

Strategies of Positive Politeness in Inviting and Declining Invitations in Vietnamese

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Abstract: *Politeness plays a significant status in human interaction, and a number of politeness strategies are commonly used in daily speech acts including inviting and declining invitations. The article presents the positive strategies which are employed in inviting and declining invitations by Vietnamese people. The framework is based on Brown, P. and Levinson, S [2] and Quang, N. [11].*

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

1. Introduction

Politeness is, by nature, reflected in language, and is expressed differently in different languages. In any speech community, linguistic and social activities which are seen as appropriate to a communicative event must adhere to a set of rules of proper behavior. The speaker's conducts are perceived as more or less polite relative to community values and norms. It is suggested that people relate to each other and manage communication on the basis of a principle of politeness. According to Yule [14:60], politeness is 'a number of different general principles for being polite in social interaction within a particular culture'. Lakoff [7:38] states that politeness is 'a system of interpersonal relation designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange'. Then, the norms and principles of politeness are, of course, culturally determined and politeness is the key word in communication.

2. Content

2.1. Theoretical background

The criteria of politeness in communication are viewed from different angles. However, in general there are some major approaches as follows:

2.1.1 Imposing normative principles to determine polite behaviors

Most noticeable of this approach is Grice's Cooperative Principle (C.P) [4]. He proposes that all speakers, regardless of their cultural background, behave according to the following basic principle with a set of maxims and submaxims governing conversation, including Relevance (Make sure that whatever you say is relevant to the conversation at hand), Quality (Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence), Quantity (Make your contribution sufficiently informative for the current purposes of conversation.), and Clarity (Do not make your contribution obscure, ambiguous or difficult to understand). The C.P is claimed to govern most human conversational interactions and rational participants abide by maxims. These maxims would constitute guidelines for achieving maximally efficient communication. If the

speaker observes all the maxims, saying precisely what he/she wants, it is not difficult for the listener to get the intended meaning of the utterance. Yet, there are many occasions when people fail to observe the maxims. Any violation of maxims can be a signal for the hearer to seek for a suitable interpretation of the utterance by a sequence of inferences.

2.1.2 Giving principles of politeness in communication as 'do's and don't'

Based on Grice's conversational principles, Lakoff [7:88] suggests three rules of pragmatic competence:

- 1) Don't impose: (the most formal politeness rule - for the participants with different power and status) S will avoid, or ask permission or apologize for making H do anything H does not want to do.
- 2) Offer options: (a more informal politeness rule - for the participants with approximately equal status and power, but not socially close) Express oneself in such a way that one's opinion or request can be ignored without being contradicted or rejected.
- 3) Encourage feelings of Camaraderie: (for friendly or intimate politeness) S shows an active interest in the other, by asking personal questions and making personal remarks, but also to show regard and trust by being open about the details of one's own life, experiences, feelings, and the like.

Thus, it is readily observed that these rules are oriented to the function of 'Making people feel good', with rules [1] and [2] evoking the impression of negative politeness. Furthermore, though they seem to be central to Western cultures, where non-imposition and freedom of actions are emphasized, impersonalization is not always perceived as polite strategy in non-western cultures, including Vietnamese culture where intimate relations and group solidarity are commonly appreciated. For this reason, it is difficult to consider the rules universal.

Leech [8] gives his Politeness Principles: 'Minimize (all things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs; maximize (all things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs.' He also lists a number of maxims, namely Tact Maxim (Minimize cost to self; maximize benefit to ther), Generosity Maxim (Minimize own benefit to self; maximize

cost to self), Approbation Maxim (Minimize dispraise to other; maximize praise to other), Modesty Maxim (Minimize self-praise; maximize self-dispraise), Agreement Maxim (Minimize disagreement between self and other; maximize agreement between self and other), and Sympathy Maxim (Minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between self and other).

As can be seen, adopting the framework by Grice, Leech treats politeness within the domain of a rhetorical pragmatics, his account of directed linguistic behavior. However, these six maxims in communication, by nature, are only four because maxims [1] and [2], [3] and [4] are interrelated. Besides, the notions of ‘cost’, ‘benefit,’ ‘minimize’, ‘maximize’ are all vague. These politeness maxims tend to be more ‘positive’, as a result, they could hardly be the universal principles of politeness in communication. Additionally, they fail to account for contextual factors such as roles of participants, setting and sex. Moreover, the model seems to be best applied to Anglo-American culture where social distance is valued.

The argument is, therefore, advanced that the ways Lakoff’s and Leech’s approach ‘politeness’ are rule-oriented and normative. Their maxims are formulated as imperatives which communicators have to observe for efficient communication. Furthermore, though such normative principles help us understand the notion of ‘politeness’, we still do not know why they are essential in human communication. Besides, these principles and maxims are only appropriate in a particular culture, therefore, they donot seem of great use in studying politeness across cultures.

2.1.3 Suggesting strategies for dealing with FTA in communication

The most elaborated work on linguistic politeness is Brown and Levinson’s [2]. Working with Goffman’s notion of ‘face’ (the public self-image of a person), Brown and Levinson clarify its two varieties: positive face and negative face. According to them, positive face is the need to be accepted by others, to be treated as a member of the same group; and negative face is the need to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not to be imposed on by others. If a speaker says something that is a threat to another person’s face it is called a face threatening act (FTA); when a speaker says something to lessen a possible threat it is called a face saving act (FSA). Brown and Levinson propose a series of strategies to minimize the threat, which is summarized in figure 1, numbering from greater to lesser risk of face:

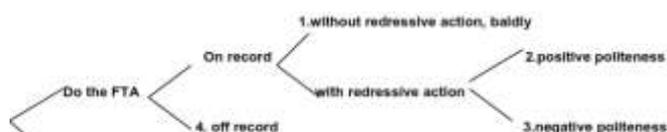


Figure 1: Possible strategies for doing FTAs (Brown & Levinson [2:69])

Brown and Levinson do not give any rules but, in Figure 1, suggest five ways to encounter FTA:

- 1) Doing the FTA on record without redressive action, baldly: The way we do an act is the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise. For example: ‘Close the door!’
- 2) Doing the FTA on record with positive politeness redressive action: the potential face threat of an act is minimized by indicating that S wants H’s want. e.g using in-group usages of address form (‘let’s go home’)
- 3) Doing the FTA on record with negative politeness redressive action: when S can not avoid using the FTA he says or does something to show that he recognizes and respects H’s negative-face wants and will not interfere with H’s freedom of action. (e.g ‘I do not want to trouble you, but could you help me to move this table?’)
- 4) Doing the FTA off record: S goes off record in doing the FTA, but he gives some kinds of hints or highlights the FTA. (S is intending to ask H to help him/her carry the table, but he/she said, ‘This table is so heavy!’)
- 5) Do not do the FTA: S does not do or say anything to threat H’s face.

This model receives high appreciation from many researchers. Brown and Levinson rank strategies from Don’t do the act on record baldly, which has no linguistically encoded compensation, through a sequence of escalating politeness strategies to Don’t do the act, where the face is too great to be compensated by any language formula so that the most appropriate politeness strategy is not to do the act. Additionally, according to them off-record utterances are assumed more polite than bald-on-record ones. Let’s take Yule’s illustration, following Brown and Levinson, as an example:

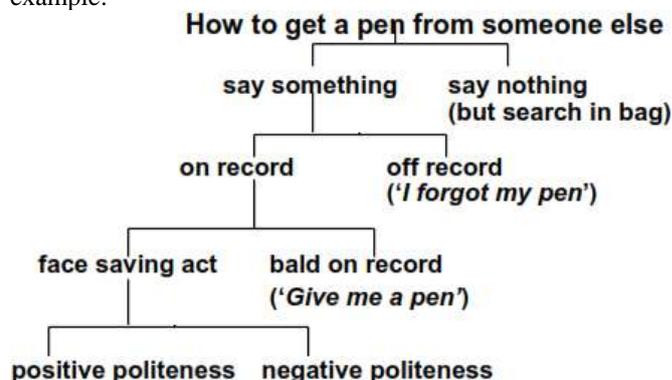


Figure 2: How to get a pen from someone else – (following Brown & Levinson 1987 -G.Yule [2:66])-

On the other hand, while working on universals of politeness, Brown and Levinson themselves are well aware of the fact that some languages and cultures tend to be primarily ‘Positive Politeness’, others seem to be primarily ‘Negative Politeness’. As a result, numbering 2 and 3 for positive and negative politeness respectively to a certain extent reduces the universal value of this schema. This theory seems to work effectively in Anglo-American culture where people are inclined to employ more negative politeness, but it does not seem to be appropriate in Oriental cultures, including the Vietnamese one. In Vietnam, showing concern, in-group membership and closeness among interactants in face-to-face in conversations are widely resorted to and always considered more polite. For this reason, although highly appreciating Brown and Levinson’s schema, Quang N.

[11:53] proposes another frame in figure 3. In agreement with Brown and Levinson, Quang N. numbers the strategies from greater to lesser risk of face losing, but based on the nature of ‘making other(s) feel good’ of polite behaviors in different cultures he grades positive politeness and negative politeness equally.

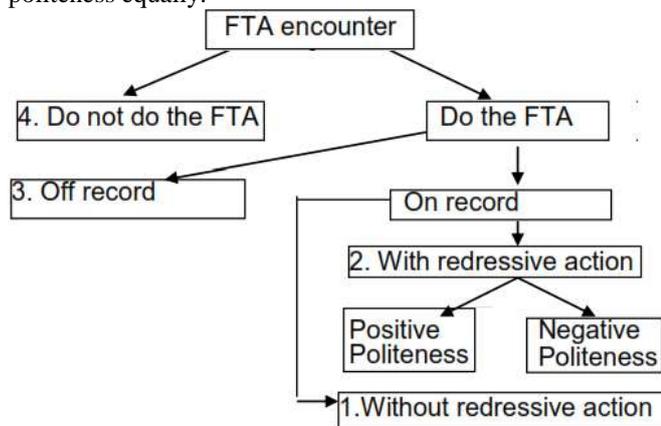


Figure 3: Possible strategies for doing FTAs (Quang N. [11:53])

Brown and Levinson suggest fifteen strategies of positive politeness and ten strategies of negative politeness. The fifteen strategies (outputs) of positive politeness are grouped into three broad mechanisms: Claim common ground (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8), Convey that S and H are cooperators (9,10,11,12,13,14), Fulfill H’s want (15). The ten strategies of negative politeness are grouped into five broad mechanisms: Be direct (1), Don’t presume/assume (2), Don’t coerce (1,2,3,4,5), Communicate S’s want to not impinge on H(6,7,8,9), Redress other wants of H’s (5,10). In comparison with Grice’s Cooperative Principles and Lakoff’s and Leech’s maxims, the strategies given by Brown and Levinson appear more practical and universal. The way they approach and posit the strategies of politeness is more appropriate because it is based on the notion of ‘human being’ with thoughts and face-wants. In other words, Brown and Levinson’s approach allows us to conduct cross-cultural contrastive analyses, to discover cross-cultural differences in interpreting appreciating and employing politeness and politeness strategies.

However, revising and extending Brown and Levinson’s research, Quang N. [12:16-186] suggests seventeen strategies of positive politeness and eleven strategies of negative politeness. He adds the following strategies to Brown and Levinson’s positive politeness strategies:

- Strategy 16 (PPS 16): Comfort and encourage
- Strategy 17 (PPS 17): Ask personal questions and for negative politeness:
- Strategy 11 (NPS 11): Avoid asking personal questions

I share Nguyen Thien Giap’s in Quang N. [12:4] argument that these additional strategies are appropriately added since they work actively in real life communication. However, in his discussion of the strategies of positive and negative politeness, Quang, N. [12:24-188] examines them without putting them clearly in each of the broad mechanisms suggested by Brown and Levinson [2]. His analysis, in my opinion, is reasonable in the way that the sharp distinction

among the mechanisms is difficultly achieved because one strategy may be used for more than one different communicative intentions and one intention may explore more than one strategy. To some extent, however, Quang N.’s amendment of strategies seems to leave an argumentative question of which broad mechanisms suggested by Brown and Levinson’s the added strategies (PPS 16, 17- NPS 11) belong to. In my opinion, PPS 16, in which S shares sympathy and encouragement with H, belongs to the third broad mechanism of positive politeness strategy: ‘Fulfill H’s want for some X’. Additionally, though the position of PPS 17 and NPS 11 (at the end of the list of strategy) proposed by Quang N. can highlight the opposite functions of the two kinds of politeness strategy, which are commonly used in two different cultures (Western and non-Western), it appears to be reasonable to discuss PPS 17 as one of the strategy of the first broad mechanism (Claim common ground) suggested by Brown and Levinson because for communicators in non-western cultures including Vietnam, personal questions are used as a mark of friendship or interest in H .

Both kinds of politeness strategy - positive and negative – are used in daily communication, however as Quang N. [11:53] has explained, while negative politeness strategies seem to be preferred in Western countries, positive politeness strategies tend to be more commonly used in non-western communities including Vietnam. For this reason and within the scope of the paper, a brief study is conducted on positive politeness strategies realized for the speech act of ‘inviting and declining invitations’ in Vietnamese.

2.2 Positive politeness strategies in inviting and declining invitations in Vietnamese

In positive politeness, unlike negative politeness, the particular face want violated by the FTA is not always necessarily redressed. Its sphere of redress is directed to the appreciation of alter’s wants in general or to the expression of similarity between ego’s and alter’s wants. These amendments are illustrated in Figure 4 adapted from Brown and Levinson’s classification:

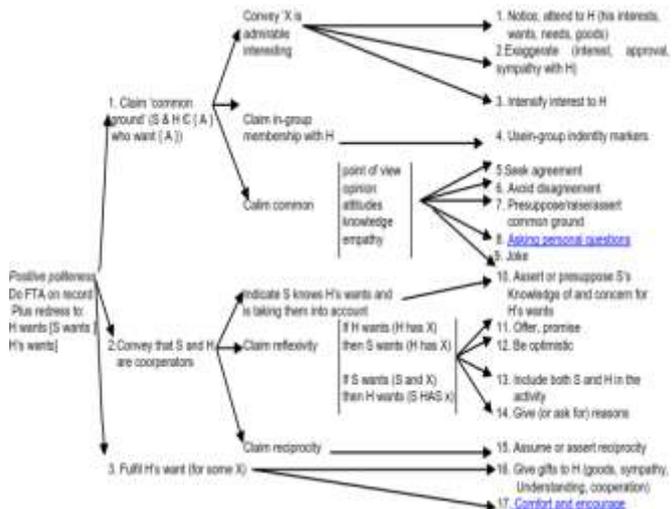


Figure 4: Positive politeness strategies (Adapted from Brown and Levinson [2:102])

According to Brown and Levinson [2:103] there are three broad mechanisms belonging to the strategies of positive politeness: Claim 'common ground' (S & H (A) who want(X)), Convey that S and H are cooperators, Fulfill H's want (for some X).

In this paper, these mechanisms and their outputs inclusive of Quang N.'s amendments are analyzed with reference to inviting and declining invitations in Vietnamese. However, it is noticeable that in real life, invitations might be refused. Therefore, one invitation would require more elaboration, and declining an invitation is not difficult but how to do it without hurting the addressee's feeling is a delicate form. As a result, invitations and refusals rarely stand alone, but are often extended to some utterances that are called lead-ins or pre-invitations/ pre-refusals and lead-outs or post-invitations/ post-refusals. For this reason, in the following examples of positive-politeness strategies invitations and refusals together with extended utterances are examined.

2.2.1 Claim 'common ground':

In these strategies of this type, in order to claim 'common ground' with H, S indicates that belonging to some set of persons they both share specific wants (including goals and values). Following are three ways in which S makes this claim:

- Showing his/her interest in H's want
- Emphasizing both S and H belong to the same category or group with similar wants.
- Claiming common perspective with H (without necessarily stressing in common membership).

We now examine the outputs of these three methods of stressing common ground in eight positive-politeness strategies in inviting and declining an invitation:

Strategy 1: Notice, attend to H (his interest, wants, needs, goods):

In this strategy S expresses his/her interest in such aspects of H's condition as noticeable health state and remarkable changes, of which H seems to expect S's notice and approval. For example:

-You must be hungry, it's long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?

- Brown & Levinson [2:103]-

Similarly in Vietnamese:

[1] -*Ồ! Cậu có bộ váy đẹp quá! Bộ này mà đi dự tiệc cưới với tớ tối nay thì tuyệt vời.* (Oh! Your dress is so beautiful. It is wonderful to go to the wedding day with me tonight!)

[2] -*Em chắc hẳn đã mệt lắm rồi nhỉ? Minh ghé đâu đó uống nước đi!* (You are tired, aren't you? Go somewhere for a drink now.)

In [1] and [2] the speaker takes notice of H's dress and H's state of health. Due to these concerns the invitations seem to be for H's want.

Another aspect of notice output is jokes. When H makes an FTA against himself, in order to indicate that S 'notices' it and is not embarrassed by it, S tells a joke. This also occurs

in declining an invitation when it seems to be beneficial to the inviter only and the invitee does not like it:

[3] *A- Bọn mình vừa mở câu lạc bộ khiêu vũ nhưng còn thiếu tay trụ cột! Cậu đảm trách vai trò ấy giúp bọn mình nhé!* (We have just opened a dancing club, but the manager is still lacking. Could you be in charge of it?)

B- Thôi! Tớ chẳng dám! Chân tay con nhà võ của tớ mà tham gia vào không khéo câu lạc bộ khiêu vũ của các cậu sẽ trở thành câu lạc bộ 'khiêu chiến' ấy chứ! (No, I don't dare! My 'boxing' hands may turn your dancing club into a 'fighting' club.)

B's joke can serve as a good way to decline A's invitation without offending A by giving his refusal point-blank.

Strategy 2: Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H):

In this strategy S often exaggerates his interest, approval, or sympathy with H. For example:

[4] -*Trời ơi! trong bộ áo váy này trông em thật giống như hoa hậu báo Tiền Phong vậy. Diện bộ này đi dự dạ hội ở câu lạc bộ bọn anh đi!* (Oh dear! In this dress you look like Miss Tien Phong! Go to our club now!)

In Vietnamese invitations, it is personally observed that exaggerated compliments often go together with invitations in such a way that they express S' interest to H's condition and make the invitee comfortable before accepting the invitation.

In English and Vietnamese the exaggerative or emphatic use of such intensifiers as so, such, for sure, really, extremely, enormously, exactly, absolutely, perfectly, terribly ... (English), and trời ơi, vô cùng, thực sự, thật là, thật, rất, rất chi là, quá là, rất ư là, lắm, thế, đấy... (Vietnamese) is often resorted to for this end. In addition, this is often done with exaggerated intonation, stress, and other aspects of prosodics, as well as with intensifying modifiers. Another device is reduplication: xinh xinh là, rất rất chi là...

[5] - *Ngày mai là ngày sinh nhật mẹ em. Anh mà tới dự sinh nhật thì mẹ em rất rất chi là cảm động!*

(Tomorrow is my mother's birthday. If you come, she will be very very touched.)

Strategy 3: Intensify interest to H:

There are some different ways to do this strategy:

a) Making a good story:

To communicate to H that he shares some of his wants, S intensifies the interest of his own contributions to the conversation by making a good story. For example:

[6] -*Vừa nãy tớ đi qua đường Lê Hồng Phong, thấy xe tắc lại- chẳng biết chuyên gì tớ cũng chen vào. Cậu biết chuyên gì không? Hóa ra là trước cửa rạp chiếu phim Lê Lợi người ta xếp hàng đông nghịt để mua vé xem phim 'Gái Nhây'. Tớ cũng may mắn kiếm được hai vé. Tối nay chúng mình đi xem nhé!*

(I have just passed Le Hong Phong street. Seeing a jam and not knowing what happened, I pushed my way through the crowd. Can you guess what was happening? It happened that they were queuing for tickets for the film

'Dancing Girl' in front of Le Loi cinema. I'm lucky to get two tickets. Let's go to see this film this evening?)

In this example, the inviter pulls H right into the middle of the events and increases their interest to him (H) before giving the invitation.

b) Using the vivid present or switching back and forth between past and present tenses

This is a common feature of positive-politeness conversations:

[7] – 'Black I like. I used to wear it more than I do now, I very rarely wear it now. I wore a black jumper, and when I wear it my Mum says 'Ah', she said. But Len likes it, he thinks it looks ever so nice and quite a few people do. But when my mum sees it she said, Oh it's not your colour, you're more for pinks and blues.'

-Brown & Levinson [2:106]-

If in English the vivid present or switching back and forth between past and present tenses may be used for this purpose, in Vietnamese this is commonly done by using the present:

[8] – *Hôm qua (đã) đi xin duyệt mấy công văn em (đã) tình cờ phát hiện ra một quán 'Cây' mới. Chiều nay tan sở em mời xếp ghé qua duyệt xem thử ra sao!* (Yesterday when going to ask for ratification of some official documents, I by chance see (saw) a new 'dog' stand. This afternoon, I would like to invite you to taste if it is good or bad.)

c) Using directly quoted speech :

Using directly quoted speech rather than indirect reported speech is another feature of this strategy. For example:

[9] – *Anh ấy bảo: 'Cứ yên tâm đi. Tao mà đã thuyết phục thì cái Lan nhất định sẽ đi với mày'* (He said, 'Don't worry! If I persuade, she will go with you!') - Quang N. [12:28]-

However, according to my personal observation, when giving an invitation, the Vietnamese do not seem to use directly quoted speech very often:

[10] – *Ba mẹ anh bảo là tối nay mời em tới ăn cơm với gia đình.* (My parents told me to invite you to have dinner with my family this evening.)

Rarely :- *Ba mẹ anh bảo: 'Tối nay mời con Lan tới ăn tối nhé'* (My parent said, 'Invite Lan to have dinner with our family this evening.')

In Vietnamese, the invitation sounds like a narration or it seems to convey a special meaning if direct speech is used. For example:

[11] – *Chiều hôm qua mẹ bảo với anh: 'Ngày mai con nhớ mời con dâu tương lai của mẹ tới ăn tối nhé!' Đấy, mẹ công nhận em là con dâu tương lai của mẹ rồi đấy!* (Yesterday afternoon my mother said to me, 'Tomorrow remember to invite my daughter-in-law-to-be to come for dinner!' You see, my mother has accepted you as her daughter-in-law!)

In [11] the direct invitation with the bold words seems to be a comment. Sometimes the comment may have a negative meaning as in the following example:

[12] – *Hôm qua thằng Luân nói với tớ: 'Nhớ mời em Lan của tớ tới ăn tối nhé!!' Gớm, nó làm như em Lan đã là gì của nó rồi ấy!* (Yesterday Luan said to me, 'Remember to invite my Lan to come for dinner!' Uhh! He said as if she was 'his own'.)

d) Using tag questions or expressions

Using tag questions or expressions is often to draw H as a participant into the conversation, such as 'you know?', 'see what I mean?', 'isn't it?':

[13] – *Sit down, will/won't you?*

The Vietnamese often use cajolers (anh/ chị...biết không?, như anh/chị... thấy đấy?...), or appealers (nhì? Chứ nhì? Đúng không nào?)...Especially, in invitations they often use such appealers as: 'nhé', 'nhí', 'đi'...:

[14] – *Em có rảnh không? Mình đi uống nước đi!*

(Are you free? Let's go for a drink?)

[15] – *Chiều nay chúng mình đi xem triển lãm ở khu trung tâm nhé!* (Shall we go to the exhibition in the centre this afternoon?)

Cajolers 'anh/ chị...biết không', 'anh/ chị hiểu cho, 'anh/ chị biết đấy'... are sometimes used as lead-ins for starting the reason why the invitation is not accepted:

[16] – *A Chiều Chủ nhật này mình định nấu món gì đó, cậu nhớ tới nhé!* (This afternoon I'm going to cook something, please come!)

B- *Dạ, chắc là em không tới được. Chị biết không, bà nội mấy đứa mới lên chơi nên em phải ở nhà làm nhiệm vụ con dâu đang đang chứ.* (I can't come. You know, my husband's mother has just come, so I have to stay at home to do a clever daughter-in-law's duties.)

The cajoler 'chị biết không' in this refusal harmonizes the interpersonal relation and raises the inviter's sympathy with the invitee when she cannot accept the invitation.

e) Exaggerating facts to overstate:

Exaggerating facts is a related technique:

[17] – *Em có thể đi uống nước với anh vài phút được không?* (Could you go for a drink with me for few minutes?)

[18] – *Tối nay em thấy hàng trăm người chen nhau trong rạp 'Điện Ảnh'. Chị em mình cũng đi đi!* (This evening I saw hundreds of people in the cinema 'Dien Anh'. Let's go!

The exaggeration in these cases seems to be an element of attempting to increase the interest of the conversational contributions by expressing them dramatically.

Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers:

Using the innumerable ways to convey in-group membership can help S to claim the common ground with H.

These include:

- In-group usages of address form
- In group usages of language or dialect.

- In-group usages of jargon or slang
- In-group usages of ellipsis

a) Address form:

According to Quang N. [12:30] in many languages the address forms which express solidarity semantic are often used as in-group identity markers.

In Vietnamese invitations, the following addressing relationships are often used:

+ Circular relationship:

[19] – *Chú cháu mình đi nhậu lai rai đi!* (We go for a snack and drink!)

+Horizontal relationship – Type 1:

[20] – *Tớ với cậu chủ nhật này vòng qua sông Cầu ghé về nhà ngoại tớ chơi nhé!* (You and I pass Cầu River to drop in on my grandmother this Sunday!)

+Dynamic relationship- Type 2:

[21] – *Thủ trưởng với em đi làm cái gì cho ấm bụng đi!* (You {boss} and I go for something to eat!)

To convey such in-group membership, the Vietnamese often use other address forms including personal names, generic names and terms of endearment like: em/anh yêu, anh bạn...Such forms may be used to soften FTAs, especially in requests; this occurs in invitations, too:

[22] – *Em yêu, hôm nay anh mời em đi com tiệm nhé!* (Darling, today I'd like to invite you to eat out!)

[23] – *Đi làm một 'vại' chứ anh bạn?* (Go for a drink, friend?)

In Vietnamese the appealer 'ơi' often goes with the above-mentioned addresses to draw H's attention and to increase solidarity:

[24] – *Minh ơi! Chủ nhật này tớ mời cậu tới ăn mừng nhà mới của tớ nhé!* (Eh Minh! This Sunday I'd like to invite you to my house-warming party!)

b) Language or dialect:

In the places where the linguistic repertoire includes two or more codes, the phenomenon of code-switching (switching from one language or dialect to another in communities) may occur. The switch may be from the 'high' and prestigious to the other 'low' and domestic, or from the formal to informal or vice versa:

(When A, hosting a house-warming party, invites the people in his/her department):

+ To the manager:

[25] – *Nhà em vừa xây xong rồi thủ trưởng a. Em mời thủ trưởng 5 giờ chiều ngày mai tới ăn mừng nhà mới với chúng em!* (My house has just been built. I'd like to invite you to my house-warming party at 5 p.m. tomorrow.)

+ To the close friends:

[26] – *Ê, chiều mai 5 giờ 'xả láng' một bữa ở nhà tao nghen! Tao 'rửa' nhà đó!* (Eh! At 5 tomorrow afternoon, 'relaxation' party at my house! I 'wash' it.)

The switch may be from one dialect to another:

+ To a Northerner:

[27] – *Nếu anh chị không bận gì, mời anh chị ghé và thăm nhà em một tí!* (If you are not busy, I'd like to invite you to drop round some minutes)

+To a Southerner:

[28] – *Anh chị có rảnh không, ghé dzô chơi nhà em chút xíu!* (Are you free? I'd like to invite you to drop round some minutes)

Other cases simply involve switching from one language to another, in bilingual or multilingual communities.

c) Jargon or slang:

The use of in-group terminology is another way of using an in-group language or dialect. All the shared associations and attitudes that S and H both have toward that object may be evoked when S refers to an object with a slang term; this then may be used as FTA redress. For example:

+ A streetwalker to a passer-by:

[29] – *Anh Hai đi với em tối nay nghen!* (Brother, 'go' with me tonight?)

+ To a drinking-friend:

[30] – *Chiều nay làm vài xị đi!* (This afternoon go for some litres {drinks}!)

d) Contraction and ellipsis:

An association between the use of ellipsis and the existence of in-group shared knowledge may occur due to the reliance on shared mutual knowledge to make ellipsis comprehensible. For example:

[31] A- *Bia chứ?* (Beer?)

B- *Nhất trí!* (O.k)

A- *Ken nhé!* (Ken?)

B- *Sài sang thế! Băm ba thôi.* (Too expensive! 33,O.k.!) -Quang N. [11:33]-

The communication may be broken down (B may not understand what 'Ken' means and A may not understand 'Băm ba' means) if they are not in a party or restaurant and share mutual comprehension.

Strategy 5: Seek agreement:

To seek ways in which it is possible to agree with him is another characteristic way of claiming common ground with H. There are some popular ways to seek agreement as follows:

a) Safe topics

Raising 'safe topics' allows S to stress his agreement with H and therefore to satisfy H's desire to be 'right', or to be corroborated in his opinions. For example, you want to invite a colleague to the theatre and you know that she is interested in fashion; you can give a compliment on her dress before giving an invitation:

[32] – *Ồ! Bộ váy mới của em đẹp quá! Tối nay diện bộ này đi xem hát với anh đi!* (Oh! Your new dress is so beautiful! In this dress go to the theater with me this evening, please!)

'The more S knows about H, the more close to home will be the safe topics he can pursue with H'. In this case, fashion is a safe and interesting topic (see Strategy 1) and it may lead to an acceptance easily. However, if the invitee is a person who always proves to be independent on her parents, the following invitation may confront with a negative reaction:

[33] – *Mẹ lại mới mua cho em bộ váy mới đấy à? Tối nay diện bộ này đi xem hát với anh đi!*

(Has your mother just bought one more dress for you?
In this dress go to the theater with me this evening,
please!)

In addition, in different cultures the notion of 'safe topics' is various. For example, according to my survey in the paper 'White lies in refusals to an invitation made by American and Vietnamese people', Vietnamese invitees tend to give the more specific reasons. In addition, Vietnamese invitees seem to appreciate refusals with specific reasons when the inviters have a close relationship or are older than they are. Meanwhile, Americans value privacy and avoid poking their nose into others' personal matter; as a result, they give general explanations in most cases. For example:

+ An American invitee to a much older inviter:

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

+A Vietnamese invitee to a much older inviter:

[35] – *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 Vietnamese 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 American does, it appears rude and he seems to be impolite and may offend the elder inviter.

b) Repetition

Repeating part or all of what the preceding speaker has said in conversation may also stress emotional agreement with the utterance or stress interest and surprise. This occurs in accepting and declining an invitation, too:

[36] – A- *Trời đẹp thế này mà đi 'Bãi dài' thì tuyệt vời em nhỉ? Hay mình đi bây giờ đi?* (It is wonderful to go to 'Bãi Dài' in this weather! Let's go there now!)

B- *Vâng, trời đẹp thế này mà đi 'Bãi dài' thì tuyệt quá rồi còn gì, nhưng tiếc quá bây giờ em lại phải ra ga đón mẹ.*

(Yes, it is wonderful to go to 'Bãi Dài' in this weather, but I'm sorry I can't because I have to go to the railway station to pick up my mother now.)

The repetition in such a refusal may soften FTAs, which is common in Vietnamese (see strategy 6).

c) Minimal encouragers

There are a number of particles that function to indicate emphatic agreement, such as 'vậy à?', 'thế huh?', 'ái chà!', 'úi giời ơi!' 'hết ý!...' Such particles are often used with the respondent role as utter brief agreement after each sentence or two. Some of them are also used in response to an invitation:

[37] –A – *Này, ở Hội trường đang có vở kịch nói mới đấy!* (Eh, a new play is on at the theatre!)

B – *Hay quá nhỉ!* (so interesting!)

A – *Đi xem đi! Tôi chiều đãi.* (Let's go! I'll buy the tickets)

B – *Ái chà! Thật vậy sao? nhưng tiếc quá tối nay tôi phải đi thi lại mất rồi.* (Uhh!! Really? But I'm sorry I have to take a re-examination this evening)

Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement:

Disagreement is an act threatening H's face strongly; as a result, this strategy is used in all communities. It includes token agreement, pseudo-agreement, white lie, and hedge; however, the first three techniques are commonly used in declining an invitation.

a) Token agreement - White lies:

Mechanisms for pretending to agree may originate from the desire to agree or appear to agree with H. English people often use 'Yes, but...' rather than a blatant 'No...' This is very popular in declining a Vietnamese invitation:

[38] –A – *Hương ơi, lớp mình sắp sửa tổ chức đi picnic đấy. Cậu qua đi chơi với lớp mình cho vui.* (Huong, my class is holding a picnic. Go with us!)

B – *Thích quá nhỉ! Giá mà tớ rảnh thì tớ đi ngay nhưng tớ lại sắp thi học kỳ rồi.* (So interesting! If I were free, I would go with you, but I'm going to take examination.)

Perhaps, the token agreement in such refusals, in some cases, may be considered as white lie, a further output of the positive politeness desire to avoid disagreement. When declining an invitation, but wanting not to damage the inviter's positive face, the invitee often gives some reason, though it is not true. Another example:

[39] –A- *Chúng tớ mời cậu gia nhập câu lạc bộ mới mở của chúng tớ cho vui.* (We'd like to invite you to join our new club.)

B- *Hay quá, tớ thích lắm! Nhưng tiếc là dạo này tớ phải đi công tác luôn, ít khi ở nhà lắm. Khi nào rảnh rồi tớ sẽ ghé câu lạc bộ của các cậu xem sao.* (Great! I'd love to. But I'm sorry I can't because lately I have to go on business, rarely at home. When having free time, I'll come to your club.)

In this case, B may not like the friends in the club; nor may he enjoy participating in a club, and both A and B may understand that the reason is not true, but the inviter's face is saved by not having his/ her invitation refused point-blank. According to Quang N. [12:47] white lies are often preceded by lead-ins and gambits, such as 'tiếc quá', 'giá mà cậu nói trước thì tốt quá', 'mong anh/chị thông cảm', 'tôi rất thích, nhưng...' etc. In my opinion, such token agreement or white lies with the above-mentioned gambits and lead-ins are also hedges which S may choose to be vague about his own refusals in particular or opinions in general.

b) Pseudo-agreement

In English there is another example of apparent or pseudo-agreement which is the use of 'then, 'so'' as a conclusory marker, an indication that the speaker is drawing a conclusion to a line of reasoning carried out cooperatively with the addressee. This phenomenon also occurs in Vietnamese:

[40] –A- *Tối Chủ nhật này hai gia đình mình đi uống cà phê đi!* (Will our two families go to the café this Sunday evening?)

B- *Chủ nhật này tớ đi Nha Trang chưa về.* (This Sunday I'll have not returned from Nha Trang.)

A- *Thế thì Chủ nhật sau vậy?* (Then, next Sunday, o.k?)

Strategy 7: Presuppose/raise/assert common ground:**a) Gossip, small talk**

By spending time and effort on being with H and talking for a while about unrelated topics, S gives rise to the strategy of redressing an FTA. This strategy is commonly used for softening requests- at least, requests for favour. However, it is also used for inviting when it seems to give benefit to the inviter or in the case the inviter is afraid of being refused, or simply he wants to make the invitation more natural. For example, a boy wants to invite the girl he is really sweet on to the cinema:

[41] –A- *Đạo này em có khỏe không?* (How are you?)

B- *Em vẫn bình thường anh ạ.* (so so)

A- *Thế công việc chắc bận rộn nhỉ?* (You are busy at work, aren't you?)

B- *Vâng, lúc nào chẳng vậy mà anh.* (Yes, as usual!)

A- *Cũng phải có lúc nghỉ ngơi cho đầu óc thư giãn chứ không thì ốm đấy em ạ!* (You should relax your mind, if not you may get ill)

B- *Vâng em cũng muốn thế!* (I hope so)

A- *Hay tối mai thứ bảy anh em mình đi xem phim hài ở rạp 1-5 cho đổi không khí đi!* (Let's go to see a comedy at 1-5 cinema to change the atmosphere?)

b) Point-of-view operations

For the normal unmarked deictic, the centre is the speaker including time and place of speaking. However, in fact there are many utterances with deictic centrings that are not this one: S speaks as if the central person were H. Such methods of 'taking the role of the other', which are called 'point-of-view operations', are basic politeness phenomena. This characteristic of positive politeness attempts to bring together or merge the point of view of speaker and addressee. In order to reduce the distance between S's, or H's point of view we can use some following techniques:

+Personal-central switch:

In this technique, S speaks as if H were S, or H's knowledge were equal to S's knowledge. There are some ways to do this technique:

-question-tags(see strategy 3d)

-appealers & cajolers (see strategy 3d)

-pronouns (see strategy 4a): One can merge the 'I' and the 'you' into an inclusive 'we' although it is only H who is really being referred to:

[42] – Now, let's go get a drink!

Similarly in Vietnamese:

[43] – *Bọn mình đi uống nước đi!*

Possessive adjectives sometimes are omitted to reduce the distance between the inviter and invitee:

[44] – *Mẹ (anh) mời em tới ăn Tết niên đấy!*

([My] mother invites you to the New Year's eve party!)

+Time switch (see strategy 3b)

+Place switch:

[45] – *Lan ơi, tới nhà anh chơi đi!* (Lan, come to my house!)

[46] – *Lan ơi, về nhà anh chơi đi!* (Lan, return to my home!)

In comparison with *tới* in [44], *về* in [45] and [46] seem to make the relationship between S and H closer because S speaks as if H returned his/her own home.

C) Presupposition manipulation:

In the manipulation of presuppositions, which can be turned to positive-face redress, something is not really mutually assumed, but S speaks as if it were mutually assumed.

+Presuppose knowledge of H's wants and attitudes:

In order to indicate that S knows H's wants, tastes, habits... and partially to redress the imposition of FTAs, the English commonly use negative questions which presumes 'yes' as an answer. For example:

[47] – *Wouldn't you like a drink?*

[48] – *Don't you want some dinner now?*

–Brown & Levinson [1:122-123]-

In agreement with Quang N's opinion [12: 68-70], my quick personal observations show that Vietnamese invitees are mostly embarrassed with such invitations:

[49] – *Anh không thích uống trà sao?*

(Wouldn't you like a cup of tea?)

[50] – *Anh sẽ không đến dự tiệc với chúng tôi à?*

(Won't you come to the party with us?)

Most of our student-interviewees think that these utterances are not real invitations and they feel annoyed. This is a real culture-shock because the Vietnamese are used to affirmative positive forms of invitation:

[51] – *Mời anh uống trà! / Anh uống trà đi!* (I'd like to invite you a cup of tea/ Have a cup of tea, please.)

[52] – *Mời anh đến dự tiệc với chúng tôi. / Anh đến dự tiệc với chúng tôi nhé!* (I would like to invite you to the party with us!/ Come to the party with us, please!)

Or double negation forms:

[53] – *Chẳng lẽ trời đẹp thế này mà anh em mình lại không đi đâu đó thì phí nhỉ?* (Why don't we go somewhere in such a beautiful weather?)

+Presuppose H's values are the same as S' values:

In this case, 'S and H have the same values with respect to relevant predicate, the same definition of what the scale is, of what constitutes beauty or goodness.' (see strategy 2 & 6) This preference for extremes on value scales is a feature of positive politeness.

+Presuppose familiarity in S-H relationship (see strategy 4)

+Presuppose H's knowledge (see strategy 3d)

Strategy 8: Ask personal questions

It is noticeable that a small talk with some personal questions to show S's concern for H is resorted to in both AE and VN (see PPS 1, PPS 7), but the depth of S's concern into H's privacy in Vietnamese invitations is much more than in American ones. For members of negative-oriented community, asking personal questions, especially in the first meeting, seems to be impolite since it is considered as 'poking their nose into others' personal matters'. In Oriented cultures, however, these kinds of question are commonly accepted in greeting routines or small talks because the members are inclined to employ more positive politeness [12:84]. In In. and DIn, Vietnamese people also resort to personal questions as pre-sequences, showing concern for H or making the invitation more natural. This strategy is partly similar to PPS 2 (small talk), but often involves more personal matters:

[54] A – *Dạo này em làm gì mà anh thấy đi ngang qua đây hàng sáng vậy?*

(What have you been doing, but I saw you passing here every morning?)

B – *Dạ em đi phục vụ ở quán cà phê ‘Thu Vàng’!*

(I’m working as a waitress at ‘Thu Vàng’ café)

A – *Sao không ghé nhà anh? Bây giờ có rảnh không, mình đi đâu đó uống nước nói chuyện đi?*

(Why didn’t you drop in on me? Are you free now? Let’s go to have a drink and talk!)

Strategy 9: Joke

Joking is a basic positive-politeness technique, for putting H ‘at ease’ and jokes may be used to stress mutual shared background or values (see strategy 1). We can see this strategy used in declining an invitation when the invitee would like to save the inviter’s face:

[55] –A- *Tớ vừa mới tậu chiếc ‘Future’. Tối nay tớ ‘rửa xe’ với nhóm thằng An ở quán Nguyễn Lữ, cậu tới nhé!*

(I’ve just bought a ‘Future’. This evening I ‘wash’ the motorbike at Nguyen Lu stand. Come with us?)

B- *Ái chà, thích quá nhỉ? Nhưng tiếc quá, tớ có uống được đâu. Không khéo chưa uống các cậu đã lại phải kiêng tớ về!* (Oh, so interesting! But I’m sorry I can’t drink alcohol. I’m afraid that you ‘ll have to carry me home before dinking!)

In this case, B may not like the group of friends that A invites, but the reason he gives and the way he jokes help him avoid offending A.

2.2.2 Convey that s and h are cooperators:

Deriving from the want to convey that the speaker and the addressee are cooperators in the relevant activity, which can serve to redress H’s positive-face want, the second major class of positive-politeness strategies shows that S and H share goals in some domain. The following strategies are some ways belonging to this mechanism:

Strategy 10: Assert or presuppose S’s knowledge of and concern for H’s wants:

To indicate that S and H are cooperators, and potentially to put pressure on H to cooperate with S, S may assert or imply knowledge of H’s wants and willingness to fit S’s own wants in with H:

[56] –I know you can’t bear parties, but this one will really be good – do come!

– Brown & Levinson [2:125] –

Similarly in Vietnamese:

[57] –*Tôi biết là anh chẳng thích gì hội họp, nhưng sắp có một hội thảo đúng về đề tài anh quan tâm nên chúng tôi mời anh đến tham dự.* (I know you don’t like meetings, but there is a symposium on the topic you are interested in, so we would like to invite you to take part in it)

Or:

[58] – *Mình biết là cậu bị ‘dị ứng’ chỗ đông người, nhưng đây là buổi ca nhạc có một không hai- toàn là các ca sĩ nổi tiếng. Không đi là phí một đời đấy! Đi nhé?*

(I know you have a ‘bad reaction’ to crowds, but this is a special music performance with famous singers. Don’t let slip this good opportunity!)

Strategy 11: Offer, promise:

To redress the potential threat of some FTAs, S may claim that (within a certain sphere of relevance) whatever H wants, S wants for him and will help to obtain.

In inviting, according to Quang, N. [12:78-79] there are two different kinds: definite and indefinite. For example:

[59] – *Khoảng bảy giờ tối mai qua nhà mình ăn cơm nhé!* (definite) (About seven tomorrow evening do come to my home for dinner, please!)

[60] – *Chi này, hôm nào rảnh rồi bọn mình đi đâu chơi đi!* (indefinite) (Chi, when having free time, let’s go somewhere!)

In the above examples [59] is a real invitation, but [60] seems to be an unreal one or lip-service. However, sometimes there is only definite deixis (either temporal or special) in the invitation:

[61] –*Khi nào đó mình đi xem phim ở rạp Tháng Tám đi!* (Some day let’s go to see a film at Thang Tam cinema!)

[62] – *Tối thứ bảy này mình đi đâu đó thư giãn đi!* (This Saturday let’s go somewhere for relaxation!)

Invitation [62] with the definite time seems to be more definite than [61].

In refusing an invitation, there are also such definite and indefinite promises:

[63] – *Tiếc quá hôm nay em bận họp. Để hôm khác anh nhé!* (indefinite)

(I’m sorry, today I have a meeting. Another time?)

[64] – *Tiếc quá hôm nay em bận họp. Hay để thứ bảy được không anh?* (definite)

(I’m sorry, today I have a meeting. Or Saturday, o.k?)

[64] is a definite and real promise, but [63] seems to be an indefinite and unreal one. However, the invitations or promises, though definite or indefinite, real or unreal, clearly demonstrate S’s good intentions in satisfying H’s positive-face wants.

In addition, invitations sometimes are combined with promises as in the following example:

[65] – *Tối mai sang nhà anh chơi, anh có cái này hay lắm! Chắc là em sẽ rất thích!* (Tomorrow evening come to my house, I have something interesting! I’m sure you like it very much!)

The promise ‘anh có cái này hay lắm! Chắc là em sẽ rất thích!’ is made in to increase the invitee’s interest or curiosity.

Strategy 12: Be optimistic:

This is perhaps the most dramatic difference between positive-politeness and negative-politeness ways of minimizing the size of the face threat. In this case, S is so optimistic as to claim tacitly that H will cooperate with S to obtain S’s wants because they share mutual interest. There are some examples to illustrate this strategy as follows:

+The use of understaters, appealers:

Using such understaters as ‘một chút, một tẹo, và, chút xíu.....’ seem to work by minimizing the size of the face threat:

[66] – *Em đi uống nước với anh một lát nhé?*

(Can you go to have a drink with me for a moment?)

The understater 'một lát' implies that it will not take the invitee so much time to have a drink with S, which may help the inviter to get H's acceptance.

The inviter may also use appealers for this purpose (see strategy 3d,7b)

+The use of downtoners:

S may use some downstoners in this strategy: 'có khi', 'có khả năng...' 'có thể', 'hay là'....Some of them are also used in invitations and refusals:

[67] – *Trời hôm nay đẹp quá! Hay là mình đi dạo một vòng đi!* (The weather is so beautiful! Perhaps, go for a walk now?)

[68] – *Chà, lời mời hấp dẫn quá, nhưng có lẽ là hôm đó em không đi được...*(The invitation is so interesting, but perhaps I won't be able to come that day...)

+The use of conventional gambit:

The minimization may be literally stated with expressions like: 'Mình hy vọng là...', 'Chắc cậu sẽ vui lòng...', 'Tôi nghĩ là...':

[69] – *Anh hy vọng là em sẽ không từ chối lời mời tôi dự sinh nhật của anh!* (I hope you won't refuse my invitation to my birthday party.)

+Talking up:

Sometimes S may talk H' ability up to reach the efficiency (implying that it's nothing to ask or offer or that the cooperation between S and H is small things). Let's take this example:

[70] – *Chúng em biết chị nổi tiếng là nhà hùng biện tài ba, chính vì vậy mà hôm nay chúng em tới mời chị lên phát biểu trong hội nghị sắp tới.* (We know you are famous for rhetoric, so today we would like to invite you to make a statement in the next conference.)

Strategy 13: Include both S and H in the activity:

When S really means 'you' or 'me', he uses an inclusive 'we' form to call upon the cooperative assumptions and thereby redress FTAs (see strategy 4,7b). According to Quang N. [12:84], this strategy seems to be similar to strategy 4, yet it stresses 'being in the same boat' between S and H and softens FTAs, not really draws both S and H as participants. However, in my opinion, this may leads to the two different acts 'mời' (inviting) and 'rủ' (proposing joint action) in Vietnamese. According to Thuy Nga [13:79] the act of 'mời' expresses S's desire to get H to do something politely and the S usually bears expenses, in contrast 'rủ' is to ask H together with S to do something informally. For example:

[71] – *Thưa cô, lớp tổ chức Hội Nghị Học Tốt vào tối thứ sáu này. Chúng em mời cô tới dự và truyền đạt thêm cho chúng em những kinh nghiệm bổ ích a!* (Our class is holding a Good Study Conference this Friday. We would like to invite you to come and impart your experience of studying.)

[72] – *Lớp A sắp tổ chức Hội Nghị Học Tốt vào tối thứ sáu này đây! Bọn mình tới dự để rút kinh nghiệm đi!* (Class A is holding a Good Study conference this Friday. Let's come to learn from their experience!)

We can easily realize that [71] is 'mời' and [72] is 'rủ' in Vietnamese. However, in my opinion Thuy Nga's definition is not satisfying because in some cases it is really difficult to identify which is 'mời' and which is 'rủ', for example when address-forms 'mình', 'chúng mình', 'anh em mình'...are used:

[73] – *Tối nay anh em mình đi xem phim 'Titanic' ở rạp 1-5 đi!* (This evening let's go to see 'Titanic' at 1-5 cinema!)

Thus, this distinction depends on not only intralanguage but paralinguage and extralinguage elements in real-life communication.

Strategy 14: Give (or ask for) reasons:

Giving or asking for reasons is another aspect of including H in the activity and assuming H's cooperation or reflexivity (H wants S's wants). Explaining the reasons may be seen in both invitations and refusals to an invitation in Vietnamese:

[74] – *Ngày mai là sinh nhật lần thứ 20 của em. Em định làm một bữa tiệc nhỏ với mấy đứa bạn thân thôi. Anh tới dự nhé!* (Tomorrow is my 20th birthday. I'm going to hold a small party with some close friends. Do come, please!)

[75] – *Tiếc quá! Ngày mai anh không thể đến được vì phải đi trực mát rồi.* (I'm sorry, tomorrow I can't come because I have to do my duty.)

In my personal observation, the Vietnamese tend to give 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.

Strategy 15: Assume or assert reciprocity:

Another way to claim the existence of cooperation between S and H is to give evidence of reciprocal rights or obligations obtaining between S and H. We can see this technique in both invitations and refusals to an invitation as in the following examples:

[76] – *Lần trước em đã ghé nhà anh rồi, lần này anh nhớ qua nhà em chơi nhé!* (Last time I came to your house, so this time remember to drop in on us)

[77] A- *Ghé nhà anh chơi một tí!* (Drop round for a moment, please)

B- *Thôi! Lần trước em ghé nhà anh rồi! Bây giờ anh qua nhà em cho biết nhà chú!* (No, last time I came to yours, so now drop into my house to know it, please!)

[78] – *Hôm nay em bận, không nhận lời mời đi uống cà phê với anh được. Thôi, Chủ nhật sau em khao bù nhé!* (Today I'm not free, so I can't accept your invitation to go for a drink. Well, next time I'll invite you!)

2.2.3- Fulfil H's Want (For Some X)

Strategy 16: Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

The action of gift-giving (not only tangible gifts, but human-relations wants - the wants to be liked, admired, cared about, understood, listened, and so on) is the classic positive-politeness action used to satisfy some H's wants as well as satisfy H's positive-face want. This can be seen clearly in the following invitation and refusals to an invitation:

[79] –Hôm qua tớ đi siêu thị thấy mấy chai rượu mới - loại mà cậu thích ấy! Tớ tới nhà tớ ‘nhâm nhi’ đi!

(Yesterday I went to the supermarket and bought some new bottles of wine - it's your favorites - Come to my home for drinking tonight, please!)

In this case, the invitation seems to be for the hearer's like and it seems to be a gift for him. This may give way to H's acceptance.

Strategy 17: Comfort and encourage

In this strategy S shares sympathy, understanding and cooperation with H by comforting or encourage him/her: Khổ chưa (Poor you!), Không sao đâu (No problem), chuyện vặt (No big deal), vui lên nào (Cheer up!)... This sympathy is often expressed as pe-sequences in invitations. For example:

[80] A – *Tớ buồn quá! Vừa mới trượt kỳ cuối rồi.*

(I'm so sad! I've just failed the final exam.)

B – *Việc gì phải lo. Có trượt thì mới là sinh viên chứ. Tháng sau thi lại là qua thôi. Tớ nay đi đâu đó thư giãn đi!* (Why worried? Failing some exam is a student. Next month, taking reexam, you will pass. Tonight go somewhere for relaxation!)

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, 'politeness' in communication is viewed from different angles. Grice's cooperative principles, Lakoff's principles, Leech's maxims, and especially Brown and Levinson's strategies of politeness are the valuable works which laid the foundation for this domain. Quang N. [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' [2: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.; as a result, they are really essential in communication - in all speech and communicative acts. It is obviously seen that with three broad mechanisms and seventeen strategies mentioned above, positive-politeness techniques are used to emphasize closeness and enhance the solidarity between S and H. 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 positive-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.

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