I've got to do some homework" and couldn't accept the invitation.

b.2. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of polite words/ phrases

There are certain common phrases like *"I'm sorry; I'm afraid I can't; That's very kind of you, How kind of you...."*

Example 10: A conversation between Pamela and the colleague, Dana at the office

Pamela: *Hello, Dana. I know this is sudden, but a good friend has just come to town and Roger and I are giving him a little party next Wednesday. I know Jeff is still out of town, but we would love to have you come. Are you free?*

Dana: *I'm afraid I'm not. I'm leaving for Dusseldorf tonight.*

(Sidney, 2001, p.124)

b.3. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of negative ability

This strategy can be analyzed in the direction of negative face, self-criticism, and face-saving act in communication. By using it, the decliner transfers responsibility to the inviter.

Example 12: A conversation between Pamela and friend on the phone

Pamela: *Roger and I are having a few people over for an early Christmas dinner tomorrow, and we want you and Kemal here.*

....

Dana: *No. As a matter of fact, **I don't**.*

(Sidney, 2001, p.117)

In the above example, the status between Pamela and Dana is equal. Pamela issued a direct rejection. "No. As a matter of fact, I don't" is very assertive and decisive, with no modality factor. Therefore, there is more or less risk of threatening the face of the inviter.

b.4. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of the uselessness of the invitation

This is a high face-threatening expression. It is often used when the person who declines the invitation has a higher or equal social status than the inviter. The real content of this strategy is that the refusal is made on the basis of assessing the benefit/disadvantage of the invitation act.

Example 13: A conversation between a daughter and her mother when she brings milk to the bed

Daughter: *Here, Mother, drink it. It will be good for you.*

Mom: *I don't want to. **I am not interested.***

(John, 2002, p.174)

b.5. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of postponement

This strategy is built on the element of time. When using this strategy, the speaker expresses a desire to delay the invitation given by the inviter. Some commonly used phrases include *not now, not today...*

Example 14: A conversation between Dolly and Anny at a café

Dolly: *Smoke?*

Anny: ***Not now.***

(Sidney, 1985b, p.95)

b.6. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of inappropriateness of the invitation

Example 15: A conversation between the husband, Mallory and his pregnant wife in the living room.

Mallory: *How about a drink?*

Sandra: *No. I shouldn't. The baby...*

(Sidney, 1995a, p.112)

In the example above, the wife pointed out the bad effects of wine to pregnant women by saying “The baby...”

b.7. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of reason

This is a tactful, polite refusal strategy that avoids threatening to the inviter's face and maintain the relationship between the interlocutors. In many cases, the decliner can give objective or subjective reasons leading to the failure to perform the invitation.

Example 16: The conversation between Clifton and Jill when she visits the couple, Jill- Toby

Clifton: *I want to give a dinner party for you and Toby. I'll take over the private room at the Bistro with a hundred of your most intimate friends. How does that sound?*

Jill: *I'm so sorry. Cliff. I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to make it tonight. **I'm a little tired. Toby thinks I should stay home and rest.***

(Sidney, 1976, p.208)

In the example above, Jill declined the friend's invitation with personal reasons “I'm a little tired.”, “I should stay home and rest”.

It enables him to maintain the relationship between the inviter.

b.8. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of personal principle

Example 17: A conversation between Mr. Edwards and a partner at the office

Edwards: *Would you like some tea?*

Jennifer: *No, thanks. **I never drink tea in the morning.***

(John, 2000, p.75)

4.2. Expressing formulas of the speech act of direct refusal of invitations by the Vietnamese

4.2.1. Semantic formulas of the speech act of direct refusal of invitations

a. Performative verbs

Like Americans, Vietnamese people rarely use performative verbs for their refusals. We found out that both Vietnamese people and American share the low frequency of performative verbs when declining an invitation.

Example 18: A conversation between a soldier and Tham when she passed the barracks

Soldier: *Drop into our barracks, please*

(*Mời cô vào đơn vị chúng tôi chơi đã*)

Tham: *I'm sorry. Let's another time. Although the opportunity to enlist in the army was opened, I still had to **refuse.***

(*Xin phép anh, để đến khi khác. Dù cơ hội để được nhập ngũ đã hé mở, em vẫn phải từ chối.*)

(Lê, 2003, p.18)

b. Semantic formulas containing negative word NO

In Vietnamese, NO (KHÔNG/ THÔI) usually occurs in the part of the dilouge as an indication of refusal.

Example 19: A conversation between Khoi and her lover when he came to her house

Khoi: Well, now go out for a meal with me as an apology, okay? (*Thôi, bây giờ mời em đi ăn một bữa coi như tạ lỗi vậy nhé*)
Nhy: No! I'm not going anywhere. (*Không! Em không đi đâu.*)

(Nguyễn, 2017, p.98)

Example 20: A conversation between Lam and Siu- the casino owner at the casino

Lam: Is there a good room?

(*Còn phòng tử tế không?*)

Siu: Yes, there are three super deluxe rooms left. Let me have a chance to invite the boss for a night.

(*Dạ, còn ba phòng super delux. Em mời đại ca một đêm.*)

Lam: No need to invite, I'll pay the rent off.

(*Không cần mời, tôi trả sòng phăng.*)

(Nguyễn, 2005a, p.117)

Lam refused Siu's invitation with the phrase "No need to invite" and with an explanation "I'll pay the rent off".

4.2.2. syntactic formulas of the speech act of direct refusal of invitations

a. syntactic formula of S + not + V (S + KHÔNG + V)

In Vietnamese, there is equivalent to this kind of syntactic formula with some negative words such as no/not.. (*chẳng/ chả/ chớ/ khỏi*), the subject (S) indicates the relationship between the two interlocutors and their attitude based on certain situations.

Example 21: The conversation between Khuu and his sister-in-law when she arrived his home at lunch time

Mr Khuu: Sister-in-law. Come in for a meal.

(*Kìa dì. Dì vào ăn cơm.*)

Mrs. Son: I have just eaten, I'm not hungry.

(*Bác cứ ăn đi, em không đói.*)

(Nguyễn, 1990, p.144)

Example 22: The conversation between Lam and his lover when he called her on the phone

Lam: I will come pick you up to eat this afternoon.

(*Trưa nay anh đến đón em đi ăn nhé.*)

Phuong: I can't go anywhere. The best choice is that you come to the company to have a meal with me.

(*Em không đi được đâu. Tốt nhất là anh về công ty ăn cơm tập thể với em.*)

(Nguyễn, 2005b, p.9)

Example 23: A conversation between Tuong and his ex-wife when she came home to visit her children

Tuong: Sit down, Lien. I take you some water.

(*Mời Liên ngồi. Tôi đi pha nước.*)

Lien: No, no need. ...

(*Thôi, khỏi cần. ...*)

(Nguyễn, 2003, p.116)

b. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with extended components

b.1. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement insulting another person's face

This is a drastic strategy and threatens the face. The context shows anger; the words used can be vulgar, brusque and rude. This strategy is often used when the decliner is of an equal or higher status than the inviter.

Example 24: A conversation between the husband, Sinh and his wife in the living room when he accidentally discovered someone's sweet letter to his wife

Sinh's wife: Do you think this cake is delicious? I bought it at Hang Trong. This piece of marinated meat is the best. I have to pay up to five hao. Let me cut it for you. You look really hungry. I'm hungry, too. Well, let's eat until we're full, we'll see to everything later...

(*Anh xem bánh này có ngon không? Em mua ở Hàng Trống kia đấy. Miếng thịt ướp này là hạng ngon nhất, em phải trả đến năm hào đấy anh ạ. Để em cắt cho anh ăn nhé. Hình như anh đói lắm thì phải. Em cũng thế. Thôi chúng ta hãy ăn cho no đã, rồi sẽ liệu sau...)*

Sinh: I don't want to eat these damn things!

(*Không ai thèm ăn những thứ khốn nạn này!*)

(Thạch, 1937, p.32-33)

b.2. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of polite words/ phrases

Like Americans, Vietnamese people especially like to use the expressions including sorry/I'm sorry/It's a pity/ maybe (*xin lỗi/xin phép/đáng tiếc/thứ lỗi/có lẽ*)... to make the refusal softer and more pleasant and polite. This strategy is used when the decliner has a lower or equal position than the inviter.

Example 25: A conversation between Mrs. Lan and a guest in the living room

Ms. Lan: It's still early to go to the bus station. I'd like to invite you to stay for dinner with my family.

(*Vẫn còn sớm để ra bến xe. Mời bác ở lại ăn cơm với gia đình em.*)

Guest: Well, I'm sorry. I ask leave early. Let's another time.

(*Thôi xin phép chị và gia đình. Để đến khi khác.*)

(Lê, 2003, p.175)

Example 26: A conversation between Lam and Loan when he came to her house and invited her to dinner

Lam: We're going to have lunch. I invite Loan.

(*Chúng ta đi ăn cơm. Tôi mời Loan.*)

Cam Loan: *Maybe* I can't go.

(*Có lẽ em không đi được.*)

(Trần, 2016a, p.158)

b.3. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of negative ability

Example 27: A conversation between two officers at the wine party

Captain: Then please invite Major Lam!

(*Vậy thì xin mời thiếu tá Lâm!*)

Lam: **I am incompetent**... If I had a talent, there would no need to invite!

(*Tôi bất tài... Nếu tôi có tài, khỏi cần mời!*)

(Nguyễn, 2015, p.62)

Example 28: A conversation between Mai and Mr. Han in the living room

Mr. Han: Take it easy, get some water, have a few cups of Chinese tea with me first.

(*Hãy thong thả, được nước rồi, uống vài chén chè tàu với tôi đã.*)

Mai: Dear Sir, I am a country person and don't know how to drink Chinese tea.

(*Thưa cụ, quả cháu nhà quê nhà mùa không biết uống chè tàu.*)

(Khái, 1934, p.29)

b.4. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of the uselessness of the invitation

Example 29: A conversation between Hai Binh and Dung Ha in front of the bar

Hai Binh: Com in for a drink, sister. How about negotiating?

(*Mời chị vào uống nước, mình thương lượng xem sao?*)

Dung Ha: Well, back...there is nothing to meet in private! what the hell do you negotiate?...

(*Thôi, về...chẳng có gì để phải gặp riêng cả! Thương lượng cái quái gì nữa...*)

(Thanh, 2017, p.104)

In the above example, with a higher position, the gangster leader, Dung Ha refused to have some water from Hai Binh by showing decisiveness, non-negotiation with "there is nothing to meet in private" or it is no use negotiating.

b.5. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of postponement

Example 30: A conversation between the father and his son at a home party

Dad: Drink, guy! (*Uống đi!*)

Lam: Slowly dad.. (*Từ từ bố...*)

(Trần, 2016b, p.30)

Example 31: A conversation between Mr. Trac - the director of the bank and My, Lieutenant Colonel, the head of the Economic Security Department after the meeting at the bank.

Mr. Trac: We understand. So now the Board of Directors would like to invite all of you to a meal and the board of the Directors of the Provincial Public Security, please do not refuse.

(*Chúng tôi hiểu. Vậy bây giờ Ban Giám đốc xin phép được mời cơm các anh và Ban Giám đốc công an tỉnh xin các anh đừng từ chối.*)

My: Dear Mr. Trac, please let me see you another time. (*Báo cáo anh Trác, xin anh cho anh em được hẹn anh dịp khác.*)

(Nguyễn, 2005a, p.59)

b.6. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of inappropriateness of the invitation

This is a rather face-threatening strategy, especially in cases where the person who declines points out the inappropriateness.

Example 32: A conversation between Hoang and Diep Truc on the phone

Hoang: I'll come and pick you up for entertainment again some day!

(Mai một anh lại qua đón em đi chơi nhé!)

Diep Truc: I can't promise with you. I have too much work. But to be honest, I rarely go here and there for entertainment..

(Em không hứa được đâu anh à. Công việc thì quá nhiều. Mà thật tình thì...em rất ít đi đây đi đó để giải trí...)

(Phuong, 2014, p.80)

b.7. Syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of reason

This is the most widely used refusing expression in Vietnamese, hence it is occasionally not very helpful. It's quite typical to deny with arbitrary or objective justifications.

Example 33: A conversation between Mai and Mrs. An when she went to Mai's house

Mai: Rarely do you come to my house. Could you stay and have a mediocre meal with my brother and me?

(Chả mấy khi cụ lên chơi, thế nào cũng xin cụ chiếu cố xơi với chị em cháu một bữa cơm xoàng.)

Mrs. An: Okay. Thanks. But I'm really full, I'm not a guest.

(Thôi. Tôi cảm ơn mẹ. Nhưng quả thực tôi no lắm, tôi không làm khách đâu.)

(Khái, 1943, p.109)

b.8. syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement of personal principle

The overt method of rejecting an offer by citing a personal principle. It has a syntactic formula containing “KHÔNG/ KHÔNG BAO GIỜ/ KHÔNG ĐÒI NÀO/ CHẴNG/ CHẴNG BAO GIỜ/ CHẴNG ĐÒI NÀO – NEVER”. In reality, this tactic essentially threatens the other person in front of them.

Example 34: The conversation between the captain and Mrs. Dung at the party

Captain: Drink up. I drank it all!

(Cô uống đi. Tôi uống cạn rồi!)

Dung: I'm not used to drinking.

(Tôi không quen uống rượu.)

(Nguyễn, 2015, p.300)

Example 35: A conversation between the host and guest

Ví dụ 209: Cuộc thoại giữa chủ nhà và khách

Host: Wait a minute, smoke with me!...

(Khoan đi đã, hút với tôi điếu thuốc nào!...)

Guest: Thank you. I don't smoke.

(Cám ơn. Đây không hút.)

(Quế, 2014, p.106)

5. Conclusion

Through twenty - nine literary works in both languages, we all found out some similarities and differences in expressing formulas of the speech act of direct refusal of invitations by the Vietnamese and American English native speakers. In general, they have the similar semantic and syntactic formulas. The American and the Vietnamese share the low frequency of employments of performative verbs. In terms of differences, unlike Americans, in Vietnamese, there is no word formation by adding prefixes or suffixes at the beginning or the end of root words to create new negative words. Furthermore, there are no syntactic formulas containing negative word NOT with a statement insulting another person's face that can be found out in English. Through this study, it is expected to give more information to readers with similarities and differences in terms of semantic and syntactic formulas used when refusing invitations directly in both languages. It brings some part contributions to improving the effects of communication.

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