NHỮNG CHIẾN LƯỢC KẾT THÚC HỘI THOẠI Ở VĂN PHÒNG GIỮA NHÂN VIÊN VÀ NGƯỜI QUẢN LÝ BẰNG TIẾNG ANH VÀ TIẾNG VIỆT

Hoàng Trà My*

Nghiên cứu này nhằm so sánh cách nhân viên và quản lý người Việt và người Anh sử dụng ngôn ngữ lời nói để kết thúc hội thoại ở văn phòng với dữ liệu là 120 cuộc thoại (60 bằng tiếng Anh và 60 bằng tiếng Việt) trên phim. Với phương pháp phân tích nội dung, chiến lược hội thoại được tổng hợp, mã hóa và so sánh giữa hai ngôn ngữ. Kết quả chứng minh rằng cả hai đều có xu hướng nói "cảm ơn", "xin chào" hoặc đề cập đến hành động hay liên lạc tiếp theo. Tuy nhiên, so với người Anh, người Việt nói nhiều hơn, vòng vo hơn và khoảng cách quyền lực giữa nhân viên và quản lý được thể hiện rõ hơn.

Từ khoá: *kết thúc hội thoại; chiến lược kết thúc hội thoại; chiến lược kết thúc hội thoại bằng lời; hội thoại ở văn phòng; hội thoại giữa nhân viên và quản lý.*

The study aims to compare and contrast how English and Vietnamese staff and managers verbally end their conversations at offices based on the data from 120 conversations (60 English and 60 Vietnamese) conducted in films. With content analysis, verbal closing strategies are noted down, coded and compared in both languages. The results show that they both frequently use "thank you", "goodbye" or refer to future actions or contacts in closing sections. However, Vietnamese subjects produce much lengthier closing sections with the employment of more types and numbers of verbal strategies than English ones. Additionally, through the use of verbal strategies, the power distance between Vietnamese staff and managers is displayed more significantly than that of English ones.

Key words: *conversational closings; closing sections; conversational closing strategies; verbal strategies; staff-manager conversations.*

VERBAL STRATEGIES USED IN CLOSING A CONVERSATION AT OFFICES BY ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE STAFF AND MANAGERS

1. Introduction

1.1. Literature Review

Necessarily, all conversations have to end due to the non-existence of forever social encounters. Individuals need to end encounters and begin others constantly. Socially, this process happens continuously and routinely and it plays a significant role in maintaining human relations (Albert & Kessler, 1978, p. 541).

The rather rich literature on the area proves that conversational closing has

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been developed fairly rapidly. Among a number of researchers and linguists of this field, Goffman (1952 and forthcoming) is regarded as a pioneer. Despite being the first researcher to touch on this area and examining it several times, Goffman studies conversational closing inconsistently. He has conceptualized the problem of ending encounters from various points of view in his different works. In his 1952 paper, ending is defined as a "loss" suffered by a person to which he must adapt and for which he requires defense, strategies, consolations, etc. Endings and farewells are related to the concept of face in his 1955 paper, they function as "assess rituals" in his 1971 paper or "temporary brackets" related to his called frame analysis in his 1974 book (cited in Abert & Kessler, 1976, p. 149). Besides Goffman, Schegloff and Sacks (1973) may also be considered other groundbreakers. In an extension of their earlier work on conversational openings, Schegloff and Sacks (1973) explore conversational closings from 500 telephone conversations and their biggest contribution in this field is closing sequences of a conversation.

After Goffman (1952, and forthcoming) and Schegloff and Sacks (1973), following researchers have delved into conversational closings in different approaches. On the one hand, despite both verbal and non-verbal behaviors forming a fundamental part of conversational closing process (O'Leary & Gallois, 1985), some investigators only concentrate on verbal behaviors while others prefer non-verbal behaviors (Albert & Kessler, 1978; Clark & French, 1981; O'leary & Gallois, 1985). On the other hand, whilst most of researchers in this field draw their interest on closings of general conversations, some others have a preference to closings of conversations with specific features, for example, the closing section of legislative sessions (Ayodele, 2012), service encounters in Agencies (David, Hei, & DeAlwis, 2012) or advising sessions (Hartford, & Bardovi Harlig, 1992).

One of the most challenging and risky problems in exploring conversational closing is the process of collecting data (Albert & Kessler, 1976, p. 148). Although it is ideal to gather naturally occurring conversations, it is extremely demanding. This obstacle has made researchers delve in this field variously in terms of data collection methods and data sources. Written conversations in textbooks or emails are the most convenient sources of data and have been made use of by lots of researchers (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991; Yuka, 2008). Furthermore, thanks to modern technologies which help conversations to be easily recorded, many researchers, following Schegloff and Sacks (1973), take advantage of telephone conversations as the main data for analysis, for example Takami (2002) while others rely on some channels of mediated communication like *online chats* (Pojanapunya &

Jaroenkitboworn, 2011) or *talk show interviews* (Martinez, 2003). Particularly, there have been some researchers who try to record naturally occurring conversations (LeBaron & Stanley, 1976) or create nearly natural data via role-plays with the help of volunteers (O'leary & Gallois, 1985). Consequently, the rich literature on conversational closing has demonstrated its significance as well as contribution to linguistics. Surprisingly, although this area has drawn interest of a number of linguists and researchers from various languages worldwide, it is absolutely absent in Vietnamese.

1.2. Aims of the study

Conversation has an exceedingly important role in society because it fosters communication process, then the development of human beings. To communicate well, parties need to acquire skills of initiating, maintaining and closing a conversation. In the scope of this study, the process of conversational closing is delved into. Conversational closing process is essential but challenging. As a matter of fact, closing a conversation suddenly may make the speaker appear impolite or rule whilst interrupting and walking away in the midst of a conversation may be considered ill-mannered (David, Hei & DeAlwis, 2012). Furthermore, "knowing how to close or say goodbye in one native language does not ensure success in another language" (Bardovi-Harlig, et al., 1991) because the ways people break contact with each other vary from culture to culture.

Additionally, conversational closing process of different types of conversations is different. Closing process of a chit-chat conversation between close friends is definitely different from closing process of a formal conversation between strangers. In the scope of this study, only conversations between a staff and a manager occurring at office settings are investigated. The reason for the choice of this relationship and this setting is due to the popularity as well as importance of these conversations. Currently, there are lots of Vietnamese people working for foreign companies in Vietnam or in abroad where English is the main language of communication. And the need of communication in exchanging work between Vietnamese people and foreigners, especially English speaking people is becoming more and more essential. In addition, nowadays a lot of foreign and even Vietnamese companies require that their staff have communicative skills or communicative skill is regarded as one of the most important soft skills for a person to pursuit a job. Consequently, this study is conducted to expose verbal strategies restored by English and Vietnamese staff and managers to close a conversation at offices. Specifically, this study is to answer two research questions: (1) what are verbal strategies employed by English and Vietnamese staff in closing

conversations at offices? And (2) what are verbal strategies utilized by English and Vietnamese managers in closing conversations at offices?

1.3. Methodology

1.3.1. Conversations in Films

The literature review has proved that researchers keen on the area of conversational closing have approached it from different sources of data due to the challenges of collecting the naturally occurring talks. It is undeniable that naturally occurring conversations are one of the most valuable sources of data which can bring up much contribution to linguistic literature; however, the process of recording them is extremely demanding. In many countries, especially in Western countries where the privacy is respected, researchers need to obtain a legal document as a consent form from all participants before they can record their conversations, which is difficult because not many people are happy to have their conversations recorded. Additionally, although researchers may have permission from participants to record their conversations, it is also illegal to put recorders at offices because of confidential problems. All business information has to be kept secret; hence, recording naturally occurring conversations at offices is impossible.

Because of the impossibility of recording naturally occurring conversations, the researcher has to think of other sources of data. The literature has demonstrated that conversations in films are a good choice for the current study. Films are regarded as one of the most useful and nearly natural sources. Despite conversations in films are fictional, they are closely resemble naturally occurring ones. Films are created to mirror the real life. The scriptwriters basing on their underlying knowledge try to create nearly natural conversations and actors and actresses with their own talent try to perform as exactly as in real life. That films bear a strong resemblance to life can be shown in the way viewers accept them. The ways viewers express their emotions like happiness, excitement, disappointment, angriness…while watching films can prove the lifelikeness of films. In short, due to the impossibility of collecting naturally occurring conversations, conversations in films are collected instead because of their advantages like accessibility, richness and lifelikeness.

1.3.2. Data Collection Criteria

The results of this study base on the data from 120 conversations (60 English and 60 Vietnamese). Conversations selected must have the closing sections and be between two participants – a staff and a manager at the age from 20 to 60. To ensure equivalent contents and forms, English and Vietnamese films selected have to follow some common criteria such as broadcast channels, production time and contexts. From these criteria, the film

"House of cards" in English and two films "Đối thủ kỳ phùng", "Cảnh sát hình sự - Chạy án" in Vietnamese are chosen. These films discuss current issues of society in the context of English and Vietnamese Governments, for example, working environments of politicians, congressmen, and police. Lots of similar features of these films can ensure the validity and reliability of data collected from them.

1.3.3. Qualitative and Quantitative Content Analysis

Despite a rather rich literature on this area, each researcher comes up with different categories of strategies due to the various types of conversations examined. To find out categories of verbal strategies restored by English and Vietnamese staff and managers to close a conversation at offices, the method of qualitative and quantitative content analysis is used in the current study. Exactly, the study follows some steps:

Firstly, English and Vietnamese films are watched and conversations with closing sections are noted. The closing sections of these conversations are transformed into text. Secondly, the categories and a coding scheme are developed from previous studies and theories. The literature indicates that former researchers have built up a number of categories of verbal closing strategies. These strategies are noted, synthesized, compared and grouped into categories. These categories, then, are used to code the current data. Thirdly, the data are coded manually. Verbal strategies restored by English and Vietnamese staff and managers in closing a conversation are coded into current categories. In this process, new themes may emerge and need to be added. That is to say, strategies which cannot be put into current categories are put into new categories. Finally, all verbal strategies performed by English and Vietnamese's subjects in the closing sections are noted down then generalized from the most to the least popular ones. These strategies basing on their frequency of appearance in relation with 60 collected conversations are analyzed and evaluated. From the frequency of occurrence of each strategy, conclusions and meanings are drawn.

1.3.4. Coding System

Different types of conversations are investigated by prior researchers, strategies of closing a conversation are, accordingly, various. A variety of verbal strategies proposed by earlier researchers such as Clark and French (1981), Pojanapunya and Jaroenkitboworn (2011) and Okamoto (1990) can be summarized in table 1 below:

Verbal strategies	Characteristics	Examples
Summary or results	Summary the main content of the conversation or state the results or the outcomes of the conversation	E.g., "So we have a picnic this weekend and you prepare food and drink"
Informing the need to leave	Indicate the necessity of leaving via the verb "have to" or politeness markers like "hey", "ok" and "so".	E.g., "I have to go now"
Justification (reasons + excuses)	Give the reasons or excuses of the leaving	E.g., "I have a meeting now"
Wish expressions	Express wishes towards the other parties or their relatives.	E.g., "I wish you all the best, Meechum."
Referring to future contact	Mention future contacts as a way to state the close relationship between the parties	E.g., "All right. I'll speak to him."
Expressions of thanks or pleasure	Express thanks, pleasure, gratitude and acknowledgement toward the other party.	E.g., "Thank you, Mr. President." "Thank you, Frank"
Expressions of apology	Words or phrases expressing apology such as "I'm sorry" or "Sorry"	E.g., "I'm sorry."
Referring the external circumstances	External circumstances like telephone ring, messages, the third person, door bell are made use of as the reasons for ending the conversation	E.g., "Take your phone" (the phone is ringing)"
Saying "goodbye"	Words or phrases expressing "goodbye"	E.g., "Bye-Bye"

***Table 1**: Verbal strategies in conversational closing*

From the results in former studies, nine verbal strategies commonly exploited to terminate a conversation by earlier linguists and scholars can be listed above. The method of deductive content analysis is applied to figure out whether these strategies are employed by English and Vietnamese staff and managers to close a conversation at offices; which strategies are frequently employed; which ones are rarely employed and the reasons for the frequency of their occurrence. Verbal strategies occurring in the closing sections will be marked. Especially, ones emerging

from the data can be added as new categories. The final findings will provide the real strategies employed by English and Vietnamese staff and managers to close a conversation at offices verbally.

2. Results and Discussions

2.1. Verbal strategies by English and Vietnamese staff

Verbal strategies used by English and Vietnamese staff are illustrated in the table below:

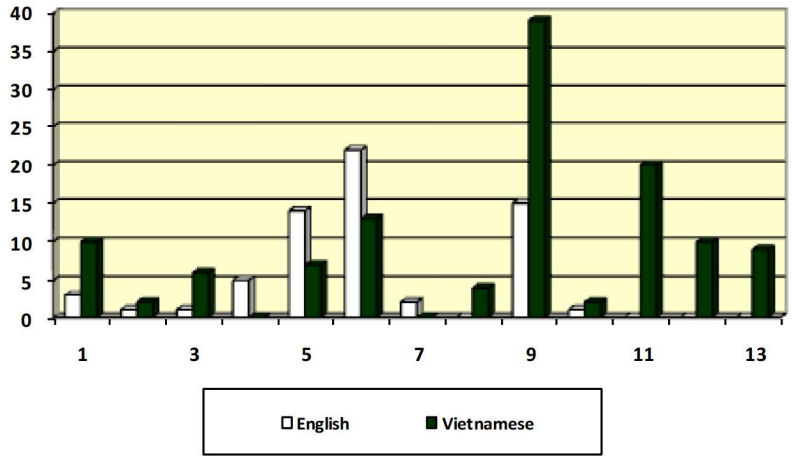

Table 2: *Verbal strategies by English and Vietnamese staff*

Note:

1: Summary/ results

2: Informing the need to leave

3: Justification (reasons + excuses)

4: Wish expressions of health or success

5: Referring to future contact or future actions

6: Expressions of thanks/ pleasure/ compliments/ acknowledgment/ gratitude

7: Expressions of apology

8: The external circumstances

9: Saying "goodbye"/ giving termination marks

10: Allowing/ letting the partner to leave

11: Asking the partner's permission for leaving

12: Relieving the partner's mind

13: Informing the leaving to the partner

Table 2 illustrates a considerable difference in the use of verbal strategies by English and Vietnamese staff. Vietnamese staff are more talkative than English ones with the use of more numbers of verbal strategies. Factually, the total number of verbal strategies exploited by Vietnamese staff is double of that of English ones with 122 and 64 ones. With regard to the nine previously

mentioned strategies, four strategies including *saying "goodbye" or giving termination marks, expressions of thanks or pleasure, referring to future contacts or actions* and *summary/ results* are most frequently used with 25%, 36.7%, 23.3%, 5% by English staff and 65%, 21.7%, 11.7%, 16.7% by Vietnamese staff respectively. These numbers illustrate that the employment of each strategy by the staff in both languages is remarkably different. Firstly, while saying "goodbye" seems to be an indispensable behavior of Vietnamese staff, it is not preferred by English staff. More notably, in comparing the act of saying "goodbye" with giving termination marks, an in-depth re-examination of the data indicates that Vietnamese staff tend to say "goodbye" whilst English staff make use of termination marks. The high employment of this strategy of Vietnamese staff can be explained by the culture of "greeting" and "saying goodbye". In Vietnamese culture, one is expected to show respect to people senior in age, status or position; hence, it is essential for Vietnamese staff – the less powerful ones to "greet" when meeting and to "say goodbye" when leaving their managers – the more powerful ones. In contrast, English parties highly focus on the goal. When the goal of the conversation is achieved or the task is accomplished, English staff may inform the leaving by termination marks for short. Secondly, dissimilar to Vietnamese staff, English ones choose *expressions of thanks, pleasure or compliments* to end a conversation. The great exploitation of this strategy by English staff is accounted by the inequality between staff and managers. Essentially, the less powerful partners – the staff express their gratitude towards the more powerful partners – the managers in case they enjoy benefits from them. However, the lower frequency of use of this strategy by Vietnamese staff may be due to the unfamiliarity of saying "thank you". Thirdly, English staff prefer mentioning the future's state of assigned tasks than Vietnamese ones. By *referring to the future contacts or actions*, they give a promise or a commitment to carry out an assigned task in the future. Lastly, *making a summary or giving a result* is much more preferable by Vietnamese staff. In fact, this act is mainly to make closings lengthier and more roundabout instead of giving new information. By using this strategy, Vietnamese staff can avoid abrupt or hasty closings which may threaten their managers' faces.

Inversely, the strategies of *informing the need to leave, giving justifications, wish expressions, apology expressions* and *the external circumstances* are exploited exceedingly moderately with 1.7%, 1.7%, 8.3%, 3.3% and 0% by English staff and 3.3%, 10%, 0%, 0%, and 6.7% by Vietnamese staff respectively. The infrequency of occurrence of *informing the need to leave, giving justifications* and *wish expression* is opposed to the results of previous studies which regard them as

the most common used strategies (Albert & Kessler, 1976; Okamoto, 1990; Pojanapunya & Jaroenkitboworn, 2011). This difference is justified by typical features of working environment. In offices, due to regular meetings and formal relationships, it becomes unnecessary and inappropriate for partners to inform the necessity or justify their leaving as well as express wishes to their partners. Nevertheless, the infrequency of use of *expressions of apology* and *external circumstances* is in agreement with previous researches (Okamoto, 1990; Takami, 2002). Factually, the external circumstances like the ringing of the phones are exploited only Vietnamese staff with 6.7% whist the expressions of apology are only restored by English staff with 3.3%.

Except for nine previously suggested strategies, English and Vietnamese staff also employ four further strategies to terminate a conversation with their managers namely *allowing/ letting the partner to leave, asking the partner's permission for leaving, relieving the partner's mind* and *informing the leaving to the partner*. Thanks to these four strategies, the differences in the way the staff in both languages end a conversation are explicitly depicted. To start with, the strategy of *allowing or letting the partner to leave* is used specially. As usual, staff have no rights to ask their managers to leave because of being in lower positions. However, the use of this strategy in specific situations may be appropriate and effective. For example, in an English conversation, the secretary allows her manager – the US vice-president to go home by saying "*Okay. Go. I'll figure it out*." (House of cards, season 2, episode 4). At that time, the vice-president and his secretary have to deal with a problem in emergency; however, the vice-president wants to go home to meet his wife because of a personal trouble. Understanding her manager's anxiety, the staff lets him go home and takes full responsibility for the whole task. This behavior, in this circumstance, helps express the staff's concern towards her manager. Differently, Vietnamese staff utilize this strategy only to repeat the words of their managers like "*Vâng, thế anh vào đi ạ*" (Đối thủ kỳ phùng, episode 16) or "*Thủ trưởng về ạ*" (Cảnh sát hình sự - Chạy án, season 2, episode 14) as a polite response.

Surprisingly, the other strategies including *asking the partner's permission for leaving, informing the leaving to the partner* and *relieving the partner's mind* are only taken by Vietnamese staff with 33.3%, 15% and 16.7%. The exceptionally prominent utilization of *asking the partner's permission for leaving* is due to the culture of "greeting" and "asking" in Vietnam. Customarily, it is ritual for the Vietnamese partners in a lower position to ask for the permission of the partners in a higher position for leaving via the phrase "xin phép" such as

"*cháu xin phép cháu đi nhé*" (Đối thủ kỳ phùng, episode 3) or "*em xin phép*" (Đối thủ kỳ phùng, episode 9). In comparison with the act of *asking for the partner's permission,* the act of *informing the leaving to the partner* may be considered to be a less polite way of closing a conversation. This behavior is demonstrated by some phrases like "về/ đi đây ạ", for example, "*cháu đi đây ạ*" (Cảnh sát hình sự - Chạy án, season 1, episode 12). These strategies are not used to ask for the manager's permission but to show the staff' respect towards the managers via the act of informing because of their greater power. Typically, in Vietnamese culture, relieving the partner's mind, often described by the phrases "(xin) anh/chị/bác cứ yên tâm (ạ)" is often restored by the less powerful partners to give a promise or a guarantee to accomplish the assigned tasks perfectly. The managers, accordingly, do not need to worry about the tasks. For example, in a Vietnamese conversation, a lawyer is talking to his manager - a director of a big company, and when the lawyer is assigned a task, instead of promising to do it, he relieves his manager's mind by saying "*anh cứ yên tâm*" (Đối thủ kỳ phùng, episode 5). It can be noted that English and Vietnamese staff have different ways of responding to the manager's request. Despite both giving a commitment or a confirmation to carry out the tasks, English staff just refer to future contacts or actions as a promise to do assigned tasks whist Vietnamese staff mention the expected or satisfactory results of the tasks. By relieving the manager's minds, Vietnamese staff both promise to finish the tasks and express their regards and responsibility to their managers.

2.2. Verbal strategies by English and Vietnamese managers

Verbal strategies taken by English and Vietnamese managers are presented in the table below:

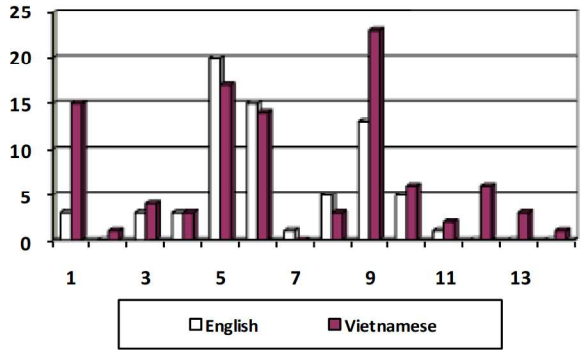

Table 3: *Verbal strategies by English and Vietnamese managers*

Note:

1: Summary/ results

2: Informing the need to leave

3: Justification (reasons + excuses)

4: Wish expressions of health or success

5: Referring future contacts or actions

6: Expressions of thanks/ pleasure/ compliments/ acknowledgment/ gratitude

7: Expressions of apology

8: The external circumstances

9: Saying "goodbye"/ giving termination marks

10: Asking the staff to leave

11: Sending a message to the third person

12: Informing the leaving to the partner

13: Allowing the partner to leave

14: Relieving the partner

Like the staff, Vietnamese managers' verbal behaviors are more various and diverse than those of English ones due to their employment of more numbers and types. Vietnamese managers need 98 verbal strategies, categorized into 13 types whist English ones only take 69 ones, grouped into 10 types. This difference can be accounted by the Vietnamese' indirectness and English directness in communication. Normally, Vietnamese partners, belonging to a high-context culture, are inclined to be roundabout in interaction, especially the process of terminating a conversation because an abrupt and hasty closing may threaten the interlocutor's face. In contrast, English partners, belonging to a low-context culture, prefer direct or focused interaction; hence, they tend to produce quick conversational closings. However, in the use of each strategy, English and Vietnamese managers share more similarities than differences.

Firstly, the most frequently utilized strategies by the managers in both languages are *summary/ results, future contacts or actions, expressions of thanks, pleasure or gratitude* and *saying "goodbye"/ giving termination marks* with 5%; 33.3%; 25%; 21.7% in English and 25%; 28.3%, 23.3%; 38.3% in Vietnamese respectively. The strategies of *future contacts or actions* and *expressions of thanks, pleasure or gratitude* are exploited quite equally by English and Vietnamese managers. The first strategy is to give a promise to do something or remind their staff to accomplish particular tasks. For instance, in an English conversation, the manager promises to reconsider his decision on their current project by saying "*all right, I will have another look at it*" (House of cards, season 2, episode 8). The second strategy is to show their pleasure or compliments towards their staff thanks to their responsibility and devotion. For example, in a Vietnamese conversation, a staff brings her manager a folder of document

and the manager expresses his gratitude by saying "*cảm ơn cô*" (Đối thủ kỳ phùng, episode 24). By saying "thank you", the manager infers that the staff has done a good job and she can leave his office. Unlike these two strategies, *summary/ results* and *saying "goodbye"/ giving termination marks* are much more preferable by Vietnamese managers with 25% and 38.3% than English ones with 5% and 21.7%. Vietnamese managers like these strategies because they make the closings lengthier and less abrupt, then help avoid sudden and hasty endings. In contrast, English managers have a tendency to create direct and short closings.

Secondly, with regard to rarely employed strategies, it can be clearly seen that both English and Vietnamese managers seldom *inform the need of leaving* (0% and 1.7%), *express their wishes* (both 5%), *express apologies* (1.7% and 0%), *make use of the external circumstances* (8.3% and 3%) or *justify the reasons for conversational closings* (0.5% and 6.7%). The rare exploitation of these strategies in both languages is opposed to the results of the previous researches which have proved their regular appearance in closing sections (Albert & Kessler, 1976; Okamoto, 1990; Pojanapunya & Jaroenkitboworn, 2011). The more power of the managers in combination with the special focus on the effectiveness of the work instead of building a good relationship justify for the small employment of these strategies in both languages.

Finally, apart from these nine verbal strategies claimed by earlier scholars, there also exist five further ones taken by the managers in both languages. English and Vietnamese managers *ask the staff to leave* with 8.3% and 10% and *send a message to the third person* with 1.7% and 3.3%. These two strategies are supposed to be a privilege of the more powerful partners. Normally, at office settings, it is appropriate for the more powerful partners to ask the less powerful ones to leave or do certain tasks thanks to their power. For example, Vietnamese managers ask his staff to leave with a reason "*thôi em về đi, anh có khách*" (Cảnh sát hình sự - Chạy án, season 2, episode 14), or without a reason "g*iờ anh về làm việc đi*" (Đối thủ kỳ phùng, episode 6). Or in another sample, the US vice-president closes the conversation with his staff by sending a message to the third one, which can be seen as a further task "*tell the President it saddens me that we now have to communicate through lawyers*" (House of cards, season 2, episode 12). Additionally, the three other strategies including *informing the leaving to the staff, allowing the staff to leave* and *relieving the staff* are utilized by only Vietnamese managers, exactly with 10%, 5% and 1.7%. By *informing the leaving*, Vietnamese managers not only show their authority – the right to close the conversation but also their concerns towards their staff. By

allowing the staff to leave, they response to the act of asking for the permissions for leaving and by *relieving the staff*, they show their appreciation to the staff' concerns.

3. Conclusions and suggestions for further studies

3.1. Conclusions

The results display that English and Vietnamese subjects share slight similarities but make notable differences in the way they employ their verbal strategies to close a conversation at offices. In terms of similarities, both of them prefer such verbal behaviors as *referring future contacts or actions, expressing thanks or pleasure* and *saying "goodbye" or giving termination marks*. The frequency of use of these behaviors is accounted by their habits of saying "thank you", "goodbye" at the end of a conversation in combination with the typical working environment – the official setting. Inversely, due to the regular meeting and the focus on tasks rather than on creating a rapport, partners in both languages have preference to avoid verbal strategies like *informing the need to leave, justifying their leaving,* and *expressions of apology or wishes*.

On the contrary, English and Vietnamese subjects make enormous differences in the ways they make use of verbal strategies to end their conversations at offices. In contradiction to English subjects, Vietnamese ones create much lengthier and more complicated closings with the utilization of more number and types of verbal strategies. Dissimilar to Vietnamese subjects, English ones attempt to build brief closings with great focus on the effectiveness of the work or the goal of interaction. Finally, while the power distance between staff and managers in English is vague, it is presented obviously in Vietnamese. Despite the closeness, Vietnamese staff especially express their respect and honor towards their managers via the acts of *informing or asking for their managers' permission for leaving* whilst Vietnamese managers display their power through the act of *asking their staff to leave*. These differences can be justified by the English's low-text culture and directness in interaction opposed to Vietnamese high-text culture and indirectness in interaction.

3.2. Suggestions for further studies

The author is well aware of the limitation as well as the weakness of using the conversations in films as the data. The study will be much more valuable and meaningful if naturally occurring conversations are collected as the data for analysis; hence, it is suggestible for the further researchers to examine conversational closing strategies with real life data. Furthermore, to produce a good closing, nonverbal strategies are also essential; consequently, it is better for other researchers to focus on verbal in combination with nonverbal strategies in closing a conversation. Finally, the

relationship between colleagues is worth inspecting as well.

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