

**THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

TRAN THI THUY AN

**AN INVESTIGATION ON PRAGMATIC TRANSFER IN
VIETNAMESE EFL REFUSALS**

**(Nghiên cứu sự chuyển đổi về ngữ dụng học
trong cách nói từ chối của sinh viên Việt Nam)**

M.A. THESIS

Field: English Linguistics

Code: 8220201

THAI NGUYEN – 2018

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Supervisor: Dr. Duong Duc Minh

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare the thesis entitled

An Investigation on Pragmatic Transfer in Vietnamese EFL Refusals

is the result of my own research for the Degree of Master of Arts at the School of Foreign Languages - Thai Nguyen University and this thesis is in total fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree Master of Arts. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree and any other university or institution.

Signed

Date

ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to investigate similarities and differences in the speech acts of refusals among native Vietnamese speakers (NVs), Australian native speakers of English (NEs), and Vietnamese learners of English (VEs). The Written DCT (Discourse Completion Test) was used for data collection. Research subjects included 90 people in three groups: 30 native Vietnamese speakers, 30 Vietnamese English learners, and 30 Australian native English speakers. The performance of three groups were compared to find out the differences in semantic formulae of refusals made by Vietnamese, Vietnamese English learners and native English speakers, the characteristics of pragmatic transfer in EFL learners. The responses were coded according to the classification of refusal strategies as outlined by Beebe et al., (1990). The findings reveal that pragmatic transfer exists in choice and content of semantic formulae. Native speakers liked to use more direct refusal strategies and positive feelings than Vietnamese speakers and the pragmatic transfer occurred in Vietnamese EFL learners.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.A:	Bachelor of Arts
DCT:	Discourse Completion Task
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
ESL:	English as a Second Language
L1:	First Language
L2:	Second Language
NE:	Native English
NNSs:	Non-native Speakers
NSs:	Native Speakers
NV:	Native Vietnamese
VE:	Vietnamese EFL learners

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rationale for the study

Language is the carrier of culture and culture the substance of language: The two cannot exist separately (Romaine, 2000). To succeed in communicating with others, one must be aware of the culture behind the language used in communication (Tanck, 2004). When speaking a foreign language, the issue of culture becomes critical. English as Foreign language (EFL) learners, especially those with languages different and distant from English psychologically, culturally, phonologically, and syntactically, may struggle when attempting to communicate in English. Non-proficient language learners are not only jeopardized by their imperfect language knowledge but obstructed by their inadequate knowledge of culture.

To compensate for their lack of knowledge, EFL learners may fall back on their own linguistic cultural reservoir, translating utterances from their mother tongue and applying their own cultural rules when communicating in English (Al-Eryani, 2007; Lauper, 1997). This might lead to pragmatic errors that could result in misunderstanding and embarrassment or pragma-linguistic failure (Riley, 1989; Thomas, 1983; Umale, 2011).

This is especially important nowadays as “cross-cultural communication is becoming an integral part of life, with globalization and rapid advances in new technology” (Umale, 2011, p. 19). In addition, employment opportunities in the local and global market increasingly demand good language proficiency and communicative ability. Therefore, teaching pragmatic rules in a way that they would involve communication strategies and speech acts will give students the English knowledge and communicative competence that will secure good job placements after graduation.

The phenomenon of pragmatic transfer and their motivating factors have been investigated in several speech acts in different languages, such as English, Hebrew, Spanish, French, German, Danish, Arabic and Portuguese (Byon, 2004). Several cross-cultural studies proved that pragmatic transfer is evident in L2 speech