

Realization of Negative Face Preserving Strategies in Inviting and Declining Invitations in Vietnamese and American English

Duong Bach Nhat, Ph.D

University of Economics - The University of Danang, Vietnam
Duongbachnhat[at]gmail.com

Abstract: *The article discusses politeness with the focus on negative politeness in communication viewed from different angles and presents the negative politeness strategies which are used to preserve the other's negative face in inviting and declining invitations by Vietnamese and American people, based on the framework by Brown, P. and Levinson, S [1] and Quang, N. [12].*

Keywords: Politeness strategies, negative face, negative politeness strategies, inviting, declining invitations

1. Introduction

Grice's cooperative principles [2], Lakoff's principles [6], Leech's maxims [7], and especially Brown and Levinson's strategies of politeness [1] are the valuable works which laid the foundation for this domain. N.Quang [11], [12], with the realization of positive and negative politeness equality and some other amendments such as the addition of positive and negative strategies, the components of communication, the matrix for intra-cultural and cross-cultural communication... suggests another approach to the domain of 'Politeness'. Let's take Brown and Levinson's idea to summarize the importance of 'politeness': it is a crucial notion in '*a precondition of human cooperation, so that any theory which provides an understanding of this phenomenon at the same time goes to the foundations of human social life*' [1:xiii]. Furthermore, in order to achieve efficiency in communication communicators resort to many different techniques of politeness including positive and negative strategies as suggested by Brown and Levinson and Quang, N [8]; as a result, they are really essential in communication - in all speech and communicative acts. In order for the inviter to be successful and the invitee to avoid damaging the inviter's face by refusing point-blank, the Vietnamese use many different techniques of negative politeness. Of course, the frequency of using these strategies in this speech act is not similar in all cases, and certainly, they are diverse in different cultures. Therefore, having a good knowledge of his own native language in general or in inviting and declining an invitation in particular will help a foreign language learner study another language better.

2. Content

2.1. Theoretical background

2.1.2 Negative Politeness

'The word 'negative' here doesn't mean 'bad', it is just the opposite pole from 'positive' Yule [15:62], therefore it is not correct if we translate it into Vietnamese as 'tiêu cực'. In agreement with Quang, N [12:87] we think it is wise to use the terms of 'âm tính' and 'dương tính' in Vietnamese as the

equivalents of 'negative' and 'positive' in English, respectively. However, the notion of 'negative politeness' is perceived differently by various politeness researchers.

According to Brown and Levinson [1:101,129]:

'Negative politeness is redressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded'

Thus, negative politeness orients to preserving the negative face of other people. In Respectability-Familiarity continuum, compared with positive politeness which is 'free-ranging' and 'the kernel of 'familiar' and 'joking' behavior', Brown and Levinson consider negative positive, 'the heart of respect behavior', to be specific and focused.

Seeing the tendency to use negative politeness forms and emphasizing the hearer's right to freedom, as a deference strategy, Yule [15:62] states,

'...a face saving act which is oriented to the person's negative face will tend to show deference, emphasize the importance of the other's time or concerns, and even include an apology for the imposition of interruption. This is also called negative politeness'

In this author's view, when employing negative politeness, we use speech strategies that emphasize our deference for H. This is much more likely if there is a social distance between the S and H. In consideration of the function of negative politeness in communication, Quang, N [12:88] defines,

'Negative politeness is any kind of communicative act (verbal or nonverbal or both) which is intentionally and appropriately meant to show that S does not want to impinge on H's privacy, thus, increasing the sense of distance between S and H.'

Thus, if positive politeness is minimizing social distance between interactants, negative politeness is maintaining social distance between interactants or 'minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA unavoidably effects'. For

this reason, 'negative politeness' is labeled differently: 'Deference politeness', 'Distancing politeness'...

However, according to many non-Western culture researchers such as Huong, V.T.T [4] and Hoat, N.D. [5], the strategies emphasizing deference and social distance are used mainly to satisfy the public face or the social face, not the private or individual face as Brown and Levinson claim. Aiming mainly at mitigating 'the face threat of the utterances' illocutionary points to improve communicative efficacy', strategic politeness suggested by Huong, V.T.T [4:82] is used to pay respect to the private face of participants consisting of positive and negative face. In this sense, 'negative face wants', one of the two basic wants tied to the private face, are associated with 'the desire to be free from imposition', exclusive of respect to the speaker-hearer status and solidarity differences (respectful politeness). However, there might be some cases in which exists an overlap between strategic and respectful strategies, between the desire to be freedom from imposition and the desire to be respected. It is impossible to separate 'respectfulness' and 'solidarity' clearly from strategic politeness, especially in such a language as Vietnamese which possesses a rich system of address forms.

2.1.2 Negative Politeness Strategies

Five manifestations of negative politeness, according to Brown and Levinson [1:131], are grouped into five broad mechanisms:

- Be direct
- Communicate S's want to not impinge on H
- Don't presume/assume
- Redress other wants of H's.
- Don't coerce

The broad mechanisms consisting of a set of five outputs with ten strategies as introduced are summarized by Brown and Levinson in fig1.

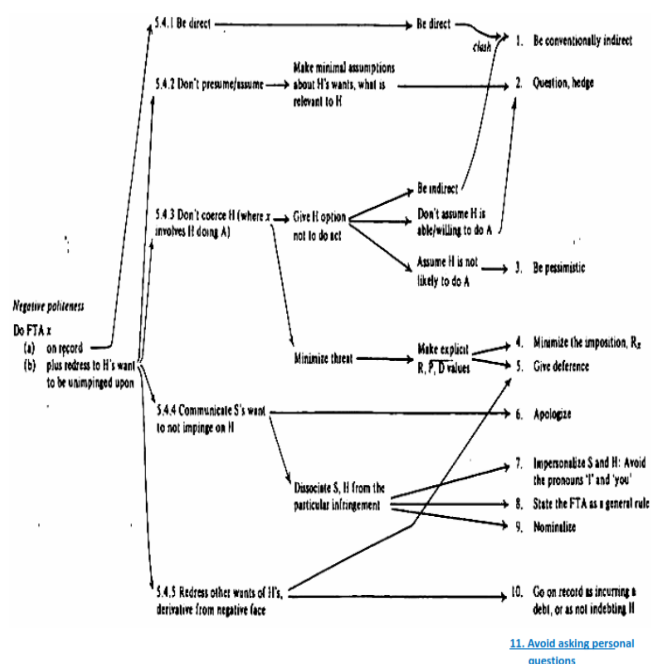


Figure 1: Negative Politeness Strategies adapted from Brown & Levinson [1:131]

It is noted that N.Quang [12:129-186] adds NPS 11 (Avoid asking personal questions) to the list given by Brown and Levinson. This strategy is opposite of PPS 17 (Asking personal questions) and is really a negative politeness strategy since it is employed to avoid violating H's freedom and maintain the distance between S and H. Thus, NPS 11 seems to belong to the fifth broad mechanism 'Redress other wants of H's' in Brown and Levinson's classification and works effectively in Anglo-American culture where people are inclined to employ more negative politeness. The amendment admittedly puts a focus on one of the major differences between negative-oriented and positive-oriented communities. For this point, this strategy is necessary for our research into the use of In. and Din. in two different cultures: the United States (a negative-oriented) and VN (a positive-oriented). Additionally, in our classification the eighth strategy (State the FTA as a general rule) given in Brown and Levinson's chart will be discussed as a hybrid politeness strategy which is oriented to both PPS and NPS. For this reason, in this paper, nine strategies (except the eighth) suggested by Brown and Levinson and one more proposed by N.Quang will be examined in the use of NPS in In. and DIn. in American English (AM) and Vietnamese (VN).

2.2 Negative politeness strategies in In. and DIn. in AM and VN

Based on the universal theory of linguistic expression of PS in communication proposed by Brown and Levinson [1] and the evidences of the realization of PS in English and Vietnamese provided by a great number of Vietnamese researchers (Quang, [11], Tam, H.C. [13], Hoat, N.D. [5] etc.), it would be expected that *besides unavoidable differences, there would be equivalent linguistic realizations of NPS in In. and Din. in VN and AM.*

Five broad mechanisms and their ten strategies belonging to negative politeness suggested by Brown and Levinson [1] and N.Quang [12] are advanced with reference to In. and DIn. in AM and VN. As discussed in Nhat, D.B [8], lead-ins or pre-invitations/ pre-refusals and lead-outs or post-invitations/ post-refusals, which are commonly used in real life, will be counted in the close analysis of the realization of PS in In. and DIn. in AM and VN. The VN invitations or refusals to invitations, if being not equivalent to the AM ones in the preceded examples, are translated into English word-by-word in order to help the readers understand the main idea of the utterances.

A- BE DIRECT

★NPS 1: Be conventionally indirect

Conventional indirectness, according to Brown Levinson [1:132], is 'the use of phrases and sentences that have contextually unambiguous meanings (by virtue of conventionalization) which are different from their literal meanings.' Thus, this way enables S to reach the compromise between two opposite desires: the utterance is conveyed on record (illocutionary target is indicated) and S's need is expressed indirectly (S's reluctance or unease when giving the utterance is manifested indirectly). According to

Brown and Levinson [1:132] and Quang, N. [12:90], the degree of conventionalization depends on the degree of compromise between them: the desire for the utterance being on record (indication of the illocutionary target) and the degree of conventionalization are in inverse ratio.

This strategy is employed very often in AM:

- [1] – **Wanna** come over tomorrow night and watch the game with us?
- [2] – **Would you care/like** to come over tomorrow night and watch the game with us?

This strategy, though less often than in AM, is also found to be used in VN:

- [3] – **Không biết là anh có thể** đến ăn tối và xem trận đấu với chúng tôi được không?

Thus, the strategy of conventional indirectness is resorted to in both AM and VN. Notice that invitations can not be absolutely arranged according to their formality because in communication some of them are approximately the same level of formality; moreover, formality and politeness depends on not only the elements of intralanguage but also parlanguage and extralanguage in a particular interaction.

B- DON'T PRESUME/ASSUME

★NPS 2: Question and Hedge

a- Question: From the examples in NPS 1, it can be seen that interrogative forms in invitations in both AM and VN are adhered to conventional indirectness. However, some differences in the attitude toward the degree of formality can be found between AM and VN invitations. Let's examine the following pair:

- [4] – *I would like to invite you to come for the New Year party.*
- [5] – *Would you care/like to come for the New Year party?* Equivalently in VN:
- [6] – *Chúng tôi xin mời anh tới dự tiệc năm mới cùng với chúng tôi!*

(We would like to invite you to the New Year party with us)

For VN people, in general, invitations in the interrogative forms seem to be less formal and easily misunderstood. For example, let us compare:

- [7] – *Anh có thích tới dự tiệc năm mới với chúng tôi không?*

(Do you like to come to New Year party with us?)

➔ Is it an invitation or a question for hobby?

➔

- [8] – *Anh có thể/sẽ tới dự tiệc năm mới với chúng tôi không/ chứ?*

(Can/ Will you come to New Year party with us?)

➔ Is it an invitation or a question for future intention?

b- Hedge: According to Brown and Levinson [1:145] ‘a hedge is a particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is partial, or true only in certain respects, or that is more true and complete than perhaps might be expected (note that this latter sense is an extension of the colloquial sense of ‘hedge’). In line with Brown and Levinson’s idea [1:116] that hedge is used ‘to vague’ S’s opinion, Quang, N [12:103] assumes that hedges are employed to avoid the exactness of the propositional content. In the light of Brown and Levinson [1:146-172], hedges are examined **on illocutionary force** and **on Grice’s Maxims**.

In both AM and VN, there have existed some strengthening particles (those that mainly act as emphatic hedges). Following are some hedges most commonly used in AM and VN: only, do (do come...), verb-emphatic particles (do-hãy), conclusive particles: AM: *then*. - VN: *vậy thì, thế thì... vậy... (then)*, sincerity particles: AM: *really, true* - VN: *thực sự*. (really, actually), exclamatory particles. For example:

- [9] – Sorry! **Really**, I can’t come!

–Xin lỗi, thực sự tôi không thể đến được!

- [10] – Oh! **So** interesting!, but I can’t come....

–Ôi! Hay quá! Nhưng tiếc là em không thể đi được...

There are some particles employed to weaken the utterance in both AM and VN such as facilitative-tags, tentativizers: (seems to often to indicate the presence of an implicature) AM: *perhaps, wonder...* - VN: *có lẽ* (perhaps), *không biết là...* (do not know that...) (indicate concern for the needs of others): AM: *will you...* - VN: *em nhé? anh nhỉ? Chứ nhỉ?...* commiserative usage showing the contrary-to expectations sense: AM: *Sory, I’m afraid, but...* - VN: *xin lỗi* (sorry), *e rằng* (afraid that), *nhưng* (but), *nhưng mà tiếc rằng* (but regretfully)..., quotative particles: (S avoids responsibility for believing in the truth of the utterance): AM: *it is said, it is believed that...* - VN: *nghe nói là* (hear that), *người ta nói là* (People say that)...

It is noticeable that there is another kind of hedge commonly resorted to in requests, commands, and invitations pointed out by Henricher [3]- in Brown and Levinson [1:162]: clause ‘if’: *if you can* - *nếu anh có thể*, *if you want* - *nếu anh muốn*, *if you let me* - *nếu anh cho phép...* Take some examples in AM invitations:

- [11] – Join our club **if you would like?**

- [12] – I would like to invite you to drop into my home **if you free.**

There are equivalent expressions in VN:

- [13] – **Nếu cậu thích** hãy gia nhập vào câu lạc bộ bóng mình đi!

(If you like, join our club!)

This kind of clause is used to suspend the felicity condition which contributes to making H feel freer. It appears that in VN they often begin the invitation, but in AM they are at the end.

C-DON'T COERCE H (WHERE X INVOLVES H DOING A)

★NPS 3: Be pessimistic

This is an important NPS, in which doubt that the conditions for the appropriateness of S's speech act obtain is expressed explicitly.

In AM, beside indirect speech acts including inviting with assertions of felicity conditions which have had a negated probability operator inserted as discussed in NPS 1, subjunctives are used to minimize the imposition on H:

[14] –**Would** you like to come to the party on Sat.?

and to create the feeling of hypothetical world of the propositional content:

[15] – *Nếu cô tới dự tiệc năm mới với chúng em thì hay quá!*

(If you could come to New Year party with us, it's very interesting)

It is noticeable that 'would' in [14] is frequently used in AM in invitations, but it is absent in VN. Nevertheless, 'Nếu' in [15], which is considered as a formal invitation in VN, seems to be uncommon in AM. It can be seen that 'Giá mà' in VN and 'I wish I could' in AM tend to be used with high frequency in declining invitations formally:

[16] – *I wish I could, but I'm busy. May be another time, though.* (Wall, [14:136])

–*Giá mà tớ có thể, nhưng tớ bận mất rồi. Hẹn khi khác nhé!*

★NPS 4: Minimize the imposition, Rx

One way of defusing the FTA is to indicate that Rx, the intrinsic seriousness of the imposition, is not in itself great. This factor, according to Quang [12:136], is more interaction-oriented than interactant-oriented. Some common expressions used in this strategy are downtoners and understaters. For example: AM: *Just, Only, Simply, Merely...* - VN: *Chỉ (only), Chỉ xin, Chỉ xin được (only beg for),...*

[17] –*I just dropped by for a minute to invite you all for tea tomorrow –you will come, won't you?* (Brown and Levinson [1:127])

–*Tớ chỉ ghé vào đây vài phút để mời các cậu ngày mai đi uống trà. Các cậu đi nhé?*

Here, 'just'/'chỉ', conveying both its literal meaning of 'exactly', 'only' and conventional implicature 'merely', softens the importance of the invitation. Thus, S may imply that it is no matter if H declines his invitation and consequently, the imposition on H is reduced.

Also, some expressions are employed effectively in invitations. Let us compare the following invitations:

[18] –*Come and see us some time.*

[19] –*Hôm nào nhân tiện đến nhà chúng tôi chơi nhé!*
(Some day by the way come to our house!)

[20] –*Drop round some time.*

[21] –*Hôm nào nhân tiện ghé nhà chúng tôi chơi nhé!*

(Some day by the way drop into our house!)

'Ghé' and 'drop round' make the invitation less formal than 'đến' and 'come and see', and they seem to minimize the imposition. However, this strategy is more commonly used in commands or requests than in invitations and refusals to invitations.

D- COMMUNICATE S's WANT TO NOT IMPINGE ON H

Indicating that S is aware of H's negative-face demands is one way to avoid impinging on H. There are five main ways to achieve this goal: *Give deference, Apologize, Impersonalize S and H, and Nominalize.*

★NPS 5: Give deference

This strategy plays a very important role in communication. If viewed from social factors suggested by Brown and Levinson [1] it is affected by P and D, but if seen from categorical dimensions in communication proposed by N.Quang. [12:227] it is manifested in different levels: Hierarchy vs Equality, Self-abasement vs Self-assertion, Subjectivity vs Objectivity, Directness vs Indirectness. There are two ways to do this strategy:

+ S abases himself:

[22] – *Come to my hovel whenever you find yourself free.*

– *Lúc nào rỗi mời anh qua tệt xá tôi chơi.* N.Quang [12:139]
+ S raises H:

[23] –*Professor Brown, if you have free time we would like to invite you to a party this Sunday.*

–*Thưa Giáo sư Brown, nếu ông có thời gian chúng tôi xin mời ông tới dự tiệc vào Chủ nhật này.*

These two ways are really 'two sides of the coin' because while abasing himself, S is raising H and vice versa; moreover, in both cases what is conveyed is that H is of higher social status than S. Additionally, N.Quang [12:140] points out that in communication 'honorific labels' and 'dishonorific labels' are combined in an utterance:

[24] – Ngày mai, xin **được** mời hai bác **quá bộ** đến **dùng** bữa **com muối** với gia đình nhà tôi ạ.

(Tomorrow, I beg to invite you come to have a ‘salty’ meal with my family.)

‘được’, ‘quá bộ’ and ‘dùng’ are honorific labels, and *com muối* is a dishonorific label. Let’s take an example of the action of making an invitation for a meal in VN. There are a number of honorifics or dishonorifics which have the same basic meaning (*please have...*) but different emotional meanings, such as: ‘ăn com’, ‘chén’, ‘đánh chén’ (dishonorifics), ‘xơi com’, ‘dùng bữa’...(honorifics). This variety requires the speakers how to flexibly choose and use them in a way suited to the addressees in a certain case. It is observed that such labels and their combination are much more abundant in VN than in AM.

★NPS 6: Apologize

When apologizing for doing FTA, S can both indicate his reluctance to impinge on H’s negative face and partially redress that impingement.

a- Apologize directly:

+ **Admit regret**: S admits his regret or sadness to do an FTA:

-AM: *Sorry, ...; I’d be sorry to ...; (I’m) sorry, but ...; I’m sorry for ...* -VN: *Xin lỗi, ... (sorry); Xin lỗi phải, ...; Xin lỗi vì ...; Xin lỗi về ... (sorry for ...); Tiếc là ... (regret that ...)*

These expressions are frequently used in declining invitations in both AM and VN.

[25] – *Sorry, I can’t come. Maybe another time.*

–*Xin lỗi tôi không thể đến được. Có lẽ hẹn dịp khác nhé!*

+**Beg forgiveness / sympathy**: S may beg H’s forgiveness, or at least ‘acquittal’. However, this way is used with great frequency in requests, commands or when S making mistakes or faults, not commonly in invitations and refusals to invitations.

[26] –*Tha lỗi cho tớ, hôm nay tớ thực sự không thể đi được!*

(Forgive me, today I really can’t come)

[27] – *Hôm nay mình bận mất rồi, thông cảm nhé!*

(Today I’m busy, sympathize with me!)

b- Apologize indirectly:

+ **Admit the impingement**: S can simply admit that he is impinging on H’s face. For example: -AM: *I know you’re tied up, but ...; I’m sure you must be very busy, but ...; I’m going to trouble you ...* -VN: *Tôi biết anh/ chị rất bận, nhưng ... (I know you’re busy); Phiền anh / chị ... (I’m going to bother you ...)*

[28] – *I know you’re tied up, but there is a very important conference at our Department tomorrow. We should be delighted if you were able to come.*

[29] – *Tôi biết anh rất bận, nhưng có một hội nghị quan trọng tổ chức tại khoa chúng tôi vào ngày mai. Chúng tôi rất vui nếu anh có thể tới tham dự.*

Such kinds of expression are more often resorted to in requests and command.

+**Indicate reluctance**: Added to the hedges mentioned above, S can attempt to show that he is reluctant to impinge on H with some other expressions such as the following:

-AM: *I wish I could, but ...; I’d like to, but ...; I’d love to, but ...*

-VN: *Không phải là tôi không muốn, nhưng mà ... (it is not that I do not want, but ...); Không phải là tôi không muốn, mà là ... (it is not that I do not want, but it is ...); Phải từ chối, tôi cũng cảm thấy áy náy, nhưng thực sự là tôi không thể ... (having to decline I feel uneasy, but I really can’t ...)*

These expressions work actively in declining invitations. For example:

[30] – *I’d love to, but I have an appointment at that time.*

Similarly in VN:

[31] – *Tôi rất thích, nhưng đúng thời gian đó tôi có hẹn mất rồi!*

(I like it very much, but exactly at that time I have an appointment)

+ Complain and self-abase:

In this way, S claims that he is incapable doing what H suggests, asks, invites...

-AM: *You know I’m bad at ..., You know I’m hopeless in ..., I’m afraid I’m not able to ...*

-VN: *Tôi ... chán lắm (My ... is so boring), Tôi dở lắm (I’m bad at ...), Về khoản này thì tôi dở lắm (About this I’m bad), Về khoản ... thì tôi dở lắm (About ... I’m bad).*

[32] A – *Let’s go to the dancing club tonight!*

B – *Oh, no ... I’m such a bad dancer.*

Similarly in VN:

[33] A – *Anh mời em nhảy bản này với anh nhé?*

B – *Thôi, em chẳng nhảy nữa đâu. Em nhảy dở lắm!* (Quang, N. [12:156])

+Give overwhelming reasons:

S can claim that he can not do what H asks or invites because of compelling reasons.

In a negative response to inviting:

[34] – *I'm sorry, I can't come because I have to do my duty.*

–*Tiếc quá! Anh không thể đến được vì phải đi trực mất rồi.*

The VN tend to give more specific reasons when inviting and especially when declining an invitation. It might be the case that specific reasons will help them avoid damaging the inviter's face when his invitation is refused. However, VN invitees seem to appreciate refusals with specific reasons when the inviters have a close relationship or are older than they are. Meanwhile, AM speakers value privacy and avoid poking their nose into others' personal matter; as a result, they give general explanations in most cases.

+ An AM invitee to a much older inviter:

[35] – *I'm sorry, I won't be able to come. I may be busy / I'm afraid I have other plans that day.*

+A VN invitee to a much older inviter:

[36] – *Cháu xin lỗi bác ngày hôm ấy cháu không đến được vì cháu phải đi dự hội thảo ở trường ạ!*

(I'm sorry for not coming that day because I'll have to attend a symposium at college.)

If in [35] the VN invitee only says, '*Cháu xin lỗi bác ngày hôm ấy cháu không đến được vì cháu bận/ có kế hoạch khác ạ!*' (I'm sorry, I won't be able to come. I may be busy / I'm afraid I have other plans that day) as the AM does, it appears rude and he seems to be impolite and may offend the elder inviter.

+In apologizing indirectly S may give hope and promise.

★**NPS 7: Impersonalize S and H**

Avoiding mentioning directly to S and/or H is one way to save S's and/or H's negative face. There are various ways to do this strategy:

a- Performatives: In this technique, according to Brown and Levinson [1:190], generally the initiator and/or the addressee are avoided; yet in VN invitations without subject, when the verb 'mời' (invite) remains, the addressee is always indicated explicitly:

[37] – *(Bạn tớ) Mời cậu tới dự tiệc với bạn tớ!*

(I Invite you to come to the party with us)

Not:

[38] – *(Bạn tớ) Mời (cậu) tới dự tiệc với bạn tớ!*

(I Invite you to come to the party with us)

However, such an invitation seems to be very informal and used when S and H have a very close relation. In order to make it more polite, 'ạ' is often added to the invitations:

[39] – *Mời bác vào chơi ạ!*

(Invite you come in!)

The equivalent invitation, however, has never seen in AM:

[40] – *Invite you to come over for dinner.*

It seems that in AM if the initiator is absent in the invitation, the technique of 'imperative' is explored. (see b)

b- Imperatives: The 'you' of the subject of the complement of the performative is often omitted in direct requests or commands, and in informal invitations. 'Imperative' itself is a highly face - threatening speech act, yet the degree of face-threatening depends on many communicative factors (intralanguage, paralanguage, and extralanguage). Let us examine some examples in AM and VN:

[41] – *Mary, come over for dinner on Sunday.*

[42] – *Lan ơi, thứ Bảy tối ăn tối nhé!*

(Lan [+appealer], on Saturday come for dinner [+appealer])
It is obvious that the syntactic forms of [40] and [41] are similar to requests. Different from AM invitations, in VN invitations appealers are often explored to reduce the imposition of the FTA. However, the content of the utterance and the combination of intralanguage, paralanguage (e.g. gentle voice, welcoming smile...) and extralanguage (e.g. inevitability of situation in AM and VN) signal to H for the invitation given. This phenomenon occurs in both AM and VN.

c- Impersonal verbs: In this technique, the agent is often deleted:

[43] – *It is so wonderful to go out at the moment. Let's go for a drink, Ok?*

[44] – *Chà, bây giờ mà đi đâu đó thì tuyệt vời nhỉ! Hay đi uống cà phê đi?*

(Well, now going somewhere is wonderful! Or go for a drink?)

It can be seen that in [43] (VN) the subject is absent, but in [42] (AM) despite the deletion of the real subject, the form subject exists in the pre-invitation. In AM, the form subject 'it' (It is + adj....to/ that...) is used with a great frequency. This structure is not only used in pre-invitations but sometimes in very formal while-invitations in AM: *It would be desirable (for me).. = I would like...* (Brown and Levinson 1987:192), yet the agent remains as a complement:

[45] – *It would be desirable for me to invite you to come and visit our college. (= I would like to invite...)*

And in responding to formal invitations:

[46] – *It's kind of you to invite me, but.... (= You are kind...)*

Nevertheless, this usage is less common in VN invitations:

[47] – *(Chúng tôi) Rất vinh hạnh được mời anh tới thăm trường.*

([We are] honoured to invite you to visit college)

d- Passive and replacement of the pronouns 'I' and 'you' by indefinites: These techniques work actively in the cases what S says seems not to be beneficial to H (comments, criticisms, sad news, requests...). They are also explored in invitations and declining invitations.

+The passive coupled with a rule of agent deletion is frequently employed in AM. For example: *It is said that..., it is believed that..., it is rumored that...*

[48] – *It is said that the film is very interesting. Let's go to see it tonight!*

As discussed in NPS 2 (*Hedges encoded in particles - Quotative particles*) by saying so, S may avoid responsibility for believing in the truth of the utterance, but at the same time he may imply that many people, not only he himself, think the film is interesting, which increases both H's interest or curiosity and the persuasiveness of the invitation. This technique of passive form is resorted to with a high frequency in AM, but rarely used in VN. The equivalent of 'it is said...' mostly used in VN is 'nghe nói là, nghe đồn là ...', which is similar to the techniques of 'performatives' (NPS 7 a)

[49] – *Nghe nói rạp Lê Lợi đang chiếu bộ phim rất hay. Tối nay mình đi xem đi!*

(**It is said** that the film on at Leloi cinema is very interesting. Tonight we go to see it!)

+These expressions are translated into VN: *người ta nói là..., người ta cho là..., người ta đồn là...,* which are often used as pre-invitations or post-invitations:

[50] – *Anh đã mua hai vé mời em tối nay đi xem phim 'Titanic'. Người ta đồn là bộ phim đó hay lắm đấy.*

(I have bought two tickets to invite you tonight to see 'Titanic'. **People rumour** that it is very interesting.)

This technique is sometimes used in declining invitations:

[51] (A invites B to go to see a film in the cinema with him, and B refuses:)

– *Dạo này người ta chẳng xem (chẳng ai xem) phim chiếu ngoài rạp đâu anh ạ. Thôi bây giờ mình ở nhà xem video đi.*

(Lately, **people** do not see (**nobody** sees) films at the cinema. We watch video at home now.)

Yet, it is noticeable that 'người ta...' is equivalent to another usage in AM in which the pronouns 'I' and 'you' are replaced by such indefinites as 'people', 'they', 'someone'...

[52] – *People say that the film is very interesting. Let's go to see it tonight!*

e- Pluralization of the 'I' pronoun: This technique is commonly used in VN when S is on behalf of a group of people:

[53] (A student invites his teacher to the class meeting)

– *We would like to invite you to the class meeting on Saturday evening.*

Similarly in VN:

[54] – *Chúng em mời cô tới dự buổi họp lớp vào tối thứ Bảy ạ!*

(We would like to invite you to the class meeting on Saturday evening.)

Instead of 'I' - 'em', the student uses the plural pronoun 'we' - 'Chúng em' to imply that he is on behalf of the whole class. However, this technique is also used in some special cases when S would like to avoid mentioning directly to S for some special reasons. For example: S personally invites H but she says:

[55] – *My family should be pleased if you could come and have dinner with us tomorrow.*

[56] – *Gia đình em rất vui được mời anh tới dự tiệc ăn mừng nhà mới vào thứ Bảy tới.*

(My family is very happy to invite you to our house-warming party next Saturday.)

In this case, S, instead of mentioning 'I' in [54] and 'tôi' in [55] as the real hosts of the invitation, borrows 'his family' to avoid the intimacy or to strengthen the persuasiveness of the invitation.

f- Address terms as 'you' avoidance: To avoid the rudeness of address form 'you' (*you, that man in...- VN: anh kia, cái ông/bà...này...*), in AM there are some formal titles such as *Sir, Madam, Miss...* or informal forms such as *Mate, Mac, Guy...*. This phenomenon may happen in invitations when S and H have not known each other before:

[57] (In a party, a man invites an unknown woman/girl)

– *Excuse me, may I have the honor of this dance, Miss?*

Different from AM address forms, which always stand alone, the use of VN address forms is often combined with appellations 'oi', 'thưa':

[58] – *Thưa cô, tôi có thể mời cô nhảy bản này được không?*

(You, may I invite you to dance to this music?)

Such forms may be used to soften FTAs or to draw H's attention and to increase solidarity.

g- Reference terms as 'I' avoidance: With this technique S may both vague the privacy of the act and soften threatening H's negative face. For example:

[59] – *Our class would like to invite you to the New Year party on Sunday.*

Similarly in VN:

[60] – *Khoa mời cô tới dự buổi hội thảo vào ngày thứ hai ạ.*

(Department invite you to the workshop on Monday.)

S's communicative intention in such an invitation is similar to the usage of *pluralization of the 'I' pronoun* mentioned above: S is on behalf of the class or department to give H the invitation.

h- Point-of-view distancing: Time and place switching has already discussed in PPS 3c as a positive-politeness strategy. Yet, if in PPS 3 the vivid present or switching back and forth between past and present tenses may be used in pre-invitations to make the events livelier and increase H's attraction, the switch back past or continuous past tenses in invitations in AM implies that the invitation is an *assumption*, which minimizes the imposition on H:

[61] – *I was wondering if you'd like to come to dinner on Tuesday evening.*

Nevertheless, in VN invitations this seems commonly to be done by using the switch from the present to the future for the same purpose:

[62] – *Anh mời em tối thứ Bảy đi dự tiệc năm mới.*

(I invite you on Sat. evening to come the New Year party)

[63] – *Anh định mời em tối thứ Bảy đi dự tiệc năm mới.*

(I'm going to invite you on Sat. evening to come the New Year party)

[64] – *Anh định sẽ mời em tối thứ Bảy đi dự tiệc năm mới.*

(I'll be going to invite you on Sat. evening to come the New Year party)

Of the two kinds of demonstratives (proximal demonstratives: *this, these / này, đây...* and distal demonstratives: *that, those / kia, đó...*) only the former, in personal observation, seems to be explored in invitations as a

PPS to shorten the distance between S and H (see PPS 7b) in both AM and VN.

★NPS 8: Nominalize

In AM, 'degrees of negative politeness (or at least formality) run hand in hand with degree of nouniness' (Ross 1973 - in Brown and Levinson [1:207]).

Normalization is often exploited in very formal invitations in AM:

[65] – *Stay and visit us for a while.*

[66] – *Would you honor me with a visit?*

[65] is obviously more formal than [64].

The same phenomenon happens in VN:

[67] – *Anh đến dự hội nghị vào ngày mai sẽ làm chúng tôi thấy rất vinh dự. (You attend the conference tomorrow, making us highly honored)*

[68] – *Sự có mặt của anh trong hội nghị ngày mai sẽ là một vinh dự lớn cho chúng tôi. (Your attendance at the conference tomorrow is a great honor for us)*

This usage is commonly explored in written language, yet it also occurs in spoken one:

[69] – *(Your) Coming to my party, O.K?*

E-REDRESS OTHER WANTS OF H's DERIVATIVE FROM NEGATIVE FACE

★NPS 9: Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebted H

Beside the strategy to give deference to H by indicating he is respected and esteemed and felt to be superior, S may acknowledge that for doing some FTA, S has directly or indirectly incurred in H's debt, which may be H's derivative want to be more powerful than S. This phenomenon can be seen in AM and VN invitations and declining invitations:

[70] – *Would you honor me with a visit?*

This invitation indicates that H's visit is a benefit he brings to S, so indirectly S falls into H's debt. Some expressions in VN are more directly used for this purpose:

[71] – *Nếu được bác đến chơi thì phúc cho chúng em quá.*

(If you come, we'd be very grateful)

[72] – *Chúng em rất biết ơn nếu được bác đứng ra chủ trì hôn lễ.*

(We'd be very grateful if you would be the preside for our wedding party)

In the same way, expressing thanks in responding to invitations puts S on record in accepting a debt. Some common expressions in AM are *Thank you..., Thank you*

very much..., Thank for asking. There appears to be a great variety of the equivalent expressions in VN: *Cám ơn...* (thank you), *Cám ơn nhiều...*, *vô cùng biết ơn* (thank you very much), *Quý hoá quá...* (it is very kind of...), *Thật là phúc cho...* (...very grateful...)... For example:

[73] –*Thank you very much, but I'm afraid I have other plans for that night.*

[74] –*Cám ơn nhé, nhưng tiếc quá hôm đó mình bận mất rồi.*

(Thank you, but regret that day I will be busy)

★NPS 10: Avoid personal questions

As discussed in PPS 8 Nhat, D.B [8:589], for members of negative-oriented community asking personal questions is seen as 'poking S's nose into H's/others' personal matters'. As a result, while asking personal questions is one way of showing concern for H in VN, avoiding this kind of question is a general rule in AM. This difference can be obviously seen in greeting routines and initial talks as pre-sequences of the FTAs including invitations. Let's compare the following pre-sequences given by an AM and a VN speaker:

An AM person invites his friend to go for a drink:

[75] A- *Morning, Joyce. You look tired.*

B- *I am! I just jogged six miles.*

A- *What about coming in for a cold drink?* Wall [14:139]

A A VN speaker to her friend:

[76] A- *Chào Minh. Trông cậu mệt mỏi quá nhỉ?* (Hello, Minh. You look tired)

B- *Tớ vừa chạy bộ 2 km xong.* (I just jogged 2 km)

A- *Cậu chạy một mình sao? Ông xã đâu? Sao không rủ ông xã chạy cùng.* (You jogged alone, didn't you? Where is your husband? Why don't you ask him to jog with you?)

B- *Ôi, ông ấy mà ra khỏi giường được thì tới giờ đi làm mất rồi!* (Oh, it's time to go to office when he gets up)

A- *Còn thời gian không ? Đi ăn sáng đi!.....* (Have time? Go for breakfast!)

While in [75] a small talk with personal questions are welcome to both the VN initiator and addressee, in [74] only one or two questions about H's health state as a lead-in are limited. It seems to be that if such personal questions in [75] are used to communicate with an AM person, he may feel annoyed and may not give any responses.

3. Conclusion

In summary, negative politeness, 'the heart of respect behavior', orients to preserving the negative face of other people. It emphasizes the hearer's right to freedom, and increases a certain distance between S and H or S's deference for H. Thus, if positive politeness is minimizing social distance between interactants, negative politeness is maintaining social distance between interactants or 'minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA unavoidably effects'. In order for inviters to be successful and invitees to avoid damaging the inviter's face by refusing point-blank, both the AM and VN use many different techniques of negative-politeness. Some major cross-cultural differences in realization of NPS in In. and DIn. used by the two groups are summarized as follows:

1. Expressions of conventional indirectness and the attitude towards the degree of formality in AM and VN are not similar. (NPS 1)
2. In AM, interrogative forms tend to be used as formal invitations, but in VN they seem to be less formal. (NPS 2)
3. Double negative forms in invitations, which are hardly used in AM, are employed in VN. (NPS2)
4. While negative questions in invitations which presumes 'yes' as an answer (to indicate that S knows H's wants, tastes, habits) are commonly resorted to in AM, affirmative positive forms of invitation are employed more commonly in VN. (NPS 2)
5. While in AM subjunctives help H distinguish an invitation from a normal question or request, command, in VN politeness markers and appealers are explored in invitations for the same function. (NPS 2)
6. In AM invitations and refusals to invitations, tentativizers may be independent particles (e.g *perhaps, maybe*) or embedded in modal verbs e.g (*may, might*), but they are always independent ones in VN (e.g *có lẽ, có thể*). (NPS 2)
7. While in AM adverbial clause hedges (*if clause*) tend to be put at the end of the invitation, they seem to be in the beginning in VN. (NPS 2)
8. Honorific and dishonorific labels seem to appear more commonly in Vietnamese invitations than in American ones. (NPS 5)
9. Specific reasons for the refusals to invitations seem to be preferred in VN than AM. (NPS6)
10. Performatives (*the verb 'invite' without subject*) are commonly used in Vietnamese invitations, but absent in American ones. (NPS 7)
11. It seems that if the initiator is absent in American invitations, the technique of 'imperative' is explored. (NPS 7)
12. Different from AM, the passive coupled with a rule of agent deletion is not common in VN. (NPS 7)
13. While in American invitations the switch back past or continuous past tenses implies that the invitation is an 'assumption', in Vietnamese ones the time switch seems commonly to be done from the present to the future tenses for the same purpose. (NPS 7)

14. The technique of normalization in invitations seems to be more common in AM than in VN. (NPS 8)
15. In general, in contrast with Vietnamese people, American people avoid asking personal questions in inviting. (NPS 10)
16. However, in general the answer for the hypothesis of the existence of equivalent linguistic expressions of NPS in VN and AM is positive. Noticeably, in real-life conversations the frequency of using these strategies in this speech act is not similar in all cases, and they are diverse in different cultures.

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Author Profile



Duong Bach Nhat received the M.A degree in Methodology in English in 2002 and the Ph.D degree in English Linguistics in 2008 from College of Foreign Languages - Vietnam National University, Hanoi. She is now working at University of Economics – The University of Danang, Vietnam.