A study of pragmatic change in the Vietnamese of second generation speakers in Queensland, Australia

Tinh Bao Hoang

School of Languages and Linguistics
Griffith University

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ABSTRACT

Language contact, bilingualism and contact-induced language change have created controversial issues among linguists as more and more people of different languages and cultures around the world come into contact. There have been studies of the phenomena of language change including code switching, code mixing, interference, transference, and convergence in different language dyads (Clyne, 2003), especially in multi-lingual societies like Australia, the United States of America and Canada. However, there is insufficient research into the Vietnamese language used in Australia and its changes in comparison with Vietnamese used in Vietnam. This empirical study, therefore, investigates the patterns of pragmatic transference in spoken Vietnamese used by the second generation speakers in Australia who are English-Vietnamese bilinguals. The basic hypothesis of this thesis is that the formulae of pragmatic speech acts in spoken Vietnamese used by the second generation and their lack of knowledge or incorrect usage of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs show a shift from indirectness to directness in the pragmatic performance of the language. Specifically, the study focuses on the speech act of refusal and the usage of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs. The study documents such pragmatic transference and explores the causes of these changes. The findings will help to fill the gap in the study of language change in linguistics as a whole, and particularly the study of the Vietnamese of the English-Vietnamese bilinguals, and the English-Vietnamese dyad in terms of linguistic and pragmatic elements. The findings have implications for language maintenance among the Vietnamese diaspora community in Australia, for the study of language change in heritage languages, and for understanding trends in the multicultural and multilingual society of Australia.
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signature

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# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................................... i
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY ........................................................................................................... ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................................ iii
LIST OF TABLES, GRAPHS AND CHARTS .......................................................................................... viii

CHAPTER 1 ............................................................................................................................................ 1
INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................................................... 1
1.1. Background .................................................................................................................................... 1
1.2. Research questions ....................................................................................................................... 6
1.3. Aims of the research, rationale, and contributions ........................................................................ 7
1.4. Thesis structure ............................................................................................................................ 10

CHAPTER 2 ........................................................................................................................................ 12
LITERATURE REVIEW AND RATIONALE FOR THE CURRENT STUDY .................................................. 12
2.1. Bilingualism to code switching to language transference and change: a sequential pattern ............ 12
2.2. Politeness, face and directness / indirectness strategies ................................................................. 17
2.3. Politeness from the perspective of high context cultures ............................................................... 21
   2.3.1. Face work in high context cultures ....................................................................................... 22
   2.3.2. Indirectness strategies in high context cultures .................................................................... 25
   2.3.3. Usage of proverbs as a form of indirectness ....................................................................... 28
2.4. Approaches to analysing pragmatic transference .......................................................................... 31
2.5. Characteristics of Vietnamese communication style ..................................................................... 39
2.6. Approach to the current study ...................................................................................................... 41

CHAPTER 3 ........................................................................................................................................ 44
METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................................................. 44
3.1. Mixed methods approach ............................................................................................................. 45
3.2. Participants .................................................................................................................................... 47
3.3. Data collection ............................................................................................................................. 51
   3.3.1. Data collection for Research Question 1: The patterns of pragmatic transference of the second generation ..................................................................................... 51
3.3.2. Data collection for Research Question 2: Identifying the causes of the changing pragmatic pattern ................................................................. 54

3.4. Data analysis ............................................................................................................. 56

3.4.1. Data analysis for Research Question 1: the patterns of pragmatic transference of the second generation Vietnamese speakers ......................................................... 56

3.4.2. Data analysis for Research Question 2: Identifying causes of the changing pragmatic patterns 59

CHAPTER 4 .................................................................................................................. 62

EVIDENCE FROM THE DISCOURSE COMPLETION TEST ROLE PLAYS OF PRAGMATIC TRANSFERENCE: FROM AN INDIRECT TO A DIRECT SPEAKING STYLE ........................................ 62

4.1. Introduction .............................................................................................................. 62

4.2. A comparison of the refusal patterns among the second generation speakers, the first generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers ........................................ 63

4.3. A comparison of the use of direct “không” (no) among the three cohorts .............. 77

4.4. The contrast between the second generation speakers’ direct speaking style and the indirect style of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and first generation speakers ........ 83

4.4.1. Describing the indirect style: how the Vietnamese “beat about the bush” .... 83

4.4.2. The second generation speakers’ direct style: A pragmatic code-switching .... 90

4.4.3. Vague versus clear-cut style ................................................................................ 93

4.4.4. A shift from the first generation speakers’ and domestic Vietnamese native speakers’ intuitive, emotional basis to the second generation speakers’ rational basis for deciding on a response 97

4.4.5. A shift from the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and first generation speakers’ hierarchy basis to the second generation speakers’ equality basis ................................................. 101

4.4.6. Effects of code switching on indirectness .......................................................... 106

4.5. Tests for relationship between the second generation speakers’ level of directness and a) Vietnamese proficiency; b) duration of Vietnamese classes ..................................... 108

4.6. Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 113

CHAPTER 5 .................................................................................................................. 115

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF PRAGMATIC TRANSFERENCE IN TERMS OF THE USE OF VIETNAMESE IDIOMS AND PROVERBS AND EVIDENCE OF LACK OF AWARENESS OF THE TRANSFERENCE ........................................ 115

5.1. Introduction .............................................................................................................. 115

5.2. A comparison of the repertoire of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs among the second generation speakers, first generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native speakers .... 115

5.3. A mismatch between actual language performance and the perception of performance by the second generation speakers .................................................................................. 123

CHAPTER 6 .................................................................................................................. 132
# Table of Contents

REASONS FOR THE TRANSFERENCE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT .......................................................... 132

6.1. Factors contributing to the loss of indirectness in Vietnamese communication .......... 132
6.2. Attitudes toward the preservation of Vietnamese language and culture in the Australian context .................................................................................................................. 145

CHAPTER 7 .................................................................................................................. 147

DISCUSSION .................................................................................................................. 147

7.1. Summary of evidence for pragmatic transference and language change .................. 147
7.2. Significance of this study for the field of pragmatic transference research .......... 151
7.3. Characteristics of pragmatic transference in the second generation speakers' Vietnamese speech 152

7.3.1. Aiming at clarity, a characteristic of Australian English ................................. 153
7.3.2. The loss of Vietnamese idiom / proverb usage – a loss of a feature of Vietnamese speech style ................................................................. 157
7.3.3. Linguistic realisation of non-shared strategies ................................................. 160
7.3.4. A case of negative transfer ............................................................................. 163
7.4. Reasons for the pragmatic transference ................................................................... 166
7.5. Comparing and contrasting the results with previous studies ....................... 173

7.5.1. The relationship between pragmatic transference and proficiency .............. 173
7.5.2. The relationship between code switching and pragmatic transference .......... 176
7.6. Reflection on the effectiveness of methodological aspects ............................... 177
7.7. The mismatch between the second generation speakers’ awareness and language performance reflects an incomplete transfer ............................................. 179
7.8. Limitations of the study ...................................................................................... 180

CHAPTER 8 .................................................................................................................. 182

CONCLUSION ................................................................................................................. 182

a. Answers to the research questions ......................................................................... 182
b. Implications of this study for the study of language change ................................. 184
c. Practical implications of this study for understanding trends in multicultural and multilingual Australia, and for language maintenance among the Vietnamese diasporas in Australia ............. 187

8.4. Suggestions for further research ............................................................................. 192

Appendices .................................................................................................................... 193

Bibliography .................................................................................................................. 233
LIST OF TABLES, GRAPHS AND CHARTS

1. TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.</td>
<td>The performance of refusal patterns by the 31 second generation speakers.</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.</td>
<td>Comparison of male and female second generation speaker total strategy use.</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.</td>
<td>Comparison of male and female second generation speaker use of each strategy type.</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.</td>
<td>The performance of refusal patterns by the 30 first generation speakers.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.</td>
<td>The performance of refusal patterns by the 19 domestic Vietnamese native speakers.</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6.</td>
<td>Mann-Whitney U test of strategy use between the first generation speaker and domestic Vietnamese native speaker groups.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7.</td>
<td>A comparison of strategy use among second generation speaker, first generation speaker and domestic Vietnamese native speaker groups.</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8.</td>
<td>A comparison of Mean, Standard Deviation and Median for the number of strategy types in repertoire among the three cohorts.</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9.</td>
<td>A comparison of the participants having each strategy in their repertoire, among the three cohorts.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10.</td>
<td>A comparison of the median % of strategy use for each strategy type, among the three cohorts.</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 11.</td>
<td>A comparison of direct head acts among the three cohorts.</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 12.</td>
<td>A comparison of occurrences of the direct head acts among the three cohorts.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 13a.</td>
<td>The second generation speakers’ Vietnamese proficiency and level of directness manifested in their refusal patterns as judged by 13 domestic Vietnamese native speakers.</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 13b.</td>
<td>The mean scores of the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese proficiency and level of offence through their refusals judged by 13</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14. Results of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient tests for correlation between the second generation speakers’ proficiency and variables measuring level of indirectness.

Table 15. Significance values for Kruskal-Wallis tests for relationships between length of Vietnamese classes and different variables: Total direct head acts, Total supportive moves, Total strategies used and Total strategy types in repertoire.

Table 16. A comparison of Vietnamese idiom and proverb recognition and usage among the three cohorts.

Table 17. A comparison of median and asymp. sig. in use of Vietnamese proverbs and idioms by a Kruskal Wallis test.

Table 18. Results of tests for relationship between the second generation speakers’ proficiency and variables relating to their knowledge and use of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs.

Table 19. Results of tests for relationship between the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese formal tuition duration and variables relating to their knowledge and use of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs.

2. GRAPHS

Graph 1. Number of strategy types used in the refusal patterns by the three cohorts.

Graph 2. A comparison of total strategies used by the three cohorts.

Graph 3. A comparison of the frequency of direct head act strategy use among the three cohorts.

Graph 4. A comparison of proverb and idiom test 1 scores among the three cohorts.

Graph 5. A comparison of proverb and idiom Test 2 scores among the three cohorts.

Graph 6. The difference in the actual and declared use of negative ability, direct “Không”, expressing regret and indefinite strategies among the second generation speakers.
3. CHARTS

Chart 1. Answers by second generation speakers to question 10 in the questionnaire.

Chart 2. The percentage of second generation speakers who see themselves as using a more direct speaking style than their parents.

Chart 3. The percentage of second generation speaker participants feeling uneasy when giving true reasons for refusing in Vietnamese.

Chart 4. Degree to which the second generation speakers are influenced by the concept of saving face.

Chart 5. Second generation speakers’ questionnaire response on their parents’ teaching about morals and behaviour through the use of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs.

Chart 6. The percentages of the second generation speakers using Vietnamese in the domains.

Chart 7. The proportion of the second generation speakers thinking that it is a good idea to learn more about Vietnamese idioms and proverbs to improve their Vietnamese.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In a multi-cultural country like Australia, bilingualism (or multilingualism) is a familiar language phenomenon. This makes Australia “a distinctive live language laboratory” (Clyne, 1982, p. 710). Whenever there are contacts among people of different languages, practices of code-mixing and code-switching occur, eventually leading to language change. As in any other multicultural society, the Vietnamese communities in Australia experience a process of gradual language change due to bilingualism, with speakers switching to the dominant English language under cultural pressure, or lack of Vietnamese use. The second generation of Vietnamese immigrants has been raised in an English-speaking environment in Australia, and at the same time they are exposed to the Vietnamese language spoken by their older family members at home. Although they may prefer not to use their mother tongue, some may be forced to speak Vietnamese whenever they have contact with Vietnamese people. As a result, they become bilingual. However, the Vietnamese language is subordinate to English, and not all families can afford formal Vietnamese classes for their children in order to preserve the language in the community. This results in some Vietnamese second generation speakers not speaking Vietnamese at all or speaking Vietnamese with difficulty. Apart from code switching, code mixing or borrowing words, which eventually result in new patterns of Vietnamese being used in Australia, the Vietnamese second generation speakers are also influenced by the communication styles in Australia, that is, the pragmatic repertoire of language. Hence, patterns of pragmatic transference in spoken Vietnamese used by second generation Vietnamese immigrants have become apparent.

Why does this research focus on spoken Vietnamese used in Australia?

In relation to second generation Vietnamese speakers’ writing skills, Tran (2006) found that only 8% of the participants in her study could write Vietnamese well, and that a large majority had difficulties writing in Vietnamese, to the extent that academic writing of essays was impossible. On the other hand, spoken Vietnamese used in Australia seems to be renewed due to contacts between the student population from Vietnam and Australian Vietnamese as well as among the Vietnamese groups in Australia. Nevertheless, there have
been great changes in spoken Vietnamese in Australia, especially in the second generation speakers, in terms of pragmatics, that is, the use of language in social contexts and the ways in which people express and perceive meanings through language.

This thesis focuses on the patterns of pragmatic transference as manifested in conversational speech acts. By pragmatic change as used in this thesis, it refers to any linguistic differences, that is, verbal patterns and formulae of speech acts, or any cross-cultural norms embedded in the patterns of speech acts. By pragmatic transference, it refers to the “influence exerted by learners’ pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information” (Kasper, 1992, p. 207) (For detailed discussion and definitions, see Section 2.1). It is clear that in cross-cultural communication, the speech acts which carry the cultural norms of a particular culture will be most modified by the influence of different cultures (Jandt, 1998). That is why this researcher has chosen spoken Vietnamese for study as it entails a great deal of the typical characteristics of language change. Apart from such characteristics as code-switching, code-mixing, wrong pronominal usage and variation in linguistic politeness which have already been investigated in some previous studies (Ho-Dac, 1997, 2003; Thai, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Le, 2011), the patterns of pragmatic change seem to be a prominent element in need of research.

There has been some but limited research so far into the Vietnamese language as used in Australia. Ho-Dac (1997, 2003) studied code-switching in first generation Vietnamese bilinguals. The study was limited to signals of a change in the social relationship between the addressee and the addressee through the use of personal pronouns. Based on the Myers-Scotton markedness model, Ho-Dac’s study presented patterns of code switching of English personal pronouns into the Vietnamese system of person reference in order to fulfill the communicative functions associated with Vietnamese language and culture, which are considered “a strategy to negotiate identity” (1997, p. 10). Ho-Dac argues that because the use of address terms in the Vietnamese language is so important in speech, “a change in address terms signals a change in relations between the participants”. He comes to the conclusion that “the social motivation behind the code switching of personal pronouns is the indispensable regularities in the use of the Vietnamese system of personal reference” (Ho-Dac, 1997, p. 11).
Thai (2005a and b, 2006) analyses Vietnamese as constituting an example of externally motivated change through code switching and code mixing. Thai (2006) discussed Vietnamese used in Australia as a diasporic language, the characteristics of which are very different from those of the domestic one. The Vietnamese communities of Australia comprise people from different regions of Vietnam who spoke different Vietnamese dialects on arrival, accompanied by different cultural norms; “contact among speakers of various repertoires gradually helps establish and transform the understood norms shared within a speech community” (Thai, 2006, p. 2). Thai argued that, through code switching and code mixing, migrant Vietnamese have formed another diasporic dialect used in Australia, which bears a “separate identity” (p. 3). Before that, Thai (2005b) assumed this dialect to be a “language island” (p. 710). However, Thai (2006) only stressed identity rather than language change. The subjects he investigated were chosen at random and were not limited to second generation speakers and the scale of the research was not extensive enough for the reliability of the findings to be certain.

Le (2011) investigates the differences in politeness expressed by Vietnamese speakers living in Vietnam and Australia in their verbal interactions caused by the effect of language contact of Australian English into Vietnamese through semantic transference. He argues that this kind of semantic transference is interrelated with pragmatic transference in terms of how the speaker adopts routines and strategies in speaking English for expressing pragmatic meaning in their usage of Vietnamese. Generally, Le (2011) finds that Australian Vietnamese are more linguistically polite than contemporary Vietnamese living in Vietnam. He also finds the reasons for these changes: the impact from sociopolitical change and the impact from language contact. Although the study of Le (2011) is not closely related to the present study, the significance of that study is that it has set a very good background for this investigation into the overseas Vietnamese speech by documenting linguistic changes of such speakers albeit in a different area.

Some other studies such as Vo (1994), Tran (2006), and Tran (2008) only concentrate on the maintenance and preservation of the Vietnamese language overseas through the investigation of the younger generation speakers’ attitudes towards their heritage language. Pham (1998) gives us some insights into language attitudes towards the issue of maintaining the Vietnamese language in Australia, which is also the interest of Ninnes (1996) and Tran (2001). Nguyen (2003) studies prosodic transfer in Vietnamese acquisition of English stress.
and rhythm and the subjects of the research were ESL learners. These studies do not address language change through language contact.

**Vietnamese as a community language in Australia**

Due to the fact that Australia is a multilingual society, various language policies have been issued by the Australian government (Clyne, 2004), and CLOTE (Community Languages other than English) programs have been introduced into the school system Australia-wide. Clyne (1984) listed a lot of CLOTE programs used throughout Australia in both social and domestic domains but Vietnamese did not appear in any of them despite the number of Vietnamese in Australia as shown in the Australian Census, 1976. However, according to Clyne (2005), the Vietnamese language appeared in the Top 20 community languages in Australia in 2001 in terms of the number of speakers; and in the Top 10 community languages in five major capitals in 2001. In terms of community language home-users aged 0-14 years, Vietnamese ranked near the top in five major capitals, 2001. These facts show that the Vietnamese language has been used and preserved more and more by young generation Vietnamese (Clyne, 2005).

However, the Vietnamese language used in Australia is seen as a kind of diasporic Vietnamese, a “language island”, which is linguistically and ideologically different from the language used in the homeland (Thai, 2005a). What makes it distinctive is that by employing code-switching into and from English, Vietnamese speakers in Australia signify a separate identity (Thai, 2006). Ho-Dac (1997) also claims that code-switching (of personal pronouns) in conversation is employed as a strategy to negotiate identities, which is the specific characteristic of speech interaction in Vietnamese bilingual speakers (in Melbourne). Some previous research (Nguyen, 1980; Le, 1995; Cahill & Nguyen, 1995; Vo, 1994) show several characteristics of the diasporic Vietnamese language in terms of phonetics, lexicon and pragmatics, especially by second generation Vietnamese speakers. The most distinguishing feature is the presence of English in Vietnamese utterances known as “intermingled speech, or negatively as contaminated Vietnamese talk” (Le, 1995, p. 103) which, to some extent, facilitates a smooth interaction in such a bilingual environment.

Speakers of second generation immigrants of any language may willingly lose their home languages due to their strong desire for assimilation into the mainstream dominant group, or lack of exposure to their home language (Tse, 2001). Specifically, it has become a universal language contact phenomenon in Australia that children may use either their native
language or some English with their parents; however, whenever they communicate with their peer group, only English is used (Clyne, 1967). This group of speakers is developing with an increasingly passive understanding of their heritage language and seems not to use the language actively. These children, according to Chin (2007), are referred to as passive bilinguals who possess an ability to understand but not produce meaningful utterances. In agreement with Clyne (1967), Ninnes (1996) concludes that the Vietnamese language is “used more in private and ethnic settings such as the home and community events than in public settings” (p. 1). Studies show that both Australian-born and overseas-born immigrant children have the tendency towards being at risk of losing, discontinuing or failing to acquire their parents’ native language and identity (Clyne, 1982).

There has recently been strong promotion of CLOTE programs in Australia and the Vietnamese language has been introduced in some secondary schools as a foreign language or employed as a language of instruction; however, it is still “considered marginal in comparison with other Asian languages” (Le, 1995, p. 104). The attitude of the majority to the minority language is a strong, influential factor towards the maintenance of heritage languages. Australia has experienced different historical periods in defining itself as a multicultural and multilingual society in which attitudes towards minority languages have shifted greatly. Therefore, the effects of this aspect also vary. After all, the maintenance and preservation of CLOTE is due to the enhancement of the education system with the governmental support.

Vietnamese is used at home in Australia by 160,000 residents, making it the sixth largest community language group in the country (Ben-Moshe & Pyke, 2012). In the modern context, Vietnamese is the national language of a country which is of political and economic significance to Australia. As mentioned, the Vietnamese language used in Australia is in free development, a mixture of traditional Vietnamese treasured by South Vietnamese (most overseas Vietnamese living in Australia are from South Vietnam and fled the country as boat people) and modern Vietnamese language from different sources. It has been on the list of languages with the highest proportion of speakers in the 0-14 years bracket together with Arabic, Lebanese, Khmer, Turkish, and Urdu (Kipp, Clyne, & Pauwels, 1995). However, in terms of status, six high priority languages have been identified, namely, Chinese, Arabic, Japanese, Indonesian, German and French, all of which are considered of great importance for employment (Kipp, et al., 1995). Vietnamese is not included in the list! The inference is
that Vietnamese belongs to a low status language group, which may negatively affect the continuity of native language maintenance among Vietnamese speakers.

In the Australian context, it would seem that there is a big gap between the immigrant group and mainstream Australian society, which exemplifies a clear-cut cultural difference. That is, the greater the distance between the community language culture and the Australian culture, the greater effort the minority groups must have for language maintenance (Clyne, 1991, cited in Kipp et al., 1995).

To the best of my knowledge, there are very few studies investigating pragmatic transference in the Vietnamese language spoken in Australia. I am not aware of any studies that specifically address the issue in second generation speakers. Hence, this research examines change in different areas with respect to spoken Vietnamese in Australia, focusing on patterns of pragmatic transference in the speech act of refusal. Employing participation of three groups - first generation immigrant speakers, second generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native Vietnamese speakers – this thesis will attempt to document a comparison of language use and the flow of language transmission among these groups.

1.2. Research questions

The present study addresses the following questions:

1. Is there a shift from an indirect to a direct mode of speaking in the language of second generation Vietnamese speakers in Australia as compared to standard domestic Vietnamese?

   In particular, the study will examine:

   a. Any evidence of pragmatic transference in the speech act of refusal in terms of pragmatic features of directness / indirectness and the so-called “politeness” in spoken Vietnamese used by the second generation speakers of Vietnamese in Australia in comparison with domestic Vietnamese. The changes here may include any linguistic differences, that is, verbal patterns and formulae of speech acts, or any cross-cultural norms embedded in the patterns. What linguistic and sociolinguistic elements are lost or replaced, e.g. code-switching and supportive moves in the refusal formulae?

   b. Any knowledge / lack of knowledge of / or use / misuse of Vietnamese proverbs and idioms. One of the ways in which indirectness is manifested in
Chapter 1: Introduction

Vietnamese is through proverbs and idioms. To what extent do these speakers lose this element in their speech? What is used to compensate for such loss?

2. What are the possible factors contributing to the linguistic changes?
   a. What elements affect the performance of Vietnamese in terms of pragmatic directness / indirectness by the second generation of Vietnamese immigrants, e.g. language environment, heritage language transmission from parents, formal Vietnamese classes, heritage language curriculum?
   b. How does Australian culture (e.g. communicative characteristics like being succinct, and getting straight to the point) influence the repertoire of the Vietnamese language in Vietnamese-English bilingual communities? To what extent does cultural code choice play a role in the changing patterns? Is Vietnamese-English code switching in the second generation speakers’ speech patterns likely to be one of the reasons for the pragmatic transference?
   c. Is there any relationship between directness-indirectness transference and Vietnamese proficiency in the second generation speakers?
   d. Apart from parents’ influence, what are the other possible factors affecting the formation of direct / indirect speech patterns of these second generation speakers?
   e. How do the language users themselves perceive the reasons for the changes?

1.3. Aims of the research, rationale, and contributions

The primary aim of the research is to understand how pragmatic transference is manifested in the spoken Vietnamese language by the second generation speakers. The study aims to contribute to knowledge in the field of language change, and specifically, in the field of pragmatics.

Previous research on language contact has shown a very typical process of language shift, language maintenance and language loss in immigrant communities as follows: the original home language dominated for the first generation, balanced bilingualism dominated for the second, and the host language dominated for the third generation, leading to heritage language loss after that (Crystal, 2000). When we witness what has been happening linguistically and culturally in Australia, the situation may be different. This “distinctive live language laboratory” (Clyne, 1982) exists due to the effort by governments to create a multilingual, multicultural Australia by implementing policies for community language
preservation which have been carried out throughout the nation. It may not be too late for the Vietnamese diaspora in Australia to do something for the preservation of Vietnamese language and culture.

In specific terms, the Vietnamese language spoken by the second generation of Vietnamese immigrants in Australia has shown some distinctive characteristics which are worth analysing and documenting as it could become a potential dialect of mainstream Vietnamese. Thomas (2004) states that “among the children of Vietnam-born people in Australia, there is significant loss of fluency in Vietnamese language” (p. 1143). With the influence of English, the choice of English words, code-switching into some particular English phrases or sentences, or using a direct style of communication, younger speakers have shown they are comfortable with this style of language mixing.

My experience and observations have convinced me that, on the one hand, the Vietnamese used in Australia seems to have become old-fashioned because of the isolation of the Vietnamese diaspora, yet on the other hand, it is also fresh and flexible due to the English influence in spoken Vietnamese, and the multicultural communication style affecting the communicative styles of the users, especially the second generation bilingual speakers. Moreover, English has also dominated, shaped and modified the thinking patterns of Vietnamese speakers in Australia, resulting in various transference patterns evident in the communication style of the Vietnamese in Australia compared with domestic Vietnamese. Furthermore, because the younger generations of Vietnamese descent are likely to favour or prefer English, and to neglect learning, practicing and using Vietnamese properly, their skill in using that language seems to be diminishing. This has led to the simplification of their language use, and a fall in their level of proficiency, especially in their vocabulary range, and a fall in their level of expression in particular contexts via idioms and proverbs which shapes the distinctively indirect mode of communication favoured by the Vietnamese people. Hence, the purpose of the research is to identify patterns of the changes, specifically patterns of pragmatic transference representing a shift from an indirect to a direct mode of communication. The study focuses on the speech act of refusal in particular, and then examines the possible causes leading to the transference.

In the investigation of the differences between the standard domestic Vietnamese and the language of the second generation in Australia, these areas will be further studied:
Chapter 1: Introduction

1. A direct speaking mode, where indirectness is favoured in Vietnamese as a high context culture.
2. Lack of or incorrect usage of idioms and proverbs which weakens the indirect mode of speech.
3. Pragmatic transference including the differences of wording in speech acts and the influence of cultural norms of L1 culture.

The study will draw on the theoretical frameworks described by Thomason (2001, 2003) on language change, and Clyne (1967, 2003), and Bettoni (1981) on transference, and Beebe et al. (1990) and Blum-Kulka (1989) on pragmatic transference in particular. Dealing with the matter of language change, this study, on the one hand, aims at documenting possible “transfer-induced innovations” (Mougeon, Nadasdi, & Rehner, 2005), and “the loss, addition and replacement of features” (Thomason, 2001). On the other hand, I am also seeking the causes of these changes in the Vietnamese community in Australia. In terms of transference, this study attempts to expand on the variables which Beebe et al. (1990) and Blum-Kulka (1989) used in their studies, since the language pairs in their studies are different in nature from the English-Vietnamese dyad in this study. In other words, this study will contribute to knowledge on Vietnamese language change in Australia, and contribute to theories of language change generally, summarized as follows:

- looking at the implications for language change in language contact situation where the heritage language is the minority;
- illustrating and enriching theories of language change, particularly language transference in contact situations as this useful research will be another good instance of language change; then identifying areas for future research; in a broader sense, this research aims to fill a gap in the Vietnamese language research in the field of linguistics, especially pragmatics.
- challenging some previously held assumptions and also providing further evidence for current theories of language change: for example, the relationship between pragmatic transference and second language proficiency.

With the increase in global travel and trade, “the intensification of the flow of ideas and people between the homeland and Australia and with other Vietnamese throughout the world is very likely to have an impact on the attitude of Vietnamese-Australians toward their homeland” (Thomas, 2004, p. 1148). An investigation of their speech in terms of pragmatic transference is important and is of interest to Vietnamese people both in Vietnam and
Chapter 1: Introduction

overseas because errors in speech act realisation can cause quite serious misunderstanding (Ikoma & Shimura, 1994, p.106). To sum up, the findings will be of practical benefit in the following areas:

- helping raise the awareness of the curriculum designers of Vietnamese language teaching in Australia and therefore support the improvement of Vietnamese language learning and teaching programs in English speaking countries like Australia, Canada and the USA where there is a large number of Vietnamese immigrants;
- helping overseas Vietnamese and domestic Vietnamese avoid misunderstandings due to language use or misuse as “pragmatic transfer may lead to miscommunication” (Zegarac and Pennington, 2000, p. 167);
- enhancing the preservation of the Vietnamese language and culture as language is important in the process of cultural identity, because language and communication loss can lead to identity loss.

Therefore, this study has both theoretical and practical value.

1.4. Thesis structure

Chapter 1 is this Introduction, including the background for the study, the research questions, purpose and contributions. This is followed by the Literature Review in Chapter 2 in which the discussion of relevant literature will provide the basic rationale and framework for the study. Chapter 3 sets out the Methodology presenting details about the participants, their community, the data collection process and data analysis methods. The next three chapters, Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are the presentation of the findings:

1) Documentation of the patterns of pragmatic transference through the study of the refusal patterns and the usage of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs by the second generation speakers, the first generation speakers, and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers,

2) Identification of causes of the changes including attitudes towards language maintenance, as well as effects of language environment on the acquisition of Vietnamese.

Chapter 7 reviews and interprets the results, comparing the findings with those of previous studies about patterns of pragmatic transference in other languages to demonstrate consistency or variation, then presents any reinforcement, expansion, or confirmation of the
existing research. Chapter 8 concludes the thesis, drawing implications for language change and language maintenance in language contact situations in countries like Australia.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RATIONALE FOR THE CURRENT STUDY

The thesis is concerned with ways in which directness is transferred into the spoken Vietnamese used by Vietnamese-English bilinguals in Australia. In order to establish a framework for the study, the following literature review deals with four areas. First, it discusses, in sequence, bilingualism, code-switching, and language transference and change. The second section addresses politeness, face work, and directness versus indirectness in general. Then these issues are reviewed in the third section specifically from the perspective of high context culture, with attention to face saving strategies, indirect speaking modes, and metaphorical usage of proverbs. Direct and indirect communication styles are contrasted here, and in particular the direct communication style of Anglo-Australian culture, on one hand, and Vietnamese pragmatic patterns which are embedded in indirectness mode, on the other. The fourth section reviews approaches to the study of pragmatic transference and introduces the current study, defining its research questions.

2.1. Bilingualism to code switching to language transference and change: a sequential pattern

This section explores concepts essential to the context of the study and the key subjects: the second generation of the diasporic Vietnamese community in Australia. They are societal bilinguals for whom English is dominant in most of their social domains, but who continue using Vietnamese in the family and on other community occasions. This section will look at the sequential relation among bilingualism, code switching and language transference.

Language contact may lead to bilingualism. It occurs when a person uses two or more languages in daily communication. It is estimated that two-thirds of the world’s population is bilingual (Appel & Muysken, 1987), which indicates the importance of research into bilingualism and its implications.

There has been considerable debate over time regarding the definition of bilingualism. According to Bloomfield (1933, cited in Romaine, 1995) and Haugen (1953), a person is called a bilingual when she / he has such characteristics as “native-like control of two languages”, or has “sufficient skills in a second language” to “produce complete meaningful
utterances in the other language” (Haugen, 1953, p.7). However, other linguists have found problems with such loosely descriptive terms. Later studies have established these concepts to be inapplicable or “fruitless” (Bettoni, 1981, p. 18). According to Diebold (1961), bilingualism has commenced even when a person just “begins to understand utterances in a second language, but is unable to produce utterances”. In this light, bilingualism may be broadly defined as the condition of having an ability to use two or more languages to some degree. McMahon (1994) sees bilingualism as linguistic contact and defines “a bilingual speaker as a person with some knowledge of two or more languages” (p. 200). Diebold (1961) agrees with Weinreich (1953) that bilingualism is the practice of alternatively using two languages. That is because bilingualism refers to the ability to distinguish one linguistic set from another in order to switch, and also refers to the awareness of social conditions that determine the selection of one code or the other and that require the bilinguals to make choices (Zafaranian-Sharpe, 1999). This definition seems to be the most supported and accepted. It encompasses a range of language proficiency from a controlling ability to being just an incipient speaker, and includes those whose language skill can fulfill the individual’s needs to communicate in a multilingual environment.

Most bilinguals are more fluent and more at ease in one of their languages than in the other (Hornby, 1977). It is inevitable that in multilingual communities, there is a dominating or high status language that overwhelms the use of other languages. Bilinguals may be members of minority communities (including immigrant communities) who use that dominating language more frequently in most social contact than their “home” language. From observation, it is clear that the key subjects in this study belong to this category as Australia is a multicultural, multilingual country with English as the dominant official and high-status language. Second generation Vietnamese-Australians use English most of the time, in most domains, and speak their home language only with selected interlocutors (see Kelleher, 2010).

Because bilingualism is a fact of life, understanding its characteristics so as to have proper language planning for multicultural societies is essential. Bilingualism is increasing worldwide both in frequency and in importance as the world becomes a “global village” and people are physically and virtually linked together. Indeed, it is becoming a means of survival for multicultural societies such as the USA, Australia and Canada. Few countries pay as much special attention to policies for language maintenance and education to the extent as it occurs in Australia (see Hornberger, 2005).
One of the outstanding characteristics of bilingual communication is code-switching: alternating use of two or more languages within a conversation. Code-switching has long been recognized as a key feature of language contact and bilingualism, and is a controversial topic. From the first study by Weinreich (1953) to that of Romaine (1995), followed by an abundance of current research, code-switching is defined as a change of language within a conversation. Considered an interference phenomenon, code-switching is perhaps the most obvious indication of a person’s bilingual abilities, since very few bilinguals keep their two languages completely separate (Baker & Prys-Jones, 1998). However, there is no single answer to the question of where code-switching occurs and why (Auer, 1984) as code choice does not only indicate the significance for the individual, it also reflects societal values and attitudes. This argument completely contradicts Weinreich (1953) who proposed that an ideal bilingual switches from one language to the other but “certainly not within a single sentence” (p. 72). Currently, code-switching is perceived to occur during a conversation, from sentence to sentence, or within a sentence. Myers-Scotton (1993) argues that code-switching is a selection of forms: “the intentionality of language choice” (Clyne, 2003, p. 42) by bilinguals from an ‘embedded’ language (or languages) in utterances of a ‘matrix’ language during the same conversation.

Code-switching is not generally due to a deficiency of the speaker in either language, nor is it a random phenomenon, as, from the pragmatic viewpoint, code-switching is regarded as a discourse strategy and a speech style (Blom & Gumperz, 1972, p. 407) or as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems (Gumperz, 1982, p. 59). Furthermore, Cheng and Butler (1989), and Brice and Anderson (1999) conclude that code-switching is a verbal skill attained as a result of a high level of competence in more than one language. It should not be considered a defect or a deficiency of language knowledge, but an asset, because code-switching, when used for a purpose, can maximize communication with effective expression, and strengthen the content and essence of messages. According to Ho (2007), code-switching, code mixing and borrowing are not a matter of knowledge or fluency but of familiarity, as fluent bilinguals can be aware of and control the frequency of code-switching, code mixing or borrowing when conversing with different interlocutors. Research shows that in a bilingual situation, code-switching is perfectly acceptable and takes place at ease when two bilinguals who share the same pair of languages come into contact. In other words, code-switching is a natural occurrence when two bilingual speakers engage in discourse. Meisel
(1994) supports the claim that when a bilingual person is in a bilingual situation, both languages will be fully activated and therefore lead to code switching / code mixing, or borrowing. In fact, Meisel argues that during a discourse with another bilingual individual, at a given point a bilingual person has to make a decision, which is mostly unconscious, about which language to use, and to what extent (Meisel, 1994, p. 415). This shows that the phenomenon of code-switching has still not been clearly defined and distinguished. Also, the issue of whether code-switching is the only cause of language transference (which will be mentioned later in this chapter) is still the subject of debate.

Eventually, bilingualism leads to language change, known as contact induced language change (Jones & Singh, 2005). Language change can be brought about by various linguistic and non-linguistic factors such as the physical, social, mental and environmental aspects of human life, and linguists have proposed different categories of changes. One of the basic models distinguishes between internally motivated and externally motivated change (Jones & Singh, 2005, p. 20); this thesis deals with contact-induced language change, which is externally motivated. Silva-Corvalan (1994) discussed intensive language contact as a powerful external promoter of language transference and therefore change. As Mougeon et al. (2005, p. 100) put it, a “high level of restriction in the use of minority language, and contact with a majority language, can bring about the emergence of innovations”.

Various terms referring to transference have been proposed and their definitions debated. Clyne (1967, p. 19) uses the term “transference” with the intention of pointing not at the cause (i.e. the act of code-switching), but at the result of the phenomenon; specifically, transference refers to “the adoption of any element from another language”. In Clyne’s argument, transference is the process of transferring features or constructions from one language to another, and in this light, a loanword or a switch is called a transfer. In this sense, the terms ‘transference’ and ‘transfer’ can be used interchangeably. Bettoni (1981, p. 22) supports the use of the term in her work, insisting that “however valid a theoretical concept inter-lingual identification might be, I will still use Clyne’s term ‘transference’ here and deal mainly with that type of interference which involves an outright transfer of elements”. In a similar vein, Treffers-Daller and Mougeon (2005, p. 95) also treat transfer as a product “close to what Thomason and Kaufman (1988) call Interference”, and they claim it is “less visible than code switching or borrowing”.
However, Odlin (1989, p. 26) argues that “transfer is not simply interference” as “interference implies no more than what another term, negative transfer, does”. He proposes another definition of substratum transfer: that “transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired”. Tosi (2006, p. 162) shares this point of view with Odlin that transference carries the “conscious efforts at adaptation by speakers”, whereas interference expresses the “uncontrolled intrusion from the dominant language”.

It seems that there is still no consensus among linguists with respect to the precise meaning of the terms ‘transference’ and ‘interference’. In this study, I use “transference” in the sense used by Clyne, without distinguishing between intention and uncontrolled intention as Tosi (2006) does.

The types of transference listed in Clyne’s early work (1967) included phonic transference, lexical transference, semantic transference, syntactic transference, multiple transference, pragmatic transference, and prosodic transference. However, pragmatic transference was not extensively studied by Clyne (1967) and it was not mentioned in Clyne’s more recent work (2003). Clyne (2003) presented a summary comparison between language contact phenomena of different language dyads, in which the Vietnamese-English pair – of particular interest for this study – is characterised as follows, with no specific mention of pragmatic transference:

1. Much transversion, irrespective of English proficiency.
2. Tonal facilitation of transversion.
3. Little lexical and syntactic facilitation.
4. Much interclausal transversion.
5. Some simple collocations constituting multiple transference of English Language islands (e.g. typical Australian) and a few individual lexical transfers.
6. Where there is lexical facilitation: mainly consequential, with lexical transfers as the predominant type of trigger-word.
7. No need for morphological integration into isolating language.
8. Low language shift rate.

(Clyne, 2003, p. 236)
From this observation, it is clear that there is still a gap in language transference research on the Vietnamese language, specifically that of pragmatic transference.

Pragmatic transference has also been defined in different ways. Takahashi and Beebe (1987, p. 134) argue that pragmatic transfer is “transfer of first language (L1) sociocultural communicative competence in performing L2 speech acts”. In the same vein, according to Zegarac and Pennington (2000, p. 167), pragmatic transfer roughly means the carryover of pragmatic knowledge from one culture to another and is defined as “the transfer of pragmatic knowledge in situations of intercultural communication”. Zegarac and Pennington (2000, p. 166) see it as a cognitive phenomenon by definition, “because it concerns some aspects of human knowledge, but it must also be studied descriptively from a social point of view”.

Before examining the ways in which pragmatic transference has been studied, it is necessary to outline the concepts that such studies are interested in, especially politeness, face and directness and indirectness in communication.

2.2. Politeness, face and directness / indirectness strategies

When considered out of context, the meaning of an utterance can change significantly from the meaning it has in a specific context. For socio-cultural goals, the concept of politeness must be established as it shapes the ways people express themselves appropriately through a variety of linguistic devices (see Haugh & Chang, 2011). Politeness relates to the ways in which the members of a social group conceptualise behavioural possibilities as they participate in socio-communicative verbal interaction (Watts, 2003, p. 27). Politeness is a basic social process and always considered to be central to communication; something that every communicator must abide by. Like any other concept, politeness phenomena exist in all languages but are expressed in different ways and to different extents. Though it is a universal phenomenon and “all languages employ the same range of politeness maxims” (Hill et al., 1986, p. 363), the strategies implemented and the weights assigned for politeness are different in different languages and cultures. For example, politeness values and face semantics in the Chinese culture are very different from those in Anglo-American culture (Gu, 1990). Clearly, a high level of language proficiency does not guarantee the success of communication in terms of pragmatics, in which politeness is heavily counted (for further discussion of politeness and pragmatics, see Haugh & Kádár, forthcoming; Haugh & Culpeper, forthcoming).
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Rationale for the current study

The foundation study of politeness is that of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) who investigated the relationship between politeness, face work and directness / indirectness strategies. Brown and Levinson treat politeness as a device that helps soften face-threatening acts, that is, minimise face loss; they proposed a convincing case for the role of “politeness strategies as face-saving devices”. The notion of face, in fact, is linked to politeness as an abstract concept in a universal model of politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1978) classified politeness into two main types - positive and negative - each of which is applied with particular politeness strategies. Positive politeness strategies include:
- attending to hearer’s interests, needs, wants
- using solidarities in-group identity markers
- being optimistic
- including both speaker and hearer in activity, offer or promise,
- exaggerating interest in hearer and his [sic] interests
- avoiding disagreement
- joking.

Negative politeness strategies include:
- being indirect
- using hedges or questions
- being pessimistic
- minimising the imposition
- using obviating structures, like nominalizations, passives, or statements of general rules
- apologizing
- using plural pronouns.

However, several recent studies challenge Brown and Levinson’s work. Leech (2007) argues that the Brown and Levinson (1978, p.167) model has a Western bias and as a result, “cannot claim to present a universal theory applicable to all languages and cultures”. Ogiermann (2009) conducted an empirical study (a comparison of English, German, Polish and Russian requests) which has shown the drawback in the Brown and Levinson (1978) theory in the treatment of politeness associated with directness / indirectness and the notion of face. She identifies the distinguishing boundaries between some particular groups of
cultures in terms of their perception of politeness. Bella (2011, p. 1721) adds another set of shortcomings claiming that Brown and Levinson heavily relied on “single de-contextualised utterances and the consequent neglect of longer stretches of discourse”. But despite this later research questioning the applicability of their model to certain cultures and languages, Brown and Levinson’s studies (1978, 1987) remain key works whenever there is any investigation in the field (see Haugh & Chang, 2011, Haugh & Kádár, forthcoming).

Linked to politeness is the notion of face, which is defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself / herself by the line others assume he / she has taken during a particular contact, particularly in social verbal interaction (Watts, 2004, p. 124). This concept originated from Goffman’s (1959, 1990) notion of self-image - the presentation of someone’s image in everyday life. According to Brown and Levinson (1978, p. 66), “face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction”. They assume that every individual has two types of face: positive face is defined as every member’s desire that his / her wants be appreciated and understood in social interaction, whereas negative face is the desire for freedom of action which should not be impeded by others. In other words, people use different strategies which they think appropriate in certain communicative contexts for the purpose of avoiding or minimizing any threat to both their interlocutor’s and their own face (Sifianou, 1992a, p.156. For further discussion of face, see Haugh, 2009; Haugh & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2010).

There is a lot of research on politeness based on the most controversial element of face: face-threatening acts. Brown and Levinson (1978) argue that different speech acts reveal some degree of face threat. For example, advice will threaten face because it can carry a sense of criticism or indicate a limitation to the hearer’s freedom of action. In the case of invitation, both interlocutors suffer from face threatening acts; that is, when people are recipients of an invitation, they are put into a position of considering whether it is good or not good to accept, and the inviter who is in the active role may be put into an embarrassing situation if his / her invitation is refused. Watts (2003) discusses the relationships between speech acts and face threats in more detail, arguing that certain social conditions in the relationship between the speaker and the addressee determine the choices of strategies from among the following: bald-on-record face threatening acts, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record politeness, or not to do the face threatening acts at all. For example:
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Rationale for the current study

Situation: the speaker wants to borrow the addressee’s lawnmower to mow her / his own lawn.

The speaker may choose one statement among the following after saying something like *Oh, dear! My lawn’s looking a real mess and my lawnmower’s being repaired.*

1. Lend me your lawnmower this afternoon, would you, Fred? Mine’s not back till the end of next week.
2. D’ you reckon you could lend me your lawnmower this afternoon, Fred? Mine’s not back till the end of next week.
3. I say, Fred, old boy, would you mind me borrowing your lawnmower this afternoon? Mine’s in for repair at the moment.
4. That’s a superb new lawnmower you’ve got there, Fred. I wonder if you’d mind me borrowing it for an hour this afternoon to do my lawn. Mine’s in repair at the moment.

These utterances range from less polite to more polite in accordance with serious to low face threatening acts (pp. 94-95). Incidentally, the statements also often indicate the closeness of the relationship.

Politeness is also discussed with respect to directness / indirectness strategies. Leech (1983, p. 108) argues that to increase politeness, using a more and more indirect kind of illocution is possible because it increases the degree of optionality. Directness and indirectness have become the basic distinction in the standard speech act theories, relating to politeness and the notion of face. Direct speech acts occur when a speaker says what he / she means, whereas indirect speech acts are employed when he / she means more than, or something other than, what he / she actually says (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) or chooses to say the same thing in an indirect manner. Brown and Levinson (1978) link politeness with the concept of directness / indirectness with the argument that a higher degree of indirectness shows more politeness. Although indirectness is not the only key to politeness, many scholars have discussed indirectness in the relationship to politeness needs. For example, Zhang (1991, p. 79) reviewed this issue and concluded that many studies on indirect speech behaviour found “cross-culturally similar linguistic forms of conventional indirectness and semantic properties of non-conventional indirectness” and this relation was affected by various social and psycholinguistic factors. In addition, the association between indirectness and politeness is automatically set as the ethnocentricity of culture (Sifianou, 1992, p. 113);
that is, whatever level of indirectness should be accepted to be appropriate by any individual of any culture.

Directness and indirectness are two distinct modes of speaking that vary linguistically and culturally due to language conventions and language use (Gumperz, 1982). As a social phenomenon, indirectness is seen to be preferred by speakers in day-to-day communication despite the fact that languages always provide them with “an explicit, direct way for achieving communicative ends” (Blum-Kulka, 1982, p. 30). However, as Sifianou (1992, p. 113) argues, the linguistic constructions themselves - whether direct or indirect - are not inherently polite or impolite because politeness is not only characterised by the speakers’ intention and the addresses’ expectations but by various social factors hidden in the situation as well. Referring to the intercultural constraints, Blum-Kulka (1982) further argues - in relation to her observation on Hebrew cultures - that in intercultural communication, some degree of directness which is allowed in one culture’s social norms in some given context might be considered offensive if transferred to another culture and context.

Pragmatic failure can occur if there exists a mismatch between language and culture. For the sake of politeness, interlocutors using a second or foreign language (L2) are often aware of the notion of face, irrespective of whether they regard it as Face Threatening Acts or Face Enhancing Acts, so that they can adjust the level of directness in accordance with L2 culture. The pragmatic transference in inter-language is thus inevitable (see Haugh, 2009; Haugh & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2010).

2.3. Politeness from the perspective of high context cultures

How people view politeness is determined by the philosophical foundations and values and beliefs of their culture. In other words, the theories of politeness need to recognise different ways in which politeness is shaped by the philosophies embedded in those cultures. The profound influence of Confucianism on East Asian communication has been studied consistently (Chen, 1986; Chen, 1990; Nguyen, 1990; Chen & Chung, 1994; Pham, 2007, Haugh & Hinze, 2003). The Confucian philosophy is distinctly exposed and clearly observed in Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Taiwanese, Korean and Singaporean communication (Chen, 1990; Chen & Chung, 1994; Kim, 1995; Samovar & Porter, 2004, Haugh & Hinze, 2003). These East Asian cultures are grouped into a high context culture category which is defined as a culture in which people communicate more nonverbally than verbally; and their
utterances mean more than, and are understood beyond, the actual wording (Jandt, 1998. See also Haugh & Hinze, 2003).

According to Chen (1992), the meaning of an utterance or an expression cannot be interpreted properly without a profound understanding of the cultural value hidden behind that wording. Preference for honouring one or another of the politeness principles such as distance, deference or camaraderie results in a communicative strategy that makes up style (Tannen, 1984). For instance, Tannen (1981, p. 236) talked about the conversational style which has much to do with the formation of ethnic stereotype. In the case of her Greek investigation, she found that Greek social norms required a much higher level of indirectness in social interaction than American ones. Blum-Kulka (1982) gave another example of the popular view about Israelis’ lack of politeness when the patterns of blunt directness were often heard in public. In fact, she claims that conventional indirectness was tightly related to levels of politeness.

However, the practice of politeness in Asian cultures means more than a means for people to avoid problems in communication; it helps people not only save face but also enhance mutual understanding by maintaining harmony and social cohesiveness. Asian politeness is accommodative approach oriented rather than defensive approach oriented (Merkin, 2004). As such, many politeness theories from Anglo-Western culture turn out to be inapplicable to non-Anglo cultures as will be discussed in subsequent sections.

2.3.1. Face work in high context cultures

The notion of face and directness versus indirectness in communicative styles are universal concepts; however, the philosophy of different cultures will determine how and to what extent people perceive these and set the standards for the practice of communication modes.

Although Brown and Levinson (1978) have established the foundation for politeness research in accordance with face work, their model has received much criticism from later research on politeness in high context cultures. Koutlaki counter-argues that if face-threatening acts are interpreted from Brown and Levinson’s (1978) point of view, communication is seen as “a minefield full of acts potentially dangerous to face” (Koutlaki, 2002). In addition, Nwoye (1992) reflects that if it is true that the interlocutors are always at risk because of constant potential threat to their face, social interaction will be devoid of all
elements of pleasure (p. 311). Also, Gu (1990) shows that the model of Brown and Levinson (1978) cannot be applied to the Chinese concept of politeness because, in Chinese collective culture, speech acts do not entail the risk of threatening face. In another direction, Gu’s study demonstrates that speech acts tend to be face-enhancing acts when they take into account the ideals of the socially hierarchical structure of a collectivist community. Based on a comparison between Chinese and American acts of refusing, Chen et al. (1991, p. 122) point out the differences in terms of face that are regulated by different face-concerns: American ‘individual face wants’ (see Levinson, 1978) and maintaining / preserving Chinese miànzì and lìān (both mean face). Kasper (1990, p. 194) agrees with many other authors that seeing almost all linguistic speech acts as potentially face-threatening seems a very pessimistic view of interaction.

Sifianou (1992) explains the difference in the motivation of politeness, between Greek and English, in terms of the two basic components of face. She argues that “the English seem to place a higher value on privacy and individuality, i.e. the negative aspect of face, whereas the Greeks seem to emphasize involvement and the in-group relations, i.e. the positive aspect” (Sifianou, 1992, p. 41). The differences here are a major source of misinterpretation and misjudgements leading to inappropriate stereotypical comments regarding politeness. Hence, the nature and quality of relationships and the dominant cultural values should be taken into account in linguistic research: “They seem to play a determining role as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour, perhaps to a greater extent than Brown and Levinson would like to accept” (Sifianou, 1992, p.43).

Other criticism of Brown and Levinson’s model comes from Koutlaki (2002, p. 1755) who states that because Persian face (šæxsìæt) is linked to social values, “it should be characterised as public face”, and it certainly opposes the concept of private face rooted in the individual’s needs as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978). In fact, in Persian culture, acts which are known as face-threatening acts in Brown and Levinson’s conception should be characterised as face-enhancing acts. This notion presents politeness in Persian as the “maintenance of both interactants’ faces (šæxsìæt) through showing ehteram (near equivalents ‘honour’, ‘respect’, ‘esteem’, ‘dignity’)” (Koutlaki, 2002, p. 1755).

In cultures throughout Asia, losing face is a terrible thing to suffer (Varner & Beamer, 2005), and leads to indirect strategies for the performance of certain types of speech acts in situations where “English speakers would not necessarily see the need for indirectness, since
they perceive no threat to face” (Richards & Sukwiwat, 1983). For example, “Japanese avoid conversational topics which might lead to disagreement, or witty verbal display, for fear of disturbing the harmony of the group” (Richards & Sukwiwat, 1983); and direct disagreement is only sometimes seen in power distance relationships, i.e. between people of higher and lower status (Beebe and Takahashi, 1989). In Thai, the concept of face is referred to by the term *krengcaj*, which means taking the other person’s face needs and feelings into account so that no threat is involved either to speaker or to hearer. Generally, in collectivist societies, one’s face is not only individual but also that of the family, organisation, and community (Varner & Beamer, 2005). Rubin (1983, p. 15) observed that in many cultures, “saving one’s own and / or another’s face is high on the list of values of social interaction. This seems less important in American and European cultures”. Ting-Toomey (1988, p. 224) agreed that “individualistic cultures (such as that in Australia and the United States) emphasize individualistic goals over group goals and they are concerned with self-face maintenance. Whereas, collectivistic cultures (such as those in China and Japan) value group goals over individual goals and they are concerned with both self-face and other-face maintenance”.

Another example is Vietnamese people’s *bệnh sĩ* (disease of preserving face) (Tran, 1999) which results from the extreme of face and honour appreciation. This characteristic is reflected in numerous proverbs and idioms like “uốn lưỡi bày-launch trước khi nói” (literal meaning: bending the tongue seven times before uttering; metaphorical meaning: one should be extra careful when uttering lest one hurt people’s feelings) (Vo, 1994). Hence, Vietnamese people like being tế nhị, ý tì (delicate, concerned) (Tran, 1999), resulting in the communicative style of vòng vo tam quốc (beating about the bush) (Tran, 1999, p. 158).

Face is always discussed in relation to politeness and indirectness strategies, especially in high context cultures. Rinnert and Kobayashi (1999, p. 1174) who studied Japanese speech acts state that “the more the speaker risks loss of face” in speech act performance, “the more indirect the strategy he / she uses” to achieve a higher degree of politeness. Obeng (1994, p. 64) also stresses the importance of indirectness in face work and concludes that indirectness “helps save and maintain face” as utterances communicating difficulties or being risky of causing face-threat are mainly verbalised indirectly”. Vu-Huong (2000) finds that in Vietnamese culture, there exist two consistent but contradictory types of face - private versus public - which set the background for communicative strategy. Vietnamese people always exhibit socially recognised communicative norms to enhance each other’s face. This practice highlights the public face, yet does not obscure the private face. In fact, although Vietnamese
people are extra careful with politeness and face saving methods, they do have a variety of strategies to mitigate pressure in social relations, potential obligation due to power, and hurt in personal feelings.

As in a cause-effect relationship, the notion of face is tightly attached to indirectness strategies, especially in high context cultures, which will be reviewed in the following section.

### 2.3.2. Indirectness strategies in high context cultures

There is an abundance of literature on politeness in relationship to indirectness, especially in high context cultures. Leech (2007) posed the research question for his study “Politeness: Is there a direct-indirect divide?” In fact, Leech argues that, although politeness is a universal phenomenon and it is based on the notion of face, the treatment of the individual concept in Western cultures is never appropriate to the collectivist orientation of Eastern cultures, specifically those of China and Japan. He found enough positive evidence to support his hypothesis, contradicting Brown and Levinson (1978). Within European languages, Marti’s (2006) study on indirectness and politeness in Turkish-German bilingual and Turkish monolingual requests shows that indirectness and politeness are related but not linearly linked concepts. This is also supported by Ogiermann (2009) who has made a comparison among the English, German and Polish languages and proved that politeness is treated differently across cultures in forms of directness / indirectness, with face also taken into account. This means that there is not always the same kind of relationship between directness / indirectness and politeness, so the matter is not just a question of Asian as opposed to Western cultures.

According to Tannen (1981) who studied Greek and American English as a pair of languages, indirectness is a necessary means for serving the needs of rapport and defensiveness. Rapport is the pleasant satisfaction of being understood without explaining oneself, of getting what one wants without asking for it. Defensiveness is the need to be able to save face by reneging in case one’s conversational contribution is not received well. With such a need, the interlocutors can achieve a sense of being polite, courteous and less offensive toward one another. In a similar vein, Neuliep (2003, p.219) adds that indirect communication can prevent potentially embarrassing moments that might threaten the face of either speaker. Furthermore, when observed from the perspectives of high context cultures, indirectness is also motivated by “people’s desire to avoid imposing their wants on others; or
to give others more options and choices; or to refuse things in a very seemly way” (Nazzal, 2001).

The use of an indirect style of language is best observed in many high context cultures; in fact, indirectness is valued in these cultures because saving face and perpetuating harmony in social relationships is highly valued. For example, “the Chinese are thought of as people who value harmony in social relationships and appear to operate on the basis of extreme indirectness” (Sifianou, 1992, p. 50) which can be regarded as a demonstration of negative politeness. Sharing this view, Zhang (1991) argued that the character of Chinese face as a ‘public self-image’ motivated to a large extent the Chinese way of enacting indirectness in interaction. Tannen’s (1981) pilot study points out that modes of indirectness are one of the components of conversational style. Tannen investigated the negotiation of meaning conveyed in conversations in actual contexts. The case of Greek / American English intercultural communication in Tannen’s work reflects the conversational style that shapes differences in patterns of interpretation through which people can yield information about expectations and social norms. This is because whenever people communicate, they convey not only the content of their message, but “an image of themselves” (Goffman, 1959, 1990).

One of the means of analysing directness and indirectness is the classification of the semantic formulae in speech acts. For example, Zhang (1991, p. 97) found a typical sequence of indirect request in Chinese, structured as follows:

- Supportive moves (see 3.4.1) (expressing worries and problems, seeking advice, offering sympathy, stating wishes, self-criticism)
- Request
- Supportive moves (self-criticism, promising, thanking)

It has been demonstrated that the semantic formulae of speech acts in cultures like Japanese (e.g. Ikoma et al., 1994 on refusals); Greek (e.g. Tannen, 1981 on conversational styles; Sifianou, 1992 on politeness); Chinese (e.g. Zhang, 1991 on indirectness in Chinese requesting) and Vietnamese (e.g. Tran, 2004 on refusals) are more complicated and long-winded than in low-context cultures like Anglo-American (e.g. Felix-Brasdefer, 2003 on declining invitations); Israeli (e.g. Koulaki, 2002 on face work) and German (Palidou, 1994 on politeness). Ikoma and Shimura (1994, p.111) compared direct and indirect speech styles in terms of the semantic formulae of refusals in Japanese and American English. In direct mode style, people can make such performative and non-performative statements as ‘I
refuse’, ‘I can’t’, ‘I won’t’, ‘No’. However, in indirect mode style, a refusal must include several elements known as supportive moves; among these are: making a statement of regret (e.g. ‘I’m sorry’), expressing a wish (e.g. ‘I wish I could help you’), giving a reason, explanation (‘I have already made an appointment that day’), proposing an alternative (e.g. ‘Why don’t you ask John? He’s quite available’), setting conditions for future or past acceptance (e.g. ‘If you had asked me earlier, I wouldn’t have accepted Mary’s invitation’), promising future acceptance (e.g. ‘Perhaps next time, OK?’), making a statement of principle (e.g. I never do business with women), or a statement of philosophy (e.g. ‘Too many cooks spoil the broth’) and so on. According to Zhang (1991, p. 86), “supportive moves serve as a means of negotiation, steering the course of the interaction in the direction of one’s intended goal, and in the course of that, act as face saving strategies to supply the chance for both parties to perform a polite act”. In this light, supportive moves are always expected in polite acts in a high context culture like Chinese, with which Vietnamese culture shares most characteristics. In fact, supportive moves are often discussed in relation to face saving strategies, indirectness and politeness in high context, especially Oriental cultures (Gu, 1990; Zhang 1991, Blum Kulka 1982, 1987; Takahashi and Beebe, 1993).

Directness and indirectness are performed differently for refusals in the speech acts of requests. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in a study of Hebrew, and Hassall (2003) in a study of Bahasa Indonesia, discuss the variety of strategy types and levels of directness in requests. Three levels for requests have been identified, summarised as follows:

DIRECT: imperative, explicit performative, hedge performative, goal statement, want statement

CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT: query preparatory ability or permission, query preparatory, availability.

NON-CONVENTIONALLY INDIRECT: question hint, statement hint.

Influenced by the L1 culture norms, L2 users are oriented to choosing different patterns from among the above which they think are appropriate, without any realisation that they have made some pragmatic transference. For instance, Hassall (2003, p. 1921) notes that the Australian learners in his study use statement hints more than Bahasa Indonesia native subjects, as the latter get “no further than making a preliminary to a request because they are doubtful about how to phrase the actual request”.

27
Another way of measuring or analysing directness / indirectness is the investigation into the use of modality. Modal forms in different languages can also be the determinant of levels of directness in speech acts. “Modal verbs are crucial in conventionally indirect requests as they refer to the topica...” (Faerch and Kasper, 1989, p. 228). According to these authors, the success of the speech acts is determined by the selection of an appropriate modal verb. Hassall’s (2003) study on requests by Australian learners of Indonesian shows that the Low group (possessing low linguistic proficiency) prefer the native speaker’s (Indonesian) choice of modal verb ‘can’, whereas the High group strongly favours the modal “may”. This can be explained by a previous study that “advanced learners sometimes resist transfer of L1 pragma-linguistic forms that can be transferred due to over caution, while lower level learners may successfully transfer the same forms” (Hassall, 2003, p. 1919). Altman (1990, p. 98) finds that the interpretation of should and ‘d better is “especially problematic” for ESL learners, because if not properly understood and appropriately used, modals will hurt interlocutors’ feelings.

However, the level of directness / indirectness also varies because it depends heavily upon variables such as gender, distance, power and specific situations. In the latest study, Adrefiza (2011) discovered that apology responses by both Australian and Bahasa Indonesia women show indirectness and soften face threats towards interlocutors. However, to some extent, “Indonesians are revealed to be more direct and more face threatening than the Australian counterparts” (Adrefiza, 2011, p. 3). This kind of finding seems to challenge the claim that indirect speech acts prevail in East Asian communication.

2.3.3 Usage of proverbs as a form of indirectness

Indirectness can also be achieved in Asian languages, such as Vietnamese, through the use of proverbs. Goodwin and Wenzel (1981,p. 141) use the definition of proverb in The American College Dictionary: “short pithy saying… popularly known and repeated, usually expressing simply and concretely, though often metaphorically, a truth based on common sense or the practical experience of mankind”. Earlier, Smith (1965, p. 11) defined a proverb as “the fruit of the longest experience expressed in the fewest words”. Using proverbs in daily speech is supposed to be universal as it offers the speakers the “opportunity of saying something which is extremely sensitive and personal in a very depersonalised or indirect manner” (Penfield, 1983, p. 87). The proverb in its interactional setting can replace a more direct expression and it is supposed to convey a value judgement which has persuasive
impact on the addressees (Penfield, 1983). Despite its shortness and succinctness, the proverb “summarises a situation, passes a judgement, or offers a course of action” and deals with “concrete problems that confront everyone” (Goodwin & Wenzel, 1981, p. 142). There is no doubt that proverbs are short but forceful and to the point. They communicate universal truths in the most effective way with wisdom and wit. The proverb is said to be closely related to indirectness in the politeness aspect. In fact, Charteris-Black (1995, p. 264) classifies the proverb as an “indirect speech act” because “indirectness is achieved through the use of a proverb which enables the speaker to conceal his [sic] intended meaning”.

Vietnamese idioms and proverbs are classified as a mixed category and defined as a saying conveying full meaning, which can be a piece of advice, a suggestion or an instruction by which people express an idea or describe a mood figuratively (Vu, 2004). According to Hoang (2002), idioms and proverbs in Vietnamese are “a fixed group of words, frozen and sustainable in form; the constituent words of each idiom are unchanged and kept in a fixed sequence”. Their figurative meaning is expressed in a metaphorical manner.

In some languages, using proverbs is a popular practice, to such an extent that, for example, it is noted that “Chinese proverbs are literally in the mouth of everyone, from the Emperor upon his throne to the woman grinding at the mill” (Smith, 1965) or a Ghanaian speaker who is unable to decorate speech with embellishments like proverbs, metaphors or idioms is supposed to be communicatively incompetent (Saah, 1986). To Africans, “the proverb is employed in everyday discourse, and is probably the most spontaneous of all the expressive arts in Africa” (Yankah, 1982, p. 144). The proverb is described as a “lamp of the word” among the Arabs, and an “ornament of speech” in Iran; to the Somali, proverbs “put spice into speech”; and the Igbo’s saying “proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten” implies that words are hard to swallow without a proverb lubricant (Yankah, 2000, p. 206).

Like other studies of African languages, Obeng’s study on Akan (1994) reveals that indirectness is expressed in such strategies as proverbs, metaphors, innuendo, euphemisms, circumlocution, and hyperbole. In particular, Obeng (1996, p. 545) found that proverbs play “a tremendous role in the management of face in Akan communication”. By employing these communicative strategies, the interlocutors can avoid directness and can handle difficult situations tactfully, and hence be able to obviate crises to make “their utterances consistent with face and politeness” (Obeng, 1986, p. 42).
Researchers have shown some remarkable effects of proverb usage relating to indirectness in politeness theory. Barajas (2010) argues that the use of proverbs as socialising tools to argue, advise, unite, and entertain is a reflection of a social value because “proverbs often function as an indirect way of criticising something or someone who is not adhering to prescribed social morals or values” (Barajas, 2010, p. 104). In addition, “the intended targets of the proverb can save face by allowing the indirect and generalising nature of the proverb to remain a general lesson” (Barajas, 2010, p.104). Actually, the use of metaphor in proverbs is a type of softening mechanism as it helps reduce the illocutionary force (Charteris-Black, 1990). Barajas’s (2010) study on indirectness and the use of proverbs supports Brown and Levinson’s (1978) theory of politeness, opening up a consideration of the discursive and rhetorical dimensions surrounding proverb use (Barajas, 2010, p. 158).

In the same vein, Obeng (1996, p. 543) states that the proverb can act as “a mitigator that redresses the offensive intent of an upcoming face threatening act”. By using proverbs, as Obeng argues, speakers have to use a kind of redressive pre-proverbial utterance called “deferential formula” (Obeng, 1996, p. 544). This is of the type “It is the elders who said…”,”As your father always says…” and so on, and these utterances excuse the interlocutor from responsibility for the word (with or without the proverb). Cram (1983) shares this viewpoint that “it is not the speaker’s own point of view that is being expressed, but that of the common ancestors of both speaker and hearer”. Actually, the proverb, in some particular contexts (e.g. advice giving) can signal an upcoming difficult utterance which then allows the speakers to have choices of a pre-closing, or closing, or transition of topic, or the end of turn (Obeng, 1996, p. 544). Furthermore, Penfield (1983, p. 19) discusses the advantages of using quotations and proverbs such that “the speaker can avoid being directly responsible or obligated for the message conveyed and can save himself embarrassment”. Charteris-Black (1990, p. 264) agrees that “the motive behind this use of a proverb is that it is a form of speech in which criticism can be made, or advice given, without offence being taken”. That is due to the indirectness of proverbs in an interactional setting, with the effect that one can “escape being under the control of reality” (Penfield, 1983, p. 19). The speaking style with preference for proverbs is, in fact, a stylistically discursive mode which is characterised by courtesy, subtlety and formality. That is why proverbs can “illustrate how politeness can be conveyed through the use of indirect speech acts” (Charteris-Black, 1990, p. 268).

However, according to Penfield (1983), this kind of verbal behaviour varies from culture to culture because not all societies value it equally. It is noted that, for example, in the
USA, older and rural people use more proverbs with higher frequency than those who are urban-raised. The practice of using proverbs in speech is mostly seen in high context cultures such as African (Obeng, 1994; Saah, 1986) and East Asian cultures (Barajas, 2010; Vo, 1994). To sum up, using proverbs is an art, and it is a learned process, and as Yankah (1982, p. 156) found in his study, “rural upbringing and early and continuous exposure to the proverb tradition are largely responsible for the fondness of proverbs”.

Having considered the ways politeness, face and indirectness are related, and differ across cultures, we now turn to the question of how the transference of communication styles reflecting these can be studied.

2.4. Approaches to analysing pragmatic transference

Many studies of pragmatic transference investigate the performance of specific speech acts. According to Clyne (1977), transference of formulae for speech acts from one language to another is seen to occur in a similar way as other kinds of transference. However, Beebe (1990, p.55) argues that language transfer takes place not only at linguistic but at psychological and sociological levels. She lists the three categories of sociolinguistic transfer, one of which is the transfer of native, discourse level, socio-cultural competence including pragmatic transfer, that is, “transfer of L1 (referring to native language) socio-cultural communicative competence in performing L2 (a second language) speech acts or any other aspects of L2 conversation” (Beebe, 1990, p. 56).

Pragmatic transference is often discussed in terms of two types: negative and positive transfer. In the case of L2 learners, negative transfer occurs when L2 learners have mistakenly generalised from pragmatic knowledge of L1 to an L2 setting, that is, they have carried over the L1 knowledge which is appropriate and acceptable in L1 culture but inappropriate and unusual in L2 culture. Positive transfer, on the other hand, happens when the learners apply an L1 pragmatic norm in an L2 interaction with success because the norm is shared (Zegarac and Pennington, 2000, p. 169).

In their study on pragmatic transfer in the speech act of refusal, Beebe et al. (1990, p.56) performed an investigation on Japanese learners of English “to present evidence that pragmatic transfer exists in the order, frequency, and content of semantic formulae used in the Japanese ESL learners’ refusals”. In the opposite direction in terms of subjects, Ikoma and Shimura (1994) have found evidence of pragmatic transfer in the frequency and content
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Rationale for the current study

of semantic formulae in refusals by American learners of Japanese as a second language. Actually, Ikoma and Shimura (1994) have further developed the semantic formulae in refusals that Beebe et al. (1990) had created before, which can be summarised as follows:

A typical semantic formula consists of

1. DIRECT REFUSAL: performative, no, negative
2. INDIRECT REFUSAL: regret / apology, wish, excuse, alternative, condition, promise, principle, philosophy, threat, guilt, criticism, request, off the hook, self defence, unspecific, lack, silence, hesitation, do nothing, departure, switch, joke, repetition, postponement, hedging.
3. ADJUNCTS TO REFUSAL: positive, empathy, pause filler, thanking.

Another study in this field is that of Felix-Brasdefer (2003). After exploring the differences between American English and Latin American Spanish in terms of pragmatic strategies in declining invitations, Felix-Brasdefer (2003) investigates the transference of politeness strategies in the way American English learners of Spanish perform the speech act of declining invitations. She concludes that, while American English refusal patterns are more direct, Latin American Spanish speakers exhibit a tendency towards indirectness and verbosity. As such, the American English learners of Spanish are found to employ directness instead of Latin American indirectness and have some negative pragmatic transfer, which reflects “lack of L2 socio-cultural knowledge that affected their performance despite their advanced learner status” (Felix-Brasdefer, 2003, p. 1720). Blum-Kulka (1982) found some evidence that Anglo-Canadian learners of Hebrew had a tendency toward indirectness as they did in their L1, using much less directness than the native speakers of Hebrew do. Takahashi and Beebe (1993) found that Japanese speakers of English retained their preferred Japanese formulaic indirectness, which is a feature of Japanese communicative style, while communicating in English. Another example comes from Faerch and Kasper (1989) who showed that Danish learners of German, when using German request patterns with the transfer of formal equivalent modal verbs, could not achieve their communicative purpose.

Most importantly, Felix-Brasdefer (2003) relates indirectness to various semantic formulae known as pragmatic strategies. Specifically, in terms of refusals, they include excuse / explanation, wish, apology, repetition of part of discourse, alternative, promise to try to comply, condition for past acceptance, condition for future acceptance, indefinite reply,
expression of gratitude, positive opinion - all known as supportive moves opposite to direct head acts like negative ability (Felix-Brasdefer, 2003, pp. 1724-1725).

Many researchers further discuss the practice of the speech acts of refusal as a set. Tanck (2002) argues that the pragmatic strategies always involve several speech acts. For example, a typical formula of refusal consists of a regret (apology), direct refusal (saying ‘No’), and thanking (gratitude). Her study shows that, among non native speakers of English whose first languages include Chinese, Korean, Thai, Russian, Polish and so on, the direct refusal is generally absent because the subjects tend to avoid saying ‘No’, instead, they add more reasons or excuses which may express their inability or unwillingness. According to Tanck (2002, p. 16), the L2 pragmatic competence can develop and be improved by instruction, although she confesses that the speech acts of refusal and complaint “demand more social interaction as well as many face-saving moves” than other kinds of speech acts. Bella (2011, p. 1723) shares this view with Tanck and uses the term “speech act sequence” in her study as she argues that refusals are understood “not as single utterances but as sequences including more than one turn” used by the refuser to complete the refusal. In fact, “the speech act set” was discussed by Olshtain and Cohen (1983, p. 22) long before, in their study of the semantic formulae of apology. A pattern of apology may include an expression of apology, an explanation or account of the situation, an acknowledgement of responsibility, an offer of repair, and a promise of forbearance.

The speech acts of requests and apologies (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Trosborg, 1987; Cohen & Olshtain, 1981; and Hassall, 2003) have been investigated in different languages. Blum-Kulka and her colleagues established the cross-cultural speech act realisation pattern (CCSARP) to investigate cross-cultural and intra-lingual variation in two speech acts: requests and apologies. It was administered to tertiary students of eight cultures (eight languages) to make a comparison among the cross-cultural and intra-lingual variables in two speech acts: requests and apologies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). CCSARP data have covered speech act use by native speakers of the languages such as Australian, British and American-English, Canadian-French, Danish, German, and Hebrew, and by learners of English in Denmark, Germany, and the United States, as well as by learners of Hebrew in Israel (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, Chapter 1). This project has been now set as the framework for speech act research cross-culturally and multi-lingually. Trosborg (1987) had previously shown that her study of Danish speakers of English was evidence for the socio-pragmatic strategies transferred from one language to another. Cohen and Olshtain (1981), working on
the Hebrew-English language pair, point to measuring socio-cultural competence and identify some culturally and stylistically inappropriate L2 utterances in apology situations. Hassall’s (2003) study on requests highlights the development of pragmatic competence of L2 learners, that is, positive pragmatic transfer from the L1 and negative influence of formal instruction, which cause uncertainty about their ability to convey meaning clearly. Hassall argued that learners can “avoid transferring pragmatic features from the L1 as their linguistic proficiency increases” (2003, p. 1923) and their levels of linguistic proficiency will determine the success of acquiring L2 pragmatic features. This finding means that pragmatic transference is a conscious process and it is controllable.

Little research has been done on pragmatic transference with respect to other kinds of speech acts. In the speech act of giving and taking advice, Altman (1990) discusses the choice of modality, for example ‘should’ or ‘had better’, ‘must’ or ‘have to’, for the sake of mitigation of offence by Japanese speakers of English. Takahashi and Beebe (1993) investigated the influence of L1 on L2 performance in the speech act of correction. They found that “it is not only discourse patterns that transfer, but also the style shift between two different discourse patterns with interlocutors of different status” (p. 154) from the native language (Japanese). However, the speech acts of reprimanding, complaining, offering, thanking and expressing gratitude, have not been explored cross-linguistically from the perspective of interlanguage pragmatic transference, thus still leaving a gap in knowledge in this field.

Apart from those studies, Bettoni (1981, p. 54) described a different framework in her language transference research. Bettoni investigated language transference in the Italian-English dyad in Northern Queensland and mentioned about pragmatic transference but found only a few cases of misuse of personal pronouns in terms of formality / informality. She classified these into the three types of pragmatic transference. The first type is the informal usage of pronouns; the second is the way of addressing, that is, without title and using first names in Australia; the last is the requirement of spelling of names, which does not exist in Italian. However, these have nothing to do with the speech act rules.

Another approach to investigating pragmatic transference is that of Le’s (2011) study of trans-national variation in linguistic politeness in Vietnamese, which investigated the differences in politeness expressed by Vietnamese speakers living in Vietnam and Australia in terms of politeness markers. The politeness markers he examined were: affective particles,
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Rationale for the current study

kinship terms, hedges, honorifics, minimising imposition and so on. These changes in fact relate to a process of pragmatic transference; however, Le (2011, p. 330) hardly uses the term “transference” except for this quotation: “All strategies of lễ phép (respectful politeness) aim to minimise the imposition on hearer, and in this sense, it might also reflect pragmatic transference from the Anglo Australian culture”.

Two particular gaps in the study of pragmatic transference are important to note because this study seeks to contribute to filling them. First, while the study of pragmatic transference in foreign and second language learners has been productive in recent years – as is clear from the research reported above – none has focused on the immigrants’ heritage languages in terms of pragmatic transference. Second, in more specific detail, the relationship between pragmatic transference and language proficiency has not received significant attention. As the current study deals with Vietnamese speakers in Australia we now turn briefly to the characteristics of Vietnamese communication styles before outlining the aims of the study.

Typically, the methods used to examine the performance of a speech act involve either

(1) engaging participants in a Discourse Completion Test (defined in 3.3.1.1), oral interactive role play or verbal reports; or

(2) collecting naturally occurring and authentic data through observation and field notes.

However, the second type of approach, of gathering data “through direct observation and participation in a great variety of spontaneously occurring speech situations” (Wolfson, 1981) seems not to be relevant for the current study, as several disadvantages in terms of naturalistic data collection have been pointed out. In particular, as Felix-Brasdefer (2006, p. 2164) notes, the collection of natural data does not allow the researcher to control variables such as age, gender, level of education, speech act type and situation type. Verbal report and observation / field note methods will not be discussed here as they are not used in this study.

Following Blum-Kulka (1982, 1989), Beebe et al. (1990), Ikoma & Shimura (1994) and Yamagashira (2001), whose studies have been mentioned in the literature review of this thesis, used the Discourse Completion Test for their empirical studies on pragmatic transference. These studies have identified several distinctive advantages of using the Discourse Completion Test and have found valuable cross-cultural variation. Firstly,
relatively vast amounts of data can be collected rapidly. Secondly, typical expressions of a particular speech act can be captured and easily recognised. Furthermore, the formulae and strategies are clearly distinguished among speech acts, thus making it available for manipulation. Lastly, using Discourse Completion Test tends to orient participants towards the correct social and cultural contextual reaction though they may not be aware of performing these speech acts. However, a Discourse Completion Test has some drawbacks:

1. the written forms may not represent what the subjects actually say in spontaneous conversation;

2. the length of response is constrained by the space provided and the non-native speakers may meet spelling difficulties which may result in their substituting a word they can spell for their first word of choice which they cannot spell;

3. more formal language may be chosen as the subjects may perceive writing as a more formal activity than speaking (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989, p. 250).

Despite the criticism of the Discourse Completion Test, in reality, many studies following Blum-Kulka (1982) have applied a role-play tool similar to her Discourse Completion Test for speech act research, but conducted them orally. According to Kasper and Daht (1991), their review on research methodology in inter-language pragmatics shows that more than 54% of the research on speech acts reviewed use a Discourse Completion Test as a reliable tool. Certainly, the limitations of Discourse Completion Tests are unavoidable; however the advantages clearly out-weigh the disadvantages. As a result, Discourse Completion Test application to speech act research is still popular and widely used.

Originally, for each of the situation in the Discourse Completion Test, there is only one small gap for an utterance, for example:

*Husband and wife*

Diane: There’s a PTA meeting tonight.

Robert: Are you going?

Diane: I’m exhausted. ……………………?

Robert: When does it start? I can’t be there before eight.

(Blum Kulka, 1982, p. 37)
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Rationale for the current study

The model shows that the data collection process via the Discourse Completion Test sounds a little artificial because “in natural discourse, each of these speech acts might be negotiated across several turns” (Blum Kulka et al., 1989, p. 14). But then the test has been gradually developed and modified with fuller description of the situation and more turns (see Rintell & Mitchell, 1989; Beebe et al., 1990; Bergman and Kasper, 1993, Tran, 2004). This is important because, as mentioned above, Blum Kulka et al. (1989) in their later studies, adjusted their Discourse Completion Test speech acts so that the interaction may be negotiated across several turns. In other words, speech acts are not fixed in single utterances but must be understood as sequences known as ‘speech act sequence’. Here is an example from a Mexican Spanish study on refusal strategy (Felix-Brasdefer, 2006, p. 2169). This refusal pattern consists of two insistence stages; however, and despite negotiation, the refusal ends with conditionals only, showing that ambiguity is involved, which directly relates to indirectness. It is also a kind of indirect refusal as the inviter in the end still does not know whether his friend would come or not.

F2 (friend refusing): um, darn, I’m not going to be able to, brother

F1 (friend inviting): why, bro?

F2: look, the thing is that um – I’m working at a pizza place, dude and you know that I end up staying really late, so for me it wouldn’t be easy to get there.

Insistence1:

F1: darn, what time do you get off? Even if it’s late, I’ll be expecting you.

F2: you know, I get off about eleven thirty or twelve, and well you know, I’m there from, I’m there like from ten in the morning, and well, it’s really late, imagine, I get off work just exhausted.

Insistence 2:

F1: yeah, well, if you want to come then, we’ll be there.

F2: um, well, if may be I could go, well, I’d show up

F1: well, fine, we’ll see you

F2: okay.
Later, the Discourse Completion Test became also known as Discourse Completion Questionnaire as in Takahashi and Beebe (1993, p.140), Olshtain and Weinback (1993, p. 121), and Bergman and Kasper (1993, p. 102).

Apart from the Discourse Completion Test, many researchers also employed interactive role-play as an effective tool. Hassall (2003), Felix-Brasdefer (2006), Tran (2004) and Bella (2011) who are cited in the literature review all rely on such a tool. Garcia (1996) who studied the speech acts of reprimands admitted that it suited their needs very well (Garcia, 1996, p. 667). The benefits of using role play for speech act research have been pointed out by Scarcella (1979) and Felix-Brasdefer (2006) and the most outstanding strength is that it gives both interlocutors complete control of their interaction and variables (e.g. age and gender). In addition, it shows high indices of pragmatic features (e.g. mitigation, indirectness) (Scarcella, 1979, p. 277) and reflects language users’ awareness of language appropriateness (Felix-Brasdefer, 2006, p. 2164). Kasper (2000, p.323) expressed the view that role-play enables researchers to observe how setting elements influence the choice and formulae of communication acts and also gives them the right to design contexts and roles which help elicit specific speech acts and communicative events.

However, according to Houck & Gass (1996), the “Discourse Completion Test is in actuality a role play” because both forms provide data that resemble spoken language rather than written language. It is a very powerful tool that fits the study of refusals which “often involve lengthy negotiations as well as face saving manoeuvres to accommodate the noncompliant nature of the speech act” (Houck & Gass, 1996, p. 49), as such they “require a number of turns to affect a response” (Houck & Gass, 1996, p. 57). In the same vein, Beebe & Cummings (1996) also support this oral type of data, arguing that there is more elaboration, more negotiation, more hedging, more repetition, more variety and more talk of the refusal. Rintell and Mitchell (1989, p. 270) demonstrated that the written Discourse Completion Test can be converted into oral form, as “the Discourse Completion Test is, in a sense, a role play like the oral one”. Their study shows that language elicited is very similar, in many ways, whether collected in written or oral form.

The experiences of these scholars suggest that performing Discourse Completion Tests orally may combine the benefits of the two tools. It may avoid the drawbacks as mentioned and maximise the naturalness and authenticity of interactive communication. This is the method adopted in the current study, as will be discussed in the next chapter.
2.5. Characteristics of Vietnamese communication style

The Vietnamese language, known to the native speakers as Tiếng Việt, is spoken in Vietnam by approximately 78 million Kinh people, most of whom live in the coastal lowland area, and some from smaller minority groups (Asher & Moseley, 2007). It is also spoken by an estimated 3.1 million people in diaspora communities, including approximately 160,000 people in Australia (Ben-Moshe & Pyke, 2012).

Belonging to a high-context cultural group, Vietnamese people use the language as a means to express emotional feeling. Clark (1988) observed that the Vietnamese language “does make distinctions in terms of address that reflect a very deep concern in Vietnamese society for respect and good feeling in personal relation”. This means that the nature of communication among Vietnamese is determined by hierarchical factors such as age, social status, kinship, and relationship, all of which again determine the word choice patterns formally and informally. It is the culture that shapes the communication (Jandt, 1998).

Vietnamese people highly appreciate careful and deliberate utterances: uốn lưỡi bảy lân trước khi nói (literal meaning: bend the tongue seven times before speaking out / think twice before speaking). Furthermore, hiding true feeling, preserving face and being afraid of losing face all deter Vietnamese people from directness. Indirect mood is always employed in words as well as in manner. For example, Vietnamese people never accept an invitation at the first offer, they always wait until the second or maybe third time to accept; for the sake of modesty, Vietnamese people are taught not to accept an offer or a compliment until there is a sign of genuine insistence. Such a communication style can be difficult for Vietnamese second generation children to acquire, if they are raised in a low context English environment such as Australia, and this in turn makes it hard for them to acquire proper Vietnamese language usage.

The Vietnamese language is characterized by its indirectness and highly developed honorifics system. The ability to use idioms, proverbs and quotations of poetic lines in everyday life communication is also an art. “Kieu Tale” by Nguyen Du (1766-1820), one of the most famous literary works, for example, has become a source of figurative utterances commonly employed by rural Vietnamese adults and the poetic, figurative speech is a characteristic of the Vietnamese language, “a special ability of the people” (Vo, 1994, p. 99). For whatever situation, there are always some idioms or proverbs that are applicable. Because these deal with figurative meaning, they enable Vietnamese people to save face for others as
well as for themselves. By studying speech acts like apology, gratitude, complaint, refusal, compliment and so on in Vietnamese communication, it is clear that words are sparingly used; instead, non-verbal communication is extensively employed. Vo (1994) confirmed that poetic characteristics were Vietnamese people’s perennial skills. Indeed, what Vietnamese people mean seems more succinct and profound than the actual words appear to convey.

The Vietnamese language has an extremely complicated system of pronouns for addressing, the usage of which shows “a very deep concern for respect and good feeling” (Clark, 1988) in a personal relationship as well as social distance among the interlocutors. It is so complicated that, to some extent, careless Vietnamese adults may not use the pronouns properly. The distinctive feature is that the addressing system consists of not only pronouns but kinship terms as well. The interlocutors can change the way they use pronouns depending on their attitudes, temper, and emotional feeling. “These attitudes are reflected in Vietnamese language such that whenever a person speaks, the relationships between speakers and listeners and anyone else mentioned are defined in terms of hierarchy and social distance relative to the speaker or addressee” (Clark, 1988).

These characteristics are shared across the various sub-cultural components of Vietnam society despite regional cultural differences in other respects. Most research, whether focused on North or South Vietnam, always uses just one term: the Vietnamese language or the Vietnamese communication style. There is general agreement that Vietnamese has “more to say than the body of other people” (Vo, 1994, p. 98) (i.e. Vietnamese conveys more meaning in its words than most other languages).

However, Vo (1994) states with regret that the new languages the Vietnamese migrants are using daily to express their emotions and thoughts appear to be gradually exercising their influence on the migrants’ thoughts and hearts, in a negative way. “Every day they read papers which have hundreds of pages, without encountering a single poem. There are no poems in daily newspapers, there are none in weekly or monthly magazine….what they receive from local cultures will certainly modify their ways of thinking and feeling deeply and extensively” (Vo, 1994, p. 109). Therefore, language change is an irresistible outcome. A comparison between the so-called standard Vietnamese and its acquired varieties among the diaspora communities in terms of pragmatics should be useful and significant study so that the users themselves can have an understanding of their responsibilities and attitudes towards the preservation and development of their mother tongue as well as their home culture.
2.6. **Approach to the current study**

Brown and Levinson (1978, p.216) noted that “the inappropriate transference of speech act strategies from L1 to L2 is a frequent cause of pragma-linguistic failure (e.g. using a direct speech act where a native speaker would use an indirect speech act)”. However, in reality, inter-language pragmatics investigating the speech act performance of L2 learners / speakers, is only a relatively new field of second language research, despite its importance in that “speech acts constitute an aspect of language use which is often highly complex in the mapping of form and meaning but in which the stakes might be high for a second language learner in accomplishing successful communication” (Blum-Kulka, 1982, p. 30).

In studies such as Ikoma and Shimura (1994), Thomas (1983), Beebe et al. (1990), Canale and Swain (1980), Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), the investigations into pragmatic transference have been carried out on foreign language or second language learners of a relatively small range of languages. However, these are not the only kind of subjects appropriate for study.

Another type of subject is first generation migrant speakers whose potential contribution to language transference research must be taken into account. In Marti’s (2006) study, for example, the participants are Turkish students who lived and worked in Germany and defined themselves as bilinguals. Whilst these people are not actually first generation bilingual speakers they are treated as that status. These bilingual speakers are obviously a potential source of language transference; however, the second language or foreign language learners are not the same as the second generation bilingual speakers who acquire their heritage language in different language environments and in different ways. In fact, they are known as heritage language learners who “have a connection to the language of study through their family and some proficiency in it” (Kelleher, 2010, p. 1). Immigrant speakers obviously belong to another category, different from what has been described for native speakers and second language learners groups.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no studies of pragmatic transference among second generation bilingual speakers in immigrant communities, such as in the current study. The study compares the speaking style of Vietnamese second generation speakers in Queensland, Australia, with that of the first generation speakers (their parents’ generation) and with domestic Vietnamese native speakers. It focuses on the shift from indirectness to directness in speaking style.
Chapter 2: Literature Review and Rationale for the current study

Given the fact that the second generation speakers mostly learn Vietnamese from the first generation speakers, the findings from the group of first generation speakers provide an important insight into patterns of transference. There are two possibilities:

(1) If the speaking style of the first generation speakers remains indirect like that of the native speakers, the difference in the second generation speakers’ speaking style must be attributed to English and the new language environment;

(2) If the first generation speakers have partly lost the indirectness mode, then they exhibit transference and share responsibility for the change. In this case, the first generation speakers can be seen to act as a bridge between the native speakers and second generation speakers in the process of transference. This would make the case more interesting and significant as it would make it possible to see how a heritage language is passed down to younger generations with particular changes, transference and loss at different levels.

As described in Chapter 1 (see 1.2), the Research Questions for the current study are whether there is a shift from an indirect to a direct mode of speaking in the language of second generation Vietnamese speakers in Australia with respect to standard domestic Vietnamese, and the possible reasons for such a shift.

Specifically, the speech act of refusal has been chosen for the investigation in the current study as it belongs to the commissive category in which the addresser commits himself / herself not to take some future action. Commissive utterances may threaten the addressee’s face, when refusing means ignoring someone’s wants and feelings, and must be used with care (Brown and Levinson, 1987). According to Chen et al. (1991, p. 122), a refusal is perceived as having a potential negative impact on future interaction. Because of these concerns, the refuser may be reluctant to refuse directly or immediately lest it diminishes both interlocutors’ face.

By choosing to focus on refusals as a speech act, I mean to search for a clearer overall view of indirect and direct communicative styles between the investigated groups. As seen in a study on Japanese / English refusals by Robinson (1992) and on communicative style in Japanese by Clancy (1990), refusal is a more acceptable act in US society than in Japan where people have to refuse several times for an act of acceptance. This means in such a high-context culture society as Japan, refusing is an essential skill to practise in
communication. Japanese children have to learn this intuitive, indirect style of communication at an extremely early stage (Clancy, 1990, p. 28). In order to reduce risks of face loss or conflicts, the interlocutors have to employ mitigation strategies. The indirectness style can be revealed clearly through the speech act of refusals because “they require a high level of pragmatic competence” and “involve delicate interpersonal negotiation” (Beebe et al., 1990, p.68).

There are two areas of particular interest from the study: the impact of Australian English directness (in the dominant language and culture) on indirect Vietnamese refusal speech act formulae (the minority heritage language and culture); and the infrequent use of Vietnamese proverbs and idioms and restricted to very few of the subjects in second generation speakers’ speech due to the approach to transmission of Vietnamese taken by the first generation speakers (parents) and the language environment. Some features of L2 learners / speakers’ speech acts that the study identifies are: “an emphasis on clarity, a tendency to display highly non-native performance at the discourse ends of pragmatics, and performing speech acts with a different level of directness from native speakers” (Hassall, 2003).

The next chapter sets out the approach taken in the study to addressing the research questions and the methods used.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this study, mixed methods were employed to investigate patterns of change in spoken Vietnamese in Queensland, Australia, through a comparison of the language of the second-generation speakers, who are Australian born and raised, with that of the first generation migrants (their parents’ generation) and that of speakers in Vietnam. The data consist of two types: primary data, used to seek evidence of pragmatic transference in the Vietnamese of the second generation; and secondary data, used to answer the second research question about how the changes in this aspect came about. The primary data were collected through Discourse Completion Test Role-plays between the participants and myself to elicit performance of the speech act of refusal, and a language test on idioms and proverbs. The secondary data were obtained from questionnaires and interviews with the participants. In the first stage (which deals with the primary data - the visible part of language repertoire) Discourse Completion Test Role-plays on speech act situations were captured and used to identify the patterns of pragmatic transference. The results from these tests reflected the extent of indirect and direct language usage (quantitatively) and illustrate how they were manifested (qualitatively). In addition, this stage also involved the collection of data for quantitative analysis through a questionnaire. A part of the questionnaire was used in the first stage to measure the proportion of the second-generation cohort of participants who were familiar with various pragmatic formulae. In the second stage, the other part of the questionnaire was used to obtain some quantitative and qualitative information about their language environment and about culture code-mixing in terms of stylistics, transference, and influences from English. Finally, the interviews helped me further investigate the factors contributing to the pragmatic transference observed in the Discourse Completion Test Role-plays and in the questionnaire responses by eliciting perceptions and attitudes from the second-generation participants.

In terms of statistical methods, statistical analyses were conducted specifically in each study of this research project using SPSS software package Version 21 (IBM® SPSS® Statistics, IBM Corp, Armonk, New York).
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter comprises four sections. Section 3.1 sets out the rationale for the research methods used for this study. Section 3.2 is on the subjects from Inala and West End Vietnamese Communities (first and second generation speakers), and the native speaker group. Section 3.3 describes the data collection process, for both quantitative and qualitative data. Data analysis for research Questions 1 and 2 is described in Section 3.4.

3.1. Mixed methods approach

This study used mixed methods research that combines qualitative and quantitative research methods. In pointing out the outstanding features of mixed methods research, Morse and Richards (2002) argue that from their experience, “many qualitative projects involve counting at some stage, and many questions are best answered by quantification”. Recent research has shown an increasing percentage of mixed methods research application, also known as interrelating qualitative and quantitative data or methodological triangulation. The advantages of this method include: increasing the strengths while eliminating the weaknesses, multi-level analysis of complex issues, improved validity, and reaching multiple audiences (Dornyei, 2007). In more specific terms, Robson (2002) explains that, rather than focusing on a single, specific research question, multi-methods may be used to address “different but complementary questions within a study” (p. 371); they can also be used to reinforce interpretability by complementing the strong features of each method.

As the thesis is about language change, it concerns sociolinguistic issues, involving a group of people. Therefore, quantitative methods were employed in order to obtain numeric data on frequency of usage - for example, the percentage of participants who exhibits a certain formula of pragmatic transference. However, unlike other scientific research, linguistic studies deal with many variations, hence qualitative research was involved in order to get insight through such instruments as interviews, observation and interpretation of different sources. In this study, the interviews helped me explore the speaker’s motivation towards using certain patterns of language as well as their perception of such changes as pragmatic transference patterns in the multi-lingual environment.

The possibilities of integrating different components of qualitative and quantitative research into a single study are abundant; however, the actual combinations used so far in research are much fewer. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews dominate (Dornyei, 2007). Johnson and Christensen (2004, cited in Dornyei, 2007) propose several typological principles which are widely accepted. The typological organizations are based on the sequence
and the dominance of the method’s constituents including QUAL, QUAN (capital letters denote priority or increased weight), qual and quan (lower case letters denote lower priority or weight) (p. 169).

In my study, the pattern of QUAN → qual was applied. By using the questionnaire survey, a large amount of data was collected in a relatively short time. However, this technique did not allow me to explore complex meaning directly. Adding the subsequent qualitative component of a follow-up interview allowed the participants to explain or illustrate the obtained patterns. This “sequential explanatory design” (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003) is a straightforward and beneficial design in quantitative studies which enriches the final findings, yet is easy to implement and analyse.

The questionnaire has become one of the most popular research instruments applied in social sciences. In general, the result of a questionnaire survey typically deals with quantitative data, though it may also contain some information from open-ended questions that require a qualitative analysis. “When questionnaires are used in a study, the researcher is employing a strategy in which participants use self-report to express their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward a topic of interest” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 215). The strengths of the questionnaire instrument are: it can be easy to construct; it can be extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a processible format; and especially, in modern times, the researchers may be able to email the questionnaires to the respondents, which can be a major advantage of questionnaire strategy. When the questionnaire is well constructed, processing the data can be fast and relatively straightforward. In a broader sense, Dornyei (2007) states: “Questionnaires are also very versatile, which means that they can be used successfully with a variety of people in a variety of situations targeting a variety of topics” (p. 115).

In this study, a Discourse Completion Test Role-play – which is a tool adapted from a written Discourse Completion Test questionnaire (see 2.6) - and a standard type of questionnaire were employed. The Discourse Completion Test Role-play was used to elicit the oral role-play of refusal patterns, in which supportive moves serving as the indicators of indirectness could be identified. These contribute to answering Research Question 1. The more standard type of questionnaire supplied me with statistical data regarding causes of the pragmatic change that were the concern of Research Question 2.
With regard to interview, it is the method most often used in qualitative research and regularly applied in a variety of Applied Linguistics contexts for diverse purposes (Dornyei, 2007) as it is a “flexible and adaptable way of finding things out” (Robson, 2002, p. 229). Interviews are a powerful data collection strategy because they have the advantage of one-to-one interaction between the researchers and interviewees thus maximizing the direct explanations and clarification. As such, face-to-face interviews are an obvious short cut in seeking answers to our research questions. Despite some of the possible weaknesses, the interview has the “potential of providing rich and highly illuminating material” (Robson, 2002, p. 272).

The interview in this study aimed at exploring the underlying causes of the change such as the influence of parents, language domains and formal classes, as well as the awareness and perception of the Vietnamese language repertoires and the attitude of the second generation Vietnamese speakers towards the practice, the use, and the preservation of Vietnamese in Australia. This was the key to Research Question 2.

3.2. Participants

There were three groups of participants taking part in this study: (1) second generation speakers, (2) first generation migrant speakers, and (3) domestic Vietnamese native speakers who are short term visitors to Australia.

For the second generation speaker cohort, 31 bilingual (English and Vietnamese) Australian-born Vietnamese ranging from 18 to 28 years of age (16 men and 15 women), living in the suburbs of Inala and West End Vietnamese communities in Brisbane, Australia, were chosen to participate in the investigations. They were dominant in the English language, but still fluent enough in Vietnamese so that they could carry on the conversation in Vietnamese. There were no problems in their perception of the research purpose. They performed oral Discourse Completion TestRole-plays, language activities, questionnaire responses and interviews. These young subjects belong to the second generation as their parents arrived (as boat people) in Australia after 1975 (i.e., after the Vietnam war). These young subjects still live with their Vietnamese born parents and only Vietnamese is spoken at home. The second generation has been raised in a bilingual environment: at school, they use English only; at home and in community contact, they speak Vietnamese. Traditionally, Vietnamese parents always want to nurture their children until they get married, so choosing the age range of 18-28 for the participants is appropriate. All the participants in the second
Chapter 3: Methodology

generation speaker cohort took part in role-play recording, in doing the check list and language test (if eligible, see 3.1.1.2), and completing the questionnaire, but only 9 of them were interviewed.

For the first generation migrant speaker cohort, 30 first generation migrant speakers ranging from 45 to 60 years of age (14 men and 16 women), living in the suburbs of Inala and West End Vietnamese communities in Brisbane, Australia were chosen to participate in the investigations. The process includes performing oral Discourse Completion Test Role-play, doing the idioms and proverbs checklist and tests, and interviews. Many of them are the second generation speaker participants’ parents. They have been living in Australia for more than 25 years. These participants use mostly Vietnamese in their daily lives, even though they can speak some English. Code switching is commonly practised by these participants in most social gatherings. Most of these first generation Vietnamese immigrants, who come from South Vietnam, worked there as farmers on their own small farms, or as manual workers in firms, or had their own business in the markets. In Australia they often maintain the traditional mode of family: husband going out to work, with the wife staying at home taking care of the children and the home. Their English proficiency is limited, so they mainly speak their mother tongue. A survey on the language of the first group of Vietnamese refugees coming to Australia showed that up to 88.7 percent of the individuals spoke little or no English (Lewins & Ly, 1985, p. 30). After almost three decades, Ben-Moshe and Pyke (2012, p. 31) found that first generation Vietnamese speakers still have “low level of English language use” and there is a “dominance of Vietnamese for communication between all family members”. This has helped to ensure that Vietnamese has been successfully passed down to the second generation.

For the domestic Vietnamese native speaker cohort, 19 domestic Vietnamese native speakers (8 men and 11 women) ranging from 18 to 60 years of age were chosen. They are students and workers from different parts of Vietnam, residing in Australia for short periods (often from one year to three years) and have different levels of English proficiency or none at all. These participants only took part in Discourse Completion Test Role-play recording and doing the language tests and check list; and 13 of them did the evaluation. This group set the standard for comparison of the first and second generation groups’ language performance in order to see the changes and evidence of transference.
The participants were drawn from the Vietnamese communities of Inala and West End in Queensland, in the following numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohorts</th>
<th>From Inala</th>
<th>From West End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The second generation speakers</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first generation speakers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Vietnamese community in Inala was selected for recruiting participants for this study because it is the biggest group of Vietnamese people in Queensland, comprising 2836 out of a total population of 13168 (2006 Australian Census) in the suburb. Inala is about 14 km from Brisbane’s CBD and has undergone many urban renewal projects. When the first group of boat people landed in Queensland, they settled down in West End, Brisbane. Later, Vietnamese people started to move to Inala, which was an established low status public housing suburb as its real estate property was more affordable than West End. Inala’s population is racially, ethnically and culturally diverse, from Vietnamese to Samoan.

Almost all the activities of the community take place in Inala and there are some language centres offering Vietnamese classes at the weekend for the purpose of teaching Vietnamese language and culture to help preserve heritage cultural values. The Vietnamese Community in Inala has been chosen as the source of the majority of the participants for this investigation because of the following reasons. Firstly, the civic centre (including a shopping centre) is mostly occupied by Vietnamese. At weekends, Vietnamese locals often gather together in this place for shopping and social contacts. As a result, it was convenient for me to set up relationships with participants in this precinct. Secondly, because the Vietnamese language is used widely in this community, the second generation speakers have a good environment to practise and use the language; hence, they can increase the domains of usage. Lastly, their Vietnamese can be considered a variety which exhibits typical and relevant patterns of change. Among the second generation population, only relatively fluent bilinguals were chosen; semi-speakers were not selected because it was not possible for them to handle long conversations and discussions in Vietnamese.

The West End Vietnamese community was selected as a second source for recruiting participants because it was the first to be established in Brisbane and used to be a large one. However, the West End Vietnamese Community is now shrinking, with only 206 Vietnamese out of the total population of 6206 (2006 Australian Census). West End was among the first
suburbs of Brisbane. It is situated 3 kilometres south-west of Brisbane CBD, across the Brisbane river. It has a multicultural history with a high concentration of ethnic restaurants and retail outlets. During the late 1980s, the Greek community was gradually displaced by Vietnamese immigrants. However, due to the expansion of the outer metropolitan Brisbane, most Vietnamese immigrants have now moved to Inala, Darra and some other adjacent areas. The West End Vietnamese community has shrunk and somewhat lost its general community character.

With reference to sample size, Morse (2000, cited in Robson, 2002) identifies several factors that count in determining the appropriate number of participants: the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, quality of the data, study design and research method. If the “study designs produce more data per participant”, or in depth interviews produce “much richer data”, then “fewer participants will be required” (p. 199). In my study, the quantitative phase takes place in the first stage, creating the initial ground for the qualitative research later. Thus the findings of the research will not be solely reliant on statistical results. Furthermore, most studies conducted in the multifaceted approach, according to Rubino (2007), generally “make use of detailed linguistic analyses of data elicited through semi-structured interviews among relatively small samples of individuals” (p. 96). The number of 80 participants - two experimental groups of 31 and 30, and a control group of 19 - is, therefore, appropriate and reliable for my investigation. This sample size is also at least comparable to Bettoni’s (1981) sample size (47 informants, out of an Italian speaking population in North Queensland whose size was not mentioned)’ to Thai’s (2006) sample of 16 speakers chosen from about 1,000 Vietnamese speakers; to Ho-Dac’s (2003) 60 participants from the populations of three regions with a total of 11,856 Vietnamese speakers (Footscay4523, Richmond 2141, and Springvale 5192) and Clyne’s (1967) cohort of 197 participants from population of about 47,000 people.

I recruited the second generation speaker participants through their parents, to whom I was introduced by their acquaintances and / or relatives. As overseas Vietnamese often mistrust domestic Vietnamese (who are often considered Communists), they only accept new contacts after being assured of their reliability and trustworthiness. After being introduced to the parents of a family in a face to face meeting, I asked those parents for other contact details for future correspondence. In most cases phone and email were most convenient. I asked for a meeting with the parents and their child or children, explaining the purpose of the meeting which was to discuss participation of the child or children in the research project. I
Chapter 3: Methodology

needed some time to build a relationship with each participant and his / her family through more meetings before carrying out the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, tests, questionnaire and interview. The consent form and information sheet were available in both English and Vietnamese so that the parents who were not confident English readers could correctly understand what would be done in the process of data collection and had a general overview of the research.

The process of recruitment took longer than I had expected since a lot of people refused to participate in the project, and some others dropped out because the data collection process lasted for a while and they lost their patience. In addition, making appointments with people who had a busy Australian lifestyle was not easy at all. Another limitation of this study is that it is conducted only in two Vietnamese communities in Brisbane. It is not feasible to include other Vietnamese communities around Australia. The findings, therefore, can be considered typical only if we assume the performance of Vietnamese is similar in other parts of Australia.

3.3. Data collection

3.3.1. Data collection for Research Question 1: The patterns of pragmatic transference of the second generation

This part of the process included three steps: oral Discourse Completion Test Role-plays between the participants and me on different speech act situations; a test of the participants’ knowledge of Vietnamese proverbs and idioms; and completion of a questionnaire. The patterns of pragmatic transference were captured, and the numeric data from the assessment of the command of language usage, the frequency of transference pattern exhibition, and statistics on factors affecting the language usage were also obtained.

3.3.1.1. Recording Discourse Completion Test Role-plays with participants

The Discourse Completion Test Role-play was employed in this step. It was originally designed for capturing the differences in speech act realisation between native and non-native Hebrew speakers (Blum-Kulka, 1982). The test comprises scripted dialogues covering different kinds of interactive speech acts. In each dialogue, there is a short preceding description of the situation depicting the setting, the social relationship and the status of each interlocutor. This is followed by an incomplete dialogue. The participants are asked to complete the dialogue orally, filling in the parts which are the keys to the speech act analysis
Chapter 3: Methodology

(Blum-Kulka, 1989, p. 13). This example is taken from Beebe et al.’s (1990) Discourse Completion Test:

A friend invites you to dinner, but you really can’t stand this friend’s husband / wife.

Friend: How about coming over for dinner Sunday night? We’re having a small dinner party.

You: …………………………………………………………………………………………………

Friend: OK, maybe another time (p. 71).

In the current study, to enhance the authenticity of the speech, I did not use the Discourse Completion Test form as a written questionnaire, but as a frame for role-play recordings – in a similar way to Takahashi and Beebe’s (1993), Olshtain and Weinback’s (1993), Bergman and Kasper’s (1993), Scarcella’s (1979) and Felix-Brasdefer’s (2006)), as discussed in Chapter 2. This means that the two interlocutors can add some more speaking turns for the negotiation of meaning, allowing for naturalness. In the study there were 12 different situations enacted to elicit refusals. This number was made up of four types of speech acts - invitation, request, offer and suggestion – and three characteristics of interlocutor which have great impact on patterns, namely, age, gender and social status. I chose the inferior to superior relationship for the refusal patterns as they tend to show the most distinctive features of indirectness mode. Specifically, in each of the speech acts, there were three situations:

(1) A young person refuses an older person’s invitation / offer / request / suggestion:

(2) A person refuses an invitation / offer / request / suggestion from person of opposite gender;

(3) A low status person refuses a high status person’s invitation / offer / request / suggestion.

The clues in the description were enough to direct the respondents onto the right track of illocutionary uptake.
3.3.1.2. Test of indirect language usage through the use of Vietnamese proverbs and idioms

It has been observed from the speech by the second generation speakers that there is likely to be an absence of idiom and proverb usage, which is a key element in a shift from indirectness to directness in speech style. In order to examine the repertoire of language use relating to proverbs and idioms, two tests were designed to investigate how the second generation users handle them. The scores of the tests showed what level they obtained in the understanding and usage of the selected Vietnamese proverbs and idioms. Test 1 consisted of twenty multiple choice questions with a maximum score of twenty.

For example: Khi ta muốn nói rằng chúng ta phải chi tiêu hợp lý với túi tiền của mình, chúng ta nói: (When we want to say that we have to make ends meet, we say)

1. tùy cơ ứng biến (reacting in accordance with the situation)
   depend situation react adapt
2. cái khó ló cái khôn (necessity is the mother of invention)
   determiner hardship emerge determiner wisdom
3. liệu cơm gắp mắm (estimating the rice to put fish sauce on)
   estimate rice pick-up salted fish
4. tiền vào nhà khó (money goes to the poor)
   money get in house poor

Answer 3 is the correct one.

Test 2 consisted of twenty situations presenting in the form of dialogues. Speaker 1 talks about a situation; Speaker 2’s response is provided with two choices: one is the response including an idiom or a proverb, the other is a statement, paraphrasing the idea conveyed in the other choice. The respondent is asked to select which he / she would be likely to use, in each case.

Together with the test, a check list consisting of 100 typical Vietnamese proverbs and idioms was also designed to check the overall recognition: the participants are asked to say if they are familiar with each item or not. Both the tests and the checklist were in Vietnamese with all literal meaning or figurative meaning where applicable. For the validity of the test and the check list, both were tested in advance with native speakers to make sure that the native speakers could get 100% of correct answers for the test, and 100% of items known and used. All participants were invited to do the tests and the check list, the scores of which were used to get the mean for the analysis and comparison later.
3.3.1.3. Questionnaire to elicit self-report data on language use and studies

In this study, the questionnaire which sought data on participants’ awareness of indirectness formulae, possible factors in transference and the preservation of the heritage language in Australia was constructed largely on the basis of the patterns of transference observed in the previous stages of data collection. For example, given that the word Không (No) was used frequently in the refusal formulae in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, a question was included in the questionnaire to seek the reasons, and the feelings or state of mind that motivated the utterance of such a direct word. The questionnaire was also designed to collect statistical data on factors in acquiring the language, such as formal Vietnamese class attendance, domains of usage, and range of interlocutors. In other words, the quantitative data collected were the percentage of the survey participants claiming to use certain patterns of pragmatic transference, and the measurement and relations of each of the elements in language domains and interlocutors. Only the 31 second generation speaker participants were asked to complete the questionnaire, because all the questions dealt with the second generation speakers who exhibited the transference. As there were follow up interviews after the questionnaire survey process in this study, the format of the questionnaire avoided using open-ended questions. There were 31 questions of different types: multiple choice, rank order, numerical rating scale (Likert scale) in the questionnaire.

3.3.2. Data collection for Research Question 2: Identifying the causes of the changing pragmatic pattern

There were two steps in this section, involving the questionnaire and the interviews which were employed to gain insight into the causes.

3.3.2.1. Questionnaire on participants’ reported language experiences

The questionnaire also provided some information on the participants’ awareness of transference, perceived reasons for transference, language environment and the perceptions of the effects of English. Although I did not use open-ended questions in the questionnaire (as there were follow-up interviews), the items on experiences were designed to elicit attitudes towards the acquisition and use of Vietnamese. These data could be quantified via Likert scales so that they could provide some background for interviews later.
3.3.2.2. Interviews with participants

After the data from the Discourse Completion Test Role-plays and questionnaires were analysed, interviews were conducted with nine participants from the second generation speaker cohort and 10 from the first generation speaker cohort, chosen so as to cover both sexes and a range of ages and education levels. Each interview lasted for approximately 30 minutes. The purpose was to get in-depth information about how aware the participants were of their language use in patterns of refusal, including their awareness of how direct they were. In more specific terms, the clarification from the interview helped me find the causes of change and transference; for instance, why the second generation bilinguals tended to be direct in their speech acts, or how confident they felt about their usage of Vietnamese proverbs. In addition, this step helped me explore the motivation and attitudes to using and preserving Vietnamese. During the interviews, questions based on the collected patterns of pragmatic transference were used, but they were modified or tailored depending on each interviewee’s interaction with the interviewer.

I used Vietnamese for the interviews. In order to help put the interviewees at ease and also to create rapport, I used a kind of diasporic Vietnamese. This entailed using a southern accent with occasional Vietnamese-English code switching / mixing, imitating the typical speech of the second generation speakers in Australia. The purpose was to create a familiar and comfortable language and interview environment so that the participants would react naturally. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed later for the data analysis.

3.3.2.3. Evaluation of the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese proficiency and the level of directness in the refusal pattern repertoire

In order to be able to test for any relationship between the degree of pragmatic transference found in the second generation speakers and their proficiency levels, the proficiency level of the second generation speaker participants was measured using the domestic speakers as judges.

The second generation speaker participants were divided into three groups: Group 1 consisted of those who had done no formal Vietnamese classes; Group 2 comprised those who had completed 2 to 4 years of formal Vietnamese classes; Group 3 consisted of those who had completed more than 5 years of formal Vietnamese classes. There were 13 domestic Vietnamese native speakers playing the role of judges, who evaluated these second
generation speaker participants’ Vietnamese proficiency and the level of directness in their refusal pattern repertoire via the level of hurt perceived by the interlocutor. The recordings of the second generation speakers’ Discourse Completion Test Role-plays, collected as described in 3.3.1.1, were played, and the judges evaluated all 31 second generation speakers’ talks so as to make decisions on:

1. Proficiency, rated 3 for very proficient, 2 for proficient, 1 for not proficient enough;
2. Level to which the interlocutor’s feelings were hurt, rated 3 for hurt very much, 2 for slightly hurt and 1 for not hurt at all.

3.4. Data analysis

3.4.1. Data analysis for Research Question 1: the patterns of pragmatic transference of the second generation Vietnamese speakers

The most commonly used methods of descriptive data analysis, namely frequency tables and graphs, were employed to obtain the summary displays of variables and their frequency of occurrence. This is defined as “procedures for summarizing data, with the intention of discovering trends and patterns, and summarizing results for ease of understanding and communication” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 257).

Each refusal sequence in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play was analysed to produce a formula trend on the basis of Beebe et al.’s (1990) classification of refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals. A formula trend is a list classifying the various elements of the sequence. There are two main types of elements: direct and indirect. Apart from these, adjuncts to refusals are also counted (p. 73) (also see 2.4). For example, this is a typical refusal sequence in relation to an invitation from a Vietnamese native speaker.

Đạ em cũng muốn ở lại dùng cơm với anh chị cho vui (Yes, I’d love to stay to have dinner with you, it sounds lovely to be together): Willingness

nữa bây giờ thì không được rồi (but it’s not possible for me now): Direct refusal

Em xin lỗi vì đã có hẹn (I’m sorry, I already have an appointment): Apology and reason

Tôi nay tư em đi dự sinh nhật nhỏ bạn, bây giờ chắc máy đưa bạn cùng lớp đã tự tập chờ em đi rồi, hẹn nhau cùng đi mua quà questi à (We’re going to a friend’s birthday party, my
Chapter 3: Methodology

classmates have now come to my place and are waiting for me, we are gathering to go shopping together for some presents): Explanation for excuse

Em thấy ngay ghế nhường chắc là hẹn dip khác, anh chỉ đúng buồn nghe (I am sorry about this, but maybe next time, don’t be disappointed with me, please): Regret, promise and consolation

Em cám ơn anh chi nhiều lắm (Thank you very much for inviting me): Gratitude

According to Bella (2011), in relation to her study of refusals by non-native speakers of Greek, “in the presence of a direct refusal, both the so-called indirect refusals and the adjuncts function as supportive moves” (p. 1724). The indirectness strategies presented through these supportive moves in refusal semantic formulae include gratitude, detailed reasons, promise of future acceptance, statement of apology, face-threatening reason, objective condition reminder, resorting to traditional proverbs, statement of true ability, promise of consideration, self-question, exclamation, and giving advice. Bella also noted that all the examples in her data included at least one direct refusal (2011, p.1724).

   As the patterns are likely to be performed across several turns, and as Vietnamese people always have a tendency toward insistence, I adapted Bella’s (2011, p.1724) approach of analysing the patterns of refusals in two stages: the Initiation stage (spontaneous-response) and the Insistence stage. Although direct refusals typically occur at the beginning of the refuser’s contribution (Bella, 2011, p. 1724), they may be repeated in the insistence stage as well.

   For instance:

   Refuser: Oh, Maria. I can’t make it on Saturday, it’s not possible (direct head act). I’ve already arranged something with the lads from work. It’s difficult

   Inviter: Look into it, look into it if we can make it we will meet at about nine (insistence stage).

   Refuser: I don’t know, it’s difficult. We arranged ten days ago. I’m so sorry, but I will not be able to come (direct head act).

   (Bella, 2011, p. 1726)
In my study, I compared the frequency of each type of strategy (as a percentage of all strategies) in the refusal sequences of the second generation speaker and first generation speaker groups with those of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers in order to see how the degree of indirectness varies and how indirectness was manifested. At the outset, I expected the direct refusal fragment - i.e. the use of a negative ability strategy such as direct “No” - was likely to be more concentrated as it reflects the tendency toward directness. The supportive moves, as argued in 2.4, are the indicators of indirect strategies. Zhang (1991) found that Chinese indirectness is associated with information sequencing and it is characterised most prominently by supportive moves. In other words, “the degree of indirectness is determined by the length of the supportive moves which do not contain explicitly the intended proposition. The more one beats around the bush, the more indirect one’s speech becomes” (p. 82). Supportive moves also serve as a means of negotiation, “steering the course of interaction in the direction of one’s intended goal” (p. 86). In my study I therefore also calculated the total number of all supportive moves for each of the three participant groups (the second generation speakers, the first generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers), and then compared them. In the overall view, I considered the differences in usage of these patterns to illustrate the different approach to indirectness in diasporic Vietnamese communities compared to native speakers.

For the loss or misuse of Vietnamese proverbs, the scores of the test and the check list of both migrant groups, the second generation and first generation speakers, were worked out, then compared. One part of the questionnaire elicited information about the knowledge of, and the frequency of use of Vietnamese proverbs. Together, they formed a general view of language performance of the Vietnamese proverb practice in everyday speech of Vietnamese second generation speakers. As indicated in the literature review, the knowledge of Vietnamese proverbs and their usage reflects indirectness in communicative style; specifically, the loss or misuse of Vietnamese proverbs means that speech is likely to be less indirect.

The results from the evaluations of the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese proficiency and the level of directness in their refusal pattern repertoire by 13 domestic Vietnamese native speakers were analysed using SPSS statistical package to test for a relationship a) between length of formal classes and proficiency; b) between proficiency and the level of directness, c) between proficiency and some other variables relating to the frequency of direct head acts, supportive moves, the direct No, the total number of strategies,
Chapter 3: Methodology

the number of strategy types and the idiom and proverb test scores. The correlation between
the proficiency and these pragmatic transference indicators is considered in Chapter 4.

3.4.2. Data analysis for Research Question 2: Identifying causes of the changing
pragmatic patterns

The final stage of the analysis was to identify what motivated patterns of pragmatic
transference as well as their tendency towards directness in the oral Vietnamese used by the
second generation bilinguals in Australia. The findings were then compared with those of
other research on pragmatic transference in different language dyads and on different subjects
to see whether they were consistent, or whether there were any differences due to the
characteristics of the Vietnamese language and culture. Obviously, each participant had a
different background of language usage; together they formed a jigsaw picture of language
repertoire, which bore typical features of bilingualism. Research Question 2 was clarified and
brought to a conclusion when all the interviews were carried out deliberately with all the
interview questions closely related to the sub-questions of the research question.

“Qualitative data analysis is the analysis of various forms of narrative data…. These
narrative data are usually prepared for analysis by converting raw material into partially
processed data, which are then subjected to a particular analysis scheme” (Teddlie &
Tashakkori, 2009, p. 251). According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), qualitative data
analysis is inductive, iterative and eclectic. In terms of category, there are three types of
qualitative data analysis: categorical strategies, contextualizing, and qualitative data displays.
The categorical strategies which are the best suited for my thesis are the ones where narrative
data are broken down and rearranged to produce categories that “facilitate comparison, thus
leading to a better understanding of the research questions” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p.
253).

Following the quantitative data analysis, the process of qualitative data analysis was
begun with initial coding, followed by second level coding, then continued with data display
by growing ideas, interpretation of data and finally, drawing conclusions. In initial coding,
choosing and reading text carefully to obtain themes and sub-themes was of great importance.
Then, informative labelling of relevant passages facilitated the grouping process. This also
sheds new light on the insights. The second level coding was to capture the more abstract
commonalities that emerged across the individual accounts. Through this step, similar or
closely related categories were clustered into a broader group. Various essential analytical
tools including memos, vignettes, and interview profiles were used to grow ideas and develop them into main themes. Finally, interpreting the data and drawing conclusions ended the process of data analysis. This, however, does not necessarily mean data interpretation happens only towards the end of a project. In fact, “researchers start tentative interpreting as early as the initial coding stage” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 257).

When the differences between the three groups’ performance of the speech acts of refusal were drawn, the innovative patterns of pragmatic transference were documented and then analysed with the help of narrative data from the interviews as well as the contents of the responses in the discourse Completion Test Role Plays. These data partly dealt with the presentation of findings in Chapter 4 and partly with the analysis of speakers’ awareness of language usage presented in Chapters 5 and 6. This awareness addressed those elements such as why the second generation speakers transfer the directness mode from English to Vietnamese, what causes the transference, and what influences the way they formulate the pragmatic patterns in Vietnamese. The narrative data, in addition, revealed their motivation as well as their attitude towards the preservation of the heritage language in Chapter 6. The interviewees’ experience could also provide me with some of the possible problems they might face when coming into contact with domestic Vietnamese.

The mechanics of how the raw interview data were handled is as follows. Firstly, the transcript was annotated with themes. With the help of computer software (e.g. Word processing), parts of the texts was chosen, highlighted, and coloured; comments were added in correspondence to underlined or bold blocks of text; words or phrases could be searched automatically. Next, the closely related items were clustered and coded. Numbering, indexing, and cataloguing were employed to help put all the items in the order and relationship. All the items were then grouped (second level coding) and larger themes named.

The following is an example of the process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The actual conversation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Coded</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vì ở nhà còn có ông bà, họ không biết tiếng Anh nên em phải dùng tiếng Việt để nói</td>
<td>home domain, depending interlocutors</td>
<td>2f (2 for research Question 2, Item f)</td>
<td>S12F participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chuyên với ông bà(because at home still have grandparents, they not know English so I must use Vietnamese to talk with grandparents)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: Methodology

In summary, my study of language transference employed qualitative and quantitative analysis of empirical data from Discourse Completion Test Role-plays, a questionnaire, tests, check list, evaluation and interviews. Although the two sets of analyses were independent in terms of design, in practice I was able to create an association between the two processes, allowing them to shape the analysis of one another. The complementary strengths of the two paradigms (Dornyei, 2007) in the mixed methods data analysis helped elicit the best results most suited to the investigation.
CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE FROM THE DISCOURSE COMPLETION TEST ROLE PLAYS OF PRAGMATIC TRANSFERENCE: FROM AN INDIRECT TO A DIRECT SPEAKING STYLE

4.1. Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 2, “refusal strategies are embedded with cultural information and reflect cultural differences regarding directness, indirectness” (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002, p. 230). A comparison of the second generation speakers, the first generation speakers, and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers of Vietnamese has been made in this study to investigate whether pragmatic transference is observable in the performance of refusal patterns in Vietnamese. There were 31 second generation speakers, 30 first generation speakers and 19 domestic Vietnamese native speakers making a total of 80 participants. All the subjects took part in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play which consisted of 12 situations, dealing with four types of speech acts: invitation, request, suggestion, and offer. This chapter will start with a comparison of the repertoires of the refusal patterns among the three cohorts, providing quantitative data on the use of refusal strategies. The use of the direct “Không” will then be discussed in detail and compared among the three cohorts. Next, the difference between the second generation speakers’ direct style and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers’ and first generation speakers’ indirect style will be identified and discussed with illustrative examples. It will be argued that the second generation speakers’ speaking styles reflect a shift from an intuitive basis to a rational basis for formulating a refusal, a shift from a vague to a clear cut speaking style and a shift from an assumption of hierarchy to equality in social relationship of the language users. The last section presents results of the tests for relationships between the second generation speakers’ level of directness and Vietnamese proficiency and duration of Vietnamese classes.
4.2. A comparison of the refusal patterns among the second generation speakers, the first generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers

In this section, the refusal patterns as used by the second generation speakers in this study will be presented first, then those of the first generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers. The three cohorts are then compared to see how their styles differ from one another.

The second generation speaker cohort

Table 1 presents the frequencies of the various strategies used by the 31 second generation speakers in the refusal patterns of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play. The figures are presented separately for the initiation stage and the insistence stage, then the totals are given for the two stages. Each strategy is counted each time it is used; e.g. if the strategy of ‘excuse and explanation’ is used four times with different content in a refusal, it will be counted four times. Counting strategy used in this way allows comparison of the average length of refusal patterns exhibited by the three cohorts in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play. The right-hand column shows the percentage of total strategy use that each strategy type accounts for.
### Chapter 4: Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Number of occurrences of strategy in Initiation Stage (Stage 1)</th>
<th>Number of occurrences of strategy in Insistence Stage (Stage 2)</th>
<th>Total number of occurrences of strategy (Stages 1+2)</th>
<th>Percentage of total occurrences of all strategies (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct head acts (direct strategies)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ability</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>9.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct No</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>12.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>216</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>22.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting moves (indirect strategies)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse / explanation</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>45.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>5.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of part of discourse</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>11.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise to try to comply</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for past acceptance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for future acceptance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite reply</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of gratitude</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive opinion</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing for empathy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postponement / hesitation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence / pauses</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of regret</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>924</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>1243</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean number of strategies used by each subject in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1. The performance of refusal patterns by the 31 second generation speakers.**

The first two types of strategies are known as “direct head acts” of the refusal patterns, and may be followed by other strategies known as “supportive moves” (Bella, 2011, p. 1724). The supportive moves bear the characteristic of indirectness as they mitigate the harshness caused by the direct head acts.

The second generation speakers used direct head acts regularly in their refusals, accounting for 22.1% of all strategy use (9.4% for “negative ability” plus 12.7% for “direct No”) while supportive moves made up 77.9% of all strategy use. Among the supportive moves, the strategy of “excuse / explanation” was the most frequently used (45.8%), followed
by the strategy of proposing an “alternative” (11.8%). Others were only sparsely used, for example, “appealing for empathy”, “repetition of part of discourse”, “condition for past acceptance”, “condition for future acceptance”. Notably, the “expression of regret” never appeared in the second generation speakers’ refusal patterns, nor did “indefinite reply”.

The patterns of strategy used by the male and female members of the second generation speaker cohort do not show a distinctive contrast. A Mann-Whitney U test revealed no significant difference ($p>.05$) in the strategy use of males ($n = 16$) and females ($n = 15$) as far as the distinction between direct and indirect strategies is concerned, as shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>$z$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total direct head acts</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>91.500</td>
<td>-1.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total supportive moves</td>
<td>30.50</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>107.000</td>
<td>-.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total strategies used</td>
<td>39.00</td>
<td>38.00</td>
<td>116.000</td>
<td>-.158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Comparison of male and female second generation speaker total strategy use.
Chapter 4: Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Male (n=16)</th>
<th>Percentage of total occurrences of all strategies (%)</th>
<th>Female (n=15)</th>
<th>Percentage of total occurrences of all strategies (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of occurrences of strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of occurrences of strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct head acts (direct strategies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ability</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>9.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.89</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>15.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.28</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>25.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting moves (indirect strategies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse / explanation</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>45.97</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>5.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of part of discourse</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>9.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise to try to comply</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for past acceptance</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for future acceptance</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite reply</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of gratitude</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive opinion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing for empathy</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postponement / hesitation</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence / pauses</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of regret</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40.46</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>39.53</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Comparison of male and female second generation speaker use of each strategy type.

As seen in Table 3, the male and female groups employed about the same number of strategies on average (40.46 and 39.53 respectively). The two groups exhibited approximately the same percentage of use of the excuse / explanation strategy (45.97% and 45.5% respectively), and of “negative ability” (9.39% and 9.44% respectively); however, female participants made slightly greater use of “direct No” than males, who tended to offer more “alternatives” and express more “gratitude”.

In summary, there are only slight gender-related differences in strategy usage in the
second generation speaker cohort and they are not statistically significant. These findings indicate the second generation speaker cohort functions homogeneously without gender differences. Consequently gender will be ignored in all subsequent results presented.

In terms of structure, the typical refusal pattern used by the second generation speakers appeared to be:

(Apology) + direct No / negative ability + excuse + (apology)

For instance:

1. Xin lỗi Linda T không đi được, hôm nay T bận lắm (S16M)
   Sorry Linda T not go, today T busy very much
   Sorry Linda I can’t go with you, today I’m very busy.

2. Xin lỗi không có được vì có cái party phải đi ngay bây giờ (S14F)
   Sorry not go because have party must go right now
   Sorry I can’t go with you as I have to go to a party now.

3. Ở không em bận quá à, không, bữa nay phải học bài không có thời gian (S12F)
   Oh, no I busy much, today must learn homework not have time
   Oh, no, I’m so busy, no, today I have to study as I don’t have much time left.

4. Không, không, tử con của L thích cái màu của bông đó (S04F)
   No, no, children of L like colour of flower that
   No, no my children like the colour of those flowers very much.

5. Đã thời khổ, em cần cái phone để gọi thời mà (S17)
   Yes no need, I need cell phone to call only
   Oh, no need, thanks, I only need the cell phone to make phone calls.
Chapter 4: Results

The first generation speaker and domestic Vietnamese native speaker cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Number of occurrences of strategy in Initiation Stage (stage 1)</th>
<th>Number of occurrences of strategy in Insistence Stage (stage 2)</th>
<th>Total number of occurrences of strategy (stages 1+2)</th>
<th>Percentage of total strategies (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct head acts (Direct strategies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ability</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>6.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct No</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>8.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting moves (indirect strategies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse/ explanation</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of part of discourse</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>11.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise to try to comply</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for past acceptance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for future acceptance</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite reply</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of gratitude</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>7.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive opinion</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing for empathy</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postponement / hesitation</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence / pauses</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of regret</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1231</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>1712</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of strategies used by each subject</td>
<td>57.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4: Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Number of occurrences of strategies in Initiation Stage (Stage 1)</th>
<th>Number of occurrences of strategies in Insistence Stage (Stage 2)</th>
<th>Number of occurrences of strategies in Stages 1+2</th>
<th>Percentage of total strategies (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Direct head acts (Direct strategies)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ability</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Supporting moves (indirect strategies)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse/ explanation</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>45.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of part of discourse</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>13.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise to try to comply</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for past acceptance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for future acceptance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite reply</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of gratitude</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>7.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive opinion</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>7.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing for empathy</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postponement / hesitation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence / pauses</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>6.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of regret</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>788</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>1192</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of strategies used by each subject</td>
<td>61.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. The performance of refusal patterns by the 19 domestic Vietnamese native speakers.

The performance of refusals by the first generation speakers was significantly different from that of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers. Overall, the two groups employed roughly the same number of strategies in each Discourse Completion Test Role-play (mean of 57.07 per person for the first generation speakers and 61.84 for the domestic Vietnamese native speakers). However, the direct head acts (“negative ability” and “direct No” taken together) were used much more by the first generation speakers than by the domestic
Chapter 4: Results

Vietnamese native speakers (8.99% vs. 2.7%). In all the supportive moves, “gratitude” was favoured more by the first generation speakers than by the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and the “alternative” strategy more by the first generation speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Median, first generation speakers</th>
<th>Median, domestic Vietnamese native speakers</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>$U$</th>
<th>$Z$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total direct head acts</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>93.500</td>
<td>-3.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total supportive moves</td>
<td>50.50</td>
<td>57.00</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>189.000</td>
<td>-1.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total strategy use</td>
<td>57.00</td>
<td>61.00</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>230.000</td>
<td>-1.130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Mann-Whitney U test of strategy use between the first generation speaker and domestic Vietnamese native speaker groups.

A Mann-Whitney U test revealed significant differences in the number of direct head acts (direct strategies) and the number of supportive moves (indirect strategies) between the first generation speakers ($n = 30$) and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers ($n = 19$); however, there was no significant difference in the total number of strategies used.
Chapter 4: Results

A comparison of the three cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Percentage of total strategies used by second generation speakers</th>
<th>Percentage of total strategies used by first generation speakers</th>
<th>Percentage of total strategies used by domestic Vietnamese native speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct head acts (Direct strategies)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ability</td>
<td>9.41</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct No</td>
<td>12.71</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>22.12</td>
<td>8.99</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting moves (indirect strategies)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse / explanation</td>
<td>45.77</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>45.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of part of discourse</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>11.82</td>
<td>11.39</td>
<td>13.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise to try to comply</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for past acceptance</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for future acceptance</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite reply</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of gratitude</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>7.42</td>
<td>7.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive opinion</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>7.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing for empathy</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postponement / hesitation</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence / pauses</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>6.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of regret</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average number of strategies used</strong></td>
<td>40.10</td>
<td>57.07</td>
<td>61.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. A comparison of strategy use among second generation speaker, first generation speaker and domestic Vietnamese native speaker groups.

Overall, the second generation speakers produced shorter refusals than the subjects in both the first generation speaker and domestic Vietnamese native speaker groups. They used an average of 40.1 strategies per Discourse Completion Test Role-play while the first generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers wound their way to refusal in 57.07 and 61.84 strategies (on average) respectively. A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to compare the total number of strategies used by the participants in the three groups. There was a significant difference (p = .000) in the scores for the second generation speakers (Md
Chapter 4: Results

=38.00, M = 40.10, SD = 10.983), the first generation speakers (Md = 57.00, M = 57.07, SD = 13.704) and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers (Md = 61.00, M = 61.84, SD = 11.701). This means the Vietnamese Australian born speakers do not “beat about the bush” as much as the other two groups do. This is also agreed by Zhang (1991, p. 82) that the shorter length of supportive moves makes the second generation speakers’ speech less indirect than that of the other cohorts. The direct head acts make up a substantial part of the second generation speakers’ performance as they accounted for up to 22.1% compared with 2.7% by domestic Vietnamese native speakers and 8.99% by first generation speakers. Moreover, the second generation speakers led in use of the strategy of apology with the figure of 5.2. Actually, the use of “apology” is characteristic of most Western culture refusal patterns (Felix-Bradefer, 2002). With respect to “silence” and “pauses”, the second generation speakers did not fill their refusals with as much silence as the other two groups. In relation to the ratio between the initiation and insistence stages, the second generation speakers used approximately three times as many strategies in the first stage as in the second stage (924 strategies in the initiation stage vs. 319 strategies in the insistence stage), whereas participants from the native groups used just under twice as many (788 vs. 404). The ratio between the two stages for the first generation speakers is higher than that for the domestic Vietnamese native speakers but lower than that for the second generation speakers (1231 strategies in the initiation stage vs. 481 strategies in the insistence stage).
Chapter 4: Results

Graph 1. Number of strategy types used in the refusal patterns by the three cohorts (SGS: second generation speakers; FGS: first generation speakers; NS: domestic Vietnamese native speakers).

A further indicator of the degree of directness is the number of different strategy types employed by a participant: the more kinds of strategies used, the more indirect the interlocutor. The domestic Vietnamese native speakers tended to have the broadest repertoire (mean of 10.16 types), followed by the first generation speakers (8.73) and then the second generation speakers (7.06). Graph 1 shows that the second generation speakers used between 4 and 10 types of strategies. The most common numbers of strategies for them were 7 and 8 (used by 48.4% of them), while approximately 13% liked simple refusals which comprised 4 types only in the whole Discourse Completion Test Role-play, and about 16% of participants employed 10 types – the highest number for the second generation speaker group. The first generation speakers used between 6 and 12 different types of strategies, with about 46.7% of first generation speaker participants using 8 or 9 types of strategies for their refusals. In addition, there are 26.7% of first generation speakers who employed 10 or 11 strategy types. The domestic Vietnamese native speakers led the group with 21% of participants using 12 or 13 types; commonly, they used 10 types of strategies (31.6%).

A Kruskal-Wallis Test indicated a significant difference in the size of the strategy repertoire among the three groups (p = .000); the figures are presented in Table 8. However,
the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient shows that the relationship between the participants’ strategy repertoire size and the level of directness (see section 4.4) is not significant (p = .191).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Md</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second generation speakers</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>1.879</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First generation speakers</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.73</td>
<td>1.574</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Vietnamese native</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.16</td>
<td>1.642</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 8. A comparison of mean, standard deviation and median for the number of strategy types in repertoire among the three cohorts.*
### Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Percentage of second generation speaker participants using strategy (%)</th>
<th>Percentage of first generation speaker participants using strategy (%)</th>
<th>Percentage of domestic Vietnamese native speaker participants using strategy (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct head acts (Direct strategies)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ability</td>
<td>93.54</td>
<td>96.66</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct No</td>
<td>90.32</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting moves (indirect strategies)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse / explanation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>63.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>51.61</td>
<td>86.66</td>
<td>63.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of part of discourse</td>
<td>16.12</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>31.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise to try to comply</td>
<td>48.38</td>
<td>63.33</td>
<td>89.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for past acceptance</td>
<td>9.68</td>
<td>16.66</td>
<td>15.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for future acceptance</td>
<td>22.58</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite reply</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of gratitude</td>
<td>58.06</td>
<td>83.33</td>
<td>94.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive opinion</td>
<td>51.61</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing for empathy</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>63.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postponement / hesitation</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>63.33</td>
<td>57.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence / pauses</td>
<td>35.48</td>
<td>43.33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of regret</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26.66</td>
<td>52.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. A comparison of the participants having each strategy in their repertoire, among the three cohorts.

Table 9 gives a more detailed picture of the repertoire of each cohort, showing the proportion of participants in each cohort who have each strategy in their repertoire. The second generation speakers only lead in users of “direct No”, but come in third place for most of the rest except the strategies of “excuse / explanation” and “alternative” which are used by 100% of the participants in all the three groups. For the “direct No”, almost 90.3% of the second generation speakers employed this strategy compared with 50% of first generation speakers and 10.5% of domestic Vietnamese native speakers, which is consistent with the total strategies used (see Tables 7 and 9). For use of the “negative ability” strategy, the first generation speaker cohort, despite having fewer users of “direct No”, have about the same number of users as the second generation speaker cohort, with a percentage of 96.7% using...
the strategy of negative ability, followed by 93.6% of the second generation speakers and 73.7% by the domestic Vietnamese native speakers. On the other hand the second generation speakers seem unaware of the strategies of wish, appealing for empathy and expression of regret in the patterns of refusal as only 3.2%, 3.2% and 0% employed those strategies respectively, compared with 63.2%, 63.2% and 52.6% of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers.

Kruskal Wallis tests were performed to compare the frequency of each strategy type (i.e. the percentage of all strategy use that each strategy type accounted for) across the three cohorts. These findings are detailed in Table 10:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Median second generation speakers</th>
<th>Median first generation speakers</th>
<th>Median domestic Vietnamese native speakers</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct head acts (Direct strategies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ability</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct No</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting moves (Indirect strategies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse / explanation</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wish</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition of part of discourse</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise to try to comply</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for past acceptance</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition for future acceptance</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite reply</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of gratitude</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive opinion</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing for empathy</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postponement / hesitation</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence / pauses</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of regret</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. A comparison of the median percentage of strategy use for each strategy type, among the three cohorts.

It is clear that, for the direct strategies, there were significant differences in the frequency of use of “negative ability” \((p = .000)\) and “direct No” \((p = .000)\) among the three
groups. For the indirect strategies, there were significant differences in frequency of use of most of the strategies \((p < .05)\). However, the differences in frequency of use of “apology” \((p = .277)\), “repetition of part of discourse” \((p = .099)\) and “condition for past acceptance” \((p = .658)\) were not significant, nor were those for the strategy of condition for future acceptance \((p = .293)\) and “postponement / hesitation” \((p = .086)\).

Graph 2. A comparison of total strategies used by the three cohorts (SGSs: second generation speakers; FGSs: first generation speakers; NSs=domestic Vietnamese native speakers).

Graph 2 presents the mean total strategy use by the three groups. The figures increase from the second generation speakers to the first generation speakers, and to the domestic Vietnamese native speakers, corresponding to the degree of indirectness in the speech of each cohort. This places the first generation speaker as the bridging group in the sharp diminution of strategy utilisation from domestic Vietnamese native speaker to second generation speaker.

4.3. **A comparison of the use of direct “không” (no) among the three cohorts**

One of the more important communicative tasks that confront a person from a different culture is the recognition of when a speaker has said “no” (Robin, 1983). The use of the
Chapter 4: Results

direct “Không” appears to be the very first sign of transference from indirect to direct speaking style in the second generation speaker cohort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Share of total strategy used by second generation speakers (%)</th>
<th>Share of total strategy used by first generation speakers (%)</th>
<th>Share of total strategy used by domestic Vietnamese native speakers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stage 1                           Stage 2                     1+2</td>
<td>Stage 1                       Stage 2                     1+2</td>
<td>Stage 1                           Stage 2                     1+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ability</td>
<td>7.63                          4.73                      12.7</td>
<td>4.73                        0.81                     2.16</td>
<td>1.59                          0.27                     2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct No</td>
<td>9.73                          2.97                      12.7</td>
<td>1.35                        0.81                     2.16</td>
<td>0.27                          0.27                     0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 11. A comparison of direct head acts among the three cohorts.**

As shown in Table 11, the second generation speakers exhibit the most use of the first two strategies: negative ability and direct “Không” – among the three cohorts. Among the domestic Vietnamese native speaker and the first generation speaker groups the direct “Không” makes up only 0.27% and 2.16% of total strategy use respectively, whilst among the second generation group it accounts for 12.7% of all strategy use. Only 10% of the domestic Vietnamese native speaker participants (2 out of 19) used the word “Không” directly, whereas 90.32% of the second generation participants (28 out of 31) used the direct “Không” as “head acts” of the refusals. The two domestic Vietnamese native speakers who did so were young male participants. The low use by the domestic Vietnamese native speakers shows that the word “Không” is very forceful when uttered directly in Vietnamese by a native speaker, unlike in English where “No” can still sound very polite as in these examples (from Felix-Brasdefer, 2002):

1. Oh no, thanks anyway. I can catch the train as I have to depart early.
2. Oh no, on Saturday I can’t, Maria.
3. No, no, thank you so much, but I should do it myself as I have to do it again and again.

For the negative ability strategy, native speakers tend to use the word “thôi”, “đánh”, “đánh vậy thôi” equivalent to “no” expressed in a mild manner which does not sound harsh and is acceptable to Vietnamese native speakers in the direct refusals or “chắc là không thể” (perhaps can’t) instead of “không”.

For instance:
Chapter 4: Results

1. Đã thời chỉ à [interviewer: có gì mà ngài] vợ chồng em giờ chưa còn có việc, đi chơi với bạn bè
   Determiner (det.) no sister det. [don’t worry] wife husband me at the moment still have thing, go out with friend
   Oh, no [don’t worry] my husband and I still have an appointment now, going out with our friends (Speaker N15, situation 6).

2. Thôi tự tôi đứng làm người tự hào cho rồi
   No we accept be people old-fashioned end up
   OK, we admit we have to accept that we are old-fashioned people (Speaker N13, situation 12)

3. Tối nay gia đình em có việc nên chắc em không thể tham gia cùng mọi người được rồi
   Tonight family me have thing so perhaps me cannot join with everyone
   Tonight my family has already had an event, so… perhaps I cannot join yours (Speaker N02, situation 2).

4. Đành phải thật lẽ với anh
   Accept have to be disrespectful with you
   I’m forced to be disrespectful to you (Speaker N06, situation 3)

This can be compared to the Japanese situation, where Clancy (1990) mentions that there are sixteen ways to avoid saying “No”. Among the three groups, the second generation speakers also lead in use of the “negative ability”. There is 9.4% of the share of the total strategies that is made up by the negative ability used by the second generation speakers in their patterns of refusals, compared with 6.83% and 2.43% by the first generation speakers of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers respectively. A Kruskal-Wallis test showed significant differences between the three cohorts in the median number of times they used each of these strategies as indicated in the following table.
Table 12. A comparison of occurrences of the direct head acts among the three cohorts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Median number of strategies used by second generation speakers</th>
<th>Median number of strategies used by first generation speakers</th>
<th>Median number of strategies used by domestic Vietnamese native speakers</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct No</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ability</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 3. A comparison of the frequency of direct head act strategy use among the three cohorts (SGSs: second generation speakers; FGSs: first generation speakers; NSs=domestic Vietnamese native speakers).

Graph 3 illustrates the difference of the direct strategy use by the three groups. The frequency of direct act declines progressively from the second generation speaker group to the first generation speaker, and to the domestic Vietnamese native speaker group.

The second generation speaker group also differs from the other two groups in the way
Chapter 4: Results

the initiation stage is handled. The second generation speakers refuse directly by using both direct “no” and negative ability in the initiation stage, whereas the speakers in the other two groups often wait until they are forced to do so in the insistence stage. Most of the second generation speakers used the direct “Không” straight away in the refusal as the ‘key word’ to emphasize their refusal, all other strategies like excuses or alternatives then followed. By contrast, the native speakers tended to utter the direct “Không” only in the second stage and when they are obliged to do something unambiguous. Moreover, the direct refusal in the native utterances is always followed by various “positive face preserving supportive moves” (Bella, 2011, p. 1728) such as “excuse”, “alternative”, “expression of regret”, “positive opinion” in order to mitigate the harsh sounding directness of the refusal. The second generation speakers, on the other hand, by exhausting the refusal with direct “no”, negative ability and the real excuse all in the first stage, prevent the other interlocutor from proceeding to the second stage of Insistence. Thus, the refusal often ends suddenly, causing ‘hurt feelings’ in the native speaker. The second generation speakers either do not know how to hide their true feeling or see no reason to do so. They fail to make up tactful excuses and go directly to the blunt true excuse, which to the native speaker, sounds disconcerting, somewhat threatening and risks loss of face.

In response to a specific question in the questionnaire, most of the second generation speakers admit they do use the direct “không” in refusals (see Chart 1). Specifically, 53.3% of the second generation speakers say they often use it, 30% say they sometimes do and 6.9% correspondents say they occasionally or never use the word. This matches the data from the Discourse Completion Test Role-play in which only 2 subjects never use the direct “không” in any of their refusals. Yet also in the questionnaire, 80.64% of the second generation speakers said they were aware of the indirect characteristic of Vietnamese communication. So, although the second generation speakers are aware of Vietnamese indirectness they do not seem to be aware that Vietnamese people try to avoid using the word “không” under almost any circumstance.
Chapter 4: Results

**Chart 1. Answers by second generation speakers to question 10 in the questionnaire.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>often</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occasionally</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the interviews, most of the second generation speaker participants (8 out of 9 interviewees) declared that they do not take the word “không” as offensive, that is, they do not feel hurt when receiving a reply with “không”. The converse is also true for them – they see no reason not to use “không” without considering its potentially hurtful effect on the hearer. Nevertheless, in the questionnaire, 77.4% (24 out of 31) of the second generation speaker participants realise that direct refusal in Vietnamese can hurt people’s feeling.

Even when the second generation speakers do not use “Không”, their shorter refusal patterns with fewer strategies also reflect weak mitigation, which contributes to the directness of the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech. This is in part because the second generation speakers fail to use the possible equivalents of the direct “Không” in the direct head act, and in part because the supportive moves lack the hedging characteristics employed by domestic Vietnamese native speakers. In Vietnamese, there is a wide range of mild “Không” equivalents such as thôi, thôi được rồi, thôi không cần / không tiến đầu, chắc là khó rồi, chưa thể được rồi, chắc khó rồi đây, chắc để cơ / xem thử được không, chắc khó nhi. These equivalents amount to questions to oneself or expression of positive opinions, and are a means of postponing the refusal while the refuser starts to “beat about the bush”. With regard to hedging, apart from what has been classified as supportive move strategies, the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and the first generation speakers also add more delaying devices such as à, ừm, quá là (preface), chắc là, để hỏi lại xem, có vẻ là (doubt), trời sở Cô xem, chết
em mắt Sęp oi (appealing for understanding), cái gì?, hà? (surprise), sao bây giờ Sęp mới nói, làm sao mà sắp xếp cho kịp nhi, sao lại cứ với với vang vang thế này Nhi? (blaming the other interlocutor). These help soften the seriousness and reduce the perceived offence of the final refusal. However, the second generation speakers lack the tact in the use of such mitigating expressions, making their refusals sound blunt and hurtful.

4.4. The contrast between the second generation speakers’ direct speaking style and the indirect style of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and first generation speakers

This section aims to characterize the differences between the indirect speaking style of the first generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and the direct style of the second generation speakers. The subsections that follow describe the differences in terms of:

- ‘beating around the bush’ as opposed to directness
- a vague style as opposed to a clear-cut style
- an intuitive basis to problem-solving as opposed to a rational basis

and illustrate these with examples from the Discourse Completion Test Role-plays.

4.4.1. Describing the indirect style: how the Vietnamese “beat about the bush”.

As a cultural norm, “beating about the bush”, so to speak, is typical of Vietnamese speaking style. Let us examine the following instance, adapted from Tran (2004):

_Đa em cũng muốn ở lại dùng cơm với anh chị cho vui, nhưng bây giờ thì không được rồi. Em xin lỗi vi đã có hẹn. Tôi nay tự em đi dự sinh nhật nhỏ bạn, bây giờ chắc may dużo bạn cùng lớp đã tư tập cho em đợi em rồi, hẹn nhau cùng đi mua quà chút à. Em thấy ngồi ghế nhưng chắc là hẹn dập khác, anh chị đừng buồn nhé. Em cảm ơn anh chị nhiều lắm (Yes, I’d love to stay to have dinner with you, it sounds lovely to be together but it’s not possible for me just now. I’m sorry, I already have an appointment. We’re going to a friend’s birthday party, my classmates have come to my place and they are waiting for me, we’re gathering to go shopping together for some presents. I am sorry not to be staying for the dinner, but maybe next time, don’t be disappointed with me, please. Thank you very much for inviting me)._
Chapter 4: Results

In this refusal, the speaker used several strategies which are commonly employed in a refusal pattern. They are:

1. Positive opinion: Yes, I’d love to stay to have dinner with you. It sounds lovely to be together
2. Negative ability: but it’s not possible for me this time
3. Apology: I’m sorry
4. Excuse: I already had an appointment
5. Explanation: We’re going to a friend’s birthday party. My classmates have already come to my place and are waiting for me. We’re gathering to go shopping together for some presents
6. Expression of regret: I am so sorry not to be staying for the dinner
7. Alternative: but maybe next time
8. Appealing for empathy: don’t be disappointed with me, please
9. Gratitude: Thank you very much for inviting me.

The above example illustrates the way Vietnamese speakers not only use a variety of strategies but also may repeat a strategy with several different ideas, for example, some good reasons for excuses, a long story for an explanation, apology or gratitude at both the beginning and the end of the refusal. Both tendencies were evident in the speech of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers in this study. Graph 1 (see section 4.2) shows that either or both domestic Vietnamese native speakers and first generation speakers out-do the second generation speakers in use of eight, nine and ten strategy categories, and some even use up to eleven, twelve or thirteen strategy categories in their Discourse Completion Test Role-play. Let us compare two refusals to the same invitation in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play (situation 3) by a second generation speaker and a first generation speaker.

1. S16M: Đã không được, vợ của T nấu comida ở nhà rồi, T thích ăn chung với gia đình [lần sau] OK, không có gì đâu
   (Oh, no, my wife has cooked the meal at home, I like having dinner with my family [next time] OK, I will.)
rửa chén hoài mình cũng ngại, bèn phân dàn bà mà cống dũng ngôn hạnh gì cũng không bằng chỉ hết trơn. Nếu chi có mình là người em chỉ rỏ ra, không có nói mình thì em cũng thấy được di, nhưng mà có cái là em cũng ngại chi biết nhiều những tâm của chi cũng khó khăn chút xỉn đó thành ra gân chi em không được thoải mái thành ra anh cũng thông cảm, muốn ăn cơm với anh chị làm, nhưng thời để khi khác di. Em bây giờ thấy cũng không vui, giờ gặp chuyện phần toái thì dễ dâng ra sinh giận thì ở chơi với anh chị không có vui vẻ mà làm cho anh chị không có thoải mái, thành ra dễ em về, dễ khi khác, không có chị thì tốt hơn.

(Thank you so much, I appreciate your kindness, I’m your sister and you know my nature, I just say straight away what I think, your wife was born into a highly educated family, with tactful disciplines, while I communicate and behave clumsily. She’s so skilful, knows how to cook different dishes, so delicious, and I know nothing, just clumsy, only know how to wash up […] feel bad when just washing up all the time here, it’s women’s duty to be good at household stuff and behaviour, but I’m worse than her in every aspect. If only she knows how to treat me as her sister, being generous and not commenting, I may feel comfortable, but I’m so afraid that as she knows much, she’s so tough, so I don’t feel comfortable and relaxed to be with her, you should sympathise with me in this matter, I really like having dinner with you, but let’s make it some other times. I’m not feeling happy now, if any problems come up, I may get upset and destroy the atmosphere, you two may feel uncomfortable, that’s why you should let me go home, may be some other time, to tell the truth I’d rather be here without her)

In these examples, the second generation speaker used a simple structure of refusal, that is, Negative ability / direct No + excuse + explanation + alternative with short sentences, even though the speaker can speak Vietnamese fluently. The first generation speaker, on the other hand, was long-winded. The pattern can be analysed as follows: Gratitude + a story for an excuse + (asking for) empathy + positive opinion + alternative + more excuses + alternative + real reason for an excuse.

Here is another pair of refusals to an offer (Situation 4 in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play) by a second generation speaker and a domestic Vietnamese native speaker:

1. S31M: Em nghĩ là không được […] em đã set up everything ở đây rồi nên đi không có được.
(I think I can’t […] I’ve set up everything here already so I can move down there)

2. N01M: Uh, thật sự là rất muốn sẽ, à đã chiều có đến cái…, chiều có đến em và mong muốn em thực hiện cái., ư, làm cái công việc này, mà thật sự thì em cảm thấy, cảm thấy chưa có đủ năng lực để mà quản xuyên cái công việc mà tương đối to tác này […] ở thì theo cách nhìn nhận của anh em là số một, ư thật sự thì em cảm thấy không đủ cái năng lực để mà đáp ứng được… nhiều khi nhìn nhận thế nhưng em lại không thấy vẫn đế nó đơn giản, cho nên là hy vọng anh sẽ tìm được ai đó sáng suốt hơn […] ở thật sự thì ngoại ngoài cái…hy vọng là anh không làm khó em khi mà, sau khi nghe anh nói xong thì em cũng có suy nghĩ đế nó cứ như nhưng mà thật sự em không thể nào đảm nhận cái vị trí như thế.

(Actually, thank you very much for offering me…, paid attention to me and wanted to fulfill …, uh to take over this job, but to tell the truth I feel, feel not to have enough ability and experience to handle such a hard position […] yes, you may highly evaluate me as a top staff here, but I really think that I don’t have that qualification to match that big task… you sometimes feel that way, but I don’t think it’s easy, so I hope you can find someone else more energetic and innovative […] actually, besides, uh… hope you don’t put me in a dilemma when.. after hearing your opinion, I’ve kept thinking of that but I really can’t take such a tough position)

A big difference between these two refusals is that the domestic Vietnamese native speaker beat about the bush in a long chunk until he was forced to refuse with a negative ability strategy at the end of his utterance while the second generation speaker uttered the negative ability right at the beginning of the utterance reinforced by a direct no at the end. For the domestic Vietnamese native speaker / first generation speaker the excuses and the explanation are often a long story with a lot of details which aim to mitigate the speaker’s feeling of guilt in refusing things.

In more specific terms, the Vietnamese people often express a single idea in a very long utterance. Here are some examples of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and first generation speakers recommending someone else as an alternative.

1. N03M: Em nghĩ sẽ có thể tiến cử anh A hoặc chị B làm đại diện cho công ty mình. Em thấy những người đó rất có năng lực và nhiệt huyết lắm a, với lại họ cũng không muốn bản chuyên gia đình nhiều.

(I think you should choose Mr. A or Ms. B to take the role of representative.
Personally, I find them to have a good ability as well as great enthusiasm, and more
Chapter 4: Results

importantly, they do not have family commitment affairs)

2. N06M: Tôi nghĩ er…hay sẽ hay chọn một người trẻ tuổi, tôi sẽ hướng dẫn tận tình cho người ấy về chuyên môn… sẽ tốt hơn cho công ty nếu đổi ngữ trẻ mạnh. Tôi nghĩ như thế người nhân lực công ty ngày sẽ đổi tạo và cùng tạo động lực cho lớp trẻ để họ có cơ hội thể hiện mình.
(I think er… or do you think you’d better choose a young person. I’ll guide and train him / her in the requirements of the job… It will be better for the company to have young and energetic staff. I think if you do that, the company’s personnel resource will be increased and, besides, it helps motivate them and gives them opportunity to show their abilities)

(Well, let’s recommend Ms. Hoa, she’s not only very good at cooking, for ages, but present the procedures confidently as well, when we compete, we have to present everything about the dish, the recipe, how to cook, she can do it perfectly)

4. F09F: Ông chủ nên ru chỉ Oanh đi, chỉ do chỉ nhỏ nhẹ, dễ thương mà ăn rất là mêm mong có lẽ ông khách sẽ thích hơn.
(You should invite Ms. Oanh, she’s so gentle, lovely as well as talks eloquently, perhaps the guests will like her better).

In addition, the Vietnamese speakers have a variety of expressions for gratitude and gratitude is often followed by the positive opinions about the fact mentioned by the inviter / requester / offerer. Let us examine the following quotations:

1. N12F: Cám ơn anh nhiều đã nghĩ đến tôi, đây là một cơ hội lớn cho công việc của tôi. (Thank you very much for choosing me, this is a good opportunity for development in my career)

2. N01M: Thất sự là rất cảm ơn-Sep, đã chiều cổ đến cái…, chiều cổ đến em và mong muốn em thực hiện cái,, ư, làm cái công việc này
(To be honest, thank you very much, uh for your concern, appointing me for that position and wanting me to fulfill the duty)

3. N03M: Em cảm ơn Sep đã quan tâm và đánh giá cao em. Em thấy việc thêm một chi nhánh cùng rất quan trọng cho sự phát triển của công ty.
Chapter 4: Results

(I thank you for your consideration and judging my ability highly. I see that opening a branch is so important for the company’s development)

4. N05F: Tôi thật sự xúc động và cảm ơn Giám đốc rất nhiều về việc đề bạt này.
(I feel so moved and thank you very much for this appointment)

5. N06M: Đả cảm ơn sếp đã chiều cố chọn tôi, tôi thấy việc mở rộng địa bàn kinh doanh là việc cần thiết
(Well, thank you so much for your considering and choosing me. I believe the expansion of trade and market is necessary for our firm)

(I thank you very much for your regard for me. I think some other staff in the company are also suitable for this position)

7. F09F: Cám ơn ông chú nghệ, nhìn tôi với con mắt mà cao quá, làm cho tôi cảm thấy mắc cỡ, cảm ơn cái ý tốt của ông chú đã đề bạt cho V do những thắc mưu là thăng quan tiền chức thì ai không muốn, tiền bạc thì ai cũng muốn hết, đi xa thì cũng làm cho mình mới mất nữa.
(Thank you, Boss, You regard me more highly than I really deserve, I’m quite embarrassed. Thanks again for your appointing me to the position. I believe everyone would have appreciated the promotion, both for the additional money as well as the opportunity of travelling and widening our vision)

8. F10F: Cám ơn ông chú tin tưởng đề bạt cho tôi một vị trí mới, maybe có nhiều thử thách hơn nhưng cảm ơn ông chú đã tin tưởng.
(Thank you for trusting me and appointing me to the new position. There may be challenges ahead for me but you believe in my ability)

Sometimes, a refusal with too many details may stray far away from what it actually should. The speaker in this example did not use many strategy types but went on with a long story of explanation in his refusal to his wife.

F30M: Anh thì không có quen mặc vest đỏ sang trọng giống người trí thức, mình bình dân thì phải bình dân, người ta sao đó thì kế người ta người ta quen rối, còn mình thì bình dân thôi, họ tôi thì mình tiếp, mình mặc quần áo bình thường sạch sẽ thôi, mình kiểm bố đó cho nó mới, lịch sự là được rồi, đầu cần phải vest, so đó gi máy cái độ, nhưng cái ngoài đời, không có quan trọng […] bây giờ chẳng lẽ vì dự không có đó vest phải đi mua năm trăm về mặc â, em nói thì anh đồng ý nhưng phải suy nghĩ cho
Chapter 4: Results

kỹ lại, anh không thích mặc đồ vest, mặc cái đó không có quen, cái đó không quan trọng, con người tốt xấu là cái tâm mình tốt, chỗ ăn mặc gì cho đẹp, so do làm gì, kẻ đi, bè ngoài không quan trọng, anh nói để cho em suy nghĩ lại đi.

(I’m not used to wearing suits and elegant stuff as intellectuals do. We were born common people and must live as common people. Let others do whatever they like. That’s fine, they are used to it. When we host the reception we should just wear casual but neat outfits, good looking outfits, but not suits. We do not need to compete with such stupid things. To me it is just nonsense. For example, I don’t presently have any suit and I have to pay 500 dollars for one, wouldn’t I? I quite agree with what you’ve said but you must give it more thought, I don’t like wearing suits. I’m not used to wearing them and it’s not important. People, good or bad, should be judged by their nature and their behavior. What purpose does it serve if we wear flashy clothes? We shouldn’t judge people by what they wear. I tell you this so that you will reconsider)

As happens in some other refusals in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, here the speaker does not actually state that he refuses the thing suggested, but through his opinion, the negative idea is revealed though he still said that he quite agreed with his wife, which makes his refusal a bit confusing.

The insistence stage in a Vietnamese speech act, especially an invitation or offer, is a crucial part as it is an expectation for both interlocutors. This phenomenon is relatively popular in high context cultures. For instance:

Interviewer: Để Bác nói em Hồng lấy một hộp súp cho con mang về tối ăn thêm. (let me ask Hong to get you some soup to take-away for supper tonight)

Speaker N07: Đả con cảm ơn Bác, món súp của Bác quá ngon nên con đã ăn rất nhiều. (Thank you so much, Aunt, your soup is so yummy, I had eaten a lot)

Interviewer: (insisting) thế thêm một chút để ăn khuya thôi mà. (just a bit more for supper)

Speaker N07: Đả tài vì tối nay con có hẹn đi nhậu cùng người bạn, con sợ về trẻ thì món súp Bác cho mang về không biết phải làm sao ạ. (yet because I have an appointment with a friend of mine to go out for some drinks, I’m afraid I may get home late. I don’t know what to do with your soup)
Interviewer: (insisting) nếu không ăn kip con bố tử lạnh không hư đâu. (If you don’t eat tonight, just put it in the fridge, it won’t spoil)

Speaker N07: Con nghĩ là để lần sau con sẽ mang về Bác ạ. (I think I’ll take it next time, Aunt)

Actually, insistence in Vietnamese culture is a cultural expectation. In some other cultures such as Mexican, “not insisting would be considered rude” (Garcia, 1992, p. 234). Another example is from Rubin (1983, p. 14) who told a story about the insistence expectation from an Arab visitor who came to an American party at which “He was served some delicious sandwiches. When the hostess came to offer seconds, he refused. Much to his chagrin, the hostess didn’t repeat the offer. Thus the Arab sat there, confronted by some lovely sandwiches which he couldn’t eat”. Vietnamese culture shares this feature in the speech act. Because Vietnamese people always want to decline things at the first offer, whether they are going to accept or refuse later, the insistence is always needed in the speech act. It is because “the Vietnamese possess an inwardness, a well developed ability to keep their true feeling hidden. Desires are expressed by indirectness, by hinting and talking around the subject” (Nguyen, 1980, p. 11).

4.4.2. The second generation speakers’ direct style: A pragmatic code-switching

Most of the second generation speakers’ refusals are short and straight-forward. The second generation speakers only utter what is needed for a refusal, in other words, the way the speaker conveys his / her inability and dislike is very short and clear-cut. For instance:

1. S20M: Đa xin lỗi anh nghe, tài có hẹn trước rồi đó, dạ không có đi được, sorry.
   (Sorry brother, I’ve already had an appointment, I can’t go with you. Sorry)
2. S15F: T không có rành, may be next time […] nói không rành mà.
   (I’m not free, may be next time […] I said I didn’t have any free time)
   (I’m not a conformist. For everyday use stuff, I don’t care about fashion)
4. S14F: Ô xin lỗi không có được, vì có cái party phải đi ngay bây giờ nên không có ở lại được.
   (Oh, sorry, I can’t. I have to go to a party now. I can’t stay)

However, to native speakers, a good excuse followed by a negative ability or a direct
“không” is not enough. They always expect to hear more explanation. That seems to violate privacy and confidentiality but it is in the Vietnamese culture to care about the form of the negative act (Tran, 1999). Instead, the above examples look like the following refusals made by native speakers of English, reported from a study by Felix-Bradefer (2002):

1. Oh, I’m really sorry. I’ve got other plans already.
3. I can’t attend on Saturday evening. I apologise.
4. Sorry, I have plans but I would, but I have plans. I can’t stay today.
5. Unfortunately, I don’t think I’m gonna be able to make it.

(Felix-Bradefer, 2002)

The two sets of examples amount to the minimum of strategies used among apology, negative ability and excuse. They may be considered good refusals to people of Anglo-Australian culture, for example, but not to Oriental people whose concept of politeness means being more indirect (see 2.3.2). When the second generation speakers express a refusal in Vietnamese, many of them feel that they are influenced by the more direct ways of saying “No” in English. This is the case for 71% (22 out of 31 participants) who answered Yes to Question 21 in the questionnaire “When you express a refusal in Vietnamese, do you feel that you are influenced by the more direct ways of saying no in English?” In the interviews, 100% of the interviewees admitted that they did think in English first and then put the sentence in Vietnamese and that the way they reacted in English had become a habit, which seemed very natural to them.

In addition, the speakers have a tendency of resorting to direct strategies. Such refusals do not leave any chance for a negotiation by the other speaker, thus truncating their refusals by stopping them from mitigating their direct refusal. Participants S05F, S20M, S27M, for instance, did not give the other interlocutor a single chance to insist and persuade; as a result, all the refusals ended abruptly, which often hurt the hearer due to the unexpected, harsh language, leaving moments of embarrassment before the hearer could think of something to say for mitigation. For example:


(iPhone? When I have some money, I will buy one. At the moment I still don’t have enough and must use this old phone)
Chapter 4: Results

2. S05F: Mẹ chọn cho con thứ khác đi, cái này con không mặc đâu.
   (Mum, can you choose another for me? I don’t like to wear these)

   (Can’t go. Studying, Thanks Linda)

4. S27M: Đã không được đâu, cái này ba mẹ con quý lắm.
   (No, can’t do it. My parents love this so much)

In the examples above these second generation speakers speak Vietnamese in what appears to be an Australian English manner, which can be considered a pragmatic code-switching. The interviews with the second generation speaker participants revealed that most of them (7 out of 9 second generation speaker interviewees) tried to switch to the Vietnamese indirect speaking style as much as possible, however, the process does not always happen, that is, there is no pragmatic code switching to indirect style when speaking Vietnamese. For example, S07M said “Có aware, có ý tưởng beat about the bush khi nói tiếng Việt, lâu lâu cũng không switch, cũng hoi more direct, nhưng vẫn aware là nói indirect”. (Yes, am aware, still have the thought of beat about the bush when speaking Vietnamese, now and then I don’t switch, more direct, but still aware of speaking indirect). They also confirmed their inclination toward directness in their speaking style which had been shown in the questionnaire previously. For example, S09F said “I’m more direct, I know indirect means more polite, but I think you can do direct with people your age”.
Chapter 4: Results

Chart 2. The percentage of second generation speakers who see themselves as using a more direct speaking style than their parents.

Furthermore, 77.41% of the second generation speaker participants (24 out of 31) agreed with question 6 in the Questionnaire that they used a more direct speaking style than their parents when speaking Vietnamese. This majority again confirms the second generation speakers’ inclination towards directness in their Vietnamese speech.

4.4.3. Vague versus clear-cut style

Vietnamese people use an indecisive and hesitant mode of negotiation, in order to try to avoid others becoming disappointed or upset: instead of “yes” or “no”, they prefer “maybe”. A refusal is often something hard to say; therefore, they sometimes employ an unreal promise - a postponement strategy for a refusal, expressed very vaguely - e.g. let me see, let me ask, back to you later, and this promise can be interpreted as “No, I can’t”.

There are a lot of “unreal promises” made by both first generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native speakers in the data collected.

1. F17M: … thành ra thôi để thời gian rồi tôi sẽ báo cho ông biết sau (so give me some time to consider, then I’ll inform you) (Situation 4)
   … thời để tôi hỏi ai trong phòng có thể làm được rồi trả lời sau nghe (let me ask other colleagues who can work, I’ll reply to you then) (Situation 10)
Chapter 4: Results

... coi để đánh đố tôi...(will consider next period) (Situation 12)

2. F02F: ... để em xuống ký, vài ký rồi em băn luôn (let me lose weight, several kilos, then I’ll wear it) (Situation 7)

.... chắc chắn ít lâu nữa thôi em sẽ có gang thay đổi toàn bộ system... (I’m sure I’ll try to change the whole system in a short time) (Situation 12)

3. F09F: ... để em xổng ký, vài ký rồi em băn luôn (let me lose weight, several kilos, then I’ll wear it) (Situation 7)

...chắc chắn nụ lâu nứa em sẽ cố ngố thay đổi toàn bộ system... (I’m sure I’ll try to change the whole system in a short time) (Situation 12)

4. F10F: để em coi lại ngân sách gia đình rồi thì có gì nhờ giúp trong thời gian gần đây (let me consider the financial thing. Then, I’ll promptly ask you to help me) (Situation 8)

tiếc để em coi coi... (what a pity, let me see then) (Situation 11)

5. F29M: để tôi này về tôi nói chuyện với nó nó sẽ liên lạc với chi (let me talk to him tonight, then he will contact you) (Situation 9)

thôi để coi trong thời gian tới tôi kiểm có loại hoa khác nào để tôi thay thế được thì tôi bò (OK, let me see, if I can find some other kind in the next little while, I’ll replace it) (Situation 11)

thật sự trong nay mai, để cuối năm đi, có được thì tôi sẽ đến gặp chị để mà (actually, in the near future, say at the end of this year, if I have enough money, I’ll come to see you) (Situation 12)

6. F18F: thôi vậy để tôi coi có nào trong phòng tôi có thể làm được việc này tôi nói cho ông biết (Ok, let me see if there’re any colleagues in the office who can do it, I’ll let you know) (Situation 8)

dể tôi nói chuyện cho ông hay trước dâ chính thím nghe (let me talk to my husband first to let him know) (Situation 11)

7. F16F: thôi để tôi coi hỏi ông xã dâ (OK, let me ask my husband for the decision) (Situation 11)

rồi để coi, để có tiền rồi mới đi mâm xe mới (let me see, let me save some more, then buy a new one) (Situation 12)

8. F19F: thôi để thư thả tôi sẽ làm một lượt (let me wait until I can afford it. Then I’ll do it at once) (Situation 8)

dể tôi nói chuyện với mấy đứa con tôi dâ (let me talk to my children first) (Situation 11)
Chapter 4: Results

9. F03F: thôi để tôi về bàn với chồng xem sao, rồi có gì tôi trả lời lại sau (let me talk to my husband to see if it’s possible, then I’ll give you an answer) (Situation 4)
dể tôi có trọng thêm cái chỉ xen vào (let me plant some other types between them) (Situation 11)

10. N12F: thôi để tôi về, anh cho phép tôi bàn với ông xã, sắp xếp công việc nếu mà được thì tôi trả lời anh sớm đó (let me have time to discuss with my husband. If we can arrange it, I’ll inform you promptly) (Situation 4)

11. N17F: nên anh cho em xin ít thời gian để em thuyết phục anh, rồi có gì em báo cáo với anh sau (so you give me some time to persuade him, I’ll inform you how things are) (Situation 4)
dể khi nào em tính được thì em sẽ gọi điện cho anh nghe (as soon as I can afford it, I’ll call you) (Situation 12)

12. N06M: Sang năm thong thả em tính ngay đến chuyến này (next year when I can save up something, I’ll do it immediately) (Situation 10)

13. F15F: để thư thả rói tôi cũng tính chứ (let me take some time to work it out) (Situation 8)
dể tôi nói cho ông biết đã (let me tell him first) (Situation 10)
thời để tôi nói chỉ Hoa cùng phòng chỉ làm giúp tôi (OK, let me ask Ms Hoa. She may be able to help me) (Situation 11).

In this way, the refusers can enhance the face of both parties, though both know that the action of the promise will never be fulfilled. The indirectness in such utterances makes the meaning vague. For those who do not belong to that culture, these utterances will be interpreted differently, which leads to serious breakdown in communication.

The second generation speakers, on the other hand, are very clear-cut in their refusals. This characteristic is not only reflected in the direct No but also in the genuine excuse – things that Vietnamese people always want not to reveal to others for the sake of saving face. For instance, in Situation1 of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, the refuser should not reveal the fact that he / she does not like the inviter and is afraid his / her partner may get to know if they go together. However, the second generation speakers were quite straightforward and did not try to hide the true reason for refusing. This is considered tactless by the domestic Vietnamese native speakers. For instance:
Chapter 4: Results

1. S14F: tài vì em có chồng rồi, đi thầy không có tốt (because I’m married, going with you is not good)
2. S11F: em phải nói, em đã có bạn trai…an trua 2 người không được (I have to tell you, I have already got a boyfriend, so eating out with you only is not on)
3. S29F: mình đây đã có bạn trai rồi nên không được (I already have my partner, so I cannot go with you)
4. S15F: vì Hoa cũng đã có bạn trai, vớii lại cũng sắp đàm cầu ơi anh (I have got a boyfriend, anyway, I’ll soon get married to him)

Or in Situation 8 of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, the interlocutors are expected not to let others know they are broke and cannot afford a new phone; however, most of the second generation speakers reveal the truth, for example:

1. S26F: Không có tiền mua (don’t have money for that)
2. S14: Không có cái tiền để xài cho cái phone mới (don’t have any money to spend on that new phone)
3. S03M: Khoa không có tiền (I don’t have any money)
4. S12F: Không có đủ tiền đâu (don’t have enough money)
5. S06M: Tại vì nhà tau còn nhiều việc để lo nên tử tư tau mới đổi điện thoại mới (because my family still has other things to spend it on, so I will change to a new phone later)
6. S20M: Khi nào Rob có tiền thì Rob mua còn bây giờ thì không có tiền (When I have enough money I will buy, but I don’t have any money now)
7. S09F: Ở thôi, thầy tôn tiền (Oh, no, can’t afford that much)

Some responses contain quite blunt refusals which sound very rude to native speakers and which turn the responsibility for the problem back to the interlocutor. For instance:

1. S23M: Chà thử động cửa (Uhm, try closing the window) (Situation 11)
2. S25F: Cò à, không phải cái bông có mùi lạ mà chỉ là mình không thích mùi lạ thôi (Aunt, it’s not that the flowers have a strange fragrance, it’s you who don’t like that fragrance) (Situation 11)
3. S13F: mùi thì động cửa sổ lại (just shut the window if it smells bad) (Situation 11)
4. S12F: Cố động cửa dì cho cái mùi đừng có vô (shut the window if you do not want the smell to come in) (Situation 11)
5. S15F: ở mà ở bên nhà của T rồi, T thích làm gì thì làm (it’s on my side of the property so I can do whatever I like) (Situation 11)
Chapter 4: Results

These responses are not likely to bring about an amicable resolution of these situations. Such responses might be seen as quite rude by some native speakers of Australian English too, but it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate that. They seriously violate the rules of politeness as the harshness of the responses and the implicit bad behaviour threaten the hearer with loss of face. In this case, the refusers are not afraid of their loss of face due to the different perception of the concept of face, but to the other interlocutors the insult and loss of face are considerable. These examples can be seen as a serious pragmatic failure in communication.

In summary, the refusal patterns of the Vietnamese domestic Vietnamese native speakers always sound vague because they employ half concealed, convoluted statements so as to protect the integrity of the relationship of both parties i.e. no loss of face on either part. The second generation speakers, on the other hand, seem unaware of this inter-personal communication style and they refuse directly with precisely determined excuses and clear-cut decisions which is a style unacceptable to the domestic Vietnamese native speakers.

4.4.4. A shift from the first generation speakers’ and domestic Vietnamese native speakers’ intuitive, emotional basis to the second generation speakers’ rational basis for deciding on a response

Responses in refusals are like problem solving acts. Vietnamese people tend to solve problems on the basis of emotional relationship. In terms of most social matters, personal sentiment, intuition and emotions outweigh rationality. In this section, evidence will be given to show that the second generation speakers’ refusals tend to sound rational, whereas those of the first generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native speakers tend to sound very intuitive and emotional. It is this intuitive character which is used to allow for maintained inter-personal relationships by enabling all situations to be resolved through mitigation and / or negotiation, thus always avoiding loss of face of either party. This finding may help to trace the link between rationality and directness, and between intuition and indirectness.

Let us examine the refusals by some participants from the three cohorts in one particular situational context.

Situation 11 (from the Discourse Completion Test Role-play): Your family lives adjacent to an elderly couple. Though these two old people are rather difficult, they live in harmony with their neighbours. They don’t like the kind of ivy flower you have grown along the fence
between the two houses and would like it removed. You and your husband/wife like it very much and you would like to convince your neighbours to let you keep it, but in a way that will not hurt their feelings.

Woman neighbour: I see that these flowers look nice but the fragrance is too strong, especially at night, too sweet to bear, do you mind destroying it and replacing with another kind, I’ll help you find it.

You: .................................................................

Typical responses from the second generation speaker cohort

1. S15F: À mà T thích làm, và ở bên nhà của T, T thích làm gì thì làm, I’m so sorry but I like it.
   (But I like it very much, and since it is on my land I can do whatever I want with it. I’m so sorry but I like it)

2. S16M: Xin lỗi không được tại vì T mua cây bông này, và T thích, thành thứ không có nhỏ được.
   (Sorry, I can’t do as you ask as I bought this plant because I like it and I am not prepared to destroy it)

   (Aunt, it’s not really because the flowers have a strange smell, but because you just don’t like that fragrance)

   (I don’t think I can do that as I also like flowers… If don’t like that strong fragrance, shut your windows)

5. S11F: Nhờ dị trong loại khác, hà trở, cái hoa đó mất mấy năm để trồng lần đó, ở thì bác đóng cửa sổ đi, giờ thời vào thì bác đóng cửa sổ đi.
   (Destroy and plant another type? My goodness, this plant takes several years to grow, uhmm you should shut the windows when wind blows the perfume your way, shut your windows)

(This flowering plant is very expensive… can’t destroy it. You should shut the windows so the fragrance can’t get in)

These responses sound very impolite in Vietnamese and to the domestic Vietnamese native speaker assessors, the speakers may be judged as uneducated as their solutions are not thoughtful and considerate as would occur in traditional situations. In general, it is because this group is much more self-aware, values personal freedom, privacy and other principles which are the moral codes of Western culture (Kearny et al., 1984).

Typical responses from the domestic Vietnamese native speaker cohort

(Aunt, this fragrance smells a bit strong but doctors say it’s very good for health, also it can drive insects away. Destroying it seems wasteful)

(I’m really sorry. I didn’t know this fragrance made you so uncomfortable. Let me see if I can remove it and replant it in another place further away. To tell the truth, both of us like these flowers very much. Perhaps if you look at them more carefully, you will appreciate their beauty also)

3. N07F: Dạ, vợ chồng cháu được một người bạn thân tặng cây hoa này mang về trồng làm kỷ niệm, giống ở nước ngoài đó, nên chúng cháu quý lắm, mùi của nó dùng là hơi nồng, à… hay để cháu sẽ xem nói với chồng coi thử kéo cái gián qua bên nhà cháu, rồi tia bớt nhánh cho bó hoa, đỡ bớt mùi bay sang nhà bác ạ.
(Yes, a close friend of ours gave it to us as a present. It is an oxotic species, so we treasure these flowers. Yes, even if the fragrance smells strong, ah… or let me think about it and perhaps ask my husband if he can tie the clump further backward, then trim the branches to reduce the flowers. The fragrance will fade)

4. N12F: Trời ơi thật là xin lỗi chỉ, tôi cũng đâu có biết vậy đâu nhưng mà, chaotic vợ chồng tôi cũng trồng hoa này, tôi cũng không có thích đâu, nhưng sau một thời gian nó quen cái mùi đi rồi tự nhiên mình ghiền luôn đó chỉ, tài vì nó mới
nở, tôi trông trọn gián hoa này mới nở mùa đầu tiên mới máy ngày ấy, chị ướu khó giữ tôi đi, chị ướu hết cái mùa này, nếu mà chị không thích thì tôi huya mùa sau tôi sẽ nhờ trông cây khác, chị ướu đảm đảm phiên chị nuôi.

(My goodness, I’m terribly sorry. I didn’t know how much you dislike it. But could you try for a while yet? because when my mother planted it ages ago, I didn’t like it a bit either, but after a while I got used to the smell and actually I got addicted to it. This is the first time it has bloomed since I planted it! Would you try to bear it for a while, at least over this blooming season, after that if you still don’t like it, I promise to destroy it and plant another type so I won’t bother you any longer)

The domestic Vietnamese native speakers value harmony and take care not to offend the feeling of others. They avoid breaking social bonds at all costs. The responses of the native speaker help to maintain and enhance face and to reinforce the solidarity and social bonds within the community.

Typical responses from the first generation speaker cohort

1. F17M: Chị ơi xin lỗi nghe, tôi cũng không biết chị đị ứng với cái này, đề tôi hỏi lại bà xã, vì bà thích cái này, bà mua từ bên overseas, dem về thành ra cùng ký niệm, thời đề có gì hỏi lại bà xã dâ vi bà thích làm.

(Oh dear, I’m terribly sorry, I didn’t know you are allergic to this plant! Let me discuss this with my wife. She is the one who particularly likes this kind of flower. She bought it overseas and brought it here, so it has sentimental value as a reminder of her trip. However I’ll tell her and see what we can do in spite of her liking it so much)

2. F28M: Chị cứ để là không nhờ được vì hoa nầy không phải của tôi trọng, không thể làm chuyện đó đâu, xin lỗi há.

(I don’t think I am entitled to destroy it as I didn’t plant it. Sorry, (I just) can’t do that)


(I like this flower so much, and it blooms for such a short time, only a few days each year. Please forgive me and have sympathy for my situation. The flowers are already fading. I have no thought of planting another type since I particularly like this kind of flower)
Chapter 4: Results


(Goodness! I don’t know what to do! The plant was given as a souvenir by my friend who visited us last year. She bought and planted it and if I destroy it she may think we don’t value and respect her)

The first generation speakers behave cleverly by using a combination of rational and intuitive responses. On the one hand, they still highlight a harmonious and consultative method of discourse in the neighbourhood. On the other hand, they are oriented by the Australian codes and beliefs (e.g. respecting privacy, individual rights) and state more plainly their attitudes. However, the more rational ideas do not sound as ill-manered to the domestic Vietnamese native speakers as they know how to mitigate the harshness by using such strategies as appealing for empathy, postponement or proper explanations.

4.4.5. A shift from the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and first generation speakers’ hierarchy basis to the second generation speakers’ equality basis

The Discourse Completion Test Role-play performances of the three cohorts also show a difference in the social relations of the language users. The second generation speakers handle conversations with the other interlocutors on the basis of equality, whereas the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and the first generation speakers pay more attention to hierarchical social relations: women are expected to show respect to men, the young to their elders, and those of inferior status in a specific context to those of superior status.

The following responses by the second generation speakers are from the Discourse Completion Test Role-play in which the employee replies to the boss’s request:

1. S26F: Cuối tuần mắc bản rồi, tối thứ sáu rồi, trẻ quá rồi, không có đối được (situation 10)
   (Busy at weekend, Friday night is coming, too late now, can’t change the schedule)
2. S12F: Ổi, mai đi không được, em cũng hẹn đi chơi lâu lắm rồi [cancel] với ông chủ short notice dó, đi không được đâu, hẹn rồi (situation 10).
   (Oh, can’t work tomorrow, I’ve planned a trip for ages, because you (Boss) short notice, can’t go to work, already had appointment)
3. S05F: Xin lỗi ông chủ, con đa có kế hoạch riêng, có thể ông chủ kiểm người khác (situation 10).
(Sorry Boss, I’ve got other plans, Could you find someone else?)

4. S16M: Xin lỗi không đi được, có thể hỏi người khác đi được không tại vị Tín không đi được [...] very busy, không đi được, xin lỗi không đi được (situation 10).

(Sorry I can’t go, could you ask someone else to replace because I can’t go, very busy, can’t go to work, sorry for unable to go)

Such responses are not acceptable in the Vietnamese culture as they violate the hierarchical principles about age and authority relations.

In addition, the way the second generation speakers omit the subject personal pronouns made their responses sound very aggressive and a bit rude. In Vietnamese utterances, it is considered impolite if people do that even in the case of older to younger interlocutor. In the following utterances, the subjects are missing, e.g. Busy then instead of Sorry I’ll be busy then. This kind of omission is considered very impolite in Vietnamese culture.

1. S16F: Nói không có rảnh mà (already said I was not free) (Situation 1)
2. S20M: Không có thì giờ (do not have time) (Situation 1)
3. S22F: Đã hờ rảnh, đang bận (well, not free, busy now) (Situation 1)
4. S26F: Cuối tuần mặc bận rộn, tối thứ sáu bán, trẻ quá rối, không có đối được (Busy at weekend, now Friday evening, too late, can’t change) (Situation 10)
5. S23M: Ngày mai không vào đi được rồi, có chuyện ở nhà đó (can’t work tomorrow, there’s a family affair) (Situation 10)
6. S13F: Chắc không được đâu, tại vì, có thể kiểm người khác không, vi mình plan lâu lắm rồi (perhaps impossible, because, uh, are you able to find anyone else?, because I’ve planned it for a long time) (Situation 10)
7. S14F: Ví cái weekend dã bị plan out với gia đình rồi không có cancel được (already planned to go out with family at the weekend. Can’t cancel) (Situation 10)
8. S12F: Mai đi không được… đi không được đâu, hẹn rồi (can’t go to work tomorrow… impossible, had appointment already) (Situation 10)

The above examples seriously violate the politeness rules because situation 1 describes a sensitively delicate male and female relationship, and situation 10 is a request from a boss to his employee.

The following examples are from the Discourse Completion Test Role-play in which the interlocutor replies to his / her opposite sex friend’s invitation:
Chapter 4: Results

1. S11F: Anh à, em phải nói, Em đã có bạn trai, anh thấy đấy, đi cùng được nhưng anh đi hai người đầu có được [thì là bạn thôi chứ sao] (situation 1).
   (Dear, I have to say, I’ve got a boyfriend, you see, going with you is OK but how can I go out with either two different men each time [we are just friends])

2. S15F: T không có rảnh, may be next time [một tí] nói không có rảnh mà (situation 1).
   (I’m not free, may be next time, I said I wasn’t free)

These girls’ refusals hurt their male friends as their behaviors violate the gender norm, i.e., females are always expected to be charming and tactful in handling conversations; they must learn how to hide their true feeling.

This response is from the Discourse Completion Test Role-play in which the interlocutor rejects her partner’s offer:

   S13F: Em chẳng biết nau máy cải do đầu, em chỉ thấy mẹ hay nấu thôi, BBQ ăn đỗ nhưng thời (situation 9).
   (I can’t cook such things, I only saw Mum cook, BBQ just eat BBQ meat)

The girl’s response is likely to discourage her boyfriend as she fails to hide her true attitude. Furthermore, Vietnamese females are always supposed to be good at cooking and other household things.

This response is from the Discourse Completion Test Role-play in which the employee replies to his employer’s invitation:

   S24M: Em không thích opera [...] không thích (situation 2).
   (I don’t like opera, don’t like)

The man’s refusal to his boss violates the power rule in Vietnamese communication, employees are always supposed to be subservient to their employers or other men of authority.

Let us compare the above with the tactfully handled responses of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and the first generation speakers to these delicate situations.

1. N12F: Giờ biết nói sao cho anh thông cảm bây giờ, cả gia đình lớn của tôi đã book tất cả mọi thứ rồi, vé xe, rời khách sạn đó này kia, để đi cùng với gia đình bên ba may cháu rồi, giờ tôi không thể bỏ được, mà công việc cũng quá quan trọng đi, anh có thể nào... thứ hai tôi làm bù, à thôi nhưng cô Thu đi, cô Thu chưa có gia đình mà cô Thu cũng có năm vung cái đối tác này thì có thể trong thứ 7, Chù nhất này cô Thu đến làm
việc đùm, rồi tôi sẽ liên lạc thường xuyên với cô Thu, trong lúc tôi đi weekend thì tôi điện thoại thường xuyên để hướng dẫn, mong anh thông cảm cho (situation 10). (I don’t know how to ask for your sympathy in this case. My whole family, all three generations on my husband side, has booked everything already - tickets, accommodations, other things for these holidays. I can’t now cancel the trip to stay home. Of course, the job is also important - could you … let me work over time next week? Ah, let me ask Ms Thu to help me. She’s not married, and she also knows this client well. She can work this Saturday and Sunday. I’ll contact her regularly during the weekend. I’ll phone her to advise on the procedure she needs to follow. Please sympathise with me on this occasion).

In this response, the speaker used very polite phrases like *Giờ biết nói sao cho anh thông cảm bây giờ, anh có thể nào..., mong anh thông cảm cho* to show respect to the boss’s request, then to beg for sympathy as well as to acknowledge the boss’s right to request this action.

2. **01M:** Oh, ghêousy, oh, vày vày người ta mới vừa bảo hả anh [một vía, một tức thì dạy] ại chà, càng nhi. Sao mọi việc lại cứ gấp gấp thế này, ah, thất sự thưa với sẽp cái là, bà cửa em đang rất là, bệnh rất là nặng, đang nằm viện, mà nhà thì bà có ai trong hết nhiệm là, weekend này tranh thủ ghê thậm chăm sóc một tí, hay là sẽp nhở có Giang ở bên phòng kể hoạch, nó đi hỡ em có được không à [nói vậy thì..] (situation 10).

(Oh, my goodness, so these people have only just informed you, have they? [Only a moment ago] Oh dear, why so tense? Why does everything happen unexpectedly like this! As a matter of fact, I was just going to tell you that my granny has been taken seriously ill and is in the hospital. There’re just a few members in the family, so I’ve planned to pay a visit this weekend to look after her for a while. Could you ask Ms Giang in the Personnel Department if she can help? [if you’ve told this…])

*Thất sự thưa với sẽp* is a formal expression showing a hierarchical social order; in this way, the speaker places himself as the inferior person who always obeys his boss’s commands. In these refusals, the speakers fall into a dilemma but still know how to share the difficulty with their boss. By respecting the social order, after some negotiation with polite expressions, they have found the best solution for themselves without offending or failing the boss.

3. **09F:** Chà anh à, cũng khó nghĩ đồ nghe, em biết là anh cũng muốn nó mất nó may với bạn bè, muốn khen vở là khoe em chó gi đầu, nhưng anh biết không di picnic nó
cũng khó làm anh, nau o nh th hdn, minh nau dac san qu Trường hnh lungkin cng
láng cũng anh biết không, nau cái món này nó phải đi với cái món nọ, phải đi với cái
gia vị thế nào, mình ăn phải nóng ra sao, phải hâm, tô chén nó mới ngon, còn mình đi
du picnic mình chỉ có dot lọt lên mình nau thôi thì em thấy khó làm [...] nau o nhà
mang ra đó nhưng không chuẩn bị được gia vị, thành thử cũng vô dụng, tốn công
cùng em nữa, th th th như tự Tây đi, mua xúc xích, mua thịt, mình nước, với em
trön xà lách, cái món xà lách em trön đặc biệt hơn, nó khác, đó là cũng họ khác biệt
hơn người ta rồi, rồi bừa nào sắp xếp nau o nhà mới bạn bè tôi ăn, cái đó thì em sắp
xếp được (situation 9).

(My darling, I feel bad about not doing this. I know that you want to compliment my
cooking abilities and be proud of me infront of your friends—but you may not know
that cooking for picnics isn’t as easy as cooking at home. Cooking our National
specialties is quite complicated, you know, with this meat having to go with that
ingredient like special spices. We have to serve it hot which is a problem on a picnic
and also we have to use different bowl sizes. When you go on a picnic it is best just to
put up the BBQ and grill some meat. I find it very difficult to cook at home and then
take all the stuff there. And then I won’t be able to do this or that to prepare sauces or
spices to make the taste right so it turns out no good and is a waste my time! I’d rather
do what Aussies do. We’ll buy sausages, some meat, then we grill it. I’ll make some
salad. My salads are different and more special from others’. When we have time to
invite your friends for dinner at home, I’ll cook those specialties then - I can manage
that).

The wife in this situation has been successful in persuading her husband to call off his
suggestion without any unpleasant feelings. As a wife, she is in an inferior position and must
always obey her husband as required by traditional Oriental custom, but, in the end, the
husband has to listen to her sensible and diplomatic explanation.

4. F29M: Cám ơn ông đã mỗi. Tôi thì rất thích đi cùng ông để thường thức những mong
ông hết sức thông cảm, tôi nay nhà tôi có chút việc quan trọng làm, mayoría em cần
phải ngồi lại bàn bậc [...] không có tôi không quyết định được, tôi cùng tích không đi
du được cùng mấy ông, xin lỗi ông nhiều nghe, hy vọng lần sau (situation 2).

(Thank you for inviting me. I really would love to go with you and enjoy that play,
but I must beg your indulgence as tonight we have some important family affairs to
deal with. All my siblings need to be together for the discussion […] without me the others can’t make a decision. I am sorry I can’t go with you, very sorry, and I hope next time I will be able to go with you).


(What play? Ah, I’ve heard about it. It is excellent. But when? Tonight? Oh my goodness, I have to prepare the documents for the meeting tomorrow with those clients, so I think I need some time tonight at home for some preparation to ensure I am ready for the meeting. I am sure the next time will work out OK).

In each case above, the speakers have shown their interest in their boss’s invitation as well as their dissapointment in their inability to join in the occasion. With some appropriate excuses, they diplomatically refuse their boss’s invitation persuasively, although the speakers and the boss have different social status.

The conventions of hierarchy or equality greatly influence the speaking style of each cohort. Specifically, equality based communication implies more open interaction in which a direct style works best. A hierarchical environment prevents those at the ‘lower’ level from expressing themselves, and this results in the traditional indirect style of Vietnamese communication. The difference as shown through the comparison among the three cohorts above indicates a shift from indirect to direct speaking style in the second generation speakers.

4.4.6. Effects of code switching on indirectness

As noted in the literature review in Chapter 2, section 2.1 and also in section 1.1, other studies have found that code switching occurs frequently in the speech of second generation Vietnamese people in Australia. When code switching happens, the use of English can be expected to affect the nature of the Vietnamese utterance in the sense of influencing the level of indirectness. While measuring the frequency of code switching in the second generation speakers’ speech is beyond the scope of this study, it is useful to observe the effect of the second generation speakers’ use of one particular English word - ‘sorry’ – which stood out as the most common manifestation of codeswitching in their refusal patterns. In the second
Chapter 4: Results

generation speakers’ Discourse Completion Test Role-plays, it seems that the English word “sorry” has a tendency to replace the word “xin lỗi”.

1. S17F: dạ không sorry không được (Situation 2)
   Đả sorry (Situation 10)
   Sorry sẽp (Situation 11)
   Sorry cô (Situation 12)

2. S15F: I’m so sorry (Situation 11)
   T không có kế hoạch cho năm này được, sorry (Situation 12)

3. S20M: Sorry nghe (Situation 1)
   Không có đi được sorry (Situation 2)

4. S21M: Đạ sorry (Situation 2)
   Đạ sorry anh (Situation 10)

In fact, the two words “sorry” and “xin lỗi” are different in connotation. While “sorry” deals more with the expression of regret, “xin lỗi” in Vietnamese culture is an act of apology as the refuser feels he / she is offending the other interlocutor. Therefore, when the second generation speakers switch to English vocabulary in the Vietnamese utterance, the pragmatic code is changed significantly. The different content of the expression of regret, apology and forgiveness, according to Felix-Brasdefer (2002, p. 156) who investigated it in his comparative study of English and Spanish refusals, is evidence of negative pragmatic transfer.

According to Ikoma and Shimura (1994) and Felix-Brasdefer (2006), the strategy of apology and the strategy of regret are taken together as one strategy including expressions of apology (e.g. I apologise), expressions of regret / sorrow (e.g. I’m sorry) and requests for forgiveness (e.g. please, forgive me) (p.156). However, the expressions of regret in Vietnamese refusals are expressed in a different sense - the speakers often show their disappointment and regret over not being able to fulfil the action required.

Here are some examples from the domestic Vietnamese native speakers’ and the first generation speakers’ refusal patterns in this study:

1. N14M: tiếc ơi là tiếc, không đi được với người đẹp uổng quá (Situation 1) (What a pity. I’ve missed an opportunity. Not being able to go with you is such a loss)
2. N12F, N03M, N01M, N17F: chà tiếc quá (Situation 1) (wow I feel so bad)
   N12F: Nhưng mà tiếc quá tôi lại không hề biết gì về cai lương (Situation 2) (but I regret I don’t know anything about cai lương)
3. N05F: ừ tiếc thật (Situation1) (yes, what a pity)
   Nhưng thật là tiếc (Situation 4) (but I feel so bad)
4. F17M: thất là đáng tiếc (Situation 2) (It’s such a pity)
   Thất đáng tiếc đó (Situation 3) (It’s such a pity)
   Thất đáng tiếc (Situation 4) (It’s such a pity)
   Thất là đáng tiếc (Situation 10) (It’s such a pity)

However, this kind of regret did not appear in the second generation speakers’ refusal patterns; it can be seen as a loss of feature in the process of language change.

4.5. Tests for relationship between the second generation speakers’ level of directness and a) Vietnamese proficiency; b) duration of Vietnamese classes

This section returns to dealing with quantitative measures and is concerned with examining whether the level of directness in the second generation speakers speaking style is related to their proficiency level or length of formal Vietnamese study.

Tables 13a and 13b display the data on perceived levels of offence and levels of proficiency from the assessments of the second generation speakers’ speech made by the 13 native speakers who were enlisted as independent evaluators (see Section 3.3.2.3). The level of offence perceived by these evaluators is treated as a measure of level of directness in the speech of the second generation speakers. In Table 13b, the scores are calculated as described in Section 3.3.2.3.
Chapter 4: Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>PROFICIENCY: Proportion of the domestic Vietnamese native speaker assessors ranking each subject at each fluency level (%)</th>
<th>LEVEL OF OFFENCE: Proportion of the domestic Vietnamese native speaker assessors ranking each subject at directness level (%)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Proficient</td>
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<td>15.4</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S27</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S28</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S29</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S30</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S31</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13a. The second generation speakers’ Vietnamese proficiency and level of directness manifested in their refusal patterns as judged by 13 domestic Vietnamese native speakers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECTS</th>
<th>Mean proficiency score over the 13 assessments (range 1-3)</th>
<th>Mean offence level score over the 13 assessments (range 1-3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S01</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S02</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S03</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S04</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S05</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S06</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S07</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S08</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S09</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S10</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S11</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S12</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S13</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S14</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S15</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S16</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S17</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S18</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S19</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S20</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S21</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S22</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S23</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S24</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S25</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S26</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S27</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S28</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S29</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S30</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S31</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13b. The mean scores of the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese proficiency and level of offence through their refusals judged by 13 domestic Vietnamese native speaker assessors.

In terms of the relation between proficiency and level of directness, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient test shows that the correlation coefficient is negative (−.617), indicating a negative correlation between the second generation speakers’ proficiency and directness level, that is, the more fluent in Vietnamese the second generation speaker speakers are, the less direct they sound in their speech. However, in repertoire, the second generation speakers’ directness still seems to be highlighted, “less direct” does not necessarily
mean “indirect”. In other words, whether or not they have attended formal Vietnamese class for significant periods, the second generation speakers sound very direct in their refusals. Let us examine these pairs of refusals. In each pair, one is made by a participant who has attended a Vietnamese language centre for 10 years (S19F), and the other by one who has not done any formal Vietnamese classes (S05F).

Situation 1 of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play

S19F: Xin lỗi bản quá, hôm nay mình bản quá, thời để bữa khác di.
(Sorry, too busy, I’m very busy today, some other time)
S05F: Xin lỗi David em đang mắc bản quá.
(Sorry David, I’m too busy now)

Situation 10 of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play

S19F: Ông chủ nói với mình hơi trễ, mình đã đặt vé máy bay rồi để đi holiday cho cuối tuần này há, ông chủ phải tìm người khác để giúp đỡ rồi.
(You told me too late, I’ve already booked air tickets for a holiday this weekend, you must find someone else to help)
S05F: Xin lỗi ông chủ con đã có kế hoạch riêng, có thể ông chủ kiểm người khác.
(Sorry Boss, I have my own plan, can you find someone else?)

In general, the two participants did not exhibit any difference in their speech patterns, that is, they did not use many different strategies in different Discourse Completion Test Role-play situations. Both sounded very direct. One the basis of my observation during the interviews, I considered the one without formal training (S05F) and the other (S19F) who had ten years learning Vietnamese to have the same level of fluency in Vietnamese. In fact, S05F obtained 2.00 and S19F got 1.92 as mean score for Vietnamese proficiency from the native speaker judges. Again, the different duration of taking formal Vietnamese classes does not guarantee the different proficiency level and directness level. It can be deduced from these cases that acquiring Vietnamese (as a heritage language) from the family and community is quite different from that of a learner for an L2.

To test for a relationship between the length of the second generation speakers’ formal Vietnamese tuition and their proficiency in Vietnamese, a Kruskal-Wallis test was performed. This did not find there was a significant relationship (p = .390) between the two variables. This means that whether the second generation speakers attended Vietnamese classes or not
Chapter 4: Results

has no effect on their proficiency in Vietnamese. Moreover, the second generation speakers’ proficiency does not necessarily mean they can use Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in their speech. This usage is almost totally lost in this first Australian generation of young Vietnamese!

Table 14 shows the correlations between the second generation speakers’ proficiency scores and other variables indicating the level of directness in the second generation speakers’ refusals. The relationships between the proficiency and these variables were investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient tests. Correlation in this test is usually considered significant at the 0.01 level, so the tests in this case indicate that it is not significant in any of the possible relationships investigated. This means that Vietnamese proficiency does not appear to be related to the subjects’ level of directness / indirectness conveyed by those variables investigated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proficiency</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson correlation</td>
<td>Sig. (2 tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total direct head acts</td>
<td>-.129</td>
<td>.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total supportive moves</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total strategies</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total strategy types</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total direct No</td>
<td>-.335</td>
<td>.065</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. Results of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient tests for correlation between the second generation speakers’ proficiency and variables measuring level of indirectness.

The relationship between the length of formal Vietnamese classes and the various variables considered indicators of indirectness was also evaluated using Kruskal-Wallis tests. Table 15 presents the data:
Table 15. Significance values for Kruskal-Wallis tests for relationships between length of Vietnamese classes and different variables: Total direct head acts, Total supportive moves, Total strategies used and Total strategy types in repertoire.

It can be concluded that there are no statistically significant differences in the total direct head acts, total supportive moves, total strategies used in the refusals, and total strategy types in repertoire by the second generation speaker participants in relation to the extent of formal Vietnamese classes. In other words, the class length does not seem to affect the level of directness in the participants’ Vietnamese speech.

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the results of the empirical studies on the second generation speakers’ spoken Vietnamese in comparison with those of the first generation speaker and domestic Vietnamese native speaker cohorts are presented. The results show that there is a significant shift from the indirectness of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and first generation speakers to the directness of the second generation speakers reflected through the performance of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play. The second generation speakers use a larger proportion of the direct head acts in which the direct “No” is predominant with a smaller proportion of the supportive moves. The second generation speakers not only employ fewer strategy types but also use very short patterns which end suddenly without proceeding to the insistence stage which would normally occur in a Vietnamese speech act. The investigation also reveals some characteristics of the shift, namely, from a traditionally hierarchical Vietnamese custom to an equality-based relationship, from an emotional intuitive basis to rational basis, and from indirect, vague to clear-cut style of speech. Finally, the study shows that there is no relationship between Vietnamese proficiency and the level of
Chapter 4: Results

directness, nor between the length of attending formal Vietnamese class and level of directness.
CHAPTER 5

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF PRAGMATIC TRANSFERENCE IN TERMS OF THE USE OF VIETNAMESE IDIOMS AND PROVERBS AND EVIDENCE OF LACK OF AWARENESS OF THE TRANSFERENCE

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, further evidence of pragmatic transference will be presented focusing on the direct speaking style of the second generation speakers. The measurement tool for this part of the study relates to a set of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs which form a significant component of typical native Vietnamese speech (see Section 2.3.3 in Chapter 2). The ability of the second generation speaker cohort to comprehend these speech components and use them appropriately is another measure of the intactness or otherwise of their heritage language. In section 5.2, a comparison of the repertoire of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs among the three cohorts is presented. Data reported in this section come from the check list, tests, and a part of the questionnaire and in-depth interviews (see Chapter 3). Section 5.3 outlines the existence of a mismatch between what they perceive their Vietnamese usage to be and what they actually do when speaking Vietnamese in the Australian context, and argues that the pragmatic transference by the second generation speakers is incomplete.

5.2. A comparison of the repertoire of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs among the second generation speakers, first generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native speakers

The three cohorts’ repertoires of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs are compared in this section. Table 16 presents the results of the check list and tests done by the three groups. All the participants completed the check list of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs, indicating which of the 100 selected items (whose linguistic validity had been checked by ten native speakers) they recognised and which they used. Any participant who knew and / or used more than 25 items in the check list was considered eligible to undertake the two tests, each of which consisted of 20 multiple choice questions on use of idioms and proverbs.
Table 16. A comparison of Vietnamese idiom and proverb recognition and usage among the three cohorts.

The figures of 13.4 items known, 0.29 items used and 86.31 items unknown, on average, reflect the paucity of the idioms and proverbs repertoire in the Vietnamese language of the second generation speakers in Australia. Twenty-one out of thirty-one second generation speaker participants were not eligible to take the tests due to their lack of knowledge of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs.

As for the first generation speakers, a Mann Whitney test showed that this group - the intermediate group in the language transference process- displayed a significantly different mean score from the domestic Vietnamese native speakers group (p<.05) overall. The difference between the known and used items for the first generation speakers (95.8 and 71.63 respectively) is much greater than that for the domestic Vietnamese native speakers (98.79 and 96.58). This suggests that, although the first generation speakers are still using idioms and proverbs in the Australian language environment, their knowledge and usage of
these Vietnamese language components has dwindled and therefore the potential for transmission to the second generation speakers is necessarily degraded.

Table 17 illustrates the differences among the three cohorts in the Vietnamese proverbs and idioms practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Median second generation speaker</th>
<th>Median first generation speaker</th>
<th>Median domestic Vietnamese native speaker</th>
<th>p.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowing proverbs and idioms</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>96.50</td>
<td>99.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using proverbs and idioms</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>79.50</td>
<td>97.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 1 scores</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2 scores</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 17. A comparison of median and asymp. sig. in use of Vietnamese proverbs and idioms by a Kruskal Wallis test.*
Chapter 5: Results

Graph 4. A comparison of proverb and idiom test 1 scores among the three cohorts (SGSs: second generation speakers; FGSs: first generation speakers; NSs=domestic Vietnamese native speakers).

After doing the checklist, the eligible participants did the two tests of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs usage. Test 1 was used to check the accuracy of Vietnamese idiom and proverb usage. For each of the 20 situations, the participants were asked to choose the correct idiom or proverb to go with the scene described. Each correct choice scored 1 point. In graph 4, the columns indicate the differences in the scores on Test 1 among the three cohorts, for both male and female participants. In general, the second generation speakers attained only low scores (mean of 3.29 points), and the first generation speakers’ scores are a little lower than those of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers (mean of 17.2 and 19.58 points respectively).

The data also show a loss of the Vietnamese idiom and proverb usage in another aspect. There are 11 second generation speaker participants (35.5%) who do not know anything about the Vietnamese idioms and proverbs concerned, although they can communicate in fluent Vietnamese. Three participants know nearly half the items of the check list but never use a single item; this means they are only good at comprehension but not at usage of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs.

The proverb and idiom checklist comprehension was assessed by personally reading
Chapter 5: Results

each item to each participant, with some explanation, and then asking for an interpretation. The second generation speakers invariably only comprehended the literal meaning, failing to understand the metaphorical allusion – the underlying messages so clearly conveyed to all native Vietnamese by these familiar figures of everyday speech.

For example: 1. Cháy nhà lòi mạt chuột (item 19 in the check list)

Literal meaning: A mouse has to run out of a house on fire

Figurative meaning: A cheat will eventually be exposed when his deeds are discovered.

2. Đi với Phật mặc áo cà sa, đi với ma mặc áo giấy (item in the check list)

Literal meaning: When one follows Buddhism, one wears a monk gown, but among ghosts, one has to wear paper garments.

Figurative meaning: One should be flexible and adaptable so as to be able to live successfully whatever the circumstances. This is similar to the English proverb – ‘When in Rome do as the Romans do’.

The first generation speakers, on the other hand, have continued using idioms and proverbs in everyday conversations; their usage varies depending on the level of social contact with their homeland peers. Only 7 participants (23.3%) had a low level of usage (using fewer than 50 items) and these were people living in isolated circumstances, with a lack of social gatherings or other interaction with Vietnamese migrants. Through interviews with some of the first generation speaker participants, it became apparent that the main reason for the lack of familiarity with Vietnamese idioms and proverbs among the second generation speakers was that the first generation speakers, being aware of the second generation speakers’ limitations, and not wanting to alienate them, avoided using traditional figures of speech. As a result, the loss of this feature of language has taken place at an even faster rate than might have been expected.
Graph 5. A comparison of proverb and idiom Test 2 scores among the three cohorts (SGSs: second generation speakers; FGSs: first generation speakers; NSs: domestic Vietnamese native speakers).

Test 2 was used to measure the tendency of using Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in the speakers’ everyday communication. There were two choices for each of the 20 situations: one was the response including an idiom or a proverb, the other was a statement, paraphrasing the idea conveyed by that idiom or proverb. Each choice of the response with idioms or proverbs would score 1 point. In Graph 5, Test 2 scores are compared to show the differences in the tendency to use Vietnamese idioms and proverbs among the three cohorts. Test 2 scores exhibit a similar trend to those of Test 1. As the second generation speakers know little of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs, they tend to resort to the statement option. They achieved only a mean score of 0.26 points. The first generation speakers employ somewhat fewer idioms and proverbs than the domestic Vietnamese native speakers, with mean scores of 12.27 and 16.53 points respectively. This provides further evidence that Vietnamese native speakers have a higher tendency to use idioms and proverbs in particular situations than do the Australian-resident Vietnamese. Among the second generation speakers, usage has been almost lost. Their low scores confirm that there is a lack of knowledge and usage of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs as well as little tendency to use them in their speech.
Chapter 5: Results

Using idioms and proverbs in speech is a creative use of a language, yet the second generation speakers lack this type of creative or imaginative expression in their Vietnamese speech. According to Obeng (1986), metaphorical devices such as idioms, proverbs, poetry quotations, or common sayings are communicative strategies which help the interlocutors to smoothly and tactfully maintain politeness and face in their daily interactions. Let us take an example from Test 2, the test of Vietnamese idiom and proverb usage.

Speaker 1: Mẹ coi, tự nhiên anh Dũng bị đạo ở ngoài đường về nhà hết la người này đến la người khác (You see, brother Dung was irritated with someone outside his home but his anger has made him shout at his family)

Speaker 2: ...........................................

A. Û, cái thằng anh này, giần cá chém thớt ấy mà.
B. Û, cái thằng tính khí nóng nảy, chắc giân ai đó về trứt lên đầu này đủa em bây (Oh, I see, he gets bad tempered easily and must have been angry with someone, and now shouts at you all)

Choice A includes a proverb, giần cá chém thớt (literally, being cross with the fish, one strikes the cutting board with the knife) and it is more implicit; choice B paraphrases choice A, using a description and is more explicit. Most speakers from the first generation speaker and domestic Vietnamese native speaker cohorts chose option A, whereas the second generation speakers chose option B which they found easier to understand. The proverb was unfamiliar to them in any case! Traditionally, using a proverb is more effective than a statement, particularly when dealing with a sensitive situation.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient test was used to investigate the relationship between the second generation speakers’ proficiency in Vietnamese (measured as defined in Section 4.5), and their scores on the Vietnamese idiom and proverbs tests (for those who took them) and the checklist. Table 18 shows no significant relationship between proficiency and any of those variables.
Chapter 5: Results

| Table 18. Results of tests for relationship between the second generation speakers’ proficiency and variables relating to their knowledge and use of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Idiom Test 1 score | Idiom Test 2 score | Knowing idiom score | Using idiom score |
| Chi-Square | 4.479 | 2.529 | 2.481 | .356 |
| Df | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .107 | .282 | .289 | .837 |

Table 19. Results of tests for relationship between the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese formal tuition duration and variables relating to their knowledge and use of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs.

In order to investigate the relationship between the duration of the second generation speakers’ formal Vietnamese language tuition (measured as defined in Section 4.5) and the following variables: the scores on idiom and proverb Test 1, the scores on idiom and proverb Test 2, the score on knowing idioms and proverbs, and the score on using idioms and proverbs, a Kruskal-Wallis test was used. Table 19 presents the main results of the test which show that there is no significant relationship between the length of time the second generation speakers had attended Vietnamese classes and any of those variables. This indicates that more time spent in Vietnamese classes does not help learners develop functional knowledge of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs which are an integral part of standard Vietnamese speech.

This finding is to some extent to be expected since idioms and proverbs are learned as a part of everyday speech rather than in formal classes which often concentrate on vocabulary, grammar and written Vietnamese. Vietnamese idioms and proverbs are the product of a life in a rural agricultural collectively oriented community; they have been passed on from generation to generation orally (see Chapter 2). Indeed, people in the countryside and older...
people use more idioms and proverbs than younger ones or people in urban environments (Bahajas, 2010; Vo, 1994). The existence of idioms and proverbs in the Vietnamese communicative culture stresses the importance of a collective community. Hence the loss of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in the second generation speakers’ speech is due to the lack of practice and usage among communicators in the Vietnamese communities overseas where people tend to be relatively isolated from each other and the life style is much less sociable than that in Vietnam.

In sum, the usage of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs exhibited the most in the domestic Vietnamese native speaker cohort, followed by the first generation speaker cohort. This area of the language is untouched by the second generation speakers group in their performance, and in the comprehension, they mostly fail to interpret these language items figuratively. When the second generation speakers lack the use of idioms and proverbs, their speaking style lacks an important type of indirectness that the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and first generation speakers have command of.

5.3. A mismatch between actual language performance and the perception of performance by the second generation speakers

A mismatch between the second generation speakers’ language performance and their awareness of the gaps in their usage is seen through both the Discourse Completion Test Role-plays and the tests on Vietnamese idioms and proverbs.

The first type of evidence is from the investigation using the Discourse Completion Test Role-plays. As shown in Graph 6, data from the performance of the Discourse Completion Test Role-plays indicate that 93.5% of the second generation speakers (29 out of 31) used the negative ability strategy and 90.3% of the second generation speaker participants (28 out of 31) used the direct “Không”. However, in completing the questionnaire, only 25.8% (8 out of 31) and 45.2% (14 out of 31) of the second generation speakers declared that they often used the negative ability and the direct “Không” strategies in their refusals. As for the indirect strategies - expressing regret and indefinite reply – these do not appear in the second generation speakers’ repertoire in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, but nevertheless, in the questionnaire, 25.8% (8 out of 31) participants and 22.6% (7 out of 31) of the second generation speakers, respectively, declared that they often used these strategies. This implies that the second generation speakers were not conscious of whether they used
those strategies or not. These tendencies suggest a preference for directness among the second generation speakers who actually use more direct and straightforward language than they are aware of.

Graph 6. The difference in the actual and declared use of negative ability, direct “Không”, expressing regret and indefinite strategies among the second generation speakers.

Data from the performance of the Discourse Completion Test Role-plays also indicate that the second generation speakers are more direct than their parents (first generation speakers) and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers. However, the figures from the questionnaire show a contrary result. This indicates a mismatch between the language performance and the awareness of that performance by the second generation speakers. A majority of second generation speakers (76.7%, see Chart 2) admitted that they used a more direct speaking style than their parents when speaking Vietnamese although 56.7% did feel they should try to speak Vietnamese in the indirect style and were still aware of the indirect speaking style in Vietnamese conversations. In addition, about half of the participants surveyed said that they tried to be indirect and an even larger number agreed they should try harder to remember to be more indirect when speaking Vietnamese. Nevertheless, seven out of nine subjects declared their intention to continue to speak directly even when speaking to older Vietnamese. They said:
Chapter 5: Results

S07M: Tân thì direct, nếu không đồng ý thì say No.
   (I’m quite direct, if I don’t feel like it or I disagree, I just say No)
S09F: I’m a little direct (in general), but I feel I’m more direct in refusal.
S08M: Em rất là thẳng, more direct, it’s good to be direct.
   I’m very straightforward, more direct, it’s good to be direct.
S14F: Con cũng thấy nên indirect một chút nhưng khó quá à, I’m made quite direct.
   (I would like to be indirect but it’s so difficult. I’m born being quite direct)
S18M: …cũng phụ thuộc nhưng em rất là direct in most cases
   (that depends but I’m direct in most cases)
S05F: Nhần thì thẳng tính làm, không sợ mặt lồng, No là No thôi.
   (I’m very straightforward, and if it causes hurt it can’t be helped. No is No)

The mismatch is also revealed in the content of the refusals. Specifically, for example, the second generation speakers tend to use truthful excuses and explanations, even in sensitive situations, in spite of their belief that they have used typical indirect obfuscations. “White lies” are completely acceptable in Vietnamese culture as they help to cover an embarrassing situation while at the same time protecting face for both speaker and listener. Nguyen (1980, p.11) affirms that “falsehood carries no moral stricture for Vietnamese”. In practice, both interlocutors are aware of the “white lies” but this behaviour helps both interlocutors arrive at a compromise whilst maintaining solidarity and completing the negotiation in an amicable way. In Vietnamese communication, the speakers always avoid being segregated from the group, and maintain a group dialogue as much as possible and avoid direct opposition and therefore conflict.

The results from the Discourse Completion Test Role-plays show that, in the refusals, 83.9% of the second generation speakers (26 out of 31 participants) used the cues provided in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play situations, which they supposed were the true facts, but which, to the domestic Vietnamese native speakers, could not be spoken because of the loss of face that would result.

For instance:

Situation 8 from the Discourse Completion Test Role-play: Everyone in your circle of friends upgrades their cell phone; you are the only one who still uses a very old one because of your financial difficulties. One day, the group is having a tea break when someone who is a mobile
Chapter 5: Results

phone salesman suggests you buy a new one. You cannot afford one but do not want to reveal the true situation. Your response must save both faces.

Friend: You look like an ancient Vietnamese! No one in this hi-tech age uses such an old fashioned phone. I’ll take you to my shop to have a look at a 4G model on special. Take it and I will offer you a great deal.

You: ..............................................................................................

The following replies sound very harsh to the domestic Vietnamese native speakers as the second generation speakers do not hide the truth, which is likely to cause loss of face.

S14F: Tài ví bữa này không có đủ tiền để xài cho cái phone mới...
   (I don’t have enough money to spend on a new phone at the moment)

S19F: Điện thoại mình cũng cũ nhưng vẫn xài được mà...
   (My phone is old but it’s still working…)

S20M: Khi nào R có tiền thì R mua, còn bây giờ thì không có tiền thì phải xài cái phone này thôi.
   (When I have enough money I will buy a new one but at the moment I can’t afford it. I’ll have to keep using this phone)

S21M: Minh cũng không cần cái bè mất đâu,炻迟 khách có cần đi...
   (I don’t want to show off with a new phone perhaps, no need…)

S26F: Không có tiền mua đâu, thôi không có.
   (I don’t have enough money to buy it, no, I don’t)

S30M: Số tiền của tôi nó chưa đủ...
   (I haven’t enough money)

S13F: Có tiền mua iphone uồng lầm, cái cũ cũng dùng được mà...
   (It’s a waste to buy an iPhone, this old one is still working…)

S12M: Ở không cần, em thích cái điện thoại cũ của em, quen rồi, không có đủ tiền đâu.
   (Oh, no, I like this old one, I’m familiar with it, and anyway I don’t have enough money)

S09F: Ở thời, thấy tổ tiền, không có dùng phone nhiều máy.
   (Oh, no, what a waste of money, I don’t use the phone much)

S06M: Tài vì nhà tau còn nhiều việc phải lo… cho nên đối làm chi cho tổ tiền.
   (As my family still has so many things to spend money on… a new phone seems a waste)

S03M: Ở K không có tiền, điện thoại này còn xài được là phước đức làm rỗi.
   (Oh, I don’t have any money, I’m happy that this phone’s still working)
Nevertheless, 71% of the second generation speakers (22 out of 31 participants) thought that they had made up suitable excuses that would be face saving. Moreover, most of them felt at most only a little uneasy about telling the truth when giving reasons for refusing in Vietnamese, as illustrated in Chart 3.

**Question 17. Does telling the truth when giving reasons for refusing in Vietnamese make you feel uneasy?**

![](chart3.png)

*Chart 3. The percentage of second generation speaker participants feeling uneasy when giving true reasons for refusing in Vietnamese.*

In fact, the high figure of 58.1% of second generation speaker participants (18 out of 31) who felt a little uneasy contrasts with their performance in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play. Their responses to this question indicate that, while they still care about protecting face by employing indirect strategies, they fail to achieve this in practice.

The second type of evidence is from the questionnaire and interview questions concerning Vietnamese idiom and proverb usage. Three fifths of the second generation speaker participants showed that they knew that Vietnamese people employ a lot of idioms and proverbs in their conversations, but only a few knew the reasons why Vietnamese people use such seemingly complicated phraseology in everyday speech. When asked to explain why idioms and proverbs are integral to spoken Vietnamese these subjects failed to give the correct answer. For example, S16F thought that Vietnamese people used idioms and proverbs “to sound educated and gain face; to appear intelligent and well educated by expressing...
themselves as in songs and poems”. In fact, being educated or intelligent is not judged through usage of idioms and proverbs. They are a verbal skill used universally as a matter of custom by even the least educated people. S05F believed that “they can tell a whole story or meaning to a particular situation without too much explanation”. This is a good description of what a proverb or an idiom is, but it is certainly not the correct reason why Vietnamese people are so fond of using idioms and proverbs. To S18M, a proverb or an idiom “can be interpreted in different ways, and hopefully people will interpret it with the most positive attitude”. Unfortunately, for most negative situations people have to rely on idioms and proverbs to soften the impact and provide mitigation. Face saving is actually the key to the question; as Vietnamese people are always afraid of alienating others and wish to avoid loss of their own face. Idioms and proverbs provide the universally recognized method of achieving the best overall outcome in any situation. Many second generation speaker respondents simply supposed that these phrases were just borrowed from the ancestors and were unrelated to the reality of their own particular situation. They were therefore seen as irrelevant. An exception was S14F who, showing common sense, judged the value of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs to be high, in that “the use of idioms and proverbs can imply meaning to how one feels or how the situation is going and thus create a subtle, polite and witty answer that impresses the hearer and is highly approved”.

So, while face work plays a crucial part in the indirect speaking style in Vietnamese communication, it is not fully perceived by the second generation speakers. Although 77.4% (24 out of 31) of second generation speaker participants said that they were familiar with the idea of saving face when speaking Vietnamese and three quarters of those (18 out of 24 participants) appreciated the need to save the face of both interlocutors, little understanding of how to achieve this was shown through the interviews. In other words, the second generation speakers are only slightly influenced by the concept of saving face, particularly when expressing refusals in Vietnamese. Chart 4 examines the degree to which the second generation speakers are influenced by the concept of saving face. Only 22.6% (7 out of 31) of the second generation speaker participants are much influenced by the face work concept; the rest (87.4%) show little or no appreciation for the need to save face. Generally the second generation speakers do not take the concept of face seriously although they know it is an important part of Vietnamese communication behaviour.
Chapter 5: Results

Question 20. How much are the second generation speakers influenced by the concept of saving face?

Chart 4. Degree to which the second generation speakers are influenced by the concept of saving face.

The mismatch between actual and perceived performance discussed in section 5.2 was now also reconfirmed by the in-depth interviews. In the Questionnaire, what the participants acknowledged clashes with their actual performance in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, and this mismatch was discussed again in the interviews and it seemed that it was due to confusion caused by the different cultural norms embedded in the two languages as well as by the second generation speaker participants’ confusion concerning their own cultural identity.

First of all, all nine second generation speaker interviewees accepted that such a mismatch existed. On the one hand, they all see themselves as Australians in the context of life outside the home and act in an Australian manner. On the other hand, they are still required to use the Vietnamese language at home with parents, siblings and other relatives. As with all bilinguals, the English-Vietnamese bilinguals are exposed to two languages and two cultures at the same time. However, the Australian culture and language dominate, causing an overwhelming influence of English speaking style on Vietnamese language usage. This is particularly observable in terms of directness and indirectness in linguistic style. Although the length of time the second generation speakers have been exposed to the Vietnamese language and culture is generally short, the depth of exposure is intense because all the adults including grandparents, parents and other relatives (Vietnamese people tend to
live in an extended family) behave and communicate in a traditional Vietnamese way. The young people, therefore, to a greater or lesser extent, are under the impact of the traditional Vietnamese cultural values within the Vietnamese community.

Secondly, the second generation speakers interviewed revealed some confusion over cultural identity due to the blend of Australian and Vietnamese values in each individual. Despite their acknowledgement of their Vietnamese heritage, the second generation speakers cannot help but behave in an Australian manner, i.e. in both Australian and Vietnamese linguistic settings they use a more direct form of conversation and display a degree of independence not culturally acceptable in their Vietnamese setting. For instance, S14F said “Có lần nói thẳng với bà ngoại, bà cũng không nói gì vì bà coi như mình người Úc, nhưng con thấy có lỗi, con im lặng, mai một mình học lại, cho nhớ. Thấy cũng khó vì mình cũng là người Việt thời, nhưng với ở Úc nên cứ xử thế giọng Úc hơn” (I once directly refused my granny. She was not hurt because she treated me as an Australian. But I felt guilty, I kept silent but it will remind me to be indirect next times. I feel awkward about this because I’m still Vietnamese, but living in Australia makes me more Australian in behaviour). The belief in the values of privacy and equality further contributes to the greater independence and confidence of the second generation speaker group, which in turn reinforces their individuality rather than the social conformity expected as part of their family setting as reflected in S16F’s reply “mà nó ở bên nhà T, T muốn làm gì thì T làm” (But as it is in my property, I can just do whatever I like). In other words, in the Australian context the second generation speaker members learn to say whatever they consider appropriate with little regard for what others may consider inappropriate. Directness has become a part of the second generation speakers’ nature, supported by the majority of people around them in Australian society.

The final point of dislocation between the first generation speaker and second generation speaker groups is that of traditional cultural identity. One of the aspects that cause difficulties for second generation speaker members to escape from the Vietnamese tradition is the extent to which the majority of Vietnamese households in Australia still maintain close family links with relatives in their home country, some even retain properties in Vietnam (information from the informal interviews with the first generation speakers and second generation speakers). Regular visits to Vietnam provide a chance to reinforce Vietnamese cultural customs and traditions in the second generation speaker group who otherwise are
Chapter 5: Results

separated from these by their life in Australia. Both the first generation speaker group and relatives still in Vietnam expect the second generation speakers to behave simply as Vietnamese, maintaining most of their Vietnamese values and cultural identity. The second generation speakers find themselves trapped in a confusion of cultural identity, which is the reason for the mismatch discussed earlier.

To sum up, the study has found a gap between the actual verbal performance of the second generation speakers in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play and what they generally agree should be done, as acknowledged in the questionnaire. Also the concept of “face” is not fully perceived. This is understandable as the second generation speakers are mostly immersed in Australian culture rather than their heritage culture and are thus confronted with a confusion of identity in multicultural Australia.
CHAPTER 6

REASONS FOR THE TRANSFERENCE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

This chapter explores the hidden part of the “iceberg” of the second generation speakers’ pragmatic transference. Section 1 deals with some of the possible reasons for the transference, presenting results from the questionnaire and interviews. It argues that because the transmission of the Vietnamese language to the second generation speakers is not complete, the defects in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese are understandable, and that the loss of the idioms and proverbs in the second generation speakers’ speech amounts to the loss of the indirect style in Vietnamese communication by these speakers. In the second section, the second generation speakers’ attitudes towards the preservation of Vietnamese language and culture will be presented, in relation to the language environment where most of the second generation speakers are exposed to at least two languages: English and Vietnamese.

6.1. Factors contributing to the loss of indirectness in Vietnamese communication

Data from the questionnaire suggest that there are several reasons contributing to the pragmatic transference in which the loss of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in spoken Vietnamese by the second generation speakers due to the incomplete transmission of the language is noteworthy. Specifically, the primary factor appears to be the lack of teaching from parents, and secondary factors appear to be related to formal Vietnamese class curricula in Vietnamese language centres in Australia, the language environment, and the speakers’ needs.

First of all, lack of teaching from parents has contributed to the restricted acquisition of Vietnamese indirect speaking style in the second generation speakers. The role of parents in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese learning was confirmed by the second generation speaker interviewees who all (9 out of 9) said that talking with parents and learning from parents’ teaching are the main source of their Vietnamese acquisition. Because most of their parents speak very little English or none at all, they only use Vietnamese with
Chapter 6: Results

can be positive or negative about preserving the language for the younger generations, they cannot achieve much when their time spent in teaching and talking with their children in Vietnamese is too limited. F14F, who has the most negative feeling about the future of Vietnamese overseas, bitterly commented:

“Trời ơi, đất chăn tôi đây, đi làm cả ngày mới có mà ăn đạm ngừi giữ tiếng Việt cho con, thằng B con Cô hẳn gần Cô luôn vì cứ giữ hẳn hết chỗ này tôi chỗ khác cả ngày cả đêm để đi làm, cực lắm” (My goodness, ever since we set foot here we have worked all day to earn a living, no one has dared think about preserving Vietnamese for the children, B my son got cross with me because we sent him from place to place for childcare all day long so that we could go to work, very hard).

It would seem that the parents and grandparents are satisfied with the second generation speakers having only a utilitarian level of Vietnamese. Of the first generation speaker interviewees, 70% (7 out of 10) considered that their children only needed sufficient Vietnamese to allow domestic communication. Further, 8 out of 10 first generation speaker interviewees agreed that the level of Vietnamese proficiency of the second generation speakers is low but sufficient for communication with parents who are satisfied and do not demand any further linguistic competence. Interviewee F10F stated:

“Tui nhò mà nói được chút tiếng Việt với mình là phước phán làm rồi, đâu có đảm đỏi hội gi Hơn, với thật ra khi nó nhỏ nó mới gần mình, nói chuyện được nhiều với nó, lớn lên nó có bạn có bè, về nhà nó vào phòng làm việc riêng của nó nên ít có nói chuyện lắm, thành thư tiếng Việt của tụi nó bị hạn chế là vì vậy”. (We are just happy when the children here can speak some Vietnamese. We don’t ask for more. It’s because when they were still little, they were always near parents and we could talk in Vietnamese together but when they’re grown up, they have their friends, and at home, they are in their own room, doing their own business, so we can’t talk to them much. That’s the reason their Vietnamese is limited).
Figures from Chart 5 below are the best answer to the question of why proverbs are lost. In their responses to Question 26 in the questionnaire (Have your parents taught you about morals or behaviour through the use of Vietnamese idioms and / or proverbs?), 48.4% of second generation speaker participants (15 out of 31) said they never received education on Vietnamese idioms and proverbs from their parents. However, the figure of 23.3% for the answer “Yes, often” to question 26 cannot be persuasive enough for such a great task of keeping Vietnamese idioms and proverbs to survive in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese language usage. All other first generation speaker interviewees recognised this defect and had to accept the reality. Hence parents consciously avoid using Vietnamese idioms and proverbs when talking with their children as this may lead to confusion and even to a degree of alienation. Parents only explain a few common idioms and proverbs when specifically asked by their children for the meaning.

**Chart 5. Second generation speakers’ questionnaire response on their parents’ teaching about morals and behaviour through the use of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs.**

Some parents (2 out of 10 first generation speaker interviewees) seem to have ill-informed opinions about bilingualism; they are worried that if their children learn two languages at the same time, the children’s minds may be mixed up and they will suffer from language disorder. These parents choose not to send their children to Vietnamese centres and they encourage them to use as much English as possible. In fact, they have wasted their
children’s innate ability for language acquisition and it is too late when the children grow up and realize they need some Vietnamese. Participant F04F stated:

“Đứa nhỏ của chị không có khả năng ngôn ngữ, tôi hai tuổi nó mới nói, mà cũng ít nói nữa. Chị lo quá nên để cho nó nói tiếng Anh thôi, tiếng Anh quan trọng hơn mà, ước chị sỡ nó không theo kịp bạn bè trên trường, sau này mà thấy nó khả hơn thì chị cho nó đi học tiếng Việt (My second child is bad at languages, she did not start speaking until two and does not speak much. I’m so worried so I let her speak English only, English is more important for her, yes, I’m afraid she cannot catch up with her peers at school. If her ability is improved, I’ll let her learn some Vietnamese later).”

F29M, on the other hand, stressed the importance of conserving Vietnamese for the children; he stated:

“Làm gì thì làm chư con mình mà không nói được tiếng Việt thì coi như mình mất đứa con, tôi bắt mấy đứa nhỏ đi dâu thì dchimp tôi là phải có mặt ở nhà, ăn cơm chung nói chuyện” (Whatever else we do, we ensure that our children speak Vietnamese or otherwise we will lose them! For that reason I make sure they are at home to share dinner for it is then that we talk together).

In terms of the role of formal Vietnamese classes in second generation speaker Vietnamese language development, it seems the problem is not lack of access to classes but the content and aims of those classes. Answers to questions 1 and 2 from the questionnaire show that two thirds of the second generation speaker participants had attended Vietnamese classes. These took several forms - Weekend classes held in the Community House; Weekend Classes at Vietnamese temples; tutorial private groups at home. Of those who attended classes, only 5 did so for a relatively short period - a few months to 2 years. The other 15 attended classes for between 4 and 12 years (for 2 or 3 hours weekly). This should be quite long enough for a learner to acquire something more than basic communicative skills. First generation speaker interviewees F09F and F20F gave an insight into the failure to develop higher level Vietnamese language skills. Both are teachers of Vietnamese for a Vietnamese school in Darra, Queensland, and said that the lessons do not include much content of idioms and proverbs since they considered these concepts too difficult for the second generation speakers to master. They saw the purpose of these classes as being mainly to teach the children how to read and write in Vietnamese, together with some understanding of the Vietnamese cultural norms. Meanwhile, interviewees S09F and S14F were quite candid in
their description of the classes, saying they went there mainly to meet friends and play together, and continued to speak English; in fact, they learn only a little there. They also believed that children were sent to the Vietnamese classes so that their parents had some free time for doing the shopping at the Vietnamese markets!

In addition, the second generation speakers use Vietnamese only in a limited range of conversational domains and thus develop only a limited vocabulary. Their limited proficiency in Vietnamese means that they are unable to participate effectively in an authentic Vietnamese communication. As the language domains to which the young Vietnamese are exposed play a crucial role for developing and maintaining the heritage language, quantification of this was undertaken using the responses to Question 3 in the questionnaire. Chart 6 illustrates the percentages the second generation speakers using Vietnamese in each of the domains.

![Domains of Vietnamese usage](chart6.png)

*Chart 6. The percentages of the second generation speakers using Vietnamese in the domains.*

All the participants stated that home was the foremost place for them to learn and practise Vietnamese. Those whose parents and grandparents cannot speak English are obliged to use Vietnamese with them. Tran (2006) showed that the Vietnamese extended family life style appears to be a positive agent for heritage language maintenance; “family is the most effective environment in which parents can help their children to learn and to live the
Vietnamese cultural traditions” (p. 13). At home, the second generation speakers also have the chance to listen to some Vietnamese programs on the radio and watch DVDs which are a very useful source of learning. Interviewee S09F recalled her childhood:

“Hồi nhớ bà mẹ đi làm, bà ngoại coi, bắt đọc báo…nói chuyện với bà ngoại ngồi đó nghĩ ra chữ để nói” (when I was a child, I stayed at home with granny. She asked me to read newspapers… when talking with her, I had to look for words to say).

In general, Vietnamese has always been used in every Vietnamese household in Australia. According to Ben-Moshe and Pyke (2012, p. 31), 87% Australian born and 94% Vietnamese born respondents to their interviews who can speak Vietnamese well and very well speak Vietnamese at home. People still watch TV programs in Vietnamese, listen to the radio in Vietnamese, sing karaoke in Vietnamese and read Vietnamese books and newspapers. Interviewee S07M confessed:

“Ba mẹ con hay hát karaoke thành thử con cùng hay hát theo rồi nhìn chữ nur, nhờ vậy mà học được tiếng Việt rất nhiều. Có chương trình Thúy Nga nhiều cũng tốt lắm, biết được thêm nhiều về văn hóa và tiếng Việt” (My Mum and Dad often sing karaoke, I sing along and see the words running, and bit by bit I can learn Vietnamese a lot. Watching Thuy Nga shows is also very good, getting to know more about Vietnamese language and culture).

Interviewees S08M and S18M told their experience from their family education; S18M recalled:

“Ba mẹ em nghiêm khắc với con cái trong chuyển học tiếng Việt ở nhà geh làm, mỗi ngày ba bắt em đọc 1 câu chuyển bằng tiếng Việt, rồi phải viết tóm tắt lại hay kể lại bằng lời nói, nhờ vậy mà thành thạo tiếng Việt do anh” (My parents were very strict with us about learning Vietnamese at home, everyday they asked each of us to read a story in Vietnamese, then write a summary or retell it. Thanks to this, we can speak Vietnamese fluently).

Of course, these are not favourite things to do for the second generation speakers, but at least, they are exposed to Vietnamese regularly.

Social gatherings were identified as the second important domain in which children were expected to speak Vietnamese. Most Vietnamese adults, despite their good English
proficiency, tend to use Vietnamese in social contexts within the Vietnamese community and children attending with them are thus immersed in Vietnamese language and custom. It is a custom in Vietnamese culture for people to pay regular visits to one another, especially on festive occasions or for traditional ceremonies associated with ritual worship of ancestors. Thus, people in the community have regular opportunities to meet and socialise. However, it seems a universal phenomenon, in minority groups in Australia, that the second generation speakers only use the heritage language with older people and they switch to English when speaking with their peers or siblings (Clyne, 2005; Smolicz, 1992). Moreover, the second generation speakers are not likely to converse with older people without being asked. The first generation speakers, on the other hand, try not to use metaphorical Vietnamese in their speech to the second generation speakers. Hence, the extent of second generation speaker participation in speaking Vietnamese at social gatherings is limited both objectively and subjectively, and thus harnessing this natural opportunity for improvement of the language is partially defeated. The role and limitations of language domains have been identified and provides a clear explanation for the rate and magnitude of the loss of Vietnamese skill in use of idioms and proverbs that should be a part of the second generation speakers’ speech if it is to be meaningful in a traditional context.

Although the second generation speakers find it interesting to get to know more about idioms and proverbs, their meaning and usage, they do not believe their Vietnamese proficiency would benefit from formal Vietnamese classes in the role and use of idioms and proverbs. Seven out of 9 second generation speaker interviewees agreed with that. As reported in Chapter 5, the second generation speakers in the survey hardly use idioms and proverbs in their everyday speech despite a small number of participants who understood some of the idioms and proverbs through their parents’ conversation or through movies. Specifically, S07M and S09F said that they could ask their parents or older siblings to explain an unknown idiom or proverb if it did occur during a conversation. Nevertheless, the responses to Question 27 in the questionnaire (Second-generation Vietnamese people in Australia do not tend to use idioms and proverbs very much in everyday speech. Do you think that Vietnamese language courses in Australia [for the second generation, and other generations in future] should work on reviving the use of idioms and proverbs?) shows that more than 50% of the second generation speaker participants agree that Vietnamese language courses in Australia (for the second generation and other generations in future) should work on reviving the use of idioms and proverbs so that the Vietnamese speakers can maintain that
verbal skill as well as the subtly indirect speaking style. Furthermore, as shown in Chart 7, after taking the survey, the majority of the second generation speakers (58.1%) believe it is a good idea to learn more about idioms and proverbs to improve their Vietnamese. Of these, 12.9% had already formed this opinion before taking part in the survey. The other 38.7% remain undecided. Most of the second generation speakers feel they want to know more Vietnamese idioms and proverbs but they want to do this by learning from parents and adult acquaintances, and not from formal Vietnamese classes. However, the second generation speakers seem to be really only paying lip service to the value of revival of this part of the language they have lost. In reality, due to their lack of knowledge of traditional figures of speech, the second generation speakers use a simplified Vietnamese, with minimum repertoire, and in the process lose a significant Vietnamese eloquence in the art of subtle and figurative communication. Transference from indirect to direct style in their Vietnamese speech is thus unavoidable.

![Question 28. Is it a good idea to learn more about Vietnamese idioms and proverbs to improve your Vietnamese?](image)

Chart 7. The proportion of the second generation speakers thinking that it is a good idea to learn more about Vietnamese idioms and proverbs to improve their Vietnamese.

Through the subjective opinions of the second generation speaker participants at the interviews, more reasons for the pragmatic transference have been uncovered. All the second generation speaker interviewees (9 participants) state that they are Australian born and have grown up in the Australian environment with English as their first language, hence Australian linguistic conventions are the foremost basis for shaping their speaking style. They have been
taught to be concise, succinct and straightforward in speaking English. This has become a universal linguistic style which they use in both English and Vietnamese. Most of them admitted that they found a traditional Vietnamese linguistic style longwinded and easily misunderstood. For example, S05F complained that she sometimes could not understand what her aunt was trying to say to her. When S05F was playing the piano at lunch time, some of the family members were having a nap, and her aunt asked her bitterly “do you know what the time is?”, she answered “I don’t know the time” just as a normal response. S05F did not realize that her aunt was mocking her instead of ordering her to stop playing when she meant it was time for everyone in the family to have a nap, and that others should keep quiet! Another example came from S09F who said that Vietnamese adults were very fond of using images to imply something. Her mother thought that she was the only person in the family who did the housework. When the father got home from work and saw the house very clean and bright, he made a remark and wondered who had done it. Her mother replied: “Who else do you think is planting the potatoes in this field?” S09F caught a vague meaning of the response but could not imagine how people could be so indirect. Although these examples are not about the use of proverbs to convey lessons or to suggest appropriate behavior, which is the key difference this study is pointing at, they somehow reflect the second generation speakers’ perception of the indirect Vietnamese language. In general, the second generation speakers do not understand idiomatic and metaphoric figures of Vietnamese speech and thus miss the point of what is really intended. When they are not trained in high context culture, interpreting indirect things correctly seems very hard to them. In addition, S09F said “I live in the Australian culture. There are lots of changes with the generations. I learn differently now from the way in which my parents did. We develop our knowledge of the world in a more Western way, whereas our parents conform to a traditional Vietnamese pattern”. These views are common to all interviewees and highlight the importance of the individual cultural viewpoint. These social and cultural changes inevitably lead to other changes including linguistic changes amongst which pragmatic transference is only a small facet in that overall changing picture.

An important ancillary issue is that of the informality (Plueddemann, 2009, p. 26) and the directness (Blum Kulka, 1992, p. 263) which Australians are famous for in almost all aspects of Australian life. It is observed that directness is not impolite and is always expected in the Australian communication style. All the characteristics of Australian speech shape the tendency toward direct speaking styles both in spoken English and Vietnamese for the
Chapter 6: Results

Australian born second generation speakers. Eight out of nine interviewees admit their preference for directness over indirectness which to them is more effective and more comfortable. All of them show less interest in their parents’ ceremonial style and the traditional Vietnamese concepts of politeness. S18M states that on overhearing Vietnamese adults conversing, he often finds it difficult to understand what they really mean because, from his perspective they beat about the bush so much that he cannot follow the story. The second generation speakers, on the other hand, say what they think is the correct thing to say; the appropriateness is left unconsidered. Furthermore, with the simple method of address in Australia, i.e. using only first names, the gap of power and age can be reduced to minimum. This contrasts to the very complicated address system in Vietnamese culture which causes problems for the second generation speakers. In Vietnamese culture, age and power difference requires formality in communication for the person who is inferior in age or power. Interviewee S08M said that he could not figure out how to address people correctly. Rather than fail to choose the correct form of address he preferred switching to “you” and “me” in English for all types of interlocutors in his Vietnamese conversations.

The next issue to be considered is the difficulty second generation speakers have in using traditional indirect forms of speech when conversing in Vietnamese. Most interviewees (up to 8 out of 9 participants) share the view that speaking Vietnamese is more difficult than speaking English as they have to search for the correct Vietnamese vocabulary and suppress the English words which always come first to mind. Constructing an indirect sentence pattern in Vietnamese seems much more difficult. For example, in the patterns of refusals, native Vietnamese use longer structures with a lot of different strategy types. Besides, they also mitigate their speech by using mild words, more care and consideration. In other words, both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence for the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese language is insufficient and limited so that the second generation speakers have to resort to English patterns with a direct style. F14F admitted:

“Đang nói tiếng Anh nhanh, nói qua tiếng Việt phải chậm lại, indirect cũng khổ hơn nữa, nói direct Vietnamese dã khó, nói indirect khó hơn nữa, thấy chậm quá nên không thêm nói chuyện nữa” (while I speak English fast, I have to slow down when switching to Vietnamese - the indirect style is so difficult, in fact, speaking direct Vietnamese is difficult enough, speaking it in indirect style is even more difficult. When I realise that I speak Vietnamese very slowly and with difficulties, I don’t want to use it any more).
Finally, one can attribute the difficulty that the second generation speakers have, when using Vietnamese in a culturally correct context, to the difficulties in concurrent code switching – in switching between both language codes and between cultural codes at the same time. Bilingual speakers appear to switch language codes between English and Vietnamese more rapidly than they switch the cultural codes. In other words, the two are not synchronized. In some cases, this process of culture switch does not happen and results in a mismatch between language and culture, which is still a controversial issue in pragmatics specifically and sociolinguistics in general. All 9 second generation speaker interviewees agreed that they were aware of the lag in the cultural code switching and that it was particularly apparent with regard to directness and indirectness of the two cultures. All found the direct style of speech so spontaneous they could not stop using it quickly enough to avoid a faux pas when speaking in Vietnamese.

**Reasons for the mismatch - an incomplete process of transference**

The in-depth interviews also reconfirm the existence of the mismatch discussed in Section 5.2. The results of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play compared with those from the Questionnaire have highlighted the mismatch between actual repertoire and perceived repertoire. In the Questionnaire, what the participants acknowledged contrasts with their actual performance in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play. This mismatch was discussed in the interviews and reconfirms the conclusion that it is due to confusion caused by the different cultural norms embedded in the two languages as well as by the second generation speaker participants’ confusion about their own cultural identity.

First of all, all 9 second generation speaker interviewees accepted that such a mismatch existed. On the one hand, they all see themselves as Australians in the context of life outside the home, and act in an Australian manner. On the other hand, they are still required to use the Vietnamese language at home with parents, siblings and other relatives. As with all bilinguals, the English-Vietnamese bilinguals are exposed to two languages and two cultures at the same time. However, the Australian culture and language dominate, causing a distinctive influence of English speaking style on Vietnamese language usage. This refers particularly to directness versus indirectness in linguistic style. Although the length of time that the second generation speakers are exposed to the Vietnamese language and culture is generally short, the depth of exposure is also gradual and intense because all the adults including grandparents, parents and other relatives (Vietnamese people tend to live in an
extended family) (Ben-Moshe & Pyke, 2012) behave and communicate in a traditional Vietnamese way. The young people, therefore, to a greater or lesser extent, are influenced by the traditional Vietnamese cultural values within the Vietnamese community. This seems to contradict the great impact of English mentioned before, but it is the reality that the second generation speakers confront and it is the reason for the confusion driving to the mismatch.

Secondly, the second generation speaker interviews revealed some thoughts of their complexity of cultural identity due to the blend of Australian and Vietnamese values in each individual. Despite their acknowledgement of their Vietnamese heritage, the second generation speakers cannot help behaving in an Australian manner, i.e. in both Australian and Vietnamese linguistic settings they use a more direct form of conversation and display a degree of self-independence not culturally acceptable in their Vietnamese setting. The belief in the values of privacy and equality further contributes to the greater independence and confidence of the second generation speaker group, which in turn reinforces their individuality rather than their social conformity which could be expected in their family setting. In other words, in the Australian context the second generation speaker members learn to say whatever they consider appropriate with little regard for what others may consider inappropriate. Directness has become a part of the second generation speaker’s nature, supported by the majority of people around them in the Australian society.

Maintaining the bonds of cultural identity with fellow country-people is a key factor in language maintenance and culture preservation (Ben-Moshe and Pyke, 2012). Like most minority groups in Australia, Vietnamese migrants have already tended to group together in communities like Inala in Queensland, Cabramatta in New South Wales, Springvale in Victoria and so on. Multicultural Australia encourages these groups to maintain their traditions and values but this further reinforces the breach between the second generation speaker group and their forebears. As one example of the impact of this policy, language maintenance is given good priority. Although English is supposed to be made available to everyone and bilingualism encouraged among minorities, heritage home languages are still encouraged to be preserved (Rubino, 2010). As such, the second generation speaker group continues to have to use Vietnamese as their sole means of communication with their Vietnamese adults who are unable to be fluent in the English language or cannot speak English at all. Other cultural issues which impact the second generation speaker group include that of the independence seen in Australian youth as opposed to the traditional
Vietnamese family tradition. In Vietnam, children remain as part of the family units until they marry, whereupon men bring their brides into their family units whilst women move out into the family of their husbands. In both cases, they stay as members of an extended family whereas in Australia young people tend to be quite independent of their parents at a relatively young age.

The final point of dislocation between the first generation speaker and second generation speaker groups is that of traditional cultural identity. One of the aspects that second generation speaker members find hard to escape from the Vietnamese tradition is the extent to which the majority of Vietnamese households in Australia still maintain close family links with relatives in their home country. Regular visits to Vietnam provide a chance to reinforce Vietnamese cultural customs and traditions in the second generation speaker group who otherwise are separated from these by their life in Australia. Both the first generation speaker group and relatives still in Vietnam expect the second generation speakers to behave simply as Vietnamese living overseas with the maintenance of their Vietnamese values and cultural identity. The second generation speakers find themselves confused facing the complex cultural identity with contrasted sets of Asian and Caucasian characteristics, which is the reason for the mismatch discussed earlier.

Is the indirectness-directness transference happening in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese influenced by the English language they speak as their mother tongue? The interviews with the second generation speaker participants show some important points relating to the question. Most of them are not very sure about whether English affects their indirectness or not. For example, S18M states “có thể là vì tiếng Anh nó dùng direct approach nhiều hơn” (perhaps English uses direct approach more), or S19F who wonders “em cũng không được yếu nhược khác vi trong tiếng Anh Yes, No nó rõ ràng hơn, khi mình nói tiếng Anh mình ít bộc lộ tình cảm nên nói thẳng nhưng thấy không có hề gì” (I don’t know, but, perhaps in English, yes no are clear-cut, and when we speak English, we don’t show our feelings much, then being a bit direct doesn’t matter). However, they all agree that saying “No” in English does not bring any discomfort to them at all. S09F says “it’s easy to say ‘No’, it’s Australian culture and I feel it’s comfortable”. S14F adds “thấy vậy cũng dùng dỗ tài vì con ở Úc lâu ít quen, tài người Úc nói thẳng là bình thường, chúng nào mình nói tiếng Việt mình nói thẳng theo” (Yes, it’s right because I’ve lived in Australia for a long time, I’m influenced, because Australian people say it directly, it’s normal, then when I speak
Chapter 6: Results

Vietnamese, I also seem more direct).

To sum up, the data from both the questionnaire and the interviews have brought out several possible factors leading to the pragmatic transference from indirectness to directness in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech. If properly considered, these reasons may be useful as an implication for teaching and learning Vietnamese in future because they may serve as the key points to the adjustment or improvement of a better speaking style for the second generation speakers when performing Vietnamese speech.

6.2. Attitudes toward the preservation of Vietnamese language and culture in the Australian context

Despite the restricted usage of Vietnamese among the bilingual Vietnamese second generation speakers and the modification in their speech, the second generation speakers still show positive attitudes toward the preservation of Vietnamese language and culture in Australian context.

Data from the questionnaires show the second generation speakers’ interest in the idea of preservation of their heritage language and culture. When asked about the future of the Vietnamese language in Australia, most of the second generation speaker participants have a supportive view. 77.4% of the second generation speakers (24 out of 31) want their children (if / when they have them) to speak Vietnamese well. Only 6.5% dislike the idea and the rest are undecided. Furthermore, 64.5% agree that they will send their children to Vietnamese classes; only 22.6% are undecided. This means that the Vietnamese language and culture may be passed on and preserved thanks to the willingness of the succeeding generations.

Though living overseas, most Vietnamese people in Australia still have links to Vietnam; apart from their extended family living in the home town, some now have business or other economic links in Vietnam. As a result, most of them make regular trips to Vietnam (Ben-Moshe and Pyke, 2012, p. 35). This creates a bond between Vietnam and the Vietnamese diaspora in Australia, which encourages the second generation speakers to think positively about their own heritage, of which language is the first priority.

In general, young Australian Vietnamese people are not as independent as Australians from my observation while carrying out the research. They still tend to rely on their parents even after marriage, especially when they have children of their own. They often send their
children to their grandparents’ place. In turn, those grandparents also offer to look after the children whenever they have time. This practice is a catalyst for the preservation of Vietnamese because the children are exposed to Vietnamese language more. Parents and children are expected to have meals together and this is time for everyone to tell what they have been doing or are planning to do, and get advice from one another. People in an extended family are encouraged to gather together at weekends to strengthen the bonds. In other words, Vietnamese people depend on one another emotionally, if not materially. The lifestyle based on the importance of being together facilitates the practice and preservation of the Vietnamese language and culture overseas.

With regard to language preservation, from the questionnaires, 13 second generation speaker participants held the view that they needed to learn more about Vietnamese language and culture for a better personal understanding, so that they would be able to teach their children in the future. This opinion is very positive because it shows the second generation speakers have realized the importance of “learn culture and live culture” in order to preserve culture in which language is the foremost tool. The fact that Vietnamese people have lived in big and distinctive diaspora communities in Australia such as Inala in Queensland, Cabramatta in New South Wales, or Springvale in Victoria makes for good conditions for the Vietnamese offspring to take over the responsibility of language and culture conservation. Nine second generation speaker participants believed that speaking Vietnamese in the community was more important than other methods of learning language and culture, and therefore, encouraging children to speak Vietnamese more with their parents was a ‘must do’ thing. One participant thought that the persistence and effort had to come from both parents and children. In addition, sending children to Vietnamese classes is considered a solution by most second generation speaker participants. Having regular holidays in Vietnam is another way for the offspring in Australia to maintain a link to their homeland as five participants suggested in the questionnaires. However, there is also an opinion that preservation depends on where they live and how relevant Vietnamese language is to their life.
CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

7.1. Summary of evidence for pragmatic transference and language change

Chapters 4 to 6 have documented the evidence of pragmatic transference in the second generation speakers and first generation speakers’ spoken Vietnamese through two sets of investigations: the repertoire of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play and the usage of the Vietnamese idioms and proverbs.

In the repertoire of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, there are four areas in which the evidence is presented:

1. The high proportion of the direct head acts over the supportive moves,
2. The limited employment of different types of supportive moves,
3. The second generation speakers’ blunt refusals which hamper proceeding into the insistence stage, and
4. Different contents of semantic formulae.

Firstly, the high proportion of the direct head acts over the supportive moves in the second generation speakers’ performance indicates transference from indirectness to directness. In other words, the difference in the direct head acts and the supportive move proportion must be taken into account for the level of directness transfer. The so-called direct head acts are the most sensitive elements that can easily cause offence. They include all the “Nos” – things that people do not normally want or expect to hear in a Vietnamese speech act regardless of whatever speech act it is. Takahashi and Beebe (1987, p. 133) agree that “the inability to say No clearly and politely, though not too directly, has led many non-native speakers to offend their interlocutor”. This means that use of the direct acts only serve to make the interlocutor uncomfortable or even offended and thus mitigates the effectiveness of the communication. Mitigation is the role of the supportive moves which are an inseparable component of correct Vietnamese speech. However, what the proportion of direct acts versus
supportive moves should be for politeness varies from culture to culture. In the Vietnamese culture, indirectness is integral to the pattern of refusal. As seen in Chapter 4 (Table 5), the domestic Vietnamese native speakers avoid using “direct No” and use a limited number of the strategy of negative ability. In the domestic Vietnamese native speakers’ repertoire, the ratio of the direct head acts over the supportive moves was 2.7:98.3 (2.78%); whereas, in the second generation speakers’ performance, that ratio is 22.1:77.9 (28.37%). The level of directness in the second generation speakers’ speech, therefore, is ten times higher than that in the domestic Vietnamese native speakers’. This finding is consistent with those in Section 4.4 derived from the judgement of 13 native speakers. A large percentage of the second generation speaker cohort received high scores of “hurt very much” and “slightly hurt” by their manner of refusal. They hurt the domestic Vietnamese native speaker interlocutors because their refusals were so blunt and direct. This is the very first and clearest sign of the transference from indirectness to directness in spoken Vietnamese by the second generation speakers.

Secondly, the limited employment of different types of supportive moves makes the mitigation weaker in the pattern of refusal. The second generation speakers’ mitigation is limited in two ways: fewer strategy counts and fewer strategy types, making the refusals much shorter than those of the first generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native speakers. In this way, the second generation speakers failed to mitigate the negative impact of the direct head acts used initially, thus creating a sudden stop in their refusal without opportunity for further discussion or negotiation. This results in an embarrassing moment before the other interlocutor can say something to save face. The semantics of refusal patterns also varies across cultures and languages. For example, the strategy of philosophy and the strategy of threat are favoured in Japanese (Ikoma and Shimura, 1994), indefinite reply strategy in Greek (Bella, 2011; Felix-Brasdefer, 2006), and request for empathy in Vietnamese (Tran, 2004). In the second generation speakers’ refusal, expression of regret and indefinite reply strategies were not employed and most of the other strategies were used with very low frequency. As a result, the direct head acts seem to prevail in the second generation speakers’ refusal pattern, whereas the first generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers always delay the negative ability and the direct No (if applicable) until they are forced to speak out. They always try to minimise the level of directness. In general, the second generation speakers’ refusals are too simple and monotonous, sounding very harsh and blunt, which is in marked contrast to the seemingly discursive and indirect refusals of the
domestic Vietnamese native speakers’. In other words, the second generation speakers not only have a small range of strategy choices, especially the indirect mitigators in the refusal patterns but also use them infrequently. This limitation points to the fact that the second generation speakers are not aware of the need to lengthen their refusal to reduce the risk of losing face for both. In general, the second generation speakers’ refusal patterns are too short and blunt to meet the requirement of a polite Vietnamese refusal. This reinforces the evidence of pragmatic transference from indirectness to directness in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese.

Thirdly, the second stage of insistence following the first stage of initiation is of great importance in most of the Vietnamese speech acts. This is a way of hiding feeling and is an expected component of indirect communication in Vietnamese. In order to maintain the two stages, the refuser must postpone the negative ability strategy as late as possible in the refusal. It should occur in the insistence stage when all the mitigating strategies have been uttered. However, this expectation did not happen properly in the second generation speakers’ repertoire as found in this study as the refusers exploit the direct head acts too frequently in the initiation stage. With the direct No and immediate genuine excuses, the refusal affords the interlocutor no opportunity for insisting negotiation. When a refusal cannot proceed to the insistence stage smoothly, it sounds blunt and less indirect. As a result, it fails to yield a successful resolution and exemplifies a cross-cultural pragmatic breakdown.

Fourthly, in terms of the content of semantic formulae, a closer look at the supportive moves in the second generation speakers’ repertoire reveals some differences from those performed by the first generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers. Previously, Takahashi and Beebe (1990) investigated the pragmatic transfer in the refusal pattern in the Japanese ESL learners and they found some evidence that pragmatic transfer existed in the order, frequency and content of semantic formulae. In fact, such changes do affect the nature of the speech acts and they have been developed further in this study to see how the indirect speech act has been transferred to the direct one in the Vietnamese of the second generation speakers. First of all, the second generation speakers hardly used the strategy of appealing for empathy while the other two cohorts employed it at a high frequency. Most of the previous research on the refusal patterns, as noted by Felix-Brasdefer (2006) and Bella (2011) did not include this strategy in the semantic formula; Ikoma and Shimura (1994) did include it but the results indicated its absence in all cases. This means that the strategy of appealing for empathy as a supportive move is only used in some
particular cultures like Vietnamese. Secondly, the strategy of regret did not appear in the second generation speakers’ refusals. In Ikoma and Shimura (1994) and Felix-Brasdefer (2006), regret and apology are taken together as one strategy. Bella (2011) did not include this strategy in the formula. It can be deduced that the Vietnamese native speakers include this expression in the pattern of refusal in a specific manner. It helps soften their claim of inability and shifts blame to objective conditions rather than their relative unwillingness. The absence of this strategy in the second generation speakers’ repertoire means the second generation speakers fail to acquire the semantic formula of a Vietnamese refusal correctly. The absence of any supportive move makes the refusal less indirect and therefore blunt and aggressive. A third aspect is the use of pauses and silence which also has changed in the second generation speakers’ repertoire. The results showed a big difference in this parameter between the second generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speaker cohorts. Pauses and silence are often discussed in the context of high culture communication where a part of the verbal expressions is replaced by nonverbal gestures and manner. It is not surprising to see that in the domestic Vietnamese native speakers’ refusals, the percentage of pauses and silence is much higher than that in the second generation speakers’. It is observed that periods of silence in a Vietnamese conversation are not unusual (Nguyen, 1980, p.12). Because the refusal is considered a hard-to-express speech act, Vietnamese people tend to fill it with pauses and silence as a sign of indecisiveness, avoiding saying either yes or no. In most cases, pauses and silence in a Vietnamese refusal tend to be interpreted as “no” or “impossible”.

In the usage of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs, which is closely related to indirectness, the results reflect a serious loss of this feature in the second generation speakers’ spoken Vietnamese. Using idioms and proverbs in speech is a linguistic and cultural style of Vietnamese people, so its absence causes great changes to the speaking style of Vietnamese users. The data collected from the tests, the check list and the interviews revealed that the second generation speakers only know the fact that Vietnamese people employ a lot of idioms and proverbs in their speech, but they know almost nothing about those idioms and proverbs or their usage or the purpose for which they are used. Getting to know an idiom or proverb and how to use it is not normally acquired through formal lessons, but is passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. As such, it can be assumed that it is the home language environment that counts for the acquisition of such a linguistic feature. In Australia, the isolation of residency and the limitation of social gathering do not encourage the younger
Chapter 7: Discussion

speakers to accumulate a repertoire of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs. As mentioned before in Chapter 5, the first generation speakers (or the parent generation) avoid using Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in their speech when talking to their children as they suppose these are difficult for their children to comprehend. The loss of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in the second generation speakers’ speech has been considered an unavoidable phenomenon which is recognised by the domestic Vietnamese native speaker / first generation speaker groups who feel they can do nothing about it. The transference from indirectness to directness in the second generation speakers’ spoken Vietnamese is partly due to this fact.

7.2. **Significance of this study for the field of pragmatic transference research**

The findings from the present study not only provide evidence for the indirectness / directness transference in the second generation speakers’ performance of spoken Vietnamese but also open up some new areas contributing to linguistic research: 1. Direct speaking style as pragmatic transference in the second generation speakers’ repertoire of spoken Vietnamese; 2. The first generation speakers as the bridging agent in the transference process.

Firstly, the second generation speakers’ speaking style as a transfer has been added to the area of transference and it turns out to be an important facet because it affects the success of communication. Among the different types of transference, while others may innovate, expand, enrich or even distort a language, some pragmatic transference leads to misunderstanding and breakdown in communication (see Kasper, 1992). Ikoma and Shimura (1994) have given evidence of this type of pragmatic transfer in their study which they consider “harmful” (p. 125). This harmful element relates to the use of direct refusals in Japanese. The findings in this study shed light on Ikoma and Shimura’s as the second generation speakers’ spoken Vietnamese is much influenced by the direct style from their L1 English. In comparison with other studies on transference such as those of Clyne (1967) and Bettoni (1982), the pragmatic transference data in the present study has been expanded.

Secondly, repertoire of refusal patterns among the three cohorts in this study indicates that the pragmatic transference from indirectness to directness began in the intermediate group, namely, the first generation speaker cohort. The first generation speakers do not speak English as much as Vietnamese which they continue to use in everyday life. Nevertheless, there exists a slight level of pragmatic transference even in the speech of the first generation
speakers. This shows that the pragmatic transference has occurred from the domestic Vietnamese native speakers to the first generation speakers and to the second generation speakers. In this process, the first generation speakers have played a bridging role. Most of the first generation speakers are aware of the directness in Australian culture and have tried to adopt this conversational style to adapt to the new living environment. The isolation of the communities and the Vietnamese language in Australia also makes its usage limited in terms of aesthetics and ethnocentrism, that is, the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese is now just a utilitarian language for everyday communication. Whether conscious or not, language transference leading to language change and loss is an inexorable process and contributes to the evolution of an Australianised Vietnamese culture and language. It can be deduced that much of the influence has come from the day to day cultural environment where the element of directness dominates. For whatever level of pragmatic transference has happened within the first generation speaker population, it is seen that their Vietnamese has already been contaminated pragmatically, rooted in the code switching between Vietnamese and English (Thai, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Ho-Dac, 2003). Because the first generation speakers’ Vietnamese is a fundamental source for the second generation speakers’ acquisition of the heritage language, once there has been pragmatic transference in the first generation speakers’ Vietnamese, the pragmatic transference at a higher level in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese is inevitable.

### 7.3. Characteristics of pragmatic transference in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech

Some characteristics of pragmatic transference in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech identified in this study have lent support to the findings of previous studies. First is the issue of clarity versus politeness, especially from a cultural perspective. The second generation speakers have been greatly influenced by this Australian English characteristic and have transferred it into their Vietnamese speech. Secondly, this kind of transference in the second generation speaker’s Vietnamese speech is another example of negative transference as argued by previous researchers in classifying “positive or negative?” (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Faerch and Kasper, 1989; Takahashi and Beebe, 1993; Ikoma and Shimura, 1994). Thirdly, it is argued that the loss of the Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in the second generation speakers’ speech is regarded as a loss of a feature in speaking style. In this section I expand on each of these claims. Finally, this section will also discuss the issue
of shared and non-shared features across languages. Some languages have particular features which are embedded by cultural norms. The absence of these special features affects the appropriateness and effectiveness of language usage.

7.3.1. Aiming at clarity, a characteristic of Australian English

Clarity in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech has been shown clearly in their precise and succinct refusals. The findings in this study can be interpreted as demonstrating that the second generation speakers have adopted a conversational principle of clarity (Faerch & Kasper, 1989), characteristic of Anglo-Australian culture, which drives their approach to refusals. In other words, this confirms the transition to the conversational principle of clarity in the case of the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese performance. In order to make the utterance precise, the second generation speakers employed a short syntactic structure for refusal which comprises two parts to the pattern: the direct head act and the supportive move. This tendency seems to have been established from the time the second generation speakers started to speak English as their mother tongue. That “In Vietnam one does not come directly to the point” (Nguyen 1980, p. 11) is very unusual and irritating to those who are familiar with Anglo cultures. It is also the case of Japanese, the typical communication style of which is very “intuitive and indirect” (Clancy, 1990). However, the second generation speakers’ clarity in their language does not meet the requirements of Vietnamese politeness that stresses the importance of saving face and avoiding offence. At any rate, traditional Vietnamese people must avoid straight forwardness by hinting and circumlocution. Vietnamese people are often advised “Uốn lưỡi bày lần trước khi nói” (Think twice before uttering) which is expressly for this purpose. The second generation speakers’ refusal patterns are totally acceptable if they are in English; however, because they are in Vietnamese, their clarity which is highly appreciated in the Australian culture has become a problem (culturally). The clarity in the second generation speakers’ refusal is expressed by the high percentage of the direct “No” and the negative ability expression “I can’t” followed by a reasonable excuse which sounds nakedly true. In terms of linguistics, the syntax seems perfect as it conveys more than sufficiently the idea or the purport of the utterance. However, unfortunately, the clarity of the second generation speakers’ refusals is not consistent with the Vietnamese principles of politeness. This kind of transference results in a break down in communication across generations.
Clarity is most reflected in the way the second generation speakers express their refusal by use of the direct head acts as the first part of their refusal pattern. The high frequency of direct “Không” and “negative ability” strategy in the second generation speakers’ refusals immediately indicates that their decision has already been made. This is very different from their parents and Vietnamese native speakers’ vague and open-ended approach to a refusal. This difference is rooted in the different perception of the politeness concept in which face work is the central point. As reviewed in Chapter 2, the concept of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) of “positive face” and “negative face” do not work properly in non-Western cultures (Gu, 1990; Cheng, Ye, and Zhang, 1995; Garcia, 1992) where the interlocutors show cooperative action and negotiation for the sake of the “interlocutor’s wants” (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Specifically, Vietnamese people not only protect their individual face but have concern for the face of others in the group and maintain harmony in their collective community. The Australian born second generation speakers fail to internalise Vietnamese cultural norms properly and do not appreciate how deeply shameful and embarrassing it is when face is lost. As a result they are not aware of the perceived harshness of their speech acts and are therefore unable to avoid culturally inappropriate language usage. Thus the opportunity for negotiated insistence is lost and interpersonal solidarity is damaged. When the English-Vietnamese bilinguals switch between the two languages, if “No” does not sound harsh in their perception, how can direct “Không” sound differently? This reflects insufficient immersion in the Vietnamese culture with resultant contextual loss of language usage.

By the direct “Không”, which stresses the determination, the second generation speakers neglect communicative negotiation. They go against the social norms and break the concern for solidarity and interest within the collective group. The direct “Không” in Vietnamese speech not only expresses a direct refusal linguistically but conveys a non-compromise in social meaning, hence, Vietnamese native speakers only use it in sensitive situations, i.e., in negative moods such as anger. That is why, as Rubin (1983, p. 15) observed, in many societies, how you say “no” is more important than the answer itself and he declared that speakers of a different culture who want to communicate appropriately must develop the competence of sending and receiving “no” messages. Belonging to a collective culture group, Vietnamese people are generally peace oriented, i.e., they always want to be included and be involved with the community and will avoid actions that may result in exclusion. As a result, their speech often expresses willingness to cooperate and generally attempts to lead toward a successful resolution via negotiation. In fact many cultures stress
the group over the individual orientation (Ide 1989, Gu 1990, Matsumoto, 1989, Stecker, 1993) and they all share particular features in social communication. This highlights the role of indirectness in Vietnamese communication which the second generation speakers fail to acquire but rather allow clarity to prevail in their communication style.

As discussed in Chapter 2, a large proportion of supportive moves are to be expected in polite verbal acts in a high context culture like Vietnamese, specifically for the purpose of face saving. However, in this investigation, the second generation speakers did not utilise many supportive moves in their refusals and this contributes to the fact that their speech acts are weak in face saving strategies, and vulnerable to pragmatic breakdown in communication. Moreover, the fewer number of strategy types in the second generation speakers’ refusals than in the first generation speakers or domestic Vietnamese native speakers’ indicates that the second generation speakers tend to get directly to the point. They only utter what they think is enough for a response to a situation. For instance, the examples illustrated in 5.1 consist of all of the necessary parts for a refusal to be polite in Western cultures including an apology, a refusal, an excuse or explanation; however, these patterns seem too short to Vietnamese people who always expect a circuitous reply. Zhang (1991) measured the level of indirectness by the length of indirect supportive moves and argued that “The more one beats around the bush, the more indirect one’s speech becomes” (p. 82). As the second generation speakers exhaust their refusals by the direct strategies, they do not give their interlocutor any chance to proceed to the insistence stage, which plays an important role in Vietnamese speech acts. When the second generation speakers skip this stage, it often leaves an embarrassing moment before the interlocutor can think of something to say in order to mitigate the offence of the situation. In such a case, the interlocutor suffers a loss of face.

It is clear that the ingredients for the second generation speakers’ refusals contain a large proportion of direct head acts and only a small amount of the indirect supportive moves in generally shorter refusals. This is in marked contradistinction to what the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and first generation speakers do. If the domestic Vietnamese native speakers have 97.3% of a refusal pattern comprising supportive moves to mitigate the negative impact of the direct head act, any hope of mitigation in the much higher percentage of direct head acts in the second generation speakers’ refusals becomes essentially impossible. Because the degree of indirectness is “determined by the length of the supportive moves which do not contain explicitly the intended proposition” (Zhang, 1991, p. 82), the second generation speakers’ patterns of refusals display a low level of indirectness. This
tendency is also caused by the imbalance in the structure of a refusal when it cannot proceed to the insistence stage. In fact, the incorrect proportion alone in a speech act causes the communication to falter.

The second generation speakers’ lack of pragmalinguistic knowledge leads to pragmatic transference in their speech because their speech is not driven by the sociolinguistic and pragmalinguistic context. They only pay attention to the purpose of conveying information, with as much clarity as possible. As a result, the second generation speakers’ utterances in Vietnamese are sometimes ill-chosen or not put in the correct context. In the Vietnamese language, the refusal patterns employed by the second generation speakers are inappropriate and thus fail to achieve the communication intent. This phenomenon amounts to what Bella (2011, p.1734-35) observed when speakers “let illocutionary transparency prevail over politeness”, that is, these speakers chose “clarity over politeness as their main illocutionary goal”. Holtgraves (1997, p. 634) agreed that when direct forms lose the so-called politeness, they gain clarity in return. Mackiewicz & Riley (2002) see clarity and politeness as two extremes and they propose some recommendations for “balancing clarity and politeness in editing sessions with non-native speakers” with the hope that people may “gain a better understanding of which specific linguistic forms will be perceived as both clear and polite by non-native speakers”. However, in this study, the second generation speakers strive for clarity and they intentionally choose to do this because in their perception saying “No” does not mean being impolite in the Australian culture. From their perspective it is obviously best to aim at clarity when transmitting information and they do this when using Vietnamese as they have learned to do when speaking English. This is completely different from the pragmalinguistic rules of Vietnamese. Some cultures view pragmatic clarity and directness as a lack of consideration for the hearer’s face and is therefore offensive and demeaning (Ogiermann, 2009). However, Vietnamese is not unique in this regard; many other cultures such as Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Taiwanese and so on share the characteristic of being indirect, imprecise and implicit. “No may mean may be given the right time and circumstances” and “yes, sure I’ll come” in classical Arabic means No” (Rubin, 1983, p. 14). As such, the interpretation of these cultural norms requires deep pragmalinguistic knowledge and understanding.

With the second generation speakers’ use of clarity in their interlocution the result is a communicative failure, clarity can be considered a negative transfer. In reality, the Vietnamese speaking style is very ambiguous. A refusal in the first stage of some speech acts
can be interpreted as an acceptance. “No” does not mean “no” at all (Rubin, 1983). It is clear that the second generation speakers instinctively use clarity not only by the use of the direct head acts but also by reducing the mitigation strategies to the minimum without cognizance of the fact that “a high degree of politeness and mitigation are often found together” (Fraser, 1980, p. 344). In other words, the speakers aim for clarity rather than the appropriate cultural contextual speech act. This situation occurs with the second generation speakers’ refusals in this investigation. They used short utterances with fewer strategies than the first generation speaker and domestic Vietnamese native speaker cohorts and exploit the direct head acts as the first priority. In terms of structure in general, there are often supportive moves utilised as pre- and post-refusals between head acts (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002, p. 212). However, the structure of refusals differs among the three cohorts. The second generation speakers tend to use either direct head act or the strategy of apology in the first place, whereas the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and the first generation speakers need more excuses or explanation or positive opinions to mitigate the expected harshness caused by the direct head acts. These pragmalinguistic means “serve the maintenance and enhancement of their interlocutor’s positive face” (Bella, 2011, p. 1734). In all the speech situations in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, the participants are placed in the role of inferior persons on purpose as a reminder of the need for formal and tactful responses. Nevertheless, the second generation speakers still have an inclination toward directness, and in non-subordinate roles, the results may show an even more direct trend in their Vietnamese speech.

Clarity is mostly understood by the term “get to the point”, and this is the characteristic of the English style. Therefore, applying “get to the point” to Vietnamese to obtain clarity in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech has displaced the ingrained indirectness in Vietnamese and replaced it by directness.

7.3.2. The loss of Vietnamese idiom / proverb usage – a loss of a feature of Vietnamese speech style

The processes of loss, addition, and replacement of features occur in all linguistic settings. However, little studies have been carried out regarding these changes in pragmatics. In this subsection, I present the case of loss of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech and argue that such a loss has contributed substantially to the (negative) transference because without the idioms and proverbs usage, communication in Vietnamese becomes more direct and less tactful. Vietnamese uses
proverbs and idioms extensively as an indirect way of suggesting what the speaker wants to say or to have happen, but without voicing the idea directly.

The absence of idiom and proverb usage in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech can be seen as a loss of a linguistic feature (cf Thomason, 2001) which defines a major change in their speech style – a transfer from indirectness to directness. Loss of features has been demonstrated in many studies of language change and by many authors (Weinrein (1953), Gumperz and Wilson (1971)). Thomason (2001) was concerned more about the reasons for such changes and argued that perhaps “an internal motivation combines with an external motivation to produce a change” (Thomason, 2001, p. 91). The features considered in this work include any characteristics of the particular linguistic component, not just phonetic features which have been studied previously in sound acquisition research. Thomason (2003, p. 690) continues her argument that “not all changes fit neatly into one category or another, since some involve partial loss with partial replacement and others involve partial addition with partial replacement; but these three categories cover the basic possibilities”. However, as shown in the findings in Chapter 5, there is an almost total loss of an integral Vietnamese language feature in that the second generation speakers did not employ a single idiom or proverb in their Vietnamese utterances. Losing this feature has made the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech less charming and poetic, but more importantly, it has reduced the range of the indirect strategies in the communication process. As “a reflection of social values” (Barajas, 2010), idioms and proverbs have become an indispensable element in Vietnamese speech in terms of high context indirect communication because they “mean more than they say” (Charteris-Black, 1990, p. 267). The loss of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech is indeed a loss of features of linguistics.

This loss is significant because it can be said that it transforms the nature of Vietnamese from sensibility to rationality, from flexibility to rigidity, from implicit to explicit and from indirectness to directness, all of which are defined as pragmatic transference. This loss of feature can easily be seen in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech. As shown in Chapter 5, the second generation speakers are limited to recognising an idiom / proverb but not perceive the meaning and are unable to use idioms and proverbs in their own speech. In fact, idioms and proverbs are just one example of the use of quotations in speech which would normally also include poetry (e.g. from The Tales of Kieu), classics (e.g. The Trojan Horse), sayings by ancient wise men and so on. Vietnamese people employ all these
components in conversation to tactfully imply the things which traditional courtesy forbids
being spoken directly. Thanks to these poetic elements, Vietnamese speech not only conveys
communicative purpose but also reflects one’s artistic skill, intellectual eloquence and
cultural attainment. The second generation speakers’ speech, therefore, lacks a subtle richness
of language usage with its absence of a repertoire of idioms and proverbs. In light of
Thomason’s (2001, 2003) findings, second generation speaker Vietnamese usage can be seen
to demonstrate a total loss of a critical feature of traditional spoken Vietnamese.

The second generation speakers’ loss of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs usage can be
compared with the findings of Yankah (1982, p. 147) on the loss of proverbial and idiomatic
language among Western educated Africans in America. The African scholar is not “at home
with his indigenous language” due to the dominant role of English or French in the linguistic
habit. When these people communicate with their peers in the local language, they also
switch to English or French expressions and vocabulary. Given that they are still able to
communicate entirely in the indigenous tongue, their language “lacks the proverbial or
idiomatic finesses that characterises the language of the non-western educated”. Yankah
(1982, p. 155) concluded that the use of proverbs by the Western educated Africans “can
generally be said to be limited” and most important of all, they are aware that “this is a
handicap” but cannot “satisfactorily achieve this” themselves. However, Yankah’s article did
not mention the breakdown in inter-generation communication or stylistic / pragmatic
limitation. The findings in this study about the loss of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in the
second generation speakers’ speech show a comprehensive “handicap” which leads to a break
down of communication whenever they need to converse in Vietnamese.

What makes Vietnamese idioms and proverbs difficult for the second generation
speakers to acquire can be deduced from the implicit Vietnamese idiom compared with the
explicit English style. Vietnamese is highly figurative in nature. It can be considered a meta-
language with the basics of communication heavily overlaid with a rich fabric of allusions
and metaphors (Vo, 1988, 1994). Vietnamese people are skilful at creating images and they
tend to use images to imply what they want to say. For example, all the items in the idioms
and proverbs check list are the familiar happenings in everyday life in Vietnam, but they are
used tactfully to refer to human conduct, character, philosophy and so on. For instance, “Trâu
trắng mất mùa” (white buffalo goes with failure of crops) expresses criticism of an incapable
individual. Of course, these implicit concepts are not easily interpreted correctly if one is not
immersed in that culture. To a large extent, a large percentage of Vietnamese idioms and
proverbs are in two contiguous parts, e.g. “Trâu trắng mất mùa” (white buffalo goes with failure of crops) is rarely used in its entirety but rather the speaker only speaks out the first part, i.e. “Trâu trắng” (white buffalo) and the rest is left to be interpreted inferentially. Thus it is sufficient to say “Đồ cái thứ trái trắng” (You are a white buffalo), leaving the rest, i.e. “mất mùa” (failure of crops) for the hearer to infer and to think about it! Thus, if the hearer does not know that idiom / proverb, the speaker’s utterance becomes confusing at best and non-sense at worse. Failure in communication occurs in this way.

In comparison with the second generation speakers’ situation, the first generation speakers have experienced only a partial loss of idiom / proverb usage. Although the language environment does not allow the first generation speakers to employ as many idioms and proverbs as they used to do in Vietnam, they still keep a high record in the repertoire as shown by the data collected in this study. This means that they have the potential to use idioms and proverbs in their speech and certainly recognize and understand them when they hear them. We can surmise that the fact the first generation speakers’ repertoire is significantly different from that of the native speakers is due to the isolation of residency and the subjective conditions, i.e. the tendency to limit usage when communicating with children. If all first generation speaker parents were aware of the need to retain fully functional Vietnamese as a home language and tried to teach their children Vietnamese properly, Vietnamese idioms and proverbs would not have been so extensively lost in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese repertoire. The absence of idiom and proverb repertoire in the overseas Vietnamese’s speech may be affected by the Australian’s informal and simplified language usage. Observation during the data collection in the first generation speaker cohort shows that those who are younger and in more contact with English speakers used more simplified Vietnamese, i.e. idiom and proverb usage and indirectness were greatly reduced when compared to the older age groups or domestic Vietnamese native speakers.

7.3.3. Linguistic realisation of non-shared strategies

In this subsection, I will argue that in the Vietnamese pattern of refusal, there exist some particular formulaic phrases which are different from those in other languages, e.g., English (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002) and Greek (Bella, 2011). These differences cause some difficulties for the second generation speaker acquisition of these phrases and this is a reason for the transfer of English stylistic attributes into the spoken Vietnamese.
The concept of shared and non-shared features in language change has been discussed by several authors. Blum-Kulka (1982) examined request patterns in English and Hebrew, pointing out some overlapping features or shared strategies and some different elements or non-shared strategies. Obviously, the difference of the bilinguals’ two languages affects the transference. If the intent and content is similar in both languages, then the speakers will use their second language more appropriately. Blum-Kulka (1983, p. 40) agreed with Searle (1975) that languages always have equivalence in forms and functions, especially in speech act forms from the translation point of view. Hence, if forms and functions are not “translated” properly, then there is a high likelihood of transference occurring. In a more specific sense, the strategies in the refusal patterns in different languages also overlap in some particular parts and the order of strategies and the frequency of strategies also differ from each other. For instance, the strategy of regret is not used by the L1 Spanish speakers, while it is a more common strategy among Americans (Felix-Bradefer, 2002, p. 220). This study does not aim to directly compare the patterns of refusals in English and Vietnamese by the English – Vietnamese bilinguals but rather to compare the second generation speakers’ patterns with those of the first generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native speakers. From this comparison, it can be deduced that the second generation speakers’ patterns have been much influenced by their English usage patterns. The directness in the English refusals differentiates it from the indirectness in the Vietnamese patterns, thus causing the shared and non-shared strategies which are distinguishable, particularly in content and frequency of semantic formulae.

At first glance, all the speech acts seem similar or universal, i.e., they overlap with more shared than non-shared features. However, on closer examination in Chapter 4 of this study, the speech act patterns are not only different in terms of formation such as order, frequency of strategies, and in contents, but in the pragmatic performance as well. Actually, it is the pragmatic style that forms the distinctive patterns that differentiate speech act performances in different cultures. Even in the same language, the second generation speaker cohort performs the refusal pattern differently from that of the first generation speaker and domestic Vietnamese native speaker cohorts. These differences seem to highlight the role of non-shared features in the course of transference. It is obvious that the direct head acts are always needed in the refusal pattern, however, the very high portion of this component in the second generation speakers’ repertoire itself is the non-shared feature which makes the second generation speakers’ speech outstanding and leading to the transfer. The data has
shown that most second generation speakers begin their refusals with either “direct no” strategy or an apology. The first generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers, on the other hand, choose another mitigation strategy such as expressing a positive opinion, expressing a regret, explaining or repeating the discourse to begin with. These approaches to a refusal show a clear contrast which facilitates a pragmatic transference.

One of the typical non-shared strategies in the refusal patterns which would make the second generation speaker’s speech less indirect is the strategy of appealing for empathy / sympathy. As shown in Chapter 4, this strategy seems to be favoured by Vietnamese native speakers, while it hardly appears as a strategy in the refusal patterns in other languages. The expression “(Mong) anh / chị / cô / chú / ông / bà thông cảm cho / giúp” (I beg you for your sympathy) sounds very polite because it expresses all the respect, acknowledgement, gratitude, apology and so on in a humble way. Regardless of age or hierarchy, the speaker of this utterance puts himself / herself in a lower position than that of the interlocutor. However, as observed, most of the second generation speakers (96.8%) did not employ this strategy, which also means that the second generation speakers have not acquired this kind of expression in Vietnamese. This expression conveys the emotional aspect only by which the speaker initiates a negotiation on the basis of close relationship, regardless of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the matter.

Another non-shared mitigation strategy is the alternative beginning with “let me”, for instance, “let me ask my husband if he can help”, “let me think about it”. In fact, these phrases serve as postponements; and in the Vietnamese culture, they are implicitly interpreted as a polite refusal “No, I can’t”. In terms of semantics, these utterances are promises and Vietnamese people use these “unreal promises” to mitigate the disappointment of the requester where they know for sure that they cannot fulfil the offer or request. This kind of involvement matches the collective characteristic of Vietnamese people who always respect others’ opinions in a group or a household. It also reflects the apparent indecisiveness in Vietnamese communication which is always present to allow for any continued face-saving dialogue. The second generation speakers, as found in this study, never use this type of unreal promise because, to them it appears somewhat deceitful and they see no reason to make up excuses when the truth seems perfectly reasonable. The inclination toward telling the truth thus excludes this mitigation strategy in their refusals. Again, the different attitudes (beliefs) between the two generations determine the difference in the contents. As a result, some of the differences have become non-shared or unique to a particular group of speakers.
Chapter 7: Discussion

The absence of the non-shared strategies in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese refusal patterns verifies the fact that the second generation speakers have been influenced by the use of the English language in performing Vietnamese speech acts. This is also the reason why the second generation speakers cannot be as indirect as the first generation speakers and the domestic Vietnamese native speakers speaking Vietnamese.

7.3.4. A case of negative transfer

In this subsection, I will argue that the transference in this study is an example of a negative transfer. Kasper (1992) classified the pragmatic transference into two types: positive and negative. The former, according to Kasper (1992), leads to successful communicative outcomes in most cases. The latter, however, whilst not totally considered as a failure of communication, does raise a concern for second language transfer research. The issue of “L1 based sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge projected onto L2 context” has been observed in the overall view of “different patterns of pragmatic transfer displayed by learners of the same target language and different L1 backgrounds” (Kasper, 1992, p. 216).

There is little literature concerning the case of the second generation speakers and the impact on their heritage language of the domestic Vietnamese native speakers of the domestic language; however, I will treat the second generation speakers as L1 learners of an L2, i.e., Australian English learners (L1) of Vietnamese (L2) although in some cases, they may learn it as their initial L1 before learning English. However, most of my findings coincide with those already published on L1 learner of an L2, e.g. American learners of Japanese (Ikoma & Shimura, 1994), English learners of Hebrew (Blum-Kulka, 1982). In fact, in this study, the second generation speakers when speaking Vietnamese can be seen to be behaving like L1 learners of an L2 and Blum-Kulka’s (1982) argument that “the speakers of an L2 tend to rely on their L1 speech act strategies in procedure and realisation” fits into both cases. In a broad sense, they might “attempt to perform a speech act by borrowing the linguistic means from the first language” and generally simplify the system of speech act patterns (Blum-Kulka, 1982, p. 50). Generally, for the communicative effectiveness and social appropriateness, these speakers are supposed to learn new strategies and new social attitudes about the use of these strategies in context so that they can achieve the indirect acts consistent with the politeness required in that L2 (Blum-Kulka, 1982, p.51). However, the results from Chapters 4, 5 and 6 show that the second generation speakers prefer switching to their L1 socio-cultural behaviours. To them, learning to communicate in the Vietnamese manner is much
Chapter 7: Discussion

harder than learning the Vietnamese language itself. Transference becomes a solution! The transfer from indirectness to directness in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese appears analogous to the outcomes of previous studies noted in Chapter 2, e.g. Blum-Kulka (1982), Takahashi and Beebe (1993) and so on. Despite the incomplete transference process causing the mismatch between the second generation speakers’ awareness and their performance of indirectness, the repertoire of the refusal by the second generation speakers is still good evidence for the pragmatic transference from indirectness to directness in their Vietnamese speech. This transfer is consistent with the findings of Blum – Kulka. It is clear that this common phenomenon also exists in the bilinguals’ language performance; however, most of the research done so far has investigated the case of ESL and EFL learners only, not on the second generation speakers or third generation immigrant speakers.

Blum-Kulka (1983, p. 49) used the term “violating social appropriateness in the target language” to illustrate the case of “transferring native language competence and applying linguistic competence in the second language” and this violation has been verified in this study. Apart from the large proportion of direct head acts in which the strategy of “direct no” overwhelms other strategies, the bluntness of the refusals can be qualitatively assessed from the evaluation of the domestic Vietnamese native speaker judges (who play the role of the other interlocutors) in Section 4.4. Each almost invariably found the second generation speakers’ refusals to be abrasive or hurtful at some level. This means the second generation speakers’ refusals were not accepted by the native speakers because they do not meet the requirements of standard Vietnamese politeness. The hurt was due to the direct elements, i.e. the direct “no” and also due to the self-centred attitude of the second generation speakers. The second generation speakers place themselves on a higher social level than would normally have been expected, and place undisguised importance on privacy, freedom and equality rather than the Vietnamese values of humility, sharing, interdependence and sensibility. The differences in the socio-cultural perception between the two generations facilitate the language transference at the root of generational discontinuity. The second generation speakers are able to use the language syntactically but carry it away from social norms of usage, leading to a “transfer of social norms” (Blum-Kulka, 1983). Hence the second generation speaker Vietnamese speech acts become deformed and are received negatively in communication with domestic Vietnamese native speakers and first generation speakers.
Chapter 7: Discussion

Although the L2 acquisition of L1 learners of an L2 is different from that of second generation speakers (to the heritage language) in terms of language nature, the pragmatic transference is likely to happen in the same manner. As seen in Japanese learners of English in the study of Beebe et al. (1990), they displayed heavy formulaic structures in their English refusal patterns, that is, avoiding specific semantic content, and expecting more inference from the interlocutors. In addition, they employed more suggestions of alternatives (a feature in Japanese refusal) but avoid using strategies like disagreements or corrections (a feature in American English refusal) (Beebe et al., 1990). On studying pragmatic transference, Kasper (1992) concludes that “Japanese speakers of English retain certain features of Japanese communication style, such as … a preference for formulaic indirectness, when interacting in English” (p. 214). In this study, the second generation speakers performed their Vietnamese refusal patterns in the opposite way to what the native Vietnamese do, expressing the refusals with maximal clarity (employing more direct head acts) with minimal strategy types (excluding necessary supportive moves). As a result, their refusal patterns sound more like transliterated Australian English. This process amounts to what the L2 learners do in speaking a foreign language – “a negative transfer” as described by Kasper (1992).

The second generation speakers also show a socio-pragmatic failure in the way their explicit Vietnamese utterances are at variance with the implicit Vietnamese context. Kasper (1992) further argues that socio-pragmatic transfer has been proved to operate in the way learners perceive the contextual factors, for instance, whether or not it is appropriate to speak a particular utterance in a particular context. However, the appropriateness in context is not easy to identify. The second generation speakers have shown a mismatch between their awareness and the actual language performance. On the one hand, they can distinguish the Vietnamese indirectness from the English directness. Through the interviews, almost 100% of the second generation speaker participants agree that indirectness goes along with Vietnamese for the purpose of politeness. On the other hand, they also admit the truth of “Lực bất tòng tâm” (the ability doesn’t match with the understanding (consciousness)). As mentioned previously, to the second generation speakers, learning how to be indirect in Vietnamese (i.e. pragmatics) is even harder than learning the language itself (i.e. linguistics). The problem also lies in how they obtain their understanding of the appropriateness of context when they themselves do not have a proper language context in their day to day environment (this refers specifically to Vietnamese in Australia). This kind of obstacle leads to the act of borrowing and then transference. The Vietnamese proverb “Lấy râu ông nợ câm
cảm bà kia” (Putting this man’s beard on that lady’s chin) best illustrates the second generation speakers’ pragmatic transference as discussed in this study.

To sum up, the second generation speakers’ case is another example of negative transfer in language transference. Though the message is delivered correctly linguistically, the pragmatic mismatch causes problems which are evidenced by communication failure even in intra-cultural communication.

7.4. Reasons for the pragmatic transference

In this section, I discuss what I see as the possible reasons for the pragmatic transference. For this purpose, I classify the visible known reasons as objective or direct reasons, and non-visible known reasons as subjective or indirect reasons. I propose that all the reasons are rooted in the socio-cultural environment, i.e., the difference of cultures and language environment have led and contributed to the changes.

The first objective reason is that the second generation speakers have not been exposed enough to the Vietnamese cultural and linguistic practice in the speech community because they spend most of their time at work or at school speaking English and behaving in an Australian manner. At home, they only spend time with the family members during dinner. In this brief period, they may continue to speak English with siblings. However, even this contact with Vietnamese language / culture is generally restricted to childhood years. As described earlier, most of the second generation speakers participating in this research are over 18 years of age and although they still live with their parents in the same household, they are relatively independent and have privacy. Moreover, they do not have many Vietnamese friends or colleagues. At community functions, the situation is even worse; younger people hardly socialise with older ones unless they are asked to meet someone by their parents. Therefore, time for speaking Vietnamese is pitifully short, and even during this time, the opportunity for exposure to Vietnamese indirectness of manner and richness of language is limited.

The preservation of the Vietnamese language in Australia also depends on parents’ point of view. If they treasure the Vietnamese traditional values, they will teach their children how to speak and use Vietnamese, and how to behave in the Vietnamese manner; otherwise, the children will do whatever they want, and the opportunity for Vietnamese practice both linguistically and culturally may be largely lost. As discussed in Chapter 6, the parents’
interviews reveal some diversity in opinion, both positively and negatively. On the one hand, some blame the hard economic situation which does not encourage the conservation of their heritage language and culture because sending children to Vietnamese schools is both time and money consuming. Besides, these parents think that their children should assimilate to the Australian culture and speak good English in order to survive and compete with other English speaking people. On the other hand, wealthy parents think differently. They highlight the importance of language and culture enhancement, and they pay more attention to their children’s education in both languages and cultures. In reality, the majority of households face hardship in their resettlement in the new land and providing a traditional education for their offspring is a major challenge and rarely a viable option.

Another objective reason for the pragmatic transference relates to the cultural environment into which the second generation speaker group are born and raised. “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” applies to the Vietnamese second generation speakers who were born and raised in Australia. They will inevitably act in the Australian manner. Although they are aware of the indirect style accompanying Vietnamese speech, their capability and effort fail to match their awareness when they speak to traditional Vietnamese speakers, e.g. older relatives and friends brought up in Vietnam. Australian people are said to be decisive and determined as shaped by the Anglo-Australian culture. They communicate in a direct way. All the communication statements such as like, dislike, agreement, disagreement, inclination, disinclination, acceptance, rejection and so on, are clear-cut. That is the way the Vietnamese second generation speakers learn from the culture they are most exposed to. Nguyen (1980, p. 13) notes the same phenomenon taking place in America. While the parents always expect their children to conform to the Confucian order, the children, by socialising with their own age group, tend to act in the American way which is less formal and restrictive. Although the Vietnamese language and culture, together with all other heritage cultures around the world, coexist in Australia, the Australian culture dominates and shapes the manner and behaviour of those born here. It is therefore understandable that the second generation speakers now belong to the dominating culture. What they think, perceive and speak is very different from what their parents do regardless of the language they use as a communication tool. The pragmatic transference, hence, is easily comprehensible.

The findings of Chapter 6 of this study have further identified other collateral reasons for the indirectness – directness transference in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech. These reasons are also rooted in the social structure and cultural norm differences
which lead to the different language usage and style. The evidence from this study suggests that these subjective reasons can be found in the following shifts in values and customs: from hierarchical to equality based relationships, from sensibility based to rational based reactions and from imprecise or vague conversational style to a clear-cut style. Each of these will be discussed below.

The shift from hierarchical to equality based social interactions can be seen as one of the reasons for the pragmatic transfer from indirectness to directness in communication. It is the social hierarchy which affects the level of directness in speech in certain cultures. Felix-Brasdefer (2006, p. 2173) discusses the use of direct and indirect strategies in Mexican Spanish refusal patterns in a hierarchical politeness system depending on age and power status in relationships. Specifically, when addressing a person of higher status, apart from the formulaic expression usage, direct refusals are employed rarely but various indirect strategies such as positive opinion, gratitude, willingness, reasons or explanations, definite replies and promise to comply are preferred and used the most. Vietnamese culture shares this feature with Mexican culture in the great importance placed on assessing hierarchical relationships because it has such profound effects on the nature of the communication and especially on the selection of speech acts. According to Holtgraves (1997, p. 633), “People who tend to speak more indirectly may, relative to their more direct-speaking counterparts, perceive themselves as lower in status and more distant from their interaction partners and may perceive their speech acts as more threatening”. However, the communicative style has become different when the second generation speakers do not appreciate Vietnamese hierarchical values because they have learned the value of equality so important to the Anglo-Australian culture, especially in this modern time. The power (authority) distance has been minimised. For example, employers do not have as much authority over their employees as they once had or teachers over their students, etc. In the Anglo-Australian social context this change in authority status does not greatly influence politeness rituals or a proper choice of formulaic expressions. This is in marked contrast to the traditional Vietnamese situation.

A hierarchical structure in which age, power and gender are taken into account is critical in Asian cultures as it determines how people communicate politely so as to maintain social hierarchy and cohesion (Pham, 2008). For example, in the Vietnamese language, fixed models of communication are based on Confucian-oriented style in which there exist linguistic politeness strategies used to convey one’s admiration for the other’s success and prestige as well as their conduct without direct reference to their power, age and gender.
difference (Quang Dam, 1999). As seen in the Japanese culture, “people are expected to act properly according to their relative position or rank with regard to other members of the group, and it is this relative position that they want to maintain when they employ politeness strategies” (Matsumoto, 1988, p.423). In Vietnamese communication, there is a clear distinction between superior and inferior in age, power, and even gender (Nguyen, 1996; Vu-Huong, 2002; Tran, 2004); traditional communication is expected to reflect this hierarchy. It has been argued that in a certain culture and in a certain context, people are supposed to use appropriate strategies (Matsumoto, 1988, p.423). The second generation speakers in this research, therefore, face a sense of confusion when switching between the two contrasting cultures with such opposing points of view about inter-personal relationships in society. Specifically, the Australian culture has given the second generation speakers a sense of equality which results in having more rights and more freedom. This is consistent with the findings of Matsumoto (1988), who observed that Westerners defined themselves as “individuals, with certain rights and a certain domain of independence” (p. 423). This attitude puts everyone at the same level in the society. For example, students can correct teachers’ mistakes, employees can reject their boss’ ill-considered proposal, children can sue their parents for abuse, none of which are accepted or would occur in most Oriental societies where people of higher status are respected and not questioned or challenged (Smith, 1991). Vietnamese culture stresses the importance of older age, authority and male domination, hence, communication between interlocutors of different age, power and gender often require more care by the so-called inferior. The fact that the second generation speakers’ language performance lacks certain strategies regarding age, power and gender in order to be polite Vietnamese standards is understandable.

Hierarchy not only affects the choice of vocabulary and sentence structure, but also of speech acts and rules for speaking behaviour. Nguyen (1980, p. 13) admits that rather than violating politeness, Vietnamese people will remain silent and “try to swallow the frustration until it becomes unbearable” because “retorting or talking back is rude” by the mutually accepted inferior. Smiling or keeping silent, in fact, is a way of responding very indirectly in difficult situations. In Vietnamese culture, if children respond to older people inappropriately, their parents are blamed. As such, in order to protect family’s “face”, every young person must be responsible for their utterances. When this rule no longer pertains, as in Australia, and is replaced by an equality based relationship, younger interlocutors do not feel any restrictions in their mode of speech. Therefore, hedging and insinuation required for indirect
speech have become unfamiliar to these young Vietnamese speakers. The response like “Ông chú à, mai vở làm không có được đâu, mặc bản chuyện gia định rồi” (Boss, (I) can’t go to work tomorrow, have some family affairs) are very common among the second generation speakers, but would sound unacceptable to the domestic Vietnamese native speakers’ ears. Obviously, hierarchical communication requires a more formal style, which goes along with indirectness. When the distinction between age, gender and power is not counted, the characteristic of communication will be shifted in the other direction (i.e. towards directness). It is this aspect of pragmatic transference the present study focuses on.

Sense / rationality and sensibility also affect how communication is conducted. Since the second generation speakers’ speech has been demonstrated to be based on rationality it is easy to understand the transfer from indirectness to directness. While sense is based on principles, sensibility relies on concerns and cares. Belonging to a high context culture of collectivism, Vietnamese people place great stress on concern and care for others because “the high context culture system values group value orientation, spiral logic, indirect verbal interaction, and contextual nonverbal style” (Ting-Toomey, 1988, p. 225). It is said that Oriental people and Vietnamese people in particular live and work on the basis of sensibility whereas Europeans do so on rationality. This concept is popular and widely approved by most Vietnamese and hence it is surprising that there is no other published literature on this topic other than that of Vo (1988, 1994) and Tran (2012). Vietnamese people use sensibility, i.e., the acute perception and responsiveness toward their interlocutor’s emotional state, to set the communicative standard. Whenever interactions are considered on a scale of rationality and sensibility, sensibility always prevails. In other words everything in daily life is solved by using sensibility first, then rationality later. This characteristic is rooted in the Vietnamese maxim of always maintaining harmony and saving face. Because the second generation speakers generally have no opportunity to learn this Vietnamese cultural feature, it cannot become part of their Vietnamese speech act repertoire and hence they use their familiar rational based style learned from the Australian culture. Due to the use of sensibility, the Vietnamese speech avoids direct disagreement, correction, disapproval, criticism and so on. In the refusal speech act, direct head acts are minimal and supportive moves are reinforced with more hedges, more alternatives. To Vietnamese people, sensibility means flexibility, exception, tolerance, non-regulation. This shapes the curve line in the circuitous speech, leading to a very indirect speaking style among Vietnamese people.
Sensibility is clearly expressed in the first generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native speakers’ repertoire of refusals. In the situation of the refuser, Vietnamese always want to be involved in finding the best solution. An alternative, e.g., “let me ask someone else”, is usually offered as a positive opinion strategy and is preferred as an act of involvement by which the interlocutor means to share the difficult situation with the speaker. In general, Vietnamese people always stress sensibility in communication and reaction. On the other hand, the second generation speakers clearly distinguish the wrong from the right, correct from incorrect, and find it difficult to accept the Vietnamese concept that “yes may mean no or silence can be either yes or no” (Nguyen, 1980). Therefore, the second generation speakers’ utterance such as “No, impossible, because I just like it” (S16F) will never be acceptable to the native Vietnamese.

Sense or sensibility orientation results in either the clear-cut or the circuitous (vague / beating about the bush) communication style. In fact, the characteristic of being clear cut in speech has been discussed in the above section about clarity. The vagueness is caused by too many details and possibilities (to some extent, they have become irrelevant) and hinting cues. Schmidt (1983), investigating a case of communicative competence in a Japanese man, points out an extremely indirect way of conveying directives which, according to him, is typically Japanese.

“This is all garbage” implies “put it out”

“You like this shirt?” means “why don’t you change it?”

Of course, these hinting cues are only interpreted properly by people of the same culture. In Vietnamese culture, a type of figurative speech known as nói bóng, nói gió is often heard.

For instance:  Đẹp mặt chưa! (Did your face look beautiful?)

Đi chơi sư assistir! (You had a good time, didn’t you?)

These utterances are very difficult to understand properly by people of different cultures. In fact, they are reprimands which parents often use for their naughty children who did something wrong. The implication in general is too vague for people from low context cultures.

The sense of accuracy also differs among the domestic Vietnamese native speakers, the first generation speakers and the second generation speakers, which affects the clarity of the
speech. The Vietnamese’s imprecise speech is shown through inaccurate information like rumour (e.g. it is said that); the interlocutors tend to refer to an unknown third party with unknown agents, time and place. Vietnamese people prefer approximation to accuracy (Vo, 1994). For example:

(How much is that item?) năm, bảy đông gì đó (five, seven dollars or something)

(When should we meet?) mai mốt chi đó, để xem (tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, let’s see)

(How many people do you need for the group?) hai, ba mươi người cũng được (twenty, thirty, whatever)

By contrast, people from a Western culture prefer accuracy. Confirmation or reconfirmation is always needed to make sure that things will happen as planned. This is why the second generation speakers are very clear-cut in their speech, making their Vietnamese sound blunt and abrasive to older Vietnamese speakers. In general, this kind of shift is closely related to the clarity which has been discussed previously.

Speaking Vietnamese without the face saving strategies is also a reason for the indirect-direct transference. The findings chapters have shown that the second generation speakers are not aware of the Vietnamese face saving concept. They thought they knew it. However, through the in-depth interview, it turned out that they knew almost nothing about it! Vietnamese people are always kept in the indirect mode because they are motivated by the need to save face. This results sometimes in Vietnamese appearing deceptively content “bằng mặt nhưng không bằng lòng” (being content in the face but not content in the feeling), but it is a phenomenon known as “hiding feeling”. This occurs to some extent in many cultures but is considered an essential ability for Vietnamese. Pham (2008) agrees that due to the concern for public evaluation and the fear of loss of face, “young people are taught to conceal things that are vulnerable to criticism from the public, as seen in proverb “đóng cửa bảo nhau” (making / keeping remarks within the family) or “tốt khoe xấu che” (displaying good things, hiding bad things)”. When one has to be constantly aware of the feelings and views of others, and try to minimise social disapproval and loss of face, then there is a tendency to conceal emotional expression (Tran, 2004). When the second generation speakers are not governed by such matters, their speech follows what they think regardless of indirectness. This is an obvious example of transference.
To sum up, the objective socio-cultural conditions in which the second generation speaker group find themselves have created the subjective reasons which have driven the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech to a less indirect speaking style. However, the pragmatic transference in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech is subject to living conditions, family background and also their personality.

7.5. Comparing and contrasting the results with previous studies

Apart from expanding and supporting some of the previous studies with evidence, the findings of this study also challenge some previous researchers’ findings. Two areas will be discussed: the relation between pragmatic transference and proficiency; and the relationship between code switching and pragmatic transference.

7.5.1. The relationship between pragmatic transference and proficiency

“What the conditions are for learners to transfer L1 pragmatic knowledge or to abstain from transfer” is still insufficiently debated (Kasper, 1992, p. 216). Blum-Kulka (1982) discussed the relation among social appropriateness rules, linguistics behaviour and properties inherent in the speech event (p. 44). That study proposes that the transfer from directness to indirectness and vice versa “would be interpreted as evidence for transfer of social norms” and the preference of one over another may be due to “lack of linguistic means” in a language in which the speakers do “not have a full control” (p. 47). Actually, according to Clark (1979), cultural differences cause different interpretation of indirect meanings. As indirect utterances require the interpretation at two levels (literal and figurative (intended) meanings of the utterances) the interlocutors in a second language may find it difficult to execute the dual processing due to the less familiar conventions in that second language. This has been proved correct in this research where the second generation speakers have to switch between the two somewhat contradictory cultures: Australian and Vietnamese – low context versus high context culture, individual versus collective culture. The second generation speaker interviewees admitted that speaking Vietnamese was already difficult; carrying on indirect speech in Vietnamese was even more difficult for them. The transfer of L1 pragmatic knowledge can be seen in the way the second generation speakers used the apology and gratitude strategies in the Discourse Completion Test Role-plays. They used twice as many apology expressions as the domestic Vietnamese native speakers who employed the appeal for empathy instead. The appealing for empathy strategy seems rarely to happen in other languages (see Ikoma & Shimura, 1994; Bella, 2011) but is to be preferred in
the Vietnamese refusals. The decreased use of the gratitude strategy in the second generation speakers’ speech fits the findings of Felix-Bras de rer (2002) who showed that the English learners of Spanish also do not use gratitude in their Spanish refusal patterns (p.141). These differences are due to the transfer of L1 pragmatic knowledge.

As a matter of fact, the findings of this study have contributed to the debate on whether and how L2 proficiency is related to pragmatic transference. All reported studies claim that L2 proficiency bears some relationships with pragmatic transference; but many studies give contrasting results on the direction of the relationship. For instance, Takahashi & Beebe (1987) built up the hypothesis that the pragmatic transfer was closely related to the second language proficiency and Beebe et al. (1990) accepted that incomplete knowledge of target language sociolinguistic patterns was one reason for the transfer. They argue that when the L2 learners are fluent in L2 and in full control of that language, at that point, they are most likely to transfer L1 cultural norms into L2 discourse. Later, Al-Gahtani (2009) following Takahashi & Beebe (1987) also found that “as second language proficiency increased, learners were more likely to undertake pragmatic transfer. High intermediate and advanced learners negatively transferred considerably more L1 pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic norms into the L2 context than beginning and low intermediate learners”. The findings of this investigation do not support these earlier researches. Instead it was apparent that no matter how fluent in Vietnamese the second generation speakers are, they all behave in an L1 cultural context. As presented in Chapter 4, the correlation coefficient between the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese proficiency and the level of directness is negative (-.617). This means that the more fluent in Vietnamese the second generation speaker speakers are, the less direct they tend to be in their Vietnamese speech. Again, it indicates the less transfer level in the most Vietnamese fluent second generation speaker speakers. However, the term “less direct” does not necessarily mean the second generation speakers can stay “being indirect” in their Vietnamese speech; no matter how fluent in Vietnamese they are, most of them speak Vietnamese in a more direct style.

Furthermore, in more specific terms, it is also found in other correlation tests that the proficiency is not related to the degree of directness via some other direct elements in the refusal patterns such as direct “No”, negative ability strategies, and direct head acts in general. Once again, it is demonstrated that the second generation speakers’ proficiency in Vietnamese does not determine the level of directness / indirectness in their speech, which reflects the level of pragmatic transference from L1 to L2. Actually, the usage of a large
proportion of direct head acts and a small proportion of mitigation has become established in
the refusal patterns employed by the second generation speakers. The second generation
speakers have allowed the Vietnamese indirectness to lapse and be replaced by a more direct
style in their Vietnamese speech. Therefore, the finding of Takahashi & Beebe (1987) that
“transfer increases as the learner’s proficiency increases, i.e., that transfer is greater among
our higher proficiency learners than among lower proficiency learners” (p. 153), is not
consistent with the present findings.

Other evidence that challenges Takahashi & Beebe’s (1987) hypothesis is that the
transfer occurs to some extent in the first generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech.
Linguistically, the first generation speakers’ Vietnamese remains the same except for some
switching to English occasionally, especially the culture-bound terms widely used in
Australia. However, as shown in the results chapters, the pragmatic transference occurs
significantly within the first generation speaker group. This means the pragmatic transference
depends more on something else, for example, the social and cultural environment rather than
on language proficiency. The first generation speaker group has served as a bridging group,
the transference occurring in this group has shown a steady progress in the pragmatic
transference to a later generation in a different language environment. Given that the
acquisition of heritage language in bilingualism and of a foreign language is different, it is
reasonable to expect that the relationship between proficiency and pragmatic transference
may also be different. In fact, the findings of Takahashi & Beebe (1987) study did not
support their own hypothesis though there was some supporting evidence from other research
(Kasper, 1992, p. 219). The findings of the present study also do not support that of
Takahashi and Beebe (1987). This highlights the need for further research to clarify the
issues.

However, this study does agree with the work of Maeshiba et al. (1996) and
Yamagashira (2001) who declared that their studies did not lend support to Takahashi &
Beebe’s (1987) when they found that their advanced Japanese learners as participants were
inclined not to transfer first language strategies into their L2 performance. It was explained
that “the advanced learners have a better ability to emulate American apology behaviour than
the intermediate learners”. The authors further discussed that the intermediate learners, in
contrast, adopted “a less elaborated, first language based approach” in their apology strategies
to redress offences than the American native speakers and the advanced learners” (Maeshiba
et al., 1996, p. 181), which shows a negative pragmatic transfer. Although the findings of this
study show a negative relation between the level of directness (which further indicates the transference) and language proficiency, in detail, the Vietnamese fluent speakers do not necessarily assure a high level of indirectness in their speech.

7.5.2. The relationship between code switching and pragmatic transference

Is pragmatic transference caused by code switching? Although Clyne (2003, p. 190) proposed several arguments over the issue of the relationship between code switching and language shift, and Silva-Corvallis (1994) noted that intensive language contact is a powerful external promoter of language transference and change, no one has formally discussed the relationship between code switching and language transference or has so far found the precise mechanism of language change. In the case of the second generation speaker cohort, these bilinguals have to switch between English and Vietnamese and they do have a dual set of Australian and Vietnamese cultures in their behaviour. As seen in the findings, there exists a mismatch between their language repertoire and their awareness of usage. When the second generation speakers speak Vietnamese, they do think about the need for an appropriate usage, i.e., a more indirect style; however, this manner seems to be processed more slowly than the utterance itself, and results in their Vietnamese speech being accompanied with the Australian style, i.e., the more direct style. This kind of code switching seemingly causes some transference.

In this study, I am not claiming to have evidence in relation to this as I did not set out to address the issue. However, I observed and also pointed out that the second generation speakers seemed to engage in a great deal of code switching during the performance of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, as well as in the interviews. I hypothesise that if the linguistic code switching can synchronize with cultural code switching, the pragmatic transference may probably not happen. For instance, as shown in Chapter 4, the request Situation 10 in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play is made by a boss whose speech, in the Vietnamese culture is supposed to carry the authority which will subdue every employee. However, the style of refusals made by the second generation speakers degrades the boss’s status and is quite inappropriate in a Vietnamese cultural context. The second example is the request Situation 11 in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play which is a dialogue between an old lady and her young neighbour. As the findings in Chapter 4 show, the second generation speakers neglect the age difference principle which is stressed in Oriental communication. This results in the lady’s loss of face when she herself is degraded by a
younger interlocutor. This obviously reflects the intrusion of the Anglo-Australian culture in the Vietnamese response. Another example is that discussed in Section 4.4.6, by code-switching to the ritualistic English phrase “(I’m) sorry”, the second generation speakers have missed the subtle feeling of regret/apology and forgiveness implied in the Vietnamese term “xin lỗi (ông / bà)”. While English “I’m sorry” is the ritual form (Felix-Brasdefer, 2002), the Vietnamese “xin lỗi” carries the connotation of the unfulfilled including expressions of regret, apology and forgiveness. Hence, the act of apology is only used sparingly by Vietnamese in appropriate situations. In this sense, it can be said that code switching is one of the reasons leading to transference in the second generation speakers’ speech.

However, this justification does not work properly in the case of the first generation speakers who do not switch much to English because some even do not speak English but still experience some pragmatic transfer. At first, the first generation speakers’ repertoires were assumed to be the same as the domestic Vietnamese native speakers’, however, as shown in the Kruskal-Wallis Test (see 4.2), there is a small transfer to more direct mode in the first generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech. The slight pragmatic transfer happening in the first generation speakers’ speech therefore appears to be influenced more by the living environment and the Australian culture they are exposed to. This also means that code switching may not be the key factor in the pragmatic transference. After all, this aspect presents ideas for future research as it has not been covered in the range of the present study.

### 7.6. Reflection on the effectiveness of methodological aspects

With reference to methodological technique used in this study, the oral Discourse Completion Test Role-play has proven to be effective for capturing the speech act repertoire. The oral Discourse Completion Test (Role-play) has proven a robust tool over a long period and has undergone innovative development. Designed as a written test, it has now become an oral one with several turns between the parties making it a full speech act. It does not matter whether the Speaker 1 in the Discourse Completion Test Role-play is the researcher or another person as the dialogue for the Speaker 1 is fixed or partly fixed thus helping to ensure consistency over the tests with all participants in the data collection process. With the added features of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play, namely, oral and greater number of turns, the data collected has become more authentic and meets the demand of negotiation in a speech act. It has given the researcher a fully detailed speech act set, facilitating the data analysis and comparison. Houck & Gass (1996, p. 47) admitted that the richness of naturally
occurring refusals could not be adequately captured with a formalised structure as presented by a written Discourse Completion Test Role-play. When carrying out an oral Discourse Completion Test Role-play, the participants were not given significant time for preparation and thus their responses are almost instantaneous and close to normal everyday speech. The oral Discourse Completion Test Role-play raises the authenticity of the speech act assessment. Moreover, only with the oral Discourse Completion Test Role-play was I able to test whether the participants allowed the speech act to proceed to the insistence stage. When we use a written test, the insistence stage is set by default for all the situations and participants. However, in an oral Discourse Completion Test Role-play, the participants may exploit all the strategies, then end the speech act in just one stage. For a language of a culture that needs the insistence stage, the oral Discourse Completion Test Role-play is indeed a solution for the investigation of speaking style. By employing the oral Discourse Completion Test Role-play, this study has overcome the weaknesses Beebe & Cummings (1996, p. 80) pointed out – namely that “Discourse Completion Test data do not have the repetitions, the number of turns, the length of responses, the emotional depth, or other features of natural speech”.

The second phase of this investigation introduces an experimental technique not previously used in pragmatic studies. Using idiom and proverb repertoire as an extra tool to measure the level of directness / indirectness allows the degree of pragmatic transference to be quantitated. This approach has not previously appeared in the literature. Although accurate figures cannot be calculated in this study, the loss of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in the second generation speakers’ language performance has proved that the second generation speakers’ spoken Vietnamese cannot be as indirect as that of the first generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native speakers. Data from the second generation speaker interviewees show that they do not see any reason to have knowledge of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs. In fact, this subjective condition may be what is restraining any possibility of revival of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs in the second generation speakers’ speech specifically and the Vietnamese language in general.

The mixed-method research with a number of different subtypes in the data collection has revealed both good points and drawbacks. Maximising the level of authenticity and reliability in my study was achieved only by the use of a combination of the oral Discourse Completion Test Role-play (repertoire), checklist, tests, questionnaire, interview and evaluation. Each type assesses both subjective and objective viewpoints and together they
have formed a very reliable method of data collection. However, as shown in the findings
chapters and discussed above, the mismatch between the second generation speakers’
repertoire and their awareness shows that the questionnaire tool may be less reliable in the
field of language research. While they think they are reasonably indirect, their performances
of the Discourse Completion Test Role-play are very direct. Vietnamese people have an
idiom “Lực bất tòng tâm” (Ability does not match conscience) to illustrate this. Although the
second generation speakers always want to be indirect in their Vietnamese speech, their
linguistic competence in Vietnamese and the influence of English do not allow them to do so.
After all, if language research is done without the authentic performance, the results may not
portray actual use.

Another drawback of some experimental techniques is the difficulty faced when a
technique requires prolonged data collection. Although the second generation speaker
participants were willing and helpful, they were too busy to make numerous appointments to
complete certain tasks. The prolonged, multi-stage process made the participants tired and
demotivated. Time consumption was a major issue. Some participants who could not easily
arrange the meeting refused participation. Further, most participants were uncomfortable
doing the survey and language tests in Vietnamese. They said they were not confident doing
things in Vietnamese. Also, the prejudices about “domestic” and “overseas” Vietnamese
have, in some cases hampered cooperation. Overseas Vietnamese people always feel a gap
between themselves and domestic Vietnamese, who they view negatively in a political sense.
This has a subtle impact on their relationship to me and on their approach to cooperation with
the research project. Generally, the participants cooperated only out of a sense of duty and
rarely showed any interest in the topic of the research.

7.7. The mismatch between the second generation speakers’ awareness
and language performance reflects an incomplete transfer

It is the mismatch between thoughts and actions which causes major miscommunication
with the second generation speaker group. This is understandable because although immersed
in the English speaking environment, the second generation speakers still have a strong bond
with their Vietnamese origin. The second generation speakers are indeed the bridge between
their Vietnamese household and the Australian community outside; that is also why they are
Vietnamese – Australian bilinguals. There is an interesting contradistinction between second
generation Vietnamese brought up in Australia and those raised in other multicultural
countries such as the USA or Canada where these young people primarily undergo the mainstream culture assimilation. Whereas the latter group give up their heritage culture and adopt the Anglo-Saxon culture, the second generation immigrants in Australia are encouraged to use their heritage language at home and to practise Vietnamese culture as much as possible. As a result, the second generation speakers in this study, in general, are still very Vietnamese in most aspects of life. Hence, the blend of half Vietnamese and half Australian characteristics initiates the mismatch discussed earlier.

In detail, the mismatch between the second generation speakers’ repertoire and the awareness exists due to the overwhelming domination of the host language and culture in the multilingual and multicultural Australia. This supports what Clyne (1967) finds that most bilinguals possess a dominant and a second language. The dominating English as a high status language in multilingual Australia has made other heritage languages dwindle. Most of the second generation speakers investigated agree that they do perceive the importance of being indirect in the Vietnamese speech but cannot do that partly because the two phases of language switch and culture switch do not synchronise. The Vietnamese indirect style seems to lag behind as the English more direct style which is used more frequently in most social contact. Their heritage language is generally used much more restrictedly and mostly in the home, which is why it is also called “home” language after its usage domain. The principal issue in language proficiency loss, however, is clearly that of loss of the richness and subtlety of the traditional components of Vietnamese language, which themselves are integrally bound up in the nature of the culture itself. Language proficiency and cultural integrity are inseparable.

7.8. Limitations of the study

A major limitation of the present study is the small number of participants which limits the possibility to claim statistical significance for the results of the quantitative analysis. Initially, it was intended to recruit fifty for each cohort (first generation speakers, second generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native speakers). However, during the data collection period, I faced difficulties in recruiting the participants because many eligible second generation speakers were not willing to participate. Some of the second generation speakers were not allowed to participate by their parents who were anti-Communist and were suspicious of whether this research was politically oriented. In most cases, the participants were introduced by a third party who gave them a degree of credibility. It therefore took
some time to gain the trust from the participants and this made the recruitment process much more time consuming than envisaged. It was not feasible to further extend the process in order to arrive at the desired fifty per cohort.

Another difficulty was the paucity of literature on the field investigated. Firstly, pragmatic transference has not been studied a great deal or in detail. In comparison with other types of transference such as that in phonetics and syntax, pragmatic transference has been largely neglected. In addition, to date, as far as I have been able to establish, no studies have been published on the pragmatic transference by second and third generation immigrant speakers. Instead, the focus has been on the first generation of immigrant speakers and on transference generally. More specifically, the Vietnamese language use in this type of research has not been addressed. Therefore, this study had to be based on and draw comparisons with research on other languages for statistic evidence and background. It is likely that this study may lack the systematic unity because of the lack of an existing body of such research in the Vietnamese language.

Last but not least, the data collection process for each second generation speaker participant lasted so long and with so many stages that often the participants became demotivated about their involvement. Most found the process tedious and eventually felt the research was intrusive on their time. In fact, some were not willing to continue to completion because the study was more complicated and demanding than they had expected. As a result, fewer interviews with the second generation speakers were conducted than intended, although it is known that in-depth interviews provide valuable information, particularly supplementing other methods of data collection (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Indeed, without the interviews, this study would not have reached the conclusions that it has been possible to draw from the research.

In summary, this study has done a practical investigation into the pragmatic transference of the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech from which significant values of the study for the field of pragmatic transference research and for linguistics in general have been highlighted. The characteristics of the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech are analysed and conceptualised. A discussion of research methods and the limitations of the study have also been mentioned so as to guide further research.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated pragmatic transference in the Vietnamese second generation speakers’ spoken Vietnamese and the possible reasons for such transference. In this chapter, I first summarise the answers to the research questions. I then present the implications of this study for the research field of language change, and for understanding trends in multilingual Australia. Finally, I outline the practical implications of this study for language maintenance among the Vietnamese diasporas in Australia.

a. Answers to the research questions

Research Question 1: Is there a shift from an indirect to a direct mode of speaking in the language of second generation Vietnamese speakers in Australia as compared to standard domestic Vietnamese?

The study has found substantial evidence of such a shift as documented in Chapters 4 to 6. The first piece of evidence of pragmatic transference was found through the investigation of the speech act of refusals among the three groups of participants – domestic Vietnamese native speakers, first generation speakers and second generation speakers (see Chapter 4). The second generation speaker cohort exhibited a much larger proportion of direct head acts in a very brief pattern than the domestic Vietnamese native speakers and the first generation speakers and used fewer mitigation strategies. There are also changes in the formulae of speech acts; that is, some particular strategies have been lost in the second generation speakers’ performance of Vietnamese refusals. The differences observed between the cohorts can be described as suggesting shifts from an emotional (intuitive) to a rational basis, from a hierarchical to a more equal basis, and from a vague to a clear-cut style. Apart from these, code switching into English has changed the nature of the refusal patterns which bears the Vietnamese cultural norms. In general, the second generation speakers’ patterns of refusals sound very abrupt in comparison to those of the first generation speakers and domestic Vietnamese native speakers.

The second piece of evidence of pragmatic transference was found in the investigation of the usage of Vietnamese proverbs and idioms as documented in Chapter 5. The lack of
knowledge of, the misuse of, or the total loss of Vietnamese proverb and idiom usage have made the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech significantly less indirect. There appears to be no compensation for this loss which represents another instance of loss of intrinsic features in the changing dynamic of language in the Australian Vietnamese diasporas.

Research Question 2: What are the possible factors contributing to the linguistic changes?

The principal factors identified in this study (see Chapter 6) are the lack of exposure to correct Vietnamese usage in both the linguistic and pragmatic sense, and the influence of the norms of Australian English. The lack of exposure to the Vietnamese language at schools and workplaces for the second and future generations make it impossible to assure the preservation of Vietnamese in Australia. The attendance at Vietnamese classes in the community might be seen as a way of offsetting such language loss but has been found in this study to be no guarantee of improved proficiency and correct usage of the Vietnamese indirect speaking style. In addition, the communicative characteristics such as being succinct and getting straight to the point in Australian culture have influenced the repertoire of the Vietnamese language in Vietnamese-English bilingual communities to a major extent. The cultural code switching has created some mismatches between the second generation speakers’ awareness and performance of Vietnamese, that is, the second generation speakers are generally unconscious of their directness and surprised to find out that their Vietnamese usage is often upsetting and offensive to native speakers.

The most important finding contributing to linguistic studies concerns the relationship between indirect-direct transference and Vietnamese proficiency in the second generation speaker participants as documented in Section 4.5. The negative relationship between these has cast doubt on what previous researchers have found; that is, in this study the more fluent in the L2 the speakers are, the higher the level of transference occurring. This study therefore presented another contribution in the debate relating to subjects and language environment.

The study has also shown that code switching was not found to be the main cause of transference because the transference occurs even in the first generation speakers’ performance of their mother tongue (see Chapter 6). Because this aspect has not been a focus of the study, suggestions for further research have been made in this regard.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

The study also reveals that the pragmatic transference occurring in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese speech is not complete. There exists a mismatch between what the second generation speakers think about their performance and what they actually do; that is, they are aware of the fact that they should be indirect in speaking Vietnamese but their usage is unconsciously oriented towards the directness of their corresponding English usage.

The attitudes of the second generation speakers towards preserving the heritage language in Australia do not seem to be necessarily a factor in causing the pragmatic transference, but rather could be seen as potentially influential in the opposite sense. They proposed certain methods to first improve their skills in Vietnamese culture and language, then to transmit to younger generations.

b. Implications of this study for the study of language change

There are five key innovations in this study and each has implications for the study of language change in general and Vietnamese language change in particular.

Firstly, in the broadest terms of language change, the findings from this study have added another chapter about pragmatic changes in the field of contact induced language change in general. Previously, for example, Clyne (1967) who investigated the case of German used in Australia, and Bettoni (1982) investigating Italian used in Australia, found a lot of changes in most of the main areas in linguistics but not in terms of pragmatics. In the context of Greek communities in America, Bella (2011) did find evidence of changes in pragmatics, specifically, in the mitigation of the refusal patterns. There was, however, no mention of directness-indirectness transference in that study. Therefore, the findings of the current study are different and original. The transference from indirectness to directness in the second generation speakers’ spoken Vietnamese has opened up a new area in pragmatic transference research and a new approach to investigating language change.

In pragmatics, directness / indirectness has been widely discussed and investigated. It is important in language use because it affects how sentence structure or linguistic formulae are used. However, research into the transference from indirectness to directness or vice versa has not so far received much attention, especially in the heritage language spoken by younger generation speakers. Vietnamese is imbued with indirectness and when the second generation speakers use it with greater directness, their Vietnamese becomes blunt, less polite and often offensive. This study once again shows that directness / indirectness in speech means more
than a speaking style; its transference causes a breakdown in communication due to the violation of the rules of politeness.

The second innovation in this study is employing the idiom and proverb usage in speech to measure directness / indirectness. Directness / indirectness has always been considered to deal with speech acts and studies on directness / indirectness totally rely on speech acts research. The use of idioms and proverbs as a tool to measure the extent of directness / indirectness has proved valuable in this study. I am not aware that it has been used previously by other linguists and it is therefore an original contribution to this type of research. In some languages such as Chinese, Vietnamese, African Igbo, Akan and Ghanaian (Smith, 1965; Vo, 1994; Yankah, 1982 and Obeng, 1996), employing idioms and proverbs is an art of implicit speech, heavily bearing the indirectness. As such, using idioms and proverbs as a tool to measure the level of indirectness is obviously reasonable. The converse would also be true, if perhaps to a lesser extent. Researchers in non-English speaking countries studying the preservation of language skills in English speaking migrants may usefully incorporate idiom and proverb usage tools in their research of heritage language preservation.

The third way in which the study is innovative is in choosing second generation speakers as the subjects for the investigation of pragmatic transference. Previously, L1 learners of L2 - e.g. American learners of Greek (Bella, 2011) or English learners of Hebrew (Blum-Kulka, 1982) - or ESL learners such as Japanese learners of English (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987) have been used in research of pragmatic transference. In multicultural and multilingual societies, the first generation speakers of a heritage language have often been involved in investigations about language change and heritage language preservation. To date (and unfortunately), the second generation speakers of a heritage language have not been involved very much in applied linguistic research although their role seems more important than that of the first generation speakers in heritage language preservation. While the heritage language is still the first generation speakers’ mother tongue, it becomes the second generation speakers’ second language. Therefore, changes in language usage are far more likely to be seen, and are of greater importance, in a second generation speaker cohort than in that of the first generation speaker.

Next, the finding of transference in the second generation speakers’ Vietnamese performance has contributed knowledge to the wider field of linguistics. The study provides
Chapter 8: Conclusion

another example of negative transfer. Such negative transfer may cause communication breakdown as the more direct speech of the second generation speakers causes significant offense to other interlocutors.

Fifth, and most importantly, this study has used a new approach to measuring the level of directness in refusal patterns. The degree of directness in language usage has been studied previously. Blum-Kulka (1982) mentioned the degree of directness in which the distribution of responses is governed cross-culturally either by shared or non-shared rules of directness. The different patterns of responses are ranked from less direct to more direct forms. The percentages of repertoires by different groups are then presented. In this study, if we consider the domestic Vietnamese native speakers’ performance to be the standard of indirectness in expressing a refusal, the proportion between the direct head acts and the supportive move strategies must be taken into account. However, it seems the level of directness does not quantify well as it depends on other aspects like content, order and frequency of the strategies. As directness / indirectness deals more with socio-psychology, the level of directness should be judged on the level of abrasiveness as perceived by the native speaker. If so, it is suggested that the speech act patterns should be presented to domestic Vietnamese native speaker who will rate the level of directness on the basis of questions such as “How do you feel about the sensitivity of the response? Did you find it offensive / hurtful?” using a 4-point scale (i.e. Very much / Much / Little / Not at all) similar to a Likert scale which has an odd number of points.

The degree of directness is measured in an innovative way in this study, using native speakers as the quantifying agents as suggested above. The evaluation as presented in Chapter 4 reflects the speech act performers’ level of directness. Some responses amazed the domestic Vietnamese native speaker ‘judges’ as they badly violate the Vietnamese codes of politeness. This type of evaluation is reasonably objective because the judges do not know who the speakers are, what gender they are, how old they are, what background they are from and so on. Obviously, the difference in rating due to the subjectivity is unavoidable, but the variation is minimised by having sufficiently large number of the judges to give statistic validity.

It can be seen that the degree of directness argued by Blum-Kulka (1982) is another area that needs more research and investigation. Because speech acts vary from one culture to another in terms of linguistic and social norms, there must be different tools for measuring
Chapter 8: Conclusion

this degree. As for the refusal speech act, the syntactic order, the frequency and the contents have been mentioned by Takahashi & Beebe (1987); the direct head acts and the supportive moves have been discussed by Bella (2011) and again in the findings of this thesis. As well, this study has suggested that the evaluation method of using native speakers as judges to rate the linguistic performance of the experimental subjects is a valuable new tool. The results have shown the consistency among the judges for the evaluation.

c. Practical implications of this study for understanding trends in multicultural and multilingual Australia, and for language maintenance among the Vietnamese diasporas in Australia

This study of the Vietnamese second generation speakers in Australia takes place in a very timely fashion as it utilises a cohort of participants who are still young enough to be under the guidance of their parents whether they live with their parents in the same household or not. This is fortunate in that the investigation has been carried out more easily because there is a direct link between the first generation speakers and the second generation speakers in a typical language environment of bilingualism. As a general trend, a heritage language is usually lost by the third or fourth generation. Therefore, studies of language change of the type presented here may become very difficult or impossible within few decades in multilingual Australia, since immigration has been greatly restricted and therefore the pool of second generation speaker from which to choose will start to dwindle.

Such a study as the present one cannot be carried out without a multicultural-multilingual society like Australia. Australia, known for being a “live language lab” (Clyne, 1982), has taken the initiative to launch and promote many heritage language preservation programs. Studies such as this one potentially have great value in guiding and shaping such programs and should be warmly welcomed and encouraged. This thesis was inspired by and rooted in the varieties of languages spoken everywhere throughout Australia and the study has partly contributed to a better understanding of the overall picture of multilingual Australia (see Hornberger, 2005; Kelleher, 2010).

Because the Vietnamese population in Australia is reasonably big, the preservation of Vietnamese is essential and important in multilingual Australia. It is hoped that this study will help people from different generations to have better understanding about one another and to avoid communication breakdowns so often occurring between the generations.
Specifically, when the Vietnamese first generation speakers are addressed by second generation speakers, they should be tolerant of incorrect usage. By understanding the causes, first generation speakers should not take offence but rather encourage and correct such usage without criticism. As well, the first generation speakers must take more responsibility for ensuring proper teaching of the full richness of the Vietnamese language and culture to the second generation speakers, and remind the latter to speak as much Vietnamese as possible with peers and siblings (who are also bilingual). By now many second generation speakers lack the ability to perform indirectness in their Vietnamese speech, so the adults need to take particular effort to help remedy this. For example, Vietnamese people have a tradition of “Tiến học lữ - Hậu học văn” - Learning to behave properly first and then learn the language! That means that behaviour is taught from birth before language skills are developed. When young people have good conduct, their speech will be well shaped by their conduct. From this point of view, the second generation speakers need to be taught the socio-cultural structure of Vietnam, to understand its hierarchical social nature, and about the Oriental code of communicative etiquette which avoids loss of face and allows nearly all issues to be resolved amicably.

Pragmatic value: Should Vietnamese language centres be a target of language preservation in Australia?

One unfortunate finding is clear. Whether second generation speakers were sent to Vietnamese classes or not has essentially no impact on their level of proficiency in Vietnamese. The participants with no formal Vietnamese classes who can speak very fluent Vietnamese as reflected in Chapter 4 provide evidence for this claim. This raises a big question for educators: How should Vietnamese be preserved in Australia most effectively? Normally, formal language classes will help people to improve literacy – that is, the ability to read and write. However, as Tran (2006) affirms, only 8% of the second generation speakers can write properly, the majority of them do so with difficulty. As in this study, during the period of data collection, the second generation speakers exhibited low literacy because most of them could not read the tests and the instructions in Vietnamese! It is to be expected that home is the foremost domain where Vietnamese people use Vietnamese. Almost all the second generation speaker participants (30 out of 31) chose “Home” for the first place they speak and acquire Vietnamese. This means that home is the key factor in preserving the heritage language.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

When it comes to preserving the heritage language in Australia I would argue that attending formal Vietnamese classes and gaining literacy is not as important as obtaining proficiency in spoken Vietnamese. As seen in Chapter 4, the length of Vietnamese classes taken by the second generation speakers does not show a positive correlation with Vietnamese proficiency. Some second generation speaker participants had no opportunity to attend Vietnamese classes, but their Vietnamese was as good as that of some who attended more than ten years of formal Vietnamese classes. I accept that the formal Vietnamese classes for the Australian-born offspring are necessary to ensure their literacy, but I would argue other measures need to be taken to ensure their proficiency in Vietnamese for communicative purposes. Spoken language skills are far more important in day to day life of Vietnamese families and so it seems obvious that the importance of teaching verbal skills outweighs that of literacy skills. Until this study, educators have reasonably assumed that formal language classes can equip young Vietnamese both with written and verbal skills consistent with their cultural heritage.

The issue then is how to keep the level of Vietnamese spoken in each Vietnamese household in Australia at its highest level, as this is the key to the problem of preserving the language. The interviews with the first generation speaker and second generation speaker participants revealed that some families are much more successful than others in passing the Vietnamese language on to younger generations (see Chapter 6). Firstly, regular family gatherings are important. When children still live with parents, meal attendance is usually required. This is generally the only time of the day that all family members gather together and share the atmosphere of a Vietnamese culture and family. This should be a time of sharing the Vietnamese cultural richness in all its facets and of enhancing the family ties. All of this depends on fluent and appropriate language skills and can continuously refine and enrich those skills. Secondly, radio and television stations broadcasting programs in Vietnamese seems to be a useful addition because this will give people in the household an opportunity to discuss things in Vietnamese, developing the language skills as well as the cultural knowledge embedded in the ensuring discussions. Last but not least, parents’ positive attitude toward their children’s language skills is perhaps paramount in importance. Strict parents always force children to speak only Vietnamese at home, assign them to read some materials in Vietnamese such as stories or articles in the daily papers and follow this with discussion of what has been read. By doing this, the Vietnamese language has been preserved reasonably well.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

To sum up, families and parents’ effort is the principal component in the heritage language preservation overseas.

This argument opens a new challenge to educators and language policy planners as it offers a different viewpoint about language maintenance among the second and third generation Vietnamese than has previously been recognized. It is undeniable that literacy is of great importance, but in the context of preservation, it is a luxury. Spoken Vietnamese should be paid more attention than written Vietnamese. Spoken Vietnamese for the second generation speakers appears to be the most crucial issue to be considered if educators are to develop the right policies for the whole community in the cause of language and culture maintenance.

A positive attitude towards their heritage preservation

Despite all the difficulties of Vietnamese language and culture preservation that the overseas Vietnamese people in Australia have faced, the findings from this study show a positive attitude towards Vietnamese values in multicultural Australia. It is natural and ethnocentric that the second generation speakers have started to think about their mother tongue which needs conserving for the future in these separate diasporas in Australia. Their thoughts reveal this positive attitude in three ways: improving themselves first then helping their children, making a connection to Vietnam, and strengthening the diasporas consolidation (see Chapter 6).

Both the first generation speakers and the second generation speakers are very practical in their understanding that, in order to preserve Vietnamese language and culture overseas in general, they must improve themselves and succeed in their new country before they can transfer what they possess in terms of knowledge about Vietnam to their children. By getting involved in the study, the second generation speakers are stimulated to think more about the future of Vietnamese language and culture in Australia. Most of the second generation speaker participants have suggested some possible ways of improving and preserving their Vietnamese such as talking more in Vietnamese, listening to the Vietnamese programs on the radio, television and the Internet, reading newspapers and books, getting more information about Vietnamese traditions and customs, getting involved in Vietnamese ritual and festival activities and so on. All of these seem workable because if they are willing, they can get help from the first generation speakers for such practices. As soon as they feel confident about
their Vietnamese knowledge, they will assist their children to follow what they have done for the cause of preservation.

Making a link to Vietnam is also a very good idea for the preservation of Vietnamese language and culture overseas. The second generation speaker participants find it important to take their children to Vietnam so that the children can develop an idea of their home land, their origin and their heritage mother tongue. They will not be able to speak a language properly, to talk about a culture with a pride if they do not see what the country is like. In reality, many young people have gone to Vietnam to invest in some significant projects. Their success shows that they have built a bridge to link Vietnam with overseas communities and step by step wipe out the political prejudices.

The last meaningful idea about preservation stresses the importance of building a strong consolidation within the diaspora. Actually, this thought fits the characteristic of a Vietnamese collective village where people always take care of one another and put the community’s benefits above the individual ones. This includes, for instance, doing good acts to honour Vietnamese traditional values such as being hard working, self respecting and / or patriotic. When people are bound together by a common goal, younger generations will feel they should have more responsibilities for the community and the preservation will work better. Hopefully, the ethnic groups in Australia are still being encouraged to preserve their ethnic diversity in order to make a “six billion stories and counting” (from SBS Radio, Australia) Australia. Such efforts will continue giving younger generations in Australia humanity values to protect their own heritage in a culturally diversified society (see Hornberger, 2005).

In conclusion, however much the heritage language has been changed in an English domination environment, its existence is worth treasuring. Vietnamese will hopefully not be lost in the third or fourth generation like other languages have been. Positive attitude means willingness which will bring good outcomes if there are the right policies, encouragement and support from the authority in the diasporas. It is possible to do something to help before it is too late. Community leaders within the Vietnamese diaspora should help promote efforts for improving and preserving Vietnamese to every household via the media. If everyone has goodwill, it can be done.
8.4. Suggestions for further research

Due to the extent of data collection difficulties, the findings in this thesis must be somewhat not very qualified. This study investigates pragmatic transference as exemplified in the Vietnamese communities in Brisbane. Conceivably, in larger Vietnamese communities in Sydney or Melbourne, the pragmatic transference may share similar characteristics but may also have its own distinctiveness. Therefore, one of the suggestions for further research is that the future studies cover different Vietnamese communities in different regions of Australia so that their levels of pragmatic transference can be compared and contrasted.

Further research also needs to investigate the rest of the Vietnamese diaspora in other overseas multicultural countries such as the USA or Canada because different countries will have different policies about heritage language preservation, and the immigrant communities will have different histories and experiences. The differences in context can be expected to have a major impact on how fluent in heritage language the younger generation speakers will be, and therefore, possibly, on the level of transference.

Further research in the Vietnamese case should also explore other tools for defining and measuring the level of pragmatic transference, in order to have a more complete view of such transference. That is, it would be useful to investigate different speech acts, such as the speech act of giving and receiving compliments and the speech act of correction. Furthermore, apart from speaking style - e.g. directness versus indirectness in the pragmatic field - other aspects within pragmatic transference such as hedging, politeness etiquette, opening and closing conversations have been overlooked and should be included in future studies.
Appendixes

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

14-Oct-2010

Dear Mr HOANG

I write further to the additional information provided in relation to the conditional approval granted to your application for ethical clearance for your project "A study of patterns of change in the Vietnamese language spoken by the second generation of Vietnamese immigrants in Queensland, Australia" (GU Ref No: LAL/08/10/HREC).

This is to confirm receipt of the remaining required information, assurances or amendments to this protocol.

Consequently, I reconfirm my earlier advice that you are authorised to immediately commence this research on this basis.

The standard conditions of approval attached to our previous correspondence about this protocol continue to apply.

Regards

Karen Moorehead
Manager, Research Ethics
Office for Research
G39 room 3.55 Gold Coast Campus
Griffith University
ph: 3735 5585
fax: 5552 9058
email: k.moorehead@griffith.edu.au
web:

Cc:

At this time all researchers are reminded that the Griffith University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research provides guidance to researchers in areas such as conflict of interest, authorship, storage of data, & the training of research students. You can find further information, resources and a link to the University's Code by visiting http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/xupdatemonth/e7852d226231d2b44a25750c0062f457?opendocument

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addressee(s)], please disregard the contents of the email, delete the
email and notify the author immediately
Appendixes

Appendix 2: Information sheet

A study of the patterns of change in the Vietnamese language spoken by the second generation of Vietnamese immigrants in Queensland, Australia

GU Ref No: LAL/08/10/HREC

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Researchers: TINH BAO HOANG
School of Languages and Linguistics
Tel: 0412592013
baotrangflood@yahoo.com

Supervisors:
PROF. DEBORAH CAO	Dr. CLAIRE KENNEDY
School of Languages and Linguistics	School of Languages and Linguistics
Tel: (07)3735 5127	Tel: (07) 3735 7141
d.cao@griffith.edu.au	c.kennedy@griffith.edu.au

This research is being undertaken to totally fulfil the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, at Griffith University.

What is this thesis about?

Due to language contact and the isolation of language repertoire, the Vietnamese language used overseas, in Australia in particular has been changed gradually. Bilingualism (or multilingualism) of the Australian born Vietnamese second generation speakers results in new patterns of spoken Vietnamese with such features as code-mixing and transference, borrowing, coining and so on.
Besides, the Vietnamese language usage by those speakers also shows some other differences from the domestic Vietnamese in the way that there are addition, loss, and replacement of features in their speech. This research will document the innovative patterns of changes, then explore the causes via the speakers’ attitude towards the heritage language, the motivation, and the effect of the language environment on the acquisition of the home language. The findings will hopefully update the Vietnamese language overseas in the course of language development. Therefore, the thesis will be a reasonable contribution to the Applied Linguistics field.

What will you be asked to do?

The data collection of a mixed methods research for this thesis comprises of conversation recording, questionnaire and checklist, and interviews. Therefore, you will be asked to have a long talk (about 45 mins) with the researcher in the first stage; this conversation will be audio recorded. In the second stage when the questionnaire is designed with the contents collected from the conversations, you will be asked again to do the questionnaire on the innovative patterns. There is also a language test and a checklist on the usage of Vietnamese proverbs/idioms for you to complete.

When the numeric data is acquired, in-depth interviews will be carried out. You will be interviewed for about half an hour about your awareness of the new patterns, your attitude towards the Vietnamese language, and the heritage language preservation in this multilingual and multicultural Australia. You are also encouraged to express the motivation, the effect of the language environment on the acquisition of the Vietnamese language.

Your confidentiality

Your conversation with the researcher, and your interview will be audio recorded and transcribed; your score of the test and the checklist will be used for the numeric data and never be revealed because your identity will be coded. Such a coded name as F12 will be used in the analysis to ensure the confidentiality. During the research period, all the transcripts will be stored in the locked cabinet and recorded files will be kept in password protected folders. As soon as the thesis is submitted, these transcripts and files will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation
Appendixes

Your participation is entirely voluntary. The completion or partial completion of the conversation recording, the interviews, and the test and checklist does not influence the research procedure. You can withdraw your participation at any time.

After you have carefully read this information you will be asked to read and sign a form giving your consent to participating in this research.

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical conduct in Research Involving Humans. If participants have any concerns or complaints about ethical conduct of the research they should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au

Privacy statement

The information collected will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A De-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all time be safeguarded. For further information, consult the University's Privacy Plan at www.gu.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp or telephone (07)3735 5585

Questions / Further information

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the research team whose contact details are provided at the beginning of this form.

Thank you for your participation in this research.
NGHIÊN CỨU NHỮNG THAY ĐỔI TRONG VĂN NÓI TIẾNG VIỆT CỦA THẾ HỆ THỨ HAI NGƯỜI VIỆT NAM ĐỊNH CƯ TẠI QUEENSLAND, ỨC CHÂU

Số đăng ký tại Đại học Griffith: LAL/08/10/HREC

BẢNG THÔNG TIN

Những người nghiên cứu: TINH BAO HOANG
Trưởng Ngôn ngữ và Ngôn ngữ học
Tel: 0412592013
baotrangflood@yahoo.com

Giáo viên hướng dẫn:
Giáo sư DEBORAH CAO
Trưởng Ngôn ngữ và Ngôn ngữ học
Tel: (07) 3735 5127
d.cao@griffith.edu.au

Tiến sĩ CLAIRE KENNEDY
Trưởng Ngôn ngữ và Ngôn ngữ học
Tel: (07) 3735 7141
c.kennedy@griffith.edu.au

Nghiên cứu này thực hiện để trình luận án Tiến sĩ, tại Trường Đại học Griffith.

Luận án này để cập vấn đề gì?

Vì có sự giao lưu ngôn ngữ và môi trường ngôn ngữ sự dụng bị tách biệt, tiếng Việt hai ngoại, chương hạn như ở Úc đã dần dần bị thay đổi.

Song ngữ (hay đa ngữ) của thế hệ thứ hai người Việt Nam sinh ra và định cư tại Úc đã mang lại sự thay đổi trong văn nói với những đặc tính ngôn ngữ như trồng lăn ngôn ngữ, chuyển thể, vay mượn, đất mồi, vv.... Ngoài ra, việc sử dụng tiếng Việt của những đối tượng này cũng thể hiện sự khác biệt so với tiếng Việt sử dụng trong nước, đó là trong cách hành văn của họ được thể hiện ở, hoặc làm
mất đi, hoặc thay thế một số đặc tính. Nghiên cứu này sẽ nêu ra được những mẫu thay đổi, và cùng sẽ tìm ra nguyên nhân của sự thay đổi này qua thái độ của người sử dụng đối với tiếng mẹ đẻ của mình, qua dòng cờ và ảnh hưởng của môi trường ngôn ngữ đến việc học nói tiếng mẹ đẻ. Những phát hiện này sẽ cập nhật thêm thông tin cho tiếng Việt hải ngoại trong tiến trình phát triển ngôn ngữ. Chính vì thế, luân án này sẽ là một động gôn đáng kể cho ngành ngôn ngữ ứng dụng.

Bản sẽ phải làm gì?

Qua trình thu thập dữ liệu cho nghiên cứu với phương pháp pha trộn bao gồm thâu âm và làm thoại. Với thể, trước tiên bạn sẽ thực hiện một cuộc nói chuyện dài khoảng 45 phút với người nghiên cứu để tài, và làm thoại này sẽ được thâu âm. Sau đó, nội dung từ cuộc làm thoại sẽ được sử dụng để xây dựng một bảng câu hỏi trắc nghiệm và bạn sẽ giúp trả lời những câu hỏi về những thay đổi đối trong ngôn ngữ. Ngoài ra, bạn còn phải trả lời bằng trắc nghiệm và một danh mục về cách sử dụng thành ngữ, tục ngữ Việt Nam. Khi các dữ liệu về số đã có được, các cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được tiến hành. Bạn sẽ được phỏng vấn trong vòng 30 phút về nhận thức của mình đối với các câu nói mới này, về thái độ của bạn đối với tiếng Việt và việc bảo tồn tiếng mẹ đẻ tài nước Úc và văn hóa và da ngôn ngữ này. Ngoài ra, bạn còn được yêu cầu bấy tỏ động cơ thời thức học tiếng Việt, những ảnh hưởng của môi trường ngôn ngữ đến việc tiếp thu tiếng Việt của bạn.

Bí mật riêng tư của bạn

Đảm bảo cuộc bản với người nghiên cứu và cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được thấu ám và ghi ra giấy; điểm số bản đạt được của bài kiểm tra và trả lời danh mục sẽ được sử dụng cho dữ liệu số, tất cả sẽ không bị để lộ với tên tuổi của bạn sẽ được mã hóa. Một tên mã hóa chàng hạn như F12 sẽ được dùng trong phần tích nhận đam bảo tính bí mật riêng tư. Trong suốt quá trình nghiên cứu, tất cả lời ghi từ file tiếng sẽ được cắt giữ trong ngăn kéo có khóa, và file ghi âm được cắt trong các thư mục có mật khẩu. Ngày khi lưu án được nộp, tất cả file này và tài liệu ghi sẽ được hủy.

Tham gia tự nguyện

Sự tham gia của bạn là hoàn toàn tự nguyện. Việc hoàn thành hay dang đố nưa chứng trong thâu âm đảm thaoi, phỏng vấn, làm bài kiểm tra và trả lời danh mục sẽ không ảnh hưởng đến tiến trình nghiên cứu. Bạn có thể rút lui bất cứ lúc nào.

Sau khi bạn đọc công thần thông tin này, bạn sẽ được yêu cầu đọc và ký vào một mẫu đơn ghi nhận sự chấp thuận tham gia vào nghiên cứu này của bạn.
Đạo đức nghiên cứu

Trường Đại học Griffith tiến hành nghiên cứu theo Luật Đạo đức nghiên cứu quốc gia liên quan đến con người. Nếu người tham gia có quan tâm hay phàn nàn gì về đạo đức nghiên cứu xin hãy liên lạc với Trưởng phòng quản lý Đạo đức nghiên cứu theo số 3735 5585 hay research-ethics@griffith.edu.au

Luật đảm bảo tính riêng tư

Thông tin thu thập được sẽ không được tiết lộ với bất cứ một người thứ ba nào nếu không được sự đồng ý của bạn, ngoại trừ phải đáp ứng yêu cầu của chính phủ hay các cơ quan công quyền. Bạn sẽ được loại bỏ tên tuổi nếu có thể được sử dụng cho các nghiên cứu khác. Tuy nhiên, việc để nặc danh sẽ được áp dụng bất cứ lúc nào. Để biết thêm chi tiết, xin vui lòng tư vấn với Phòng Đảm Bảo Tính Riêng Tự của trường qua trang mạng www.gu.edu.au/ua/aa/vc/pp hoặc điện thoại (07)3735 5585

Thảm mắc/ Thông tin thêm

Nếu bạn muốn hỏi bất cứ vấn đề gì liên quan đến nghiên cứu này, vui lòng dùng e ngai liên lạc với bất cứ thành viên nào trong nhóm nghiên cứu theo thông tin liên lạc đã cung cấp ngày đầu văn bản này.

Cảm ơn sự tham gia vào nghiên cứu này của bạn.
Appendix 3: Consent form

A study of the patterns of change in the Vietnamese language spoken by the second generation of Vietnamese immigrants in Queensland, Australia

GU Ref No: LAL/08/10/HREC

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Researchers: TINH BAO HOANG

School of Languages and Linguistics

Tel: 0412592013

baotrangflood@yahoo.com

Supervisors:

A. PROF. DEBORAH CAO Dr. CLAIRE KENNEDY

School of Languages and Linguistics School of Languages and Linguistics

Tel: (07) 3735 5127 Tel: (07) 3735 7141
d.cao@griffith.edu.au c.kennedy@griffith.edu.au

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will involve participating in conversation recordings, doing a language test and a check list and/or interviews for an investigation on the patterns of changes in the Vietnamese spoken language;
- I understand the conversations and interviews will be audio recorded;
- I understand the risks involved are negligible;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
Appendixes

- I understand that my participation in this research is entirely voluntary and my participation has no impact upon my work;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the researcher;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3735 5585 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research; and
- I agree to participate in the project.

Name: ______________________________________________________

Signature: __________________________   Date:  __/_/_____

NGHIÊN CỨU NHỮNG THAY ĐỔI TRONG VĂN NÓI TIẾNG VIỆT CỦA THẾ HỆ THỨ HAI NGƯỜI VIỆT NAM ĐỊNH CƯ TẠI QUEENSLAND, ÚC CHÂU
Số đăng ký tại Đại học Griffith: LAL/08/10/HREC

GIÁY KÝ KẾT ĐỒNG Y THAM GIA

Những người nghiên cứu: TINH BAO HOANG
Trưởng Ngôn ngữ và Ngôn ngữ học
Tel: 0412592013
baotrangflood@yahoo.com

Giáo viên hướng dân:
Giáo sư DEBORAH CAO
Trưởng Ngôn ngữ và Ngôn ngữ học
Tel: (07) 3735 5127
d.cao@griffith.edu.au

Tiến sĩ CLAIRE KENNEDY
Trưởng Ngôn ngữ và Ngôn ngữ học
Tel: (07) 3735 7141
c.kennedy@griffith.edu.au

Khi đặt bút ký tên dưới đây, tôi khẳng định là đã đọc và hiểu những thông tin được cung cấp, và đặc biệt là đã ghi nhận rằng:

- Tôi biết rằng việc liên quan của tôi đến nghiên cứu này là tham gia ghi âm đàm thoại, làm một bài kiểm tra về ngôn ngữ và diễn vận danh mục, hoặc/ và sẽ tham gia phỏng vấn để tiến hành một nghiên cứu về những mẫu thay đổi trong văn nói Tiếng Việt;
- Tôi biết là đàm thoại và phỏng vấn này sẽ được ghi âm;
- Tôi biết là những rủi ro liên quan sẽ không đáng kể;
- Tôi biết sẽ chẳng có phục lợi gì trực tiếp từ việc tham gia này cho tôi cá;
- Tôi biết rằng việc tham gia vào nghiên cứu này của tôi là hoàn toàn tự nguyện và việc tham gia của tôi cũng không ảnh hưởng gì đến công việc hiện tại của tôi;
- Tôi biết rằng nếu tôi có thắc mắc gì, tôi có thể liên lạc với người nghiên cứu;

203
Appendixes

- Tôi biết rằng tôi có thể tự rút lui bất cứ lúc nào mà không cần bàn luận hay bị xử phạt;
- Tôi biết rằng tôi có thể liên lạc với Trưởng phòng Đạo đức nghiên cứu của Hội đồng Đạo đức nghiên cứu của Trường Đại Học Griffith qua số 3735 5585 (hay research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) nếu tôi có quan tâm đến lĩnh vực Đạo đức nghiên cứu; và
- Tôi đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

Họ và tên: ______________________________________________________

Chữ ký: ___________________________ Ngày: _____/_____/_____
Appendix 4: The situations in The Discourse Completion Test Role-play (for the second generation speaker cohort)

Directions: Please read the situations, then say your responses. Do not spend a lot of time thinking about what answer you think you should provide; instead, please respond as naturally as possible and try to utter your response as you feel you would say it in each of the situation.

1a. (for female participant) David, your classmate you’ve known for several years, seems to fall in love with you and wants to show his feeling but you don’t feel like this guy. One day in the library at lunchtime, he stops by the desk you’re sitting and invites you to have lunch.

David: Ah, Hello... How are you going? What assignment are you doing? Would you like to go to the canteen to have lunch with me. I have some funny things to tell you.

You: __________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

1b. (for male participant) Linda, your classmate likes you very much but because you’ve already got a partner, you don’t want to have any relationships with other girls lest your partner gets jealous. You’re reading in the library when Linda’s passing by and stops by you. Linda invites you to go to a coffee shop. You also want to relax and have a cup of coffee, but then think about an unexpected misunderstood scandal.

Linda: Hello... you’re so hardworking. Get out and have a cup of coffee with me?

You: ________________

____________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

2. You are working for a Welsh boss who’s so fond of opera and concert. By the chance there’s an important client paying a visit to the company when a famous opera band is on stage in the city, the boss wants you to accompany him to take this client to the show. You hate opera and don’t want to have such a reception either, but you also don’t want to make your boss upset.

Hướng dẫn: Xin đọc kỹ các tình huống, rồi ứng đáp lời nói của người thứ nhất. Đừng bỏ nhiều thời gian suy nghĩ cho câu trả lời, thay vào đó, bạn hãy ứng khẩu tự nhiên câu trả lời mà bạn nghĩ là hợp lý trong đối sống hàng ngày.

Directions: Please read the situations, then say your responses. Do not spend a lot of time thinking about what answer you think you should provide; instead, please respond as naturally as possible and try to utter your response as you feel you would say it in each of the situation.


David: Ah, chào … ! Dang lâm bài gì đó, nghĩ một chút ra căn tin ăn trưa với mình đi? Hôm nay mình có chuyện vui đó.

Bạn: __________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________


Linda: Hi anh, chà, siêng quá nghe. Ra ngoài uống cafe một tí với Linda đi.

Bạn: __________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

2. Bạn đang làm việc cho một bạn trai người yên bản hội thích opera và concert. Nhưng có cơ hội, bạn trai người bạn yêu có khách hàng quan trọng đến thăm công ty, nên bạn trai người bạn yêu muốn bạn đi cùng, nhưng bạn cũng muốn không tham gia, nhưng lại không muốn làm bạn trai người bạn yêu buồn phiền.
Your boss: (your name), I’d like to treat our VIP client with a famous opera show by a Welsh opera band at theatre, would you like to accompany us? Ms. Sarah’s going to book tickets soon.

You: ...


Bạn: ____________________________

3. You’re calling at your close relatives (a couple), however, you don’t like the sister in law and are afraid of being drunk, you hesitate

Your cousin: Time’s for dinner now, stay with us for the meal, let me order your sister some beer-match first and we can have some wine and chat. My colleague who’s come back from a business trip gave me a gift of a bottle of whisky, I think it’s definitely delicious.

You: ...........


Người anh: Thời sẵn đấy ở lại ăn cơm với anh chị, để anh nói chị nấu thêm cái chỉ để uống chút ướt bIA cho vui. Thằng bạn anh mời đi công tác về biết anh mời một chai ướt bIA ngoài, chắc là ngon đấy.

Bạn: ____________________________

4. You’re an experienced staff working for a big company. The company’s expanded and is opening a branch in another city; and the boss thinks about choosing you for the position of the manager representative there. You’re family oriented, always want to have a stable life, take care of the family.

Your boss: (addressing your name), our company’s going to open a branch in .... to facilitate the customers’ service. Among the staff here, I can see that you’re the best qualified. What do you think about this decision?

You: ....


Giám đốc: Anh (Cô) (tên) ấy, sáp tới công ty chúng ta sẽ mở thêm chi nhánh ở (địa danh) để khách hàng tiện việc giao dịch. Trong số những nhân viên ở đây, tôi thấy anh (cô) là người đủ tiêu chuẩn nhất, anh (cô) nghĩ sao về quyết định này.
5a. (situation for female) You’re going on business tomorrow, at the moment you’re eating out with a group of your friends in a restaurant. Everyone knows that your boyfriend is going overseas, so one of the friendboys offers to take you to the airport. You’re kind of introvert person, always try not to bother people. Also, you don’t want you partner misunderstands. Your friend: (sounds like joking) it’s a good opportunity for me when Mr. Tam ‘s away, let me drive you to the airport tomorrow, Han.
You: ......
5a. (tình huống dành cho nữ) Bạn sẽ đi công tác xa ngày mai, hôm nay đang ngồi ăn uống tại một nhà hàng cùng với một nhóm bạn. Mọi người biết rằng anh người yêu của bạn cũng đang đi xa, nên một anh bạn không thân lắm trong bạn uổm lời sê chỗ bạn ra sân bay. Bạn là người ít thích nhớ vả, và lại bạn cũng muốn tránh tài tiếng với người yêu.
Anh bạn: Cùng là một dip hiềm.copy với mình nhận anh Tâm đi vang, để ngày mai mình chờ Hân ra sân bay cho nhé.
Bạn: ____________________________________________________________
                                            __________________________________________________________________
5b. (situation for male)
5b. (tình huống dành cho nam) Bạn sẽ đi công tác xa ngày mai, hôm nay đang ngồi ăn uống tại một nhà hàng cùng với một nhóm bạn. Mọi người biết rằng có bản người yêu của bạn cũng đang đi xa, nên một có bạn không thân lắm trong bạn uổm lời sê chỗ bạn ra sân bay vì có này cùng sê di hướng đó vào cùng gio. Bạn là người ít thích nhớ vả, và lại bạn cũng muốn tránh tài tiếng với người yêu.
Cô bạn: Cùng là một dip hiềm.copy với mình nhận em Ngọc đi vang, để ngày mai mình chờ anh ra sân bay cho nhé, giờ đó em cùng chạy ra hướng sân bay có việc.
Bạn: ____________________________________________________________
                                            __________________________________________________________________

6. You have just had dinner with your relatives, when you ‘re about to leave, you want to please the host by complimenting your aunt in law’s cooking talent, esp. The expressive soup. Right after that, your aunt asks your cousin to take a box of soup from the fridge for you to take home. In fact, you don’t like it a bit, but if you take it home and throw it away, it’s not good at all.
Your aunt: Oh, my pleasure, thank you. You see, I have to learn how to cook many special dishes to serve your uncle. I’m glad you like my soup, let me ask Hong to take some for you to bring home for your supper. Just put it in the microwave to heat it up.
You: ...
Bác gái: Ô, cảm ơn con, Bác cũng phải cổ gắng học nấu nhiều món ngon để phục vụ Bác trai. Nghe con thích món súp Bác rất vui, để Bác nói em Hồng lấy một ít cho con tới về ăn thêm cho ăn bụng. Chi cần hâm nóng lên lại là được.
7. You’re going to an interview for a very good job tomorrow. Your mother suggests you wearing a suit/ a Vietnamese traditional gown so that you can look mature and impressive. You, on the contrary, hate wearing such a thing because you don’t feel comfortable a little bit. You have never failed your mother.

Your mother: I prefer you wearing a suit/ a Vietnamese traditional gown, say the pink one, to the interview to make an impression and also you’ll look more elegant. I see that the young generation nowadays have no taste for fashion at all.

You: ....


Mẹ: Mẹ thấy ngày mai con nên mặc bộ veston đen/ bộ áo dài hồng phấn đến dự phỏng vấn cho lịch sự, lại tạo được ấn tượng tốt. Giới trẻ bây giờ mẹ thấy an mặc không được mất chút nào.

Bạn: __________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

8. Anyone in your circle of friends upgrades the cell phone, only you still use a very old one because of your financial impossibility. One day, the group is having a tea break when someone says.

Friend: You look like an ancient Vietnamese, no one in this hi-tech age uses such an old fashioned phone, I’ll take you to a shop to have a look at a 4G on sales, take it and give the old one away. I changed my phone last year and gave the old to my housekeeper.

You: ...


Người bạn:Tau thấy mấy người Việt có, thời đại bây giờ mà còn dùng cái cellphone vật không ai thậm lưu, té nửa đi với tau ghé shop có cái 4G đang dụng giá, lấy cho rồi, cái cũ đem cho ai thì cho. Būa trước tau đổi phone, dứ cái cũ cho bà người làm luôn.

Bạn: __________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

9a. (situation for male) Your girlfriend’s PC has something wrong, perhaps, it needs re-installing, so she asks you for help. You’re not very good at computing but if you don’t do it, you may lose face.

Your girlfriend: Hello, Darling. My PC has a problem. I don’t know what happened but it shuts down just after started up. Would you mind coming to my place to fix it, wouldn’t it?

Perhaps there’s something wrong with Window.

You: ...

9a. (tình huống dành cho nam) Bạn gái của bạn bị hư máy PC, có lẽ chỉ cần cài lại phần mềm là được nên nhờ bạn đến sửa giúp. Bạn không ránh về việc tìm làm nhưng cũng sợ mất mặt với bạn gái.
Appendices

9b. (for female) Your partner like you to grow long hair but you really hate it, partly you have to spend much time to care, partly you feel out of fashion. You don’t know what to do but convincing him.

Your partner: I prefer you to grow long hair like these Hue girls in this calendar, looking very charming. You used to have long hair, didn’t you? What do you think?
You: ......
9b. (tình huống dành cho nữ) Nguội yêu bạn thích bạn để tóc dài và xóa tóc ngang lưng nhưng bạn thì ghét để tóc dài, một phần vì phải bỏ nhiều thời gian chăm sóc tóc, một phần vì thấy hơi lệch thời số bạn bè chế bai. Bạn không biết phải làm thế nào nhưng chắc chắn phải thuyết phục anh ấy thôi.

Người yêu bạn: Anh thấy em để tóc dài như mấy cô nữ sinh Huế chup lịch này rất đẹp, hình như anh thấy em đã từng để tóc dài phải không? Em nghĩ sao?

Bản: __________________________

____________________________________________________________________

10. You’re director assistant in a well to do company. It’s Friday afternoon today and everyone’s eager for the long weekend ahead, you have a plan to go away with your partner. Suddenly, the boss appears and tells you that you have to come to the company tomorrow to have a reception of an overseas customer group who want to pay a visit to the company spontaneously on the way home from Thailand.

Your boss: (addressing), I’ve just got a phone call from Charles, Hongkong, he says that due to the insecurity in Bangkok, they have to work with our company 3 days earlier, this means we won’t have enough time for the preparation. Perhaps, we’re to work through weekend to work out all the document.
You: ...


Giám đốc: (tên) à, tôi mới vừa nhận điện thoại từ ông Charles, công ty bên Hồng Kông, họ nói với lũ do an ninh ở Bangkok nên họ sẽ phải đến làm việc với công ty chúng ta sớm hơn 3 ngày, vậy là chúng ta sẽ không đủ thời gian chuẩn bị. Có lẽ chúng ta phải làm việc cả weekend này mới xong được việc.

Bản: __________________________

____________________________________________________________________

11. Your family is adjacent to an elderly couple’s. Though these two old people are rather difficult, they live in harmony with their neighbour. They don’t like the kind of ivy flower grown along the fence between the two houses, however, you and your husband/wife like it very much.

Bản:非常多了。邻居在两家的篱笆之间种了常春藤，不过，你和你的丈夫/妻子非常喜欢它。
The lady: I see that these flowers look nice but the fragrance smell too strong, esp. at night, too sweet to bear, do you mind if we destroy it and replace with another kind, I’ll try to find a better type.
You: ...

11. Gia đình bạn sống bên cạnh hai ông bà già hàng xóm. Mặc dù hai ông bà này hơi khó tính nhưng họ rất sợ rát từ tệ voi hàng xóm láng giềng. Ông bà hàng xóm không thích loại hoa này trồng bờ rào sát vách nhà ông bà, nhưng vợ / chồng bạn lại thích.
Bà già hàng xóm: Tôi thấy hoa này cũng đẹp nhưng mùi hương hơi nồng, nhất là vào ban đêm mùi khó chịu, anh chị có nhờ đi trồng loại khác thử, có có hay hơn không?
Bạn: ________________________________
______________________________________
______________________________________

12. You are the Head of Personnel Department, but the Internet, laptop, fax machine and even PC at home are becoming old-fashioned, so they work slowly and ineffectively. The boss knows this situation, so he suggests you spend some money to update those things. You know that your financial ability is impossible, but always try to conceal the truth to save face in front of other colleagues.

The boss: (saying in front of some other staff) It's said that your computing system, the internet at home were born in the Stone Age, that's why the project I sent you needed the whole day to be downloaded, isn't it? Why not stopping drinking (male)/shopping (female) to update those? Get this telephone number, my brother IT company's, just call and then you'll have everything new in minutes.
You: ....................................................

Ông giám đốc: Nghe nói hệ thống máy móc, mạng Internet nhà anh (Cô) có từ thời Napoleon nên cái project tôi gửi cày ngày mới tài xưởng phải không? Tại sao không nhìn xuống bia (nhìn ăn diện một tí) mà nâng cấp lên cho bằng anh bàng chị xung quanh? Để tôi đưa số phone của công ty thiết bị văn phòng của chúng em tới, chi cần alô cho nó một tiêng là có đó mới ngay.
Bạn: ___________________________________
______________________________________
______________________________________
## Appendix 5: A transcriptionsample of a Discourse Completion Test Role-play

**By participant S13F**

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| 2. | Á, chắc không được quá tài vì không có rành, honor nữa cũng ít nghe lắm [...] mình không có rành lắm, người ta hỏi mình cũng biết đầu trả lời.
|   |   |
| 3. | Ó không sao đâu cũng không có đôi lắm, tài vi chú rủ nữa cũng đi công chuyên, thôi để bữa khác đi [có plan] có plan rồi thôi để bữa khác đi.
|   |   |
| 4. | Chắc có lẽ không được tài vì ... à, ở xa không có biết đường xã, mình ở đây quen rồi thì có bà con, ba mẹ ở đây, thấy gần hơn [có hơi] ngon hơn nhưng mà tài chờ lại mình không có sống quen được do, đi đây đi đó cũng bất tiện, khi mình cần cái gì không có ai phù giúp mình hết.
|   |   |
| 5. | À không sao đâu, H đi được mà, ở đây đường xã quen lắm, honor nữa cũng không muốn làm phiên anh [...] không sao đâu, tài vi mình không muốn làm phiên ai hết trơn, anh cũng có việc làm riêng của anh.
|   |   |
| 6. | Không sao đâu Bác, Bác để đánh cho Bác ăn đi [nấu nhiều] không sao đâu, tài con ít ăn lắm, hôm nay ăn nhiều quá rồi, con ít ăn lắm, giờ nhà con có mình con à, anh không het bồ uống.
|   |   |
| 7. | Đa không sao đâu mẹ ơi, vi con nghỉ giờ là 2011 rồi, tài giờ ai mặc áo dài nữa, bày giờ ai cũng mặc bình thường nên mình mặc bình thường thôi cũng được [dep] đa đẹp thì đẹp thiết nhưng con nghĩ mặc áo dài nhiều khi nó bắt chổi, con dùng lên ngoại không có được tự nhiên, còn mặc đó lại thì con thấy thoải mái hơn.
|   |   |
|   |   |
| 9. | Em chẳng biết nau máy cái đó đâu, em chỉ thấy mẹ hay nau thôi, BBQ ăn đó không thôi.
|   |   |
12. Sắp ấy, tôi cũng muốn có đồ mới chứ, nhưng cuộc sống trăm thứ chuyển, năm này chưa được vì còn lo married nữa, à mà cũng có thể hôm nào có chồng lên cho.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Strategy</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N: Negative ability (I can’t)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DN: Direct “No”</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Excuse/explanation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ER: expression of regret</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: Wish</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ap: Apology</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Repetition of part of discourse (this Sat)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al: Alternative (next time)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P: Promise to try to comply (I’ll try)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA: Condition for past acceptance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFA: Condition for future acceptance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR: Indefinite reply (I’m not sure)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Expression of gratitude</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO: Positive opinion (I do want to come)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Em: Empathy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP: postponement/ hesitation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP: Silence, Pauses</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total startegies</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6: Vietnamese idioms and proverbs Test 1

VIETNAMESE PROVERBS AND IDIOMS TEST 1

BÀI KIỂM TRA VỀ CÁCH DÙNG TỨC NGỮ VIỆT NAM

Please indicate your responses either by circling the appropriate letter (only ONE) or filling in the gaps. Your answers will be very valuable for my research. I am very grateful to you for your contribution.

1. Con cái trong dòng họ thường hay có những đặc điểm giống nhau về năng lực, năng khiếu, hàm ý này được diễn đạt bằng tục ngữ (The offspring in the family often share some outstanding characteristics, abilities or talents, these features are expressed by the idiom / proverb)
   A. Con nhà tông không giống lông cũng giống cánh
   B. Con hơn cha là nhà có phúc
   C. Cha mẹ sinh con trời sinh tính

2. Khi ta muốn nói rằng chúng ta phải chi tiêu hợp lý với tiền của mình, chúng ta nói (When we want to say that one has to spend money in accordance with their own income, we use this idiom / proverb)
   A. Tùy cơ ứng biến
   B. Liệu cơm gắp mắm
   C. Tiền vô nhà khó

3. Khi muốn nói ai đó trút sự bức tử của mình lên đầu người khác không liên can, chúng ta nói (When someone bursts out his/her anger on someone else not involved, we use the idiom / proverb)
   C. Giận mặt khôn
   D. Giận cá chém thốt
   E. Trâu bò húc nhau rơi muội chết

4. “Một người thường bày nhiều mưu kế để được lợi về mình nhưng cuối cùng lại gánh hậu quả” được nói ngắn gọn bằng (Someone often builds up tricks to benefit, but eventually gets the bad outcomes)
   A. Lạy ông tôi ở bụi này
   B. Mưu sự tài nhân, thành sự tại Thiên
   C. Gây ông đáp lưng ông
5. Khi chúng ta muốn nói rằng không nên xâm phạm vào đối tượng người khác, chúng ta nói (We use this idiom / proverb to say that one should not interfere some one else’s privacy)
   A. Trâu bước thì ghét trâu ăn
   B. Đèn nhà ai nấy sáng/ rạng
   C. Đồng cứ đầu nhau

6. Khi mẹ răn dạy con gái phải giữ ý giữ tước, bà thường hay nói (When a mother advises her daughter to be neat and concerning, she uses the idiom / proverb)
   A. Ăn vóc hoặc
   B. Ăn xôi chùa ngày tình
   C. Ăn coi/ trông nhờ coi/ trông hư

7. Khi người ta muốn an ủi ai đó về sự mất mát, thiệt hại vật chất của người đó, họ thường nói (When we want to console someone with his / her material loss, we say)
   A. Cửa đi thay người
   B. Mất lòng trước được lòng sau
   C. Cửa một Đông cộng một lương

8. Khi đồng viên ai dùng nán lòng trước thất bại, ta nói (When we encourage someone not to give up after some failure, we say)
   A. Tự cứ ứng biến
   B. Thua kẻ này ta bày kẻ khác
   C. Một trong hai câu trên

9. Khi ta ám chỉ trên đối này luôn có người cao tay hơn (có thể trừ được ai đó sửng số) ta nói (When we imply that there is always someone better, able to defeat someone else, we use the idiom/ proverb)
   A. Vô quyết đầy có lòng tay nhơn
   B. Tầm sự học đạo
   C. Lừa giá gặp dừa thúi

10. Khi ta nói ai đó làm ăn chập nhất, thiếu lụt về tài chính, ta muốn câu (When we imply someone does the business without sufficient capital, means to take the advantage of others for his/her own benefit, we say)
    A. Mượn đâu heo nau cháo
    B. Lấy râu ông nội cầm cầm bà kia
    C. Mượn gió biết mảng
11. Khi ta bắt ngố có được những gì ta đang cần, ta nói (when we get something by chance while being in need, we say)
   A. Chuột sa hũ nếp/ chuột sa chính gao
   B. Được ăn được nói được gói mang về
   C. Buồn ngủ gắp chiều manh

12. Khi người ta chỉ trích ai đó nhiều chuyện, lúc nói này lúc nói nọ, họ nói (When we criticise someone who is verbally dishonest, we say)
   A. Lữ khối không xương (niều đường lắt léo)
   B. Ươn bày tất lười
   C. Miệng hửm gan súa

13. Câu “Thiệt vàng sợ chi lừa” đồng nghĩa với (this proverb is synonymous with)
   A. Cây ngay không sợ chết đứng
   B. Có thứ qua lừa moi hay vàng mưrő
   C. Vàng thau lẫn lộ

14. Câu này ám chỉ một người khó có thể bỏ được tài xấu (This proverb implies that it is hard for one to give up bad habits)
   A. Ngư non hâu đá
   B. Ném đá giảy tay
   C. Ngư quen đường cú

15. Khi người con gái đẹp gặp nhiều trách móc trong cuộc đời, ta nói (When a beautiful girl/woman faces all hardships in her marriage, we say)
   A. Hồng nha hồng chẳng có gai
   B. Cái nét danh chữ cái đẹp
   C. Hồng nhan bạc phận

16. Khi ta muốn ám chỉ người không có nhiều tiền cua, hoặc địa vị, hoặc năng lực mà lại huynh hoang ta đây cũng không thua ai, ta nói (when we imply that someone who is not wealthy, has no ability or social status shows off and seems cocksure, we use the idiom / proverb)
   A. Cháy nhà lòi mặt chuột
   B. Thùng rỗng kêu to
   C. Giàu đầu lói đuôi

17. Khi thấy người nào đó ghé thăm nhà mình sau một thời gian dài không ghé chơi, ta nói (When someone who didn’t pay a visit to your family for a long time appears again to visit you, you often say)
Appendixes

18. Câu nào KHÔNG thuộc nhóm ý tưởng? (odd one out)
   A. Có trăng quên đèn
   B. Có mỏ mới củ
   C. Được mưa cho pháng Ngô khoai
   D. Có chào đời chết

19. Câu nào KHÔNG thuộc nhóm ý tưởng? (Odd one out)
   A. Ăn cháo đá bát
   B. Qua cầu rút ván
   C. Vắt chanh bỏ vô
   D. Qua sông lụy đồ

20. Câu “Thức lâu mới biết đèn dài” muốn ám chỉ rằng (This proverb implies that)
   A. phải sống thọ mới biết được cuộc đời này thế nào (one has to live long life to perceive how life is)
   B. phải ăn ở với người ta lâu ngày mới hiểu rõ người ta như thế nào (one has to live with someone long enough to understand how he/she is)
   C. phải trải qua đau khổ trong cuộc đời mới thấy ý nghĩa cuộc sống (one has to experience hardship in life to see its meaning)
   D. phải tận mắt chứng kiến mới tin đó là sự thật (one has to witness to believe)
Appendix 7: Vietnamese idioms and proverbs Test 2
VIETNAMESE PROVERBS AND IDIOMS TEST

BÀI KIỂM TRA VỀ KHUYNH HƯỞNG DỤNG TỤC NGỮ VIỆT NAM

Please indicate your responses by circling the appropriate letter for each situation. Your answers will be very valuable for my research. I am very grateful to you for your contribution.

1. S: Trời ơi con nhỏ nó vẽ đường cổ giống hết bố nó (Oh dear, her way of drawing is just like her father’s)
Bạn: ………………………
   a. Thì con nhà tổng không giống lông cùng giống cánh.
   b. Ú, thì bố nó là họa sĩ thì dạy cho con cùng bài bản mà (yeah, cos her father is an artist who teaches her the same technique)

2. S: Chắc cũng phải cố gắng vay mượn để làm dplayed cried cho con khá một tí, để con nó may mắn một chút với gia đình chồng nó (we should loan some more money to spend on a bigger wedding party so that our daughter can be prouder to her husband’s family)
Bạn: ………………………
   a. Bà coi liều cơm gặp màn thôi, không khéo nó năn thì mất làm.
   b. Bà coi là bao nhiêu làm bây nhiêu theo khả năng của mình, chớ tôi sợ nó năn làm (You must consider it again, just spend what we have, I’m so afraid of debt)

3. S: Mẹ con, tự nhiên anh Dũng bức bộ đầu ở ngoài đường về nhà het la người này đến la người khác (You see, Dung was irritated somewhere and his anger’s made him shout at everyone at home)
Bạn: ………………………
   a. Ú, cái thresholds anh may, gián cả chém thốt ấy mà.
   b. Ú, cái thresholds tình khí nóng nay, chắc giàn ai đó về trừ lên đầu may đưa em bày (Oh, I see, he’s easily in bed temper, he must have been angry with someone, and now bursts out at you all)
4. S: Cái Bà Lan nầy làm mưu nhiều kế, bày trò ra, tung trực lợi cho nhiều, nhưng rốt cuộc lại chẳng có ai theo, thành ra cuối cùng chẳng ai khác lãnh hậu quả ngoại bả đâu (Ms. Lan is so crafty, building up tricks but no one followed, they were aware of her plans, eventually no one else but her suffered)

Bạn: ..............................
a. Thi gây ông đập lung ông mà.
b. Ứ thê làm ăn không khéo, lãi thành lỗ là chuyện thương tình mà (yes, not good in affairs, benefits turning out loss is normal)

5. S: Hai đứa tui bày cách tiếp tục dấn đủm hoài kiểu này có ngày bán nhà bán cửa (You young guys should think further, holding party like this regularly will impoverish you soon)

Bạn: ..............................
a. Đèn nhà ai nấy sáng, chị à, chị bạn tâm gì cho mệ.
b. Chị à, chuyện nhà tự em chỉ bạn tâm làm gì cho mệ (sister, it's not your business, you've made yourself tired)

6. S: Mẹ biết không, chị Hoa chẳng giữ ý giữ tử gì hết, có khách tới nhà chơi mà cứ ngồi ỉ chỗ cửa, chán cả lời đi, không buồn dùng đầy pha nước mòi khách nưa (Mummy, sister Hoa wasn’t neat at all, there were some guests visiting but she still sat at the threshold, blocked the entrance, she didn’t make tea to welcome them)

Bạn: ..............................
a. Con Hoa nay, con gái lớn rồi, ăn coi nội ngồi nội hướng chứ.
b. Con Hoa nay, con gái lớn rồi, phải nè nhịp chinh chu chứ (Hoa, you’re grown up girl, you should behave neatly)

7. S: Trời ôi tháng này sao xui quá chị Bà à, thành Nam vừa bị mất chiếc xe máy, giờ ông Hùng nhà tôi lại bị cháy cái máy xay gáo ngoài vườn, không biết còn hạn đến bao giờ nữa (My goodness, this month is so bad to me, boy Nam’s just lost his motorbike, then Mr. Hung’s grinding machine’s broken, I don’t what will happen next? )

Bạn: ..............................
a. ừ thìcriteria di thay người, ai mà chẳng có lực như vậy, nhưng coi mà cũng giải hạn đì.
Appendixes

b. ừ, sao xui dử vậy, mất của hoài cùng tiếc ní, nhưng mình khỏe là được rồi chỉ a (uh, how unlucky you are, loss’s so wasteful, but we’re fine, which’s OK)

8. S: Chán quá anh à, em thay bố allegiance, vậy, mất a ưới vì thua lở (So disappointed, you see, I’ve changed to the new seeds, they looked better but I still lost)

Bàn: ........................................

a. Thua keo này ta bày keo khác, có gì mà lo.
b. Đừng nản chí, có gì mà lo (don’t give up, nothing matters)

9. S: Cái con Lan ghê gớm vậy mà không cải lại nội vụ Hoa hàm hò, đành chịu thua mùa ta (Lan’s so loud mouthed but couldn’t cope with that lady Hoa in the quarrel, lady Hoa’s so tricky and dishonest, finally she accepted failure)

Bàn: ........................................

a. Thì vỡ quyết đây có mống tay nhơn,สงคราม đối nó ra.
b. Thì có lúc cũng gặp đối thủ cao cổ vậy chứ, đang đối nó ra (Crafty one sometimes meets more tricky partner, let her be taught)

10. S: Cái công ty đó làm anarch, vốn luyện thử trước suýt sau, bè là phải thất (That company didn’t trade properly, it’s insufficient in capital, all loans, its, its bankruptcy is inevitable)

Bàn: ........................................

a. Ú, Thối buổi này toàn mượn dầu heo đâu chào thôi, chẳng ai dám tin ai.
b. Ú, Thối buổi này toàn công ty lạ, trưng dụng vốn người khác để buôn, chẳng dám tin ai (Yeah, all cheat companies presently, they all use others’ capital to make benefits, can’t trust anyone)

11. S: Thời Chí ơi, nói nó làm gì cho mệt, có bảo giờ nghe lời khuyên của ai đâu (Don’t care about him, tired of advising him, he never takes any advices from anyone)

Bàn: ........................................

a. Ú, tôi cũng thấy nói với nó như nước đổ dầu v disappearance, chán ngán quá trời.
b. Tôi cũng thấy nói với nó chẳng có chút tác dụng nào cả, chán ngán quá trời (yes, I see, talking to him is no use, feeling so disappointed)

12. S: Trời ơi, tự nhiên đang kết tiền sáng này đến cơ quan nhận được dòng tiền truy lánh strong đề số (Oh dear, I was so broke these day, suddenly, as soon as I came
to my office this morning, I was called to the cashier to receive the bonus, feeling so happy)

Bạn: ........................................

a. Đúng là **buồn ngù gầy chiều mình**, sao khôngường được.
b. Thủ tự nhiên có được thứ dang căn, sao không tường được (happening to have what we need, isn’t it wonderful?)

13. S: cái con Hoa đó nhiều chuyện phải biết, lúc nói thế này lúc nói thế nọ, không thể tin nó được (that Ms. Hoa’s so crafty, saying this today, saying that yesterday, can’t trust her)

Bạn: ........................................

a. Đồ thứ **lướt không xương như** đâu lẹo.
b. Ú, nó là thứ miệng mồm, không nhất quán trước sau đâu (yes, she’s talkative and tricky, never keeps her point of view)

14. S: Tôi thách nó đâm đơn kiện đó, tôi đây không làm gì sai trái nên chúng tôi, thìệt vàng sợ chiầu (I bet him to sue me, I don’t do anything wrong, so I’m not afraid of anyone)

Bạn: ........................................

a. Ú, **cây ngay không sợ chết đường**, cho nó kiện.
b. Ú, mình không sai thì có gì mà sợ, cho nó kiện (yes, if we aren’t wrong, we don’t scare of anyone, let him sue)

15. S: Thằng Dũng chúng nào tất ấy, thấy bô rượu được ít lâu, bạn bè rủ rê lại bể thà trở lại (Dung guy stays the same with bad habits, he gave drinking for a time, then friends invite and attract him with brandy, a drunkard again)

Bạn: ........................................

a. Ú thì **ngu quên đường cứ thời**.
b. Ú mà sao khó có thể bỏ được tất xâu vậy (just wondering why people find it hard to get rid of bad habits!)

16. S: Con Lan đẹp gái vậy mà qua hai đời chồng rơi vẫn không hạnh phúc (She’s such a beautiful woman, yet after two marriages she’s still suffered)

Bàn: ........................................

a. Thị **hồng nhan bậc phân mà**.
b. Thi con gái đẹp hay gặp rắc rối trong cuộc đời (said that beautiful girls always face obstacles in life)

17. S: Cái cha Dũng kia có tiền của, địa vị gì đâu mà bao giờ cũng hung hăng ta đây (that guy Dung has nothing, no money, no status, yet always shows off and is haughty)
   a. Thi thùng rỗng kêu to ấy mà.
   b. Thi người không có bao giờ chả thích khoe khoang (any poor man dislikes showing off their money?)

18. S1: Ông biết không, thằng Dũng mới đâu ai cũng tướng tốt tính, đáng tin cậy, nào ngờ khi làm ăn lâu rồi mới biết đêm dài mà (You see, whoever likes that guy Dung at the first glance, thinking he’s nice, kind, reliable, unexpectedly, after some time doing business with him, he turns out his nature, so mean, stingy, womanly, can’t keep company)

Bản: ……………………………
   a. Thi ông bà nói rỗ, thực lâu mới biết đêm dài mà.
   b. Thi làm gì cũng phải có thời gian mới biết thực hư ra sao chứ (Anything needs time to be rightly judged)

19. S: Nhà bà Ba thật vô phước, thằng Dũng đã vô tàiất tướng lạither sao không nên net (Mrs. Ba’s family’s so disgraceful, Dung guy’s good for nothing, then meets his wife who is so naughty)

Bản: ……………………………
   a. Ừa, thì nói nào áp vung này thôi.
   b. Thi làm sao nó lấy được vợ từ té được (how can a naughty man marry a good wife?)

20. S: Tôi thấy sơ may đưa phần chịu rồi đó, lúc tôi có tiền thì anh anh em em, bây giờ thì chạy theo mình hót thảm cha Tư Béo kia (I feel so frightened with the dishonest guys, when I have money, they all flatter, now I have no money, they leave me and run after Mr. Tu Fat)
   a. Ừ, đồ ăn cháo đã bắt thì cuộc đời cũng không ra gì.
   b. Ừ, xử sự anh em như thế thì sau này cuộc đời cũng không ra gì (yes, whoever behaves badly gets bad fortune).
Appendix 8: A checklist of Vietnamese idioms and proverbs
(Note: The version used for the data collection has no English translation)

Please indicate your responses by putting a tick (√) in the appropriate column. Your answers will be very valuable for my research. I am very grateful to you for your contribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDIOMS AND PROVERBS</th>
<th>Known</th>
<th>Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ai giàu ba họ, (ai khổ ba đời) No one stays rich nor poor for more than three generations Implies: Life offers everyone opportunities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ăn cháo đá bát Finishing eating porridge, kicking the bowl away Implies: To take advantage of someone while they have something to offer and then discarding them</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ăn cơi/ trông Nói, ngồi cơi/ trông hưng One has to be aware of the position of the rice cooking pan when eating, and of the direction when sitting Implies: (Girls particularly)(young people generally) should always consider others before themselves</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ăn cơm nhà thọi/vác tù và hàng Tống Eating at home but doing community service Implies (ironically): Helping others when one’s own family and affairs need attention first</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ăn quả nhỏ kể trông cây One who eats the fruits should appreciate the planter Implies: Always appreciate what others have done for you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ăn xôi chùa nghỉ họng/ Ngâm bồ hòn làm ngọt One’s throat often gets stuck when swallowing sticky rice offered at the temple) Implies: Apparently generous offers may often turn out to be too good to be true</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Ăn xôi ở thị Eating and living temporarily Implies: Those who don’t worry about fulfilling the usual obligations of daily life</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Bàn cùng sinh đạo tắc Poverty makes criminals Implies: Desperation will drive even an honest man to do something wrong</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Buôn ngủ gặp chiều manh Sleepy, we are offered a mat Implies: Fortune knocks at the right time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Bụt (chúa) nhà không thành God in one’s own temple is not as divine Implies: We never appreciate that which is already close to us</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 11. Bút sa gà chết  
Keeping things written, chicken may die  
Implies: Give careful thought before committing things to paper. |
| --- |
| 12. Bút/ Dứt dây domingo rừng  
Pulling rattan from the forest may damage the distant trees  
Implies: When speaking one’s mind to someone be careful it does not reflect badly on someone else |
| 13. Cá không ăn muối cá uón  
Fish without salt stinks  
Implies: You won’t become a better person if you don’t listen to good advice |
| 14. Cái khó bỏ cái khôn  
Difficulties harness wisdom  
Implies: Without the wherewithal it may be difficult to do the best thing |
| 15. Cành vàng lá ngọc  
Golden branch with gem leaves  
Implies: Girls born into prestigious families are often good for nothing |
| 16. Cây muốn lạng, gió chẳng dừng  
Trees want to stand still but wind keeps blowing  
Implies: Being forced to speak out or act because of the actions/words of others |
| 17. Châm đầu vô lừa/ Đổ thêm dầu vào lừa  
Pouring kerosene into fire  
Implies: You always inflame situations by the way you say things |
| 18. Chạy nhà lòi/ (ra) mắt chuột  
Mouse gets out of the house on fire  
Implies: Person who plays a charade to make others think well of him or to hide an unpleasant truth until it is unavoidable |
| 19. Chở củi về rừng  
Taking wood back to forest  
Implies: Taking coals to Newcastle |
| 20. Chóirthy cây gần nhà  
Dogs always rely on being near their house  
Implies: People within their home environment feel more confident and even cocksure |
| 21. Chó táp nhắm ruồi/ Chó ngáp phải ruồi  
Dog yawning caught a fly  
Implies: You didn’t get where you are through your own efforts |
| 22. Chuột sa hùnẹp/ chính gao  
Mouse falling into a jug full of sticky rice  
Implies: To marry well above one’s station |
| 23. Có công mà suốt có ngay nên kim  
One spending time and effort can convert a rod into a needle  
Implies: Anything can be achieved if you really work hardat |
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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</table>
| 24. Có tất giàt mình | One’s mistake can cause paranoia  
Implies: Everyone’s out to get me |
| 25. Con nhà lính tính nhà quan | One was born into a soldier’s family but has royal characteristics  
Implies: People in modest circumstances who want luxuries beyond their means |
| 26. Còn nước còn tát | Whenever there is water left, one still bails out  
Implies: Even though things may seem hopeless, don’t give up |
| 27. Con sâu làm rau nội canh | A small worm spoils the whole large bowl of soup  
Implies: One bad apple spoils the barrel |
| 28. Công dã trải | Labour of sand crab  
Implies: Wasted effort – in the sense of effort put in destroyed by external events |
| 29. Cửa (một) đông, công (một) lang/ nén | Gift costs a penny but effort given to that costs much more  
Implies: Its not the monetary value that counts! |
| 30. Cưa sừng làm nghé | Removing horns to be buffalo calf  
Implies: Mutton dressed up as lamb |
| 31. Cửa thiên trả địa | Properties from sky returns to earth  
Implies: Ill-gotten gains never pay off |
| 32. Đàn gảy tài trâu | Playing music for buffalos to enjoy  
Implies: Casting pearls before swine |
| 33. Đất lành chim đậu | Birds land peaceful land  
Implies: People searching for a good place to live |
| 34. Đi đêm (lắm) có ngày gặp ma | Going out at night regularly, one can encounter ghosts  
Implies: One always get found out eventually |
| 35. Đi một ngày dằng, (hoc một sáng khốn) | Travelling for a day, one can learn wisdom  
Implies: One has to get out and about and experience new things to learn |
| 36. Đi với Phật mặc áo cà sa, đi với ma mặc áo giấy | Going with Buddha, one has to wear frock, going with ghosts, one has to wear paper dress  
Implies: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you |
<p>| 37. Điếc không sở sống | A deaf person is not afraid of gun |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendices</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implies: Thoughtless people take unnecessary risks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Đời cha ăn mặn, đời con khát nước</td>
<td>Father eats salty things, children feel thirsty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: The sins of the father will be visited upon the son</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Đồng tiền đi trước đồng tiền condemn</td>
<td>Money given in advance is wise money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: It pays to bribe if you want a good outcome</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40. Đứng núi nỉ trong núi nọ</td>
<td>Standing on this mount, looking at the others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: Distant fields are greener</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Đực voi đòi tiền</td>
<td>Getting an elephant, asking for an angel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: Unrealistic expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Ech ngồi đáy giếng</td>
<td>Frogs sitting at the bottom of the well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: An ignorant show off</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>43. Gà để gà cục tắc</td>
<td>Hen who laid an egg crackled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: Blame others for one’s own mistakes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>44. Giao/ gửi trùng cho ắc</td>
<td>Give eggs to eagles to keep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implies: Don’t put your trust in others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Gieo gió gặt bão/ (Gieo) nhân nào (gặt) quá ấy</td>
<td>Sowing wind, harvesting storm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: As ye sow so shall ye reap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Há miệng chờ sung rưng</td>
<td>Waiting to catch up the falling figs with a widely open mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: Always look for opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Khéo ăn thì no, Khéo co thì âm</td>
<td>To know how to eat keeps us full, to know how to bend keeps us warm in the blanket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: Needs must when the Devil drives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Khôn ba năm dài một giờ</td>
<td>Being wise for 3 years but being stupid for 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: A moment’s error may ruin a lifetime of good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Khôn nhà đại chí</td>
<td>One is clever at home but ignorant out in the market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: Domineering at home but otherwise an insignificant person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Không có chó bắt mèo ăn cút</td>
<td>Without dogs, cats are forced to eat poo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: If necessity requires we must do our best</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Không có lửa làm sao có khói</td>
<td>No smoke without fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: When people suspect something, there is generally a good reason</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>52. Lá rụng về cơi</td>
<td>Leaves fall down the root</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Appendixes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implies: Older people want to return to their roots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>53. Lặm thẩy nhiều ma</strong></td>
<td>More priests, more ghosts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>54. Lạy ông tôi ở bụi này</strong></td>
<td>I beg you, I’m in this bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>55. Lướt cơm gap mắm</strong></td>
<td>Assessing the rice before dressing with raw fish sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>56. Lực bắt tổng tâm</strong></td>
<td>Ability and Desire do not go together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>57. Ma cụ ép/ bạt nhật ma mới</strong></td>
<td>Old ghost threatens new one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>58. Mất ngọt chết ruồi</strong></td>
<td>Sweet honey kills flies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>59. Mèo khen mèo dài đuôi/ Con hát mèo hay</strong></td>
<td>Cats praise cats having long tails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>60. Mèo mù với đực cá rang</strong></td>
<td>A blind cat has caught fried fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>61. Miệng hùm gan sứa</strong></td>
<td>Having a tiger’s jaw, but a jelly fish’s liver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>62. Môn đăng hộ đội</strong></td>
<td>Houses and families of the two sides by marriage must be in parallel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>63. Mua danh ba vấn, bán danh ba đồng</strong></td>
<td>Purchasing name for 3 thousand dollars, but selling it for only 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>64. Muôn gió bé mang</strong></td>
<td>Borrowing wind to pick up bamboo shoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>65. Ném đá giàu tay</strong></td>
<td>Throwing stone then hiding hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>66. Nhập gia tùy tục</strong></td>
<td>Being a new member in the family, one has to follow the family’s regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Vietnamese Expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 67.    | Nói nóng (úp) vung nấy  | Pan matches with its lid  
Implies: It is difficult for a wife to be good if she has a bad husband |
| 68.    | Nước đổ đâu vật  | Pouring water over duck’s head  
Implies: Water of a duck’s back |
| 69.    | Nuôi ong tay áo  | Raising bees in the sleeve  
Implies: Harbouring a viper in the nest |
| 70.    | Ông ăn chả, bà ăn nem  | Husband eats ham, wife eats sour meat balls  
Implies: If the husband is unfaithful the wife may take solace in the arms of another |
| 71.    | Qua cầu rút ván  | Crossing the stream, withdrawing the log after that  
Implies: Betraying a friend after he has supported you at a critical time |
| 72.    | Quýt làm cam chử  | Oranges take responsibility for mandarin’s action  
Implies: In life, we are sometimes unfairly treated |
| 73.    | Râu ông nọ cắm cắm bà kia  | Taking this man’s beard to put on that lady’s chin  
Implies: Doing slip shod work or showing careless lack of regard for fulfilment of a task |
| 74.    | Sai một li, đi một dặm  | Making a mistake in one millimetre and have to do it again in a mile  
Implies: One false step leads to another |
| 75.    | Sông có khúc, người có lúc  | River has some bad courses, people have some difficult times  
Implies: The course of life does not always run smoothly |
| 76.    | Sự bất quá tam/ Quá tam ba bàn  | Not one thing happens more than three times continually  
Implies: Nothing happens in runs of more than three |
| 77.    | Suy bụng ta ra bụng người  | Deducing from one’s mind to predict others  
Implies: Assuming that people are as bad as one another |
| 78.    | Tam sao thất bản  | Photocopied again and again, the documents are modified  
Implies: To save face a story is passed to intermediate people to get to the recipient and by then is quite different |
| 79.    | Thấy người sang bất quàng làm họ  | Seeing elegant people, one declares kinship with them unreasonably  
Implies: People who court acquaintance with famous people to advance their own standing |
<p>| 80.    | Thời thế tạo anh hùng  | The situation gives birth to heroes |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendixes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implies: People rise to the occasion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 81. Thửa nước dục thả câu/ Đức nước béo cò  
Taking the advantage of unclear water, one fishes  
Implies: People taking advantage of a situation to surreptitiously achieve their own ends |
| 82. Thùng rỗng kêu to  
Hollow barrel makes sound louder  
Implies: People who have very little and who put on false airs and show of success |
| 83. Thuốc dâng đã tất  
Bitter drug cures sickness  
Implies: The truth sometimes hurts |
| 84. Thượng vàng hà cảm / Vàng thau lận lận  
Gold and rice missed together  
Implies: Social ineptitude resulting in discomfort for some |
| 85. Tích tiêu thành đài/ Kiến thà lâu đất tổ  
Accumulating little by little to heaps  
Implies: If you look after the pennies, the pounds look after themselves |
| 86. Tiền mất tất mang  
Money lost, disability suffered  
Implies: One should weigh issues carefully in life to avoid making incorrect decisions |
| 87. Tiền nào cầu nửa  
Spending how much will determine the quality of goods  
Implies: You get what you pay for |
| 88. Tiền trao cháo múc  
Handing money then getting porridge  
Implies: Being fair |
| 89. Tránh vỏ dưa, gặp vỏ dưa  
Avoid melon peel, encounter coconut shell)  
Implies: Don’t calculate too much in life |
| 90. Tre già măng móc  
Bamboo trees get old, new bamboo shoots grow  
Implies: Having faith in the new generation |
| 91. Treo cao té đau  
The higher one climbs, the greater one falls  
Implies: Don’t be over ambitious |
| 92. Treo đầu heo/ dễ bán thịt chó  
Advertising goat but selling dog meat  
Implies: Criticism of cheating in business |
| 93. Trời kêu ai nấy dạ  
Those God want must obey  
Implies: We must accept our fate in life |
| 94. Trời sinh voi trời sinh cò  
God created elephants, he created grass  
Implies: Life will provide what is needed |
| 95. Trứng đôi giùm Hơn vỹ/ Trứng khôn hơn vỹ  
Eggs cannot be wiser than ducks |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Appendixes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96. Tùy cơ ứng biến</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reacting in accordance with situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: Be flexible</td>
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<tr>
<td>97. Uốn lưỡi bày lần trước khi nói</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bending the tongue three times before speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implies: Think before you speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98. Vận sự khó dẫu nan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Everything starts in difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: Be patient with the difficulties of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>99. Vẽ đường cho hươu chạy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear the path for deer to run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implies: One’s intentions do not always result in the expected outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>100. Vợ dưa cả năm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holding the chop sticks in a bunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implies: Don’t tar everyone with the same brush</td>
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</table>
Appendix 9: A transcription sample of an Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Qua bằng câu hỏi trắc nghiệm cho thấy con cũng ý thức được lời nói rào đón của người Việt. You are aware of the indirect style of Vietnamese conversation. Can you talk a bit about why you tend to use a direct style in your speech? As I go with Australian culture, the direct refusal goes with the word No, it’s easier to say No. In Australian culture, it’s not rude to say No, but in Vn culture, people tell me it’s very rude, you must react in a polite way, in face to face, hardly to say No, I feel I’m more direct in refusal. (when using the direct style, do you think you are hurting people?) oh, yeah, có chịu, I try to walk around it, find a another way but can not, a little direct (và nếu con lỡ lời direct thì con làm gì để giảm nhẹ, để sửa sai?) smile, or joking, nói lại (vậy là con vẩn nhận thức ra một điều là mình cảm thấy uncomfortable) yeah</th>
<th>Direct mismatch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Con có biết cách tránh dùng chữ Không khi từ chối trong giao tiếp tiếng Việt? What do you know about using “Không” or not using it in the Vietnamese speaking rules? không có biết nhiều, just respect not to do that, try to avoid it because it’s very rude, that’s what I know (thẻ con nghĩa nhiều chưa không, con bị từ chối thẳng thừng thì có bị hurt không?) không, a little, actually, not really, depends on the situation like I’m close to them or not, if I know them like… (đối với người trong dòng họ thì sao?) referring to them as a little bit rude, vẫn có cái awareness về nó.</td>
<td>Aware Affected by Australian culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Khi mình không muốn làm điều gì đó, mình từ chối thì mình hay biện lý do, telling the truth or making up excuses, what’s the difference? which do you prefer to use in your refusals? Why? make up excuse không được respect làm với nó giống lying, (vậy là con có thiên hướng cho telling truth hay make up) I choose both. Đại đa số nói truth, that depends, vẫn có thể make up but not easy</td>
<td>Negative idea Truth oriented, flexible</td>
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<td>4. What is your understanding to what it means to save face or lose face (to both the person you are talking to and yourself)? I know that’s very important to VN people, aware of saving face, losing face, but I know Australian way, can go up here, it’s not very important, not every point that is in Vnese culture, we take them all (vậy là con có ý thức là mình giữ sĩ diện?) yeah, có chịu, like I’m in the family, I’m married, I’m a girl… keep secret để giữ sĩ diện</td>
<td>See difference Aware of Vnamese face</td>
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<td>5. In what ways do you think the direct way of saying no in English influences your Vietnamese speech? Khong and no in English I feel it’s comfortable, it doesn’t affect me like I can say No, but I can also beat around, it’s easy to say No, it’s Australian</td>
<td>Combine</td>
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6. How do you feel when you realise that you have been hurting people by your direct speech? Do you even feel uncertain or uncomfortable when people use indirect form with you? Can you think of some specific examples (who, when, where, what about) in which you would be especially careful to be indirect? walk ur way round, saying that it’s not what I mean (cảm thấy thế nào khi người ta beat about the bush) uncomfortable, expect chú Nhật, you don’t have to do to tell me, đúng có dĩ vò về nữa, yes or no Instance: a friend lying all the time, making up excuse, annoyed

7. You can learn how to use Vietnamese idioms and proverbs effectively if you want because they have still been used widely in the community among the first generation speakers. Do you think it’s a good thing to do? If yes, why would you like to use them? Có thích học cho biết VN idioms, I find it’s very interesting, sometimes I don’t understand what they’re saying, but Vi she knows more than me and she tells what it means, like you know, underlying meaning, she learns from films Tau in Vnese (học idiom để nói đúng văn phong người Việt) it’s a good thing to do, I hear my parents talk about that and I wonder how I can use them, like an art, âm ý, underlying meaning

8. What do you think is the most important element affecting the way you speak Vietnamese, i.e. indirect or direct style? Is your style influenced by the language environment, the language transmission from parents, formal Vietnamese classes or curriculum? I’m more direct, indirect means more polite, but I think you can do direct with people ur age, with elderly people, should be indirect Phân cấp language environment, với bạn trẻ khác, phải switch, more direct with mates, more indirect with parents, relatives, elderly people I’m growing up Australian, I know English more obviously, when I translate into Vnese I just like to say that, I have to stop and think I have to say in a more polite way

9. To what extent does Australian culture (e.g. communicative characteristics like being short, succinct, straight to the point) influence your speaking style? As we live in Aus culture, there are changes in generation, we learn differently now from what my parents did, the way we obtain the world, uh more western, but parents more traditional.

10. As shown by the data collected, the spoken Vietnamese by the SGS has significant changes in the pragmatic aspect. What do you think are the possible reasons for the changes as a conclusion? Environment, I mean Australian culture and English language

11. Do you think that as long as the second generation speakers are aware of the preservation of Vietnamese language and culture, they will be flourished? What else is needed? speak Vnese at home, send them to school to learn read and write, culture
Nói chuyện với bà mẹ ở nhà nhiều nhất, communicate with people in Vnese, ở trường học Việt, culture, học nói ở nhà, bà ngoại, hỏi nhờ bà ngoại cói, bất đắc bắp, nói chuyện với ba mẹ thì còn bò câu tiếng Anh với được, nói chuyện với bà ngoại ngợi đó nghĩ ra chủ đề nói

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