

A CONTRASTIVE STUDY ON SEMANTIC FORMULAS OF REFUSALS TO INVITATIONS BY NATIVE SPEAKERS OF AMERICAN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IN TERMS OF GENDER

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Abstract: Refusals are speech acts occurring in our daily lives. In fact, choosing an appropriate strategy that is clever and effective is not simple because of many different factors including culture, gender, social status etc. This study aims to investigate gender and its effects on choosing the preferred strategies used by native speakers of American English and Vietnamese to refuse an invitation. 85 American English and 85 Vietnamese ones were asked to respond to three situations of refusing an invitation. The data, collected by means of a Discourse Completion Test from July 2021 to December 2021, were analyzed in terms of semantic formulas and were categorized according to the refusal taxonomy of Beebe *et al.* (1990). The findings show that participants differ in the ways they perform refusals. Besides, gender seems not to have much influence on choosing direct and indirect refusal strategies of invitations in both languages.

Keywords: Speech act, gender factor, invitations, refusal strategies, semantic formulas

1. Introduction

Refusals are speech acts that go against the recipients' requests and aspirations. Therefore, how to make a declination that does not hurt the recipient and still ensure to have a good relationship with each other is very important. In communication, it is necessary to select appropriate expressions. However, choosing an appropriate strategy that is clever and does not threaten the interlocutor's face is not simple because of many different factors including culture, gender, social status etc. In fact, refusing occurs when the speaker directly or indirectly declines an invitation. It not only is one of the most sensitive and open-minded behaviors that strengthen relationships or intimacy but also leads to misunderstandings in communication. In this paper, the author wants to investigate whether gender factor has any impacts on choices of direct and indirect refusal strategies of invitations by native speakers of American English and Vietnamese or not.

2. Previous studies on the speech acts of refusals

Studies on refusals have been carried out in many English-speaking countries around the world such as Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990), Beckers (1999), and Honglin (2007). Beebe *et al.* (1990, p.56) stated that "refusals are a major cross-cultural "sticking point" for many non-native speakers, and for that reason they are important for second language educators and others involved in cross-cultural communication. Refusals are also sensitive to other sociolinguistic variables, such as status of the interlocutor". Honglin (2007) conducted a comparative study of speech acts of refusal in Chinese and American English. His findings show

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cultural factors have impacts on choosing refusal strategies. Americans are more direct than Chinese and Chinese sincere refusals are considered as face-threatening acts, which call for politeness strategies to minimize the negative effects on the addressee(s). Furthermore, Chinese shows the lower degree of situational variation in the use of the three directness types. From all this evidence, he maintains that the cross-linguistic differences are due to basic differences in cultural values, i.e., Americans value individualism and equality, while Chinese value collectivism and social hierarchy.

In Vietnam, there have been a number of studies on refusals such as Vu Tien Dung (2002), Nguyen Phuong Chi (2004), Tran Chi Mai (2005), Ngo Huong Lan (2015), Nguyen Thi Minh Phuong (2006). Vu Tien Dung (2002) investigated the politeness in Vietnamese through a number of speech acts. In the study, he also pointed out six polite strategies in refusing requests by the Vietnamese. Nguyen Phuong Chi (2004) listed twenty- three refusal strategies of requests when she made a contrastive analysis on refusing requests by the English and Vietnamese. Tran Chi Mai (2005) focused on formulas expressing direct and indirect refusals of requests by the English and Vietnamese. Ngo Huong Lan (2015) presented some similarities on semantic formulas in expressing refusals between the Japanese and Vietnamese. In the study of Nguyen Thi Minh Phuong (2006), she stated that gender factors; social distance; and social status have influences in choosing refusal strategies of request by Australians and Vietnamese learners.

On the basis of inheriting and developing the results of previous works, in this study, our questions are:

1. Do Vietnamese people tend to use more indirect refusal formulas than Americans?
2. Do women use more indirect refusal formulas than men?

3. Methodology

In this study, discourse completion test (DCT) scenarios of refusals of invitations were examined according to a classification of refusal strategies proposed by Beebe *et al.* (1990, pp. 67), including direct and indirect semantic formulas, and adjuncts to refusals.

Table 1. Classification of refusals by Beebe *et al.* (1990, pp. 67)

I. Direct

1. *Using performative verbs* (I refuse)
2. *Non performative statement*
 - "No"
 - Negative willingness/ability (I can't./I won't./I don't think so)

II. Indirect

1. *Statement of regret* (I'm sorry.../I feel terrible...)
2. *Wish* (I wish I could help you...)
3. *Excuse, reason, explanation* (My children will be home that night./I have a headache)
4. *Statement of alternative*

- I can do X instead of Y (I'd rather.../I'd prefer...)

- Why don't you do X instead of Y (Why don't you ask someone else?)

5. *Set conditions for future or past acceptance* (If you had asked me earlier, I would have...)

6. *Promise of future acceptance* (I'll do it next time./I promise I'll.../Next time I'll...)

7. *Statement of principle* (I never do business with friends.)

8. *Statement of philosophy* (One can't be too careful.)

9. *Attempt to dissuade interlocutor*

- Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester (I won't be any fun tonight to refuse an invitation)

- Guilt trip (waitress to customers who want to sit a while: I can't make a living off people who just order coffee.)

- Criticize the request/requester (statement of negative feeling or opinion; insult/attack (Who do you think you are?/That's a terrible idea!)

- Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request

- Let the interlocutor off the hook (Don't worry about it./That's okay./You don't have to.)

- Self-defense (I'm trying my best./I'm doing all I can do.)

10. *Acceptance that functions as a refusal*

- Unspecific or indefinite reply

- Lack of enthusiasm

11. *Avoidance*

- Nonverbal

+ Silence

+ Hesitation

+ Doing nothing

+ Physical departure

- Verbal

+ Topic switch

+ Joke

+ Repetition of part of request (Monday?)

+ Postponement (I'll think about it.)

+ Hedge (Gee, I don't know./I'm not sure.)

Adjuncts to refusals:

1. *Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement* (That's a good idea.../I'd love to...)

2. *Statement of empathy* (I realize you are in a difficult situation.)

3. *Pause fillers* (uhh/ well/oh/ uhm)

4. *Gratitude/appreciation*

The questionnaire includes three situations of invitations in both Vietnamese and English with the same content. Out of the 700 English-language questionnaires distributed, we collected 135 ones in the period of 6 months from July 2021 to December 2021. After analysis, we selected 85 questionnaires responding to the study's requirements (the respondents are native speakers of American English, no questions were left blank). With 700 questionnaires in Vietnamese distributed, we collected 365 ones. In order to create a correspondence about the number of, we also randomly drew 85/365 questionnaires collected by Vietnamese participants to study the impact of gender factor on the choice of refusal strategies in response to invitations by native speakers of American English and Vietnamese. All 85 American respondents (67 males and 18 females) and 85 Vietnamese ones (45 males and 40 females) participating in the survey are at the age of 20 to 60 and have bachelor degrees. They are mostly economists, foreign language teachers, language researchers, educational management specialists, businessmen and so on. To analyze the data, the researcher used the Beebe *et al.*'s (1990) classification above.

Three situations of invitations in the DCT were as follows:

Situation 1: You are the president of the printing company. A salesman from a printing machine company invites you to one of the most expensive restaurants in New York. How would you verbally decline the salesman's invitation to have a meal with her/him?

Situation 2: A friend invites you to dinner, but you really can't stand this friend's husband/wife. How would you verbally decline your friend's invitation to have dinner with her/him?

Situation 3: You are a top executive at a very large accounting firm. One day the boss calls you into his office. How would you verbally decline the boss' invitation to have a party with her/him?

The reason why these three scenarios are chosen in this study is that they have been used in the previous studies. Therefore, it is easier for us to compare our results with other researchers'.

4. Results on the impact of gender factor on the choice of using semantic formulas of refusals to invitations by the native speakers of American English and the Vietnamese

The results were analyzed from 85 Discourse completion tests of native speakers of American English including 67 males and 18 females and those of Vietnamese including 45 males and 40 females in three situations of invitations in terms of gender.

4.1. Situation 1: Higher status person refuses invitation (situation 1)

(verbally declining the salesman's invitation to have a meal with her/him)

4.1.1. In terms of male participants

Here are some typical responses using direct semantic formulas of refusals to an invitation by Americans.

Sounds good, (statements of appreciation) but I think I can't. (a statement of negative willingness)

I'm sorry (a statement of excuse). I have to work late. (a statement of reason). Thank you (an expression of gratitude)

Below are responses by the Vietnamese.

Tôi đánh giá cao lời mời của anh. Nhưng tôi e rằng lần này tôi không thể nhận lời mời của cậu được.

I appreciate your invitation (statements of appreciation) but I'm afraid I won't be able to accept at this time (a statement of negative willingness)

Chúng ta sẽ bàn đến việc này sau giờ làm việc nhé. Bởi vì tôi không quen đi một mình vào buổi tối

We can discuss this matter after working hours (a statement of alternative) because I am not used to going out alone at night. (a statement of reason)

More than half of American English respondents started their indirect refusal by saying additional words to soften the blow and keep the face of the interlocutor. The most commonly used mitigations were statements of appreciation, regret, willingness, alternative, or positive opinion. A reason was usually given in the second and/or third position of the formula and half of responses used negative willingness. The Vietnamese respondents began with non-performative statements or statements of negative willingness. In the second or third position in the formula were often reasons or alternatives.

Some responses containing indirect refusals to invitations are done by Americans and Vietnamese.

In American English

I'm so sorry but it's my 20 years wedding anniversary next week and I had already had a plan of going out to have dinner with my wife. So maybe we can have that meeting at another time?

In Vietnamese

Cám ơn lời mời của bạn. Tuy nhiên, tôi thích thảo luận công việc ở văn phòng.

(Thanks for your invitation. However, I would prefer discussing the business in my office).

Mình xin lỗi. Anh biết đấy, đây là vấn đề nhạy cảm, nguyên tắc công ty tôi.

(Oh I am so sorry. It is a very sensitive, you know, the company regulation).

The US respondents are known as those who respect etiquettes. Refusing an invitation seems not to be the right thing to do with the interlocutor. The US males used the indirect formulas by giving a statement of excuse or alternative to a person of lower status or an acquaintance, whereas the Vietnamese males often show their formality and politeness by using their own principles when making an indirect refusal.

4.1.2. In terms of female participants

Here are some semantic formulas of direct refusals to an invitation given by female American English and Vietnamese interlocutors.

American English females

That's very tempting but no,

(a statement of appreciation with non-performative statement)

I have some work to do. (a statement of reason)

Vietnamese females

Cám ơn lời mời của bạn

(Thank you for the invitation)

Nhưng tiếc thật mình không thể tham dự được

(but unfortunately, I'm not able to attend.)

During the implementation of the direct formulas of invitations, besides a statement of negative willingness, Vietnamese and American females often started their refusal by saying additional words to soften the blow and keep the face of the interlocutor. The most commonly used mitigations were statements of appreciation, regret, alternative, or positive opinion.

Here are some semantic formulas of indirect refusals to an invitation given by female American English and Vietnamese interlocutors.

American English females

Thank you for your invitation. I'd love to discuss the contract in my office to fit my tight schedule.

Vietnamese females

Cám ơn lời mời của bạn.

(Thank you.)

Nhưng đi ăn với khách hàng tiềm năng là điều trái với quy định của công ty tôi

(but it is against my company's policy for me to accept meals from potential clients.)

In the expression of indirect refusal, both American and Vietnamese females gave thanks with reasons or stated personal principles when refusing an invitation of the interlocutor of lower status.

4.1.3. Findings

Table 2. Percentage of direct and indirect semantic formulas of refusal of invitations by native speakers of American English and Vietnamese when higher status person refuses an invitation

Participants	Gender	Situation 1			
		Direct		Indirect	
		Number	%	Number	%
American English	Male	19	28.4%	48	71.6%
	Female	5	27.8%	13	72.2%
Vietnamese	Male	12	26.7%	33	73.3%
	Female	11	27.5%	29	72.5%

According to Table 2, we can see that, in terms of males, when refusing an invitation by a lower status, 28.4% of American respondents chose direct formulas and 71.6% used indirect formulas whereas 26.7% of Vietnamese respondents chose direct formulas and 73.3% used indirect formulas. In terms of females, 27.5% of Vietnamese ones tended to use direct formulas and 72.5% chose indirect formulas; 27.8% of American women chose direct formulas and 72.2% used indirect formulas.

It can be concluded that when a person of higher status refuses an invitation, both American and Vietnamese were more inclined to use the indirect refusal strategies than the direct ones. However, American men tended to use more direct strategies than Vietnamese ones; and Vietnamese men had a tendency to use more indirect strategies than American ones. The number of American and Vietnamese women, using the direct and indirect refusal strategies, is quite similar. In addition, both the US men and women choosing to use direct formulas had a higher percentage than Vietnamese respondents; and Vietnamese men and women used more direct formulas than American ones.

4.2. Situation 2: Equal status person refuses invitation

(verbally declining your friend’s invitation to have dinner at home with her/him)

4.2.1. In terms of male participants

Here are some typical direct formulas of refusals to an invitation responded by American English and Vietnamese participants.

American English males:

I’m afraid I can’t. (a statement of negative willingness)

I have other plans. (a statement of reason)

maybe next week sometime?

(a statement of a expectation in the future)

Vietnamese males:

Cám ơn cậu

(Thanks a lot for your offer - a statement of thank)

Nhưng mình không thể tham gia bữa tiệc được

(But I may not be able to join the party - a statement of negative willingness)

Bởi vì tối nay mình có hẹn rồi

(because I have an appointment tonight - a statement of reason)

Có thể chúng ra ăn trưa với nhau trong tuần vậy?

(Maybe you and I could grab lunch during the week? - a statement of alternative)

In this situation, when a person of equal status refuses an invitation to a friend's house for dinner, the direct formulas used by American men includes giving a statement of reason, a statement of negative willingness, a statement of regret, a statement of aspiration in the future, or a statement of gratitude. The Vietnamese respondents preferred to use the direct formulas by giving thanks, expressing regret, proposing alternatives, excuses/ reasons, and negative willingness.

Some responses about indirect formulas of refusals to invitations are done by American English and Vietnamese males.

American English males

Sorry but I have an important project that must be finished that night. Thanks for your invitation.

Vietnamese males

Tuyệt đấy nhưng tốt hơn nếu chúng ta hẹn hò ở chỗ khác và tán ngẫu tí. Lâu lắm rồi đấy và mình có nhiều tin tức nóng hổi dành cho cậu.

(That's lovely. But I thought it'd be good if we met somewhere else and had a little chat. It's been a long time, and lots to update with you.)

Vợ cậu khó tính bỏ xừ đi.

(Your wife is so prissy)

When refusing an invitation given by a person with equal status, the US males used the indirect formulas by saying thanks or regret/excuse. Meanwhile, Vietnamese men rarely gave statements of excuses or thanks to the partners who have a close relationship. It can be said that many Vietnamese people think that when they have a close relationship, there is no need to say thanks or excuse because it seems to be unfriendly.

4.2.2. In terms of female participants

Here are some typical examples about direct semantic formulas of refusals of an invitation responded by both American English and Vietnamese interlocutors.

American English females

No, (non-performative statement)

thanks. (a statement of thanks)

I'm on a diet. (a statement of reason)

Thank you for your kindness. But I am sorry I can't make it. I have another appointment that day.

(a statement of reason, a statement of negative willingness, a statement of reason)

Vietnamese females

Minh xin lỗi. Minh không thể nhận lời được. Tuần tới mình còn một đồng việc đến hạn rồi, nên mình cần phải làm việc

(Sorry, I can't make it. I have a huge deadline next week and need to work.)

Không (No- non-performative statement)

Xin lỗi cậu, mình đang phải kiểm soát chế độ ăn

(Sorry, I have to watch my diet - a statement of reason)

Nói thật, dạo này mình đau dạ dày

(Frankly, I suffer from a stomachache - a statement of reason)

Và mình không thể ăn bánh được.

(and will not be able to eat cake - a statement of negative willingness)

Like the U.S. male responses, when refusing a friend's invitation to have dinner at home, American women began their refusal with a non-performative statement or a statement of negative willingness, a statement of thanks and a statement of reason. The common direct formula used by Vietnamese women is a statement of excuse/ apology, a statement of reason or a statement of possibility.

Here are some indirect refusals formulas of an invitation responded by both American English and Vietnamese females.

American English females

Thank you, that sounds nice, but I've got plans already on Sunday night.

(a statement of thanks with a statement of reason)

Vietnamese females

Minh rất muốn tới ăn tối với gia đình cậu nhưng tối hôm đó mình lại có kế hoạch rồi. Xin lỗi cậu.

(I'd love to, but I already have plans for that evening. Sorry.)

In brief, it can be seen that in the indirect refusal formulas, the majority of American and Vietnamese females began their refusal by saying thank-you or apology with a reason when rejecting an invitation given by an equal status person.

4.2.3. Findings

Table 3. Percentage of direct and indirect semantic formulas of refusal of invitations by native speakers of American English and Vietnamese when equal status person refuses an invitation

Participants	Gender	Direct			
		Direct		Indirect	
		Number	%	Number	%
American English	Male	17	25.4%	50	74.6%
	Female	4	22.2%	14	77.8%
Vietnamese	Male	12	26.7%	33	73.3%
	Female	11	27.5%	29	72.5%

According to Table 3, we can see that, in terms of males, when refusing an invitation by an equal status person, 25.4% of American respondents chose direct formulas and 74.6% used indirect formulas whereas 26.7% of Vietnamese respondents chose direct formulas and 73.3% used indirect formulas. In terms of females, 27.5% of Vietnamese ones tended to use direct formulas and 72.5% chose indirect formulas; 22.2% of American women chose direct formulas and 77.8% used indirect formulas.

It can be concluded that when a person of equal status refuses an invitation, both American and Vietnamese were more inclined to use the indirect refusal strategies than the direct ones. However, American men tended to use more direct strategies than American women, namely (men: 25.4% and women: 22.2%). Meanwhile, Vietnamese men had a tendency to use more indirect strategies than Vietnamese women (men: 73.3% and women: 72.5%). Furthermore, in terms of gender, the Vietnamese males and females tended to use more direct refusal strategies than the US respondents (Americans: 25.4%; Vietnamese: 26.7%), women (Americans: 22.2%; Vietnamese: 27.5%).

4.3. Situation 3: Lower status person refuses invitation

(Verbally declining the boss' invitation to have a party with her/him)

4.3.1. In terms of male participants

Here are some responses using direct refusal formulas of an invitation responded by American English and Vietnamese participants of lower status.

American English males

Well, I would love to go. (a statement of positive opinion)

I really hope that you can excuse me from going to this thing (a statement of excuse/apology)

I just really can't come.

(a statement of negative willingness)

Vietnamese males

Tôi thật sự xin lỗi sếp (I am really sorry. - a statement of regret)

Giá mà tôi biết sớm hơn. (I wish I had known about this earlier.)

Rất tiếc là tôi không thể tới được (Unfortunately, I can't - a statement of negative willingness)

Tôi có một số việc cần phải thu xếp mà đơn giản không thể thoát khỏi ... vấn đề tế nhị của gia đình. (I have made other arrangements that I simply cannot get out of ... a delicate family matter... - a statement of reason)

Mong sếp hiểu cho tôi (I hope that you will understand)

In this situation, when a lower status person refuses to accept the boss' invitation to have a party with her/him, the US males often start their direct refusal with an attempt to soften the blow. It usually started with a statement of negative willingness, a statement of regret, positive opinion, or gratitude, followed by giving reason to minimize the face - threatening act with the interlocutor.

Some responses about indirect refusal formulas to invitations are done by American English and Vietnamese males with lower status.

American English males

It'd be a pleasure for me sir. However, it'd be my son's birthday next Sunday and my wife and I had already promised to take my son to Disneyland to celebrate it and I would be a terrible dad if I canceled that trip, wouldn't I? I hope it wouldn't make you mad.

Vietnamese males

Em rất cảm ơn sếp đã có lời mời. Em xin lỗi, hôm đó lại là sinh nhật bà xã và cả gia đình em lên kế hoạch đi ra khỏi thành phố.

(Thank you for your invitation. I am very sorry since that is my wife's birthday and we are traveling out of the city.)

In this situation, politeness was appreciated by both American and Vietnamese males. They often wanted to maintain the face for the interlocutor of higher status. Therefore, they avoided using direct formulas. Therefore, the US and Vietnamese respondents began their refusal by saying thank you with a statement of a reason or a promise in the future. In addition, one of the most typical characteristics that Vietnamese men often used was a statement of excuse/apology when refusing an invitation given by a person of higher status.

4.3.2. In terms of female participants

Here are some direct refusal formulas of an invitation responded by both American English and Vietnamese interlocutors of lower status.

American English females

Thank you so much for the invitation. ((a statement of thanks)

I'm afraid I'm not able to come. I'm not in town on that day.

(a statement of negative willingness, a statement of reason)

Vietnamese females

Tôi thật sự xin lỗi nhưng tôi không thể đến dự được.

(I am really sorry but I can't - a statement of negative willingness)

Hôm đó con gái tôi có buổi biểu diễn. Tôi không thể bỏ lỡ được vì buổi biểu diễn đó rất có ý nghĩa với nó.

(My daughter has an important performance then. I cannot miss it. It means the world for her – a statement of reason)

In most direct refusal formulas, the US females often started their refusal with a statement of reasons and a statement of negative willingness. The common direct formula used by Vietnamese women is a statement of regret with a statement of negative willingness, a statement of reason or or gratitude at the beginning or at the end of the formula.

Here are some indirect refusal formulas of an invitation responded by both American English and Vietnamese females.

American English females

Thanks for your invitation sir (a statement of thanks)

but my husband and I are coming to visit our parents. We haven't seen them for a long time. (a statement of reason)

Vietnamese females

Thật vinh dự khi được sắp mời. (That would be an honor sir - a statement of appreciation)

Nhưng ngày hôm đó gia đình tôi đã có kế hoạch rồi ... và nó rất quan trọng với chúng tôi, sắp biết là ...

(but we already have plans for that day so ... And it's really important you know ... - a statement of reason)

In short, it can be seen that in the indirect refusal formulas, the US females gave a statement of reason which is sometimes replaced by a dilemma. This seems to make the formula "softer" and less face-threatening. In communication, when giving a refusal of an invitation, Vietnamese people often tended to preserve the face of higher status. Therefore, Vietnamese females began their refusal by giving a statement of reason and/or a statement of appreciation when rejecting an invitation given by a higher status person.

4.3.3. Findings

Table 4. Percentage of direct and indirect semantic formulas of refusal to invitations by native speakers of American English and Vietnamese when lower status person refuses an invitation

Participants	Gender	Situation 3			
		Direct		Indirect	
		%	Number	%	%
American English	Male	18	26.9%	49	73.1%
	Female	5	27.80%	13	72.2%

Vietnamese	Male	8	17.8%	37	82.2%
	Female	6	15%	34	85.0%

According to Table 4, we can see that, in terms of males, when a lower status person refuses an invitation, 26.9% of American respondents chose direct formulas and 73.1% used indirect formulas whereas 17.8% of Vietnamese respondents chose direct formulas and 82.2% used indirect formulas. In terms of females, 27.8% of the US women tended to use direct formulas and 72.2% chose indirect formulas; 15% of Vietnamese women chose direct formulas and 85% used indirect formulas.

It can be concluded that when a lower status person refuses an invitation, both American and Vietnamese were more inclined to use the indirect refusal strategies than the direct ones. However, the US males and females tended to use more direct strategies than Vietnamese ones. The US female respondents had a tendency to use more direct strategies than the US males (men: 26.9% and women: 27.8%). The Vietnamese males had a tendency to use more direct refusal strategies than the Vietnamese females (Vietnamese males: 17.8% and Vietnamese females: 18%).

5. Conclusion

These are the results of the survey on the impact of gender factor towards choices of direct and indirect refusal formulas of invitations by the native speakers of American English and Vietnamese from the aspect of gender. Of three situations, both the US and Vietnamese respondents were more inclined to use the indirect semantic formulas of refusal than the direct ones. Compared with Vietnamese males and females, the US respondents tended to use more direct refusal strategies when refusing an invitation given by a lower or higher status person, whereas the Vietnamese respondents had a tendency to use more direct refusal strategies than American ones when refusing an invitation given by an equal status person. The US females were more likely to use direct refusal strategies than the US males when refusing an invitation given by a lower status person. Vietnamese women used fewer direct refusal strategies than Vietnamese men when refusing an invitation given by a higher or equal status person. Vietnamese men who have lower status were more likely to use more direct refusal strategies than Vietnamese women.

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NGHIÊN CỨU ĐỐI CHIẾU BIỂU THỨC NGŨ NGHĨA TỪ CHỐI LỜI MỜI CỦA NGƯỜI MỸ VÀ NGƯỜI VIỆT NHÌN TỪ GÓC ĐỘ GIỚI TÍNH

Tóm tắt: Từ chối là hành vi ngôn ngữ diễn ra hàng ngày. Trên thực tế, việc lựa chọn một chiến lược phù hợp mà vừa khéo léo và hiệu quả là việc không đơn giản bởi nhiều yếu tố khác nhau như văn hóa, giới tính, vị thế xã hội... Nghiên cứu được thực hiện nhằm mục đích tìm hiểu tác động của nhân tố giới tính đối với việc lựa chọn chiến lược từ chối lời mời được người Mỹ và người Việt ưa chuộng sử dụng. 85 nghiệm thể là người Mỹ và 85 người Việt được yêu cầu trả lời ba tình huống từ chối lời mời. Các phiếu hoàn thiện diễn ngôn được thực hiện, thu thập trong khoảng thời gian từ tháng 7 năm 2021 đến tháng 12 năm 2021, và được phân tích dựa theo khung phân loại biểu thức ngữ nghĩa từ chối của Beebe và các cộng sự (1990). Kết quả cho thấy những người tham gia có các cách từ chối khác nhau. Hơn thế nữa, nhân tố giới tính dường như không có ảnh hưởng đến việc lựa chọn chiến lược từ chối trực tiếp và gián tiếp lời mời ở cả hai ngôn ngữ.

Từ khóa: Hành vi ngôn ngữ, nhân tố giới tính, lời mời, chiến lược từ chối, biểu thức ngữ nghĩa