"Eating alone is painful": An interdisciplinary and ethnographically inspired sociolinguistic investigation into Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Linguistics

at Massey University, Auckland

New Zealand

Thi Mai Duyen Dang

2016

Abstract

Invitations are a commonplace part of language ritual at meals in Vietnamese culture. They are verbal and non-verbal signals extended around everyday meals and interpreted as offers or invitations for food and/or company at meals. These invitations form communal and familial bonds and serve as a means to maintain hierarchical order. However, the commonly-held misperceptions of these invitations include them being explicitly verbalised, occurring only at meal-starts, and being specific to regions and people groups. Previous studies discussed the language of invitations from a narrow linguistic perspective which led to limited understandings of their nature and of how contextual and social factors govern their usage. My research examines linguistic and cultural perceptions and usage of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations (VMRIs) by about 350 native speakers of Vietnamese in New Zealand and Vietnam. My study draws on 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork data, including participant observations, informal talks, diaries, video-recordings, and interviews. This is an interdisciplinary study drawing upon theoretical ideas from Sociolinguistics and Cultural Anthropology to analyse and interpret the data.

The main findings are from two perspectives. From a linguistic perspective, VMRIs exhibit several features. Firstly, their linguistic variants are diverse. Secondly, particular linguistic features can express formality, politeness, hierarchical respect, and communicative conventions. Thirdly, key sociocultural variables (age, gender, familiarity, perception, and socio-family status) appear to influence usage. From an anthropological perspective, VMRIs are daily-life ritual practices manifesting the value of food in Vietnamese socio-cultural and historical context of food insecurity, the significance of family meals and meal manners, and the role of women.

This study on Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations expands the conceptual boundaries of invitations as multiplex discourses by showing how context (food and family meals) and other factors (status, familiarity, age, gender, and perception) generate and constrain language use. It also highlights the interrelationship between language and behaviour, the ritual practice of familial bonding during mealtimes, and the role of women in Vietnamese society. The findings emphasise the importance not only of taking account of speakers and hearers' identities and discursive contexts when interpreting contextual language use but also of identifying those contexts.

Acknowledgments

Writing this thesis has been my own solitary experience, but its completion has been greatly supported by many individuals and institutions. I would like to thank them profoundly, beyond my words and beyond these few pages of acknowledgments.

Firstly, I would like to thank my research collaborators for their time, their energy, their enthusiasm, their intellectual and personal sharing, and their voluntary engagement with my study. They invited me to their kindness, openness, friendliness, hospitality, and generosity and freely offered me their consent, their trust, and their confidentiality. Many of them also enthusiastically referred me to their colleagues, friends, and relatives so that I could obtain rich and robust research data. I can never fully repay this enormous debt, yet I value their attribution to this study so dearly.

I am deeply grateful to my incredible supervision team, Dr David Ishii, Dr Graeme McRae, and Dr Mary Salisbury, for their mentorship, their feedback, their guidance, and their encouragement. Each supervisor has helped me with their own expertise, their perspectives, and their unique supervision styles, but they altogether have also enhanced me to pursuit my own path into an interdisciplinary research, which integrates linguistics and cultural anthropology and sources of knowledge such as education, psychology, history, and sociology. I profoundly appreciate their patience, their care, their empathy, and their emotional sustenance when I most needed them. I moved myself to tears when they shared the expense to buy me a free lunch in the farewell gathering before my fieldwork or when Mary dressed-up and took me to an auspicious gathering (with lunch) to congratulate me after hearing the 'miracle' of my examination result. My respect is surely extended to these great mentors and I feel so close to them, especially to special, dear, and devoted Mary. They have been a great supervisory team that I have ever had.

My appreciation further extends to the examination board, at both the confirmation and the final viva. Their encouraging and insightful comments have made my research more comprehensive.

This work could not have been completed without the contribution and support of many other individuals. My sincere thanks go to Sasya Wreksono and Ruth Gibbons for freely giving me their precious time and professional filmmaking skills to help with my videos. My appreciation further extends to my dedicated former teachers, colleagues, friends, and

and being my great source of inspiration for this research (and previous achievements). Particularly, my indebtedness is to my parents, whose teachings are treasures of my world-view and my siblings, who keep sending me their care. I thank my daughter Jenny Linh for accompanying me to everywhere during this hash but glorious journey, for "*always being your [my] Number 1 great fan*", and for giving me reasons to persist with this study. I also thank my husband for his sacrifice and support when allowing my daughter and me to leave him home alone for my oversea study and for his assistance in my data collection.

Thank you!

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

Colloq.   Colloquialism

D   Diary-writer

FM   Female

FMG   Female guest

FNNZ   Field-notes in New Zealand

FNVN   Field-notes in Vietnam

G   Girl

INZ   Interviewee in New Zealand

IVN   Interviewee in Vietnam

Honor.   Honorifics

M   Male

MG   Male guest

NZ   New Zealand

RTs   Reference terms

SAT   Speech Act Theory

VMRIs   Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations

VN   Vietnam

X   The inviter

Z   Something offered/invited

Y   The recipient

The order of diary entries

Notes

Notes in citing the data in Vietnamese and Vietnamese authors' names

Vietnamese (tiếng Việt) is the national, official language of Vietnam, spoken as a native language with quite a few dialectical differences by around 90 million Vietnamese people (Kinh) inside Vietnam and as the first or second language by about three million Vietnamese ethnic minorities in Vietnam and Vietnamese people residing elsewhere. It is a tonal language of Southeast Asia, belonging to the Austroasiatic language family, but not related to Chinese although it contains loan words from Chinese (and other languages) and its old writing system even used Chinese-like characters. The Vietnamese alphabet in use today since the 19th Century is a Latin alphabet with additional diacritics for tones and certain letters (Cao, 1998; Nguyễn, 1988).

Given my primary focus on spoken Vietnamese, I will keep all diacritics in the original form when presenting data in Vietnamese. I will also keep these diacritics when citing Vietnamese authors' names, like Nguyễn Đình Hòa for example, except for those names published with their works in simplified forms (without diacritics), like Nguyen Dinh Hoa for instance.

I apply the APA 6th style, in which surnames rather than first names are used, to cite all authors' names, including Vietnamese names although they are in different orders, i.e., surnames come first and first names come last. Therefore, the citation will be Nguyễn (1956) instead of Hòa (1956) for the author's full name Nguyễn Đình Hòa, for example. However, there are some exceptions, for instance, citing the authors' names in full when they are recognised as pen-names or aliases, like Nam Cao (2014).

Notes in translation

Like English, Vietnamese syntax conforms to the subject–verb–object order; however, in spoken style, word order is not fixed and some arguments (e.g., subject, objects) may be omitted (ellipses); Vietnamese lexica do not have morphological inflection of grammatical features such as gender, number, mood, person, voice, or tense (Nguyễn, 1988). The meanings can be made clearer with the use of modifier and classifier systems, 'small' or 'empty' words (hư từ), but they are also highly dependent on specific contexts and shared knowledge among interactants (Luong, 1987).

Therefore, in this research of language ritual at mealtimes, to translate spoken Vietnamese data into English to capture the nuances of meanings, not just the literal meanings of the words, and to meet the requirements of the topic, I adopt the sociosemiotic approach, which is based on Halliday's (1978) social semiotic in language. This translation approach, according to researchers in translation including Nida, Morris, and Hu, "helps one understand better not only the meanings of words, sentences and discourse structures, but also the symbolic nature of distinguishing between designative and associative meanings" (as cited in Dang, 2006, p. 14). Moreover, the sociosemiotic approach focuses on not only what people say and do and how they do it but also when (in what context) and why, i.e. the large-scale social consequences of the talk (according to Hu as cited in Dang, 2006).

In translating invitational utterances in particular, I also flexibly apply three-way translation: transliteration in the source language (Vietnamese), literal translation word-for-word in the target language (English), and accessible paraphrase (or pragmatic translation) in the target language (Lembrouck, 2007) using double quotation marks and brackets. I keep the transliteration in double quotation marks "…", literal translation in square brackets […], and pragmatic translation with equivalent meanings or interpretations of the utterances in round brackets (…). Take an example of a conversation between two friends named H and Đ:

> H: *"Đ vào ăn cơm với H cho vui!"*
> [Đ come in eat rice with H for joy!] (Please come and join me for lunch, Đ!)
> Đ: *"H ăn đi. Đ ăn rồi!"*
> [H eat imperative. Đ eat already!]
> (Thanks, H. Please continue your meal. I have already eaten) (IVN13, 11:20)

Sometimes, round brackets are used within square brackets to add further information or explanations to certain literal translation in particular contextual use. There are reasons for double-bracketing translation and adding explanations. Firstly, not all lexical items in Vietnamese have close equivalents in English. Secondly, some lexical equivalents in English carry different connotations or referential meanings from those in Vietnamese in certain contextual use. Additionally, there is great difference between ways of communication in Vietnamese (which is more general and implicit) and in English (which is more specific and explicit) (see further in Chapter 1) that requires further explanation added to translation. For example, this pragmatic translation (Mother, please have meal!) can be the English equivalent for both examples "*Mẹ mời cơm đi ạ!*" and "*Mẹ ăn cơm đi ạ!*" However, the verbs '*mời*' and '*ăn*' used in them have different connotations although they both mean 'Eat'. Therefore, the information about their connotations are added in round brackets (…) placed within the square brackets of literal translations, [Mother eat (polite) rice imperative honorific!] and [Mother eat (neutral) rice imperative honorific!] respectively, to retain nuances of the source language (Vietnamese), for true presentation of language users.

Notes in using some terms

Throughout the study, I have used the terms *extenders* and *recipients* more often than *speakers* and *hearers* or *inviters* and *invitees*. This is firstly because I would like to emphasise that since Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations encompass all verbal and nonverbal respectful signals, they are extended, but not only uttered; and they can be received by other senses, not just hearing. Another reason is that *extenders* and *recipients* cover more cases than the other two pairs. For instance, *extender* is more precise than *inviter* in describing the one who extends the invitation "*Mẹ con cháu mời bà vào xơi cơm!*" [Mother child niece/grandchild invite granny come in eat rice] (Granny, please come to join us for meal!) since in this invitation, the extender mentioned not only herself but also her child as the inviters. The latter pairs are used only when I would like to emphasise the particular aspects of speaking or inviting.

I have also used the term *superior* more often than *senior*, in both family and society contexts to emphasise the reflection of Vietnamese family hierarchy in the use of mealtime invitations. In Vietnamese family hierarchy, a person who is at a higher rank of linage order is considered superior to his/her relatives regardless if s/he is younger

than them or at a lower social position than theirs. This is not always aligned with the society hierarchy, in which an older person is always regarded as one's senior. However, familial relations are more weighted than social relations in Vietnamese society - and particular in meal context. Therefore, in this study, the term *superior* has been selected in relation to the use of other terms *inferior* and *equal*. The classification of these relationships is discussed further in relevant chapters.

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Motivation and background

My interest in mealtime ritual invitations started from my family of origin and the circumstances of my own family stimulated me to study further about them. When my siblings and I were small, my parents kept telling us about manners and etiquette; extending invitations was strictly observed as our family regulations at meals. Therefore, in my parents' presence, I extended my invitations also to my elder sisters even if we had had conflict before and normally, by the end of the meal, our conflict seemed to be less tense or resolved. Therefore, I agree with claims by researchers of family rituals including Imber-Black and Roberts (1993) that rituals can celebrate, heal, and change our relationships.

Now I have my own family with a daughter, who I brought to New Zealand for this study when she had finished her first year of Vietnamese primary school. She attended a New Zealand primary school, where she learned the difference that here, students bring their own lunches and food should not be exchanged at school. Like many other Auckland-based age-mates of Vietnamese origin that I have observed, she did not extend mealtime invitations to anyone, even her father during his short visits to New Zealand, although, of her own accord, she resumed her practice during our fieldwork stay in Vietnam two years later. Misunderstandings between her and her father occurred even though they communicated in the same language. For example, she requested her father to add "*please*" in his Vietnamese requests to make his voice sound less demanding for her to do something; otherwise, she would turn them down. Meanwhile, her father insisted that she obey him regardless of the presence of polite words, based on his belief in the authority of parents over children. With my explanations and their own willingness after some tension, the father eventually managed to use Vietnamese equivalents for this English polite word in his requests to his daughter and the girl learned to recognise these numerous pragmatic alternatives in different situations, such as '*làm ơn*' (do a favour), '*hộ/giúp/giùm*' (help), '*cho ... với/đi mà*' (beg you/ please).

1

"Eating alone is painful": An interdisciplinary and ethnographically inspired sociolinguistic investigation into Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations

This kind of conflict results from a lack of mutual understandings of communication and behaviours. Misunderstandings may be due to the separation of focuses between linguistic and social and cultural aspects. It is apparently not limited to familial scope, restricted to migration issues, or simplified as purely a language matter, or specific to any ethnicities. It seems common in bilingual communities, who are not often bicultural (Kuiper & Lin, 1989), particularly of immigrants, such as those in Auckland (cf. Moore, 2004a) and elsewhere (e.g., Cheung & Nguyen, 2001; Webb, 2001). It is also an issue of contemporary rapid modernisation when people criticise others for treating each other with less respectfulness and less required formality, making light of traditional norms and values, or misbehaving by partaking in non-standard language use; whereas, others argue that the change is naturally necessary and that to move forward, people cannot just adhere to the old cultural protocols and observances without adding new values for adaptation.

A possible solution to this kind of conflict may lie not in making changes or keeping things unchanged, but in understanding them properly before deciding any changes. Only when understanding cultural practices may we be able to participate actively and creatively and contribute to their history. This issue also begs the question of acting locally and culturally while thinking globally and inter-culturally: have cultural traditions and communications in their particular situations been properly understood to fairly assess how they have been adapted and applied by inter-generations? That means they need to be viewed contextually (certain uses in certain situations) and multi-dimensionally (i.e., societally, culturally, historically (on the time continuum), and linguistically altogether). This dual perspective is what motivated me to investigate language use at meals by generations of Vietnamese speakers in contemporary society and their perceptions of behaviours behind language use adopting the approach of sociolinguistics, a broad and important domain of linguistics to study language use in its social and cultural contexts. Sociolinguistics "offers deep insights into Vietnamese people and their culture and, especially, an appreciation of problems facing them in their new cultural context in Australia and other Western countries" (Lê, 1985, p. 126).

Additionally, research into Vietnamese language and culture tends to focus on macro-rather than micro-level matters. For instance, when research discusses the evident and necessary tie between language and culture to emphasise the need to know the culture when acquiring a language for better communication (Dang, 2001; Nguyen, 2004), little

attention has been paid to cultural aspects of language use in specific situations although situational language expressions are likely representations of the culture. Thus, this study of Vietnamese language and culture focuses on a certain speech behaviour pattern expressed in people's daily life, their meals. In this way, the study aims to achieve a more meaningful balance between macro- and micro- levels of analysis than in previous research. It also offers a shift in research: researching a specific language pattern with a broad view.

Besides being grounded in sociolinguistics, this inter-disciplinary study also interfaces with cultural anthropology, the study of human cultures, beliefs, values, practices, and others primarily based on cultural understanding gained through first-hand experience or observation (Marcus & Fischer, 1999). I have taken the opportunity of residing outside Vietnam, in a multidiverse country of New Zealand, immersing myself in its multi-cultural settings, using its language (i.e., English), and undertaking their Western-styled academic culture to conduct a research on Vietnamese mealtime invitations. The research applies ethnographically inspired research methods to collect data from Vietnamese speakers residing in New Zealand and Vietnam. The study of these invitations in this fast changing globalisation era can be metaphorically likened to the English proverb of "*Take time to smell the roses*".

Rituals in Vietnamese culture have a long history existing in all the domains of work, play, and home life. Particular rituals occur during mealtimes including invitations, which represent an important aspect of daily life in Vietnamese culture. By investigating language rituals as they are expressed in everyday life, much can be revealed about the subtle and complex cultural practices of Vietnamese people, both inside and outside Vietnam, and indeed, people worldwide. The Vietnamese linguist Nguyễn Đình Hòa notes that "the description of certain socially-determined linguistic patterns used by Vietnamese in their daily intercourse reveals dominant traits of Vietnamese culture and contributes to the understanding of the ways in which Vietnamese think, feel, believe and behave, as well as talk and write" (1956, p. 1).

Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations (VMRIs) are among these linguistic patterns. They include verbal and non-verbal signals extended around everyday meals and interpreted as offers or invitations for food, drinks, and company at meals. They are more complex than they may first seem because of their multiple layers of meanings

and numerous mediating factors such as meal setting, meal scene, personal mood, personal history and many others. These language rituals serve as a bond amongst members and also as a means to maintain social and family order within communities. These invitations integrate linguistic, socio-cultural and interactional elements that reflect Vietnamese language, culture, and communicative styles.

Extending mealtime ritual invitations is of Vietnamese ancient origin (e.g., Hữu Ngọc, 1998; Phan, 1915, 2005). I propose that it is suggestive of Vietnamese culture dating back to the semi-mythical era millennia ago (see in Chapter 3). In this study, these invitations are explored and described to illustrate how they perform their linguistic functions of "expressing", "embodying", and "symbolising" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 5) Vietnamese socio-cultural reality and how the sociocultural contexts shape and reshape the production and interpretations of these language rituals. In this way, VMRIs can be tools to stimulate insights into the people's beliefs, behaviours, and communication in Vietnamese society. These kinds of knowledge can be uncovered, providing that there is an interpretative framework, which can describe these important aspects embodied within this kind of ritual communication at meals.

Various components of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972) (including linguistic knowledge, interaction skills, and cultural knowledge) have been the focus of linguistic research, including studies of invitations (e.g., Dang, T. H. 1992). However, the question arises: has adequate attention really been paid to both cultural and linguistic competence in previous studies which have limited invitations to linguistic acts only and have analysed them at a high level of generalisation? Studies of invitations have tended to analyse invitations in a particular language, Vietnamese for instance, (Đào, 2011a; Lưu, 2007) using only a linguistic-oriented interpretative framework designed for another language (i.e., English). The classification of invitations into types, such as ambiguous (Wolfson, 1989) and ostensible invitations (Isaacs & Clark, 1990) was mainly based on their linguistic expressions rather than the communicative events within which they occur (e.g., meals, weddings, meetings). Certain types of invitations in different communicative events (except for written wedding invitations) such as mealtime invitations or meeting invitations have not been the subject of serious inquiry although specific contexts of use, language users, and socio-cultural conventions and numerous other mediating factors altogether constrain the language use and shape the

way it is interpreted. In this way, the concepts of cultural context and competence have been overlooked. Hence, this study investigates mealtime invitations as a specific communicative type of invitations and from the perspectives of their language users, who bring into their practice not only grammatical and lexical knowledge but also societal and cultural knowledge with regard to cultural norms and values.

Different cultural norms and values lead to different communicative styles and different ways of interpreting people's behaviours since "cultural norms are always in the background as an interpretative framework against which people make sense of and assess other people's behaviours" (Goddard, 1997, p. 1999). This is relevant not only to people from different cultures but also to those who share the same culture but have different interpretations of values and norms. This is especially relevant to the Vietnamese because of the establishment of large migrant communities overseas over the last forty years. Thus, it is worth exploring the practice of VMRIs amongst Vietnamese speakers inside and outside Vietnam to uncover their perceptions of behaviours that lie hidden behind language use. These perceptions vary amongst different generations of Vietnamese people and are influenced by changes in the increasing globalisation of communication, but capturing a snapshot of them is still valuable.

Much can also be revealed about the mediating and evolving nature of VMRIs, the transmission of cultural values, and the dynamic changing in family structures by investigating these mealtime language rituals of Vietnamese speakers in two different research sites like New Zealand and Vietnam. As a 'superdiverse society' with a tradition of transforming itself (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012), contemporary New Zealand is percipient to immigrants' cultures and languages. At the same time, it has a commitment to biculturalism with respect to the indigenous Māori holistic and community-based culture (Durie, 2004) and the individualistic culture of the New Zealand Pākehā (European descent).

By contrast, Vietnam has remained culturally homogeneous. It is a collectivistic culture, which values emotional ties and attachment to relatives and the community. Seeing sense of belonging or company as primarily important, Vietnamese people communicate in ways to establish interpersonal relationships with others and maintain group harmony. Hence, they value the exchange of words and follow the principle of

cultured communication: "*Lựa lời mà nói cho vừa lòng nhau*"[1] (Adjust the way to talk to most please each other). Mealtime invitations, which are extended upon the need of community solidarity besides other values, are therefore seen as a primary communicative product of this collectivistic or community-oriented culture.

The differences between New Zealand and Vietnam could contribute to the practice of VMRIs amongst their residents since community and cultural practices are intertwined. For some individuals, these rituals have disappeared while some families are re-engaging with them or conversely, some communities are expressing them in different ways. Although the study does not intend to compare VMRIs used in between the two research sites, the differences in the practice and the perceptions of the use between New Zealand and Vietnamese samples are taken into account.

These rituals are among many that Vietnamese people inside and outside Vietnam in general have desired to retain while learning new values. This tradition is consistent with a long-term trend of cultural dialectic between Vietnam and the West that predates the recent waves of migration, as already put forward by a scholar of Vietnamese language and culture: "much of the ancient life with its age-old ideals and customs still persists in an immortal Vietnam eager to catch up with the West but also anxious to preserve its cultural heritage" (Nguyễn Đ. H., 1956, p. 242). Apart from the cultural values embedded in VMRIs, the changes are worthy of investigation because they raise questions about language use, behaviours, and interpersonal communications across generations, especially within families in changes; about how the changing roles of genders are affected by these traditional speech behaviour patterns.

Food and dining habits are also worthy of investigation. What and how people eat in a society can be a form of communication, "a body of images, a protocol of usages, situations, and behaviours" (Barthes as cited in Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008, p. 29). Particularly, they are "predominant markers of social change for the Vietnamese in both Vietnam and in the diaspora" (Thomas, 2004, p. 54). Food and dining styles are directly linked to both culture and rituals; rituals involving food can be the closest to life (Greene, Cramer, & Walters, 2011). VMRIs, the invitations ritually triggered by food,

---

[1] This is one of a large number of Vietnamese sayings, proverbs, folk songs/poems that I learnt from older generations as well as from mainstream course books throughout Vietnam. So, I assume it to be part of Vietnamese common knowledge and leave it uncited. This practice is followed throughout this study.

drink, and company at meals, can hence communicate the 'how' of Vietnamese dining practice and their use can also reflect life in the contemporary society. Thus, this study will explore how Vietnamese dining practice is realised in the language of mealtime invitations and in the use of these rituals in contemporary societies.

1.2. Research objectives, goals, and questions

With regard to the above rationale, the study aims to achieve the following three main objectives: 1) to document the practice of VMRIs amongst Vietnamese communities in New Zealand (Auckland) and Vietnam; 2) to examine linguistic and socio-cultural features, meanings, and functions of VMRIs in their contexts; 3) and to investigate perceptions of behaviours that lie hidden behind language use.

My goals are to document the use of ritual invitations around Vietnamese people's daily meals, to examine their socio-cultural and linguistic features, the mediating factors that have influenced their practice, and to investigate the users' belief systems that underlie language use by different genders and generations. As a result, this study intends to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the socio-cultural and linguistic contextual characteristics, meanings, and functions of Vietnamese ritual invitations around meals? How have they been used traditionally by different generations?

2. What factors may mediate the discourse of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations?

3. What are people's attitudes to language use and their perceptions of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations?

1.3. Research scope and design

In order to simplify the research and focus more sharply on the objectives, goals, and aims mentioned above, this study restricts itself to the secular oral practice in the daily meals of the Kinh representing the largest proportion of the Vietnamese people. It is acknowledged that ceremonial meals (i.e., meals at the annual death ceremony, Tết (Vietnamese Lunar New Year), or at wedding parties) may vary and certain features have been discussed in Section 4.5.1. The practice of other minority ethnic and religious

groups will not be discussed although relevant data provided by them might be included.

This thesis is comprised of eight chapters, including this introduction chapter, as detailed below:

Chapter 2 gives a detailed description of methodological foundations including the ethnographic approach, data collection methods, data analysis, research sites, and participants.

Chapter 3 discusses food and mealtimes to set the background for the practice of VMRIs; to describe how this discursive context plays a key role in shaping and reshaping the practice of inviting others during mealtimes; and to partially uncover socio-cultural features, meanings, and functions of Vietnamese mealtime invitations.

Chapter 4 provides a critical overview of theoretical and empirical works on invitations and offers an exploratory analysis of examples of VMRIs in the data collected for this study.

Chapters 5 and 6 present linguistic elements of VMRIs in details. Chapter 5 focuses on performative verbs, structures of two types of VMRIs, and eating and drinking verbs whereas Chapter 6 focuses on person reference.

Chapter 7 discusses the role of females as a socio-cultural determinant in VMRIs when VMRIs are viewed culturally.

Analysis, findings, and discussions in three chapters (4, 5, and 6) are more linguistic-oriented to explore linguistic features, meanings, and functions of VMRIs. Chapters 3 and 7 explore socio-cultural aspects of VMRIs and expand the wider cultural context that is necessary for properly understanding the more conventionally linguistic analysis in Chapters 4-6.

Chapter 8 sums up the findings of VMRIs, draws reflections and implications, states limitations, and offers suggestions for further study.

The outline of the whole thesis can also be seen in the summary chart in Figure 1-1 below:

Chapter 1- Introduction
- Principal purposes of the study
- Research questions
- Scope and design
- Expectations
- A video of Vietnamese meals

Chapter 2 – Methodology
- Ethnographic approach
- Pilot study
- Procedure of data collection
- Research sites: Vietnam and New Zealand (Auckland)
- Participants
- Development of research instruments
- Data collection methods: diaries, video-recordings, informal talks, interviews, observations
- Data analysis: qualitative and quantitative
- Examples of VMRIs used in meals and their analysis

Chapter 3-Food and mealtimes
Highlights the value of food and company or commensality in Vietnamese meals to set the background and recognise socio-cultural context for the practice of mealtime invitations (VMRIs), to foreground how this discursive context plays a key role in shaping and reshaping the practice of inviting others during mealtimes
- High cultural value attached to food
- Meanings of family meals in relation to the practice of VMRIs

Chapter 4- Theory of invitations
- a critical overview of theoretical and empirical works on invitations

My acknowledgment of mealtime invitations and expanded view of invitations:
- Discourses of VMRIs: 'little d' and 'big D'; linguistic-oriented and sociocultural discourses
- VMRIs as multiplex discourses

Chapter 5- Linguistic structures and verbs used in mealtime invitations
- Explicit and implicit VMRIs
- The use of explicit and implicit VMRIs by age and gender
- Other factors mediating the use of explicit and implicit VMRIs
- Eat and drink (ingestion) verbs in VMRIs
- The use of ingestion verbs by age and gender

Chapter 6- Person reference
- Patterns of person reference (diversity and dynamics)
- Person reference by age and gender in terms of politeness and respect
- Constructing 'selves' and positioning others

Chapter 7- The role of women
Highlights the role of women in the practice of VMRIs as another socio-cultural feature of VMRIs
- Why women
- Vietnamese social, historical, and sociocultural contexts
- Attitudes
- Volition or expectation or sacrifice
- Socio-cultural theory (regulation)
- Self-regulation and levels of self-regulation
- Influence

Chapter 8- Conclusion
- A summary
- Critical reflection and implications
- Limitations
- Suggestions for further study

Figure 1-1 A summary chart of the thesis

1.4. Expectations

My ultimate aims are to address the need to understand other people's behaviours in situations and to increase the potential for a positive social change with our own everyday actions. Therefore, I aim to provide a clear picture of VMRIs spoken locally and internationally and offer a thorough way of interpreting them, both linguistically and socio-culturally using the framework that also accounts for language users and contexts. It is hoped that this study, through an ethnographic investigation of VMRIs, can reveal traits of Vietnamese culture and society to contribute to international understandings of Vietnamese people, their belief system, perceptions, and communicative styles. I want to expand the concept of contexts of language use. I also suggest that the extended meanings of contexts of language use should be recognised and put in the interpretive framework, and the language use should be analysed in their discourses. I have also offered a shift in research orientation by interrogating and investigating (mealtime) invitations beyond their linguistic-oriented discourses as commonly found in existing literature. My research expands the conceptual boundaries of invitations in general and mealtime invitations in particular, while documenting the variants in actual daily language use. My suggestions fill the gap in linguistic studies of invitations. They contribute a higher degree of specificity than achieved in previous studies of invitations. I also expect that my research will have an effect on native speakers' perceptions of VMRIs and affect their understandings of others' behaviours and actions to avoid possible negative consequences in daily life communication. Moreover, the fact that no prior research specific to mealtime invitations has been identified in the literature might also be an advantage: my explorative descriptive study may be used as a basis for future research into mealtime invitations in other languages and cultures.

1.5. Summary

In summary, this introduction chapter has stated the rationale for researching this topic and the main research questions followed by objectives and goals. It has also presented the research scope and design before stating my expectations for the research. The next chapter will discuss the methodological foundations for the research.

A video of Vietnamese meals

This video was made on the excerpts extracted from participants' recordings of five meals (dinners and lunches) taking place at different time (between 2011 and 2013) in different provinces in Vietnam. These five meals include various situations in which mealtime invitations are made throughout a Vietnamese meal.

Please Ctrl+click to the provided link to watch this video of Vietnamese meals.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9xTyNjyBaYzUnNnVHJvaVdqQXM/view?usp=sharing

Chapter 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with an explanation of theoretical foundations behind the methodology, the ethnographic approach, and why it is used for this study. Then, it describes how instruments are developed and explains the two-stage, multi-method research process. Next, it outlines the participant recruitment and provides details of participants, followed by detailed descriptions of what and how instruments are employed. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

The project was approved by the Massey University's Human Ethics Committee[2].

2.1. Ethnographic approach

The goals of my study are to document the use of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations (VMRIs) amongst Vietnamese native speakers in Vietnam and New Zealand, to examine their linguistic and socio-cultural features, meanings, and functions, and to investigate the perceived practices residing within verbal and nonverbal language use and attitudes to these speech behaviours. To obtain these goals, I used multiple ethnographic research approaches, including the participants' retention of diaries, video-recordings, observations, informal conversations, and interviews. These employed ethnographic approaches and participants' involvement in two research sites, namely Vietnam (VN) and New Zealand (NZ) were illustrated in Figure 2-1 below.

---

[2] See Appendix A for the letter of approval, Appendix B for participant information sheet, consent forms, and confidential agreement
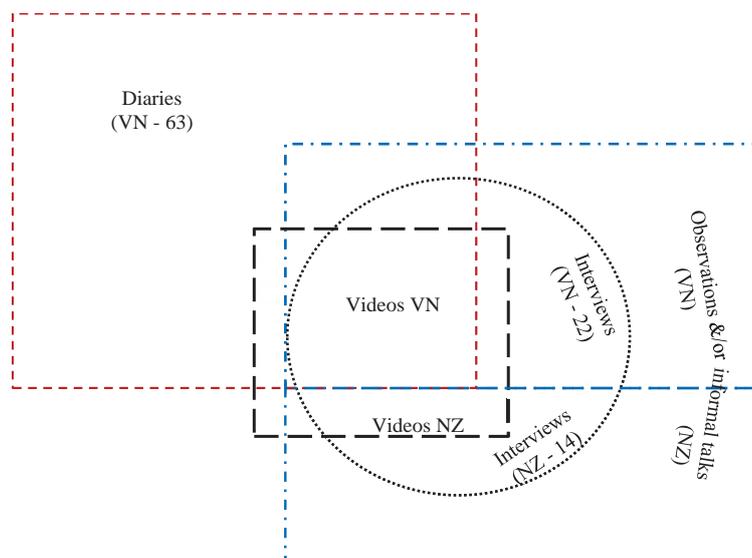
Figure 2-1 Data collection methods and participants' involvement

I chose ethnography since ethnography is a research approach that focuses on "people's behaviour in natural occurring, on-going settings, with a focus on the cultural interpretation of behaviour" (Watson-Gogeo, as cited in Heigham & Croker, 2009, p. 107) and collects "first-hand scientific data" (MacRae, 2006, p. 116). It is the primary research method of anthropology, but has recently been applied in various fields such as education, philosophy, psychology, and linguistics. Ethnography has been a base for the development of the sociolinguistic movement with a great number of writings by its founding father, Dell Hymes (1972, 1974) and other members (Blommaert, 2009; Gumperz, 1982; Saville-Troike, 1982; Tannen, 1988). Their studies mostly focus on ethnography of communication as the exploration and documentation of communicative competence within a speech community from an approach viewing discourse as a reflection of cultural and social realities to give explanations for cultural conceptions and constructions of meaning and behaviour (Davis & Henze, 1998). Ethnography of communication is alternatively termed 'linguistic ethnography' in recent studies (e.g., Jacobs & Slembrouck, 2010). Ethnography, especially ethnography of communication, is highly recommend for sociolinguistic research since ethnographies of communication "discover and explicate the competence that enables members of a community to conduct and interpret speech" (Hymes, 1972, p. 52); and "ethnographers of communication explore the physical setting, the participants, their goals; the media and

modes of communication; the norms that guides interpretation" (Johnstone & Marcellino, 2010, p. 8). A study on gender-based variations of language by Eckert (2009) is an example and a recommendation of the application of ethnography in sociolinguistic research. In this study, Eckert saw that the advantages of ethnographic interviews outweighed those of surveys not only in investigating culture but also in examining linguistic resources.

Ethnography was chosen for this study also because it offers advantages. Firstly, ethnography is appropriate for investigating my largely unknown area: how VMRIs are actually used and perceived across generations in both Vietnam and New Zealand because "ethnographic approaches are particularly valuable when not enough is known about a context or situation" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 169). Secondly, ethnographic approaches focus not only on specific speech acts or on discourses but also on the community and its members, on contexts or social situations so that the research can reveal both verbal and non-verbal strategies actually used in many situations in the given language and culture and thus, assure the authenticity of naturally occurring interactions, which may not be obtained with traditional methods in linguistics. Moreover, according to Davis and Henze (1998), research with ethnographic methods tends to use the group's own language instead of the researcher's own language. Thus, ethnographic approaches serve this study's purpose, which is to reveal participants' and their communities' language and culture practices through their own voices although adding my voice to theirs was unavoidable in the process of transcription, translation, and interpretation of data. In all, ethnographic research, according to Heigham and Sakui, can provide "the detailed and profound understanding of a given culture" while "other research methods rarely allow researchers to understand a culture in such depth" (as cited in Heigham & Croker, 2009, p. 95). Lastly, ethnography is crucial to this research because it can mitigate the 'observer's paradox', as Labov (1972) who coined this term noted that "the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed" (p. 209). The mitigation of observer's paradox in this study was obtained by the employment of various ethnographic approaches, which allowed the triangulation of the collected data provided with and without the participants' awareness of being observed, and the application of careful and systematic procedures of data collection. Thus, these

advantages have warranted the appropriate application of ethnographic methods in this language and culture study of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations.

Nevertheless, the use of ethnographic approaches was reported having some disadvantages, such as its complexities in technical issues (e.g., audio/video-recording). However, I overcame technical issues with my careful preparation for technical skills (see Section 2.3.3.1 below). Having a limited number of investigated participants is another disadvantage reported in some previous ethnographic research. Nevertheless, in this study, to enlarge the number of participants, I used multiple approaches rather than only one such as interviews or video-recordings and particularly, the employment of diaries enabled a great simultaneous involvement of writers. Moreover, I made use of my professional and social networks, as well as took advantage of my being somehow as 'native' as participants to increase my approachability and trustworthiness. Participants were very cooperative and informative and they yielded a significant amount of data. Some participants were even involved in all data gathering methods including written diaries, video-recordings, interviews, observations and informal talks (illustrated in Figure 2-1 above).

2.2. Instrument development and pilot study

I used multiple research methods (video-recordings, questionnaires, diaries, observations, informal conversations, and interviews) and the instruments (questionnaires, diaries, and interview questions[3]) were developed in a two-stage process, beginning with a pilot study. All stages, methods, and instruments including questionnaires, which were employed in the pilot study only, can be viewed in Figure 2-2 below.

---

[3] See Appendixes C, D, and F, respectively

Stages and Locations	Data collection methods		
Pilot study NZ & VN	Video-recordings	Diaries (2)	Questionnaires (6)
	Observations	Interviews (2)	Informal conversations
Main investigation Stage 2a-Vietnam	Video-recordings	Diaries (63)	
	Observations	Interviews (22)	Informal conversations
Main investigation Stage 2b-New Zealand	Video-recordings		
	Observations	Interviews (14)	Informal conversations

Figure 2-2 Data collection methods

Given the primacy of the Vietnamese language in my project, I developed all proposed research instruments in Vietnamese first since data collection in participants' first language may bring more in-depth results (Mullis, Kelly & Haley, 1996). Moreover, my goal is to investigate the language and culture together with the beliefs of native people, so it was appropriate that the research instruments were in their language. Therefore, to ensure the most appropriate versions to use, I had the initial Vietnamese versions checked for comprehension, word usage suitability, and contextual cohesion with three Vietnamese people: a senior lecturer in linguistics, a PhD student in science, and a high school student. Concurrently, I also had those initial Vietnamese versions translated into English for a couple of English-native speakers to check for pragmatic equivalents and then for my supervisors' guidance. The finalised versions in Vietnamese after being revised upon feedbacks from all those sources were used for the pilot study.

All instruments, except for interview questions, were finalised before the piloting stage. Interview questions were developed at two stages, in the piloting stage and at the later stage of the main investigation, i.e., after diaries, video-clips, and observations and

informal talks. Firstly, before being piloted, interview questions for part one (based on participants' meals and general practice of VMRIs) and questions for part three (based on the meal scene in the public-video-clip) were designed and finalised. An outline of anticipated interview questions for part two (based on participants' video-clips, diaries, and field notes (from observations and informal talks) was also proposed at this stage for peers and for supervisors' guidance. Then, after those participant-specific data had been collected in the main investigation stage and reviewed, part two's interview questions were reflectively modified, added, or discarded for instrument-based interviews.

The pilot study as the first of two stages, the pilot study and the main investigation, was conducted simultaneously in both research sites, Vietnam and New Zealand[4]. The pilot study had several purposes. It was firstly to test the proposed research instruments. The second purpose was to judge the initial hypothesis about the use and non-use of VMRIs, and to identify situated contexts of their uses, as well as to look for the initial indicators of their real practice in both Vietnam and New Zealand contexts at the present time.

For the pilot study, a small circle of my relatives, acquaintances, friends, and colleagues in both Vietnam and New Zealand were invited to be participants. Given the sensitive aspect of the topic and its possible mediation effects on results of the main investigation if the research focus was known to a wide range of participants, the instruments of questionnaires and interviews, which included more topic-focused questions than diaries, were piloted on the same three Vietnamese people mentioned above and three other friends and relatives, while diaries were piloted with two other participants who were available. Thus, six people, three residing in Auckland (two Master's students and an undergraduate) and the other three in Vietnam (a senior lecturer in linguistics, a PhD student in science, and a high school student) were the participants for the pilot study.

Findings from the pilot study resulted in some changes in terms of what and how instruments were employed in the main investigation in each research site. After piloting, I decided not to use questionnaires in both research sites, and not to use diaries in New Zealand for the main investigation. Unsatisfactory results after piloting questionnaires and diaries with three participants in New Zealand, together with a reported anticipation of limitations in using written Vietnamese and written English

---

[4] See Section 2.3.1.1 below

amongst some Vietnamese Auckland-dwellers, influenced me not to employ these two methods in this research site. Although questionnaires showed good results after being piloted with three participants in Vietnam, I also decided not to use questionnaires in Vietnam for several reasons. Firstly, when the further investigation with video-recordings, diaries, and interviews was conducted in Vietnam, the richness of data provided by these methods outweighed the value of the questionnaire data. This is because questionnaires could not cover all complexities of the researched area and what could be provided from questionnaires could be drawn from video-recordings, diaries, and interviews. Moreover, my purpose in using questionnaires to gather "a large amount of data quickly, creating an initial classification of semantic formulas, and ascertaining the structure of speech act(s) under consideration" (Cohen, 1996, p. 25) was not so strong after I had compared an analysis of preliminary data with piloted questionnaires and other proposed methods. Preliminary findings showed that questionnaires could gather only formulaic patterns of VMRIs while other various contextualised and situated structures of VMRIs were also revealed in other methods, namely video-clips, diaries, and interviews. Consequently, there was no need to complicate the methods used for getting repeated data. Without the application of questionnaires, triangulation purpose could still be satisfied with the use of a variety of other data gathering methods and data from different ranges of participants. Thus, the pilot study suggested that the main investigation should use video-recordings, interviews, observations and informal talks in both New Zealand and Vietnam; and diaries as an extra instrument employed in Vietnam only.

2.3. The main investigation

The main investigation was the second and also the main stage of the two-staged research with two sub-stages: stage 2a in Vietnam and stage 2b in New Zealand. This stage was to document the use and non-use of VMRIs around Vietnamese people's meals in both Vietnam and New Zealand contexts. It also examined the socio-cultural and linguistic features of these ritual invitations and mediating factors that have influenced the practice. Another purpose of this second stage was to investigate the users' belief systems that underlie the language use across different generations.

2.3.1. Research sites and participant recruitment

2.3.1.1. Research sites

Participants were recruited in two different research sites, Vietnam and New Zealand (Auckland). Vietnam locates in South East Asia and is about 12-13 flying hours away from New Zealand. Vietnam is where most Vietnamese-native speakers live (about 91.9 million by March 2015[5]). Like most other Asian countries, Vietnam is a collectivistic or community-oriented culture, which values emotional ties and attachment to relatives and the community, reflected in idioms, proverb, or old sayings such as "*Ăn một mình thì tức, làm một mình cực thân*" (Either eating or working alone is painful). Vietnam tends to remain culturally homogenous and retain its one-national-language policy while stimulating the maintenance of minority ethnic languages and cultures.

By contrast, New Zealand is a 'superdiverse society' with "a tradition of significantly transforming itself at particular historical moments" (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012, pp. 10-11). New Zealand has a commitment to biculturalism with respect to the indigenous Māori culture, which is holistic and community-based (Durie, 2004). Its individualistic culture, in which individual differences are valued and people may value their self over the group (Ishida, 2003), remains important with two thirds of the population as the New Zealand Pākehā (European descent). New Zealand is an immigrant-receiving country with its population coming from a wide range of countries and ethnicities. The number of people of Vietnamese origin residing in New Zealand is relatively small, about 6,660, which is less than 1% of people that stated an ethnic group living in New Zealand in 2013. However, it is one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in New Zealand with an increase of its population from 37.8% in 2001-2006 to 39.6 % in 2006-2013[6]. In one way, the Vietnamese community is small, but in the other way, it is mixed in with the larger Asian community, which, together with Britain and the Pacific, comprises three vital components of contemporary New Zealand's cultural demography (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012). With 56.4% multi/bilinguals, Vietnamese community is establishing itself within the multi/bilingual population of New Zealand and to this 'superdiverse society'.

---

[5] http://countrymeters.info/en/Vietnam
[6] Statistics in this paragraph are from Statistics New Zealand 2013

These broad differences between two research sites contributed to the data provided by the residents and were attributed to my employment of various ways to approach and recruit participants and multiple methods of data collection in each site.

2.3.1.2. Participant recruitment

I did understand that it was important to over-sample since many of my participants might discontinue or give data that I could not use; and for the purposes of my research, a wide societal range of participants were needed. Therefore, I recruited as many volunteers as possible. I started with those I knew and then found and approached others using the snowball technique, a process of reference from one person to the next, which is "quickly building up and enabling the researcher to approach participants with credibility from being sponsored by a named person" (Denscombe as cited in Streeton et al., 2004 p. 37).

A large circle of my relatives, acquaintances, friends, and colleagues in Vietnam and New Zealand were invited through emails, phone calls, social networks such as Facebook and Google Plus, or word of mouth. Through those people and with their permission as well as their willing help, I extended invitations of participation to people that they suggested. Thus, a large number of my relatives, acquaintances, friends, and colleagues as well as my relatives' colleagues, my colleagues' relatives, friends, and their acquaintances became my research participants. The majority of participants recruited by these methods were teachers, officials, workers, students, doctors, and nurses. Despite having different professions, these participants were still from a similar cultural and societal background to me, the researcher. Therefore, I managed other ways to approach a more diverse range of participants, with whom I did not have any previous contacts or relationships, or who were from a social environment quite unfamiliar to me in both Vietnam and New Zealand.

During my fieldwork in Vietnam, I approached a different group of participants such as shopkeepers, shop assistants, and other market-traders by working part time in a shop in an open-air market, one of the most popular sites of everyday-life activities of Vietnamese people. Being in that role, I had opportunities to have talks with those people about their daily life with their complete openness and sincerity; and chances to observe their daily meals, especially lunches, which often took place right in their stalls and in front of their customers and other traders. I also invited voluntary participants

that I encountered on the fieldwork trips such as farmers, in-service soldiers, businesspersons, pensioners, and school pupils.

I approached the Vietnamese community in Auckland by working as a community volunteer and participating in many activities together with them at a Vietnamese Buddhist temple in South Auckland, where many Auckland-based Vietnamese people gathered every Sunday for religious rites and other socialised activities, including communal meals. Approaching them in that way was quite effective for me to have an overview of Auckland-residing Vietnamese people, who, together with other Vietnamese in New Zealand I got to know in other ways, could serve as my participants, either anonymous or not, in the New Zealand research site. The most effective methods of gathering research data from Vietnamese people in New Zealand could thereby be worked out. Moreover, approaching those Vietnamese temple goers at the temple while involved in the temple's activities and receiving the help and recommendations of the temple's head monk turned out to be one of the best ways to establish a relationship with Auckland-based participants. Additionally, it also helped me to obtain the best observation of their communal meals in my circumstance in New Zealand, where I had recently settled down, unlike most of these participants, as a research student who had limited opportunities to observe their home meals at their private places.

The recruitment of diary-writers did not take much time and effort. Diaries were sent (hard copies through personal meetings; soft copies via emails or Facebook messages) to participants upon their acceptance and right after their consent had been collected. Meanwhile, more time, effort, and considerations of flexibility were spent on the recruitment of participants for video-recording and interviewing. For participants with whom I had already had a relationship, I took advantage of any occasions to meet them and get closer to them. Meals with them were not only target contexts for the research but also the most effective means to maintain and enhance the relationships with participants. Meals with participants in Vietnam took place either at my home or at participants' private houses or at public dining places such as restaurants or street food stalls; while shared meals at picnic areas were more common among participants in New Zealand. Moreover, sharing meals with them under our previous relationships, (e.g., friends or colleagues) rather than our new roles of researcher-participants offered

me chances to observe their meal experiences in their natural ways, and even allowed me to video-record whole experiences with less likelihood of planned acting or behaviour. That 'informal relationship' also helped me with the opportunity to repeat video-recording their meals until they became more familiar with the presence of cameras and recorders.

Participants who were referred to me through the snowball method were to some extent aware of my being a 'stranger' at my first presence or of the researcher-participant relationship when I first approached them. Thus, I needed to be very flexible in each situation. For example, in some cases, I spent some time to start and build a friendly relationship with them first by engaging them in informal gatherings with or without the presence of our mutual acquaintances (those who referred others to my research) to get to know them more before inviting them to participate in my research; while in other cases, it worked well with invitations for research participation immediately after some basic and conventional introductions.

Getting to know participants and retaining relationships with them during data collection is always of great importance for the quality of data and for a comprehensive data analysis. A more general and large-scaled investigation of participants prior to data collection is also important to help decide effective methods of data collection among them. For example, after learning that not all New Zealand-based Vietnamese people had a good command of written English and/or written Vietnamese, I decided not to use questionnaires and diaries among participants in New Zealand. Thus, interviews together with observations and informal conversations were the best choice for participants in New Zealand although Moore (2004b) stated challenges in finding Vietnamese interviewees in his oral history research with Vietnamese refugees in Auckland. Meanwhile, diaries were chosen for their Vietnam-based counterparts. This means that participants in Vietnam underwent all data collection methods that were employed among participants in New Zealand and diaries as well.

2.3.2. Research participants

Any people who identified themselves as Vietnamese speakers could become my research participants. Friends, colleagues, acquaintances, relatives, their recommended or referred people for the research, and those who I came cross during my fieldwork

trips were all invited[7]. Recruited participants and other informants in video-recordings, observations, and informal talks could belong to at least one of three groups that I called: diary participants, interview participants, and observed participants.

2.3.2.1. Diary participants

Diary participants included individual volunteers who agreed to participate in my research by providing data through diaries. Diary participants could be individuals with or without any relationship with other participants such as family members, friends, colleagues, flatmates, or else.

Diary participants involved 63 writers (12 males and 51 females) and 12 of them included video-clips. Another eight participants did not return written diaries for their personal reasons, but allowed me to video-record their meals and agreed to participate in interviews instead. The age of diary participants ranged from 16 years old to 60 years old (38 were between 16 and 25; 20 were in 26-43; and five were in 44-60). The majority of them were students (34); or in professional employment (nine primary school teachers, five university lecturers, one nurse, four army officers, and five other officials); or in manual work (three manual workers, and one farmer plus salesperson). Only two (one pensioner and one housewife) were not in employment. None were school pupils. 24 diary writers were married with children (three with grown-up children) and 39 were still single, or newly-married without children (three). All participants with written diaries resided in Vietnam with one exception of a participant who started very first entries in Vietnam and completed her final diaries in Australia, where she travelled to on business during the time of her writing diaries. No participants residing in New Zealand were involved in writing diaries.

A summary of the diary participants can be seen in Table 2-1 below.

---

[7] excluding children seven years old or under, vulnerable or disabled people

Table 2-1 Diary participants

Diary participants		Students		Professional		Manual work		Unemployment		Total
Age ranges	Socio-marital status	FM	M	FM	M	FM	M	FM	M	
44-60	Married with children	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	5
	Single/ married no children	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26-43	Married with children	0	0	14	2	2	0	1	0	19
	Single/ married no children	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
16-25	Married with children	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Single/ married no children	27	7	3	1	0	0	0	0	38
Total		27	7	19	5	3	0	2	0	63

(The reasons for the age range cut-off points and differentiating socio-marital status as shown in this table (and in Table 2-2 below) were the influence of these factors on the use of VMRIs. Age and socio-family status of both VMRI-extenders and recipients affect the use, linguistic features, and their perceptions of the invitations, which will be discussed in relevant chapters (5-7). The grading age in analysing language of VMRIs is selected as twenty-five, for example. Twenty-five typically marks the change in socio-family status [8] of most of my participants, who remained single at twenty-five and under or became married with children after that age. Twenty-five is, therefore, associated with both age grading and socio-family status changing for the users of VMRIs).

2.3.2.2. Interview participants

Interview participants were individuals who volunteered to provide data for my research through interviews. Like diary participants, interview participants could be individuals with or without any relationship with other participants such as family members, friends, colleagues, flatmates, or else.

Interview participants included 22 (15 females and 7 males) in Vietnam and 14 (10 females and 4 males) in New Zealand. Although the number of interviewees (36) is much lower than that of diary-writers (63), their age range is much wider, from 9 years old to 73 years old. Interviewees also offered a wider category of jobs, which included school pupil (1), students (16), teacher (1), nurse (1), army officer (1), in-service soldier (1), officials (2), farmer (1), pensioners (4), manual workers (5), housewives (2), and market-trader (1). Interview participants were also diverse in terms of their growing-up

---

[8] Age at marriage is different between men and women and it also changes at different times in Vietnam (Hirschman & Nguyen, 2004)

and residing locations, both in Vietnam and in New Zealand. The length of participants'
stay in New Zealand ranged from one month to 22 years.

A summary of interviewees[9] in Vietnam and New Zealand is shown in Table 2-2 below.

Table 2-2 Interviewees in Vietnam and New Zealand

Interviewees		9-15		16-25		26-43		44-73		Total
		FM	M	FM	M	FM	M	FM	M	
VN	Married/divorced with children	0	0	0	0	5	1	3	1	10
	Single/Married no children	0	1	7	4	0	0	0	0	12
NZ	Married/divorced with children	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	6
	Cohabiting with Non-Vietnamese	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Single/Married no children	0	0	1	1	4	1	0	0	7
Total		0	1	8	5	11	4	6	1	36

2.3.2.3. Observed participants

Observed participants included individuals, families, groups or communities of diners
of all ages, who provided information through video-recordings, informal
conversations, and/or observations. They were also those who indirectly provided
research data in diaries and interviews (through perceptions and observations of diary
writers and interviewees). In other words, data from these participants was given on the
basis of relationships or connections between them and the data-givers, such as family
members, friends, colleagues, flatmates, neighbours, dining partners, or else. Observed
participants also included online commenters of a public forum[10] about Vietnamese
tradition and customs. Therefore, observed participants were numerous and diverse in
age ranges, professions, and residing locations. Most of observed participants remained
anonymous to me.

---

[9] See Appendix F for more details
[10] http://ttvnol.com/threads/phong-tuc-an-uong-cua-nguoi-nam-co-nhieu-dieu-khac-so-voi-ngoai-bac-
khong.493954/

2.3.2.4. Other socio-demographic information

Participants recruited in the Vietnam research site were mainly from and were residing, at the time of the research, in Northern provinces, namely Hanoi, Hai Phong, Hung Yen, Nam Dinh, Thai Binh, Ninh Binh, Bac Ninh, Hoa Binh, Tuyen Quang, Ha Nam. Many of these Northern provinces are in areas of the Red River, which is known as 'the mythical primordial cradle of Vietnamese culture' (Taylor, 1983, p. 292), some are in highland or mountainous areas. Some participants were also from central provinces such as Nghe An, Ha Tinh, and Quang Binh and Southern provinces including Ho Chi Minh city and Ben Tre. Participants recruited in New Zealand were originally from different place in Vietnam, the North, the central, and the South. However, many participants recruited both in New Zealand and Vietnam reported that they had been travelling and living (for longer than three months) in more than one place (province, region, or country).

Sources of residing and growing-up locations were recorded for demographic information on the participants. I did not intend to recruit participants with origins from different areas in Vietnam in order to get a demographic comparison although it is a fact that social behaviours were also formed by place of residence. I recruited available participants rather than selecting typical participants since there were no typical participants in this study. Participants reflected their own perceptions, experiences, and behaviours, all of which added colour to a complete picture although not all parts of the picture have been revealed or added. Recruited participants were not necessarily representatives of either their growing-up locations or their present residential areas.

Thanks to being recruited through a wide variety of approaches, participants of this study offered a great range of socio-demographics. They varied in terms of age (which was not limited to 9-to-73 age range[11]), gender, profession, education level, and socio-family status (single, married, divorced, separated; married with and without children; single parents; parents and grandparents of toddlers and of grown-ups). They were also diverse in terms of both growing-up and residential locations (urban, rural, suburban; the North, the central, the South; inside or outside Vietnam), the time residing in New

---

[11] The youngest recruited participant aged 9 and the oldest aged 73 at the time of the research; however, provided information was also from those who were as young as one year old or much older than 73.

Zealand (for participants recruited here), and world and life experience (being been abroad or having never been out of the village; having been in the Wars, born in Wars, or only in peace time). Not all these socio-demographic details were documented in the study, but they were noted in participants' profiles kept in my fieldwork notes for references in interpretative analyses. The socio-demographic variety of participants not only offered a means of data-source triangulation but also helped this study encompass a broader scope of participants' beliefs and understanding of their language use.

2.3.3. Data collection

As already mentioned above, the main investigation was decided to use video-recordings, interviews, observation, and informal talks in both New Zealand and Vietnam; and diaries as an extra instrument employed in Vietnam only. Data collection procedures were followed with great care and consistency since the pilot study also suggested that the procedures of data collection, especially in the order of instruments to be applied, increase validity and reliability of gathered data. This is due to the sensitive aspect of the topic and the possible mediation effects on results if the research's focus was revealed to participants prior to fieldwork and if they were aware of explicit observation. Therefore, diaries and video-recordings together with observations and informal talks were conducted before interviews. This was not only because interviews were intended to be based on data collected from previously employed instruments but also because these previously employed instruments made participants be less aware of the research's focus than interviews.

Figure 2-3 below visually illustrates all employed instruments and procedures of data collection in the main investigation and aids readers through the detail descriptions of each instrument in the next sections.
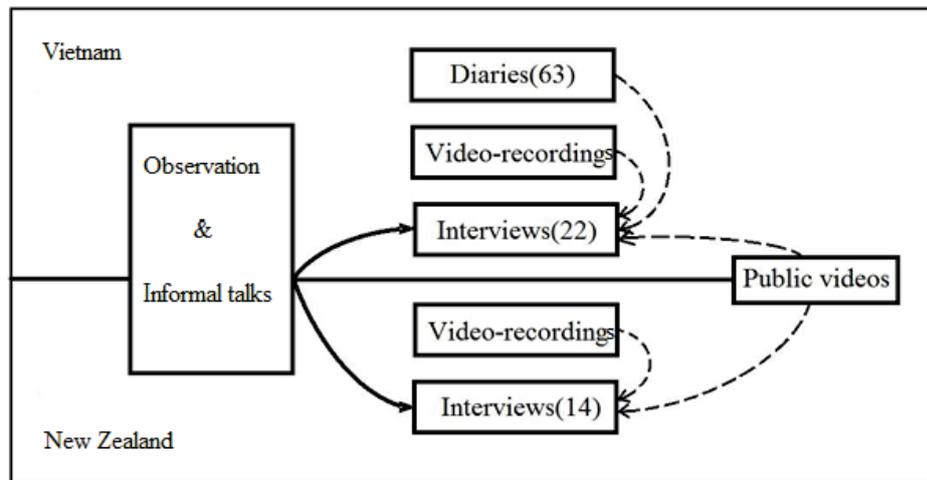
Figure 2-3 Data-collecting methods and procedures in the main investigation

2.3.3.1. Video-recordings

In order to provide visual materials for analysis and interpretation and visual bases for interviews, as well as a vehicle of triangulation of data source, meals amongst Vietnamese people, with or without foreigners, were videotaped in their natural settings. Video-recording for the main investigation was conducted at similar time or after the implementation of diaries, observations and informal talks, but before interviews.

The method of using video-clips in research has been recent but become common in various fields, especially in investigating verbal interactions (e.g., Ishida, 2003; Ogiermann, 2015) and in exploring cultural perceptions (e.g., Burke, 2013; Shohet, 2010; Tobin & Hsueh, 2007). Most video users recommend video-application in their research for its prominent advantages despite the time-consuming and technical-skill-demanding issues in dealing with videoing tasks. For example, according to Locastro and Kubota, the use of video is essential for the investigation of verbal and nonverbal communication (as cited in Ishida, 2003); it is useful to obtain ethnographic details of situations and participants (Burns, 1999; Ishida, 2003); or "using visual methods to reflect on comparative material is a powerful way to reveal hidden cultural assumptions" (Burke, 2013, p. ii).

I borrowed the idea of using video-clips in research. My participants' meals were video-taped. Participants' video-clips were used in two ways. Firstly, video-recording was employed as one individual data collection method, like any other methods employed in this study. In this way, video-recordings provided visual and authentic data as opposed to nonvisual and reported data from interviews, and offered spoken data in

comparison with the written ones from diaries. Secondly, video-recordings were used as a visual tool or a visual base to elicit responses from participants in interviews. The technique "in which the researcher records behaviour, usually on video- or audiotape, and then gets the subjects to comment on the behaviour, using the recordings as an aid too memory" (Nunan as cited in Ishida, 2003, p. 68) was widely known as 'video stimulated recalls' (Tobin, 2005; Tobin & Hsueh, 2007; and Burke, 2013) or as 'video playback approach' in some sociolinguistic studies (Gumperz, 1982; Mackey & Gass, 2005; McGregor, 1994; and Tannen, 1984). In my study, interviewees were asked to interpret and comment on people's behaviours around meals recorded in their personal video-clips, public video-clips, and diaries if applicable. Therefore, this study uses the term 'instrument-based interviews'[12] referring to the interviews that were based also on participants' personal video-recordings, public video-clips, and participants' diaries.

My adoption of video-clips in research, however, included modification. Participants' video-clips were used as a tool to obtain comments and explanations on their own behaviours, as well as on their dining partners' in their meal experience if applicable. Participants were not asked to comment on other participants' video-clips. By that, participants were assured that their video clips would not be seen or their recorded behaviours would not be commented by others. Consequently, they could feel more comfortable when commenting on their own behaviours at their meals. In order to get participants' comments on other people's behaviours, I used a video-excerpt of meal scene extracted from a Vietnamese popular television series[13]. Commenting on movie characters' behaviours could help avoid some 'level of personal threat' which is linked to "the act of critiquing one's own practice […] and which can be heightened further when critiquing extends to others" (Haggerty as cited in Burke, 2013, p. 29). Moreover, by commenting on public video-clips, there was a less likelihood of bias in people's comments on their own behaviours in their personal video-clips. Thus, when used with video-clips of participants, public video-clips can work as a means of verifying participants' opinions on people's mealtime behaviours. Additionally, the use of public video-clips can also help to elicit responses from those who were not comfortable with commenting on their own and/or their dining partners' mealtime behaviours in their video-clips.

---

[12] See more in Section 2.3.3.3.

[13] '*Chuyện phố phường*' (Daily-life stories) directed by Nguyễn and Phạm (2000), uploaded widely on YouTube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdk80jhNBRI

My adoption of video-clips was not as complicated as the application of videos by other scholars. First of all, there was no consideration needed for which meals to film. Any meals with diners' permissions could be videotaped and they were video-recorded in their natural times and places and in the manner as they were for the purpose of recording real-world events, i.e., participants' meals in natural settings. Thus, there required no directions from videographers or anyone else to lead how the meals should be or what dinners should say or act. Besides, my research did not expect professionally-taped video-clips. Videoing meals, then, just required some basic skills, including video-recording and automatic camera-recording, with which people in this age of digital technology were quite familiar and the tools could be basic digital cameras or common mobile cameras.

However, I was aware that videotaping meals in their natural settings and in the manner as they were might involve many difficulties such as in obtaining good quality of images and sounds (McGregor, 1994; Tannen, 1984), the unexpected incidents during the events, and the unanticipated length of meals to be recorded. Thus, to obtain good quality data, apart from care in each recording by myself, I based on Diefenbach, (2008) for some professional guidance on basic technical skills such as the selection of camera position and angle (the direction in which it is pointing) and proper sound levels. Guidance [14] was also given as a reference for those who recorded their meals by themselves. Moreover, there were no extra jobs for any editing of video-images, sounds or content or mosaic effect for videos as I intended to retain the originality of participants' video-recordings to be reviewed as they were. Additionally, unlike in other research, neither subtitling nor translation was needed for video-clips used in interviews because video-viewers (my participants and me, the researcher) were all native-speakers.

However, the video-recordings that were used to play back in interviews were shortened to maximum of 15 minutes. A program called Avidemux 2.6, which was available online with simple instructions, was useful for cutting off some irrelevant excerpts (the parts including no contexts or situations that ritual invitations took place or were expected to take place) while still retaining excerpts that provided needed data. In brief,

---

[14] See the last page in Appendix D

the adoption of video-recordings in terms of technical issues was manageable in my research.

My utmost concern with the videoing method was the issue of participants' awareness of being recorded or observed, which was raised by many researchers and widely known as 'observer's paradox' (Labov, 1972) or 'sociolinguistic paradox' (Wilson, 1987). Ishida (2003), for example, claimed that people tend to behave differently, e.g., their language shifts from a casual style to a more careful style when they are aware of being recorded. Being aware of the consequence of this issue on the data collected for my sensitive topic and having drawn out some experiences in piloted video-recordings, I prepared tasks before videoing in the main investigation, especially in the way of approaching participants, considering where, when and how to ask them for their meal video-recordings at their ease. For example, I made use of relationships on my personal basis rather than basing on researcher-participant relationship, and of the occasions to meet, observe and/or have meals with my participants, and then to have their meals video-taped, either by me or by participants themselves. In this way, participants were given time and occasions to get used to having their meals videotaped.

At times, several meals of the same participants were video-recorded. Some people might be more comfortable with their meals being videoed when they knew that their meals were not solely or mainly focused, so sometimes, not only meals but other contexts such as cooking, table-settings, or foods were also videoed as a means of distraction. To ensure the most comfortable state for diners and the utmost natural events, in some cases, participants recorded their meals by themselves; while in other cases when videographers were not diners, diners were left by themselves with the automatic camera-recording on, which was set prior to meals by videographers.

For ethical considerations, apart from participants' permissions for their meals to be video-taped, permissions from their dining partners were also sought for. It is advisable in Vietnamese culture to ask for a group's approval because approval from some representatives could work as the whole group's agreement and the rest would not protest. Thus, for ethical considerations and also for the effectiveness, my asking for meal-videoing permission was often extended to the whole group of diners. However, when videotaping specific diners as my participants, the camera often faced them but others facing away from the camera.

I kept all the originals of video-clips for my visual data analysis. Video-clips, which were used for interviews upon participants' agreement, were shortened to 15 minutes maximum. Shortened tapes were shown to interviewees for their verifications, comments, and explanations. This step preceded the showing of the public meal video-excerpt.

My final job with video-clips was interpreting visual images (non-verbal language) and sounds (verbal languages). It is a fact that different people might interpret the contents differently and it was also difficult to read or to interpret correctly the recorded people's performance or visual expressions. To deal with that challenge, most used video-clips were followed up with interviews, in which not only participants' comments and interpretations, but their verification of the unclear images and expressions were also given. However, for video-clips whose follow-up discussions were not available, the challenge was managed by the use of Norris's (2004) multimodal interactional analysis, an approach to the intersection and interdependence of multiple modalities or modes of communication within a given context.

In summary, video-recording was one method of collecting data in my research and video-clips of participants' meals (personal video-recordings) were used in two ways: as a data-collection method itself (for visual data analysis and interpretations) and as a base for interviews as another data-collection method (to elicit responses from interviewees basing on information revealing in the clips). The latter application based on public video-clips as well. These two ways of application with personal video-recordings were replicated with meal diaries, which will be discussed in the next section.

2.3.3.2. Diaries

Diaries have been used more in language education research (e.g., Bailey, 1991; McKay, 2006; Nguyen, T. C. L., 2009) rather than in sociolinguistic research. A diary study in second language teaching and learning is defined as "an account of a second language experience as recorded in a first person journal" (Bailey and Ochsner, 1983, p. 189). However, strengths of diaries in language education research, like those that have been drawn out by Bailey (1991), can accord well with the aims of my language and culture study. For example, diary entries can keep writers self-aware of the processes

that they are involved in and in this case that is the process of behaving at meals. Moreover, diaries, like any "other introspective methods" and as "one way of accessing participants' inner worlds" (p. 88), provide information about their writers and their perspectives on their meal experiences as well as many socio-cultural and linguistic factors. More importantly, their inner worlds are expressed in their own 'voice'. What's more, diaries record events, details, feelings about the experiences, which are not only different in many writers' diaries but are also various over a period of time in one writer's entries. They therefore allow researchers to see factors identified by writers as well. Additionally, procedure of data collection with diaries is less complex than some other methods and the process itself is more accessible for it is "low-tech, portable and trainable" (p. 88). Lastly, diaries, in combination with other methods, can provide one vehicle for data triangulation.

Apart from those strengths, which are in common with studies in language education, some other advantages of using diaries for this particular linguistic research are also noticeable. Firstly, in comparison with my piloted questionnaires, which I then decided not to use in the main investigation, diaries recorded a variety of real life language structures of VMRIs used in various situations by particular language users. These language variations could hardly be found on my piloted questionnaires for their informants yielded typical language patterns for questioned items. Moreover, diaries recorded the actual language use in various situations of their meal experiences when their writers, unlike questionnaire informants, were not being restricted to the limited aspects and situations set within the modest length and scale of questionnaires. Secondly, diaries provided reliable data without diary writers' bias or pressure from researcher's side. Writers covered various meal aspects, but still within the boundary of meal contexts when they were not aware of the research's focus- mealtime ritual invitations, which were, to some extent, a sensitive matter attracting bias that might lead to unreliable data. The reliability of diary data can be achieved through the 'repetitiveness' nature of diary entries, which are not done only once. Thirdly, writing diaries (preferably with pen and paper), in comparison with other types of writing in first-person journals such as blogs, is more common and convenient to most of Vietnamese people residing in Vietnam, who are keen on expressing themselves through writings, but are mostly still not familiar with the daily use of computers and webs. Thus, diaries rather than blogs were chosen. Last but not least, diary is supposed

to be a transformative process in which my participants can benefit from reflecting on their past experiences as opposed to just a tool for data collection.

Many Vietnamese residing in Vietnam responded positively to invitations to write meal-diaries for my research (with some refusals for personal reasons, too), while no counterparts in New Zealand participated in writing diaries. However, having diaries implemented in just one instead of two research sites was not regarded as one disadvantage of using diaries as a data collection method in this research. Diary studies yield some weakness related to issues of second language learning and teaching, such as the difficulty in comparing findings of the studies due to a small number of diaries who look at different aspects of the process; the lack of representativeness of typical language learners; lack of verification for the drawn conclusions from the provided data (Bailey, 1991). These disadvantages were not weaknesses of diaries in this study, however, for some reasons. Firstly, my research did not aim at finding diary writers as typical diners. Secondly, a large number of my diary participants were from different living areas within Vietnam and a variety of aspects addressed in their diaries helped to enrich the picture of how VMRIs were used and perceived in this multifaceted topic. Moreover, I did not intend to compare the processes as language learning and teaching studies often do.

However, diaries in my research posed a challenge of handling ambiguous data although it occupied just a small portion. That is, in some cases, unclear points or ambiguous expressions in diaries could not be verified or clarified by their writers when no follow-up discussions nor post-diary disclosures were obtained after diary collection. The provided data consequently could not be used and was excluded.

Participants were invited to write a meal-diary [15], which was a record of their experiences of any meals. Each meal-diary was required to include at least three entries, in either English or Vietnamese, with as many details as possible about participants' meal experiences including the following details:

+ Dining times, dates, places, dining situations, diners and their relationship with diary writers (older/ younger, familiarity, social distance)

---

[15] Appendix C

+ How diary writers interact, verbally and nonverbally, with other diners, late arrivals, and unexpected guests during meals

+ What diary writers think or feel about their own verbal and non-verbal behaviours and about other diners' during the meals

In working with 63 written diaries, I gave priority to those with at least three entries and those that covered guided details. Therefore, 53 diaries (41 by females and 12 by males) gave data that I could use.

Diary writers were encouraged to add writings with drawings, photos, and audio/video clips of their dining experiences. However, only writings and 12 writings with added video-clips (with and without my technical supports) were handed in. All diaries were in Vietnamese and none was in English. Most diaries were handed in in paper-hard copies in participants' handwriting; some soft copies were sent via emails.

Participants were asked to write their diaries between the end of November 2012 and January 2013. The time matched my data collection schedule. The time was also assumed to be perfect for participants to write about their meal experiences. It was the time of plenty of celebrations and holidays with meal activities in Vietnam (Vietnamese Teachers' Day, National Defence Day, Christmas, Solar-calendar New Year, and Lunar-calendar New Year, Vietnam's biggest festive celebration). Thus, participants were more willing to spend their off-work time to write diaries. Various dining situations, e.g., daily meals or feasts of special occasions; meals alone or with others; meals as a host or as a guest; meals at private houses, at the workplace, or in public-dining places; either inside or outside Vietnam; and so on were covered in diaries. Some diaries even included dining situations that I had not thought of before, e.g., having meals alone but with communication with others on the phone or on Skype. Most recorded meals were current ones, i.e., around the time when participants were asked to write diaries. Some meals took place some time ago and were recalled as participants' meals of 'best memories' or their 'unforgettable meals'. Moreover, although meal diaries were written mainly by teachers, students, and office workers, and by just a small number of farmers and manual workers, and diary-writers' age ranged between 16 and 60 only, a wide variety of social ranges of diners, who were reported as young as one year old or as old as over 80 and various in professions, social positions, and in relationship with the

writers were addressed in recorded meal entries. Practices and perceptions of not only writers themselves but also of those other diners were revealed through the writers' observation and perception. As a result, data from diaries provided robust information.

After diaries had been collected, their writers were asked if they would like to follow up with an interview including some discussion about their diary entries. Upon diary writers' agreement on being my research's interviewees as well, their diaries, together with any video-recordings and field notes that were available and related to them, were reviewed for designing and modifying questions for part 2, video-diary-based interview. In other words, interviewees' responses were elicited partly based on their diaries. By that, meal-diaries worked as a base for interviews apart from being a data-collection method themselves.

In summary, as a data collection method, diaries provided breadth and depth of detailed data while at the same time coordinated with other methods as a means of data triangulation. In this research, diaries were also used as a tool for interviews as another method to base on. The next section will discuss in detail how interviews were applied in this research.

2.3.3.3. Interviews

Unlike diaries, which were conducted in the Vietnam research site only, interviews were employed at both research sites, Vietnam and New Zealand. They were conducted after the data that they based on had been collected from other methods such as diaries, video-recordings, and some field notes from informal talks and observations. In other words, interviews were the instrument to be used last in the data collection procedure in each research site even though more informal talks and observations were still conducted after. Interviews took place in Vietnam in between December 2012 and February 2013; in New Zealand in between March and August 2013.

Interview, which is defined as "a verbal interchange, often face to face, though the telephone may be used, in which an interviewer tries to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from another person" (Burns, 1997, p. 329), is an effective way to understand and explore feelings, interests, attitudes and concerns of individuals (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Interviews can serve such purposes as to gather information for research

objectives; to help identify variables and relationships; or to be combined with other research methods (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

Interviews employed in this research were designed with three parts[16]. Part one included general questions on participants' meals[17], their general practice or non-practice of VMRIs[18], and their perceptions toward the use of VMRIs across generations[19]. In part two, questions[20] were developed at two different stages[21] and based on participants' personal meal video-clips and/or their meal diaries together with any field notes from observations and/or informal talks. In comparison with questions in part one, which elicited participants' generalisation on their use of and perceptions of VMRIs, questions in part two were directly related to those aspects in a specific meal recorded in their video-clips or written diaries.

Unlike part two, which required participants to comment on their own practice or non-practice of mealtime invitations in their personal video-clips, part three elicited interviewees' responses to the practice or non-practice of other people (film characters) in a public video-excerpt. Its guiding questions[22] were based on a selected video-excerpt extracted from episode 12 of a Vietnam's 25-episode television series, '*Chuyện phố phường*' (Everyday stories) directed by Nguyễn and Phạm (2004), first broadcast on Vietnam's national channel in 2006, rebroadcast in 2011, and widely uploaded on the YouTube website[23].

In the excerpt scene, two hosts: a middle-aged father and his blind twentyish-daughter and one invited guest, an about eight-year-old boy are sitting around a dining table waiting for a family meal. But they do not start the meal since another invited guest, who is the man's nephew, the girl's lower-ranked cousin, and the boy's father, has not turned up yet. The old man seems impatient, wondering why his nephew is so late. On the boy's response that his father has gone out to buy some wine, the old man puts a piece of good food into the boy's rice bowl and tells him to start his meal. The boy thanks him and starts eating. The old man turns to his daughter, also puts some food

---

[16] Appendix E
[17] Questions 1-3a; 16
[18] Questions 3b-11; 14a; 15a,c; 17a; 19a; 20; 30
[19] Questions 4b,c,d; 6b,c; 9b,c; 12-13; 14b; 15b, 17b; 18; 19b; 21
[20] Questions 22-29
[21] See 2.2
[22] Questions 33-35
[23] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdk80jhNBRI

into her bowl and tells her to start the meal and to leave him alone to wait for the other invited guest, but the girl insists on waiting. The guest finally turns up with a wine bottle in his hand, smiling and talking about why he needs to get some wine for the meal. Only the hosts respond to the man while his son keeps eating without saying anything. The younger man fills wine into two cups. The older man picks up one cup, giving an excuse of a special meal for having some wine, cheering cups with the younger man and extends his verbal invitation to him "*Nào, xin mời*" [Now, beg invite] (Cheers, please!) with the younger man's inviting back, "*Dạ, cháu mời bác*" [Honorific, nephew invite uncle] (Cheers!). They both sip some wine in the cups. After some talk, with the boy's being mentioned in the last utterance, the younger man turns to his son, scolds him for his misbehaving while eating, but his telling off the boy is then intervened with the hosts' explanations. The older host then shifts his talk to offer the younger man a piece of food into his bowl and invites him to eat: "*Anh cũng ăn đi này*" [Elder brother too eat imperative this] (Have this piece, please!). Two male adults both cheer cups again, but this time, before emptying the wine, the younger man raises the cup toward the hosted girl, his younger but higher-ranked cousin, and extends his verbal invitation to her: "*Mời chị Hà*" [invite elder sister Ha (the girl's name)] (Please, cheers, Ha!). The girl does not verbally response to the invitation but exchanging her eye gazes while still smiling happily with his previous talks, which bring about happy laughs also for other diners. Her smiling face together with other characters' laughs is the last image of the excerpt.

The excerpt was chosen because of the film's recentness and popularity; of its reasonable length (one minute and 56 second long); and of its suitable language and content, which included short and simple dialogues focusing mainly on the meal. Most importantly, the excerpt was selected since it included situations and contexts for meal ritual invitations to take place and/or expected to take place and it consequently evoked interviewees' comments and opinions.

In both part two and part three, interviewees viewed the video playback with my stopping for questions at critical points in the clips during the playback. Interviewees were guided with main and follow-up questions to recall and clarify; and/or to reveal how they perceived and interpreted the experience, behaviours, as well as state of mood, history, beliefs (if applicable) in the visually recorded meals. Interviewing questions for

these two parts were based on participants' diaries, personal and/or public video-clips. Thus, parts two and three were termed as instrument-based interviews[24].

The type of interviews employed in this research was a semi-structured interview (see Cohen & Manion, 1994) although each of three parts had a list of pre-determined questions and all questions (regardless of distraction ones[25]) followed a framework of themes. There was no rigorous set of questions for each part. Follow-up questions were extended to interviewees based on their responses, which in some cases brought up new ideas for discussions. Moreover, in some cases, some main questions were skipped in accordance with some particular participants' answers. Especially in part two, whose questions were mainly based on participants' video-clips and/or diaries, some guiding questions were modified, added, or discarded reflectively and accordingly with those participant-specific data and thus, they were not the same for different interviewees. Interview sessions were also flexible in how and what sequence questions were asked. In other words, order of interview parts and order of questions in each part were not necessarily the same for all interviewees.

Interviews employed in this research were also dynamic. Interviewees did not necessarily go through all three interviewing parts to yield valid data. Interviewees had several options to participate in all three parts of the interviews upon their applicable situations or to skip any parts upon their preference. For example, for those participants, whose diaries and/or video-clips of their meals were accessible, they were offered up to three options, i.e., to participate in all three parts or just one or two. Those without diaries and video-clips could become interviewees for up to two parts: part one with general questions and part three with public video-based questions. Thus, volunteers could participate in interviews for at least one part. In other words, there was at least one part for any volunteers to become research interviewees.

Part one often took about 20 minutes; part two was between five to 30 minutes; and part three often covered approximately ten minutes. Totally, a three-part interviewing session could take up to maximum one hour. Amongst 22 interviews in Vietnam, nine were carried out with all three parts; eight with two parts (part one and either part two or part three); and the rest four with one part (part one). Two out of 14 interviews in New

---

[24] See more in Section 2.3.3.1
[25] Questions 1, 2, 16

Zealand were carried out with two parts; 12 with one part; and none with all three parts. All interviews were audio-recorded using digital devices with some notes occasionally taken.

2.3.3.4. Informal conversations and observations

Informal conversations or talks help to establish good relationships with participants, foster a climate of trust, to gain tacit knowledge for the research (Fontana & Frey, 1994), and also triangulate different employed methods. Especially in this study, which explores perceptions, beliefs, habits of language use, and other factors influencing people's practice of language and culture, knowledge of the background of participants is important to a comprehensive data interpretation. Thus, informal conversations, as a crucial and approachable means to achieve such information, were conducted as much as possible before, during, and even after the data collection time (before data analysis). Necessary information from those conversations was note-taken and kept for later data analysis.

Observation as a research method is defined as a purposeful, systematic, and selective way of watching and listening to interactions or phenomena as they take place (Kumar, 1999). Observations "enable researchers to understand the context of programs, to be open-ended and inductive, to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations, to move beyond perception-based data (e.g. opinions in interviews), and to access personal knowledge" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 305). Thus, observations can satisfy this research's intention to explore the practice of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations across generations and work out their various mediating factors.

This study employed semi-structured observations (observers having an agenda but collecting more data in a less systematic manner) suggested by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000), in combination with two modified stances of observation described by Burns (1997): complete observer (i.e., only observation and no participation) and observer-participant (i.e., both observation and participation).

My observations, either with or without meal participation, were conducted in various situations in both New Zealand and Vietnam. I observed participants while having meals with them and took notes after meals or sometimes during the meals but in a

separate room. Some of those meals were also video-recorded. There were also participants' meals that I intruded as a drop-in guest, with or without other companions. Here, I observed how on-going diners reacted toward the appearance of uninvited guests of different ages, genders, and social distance. I also observed groups of anonymous diners, who did not know me and who I did not know either, in nearby tables in public dining places with mobile or notepad note-taking sometimes. The purposes of these observations were to see the mediation of video-recording and the researcher's presence on participants' invitational discourse as well as other mediating factors; to have tacit knowledge of particular users of VMRIs and have it clarified through follow-up questions in interviews; also to see the difference in observing the same events between live and then on video-clips.

Numerous observations were also done after interviews to work out if there were any discrepancies in information provided in diaries and interviews and to seek for information that might not be revealed in those instruments.

Observations and informal talks, unlike other employed methods such as video-recordings, diaries, and interviews, did not limit the number of participants and allowed my research to have more observed participants thanks to the nature of anonymity and be less or phobia-free from being recorded or being researched. Observations and informal talks were therefore useful in collecting more data, especially in the New Zealand research site, where data sources were limited in terms of both the number of participants and the feasibility of instruments conducted on them. Two groups of Auckland-based participants below were given as examples to illustrate the effectiveness of observations and informal talks in gathering data for this research.

First, observations and informal talks were especially effective to get data from a group of Vietnamese Auckland-dwellers, for whom other data collection methods were not accessible. These participants might be uncomfortable when having their meals video-recorded or when being interviewed with their words being recorded despite our good relationship. However, they were quite open to share informal talks about their everyday life including their meal habits or behaviours. Moreover, they gave me more chances to carry out meal observations when inviting me to share meals at their private houses. Thus, observation and informal talks were chosen to obtain data sources from this group of observed participants.

Observations and informal talks also offered rich data and a means of data triangulation for another group of Auckland-based participants, who allowed interviews but no meal video-recordings or meal observations at their private houses as these people hardly hosted meals at their private places and even hardly gathered for meals with other family members due to their different time schedules. Thus, informal talks and observations, which were yet limited to their communal meals on Sundays at Vietnamese Buddhist temples only, were the other means, besides interviews, to explore their meal habits and behaviours.

In short, observations and informal talks were effective methods of collecting data when other methods could not work with certain participants in this research. They enriched the gathered data and triangulated data when being co-implemented with other methods.

In summary, this study employed video-recordings, participants' diaries, interviews, informal talks, and observation. Each of these as said in Denzin and Lincoln's words "makes the world visible in a different way" (as cited in Heigham & Croker, 2009, p. 8) so a fuller and richer picture of native speakers' practices, perceptions, and behaviours with a focus on cultures through their language use of mealtime ritual invitations can be explored and represented.

2.4. Data analysis

2.4.1. Coding data sources

All participants in the research were kept anonymous. Thus, data provided by them were coded with given numbers[26] for each participant. Data were also coded with initials representing the type of instruments that they were involved in and the research sites where they participated, and with keynotes and numbers according to the length, and number of times. In particular, sample codes of data sources used throughout the research will be as follows:

(D2#5) means the data taken from the diary written by diary-writer number 2, in the fifth entry.

---

[26] I did not use initials of their names because participants' names might have similar initials.

(INZ1, 00:32) means the data taken from an interview with participant number 1 in New Zealand and recorded at 0 minute 32 seconds. **(IVN1, 00:32p1)** means the data taken from an interview with participant number 1 in Vietnam and recorded at 0 minute 32 seconds in the first interview session. P1 or p2 were added when there was more than one interview session for one interviewee.

(VideoNZ#1) means the data taken from the video-clip number 1 recorded in New Zealand. **(VideoVN#7)** means the data taken from the video-clip number 7 recorded in Vietnam.

(FNVN#1) means the data taken from field-notes number 1 of informal talks and observations implemented in Vietnam. **(FNNZ#1)** means the data taken from field-notes number 1 of informal talks and observations implemented in New Zealand.

2.4.2. Data analysis

The mixed method approach has been widely and effectively applied by sociolinguists (e.g., Fisher, 2011; Vu, 1997) with particularly, Fisher (2011, p. 14) who employed it as a 'corrective' for his feminist perspective. With a purpose of creating for readers a complete picture of native speakers' practices, perceptions, and behaviours with a focus on cultures through their language use by both individuals and groups of people, my study also employed the mixed research methods of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, not only in the data collection but also in the lens through which data was interpreted. Drawn on the dataset of two types, namely participants' utterances actually performed in daily life and their attitudes to, perceptions of, and beliefs in the practice, qualitative analysis was the focus; the quantitative analysis, mainly based on the data represented in numbers and percentages in tables, charts, or graphs, provided the empirical basis for the qualitative analysis and highlighted the results of the qualitative analysis. They collaborated with each other to comprehensively describe the topic of speech behaviours not only as their linguistic-oriented discourses but also as their wider sociocultural discourses since exploring the practices of mealtime invitations in the combination of these two discursive meanings is the main aim of my research.

Given the fact that invitations are amongst the most complex speech behaviours and Vietnamese mealtime invitations are a multifaceted issue (see Chapter 4), the analysed data were taken from various sources rather than from just one, unlike video-recordings

in Ogiermann's (2015) research that used only video to gather Polish children's requests in mealtime conversations. Moreover, to provide a holistic view of Vietnamese mealtime invitations, I used the anthropological analysis of linguistic ethnographic data[27] (see Jaffe, 2014). This approach is useful to the distinction between what people say they do and what they actually do. For example, some participants said they did not have the habit of extending mealtime invitations, but the analysis has shown evidence of their invitations (see the case of MG1 in the transcriptions of VMRIs: *"Mời cả nhà!"* [Invite all house] (Let's eat!), line 3a in Table 2-3 in Section 2.5 below).

Each method was also utilised with varies when certain aspects or questions of the research were discussed. For example, in the sections where the data presented quite clear and simple descriptions of the scale of the issue such as the number of males and females who extended explicit and implicit VMRIs (see Chapter 5), quantitative analysis was mainly used due to its "precise measurement" with "reliable and replicable data" (Dornyei, 2007, p. 34). However, when sophisticated reasoning, moving back and forth between the parts and whole, or building patterns in data into themes were required to explain for the matters, such as the self-regulation degrees of the VMRI-practisers (see Chapter 7), the qualitative analysis was used since it was better able to achieve this. Its flexibility and emergent nature (Heigham & Croker, 2009, p. 11) enabled crucial insight into these subtle aspects. Nevertheless, the convergence of both designs was applied when figures or numbers of quantified data alone could not provide a full interpretation of, for instance, participants' attitudes towards mealtime invitations, which were also expressed through various other means, such as tones of voices, facial expressions, eye gazes, or some gestures of emotions and behaviours besides words. In this way, quantitative analysis made it easier to control the data tightly and keep it focused (Dornyei, 2007, p. 34) while combining with qualitative explanation to provide readers with a clearer and fuller view of parts of the whole picture and then a complete picture.

2.5. Examples of VMRIs used in meals

The transcription of VMRIs used in two different video-recorded meals below is twofold. Firstly, it enables the reader to grasp a contour of how VMRIs are actually expressed in daily meals. Secondly, by using these data extracts, I will illustrate how I

---

[27] Explained further in Section 2.5 below

analysed the larger collection of data qualitatively and qualitatively and explain why I integrated the data from all collected sources (i.e., video-recordings, interviews, diaries, and field notes – observations and informal talks) following anthropological analysis:

> "ethnographic research on language almost always involves the collection of a wide variety of types of data: visual (photos, drawings) and audiovisual (video and audio recordings), text of multiple types and in multiple media, interviews […], and field notes documenting observations, conversations and interactions. Underlying these diverse forms of data collection is the anthropological commitment to accumulating knowledge about habitual practices over time and in context. It is for this reason that participant observation is the hallmark of the ethnographic process" (Jaffe, 2014, p. 214).

Two videos (VideoVN#6 and VideoVN#14) are from two different participants who also contributed to other sources of data. Both videos were from participants who also provided data in an interview, informal talks, and observations; the second video (VideoVN#14) was from a participant who also recorded the meal in one of her meal-diary entries.

Transcript of VMRIs in VideoVN#6 (9 minutes 59 seconds)

This is a family dinner with invited guests, but for no special occasion, in a rural village in Hai Phong province. Ten attendees are three couples: husband and wife (one host couple and two guest couples, one as the host's elder sister (FMG1) and brother-in-law (MG1), and the other as the host family's friends (FMG2 and MG2)) with their children (four girls aged 5-11). Four adults - MG1, MG2, FMG2, host - and two girls - G1 and G2 (FMG2 and MG2's children) - were sitting around the food tray. The hostess was still in the kitchen. FMG1 was helping G3 (her daughter) setting up the computer on the desk in the same room as the dining area. G3 did not join in for the meal as she had already had her meal. G4 (the hosts' daughter) shuttled between the computer desk and the dining area.

Table 2-3 Transcript of VMRIs in VideoVN#6

	Speaker	Vietnamese utterances English literal translation English gloss	Non-verbal and (meta)pragmatic features
1a	G1	*Con mời cả nhà ăn cơm* [Child invite all house eat rice] (I invite you all to eat)	Saying in a soft and low voice while hesitantly picking up her rice bowl and chopsticks. Sitting next to her, her mother (FMG2) turns towards her and nods her head while keeping arranging eating utensils for each diner. (A simultaneous talk between FMG2 and G2). The host is filling wine into three cups and puts each in front of each man without saying anything. MG1 sips his wine cup.
2a	FMG1	*Thôi, ra ăn nào* [Stop, go eat now] (Enough, it's dinner time now!)	Saying aloud while leaving the computer desk for the meal
3a	MG1	*Mời cả nhà!* [Invite all house] (Let's eat!)	Saying while picking some food by hand and not looking at anyone. Responding verbally, MG2 and host also pick up their bowls and pick some food with chopsticks; but FMG2 still continues distributing chopsticks for each diner. G2 picks a piece of food by hand.
3b	MG2, FMG2, host (simultaneously)	*Vâng* [yes] (Please!)	
Talks, humours, comments, smiles, and laughs by adults; The hostess joins the meal.			
4a	Host	*Ốc ơi, con ăn chân không?* [Ốc (G4's nickname) vocative, child eat leg not] (Ốc, would you like a chicken leg?)	Asking his daughter while turning towards her, but G4 shakes her head. (Simultaneous talks and laughter by others)
5a	Hostess	*Em mời các anh ăn cơm, em mời các chị ăn cơm* [Younger sibling invite plural older brothers eat rice, younger sibling invite plural older sisters eat rice] (I invite you all to eat)	(A concurrent talk) Saying while holding chopsticks in one hand and a bowl in the other hand; resting her look at G2
6a	FMG2	*Mời hai bác ăn cơm, anh ăn cơm, em ăn cơm, các con ăn cơm* [Invite two uncle/aunt eat rice, older brother eat rice, younger sibling eat rice, plural children eat rice] (I invite you all to eat)	Saying while glancing at different diners. (Simultaneous talks between the host and G4; the hostess and G4; laughter and comments by others)
6b	MG1	*Vâng* [yes] (Please!)	
7a	Hostess (to G2)	*Gặm mỗi chân thôi à con?* [Bite only leg only particle child] (You are eating a (chicken) leg only?)	Saying while looking at G2 and pushing a plate of food further away from her, towards G2.
7b	FMG2 (to hostess)	*Vâng* [yeah] (Yeah)	FMG2 responds the hostess while turning to G2 (her daughter).
7c	FMG2 (to G2)	*Con ăn cơm nhé!* [Child eat rice particle!] (Please have some rice, child)	Saying softly while sharing some rice with G2 with her head-nod
8a	FMG1	*Mời anh chị xơi cơm*	to superiors, not to husband, not

		[Invite older brother older sisters eat rice] (Invite you to eat, older brother and sister)	to inferiors
8b	FMG2, host	*Vâng* [yes] (Please!)	
9a	Host	*L ăn cơm nữa không L ơi?* [L (G3's name) eat rice more not L vocative] (L, would you like some more?)	Asking G3 (his niece) while turning towards her sitting at the computer desk
9b	G3	*Không ạ!* [No honorific] (No, thanks!)	
10a	Host (to G1)	*QH ăn gì, gắp đi con!* [QH (G1's middle and first name) eat what, pick imperative child] (QH, what would you like to eat? Please pick and have it!)	Asking while looking at G1, the guests' daughter
10b	G1 (to host)	*Vâng* [yes] (OK (thanks)!)	But G1 does not pick any food.
10c	Host (to G1 and hostess)	*Cô N gắp cho cháu!* [Aunt N (his wife's name) pick for niece] (Let Aunt N offer you some food!)	The hostess, his wife, starts selecting a piece of (special) food
10d	FMG2 (to hostess)	*Không, cô không cần gắp cho cháu!* [No, aunt no need pick for niece] (No, you don't need to pick food for her!)	While saying, FMG2 picks other food to put into G2's (younger daughter) bowl.
10e	FMG2 (to G1)	*H ăn khoai không?* [H (G1's name) eat French fries not] (H, would you like French fries?)	Asking G1 (older daughter) while putting some food into G1's bowl.
Talks and laughs			
11a	Hostess (to G2)	*Đây, ưu tiên nhé!* [This, priority particle] (Here is a special for you!)	Selecting a piece of food and putting it into G2's bowl. However, G2 puts it into her mother's bowl. (FMG2 explains to the hostess about G2's action)
11b	FMG2 (to G1)	*Này cho chị H miếng này* [Here, for older sister H piece this] (Hey H, please have this piece)	
11c	Hostess (to G1) a	*Úi, sao chị cái gì cũng lắc vậy?* [Ah, why elder sister whatever too shake particle?] (Ah, why do you refuse all the food offered?)	Turning to G1, FMG2 is about to give that piece to G1, but G1 withholds her bowl. Reacting on G1's refusal
11d	…. b	*Ăn đi con!* [Eat imperative child] (Please eat, child!)	FMG2 consequently puts it reluctantly into her own bowl. Surprisingly, G2 takes it back and puts it into her bowl.
Talks			
12a	Host (to MG2)	*Bác T nhắm đi, gà chọi đấy! Chọi Mơ đấy!* [Uncle T eat (slang) imperative, chicken fighting particle! Fighting Mơ (a type of chicken) particle] (Brother, please eat! It's (meat of THE) special fighting rooster!)	Saying while looking at MG2; MG2 smiles and nods his head
12b	Hostess (to MG2)	*Con gà mà mọi khi vẫn đá đấy bác ạ!* [chicken that every time still fight particle uncle honorific] (The chicken that used to fight)	Adding to her husband's talk and saying to MG2 with giggles.
Talks, humorous comments, and laughs			
13a	FMG2 (to G1)	*QH ăn thịt gà không con?* [QH (daughter's name) eat meat chicken not?] (QH, would you like some chicken?)	Saying this to G1 (her daughter) while seeing the hostess is non-verbally offering G1 a piece of food
13b	G1	*Không ạ!* [No, honorific] (No thanks)	Responding while withholding her bowl, shaking her head.
13c	Host (to G1)	*Đưa bát cô gắp cho!* [Give bowl aunt pick for] (Please let auntie serve you!)	Saying this to G1 while seeing G1 not showing her bowl to catch the food offered by the
13d	Hostess (to G1)	*Ăn đi!* [Eat imperative] (Please eat!)	hostess

	a		Thinking G1 having no intention to receive the offered, the hostess puts the food into her mother's bowl.
13e	….. b	*Sao lại không ăn cái gì, ăn cơm không à?* [Why again not eat anything, eat rice alone interrogative particle?] (Why don't you eat anything but rice only?)	
13f	…. c	*Nhanh!* [Quick!] (Please take this!)	G1 smiles and picks up other food, instead, to eat.
Talks			
14a	Host (to himself)	*Em cũng làm cái chân!* [Younger sibling too do a leg] (I will eat a leg, too)	Putting the food into his bowl. MG1 raises his cup and all three men cheer their cups.
Talks, humorous comments, and laughs			
15a	FMG2 (to G2)	*Con không gặm nữa à?* [Child no bite more particle?] (You don't want to eat this anymore, do you?)	Asking G2 while G2 puts the piece of food into her bowl. G2 shakes her head.
15b	FMG2 (to MG2)	*Này, bố ăn cái chân này cho con*! [Hey, father eat a leg this for child] (Hey dear, please help our daughter finish this leg)	Saying while leaning forward to put the food into MG2's bowl.
Talks and laughs			
16a	Host	*Anh làm miếng, xem nó có rắn không!* [Older brother do bite see it have hard not] (Brother, please try this piece to see if it's hard)	Saying with smiles while putting a piece of food into MG2's bowl. MG2 just smiles.
Simultaneous talks and laughs			
17a	Host (to MG2)	*Uống rượu với Thầy cái!* [Drink wine with Master particle] (Let's cheer, Master!)	Hearing the host saying this, MG2 raises his cup towards the host and they cheer. (Simultaneous talks and laughs)
Talks and laughs			

The transcript in Table 2-3 above illustrates the exchange of VMRIs among ten meal attendees. Among them, the host, the hostess, and two female adult guests are the key extenders of VMRIs, where as an adult guest (MG2) and two children, one who shared the meal (G4) and one who did not (G3), did not extend any VMRIs, either verbally or nonverbally. The transcript shows complexity in the exchange of VMRIs, which were not only from the hosts to the guests (5a, 12a) but also from the guests to others (6a, 13a), not only from the inferiors to the superiors (from children and the younger people to their parents and the older people as in 1a, 5a) but also the other way around (from mother to her children in 6a and from the oldest diner to all the rest in 3a); invitations were either accepted (7c, 15b, 16a) or refused (4a, 9a); they were extended with and without invitees' responses (3a and 5a, respectively); they were extended to one person (4a, 9a), to several people within one invitation (3a, 5a, 6a), or to one's self (2a, 14a). The transcript also shows that the invitations were not only in the form of dialogues exchanged between two parties (the extenders and the invitees as in 9a and 9b) but also

monologues, which were extended without verbal or nonverbal responses (2a, 5a), and multi-partied logues in which multiple parties were involved in the exchange of invitations. In one multi-partied exchange, the hostess extended an invitation to G2 (7a), but it was responded by FMG2, not G2 (7b), and FMG2 then extended an invitation to G2 (7c); in another multi-partied exchange, many invitations (13c, 13d, 13e, 13f) were still extended by different people to one person although she had already refused the first invitation (13a). The transcript also include examples of VMRIs which illustrate the diversity of invitational structures and forms of expression (see further discussion in Chapter 5) and the way parties were addressed and referenced in the invitations: for example, the host addressed MG2 as *Bác T* (Uncle T) in 12a and switched to *Anh* (older brother) in 16a then to *Thầy* (Master) in 17a (see further discussion in Chapter 6).

The most interesting data in this transcript I found is the exchange of verbal and nonverbal invitations or offers among the hostess, FMG2, and FMG2's two daughters (G2 and G1; G2 was a younger sister), shows the significance of a holistic view of the interpretation of the data in context. The hostess picked a piece of food that she considered good and put it into G2's bowl followed by her invitation (11a). However, G2 put it into her mother's bowl without saying anything. FMG2 explained to the hostess about G2's reaction, which she thought as her refusal of the food offered; she then turned to her older daughter, G1, and offered G1 that same piece of food (11b), but G1 withheld her bowl although the hostess insisted on G1's accepting and eating the food (11d). Consequently, FMG2 reluctantly put it into her own bowl. Surprisingly, G2 took the food back into her bowl without any words. This interesting reaction by G2 can indicate that her earlier reaction to the food offered should be better interpreted as her offer (of food for her mother) rather than merely as her refusal.

Due to the features of VMRIs exchanged in the daily meals in general and those in this transcript in particular, I will illustrate how I analysed the larger collection of data. The traditional way of counting tokens and participants in sociolinguistics (Ogiermann, 2015; Vu, 1987) does not appear to be very useful in this research because the statistics and the interpretations could not tell the reality. This is because participants would all be counted per head despite their different roles in participating in extending the invitations due to their different roles in participating the meal (as diners or non-diners, hosts or guests, adults or children or infants; fully or partly joining the meal). Table 2-3 above shows that there are 29 verbal invitational utterances (verbal VMRIs); 10 are from 3 M

(males - fathers) and 19 from 7 FM (females - 3 mothers and 4 girls). If the statistics were done in traditional way by the ratio of utterances per head to compare the use of VMRIs by M, FM, for example, there would be 33% for each M and 27% for each FM, which could lead to an interpretation of verbal VMRIs being extended more by M than FM.

However, it is more realistic to document the frequency of VMRIs used by speakers, who are male, female, young, or old, even though there is an imbalance in the numbers between the dyads (males and females or young and old speakers). Take a closer look at the frequency of VMRIs used in the video. Leaving the use of invitations by four girls aside, there is the use of 28 invitations by six diners (who eat) as three couples with a balance in gender (3M and 3FM) and also in their participating roles as father-mother and host-guest. The frequency of VMRIs in the video can be seen in Table 2-4 below:

Table 2-4 The frequency of VMRIs in VideoVN#6

Gender	Participating roles of diners	Frequency of VMRIs	Total
M (3)	Host – father/husband (1)	9	10 (36%)
	Guest –father/husband (2)	1	
FM (3)	Host(ess) – mother/wife (1)	9	18 (64%)
	Guest – mother/wife (2)	9	
			28 (100%)

(Numbers in brackets indicate the number of people; numbers without brackets indicate the numbers of VMRIs used)

As can be seen from Table 2-4 above, of 28 invitations extended by these three couples, 10 are from 3 M and 18 are from 3 FM. Among them, the same number of invitation (9) is extended by the host and the hostess, but there is a great difference between nine invitations from two female guests and one invitation from two male guests. These statistics show clearly that the frequency of VMRIs among female diners (64%) is much greater than among male diners (36%) when they relatively equally participated in the meal in this video. Therefore, it seems more satisfactory to see the M and FM use of VMRIs when doing the statistics on the frequency of VMRIs by M or FM rather than on the number of VMRIs used per head. This way of doing the statistics on the frequency of items was adopted throughout the thesis.

Transcript of VMRIs in VideoVN#14 (43 minutes 38 seconds) with backup from a diary entry (D2#7)

This is a daily dinner of a five-member family in suburban Hai Phong province. Four regular dining partners (grandmother, mother, daughter, and son) participated in the meal; another member (father) was not joining them (he was sleeping upstairs). The food tray was already prepared and displayed (by the daughter) on the mat in the family dining area. Other participants started to attend the meal. Their exchange of VMRIs throughout this meal is illustrated in Table 2-5 below.

Table 2-5 Transcript of VMRIs in VideoVN#14 (43 minutes 38 seconds) with backup from a diary entry (D2#7)

	Speaker	Vietnamese utterances English literal translation, English gloss	Non-verbal and (meta)pragmatic features
		The mother attended the meal after going upstairs to invite the Grandmother and the father (her mother and her husband, respectively) to go down for the meal.	
1	Mother (to daughter)	*Cứ ăn đi. Bố mày không ăn đâu* [Keep eat imperative. Father you (colloq.) no eat particle] (Go ahead. Your dad is not going to eat)	Responding to daughter's wondering about her father's non-attendance for the meal
2	Daughter	*Bố ơi, con mời bố dậy ăn cơm* [Father vocative, child invite father get up eat rice] (Daddy, I invite you to come down for lunch)	Despite mother's information and following grandmother's request, the daughter went upstairs asking father to join in the meal
	Father	*Bố không ăn đâu. Cứ ăn đi!* [Father no eat particle. Keep eat imperative.] (I'm not going to eat. Go ahead with your meal)	
3	Daughter	*Cháu mời bà, con mời mẹ ăn cơm!* [Grandchild invite grandmother, child invite mother eat rice] (Grandmother and mother, I invite you to eat)	Saying (to grandmother and mother) when starting to pick up some food to eat
	Son	*Con mời bà, mời mẹ ăn cơm, bác H ăn cơm* [Child invite grandmother, invite mother eat rice, aunt H (sister's name) eat rice] (I invite you all to eat)	Extending to all present diners (grandmother, mother, and older sister) immediately after his elder sister's invitation
	Mother	*Ừ, ăn cơm đi* [Yes, eat rice imperative] (Ok, please go ahead)	Responding to both children's invitations
4	Daughter (to grandmother)	*Bà ăn đi!* [Grandmother eat imperative] (Grandma, please eat this!)	Saying while picking up some food to put into grandmother's bowl
	Grandmother	*Không phải gắp. Tôi ăn tôi gắp!* [No must pick. I eat, I pick] (Don't need to serve me. I will self-pick if I want it!)	Saying this but still yielding the bowl to accept the food offered
	Daughter (to grandmother)	*Bà ăn nhiều cho béo, phải béo hơn cháu* [Grandmother must eat more for fat, must fatter than grandchild] (Grandma, you must eat more to be healthy. Be healthier than me!)	Saying with smiles
	Son (to grandmother)	*Bà phải ăn hết chỗ này* [Grandmother must eat up place this] (Grandma, you must finish all this!)	Saying while pointing to the plate of food
5	Daughter	*Bà ăn nữa đi? Bà thôi ạ?* [Grandmother eat more imperative? Grandmother stop honorifics?]	Talking to grandmother when seeing her being about to stop eating

		(Grandma, please have some more or are you going to stop eating?)	
	Grandmother	*ừ* [Yes] (Yeah)	
6	Daughter (to grandmother)	*Bà ăn miếng đậu?* [Grandmother eat piece Jicama?] (Grandma, would you like some Jicama?)	Asking while she was about to eat her dessert.
7	Mother (to son) a .... b	*L này!* [L (son's name) hey!] (Hey, L!) *Ăn miếng cho mát* [Eat piece for cool] (Eat this to cool you down!)	(After nonverbally offering Jicama (dessert) to her mother, but her mother shook her head). Turning and yielding this food piece towards her son, who was playing nearby after finishing his meal, saying this when he shook his head (refusing the offered)

This meal was recorded in both a participant's video (VideoVN#14) and her diary entry (D2#7). In general, what was written in the meal entry was also be seen in the video, except for the details happening outside the dining room, where the video was set up. For example, the video captured the scene when the daughter left the dining area to go upstairs right before her meal, but it could not capture what she intended to do by going upstairs or what people said to each other upstairs. Her intention (to invite her father to attend the meal) was revealed in the diary-entry and the actual invitations used by the writer (who was the daughter) were recorded in this diary entry, but these details were out of the video frame. The details described in the diary entry but unseen and/or unrecorded in the video-recording is in grey in Table 2-5 above.

In this transcript, it clearly shows what the participant (daughter) said they did (in the diary entry) cannot be separated from what actually happened (even though it was not recorded or visible in the transcript). The diary entry provides a different perspective of the event. It records the invitations exchanged between the daughter and her father as follows:

> "Tôi chạy lên mời bố xuống ăn. Bố tôi đang ngáy khò khò. "Bố ơi, con mời bố dậy ăn cơm". " Bố không ăn đâu. Cứ ăn đi!". Tôi đi xuống và ăn cơm cùng bà, mẹ và em."

> (I ran upstairs to invite my father to go down for the meal. He was snoring. "Daddy, I invite you to come down for lunch". "I'm not going to eat. Please go ahead with your meal!". I went downstairs and shared my meal together with grandmother, mother, and my brother.) (D2#7).

These invitations, which were out of the video frame, are an integral part of the invitations actually used at the meal. They, therefore, should not be excluded from the analysis.

Moreover, to focus on capturing patterns and regularities, it is necessary to gather data from a wide range of participants from diverse communities, and the same individual(s) overtime and across different contexts: meals at home, at work, private place, in public places, with regular dining partners, with non-regular dining partners, and others to establish a repertoire. My data analysis aims to synthesise these various data sources to draw conclusions about a ritual practice by collecting information about what participants say they do and what they actually do in order to triangulate my interpretation of these mealtime events. Therefore, the use of diaries and other means of recording in addition to video recordings was considered important for a complete analysis of the use and nonuse of invitations.

2.6. Summary

In summary, there is a systematic link between my research methods and overall research purpose, which is reflected in the three main research questions. The two chosen research sites with a wide variety of informants offered both linguistic and socio-cultural data that is contextually situated to satisfy answers to the first research question; meanwhile, various instruments were used to collect data to show how numerous mediating factors influence VMRIs, which answered the second research question; and the age ranges of participants within two research sites attempted to capture generational differences as the core of the third research question. The next chapter will discuss the socio-cultural context which co-constructs the meanings of VMRIs and how it shapes and reshapes the interpretations of VMRIs.

Chapter 3. FOOD AND MEALTIMES

This chapter discusses the sociocultural context that underlies the valuing of food and the gathering for meals in Vietnam. The high cultural value of food in the Vietnamese context of food (in)security will be discussed first to foreground the significance of invitations for food as food-related manners in Vietnamese culture. Then the importance of mealtimes with the practice of mealtime invitations as ritual practices for fostering familial happiness, bonds, and solidarity, offering generational exchange of socio-cultural knowledge and understandings, and developing virtue will be presented. These discussions highlight the commensality or communal nature of Vietnamese meals. The focus on food and mealtimes in this chapter suggests the interrelationship between the high cultural value of food and family meals, company, and the practice of mealtime invitations.

The focus of this chapter is threefold. Firstly, it provides a background to the context of food and mealtimes in Vietnam. Secondly, it describes how this context plays a key role in shaping and reshaping the practice of inviting others during mealtimes. Thirdly, it partially answers the research question: What are the socio-cultural features of Vietnamese mealtime invitations?

3.1. High cultural value of food

This section describes why and how Vietnamese people have attached high cultural value to food. It aims to better explain why food can trigger invitations and how significant the invitations or offers of food at mealtimes are in Vietnamese culture.

3.1.1. Why food is highly valued

There are several reasons why Vietnamese have attached high cultural value to food. Firstly, Vietnam is mainly an agriculture-based country that has historically been challenged by its unfavourable weather, labour-intensive farming methods (use of water buffalos and oxen to plough fields) and natural infestations (crop-damaging pests). Thus, to obtain a rice crop, much labour is required, as a common old saying describes: '*A*

seed of golden rice equals nine drops of sweat'. A great deal of effort is spent for little gain. Therefore, whatever they achieve, they highly value it, honour it and acknowledge its contributors. This spirit is passed from generation to generation, reflected in the following popular folk poem, for example:

<div align="center">

Ploughing the rice field till noon,

Sweat-drops fall like rain.

Whenever having a bowlful of boiled rice,

Please do not forget that each grain costs so much hard labour[28].

</div>

Another reason for high value attached to food is that Vietnam has lived "through events more turbulent and disruptive than in many other areas of the world" (Huỳnh, 1985, p. 66). Many times in its history, Vietnam suffered from critical food shortages, even famines, due to natural disasters (storms, droughts, or floods), feudal imperialism, and foreign exploitation. For example, the 1945 famine with the largest number of starved people, as the consequence of the Franco-Japanese exploitation, was reflected in Bàng Bá Lân's poem:

> … May we forget two million starved and died?
>
> Remember that third month, the year Ất Dậu.
>
> The Lạc-Hồng race endured its direst woe
>
> As corpses tottered roaming roads and street,
>
> Then dropped from hunger not to rise again (translated by Huỳnh, 1985, p. 107)

This calamity was further described in Marr (1995, p. 101) as:

> Already in December 1944, many poor villagers had been reduced to
>
> eating ground-up rice husks, wild tubers, roots of banana trees, barks,
>
> and clover […]. By the time of Tet, the Lunar New Year, in early

---

[28] My translation of the Vietnamese version:
 "Cày đồng đang buổi ban trưa
Mồ hôi thánh thót như mưa ruộng cày
Ai ơi bưng bát cơm đầy
Dẻo thơm một hạt đắng cay muôn phần"
The folk poem evokes for its readers the image of a farmer working very hard in the field at noon, the time of day with the strongest sunlight that people normally avoid. His sweat drops like rain when he is ploughing the already-flooded field. He commonly has bare feet, walks behind a water buffalo or oxen to control its ploughing. The poem also reminds its readers that each seed of the white and delicious boiled-rice in a bowl that they are given to eat every day is achieved with hard work and, thus, they should appreciate each one.

> February, thousands were dying of starvation. Whole families sometimes shut themselves up in their home, shared the few remaining morsels, then died one by one in silence.

War after war, dating from the first struggles against Chinese domination thousands of years ago to the most recent wars in the 1980s[29], also seriously worsened the food issues. After coming out of the war against the United States and into post-reunification period, Vietnam experienced significant economic challenges, making it in the early 1980s "one of the poorest countries in the world, with seven out of ten Vietnamese living in poverty" (Jayakody & Phuong, 2013, p. 235).

To summarise, the long history of food insecurity might be the reason why food is critically valuable to Vietnamese. They have developed a respect for food, particularly rice, a high appreciation for its producers and any contributors and felt guilty if wasting even a single grain of rice. This current tradition of highly valuing food continues even when Vietnam has already been transformed from a rice-importer to one of the world's top rice-exporters for decades[30]. The next section will describe how Vietnamese have attached high cultural value to food and rice in particular.

3.1.2. How high cultural value is attached to food

3.1.2.1. Food in general

In research

The high cultural value attached to food is reflected in the large amount of research about Vietnamese food in its different aspects and in numerous fields such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, and nutrition studies. Food was an important means of power consolidation and social advancement in 19th century Vietnam (Peters, 2012) or used as a political vehicle throughout Vietnamese history (Thomas, 2004). Food offered an arena of familial and social cohesion (Templer, 1998); facilitated society's expectations or social prestige and socio-cultural negotiation in a Vietnamese

---

[29] These wars include continual independence struggles against China's domination (111BC-939AD), anti-colonial war against French colonisation (1887-1945), the war of decolonisation (1946-1954), the post-colonial war (1955-1975), border wars against Khmer Rouge and China in the 1970s and 1980s
[30] The world's second largest exporter of rice since the 1990s (Haughton, Haughton & Phong, 2001; Lamb, 2002 as cited in Jayakody & Phuong, 2013)

central town (Avieli, 2007, 2012). Food offered chances of forming identities in relation to migration and immigration (Marquis & Shatenstein, 2005; Mathias, 2003; McIntyre, 2002). Though these studies focused on different aspects of Vietnamese food, they all reflect a common feature that Vietnamese people attached high cultural value to food.

In literature

The high cultural value attached to food is widely expressed in Vietnamese literature. There are works mainly focusing on the essence and good taste of special types of food, such as a report of *Phở* (rice- noodle) by the writer Nguyễn Tuân (2000). There are also works using food and drink to discuss social or political issues. To address the subordinate role and suppressed fate of women in feudal society, the female poet Hồ Xuân Hương (19th Century) used metaphors of a wide variety of food images such as *bánh trôi nước* (floating rice ball), *mít* (jackfruit), *xôi* (boiled sticky rice) in her poems. The well-known poem *Bánh trôi nước* (n.d.) (Floating rice ball) is one example.

<div align="center">

I have a white and round body

Floating up and down in water

The hand that kneads me may be rough

Still I would keep my true-red heart[31].

</div>

The poem was written in the voice of a floating cake with its typical features of a white and round body made of rice flour covering the red sweet bean at the heart and floating in water when being cooked. But the subtlety in selecting the imagery features and the wit in word choice help its readers to sense of a voice of a beautiful girl telling about her life story: remaining a true-red heart despite her up and down fate in the society.

The folktale *Lục súc tranh công* (The quarrels of six beasts, translated by Huynh, 1986) is an example discussing political issues via food. The folktale exposes arguments amongst six animals, namely water buffalo, dog, horse, pig, rooster, and goat to address the disputes over political power of six ministries in Nguyễn's dynasty (Nguyễn Ngọc

---

[31] This English translation, partly adapted from the translation of few lines in Peters (2012), was for the Vietnamese version:
Thân em vừa trắng lại vừa tròn,
Bảy nổi ba chìm mấy nước non.
Rắn nát mặc dầu tay kẻ nặn.
Nhưng em vẫn giữ tấm lòng son (Hồ, n.d.)

Huy as cited in Lạc-Việt series, 1987). All the beasts boast about their overwhelming contributions, but little gains while complaining that others contribute less but earn more. Most of the unfairness raised is related to food. For example, the water buffalo claims that he makes the greatest contributions in giving people food such as grains, beans, nuts, and fruits:

> I, Buffalo, give them their grains, their silks
>
> Without me, Buffalo, no fruits, no nuts (lines 037-043)

He asks for what he thinks he deserves to get; that is rice with fish or thin gruel mixed with greens:

> I should be given rice and fish to eat
>
> Or, short of that, thin gruel mixed with greens (lines 061-062).

He blames others for little contributions but high gains:

> They hang around for three meals
>
> And sidle off when work beckons (lines 101-105).

He finds the unfairness when others can get rice and gruel both when living and when deceased (lines 117-120), whilst he can get only "tough hay and straw".

Food is a prominent theme in Vietnamese literature especially in the period prior to the August Revolution, 1945. The enduring critical food shortage with the climax of the 1945-famine, due to multiple burdens of natural disasters, foreign occupation and exploitation, and feudal imposition, was exposed in contemporary literature and used to address the social and cultural issues of the deterioration or distortion of human character as a negative consequence. For example, the short story, *Một bữa no (A mouthful meal),* written by *Nam* Cao (1943) describes Vietnamese peasants' lives before the 1945 Revolution in a rural village. It tells the story of an old lady who dies after having an extremely full meal, which she receives after being without adequate food for months and years. To obtain that meal, she does not care what other people, including her beloved granddaughter, who used to respect her, might think of her. The meal is given to her in a scornful and disrespectful manner and never at the meal-giver's mercy. The story addresses the issue of food shortages that distort human characters and deteriorates the interrelationship of people in that contemporary society.

In daily life

The importance of food can also be seen in Vietnamese people's daily activities of food-offerings. Food-offerings are embedded in most traditional customs, ceremonies or anniversaries. They are not only rituals in annual ancestor worship ceremonies (Avieli, 2007) but also in post-funeral procession of the newly-deceased people. Meals are offered to the newly-deceased people during 100 days (or 49 days elsewhere) after their deaths. Each day at usual mealtimes, the living place food and drink on the altar in front of the deceased's portrait, light incense sticks and invite the dead to come back to enjoy the meal, just like when s/he was alive. This traditional custom was consistent with stories provided by an elderly participant, my own observations so far, and my most recent experience of my mother-in-law's funeral, occurring a week before my fieldwork in Vietnam.

Food is not only offered to relatives but also to non-relatives, both the dead and the living. For example, in '*cúng chúng sinh*' or '*cúng cô hồn*', banquets held in the seventh month for wandering souls who died of hunger in the past or who are the unworshipped spirits, types of food such as rice balls, rice porridge, grilled swollen rice (*bỏng/phổng gạo*), fruits, sweet potatoes, and candies are placed on an open-air altar to offer to those spirits. After the ceremonies, attendees are allowed to snatch the food, as such, this custom is called '*cướp xấu xí*' or '*cướp cháo thí*' (snatch-rice-porridge alms). The remainder of the food would be distributed to other people living nearby.

Besides food-offerings, eating activities are commonly held in the same ceremonies or anniversaries, for both the dead and the living. *Tết* (Lunar New Year) is one of those occasions. Before *Tết* approaches, people often prepare a sumptuous meal as the year-end meal (*bữa tất niên*), in which both their dead ancestors and their living relatives are invited to join to farewell the old year and to celebrate *Tết* together. During *Tết*, people often offer their ancestors with adequate and well-prepared meals of food, drinks, sweets and fruits two or three times a day, just as if they were alive, and the living enjoy the food after that. People keep daily food-offering rituals to their dead ancestors until a big farewell feast (*bữa cơm hóa vàng*) has been prepared for their ancestors leaving them, marking the last day of Tết.

The importance placed on food is also expressed in daily language expressions. There are numerous extended meanings associated with food and meals. Food is figuratively

used for human relationships and love. For example, '*Cơm*' (boiled rice) is figuratively used to refer to a legal wife; '*Phở*' (rice noodle soup) and a recent term '*rau*' (vegetable) refer to other illegal partners. The everyday expression '*Chán cơm thèm phở*' (bored with rice, tempted for Pho-rice noodle) can imply 'bored with legal wife, tempted for other loving partners'. Meals (food) are used to measure time. In daily language, '*bữa*' (meals) can be used to mean 'some time' or 'days'. The example "*Độ mấy bữa nữa, tôi sẽ lại sang nói chuyện với bác*" (Ngô, 1939, p.-), which is literally translated as 'Several meals later, I will again come and talk to you', means 'In several days' time, I will be back and talk to you'.

The high cultural value attached to food in Vietnam is also reflected in the wide usage of the word '*ăn*' (eat), properly because of common eating activities in cultural traditions. The verb '*ăn*' has the most collocations of among 201 Vietnamese common verbs recognised in Nguyễn's (1979) verb classification, as many as 159 combinations of '*ăn*' (Phạm, 2011). Besides the usage with its most common meaning of physical ingestion, '*ăn táo*' (eating an apple), for example, this verb is commonly used to describe the actions of attending or celebrating the festivals or ceremonies, such as '*ăn Tết*' [eat New Year], '*ăn đám giỗ*' [eat annual ancestor worship anniversary], '*ăn cưới*' [eat wedding ceremony]. This primary meaning of ingestion has been widely shifted in daily usage (Phạm, 2011). Consequently, the verb '*ăn*' can also be used for actions or characteristics with little or even no relation to eating, for example '*ăn ảnh*' [eat photo] (being photogenic), '*ăn trộm*' [eat steal] (stealing, burglarizing), '*ăn vận/bận*' [eat dress] (getting dressed). Meanwhile, besides many existing synonyms of '*ăn*', daily language users also create numerous variants of eating verbs by shifting the meanings of other verbs (see Chapter 5 for further discussions about ingestion verbs). These are evidence for the importance placed onto food (eating) reflected in daily language use.

People also place importance on food in the way they treat their guests to at least something to eat or drink during their visits, as a part of food-sharing culture. Offerings can change overtime, from the ancient time of areca-betel pieces [32] to the present

---

[32] The legend of areca-betel pieces dates from the semi-mythological era. There were two brothers living together who looked so similar to one another that the elder brother's wife mistook his younger brother for him. To avoid further incidents, the younger brother left home. His brother was so worried and went out to search for him but failed. He ended up lying dead on a stone that was the reincarnation of his younger sibling. The elder brother's wife also went out to look for her husband. Being too exhausted, she leaned herself against the areca tree which was her husband's new form of embodiment. She died and her reincarnation as a betel vine climbed and tangled around the tree. From this legend

variants of offerings such as fruits, candies, water, tea or other beverages and the like[33].

If visitors are invited to a meal, the hosts often prepare food in abundance rather than just enough: '*Thừa còn hơn thiếu*' (It is better to prepare food in abundance) because the abundance of food indicates the hosts' generosity and hospitality. Viewed in this way, the invitations for food and meals that people extend commonly at meals are also expressions about the importance of food. These invitations underlie the significance of food.

3.1.2.2. Rice[34]

A detailed discussion about the importance of rice in particular in Vietnamese culture is needed to anchor better interpretations of Vietnamese mealtime invitations (VMRIs). Rice, itself, certainly determines many features of life in Vietnamese culture, as it does across the Far East (Braudel, 1987). Rice plays a part in featuring or characterizing VMRIs, the invitations that Vietnamese often extend at mealtimes. The word '*cơm*', which literally refers to the dish of boiled rice, often appears in these invitations even when inviting others to enjoy the whole meals with other dishes, for example '*Con mời ba ăn cơm*' [child invite father eat rice] (I invite father to have meal!). This use of rice (a dish) as a metaphor for the whole meal in the part-whole metaphorical relationship is an indication of the importance attached to rice in comparison with other types of food.

The importance of rice in Vietnamese culture can be seen historically, right back to the beginning days of rice cultivation and the early Vietnamese people. Rice began being cultivated in about 2000 BC (Braudel, 1987; Visser, 1987). The earliest of Asian rice species, Oryza fatua, were cultivated by the proto-Vietnamese Lạc (Taylor, 1983). That the early Vietnamese named themselves '*Lạc*', which might derive from '*lạch*', the

---

came a practice of chewing areca-betel pieces, which combine all three ingredients (limestone, areca, and betel) to produce a red substance (as red as blood) that can warm body up. There also came the tradition of offering areca-betel pieces and a saying "*Miếng trầu là đầu câu chuyện*" (areca-betel pieces are pretexts for any talks).

[33] "*Khách đến nhà không trà thì rượu*" (Home visitors are supposed to be offered with drinks, including tea and rice liquor) and "*Khách đến nhà chẳng gà thì gỏi*" (Home visitors are supposed to be offered something to eat, from chicken to salad)

[34] Rice refers both to raw rice (*lúa, thóc, gạo*) and boiled rice (*cơm*). Depending on what types of raw rice to be cooked, *gạo tẻ* (non-sticky white rice, plain white rice, ordinary or regular rice) or *gạo nếp* (sticky or glutinous rice that can be red or white), boiled rice is called *cơm tẻ, cơm* (boiled non-sticky white rice) or *cơm nếp, xôi* (boiled sticky or glutinous rice), respectively. Like in some other Asian countries, non-sticky rice is grown and consumed throughout Vietnam (some Northern mountainous minority tribes prefer glutinous rice). Its popularity over glutinous rice and other coloured types in Vietnamese regular diet makes people often refer to it rather than to the others even when only the general word "*cơm*" or "*gạo*" is mentioned.

waterway irrigation system for rice, can be the evidence stressing the utmost importance of rice farming in Vietnamese culture since the beginning days (Avieli, 2012).

The importance of rice in Vietnamese culture can also be traced to the founding of Vietnam as a nation in the semi-mythological era of the Hùng Kings four millennia ago[35] (Taylor, 1983). The legend of the foundation of Vietnam as a nation was linked to the legend of Bánh Chưng (Chung cake) and Bánh Dày (Day cake), two types of cakes made of rice (which was then honoured as *ngọc* (gem) and some other agricultural ingredients. Prince Lang Liêu became the heir to the throne when he served these rice cakes to his father, the sixth Hùng King, to show his deepest gratitude and filial piety. Over time, rice cakes of Bánh Chưng have become a vehicle for expression of social relationships and a symbol of Vietnamese gratitude (Hữu Ngọc, 1998; Schultz, 1994). They, the representative of a pure Vietnamese culture (Avieli, 2012), have also been the icons of *Tết* (Vietnamese Lunar New Year), the most important Vietnamese festival (Avieli, 2005), and typical food in annual worship to the Ancestor King[36] and in other ancestor-worship rituals throughout the year.

This legend not only emphasises the cultural value that Vietnamese attached to rice, but it, in my viewpoint, could explain the origin of the practice of VMRIs. It could also explain the common use of *cơm* (boiled non-sticky rice) in these daily mealtime invitations. This might be because of the strong associations between the two versions of offering values: the usage of rice cakes in special events vs. boiled rice in daily meals; the perceiving of rice as precious gem, the most precious gift to the Kings in the past vs. the regarding of *cơm* as the most valuable food itself and a synecdoche for whole meals in contemporary daily life; the offering of rice cakes to show gratitude and filial piety vs. the offering of *cơm* to pay respect to the presence of others, to acknowledge their companions at meals, and also to show gratitude and filial piety. Thus, the traditional practice of VMRIs could be reasoned to date from the foundation of the nation and originate from the ritual of offering rice cakes to the Ancestor Kings.

The first official recognition of '*cơm*' (boiled non-sticky rice) as a national staple occurred in the 19th Century. Under the reign of the Nguyễn Dynasty (1802-1945), Vietnamese cultural uniformity was the focus of a national campaign to build Vietnam

---

[35] This was long before Chinese domination, which began in 111BC.
[36] This ritual is held annually on March 10 (Vietnamese lunar calendar), which is currently the national holiday

into a culturally homogenous empire (Peters, 2012). The national program started with the assumption that boiled non-sticky rice was the centre of all daily meals. Non-sticky rice was, therefore, given a dominant role, together with Emperor Minh Mạng (1820-1841) demanding his people to grow more non-sticky rice. This included his demand to transform people of ethnic minorities, who mainly ate and cultivated glutinous rice, into the consumers and producers of mainly non-sticky white rice. This might be because sticky rice crops were not deemed as productive as non-sticky rice crops (Hữu Ngọc, 1998) in meeting the demand of feeding the whole nation in times of critical food shortage then. However, it could also be interpreted as a domination of lowland majority over highland minorities. It can, therefore, be inferred that in Vietnam in the 19th Century, non-sticky rice was used as a symbol of national unity and disguised as food security policy.

Besides the demand to grow non-sticky rice throughout the country and to consume boiled non-sticky rice as the centre of all daily meals, the icon of non-sticky rice was also ordered to be carved on the first and the highest urn, called Cao Đỉnh (High Urn), of all nine bronze urns (Cửu Đỉnh) positioned in front of Nguyễn dynasty palace. The symbol of sticky rice was carved on the second urn. Corn, yam, or kumara were not seen on any urns although they were not less productive or eaten less widely than rice in the feudal time. This suggests an unstated implication, which still applies in the present days, that non-sticky rice dominated all other types as the main and daily dish; sticky rice was a special treat; others were food of the last resort (Peters, 2012) or as secondary food (Kleinnen, 1999), only eaten when the rice harvest was poor. This was the first time in Vietnam's history, that non-sticky rice's dominant role over other food was officially noted down in a state document and boiled non-sticky rice was officially confirmed as a national staple.

Rice has always been a strong political and socio-economic force throughout the history of Vietnam as an agricultural country. The political power of rice expressed through Kings or Emperors' ability to nurture the nation and feed the people with rice since the Vietnamese nation foundation (Avieli, 2005; Taylor, 1983) might be accountable for its strong socio-economic force. The modern Vietnamese government also pay great attention to the socio-economic and political role of rice. The icon of rice ears has been an emblem visibly marked in the national badge since 1959 (The Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Article 142, 1992). Considering that rice was the soul of

agriculture, farming production focused on rice with 85% of all land for rice-crops during the period of collectivisation with the Open-door policy implemented in the 1980s. Now, cultivating rice is still the most common activity: up to 90% of rural people, who make up about 80% of the population, are engaged in rice farming (Nguyen, 1995).

Rice has always been a strong spiritual force in Vietnamese culture. In the ancient times of Vietnam's matriarchy, rice was worshipped as *Thần Lúa* (Goddess of Rice), as *Mẹ Lúa* (Mother of Rice), a practice which has parallels in many other agricultural societies (Taylor, 2003, 2004; Vu, 2006), or as *Hồn Lúa, Vía Lúa* (spirit or soul of Rice). Till now, it is worshipped in different areas of the country with many local religious rites and ceremonies, such as *lễ cúng cơm mới* (new-rice worship festival) in mountainous areas, or *ngày hội xuống đồng/ hội vào mùa* (starting rice crop ceremonies) in the Northern Delta.

Rice and its products have also been used to serve Vietnamese spiritual life. Raw rice is buried along with the dead with a belief that the dead would not be hungry in the after-life. The rice-for-dead traditional custom with its meaning was described by a Vietnamese scholar in his father's funeral: "after Dad breathed his last (at 3:30 p.m. on March 26, 1960) on hồn bạch (a silk soul-piece), a pair of chopsticks was used to open his jaws, and a few kernels of raw rice were placed inside his mouth" (Nguyễn, 1999, p. 161). A bowlful of boiled rice and rice liquor, the alcohol distilled from fermented rice, are among necessary offerings[37] to farewell the newly deceased. The use of rice liquor in a send-off ritual by children to their deceased mother in her funeral is dictated in the following folk poem as an example:

<div align="center">

Your tomb, I resort to nature's protection

Pouring this cup of sweet liquor to farewell beloved mother.[38]

</div>

Rice liquor is ritually used to bind the living to their ancestors. In communal rituals and ceremonies organised in a local communal house called '*Đình*', after offering food and rice liquor to worship villagers' ancestors and local spirits, participants often share those offerings (now called gifts) amongst themselves, and sometimes pour some rice liquor

---

[37] They also include an egg
[38] My translation for the Vietnamese version of the lines in the folk poem *'Ca dao tế mẹ'*:
Chốn mộ phần con gởi nước non
Một chén rượu ngọt, giã từ thân mẹ

on the ground to share the moment with the dead (Peters, 2012). The use of rice liquor as a link between the dead and the living can be seen in many poems, including Nguyễn's (1867), for example:

> Pouring mellow liquor on the grass while missing the one in the tomb[39] (Line 3)

Rice and its products have also represented Vietnamese identities. The rice cakes of *Bánh Chưng*, reflecting rice-growing culture, rice honouring, gratitude and filial piety, can symbolise for Vietnamese (for example, Avieli, 2012; Hữu, 1998; Taylor, 1983). They are "multivocal and dynamic representations of Vietnamese national identity" (Avieli, 2005, p. 167). Rice cakes, depicting a pre-Chinese culture (Hữu, 1998; Taylor, 1983), are symbolic of a pristine Vietnamese culture (Avieli, 2012). The way these cakes speak about being Vietnamese can compare with the way that pizza and pasta reflect Italian identity (Avieli, 2005).

Rice and rice liquor were also symbolic of being Vietnamese in the 19th Century when the French attempted to colonise Vietnam (Peters, 2012). Anticolonial Vietnamese writers and poets asserted their pride of being patriotic Vietnamese and expressed their resistance against the French occupation through the metaphors of rice and rice liquor in their works. For example, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu, a great patriotic but unfortunately blind poet wrote in his poem, *Văn Tế Nghĩa sĩ Cần Giuộc* (1861):

> What is the point of living as mercenary chewing bread, getting drunk on bland alcohol, and overthrowing ancestors' altar? It is a shame. It is better to die resisting than to live with the French barbarians'[40]

In the poem lines, the poet attributed bland alcohol (*rượu lạt*) and bread (*bánh mì*) to the French barbarians as opposed to the favoured rice liquor and rice, being Vietnamese. In the years already under the French colonisation when rice liquor was highly taxed and even banned for the benefit of French alcohol trading, Vietnamese people attached the word '*quốc*' (national or state) to rice liquor, however, to claim its status. Rice liquor

---

[39] Translated from the Vietnamese version *"Rưới một chén rượu vào đám cỏ thơm ở trên mồ"* (Biệt vong đệ lữ phần, 1867)

[40] Translated from the Vietnamese version: *"Sống làm chi theo quân tả đạo, quăng vùa hương xô bàn độc, thấy lại thêm buồn; sống làm chi ở lính mã tà, chia rượu lạt, gặm bánh mì, nghe càng thêm hổ. Thà thác mà đặng câu địch khái, về theo tổ phụ cũng vinh; hơn còn mà chịu chữ đầu Tây, ở với man di rất khổ"* (Văn Tế Nghĩa sĩ Cần Giuộc, 1861).

was dubbed "*rượu quốc lủi*" (hidden national rice liquor[41]). By claiming the national status for rice liquor, people might imply their claiming of Vietnamese belonging to their own nation rather than a colony.

The symbolic meanings of rice and its products for Vietnamese national identities are different from the symbolic meanings attached to rice in India, where rice (eating and growing of rice) can be seen as a symbolic dividing line between different regional cultures within the same country (G. MacRae, personal communication, 2012). This might be because rice is grown and consumed throughout Vietnam (thanks to the national cultural uniformity campaign in the 19th Century) and/or also probably because Vietnamese have attached high status and value to rice.

In Vietnamese daily life expressions, various associations are extended from rice and boiled rice. Boiled rice is associated with sexual relationship as the example '*Ăn cơm trước kẻng*' (eat rice before the bell[42]) is used to refer to the action of having sex before marriage. Raw rice (gạo) is related to emotional states, exemplified in the following everyday expressions '*Buồn như mất sổ gạo*'[43] (As sad as losing a rice-buying-permit) or '*Đi đâu mà hớt hơ hớt hải như mất sổ gạo?*' (Why are you in such a bewilderment of losing rice-buying-report?). Rice (*lúa*) is associated with fertility and used as a metaphor for human reproduction. For example, before the rice produces grains it is said to be '*lúa con gái*' (young girl rice). It is said to '*đẻ*' (give birth) when it sprouts more stalks, and when the stalks produce rice ears, it is said to be '*chửa/có mang*' (pregnant). These metaphors are similar across other South East Asian rice-cultures such as Indonesia and the Philippines.

The important role of rice and the high status of boiled non-sticky rice have also been recognised in Vietnamese literature, and fiction and nonfiction writings. For example, in oral literature mnemonics, boiled non-sticky rice is literally and figuratively regarded as '*mẹ ruột*' (the gut's mother)[44] to mean its most important dietary value. A seed of boiled

---

[41] This term is still used and mentioned in present-time jokes or slang. Another term "*rượu quốc doanh*" (State-traded rice liquor) came to exist after Vietnamese Independence in 1945. But, in the context of national independence, in this term, *quốc* was attached to mean the liquor traded by the state.

[42] This is said to come from the war time when the children gathered and ate in communal halls where a bell would toll before each meal. However, some children would creep in before the bell toll to eat more than their share (see Temple, 1998)

[43] Sổ gạo, a rice-buying-permit was needed whenever buying rice during the Vietnam's subsidiary period (1945-1986)

[44] "cơm tẻ, mẹ ruột" (Boiled non-sticky white rice is the guts' mother)

non-sticky white rice is even metaphorically compared to 'a whole life'[45]' in a poem by Nguyễn Khoa Điềm (2007), a well-known Vietnamese poet and the former Minister of Vietnam's Ministry of Culture and Information. In a non-fiction book about over one hundred dishes on the Vietnamese table written by a chef and a restaurateur, boiled non-sticky white rice is affirmed as "the most important food at the table" and the "critical part of the meal" (Pham, 2001, p. 136).

The important role of rice and the high status of boiled non-sticky rice have been widely confirmed in research about Vietnamese food and culture. Boiled non-sticky white rice was regarded as one of "defining elements of Vietnamese food"[46] (Templer, 1998, p.52). The cuisine of boiled non-sticky rice "entailed both the wet-rice method of rice cultivation and the Vietnamese food patterns that followed from wet rice agriculture: meals around a tray of shared food, with each person having an individual bowl, full of the right kind of rice, with nước mắm as flavouring and chopsticks as the basic utensils" (Peters, 2012, p. 29). The role of Vietnamese rice was compared to that of French bread, which saved French people from the famine of the 1789 revolution (Peters, 2012). However, it was pointed out later that bread was incompatible because of more metaphors of rice, for example, for money, meals, food in general, and for making a living[47] as well as greater varietals coming from rice in Vietnamese daily life (Avieli, 2012). From rice, there are rice-base dishes[48], rice-cakes[49], food ingredient[50], and rice

---

45 "Một hạt cơm là cả cuộc đời" (A seed of boiled non-sticky white rice is a whole life) in "Tập Thiền" (Meditation) (Nguyễn, 2007)

[46] The others are fish sauce, the rich array of herbs, and spices (Templer, 1998, p. 56)

[47] *'Cần câu cơm'* [rod fishing rice]

[48] Vietnamese rice-base dishes can be served all year around as part of the everyday diet or special treats. *Cơm*, the national staple in daily meals, is non-sticky rice boiled with water. This type of rice when steamed with a large amount of water makes *Cháo* or *Cháo Hoa* (rice porridge), an indispensable dish to offer to wandering souls in 'cúng chúng sinh' or 'cúng cô hồn' rituals (banquets for wandering souls, who died of hunger in the past or who are the unworshipped spirits). This porridge can be added to meat, beans, vegetables, seafood, or herbs and spices to make different types of soup that can be served daily. *Xôi* is boiled sticky rice which sometimes has peanuts (*xôi lạc*), sesame (*xôi vừng*), dried green peas (*xôi đậu*), or black beans (*xôi đậu đen*). It can be coloured by using special leaves to make *xôi bảy màu* (seven-colour sticky rice) or using fruits like *Gấc* to make red sticky rice (xôi gấc). *Xôi* is a special treat in all types of feasts and has recently become common as breakfast food or refreshment at any time.

[49] Apart from *bánh Chưng* (mentioned in the nation-foundation legend above), made of sticky rice with dried green peas, onion, pepper, and pork wrapped squarely in green yam leaves and steamed for a long time, there are numerous other rice-base cakes, of different sizes, shapes, textures, and colours according to different occasions of the year, carrying various significant meanings. *Bánh Trôi* and *bánh Chay* are floating sticky rice balls served in *Tết Hàn Thực*, the third day of the third month. *Bánh Đa* is a crispy rice wafer with sesame for *Tết Đoan Ngọ*, the fifth day of the fifth month. *Bánh Dày* is a round sticky-rice cake for *Tết Trùng Thập*, the tenth day of the tenth month. Bánh Cốm, a green square cake

liquor. I am inclined to the idea of incompatibility also because of more extended meanings of the word boiled rice in Vietnamese [51], more functions of rice [52], the symbolic usage of rice and rice products, and indeed, much higher cultural value attached to rice in Vietnamese culture.

In brief, the importance of rice and the high status of boiled rice are evident in Vietnamese culture. The high culture value attached to rice reflects the significance of rituals surrounding its serving. These rituals encompass the extending of mealtime invitations in which '*cơm*' (boiled rice) is a synecdoche of the whole meals. Vice versa, the extending of these invitations can also be evidence expressing how highly Vietnamese people value rice. The higher rice is valued and honoured by Vietnamese people, the more their invitations for food at mealtimes signify.

3.1.3. Eating and meal manners

Food and eating is important, but the manner of eating is much more important to Vietnamese people. To them, eating is not just a bio-physical need; it is even a culture – eating culture (*văn hóa ẩm thực*). When studying Vietnamese food and drink in the 19th Century, Peters (2012) found that, to Vietnamese people, what people eat reflects not just who they are but also who they want to be. Similarly, Templer, (1998, p. 57) claims that the manner of serving is "so much part of meals" and has "as much meaning in Vietnamese meals as the food itself". As a researcher on VMRIs, a significant part of Vietnamese eating etiquette, I suggest that it is the eating manners or broadly meal manners that can reflect Vietnamese people as well as, if not better than, what they eat. Or to borrow Brillat-Savarin's words, the modified [53] expression "*what and how you eat tell who you are*" is particularly relevant in the Vietnamese context.

Meal manners to Vietnamese people are highly important. The Vietnamese saying "*Tiên học lễ, hậu học văn*" (One must learn manners prior to letters) emphasises the utmost

---

made of young-sticky rice is for *Tết Trung Thu*, the Mid-Autumn or Full-Moon festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month.
[50] Rice is ground finely to make ingredient for *Bún*, *Mì Gạo* (dried rice noodle), *bánh Phở* (wet rice noodle to make *Phở*), or *bánh Cuốn* (thin steamed-rice cake), or *bánh Đa Nem* (rice paper for wrapping spring or summer rolls).
[51] '*Cơm*' can be designated for fruit flesh, e.g., '*cơm dừa*' [rice coconut] (coconut flesh), '*cơm sầu riêng*' [rice durian] (durian pulp); '*Cơm*' figuratively refers to a legal wife: '*chán cơm thèm phở*' (bored with rice, tempted for Pho-rice noodle) can imply 'bored with a legal wife, tempted for other loving partners'
[52] Rice is also used as a medical ingredient (Hải Thượng Lãn Ông, the 18th Century)
[53] "Tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you who you are" (Brillat-Savarin)

importance of having manners to Vietnamese people[54]. Manners include *'nết ăn'* (table/meal manners). Another saying "*Học ăn, học nói, học gói, học mở*" (learn to eat, learn to speak, learn to wrap, learn to open) is to teach about the importance of learning how to eat, to speak, and to deal with things in life properly and appropriately. Amongst four things in the list, learning how to eat is the first. It shows the importance Vietnamese people place on meal manners. They include numerous rules of etiquette such as using eating utensils like chopsticks and bowls, having proper emotional states and sitting postures, knowing how to restrain hunger and to start meals at the appropriate time (not before others), using appropriate language, respecting and caring for people around, and extending mealtime ritual invitations, which are the focus of this study.

Meal manners are discussed widely in daily-life communication, in fiction, in folklore, and in oral mnemonics. In a culture so rich in proverbs, folk poems, and oral mnemonics as Vietnam (Visser, 2008), those related to eating and teaching 'dos and don'ts' in meal manners are numerous. For example, "*Ăn trông nồi, ngồi trông hướng*" (at a meal, one must observe the rice-pot and mind the seat) means that at meals, one should make sure that food remains enough in the pot for others before getting more and have a proper sitting posture and position in order not to cause inconvenience or offence to others. Another example "*Miếng ăn quá khẩu thành tàn*" (overeating destroys oneself) reminds diners not just to eat in moderation for their health benefits but also to care for others by being aware of everyone's fair share when eating communally. These gastro-political rules and other table manners are taught to children from an early age and often continue to be observed throughout their life.

Extending food offers or invitations, which is common to every human society, is regarded as food-related manners in Vietnamese culture. Offers or invitations are issued frequently and widely, not just around mealtimes but also in various daily-life contexts. When a guest visits, apart from numerous conventional invitations, such as invitations to come in, invitations to have a seat and the like, invitations or offers for food and/or drink are also customarily extended by the hosts. When eating and drinking take place, invitations or offers are observed at a high rate. For instance, just before eating or drinking something during their conversations, the interlocutors often customarily

---

[54] This is often thought as the influence of Confucian doctrine on Vietnamese society, but all civilised human beings have manners, which can be a form of 'virtue', discussed later in Section 3.2.2

• • •
70

extend invitational utterances to others. This custom is applied widely, not limited only to host-guest relationship. The saying "*Ăn có mời, làm có khiến*"[55] literally means 'people eat with/by invitations and do with/by requests'. As far as eating is concerned, the first clause of the saying can be interpreted either as extending invitations whenever eating (and drinking) with the presence of others or eating and drinking only when invited to. Both meanings show the importance of extending food offers or invitations as a manner of eating because to Vietnamese people, offers/ invitations for food are much more important than the food to be offered (*Mời chào cao hơn mâm cỗ*).

Extending proper invitations in appropriate situations at meals is, therefore, amongst the important Vietnamese gastro-political rules, food etiquette, or meal manners. These mealtime invitations mean to share food with others or to invite people to join for meals. In this way, they offer both food and company to express hospitality, solidarity, and respect. Indeed, when extending invitations, the extenders are offering not only their food, company, but also themselves as gifts. They use food as a means and language as an expressing channel (verbally and non-verbally) to index the mealtime politeness, respect (including gratitude and filial piety), and interpersonal sentiment. Therefore, VMRIs are symbolic. They embed within themselves what are highly valued in Vietnamese culture: food honour and meal manners but also respect for social order and solidarity, hospitality, inclusion, and sharing.

In addition to these cultural values, extending invitations at meals may also have other practical benefits such as for health and spiritual life. Through their respectful invitations, extenders bring happiness to themselves and others, create a healthy eating environment, and improve appetite (see Chapter 4 for participants' reasons for extending their VMRIs). Extending VMRIs may also have a link to 'Mindful Eating', a part of the Mindfulness movement proposed in Buddhism philosophy, showing awareness that people are "truly alive and present" with "those around you and with what you are doing" (Thich & Cheung, 2010, p. 124) and it has actively spread to daily activities (e.g., eating, walking, getting up). When extending VMRIs, extenders are aware of whom they are extending their invitations to, of what they (extenders and/or recipients) are doing or going to do (eating), and of what they eat (regardless if it is directly or indirectly mentioned in the invitations). However, awareness in this case

---

[55] Speak when you are spoken to, come when you are called

goes beyond individual awareness since the extenders often let the recipients know that they want to offer them food and company (sense of belonging) or they themselves are going to start/finish meals (self-invitations). Therefore, they involve the recipients in the mutual awareness.

The cultural connection between Mindful Eating and extending VMRIs may indicate that both Mindfulness and Vietnamese dining are contemporary reflection of Buddhism. Extending VMRIs is to some extent similar to the practice of saying grace at the start of communal lunches by the attendants every Sunday at the Auckland-based Buddhist temple where I collected data and which was described as a 'cultural conservator' by Moore (2004a), borrowing McCoy's (1996) word. The monk and the nun there explained that they were practising *The Five Contemplations* to show gratitude towards food since the first of seven practices of mindful eating is 'honour the food'. *The Five Contemplations*, quoted in Vietnamese and posted on the wall in the temple's refectory, were also found in the book giving instructions on mindful eating:

> *1. This food is the gift of the whole universe: the earth, the sky, numerous living beings and much hard, loving work.*
> *2. May we eat with mindfulness and gratitude so as to be worthy to receive it.*
> *3. May we recognise and transform our unwholesome mental formations, especially our greed, and learn to eat with moderation.*
> *4. May we keep our compassion alive by eating in such a way that we reduce the suffering of living beings, preserve our planet, and reverse the process of global warming.*
> *5. We accept this food so that we may nurture our sisterhood and brotherhood, strengthen our community, and nourish our ideal of serving all living beings.*
> (Thich & Cheung, 2010, p. 124)

As long as this mindfulness practice is found to be good for the diners' health (Thich & Cheung, 2010), VMRIs can, therefore, be mindfully extended for healthy eating practice. These invitations are cultivated and nurtured mainly in Vietnamese family meal discourse, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.2. Vietnamese family meal discourse

3.2.1. Defining Vietnamese meals

Meals in many cultures such as British are often defined in terms of food. For example, Douglas (1972, 1999) claims that food categories encode meals. Meals are "a mixture of solid foods accompanied by liquids' (p. 65). "A meal is not a meal if it is all in the bland-sweet-sour dimensions. A meal incorporates a number of contrasts, hot and cold, bland and spiced, liquid and semi-liquid, and various textures" (p. 66). Food is the criterion to distinguish meals from drinks and to assess the properness of a meal "the core staples and peripheral foods that make up a cuisine's ingredients are expected to be present in the appropriate proportions to make a meal proper" (Mintz as cited in Crowther, 2013, p. 157). Defined through social categories, meals are regarded as 'a micro-scale social system' and social events, which are different from drinks in terms of intimacy and distance. Meals, which express close friendship, are for family, close friends, and honoured guests. Drinks, on the other hand, are for strangers, acquaintances, workmen, and families (Douglas, 1972, p. 66).

However, food categories are not the defining elements in Vietnamese perceptions of meals though they are also the main items. A Vietnamese meal is generally called '*bữa*' [meal], '*bữa cơm*' [meal rice], '*cơm*' [rice], or '*bữa ăn*' [meal eat] as opposed to any gatherings mainly for drinks (*bữa nhậu*) [meal drink]. '*Bữa cơm*' and '*cơm*' contain the word '*cơm*' (rice) but are commonly used to refer to meals even when rice might be eaten far less than other food types[56]. They are also used for non-rice meals, such as hot-pot meals, in which foods other than rice are in the food categories. Those terms can refer to all meal types whether ordinary daily meals at home or special meals with special treats that take place only on special occasions, which are also specifically termed '*cỗ/bữa cỗ/tiệc*' (feasts, parties) at restaurants, wedding parties, anniversaries or the like.

Instead of food, the conventional time of having meals can conceptualise Vietnamese meals. The time in which meals are taken during a day is used to identify meals rather than what people eat for the meals: for example, '*bữa sáng*' [meal morning] (breakfast)

---

[56] In the old days' meals, rice was never enough and had to be supplemented by kumara, maize, cassava, yam, and the like. Nowadays, in sumptuous meals, rice is often an alternative and can be substituted with a wide variety of other food choices.

for the meals taken in the morning, often around 6-8am; *'bữa cơm trưa'* [meal rice noon] (lunch) for the meal taken around midday, often between 11am and 1pm; and *'bữa ăn tối/chiều'* [meal eat evening] (dinner) for the meals taken in the evening, often around 6-8pm. This pattern of mealtimes is customarily constructed, and Vietnamese meals are always referred to one of those three main meals, even though this time pattern may not fit all working lives.

Vietnamese people also use three time indicators of a day, namely morning, noon, and evening to refer to three main meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), shown, for example, in Vietnamese equivalents for having those meals as *'ăn sáng'* [eat morning]*, 'ăn trưa'* [eat noon]*,* and *'ăn tối'* [eat evening]. Those phrases were found in recorded VMRIs, for example: *"Con mời mẹ ăn sáng"* [Child invite mother to eat morning] (I invite mother to have breakfast) (D28#7). Even greetings around mealtimes, either with or without the presence of food, can be in the form of a questions related to meals, for example, 'Have you eaten/had meal (lunch/dinner) yet?' Food served outside customary eating times, regardless of what type and how much, can be called subordinate or light meals (*bữa phụ, bữa điểm tâm*), such as supper, morning tea, or afternoon tea. They are not even always regarded as 'meals' by Vietnamese, but just as *'ăn vặt'* [eat junk] (snack, refreshment). They may hold negative connotations. These meals were not mentioned in any diary entries or in any other data sources from my participants. This implies that in Vietnamese perception, providing food purely to satisfy hunger as the biological need is not the main function of meals. Subordinate meals can do so, but they are not constantly in people's minds when meals are mentioned. Additionally, the way people name meals regardless of food categories shows that food does not define meals, but the customary eating time may mean more to Vietnamese people because the times are indexed to social and cultural meanings. Thus, the time when serving food, rather than the food itself, defines Vietnamese meals.

Vietnamese meals are also marked by commensality, the practice of sharing food and eating together. This commensality, commonly practised in many other communities, is highly valued, for example, as an ethnically distinct way for diners to express a bonding mechanism (Visser, 2008, p. 95) or a base for cultural sites into language socialization and cultural apprenticeship (Ochs & Shohet, 2006, p. 46). Gathering for meals and sharing food communally are daily rituals of Vietnamese diners. Thus, meals do not necessarily happen in certain places, but rather with certain company. Indeed, time and

space are social and cultural (McAlister, 2012) and meals are one of the places where they combine. An ordinary Vietnamese meal is characterised by the gathering of generations in certain well-established dining areas[57], surrounding a round food tray (*mâm*) with various dishes and sauces and a rice-pot for sharing communally; each diner has a pair of chopsticks and a rice bowl as their individual eating utensils. This scenario has remained almost unchanged for centuries, as illustrated in meals over time in Figures 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3 below:

Figure 3-1 A 19ᵗʰ Century feudal-time home meal
(Peters, 2012)

Figure 3-2 A late 20ᵗʰ Century wartime communal meal
(http://www.tienphong.vn/Image)

Figure 3-3 A modern-time home meal
(Participant's photo)

Vietnamese commensality is strong among family members. Food is shared communally rather than an individual activity in which each member grabs his/her individual portions and eats at his/her flexible time. In Vietnamese culture, the whole family is always expected to eat together and at the same time. The meal will not start until all expected family members are present. Though expectations for attendance may have changed over time and timing of meals is becoming more flexible at the present time of swift globalization (see above), there is still an unstated commitment to having meals together amongst most Vietnamese people. Family members keep at the forefront of their mind that however busy they are, they should get home by mealtimes to enjoy meals together. The commitment to gathering for family meals may be the underlying reason why Vietnamese people place much weight on the cultural custom of eating regular meals, which is not just the result of habit and bodily rhythms only. That may explain why a meal which gathers dining partners is often perceived as a nostalgic scene within Vietnamese people's minds. Images of family meals have, therefore, been strategically exploited in Vietnam in numerous fields such as in advertising for business

---

[57] Meals in the old days were often served on a mat, spread on the floor or on a plank bed in the main hall; meals now, especially in urban areas, are often served on a table in the dining room.

(for example, Coca-Cola or Knorr companies) or in evoking a sense of humanity within criminals. Among my interviewees, 97% (35 out of 36) said they would prefer having meals with company, especially their family members, to having meals alone. Many of them disclosed that they felt a loss if a regular dining partner was absent from a meal. Participants' attitudes towards eating alone as opposed to eating with companions are consistent with the spirit of their ancestors' old saying "*Ăn một mình thì tức, làm một mình cực thân*" (Either eating or working alone is painful). Family meals are, therefore, a symbol of family union in people's minds.

Vietnamese commensality is not limited to home-scale meals with family members but also extended to other and broader social settings, such as daily or occasional gatherings for meals among workmates, schoolmates or country-mates. The sense of commensality in meals helps create 'secondary families' for 'meal-mates'. Several Auckland-based participants, from different regions of Vietnam, who had settled in New Zealand, could best exemplify this; they ate with their meal-mates whether they were living at the same address or not. Likely explanations for Vietnamese commensality are the family ties imprinted in the mind of Vietnamese and their "very acute sense of family solidarity" that describe Vietnamese people (M. T. Nguyễn as cited in Đ. H. Nguyễn, 1956). Another likely reason could be the influence of agricultural practice on people' life, since agriculture in Vietnamese contexts requires great cooperation that has led to a cultural tendency to do things together and at a similar time.

In short, Vietnamese meals are characterised by convivial gathering, communal food-sharing, and the bonding of certain relationships, for example, by blood, marriage, business, or other intimacy and not just for food. Thus, conventional mealtimes, conviviality, and commensality are defining elements in conceptualizing Vietnamese meals. This interpretation of Vietnamese meals is consistent with what Sydney Mintz, 'the father of food anthropology' (Robert, 2015), has defined of 'good food': "What constitutes 'good food,' like what constitutes good weather, a good spouse or a fulfilling life, is a social, not a biological, matter" (1985, p. 8).

3.2.2. Socio-cultural functions and meanings of family meals with the practice of mealtime invitations

Socio-cultural functions and meanings of family meals have been widely and thoroughly discussed (for example, Avieli, 2012; Blum-Kulka, 1997; Fiese, 2006; Holt, 2013; Ochs & Shohet, 2006; Visser, 2008). Those manifesting in family meals around the world could also display in Vietnamese family meals, such as a means of family happiness, family solidarity, emotional bonds, and the key opportunity for intergenerational socio-cultural learning. These functions and meanings will be discussed in conjunction with the practice of mealtime ritual invitations to highlight the mutually beneficial roles of these invitations and family meals. Moreover, in this section I argue that mealtimes in the Vietnamese context also offer ways of developing virtue thanks to the practice of mealtime ritual invitations.

As mentioned above, Vietnamese meals are closely associated with family life and meals make their diners a family. The ancient Greek term for family, *oikos*, meaning "those who feed together" (Lacey as cited in Ochs & Shohet, 2006, p. 37) is relevant to the term '*family meals*' used in this study. This is a participant-driven term that can broadly refer to meals attended by diners who are not limited to family members with blood or marriage relationships. This broad familial sense was commonly found in collected data, as inferred through the way extenders of VMRIs referenced the recipients as their 'family' (*cả nhà, nhà mình, nhà ta, gia đình*), regardless of any relationship between them. The use of these words is also close or similar to the use of the English word '*household*' with its meanings referring to all those, including servants, guests, hangers-on of various kinds who live (and eat) together as a single unit. For example, a teenage girl grouped all her dining partners, including parents, siblings, close and distant relatives, and guests into '*cả nhà*' (family) in her invitation "*Con mời cả nhà ăn cơm*!" [Child invite all house (family) eat rice!] (IVN1, 01:22p2). The spirit of 'family-hood' at Vietnamese meals could also be directly expressed, as in words of a 21-year-old interviewee, for instance, that '*I regard all those who company me at meals as my family members. Eating together, we are family*' (IVN15, 06:21). This family-hood spirit might result from the familial and communal control over the individual (Nguyễn, Đ. H, 1956) or the collectivism that characterises Vietnamese society (for example, Trần, N. T., 2006).

Family meals can be a source of family happiness. They are vital for a strong and stable family life, which is a central value in Vietnamese society (e.g, Pham, V. B., 1999; Trương, 2008). Family meals are strongly associated with family happiness in that they can be carriers of love, care, and respect, which are basis of family happiness. They are also where family business discussions take place, even conflicts get worked out. With the indirect cultural thought pattern (Kaplan, 1966) reflected in Vietnamese language (Nguyễn, V. Q., 1988), love, care and respect seem to be preferably expressed by Vietnamese people in indirect words or in a less orally expressive ways such as through actions and behaviours, especially through food and meal-related behaviours. For example, one participant revealed that she often served her husband from New Zealand with food prepared by herself, however time-consuming and costly it might be in comparison with ready-made food, to express her love and care towards him although at first he could hardly realise this indirect expression of her love and care. Thus, love can be expressed indirectly in the food prepared for others[58], as meant by the Vietnamese restaurant-owner's master, "family is sacred, food is love and love is food" (Pham, 2001, p. 183). Care can be conveyed through the actions of offering food, or by making sure others have had enough or have good appetite. Respect is expressed in appropriate words, and proper behaviours that create a cosy and comfortable eating atmosphere for all diners. Love, care and respect are all associated with filial piety, the most valued morals of gratitude in Vietnamese families. All these values can be expressed through food and respect words. In this way VMRIs, which are respectful behaviours of inviting people to have food or meals, can be interpreted as an indirect expression of love, care, respect, and filial piety at meals. These invitations, therefore, like family meals, can co-enhance family happiness.

Family meals can be a means to strengthen emotional bonds since mealtime conversations are particularly indicative of a family's emotional climate (Fiese, 2006). As far as I know from provided data (63 diaries with more than one meal-entry in each, 36 interviews, 20 video-recordings, and numerous observations) and my own experience, Vietnamese tend to talk about food and tell happy stories during their meals. Diners customarily try to remain good-tempered and avoid creating tension for others at

---

[58] This Vietnamese way of expressing love indirectly via food preparation is, to some extent, similar to the Mexican way, reflected in the Mexican film, *Like Water for Chocolate*, (Arau, 1992), based on a popular novel by Laura Esquivel (1989)

meals[59] although arguments still happen. When being asked how people extended VMRIs when they were experiencing unusual emotional states, many interviewees reported that they would not have meals when they were angry. An interviewee even said that "being happy and comfortable is a must while eating" (IVN1, 5:41p1). Perhaps, because of having this attitude toward eating, no participants reported that their mealtimes with others brought them the tension. Many interviewees disclosed the comfortable feelings at family meals as the reason why they preferred having meals with their family members. Therefore, VMRIs, which were reported by my participants as to make hearers happier and also to help extenders feel more comfortable, could contribute to the happiness at dining tables. As such, the exchange of VMRIs emotionally binds members to one another.

Besides creating strong emotional bonds, family meals can enhance family solidarity. While conflicts are common in family life, mealtimes can be opportunities for problem solving and resolving conflicts (Fiese, 2006). Repeated family gatherings can also offer an opportunity for investment in maintaining connections into the future (Fiese, 2006). When family meals are neglected, those connections are not guaranteed and the bond amongst members may be lost, as inferred from the sad comment of a Vietnamese person upon his family's disengagement due to conflicts: "Since we stopped eating together, we are not family any more" (Avieli, 2012, p. 63). In addition to the convention of meal gatherings, the predictable attitudes or anticipated patterns of behaviours can make diners establish relations with each other (Visser, 2008). The practice of VMRIs could function as a means of resolving conflicts insofar as they are used to express respect and care to others. It is also a respect behaviour pattern that can be predicted within family regulations to interlock the insiders. The practice, therefore, can enhance the role of family meals in consolidating family networks.

For Vietnamese people, mealtime is likely the key opportunity for intergenerational socio-cultural sharing, learning and understanding. This occurs through verbally and non-verbally interacting, and exchanging stories with diners across generations in an informal and affective setting of meals. The older generations help to cultivate morality and tradition in the younger generations while the juniors unlock their seniors' experience and help them adapt to the younger people's world. Family meals can also

---

[59] *"Trời đánh còn tránh miếng ăn"* (Never chastise anyone while they are eating)

offer diners opportunities to acquire what is necessary but unavailable at schools or in any other contexts. Those things include the use of VMRIs. One interviewee affirmed that many rules of eating etiquette, including VMRIs, could not be learned well elsewhere other than from family and especially at mealtimes, "*the practice of VMRIs starts and is nurtured mainly in families rather than in schools because schools just provide general moral lessons or conducts*" (IVN9, 15:30). He also added that children learned patterns of behaviours from their parents and thus, in families whose parents neglected VMRIs, the use or proper use of these respectful signals would consequently be absent amongst their children.

Moreover, things that people absorb at mealtimes can be important throughout their lives, and beyond the dinner table (Visser, 2008). This can be applicable to VMRIs. Extenders of VMRIs not only know how to issue invitations at mealtimes, but practising this behaviour pattern can also help them respect others; the food-sharing tradition learnt in those invitations can also construct their lifelong generosity and care for others.

Mealtimes in Vietnamese contexts also offer ways of developing moral virtues due to the practice of VMRIs. As the moral philosopher, Sandel (2010) argues, families are where people belong; members have ties with their families, which they were born with, already attached, and impossible to separate themselves from. These ties can be strengthened by acquiring family obligations. In many Vietnamese families, traditional obligations at mealtimes may include commensality, conviviality, hospitality, and respect (discussed above). These moral obligations could be manifested in the moral tie of practising VMRIs. By extending these invitations, the extenders acknowledge the presence of others at meals and offer them food and company. Inasmuch as food embodies social and cultural value in Vietnamese contexts, the practice of VMRIs enacts the offering of values. On offering values, extenders of VMRIs show their politeness (hospitality and solidarity) and pay respect (including gratitude and filial piety) to others. As such, from the perspectives of virtue ethics, the practice of VMRIs can be seen as a way of transforming values into moral virtues.

Virtue has traditionally been understood as a disposition to behave in the right manner, which can be achieved through habit or practice (Aristotle, 1893). In Confucian concept, virtue is related more to human relations than to human function as in Aristotelian concept. It requires a person to learn and practise numerous virtues, which are included

in what Confucius called as 'ren, li, xiao, wen, and shu' to become an ideal person in relation to other people (Ames, R. T., & Rosemont, H., 1998). This concept of virtue was imposed in Vietnam during Chinese domination and its influence remains at present time to some extent. Virtue can also simply be something right to do to bring happiness (Sandel, 2010). Whichever of these concepts of virtue can be applied, the practice of VMRIs embodies virtue. Through the ritual of VMRIs, values such as hospitality, solidarity, respect, gratitude, and/or filial piety are operationalised as ethical social behaviours and happiness is created. In this way, family meals that cultivate the practice of VMRIs contribute to the acquisition and development of virtues.

Using concept of moral virtues in my argument that family meals with the practice of VMRIs contribute to the acquisition and development of virtues, I, however, imply that virtues can be learned from families, as opposed to Aristotelian concept that people cannot learn sound moral principles at home. Virtues can be learned in family meals and through meal-related habit or practice, such as the practice of VMRIs. It does not totally conform to Confucian concept, either, in a way that the non-practice of VMRIs is not a vice or it can prevent a person from becoming ideal. Practice and non-practice are more likely differences in terms of moral value than the two extremes (morally right vs. morally wrong). This is relevant both when the practice is viewed as either familial or societal norms. Moreover, familial norms are placed higher than societal norms in the Vietnamese context, as the old saying "*Nhập gia tùy tục*"[60] literally means 'to follow the family's norms when being with the family'. That is why some participants revealed that they adopted their practice of VMRIs when having meals with other families; vice-versa, some lost the practice when they adapted to their new life circumstances.

In summary, family meals, a discourse of nutrition mixed with love, comforts, solidarity, manners, virtue, traditions, and knowledge that comprehensively nourish each person's life, are also where VMRIs are cultivated and nurtured. At the same time, VMRIs could enhance those positive functions and meanings of family meals. The mutually-enhanced values of family meals and VMRIs imply a strong need for retaining the frequency of family meals especially in this swift globalization.

---

[60] When in Rome, do as the Romans do

3.3. Summary

The background provided in the chapter helps to locate VMRIs in Vietnamese society and culture. VMRIs are carriers of Vietnamese cultural values, including food honour and meal manners within the discourse of food insecurity in the Vietnamese socio-cultural and historical context.

My arguments focus on the high value attached to food and company at mealtimes. Vietnamese meals are more likely to be framed by convivial commensality and notions of customary dining time than by food categories. These defining features, together with native speakers' broad concept of family meals, reflect the strong communal and familial spirit, which might be the influence of an agricultural culture in the Vietnamese context that requires company or cooperation of collective group rather than individual. Given the high value of food, particularly rice, and commensality in Vietnamese culture, mealtime invitations are significant since they are offers of food and company.

By tracing back the pre-Chinese history of Vietnamese high cultural value attached to food, particularly rice, there is an implication that the cultural practice of VMRIs might originate from the pure Vietnamese culture of offering rice cakes to their ancestors to express gratitude, filial piety, and rice-honouring. Moreover, framed by the argument that meal manners are more important than the food itself in Vietnamese food-sharing culture, extending invitations for food during meals is regarded as food-related etiquette. These invitations can index hospitality, politeness, respect (including gratitude and filial piety), and personal sentiments.

Discussions on socio-cultural meanings and functions of family meals in conjunction with the cultural practice of VMRIs highlight the interrelationship between the high cultural value of food, commensality at family meals and VMRIs. These values imply a need for retaining the frequency of family meals, where VMRIs are mainly cultivated and nurtured and VMRIs. Discussions also suggest that interpretations of VMRIs should not be separate from Vietnamese cultures of valuing food, commensality, and bonding over meals.

Thus, discussions in this chapter not only set the discursive context for the interpreting of VMRIs as invitations or offers for food and company from socio-cultural and historical perspectives; discussions also highlight the practice of these invitations as

food-related manners or meal behaviours that reflect Vietnamese socio-cultural values. In the next chapter, which discusses VMRIs from a linguistic perspective, meals will continue to be valued as a powerful and governing context, not only triggering and characterizing VMRIs but also providing time, space, and proposition for these invitational utterances.

Chapter 4. THEORY OF INVITATIONS

The previous chapter discussed the background and the socio-cultural context for the interpretation of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations (VMRIs) and their significance from socio-cultural and historical perspectives. This chapter, which includes two parts, reviews the literature on invitations (Part A) and presents initial analysis of data set of Vietnamese mealtime invitations (Part B).

The review draws attention to a gap in the literature. Firstly, no studies specific to mealtime invitations have been identified in any cultures despite the enormous amount of research into invitations. Existing research has not produced an analytical framework which focuses on types of invitations or recognised that the meanings of many types of invitations are constructed by socio-cultural conventions. Secondly, in previous research into Vietnamese invitations (T. H. Dang, 1992; Đào, 2012; Nguyen, 2004), there is a high level of generalisation. Researchers interpret Vietnamese invitations using the framework designed for English invitations without fully accounting for the language users or identifying the social and cultural aspects of the language use. Moreover, a limited set of exemplary mealtime invitations is cited in isolation from their various contextual situations[61]. These examples of mealtime invitations are discussed out of the socio-cultural and situated contexts, discussion is focussed merely on the linguistic forms that invitations take, and there is limited discussion about their social and pragmatic functions.

In the second part of this chapter, evidence from my research will be presented to illustrate how mealtime invitations occur as part of a complex series of verbal and non-verbal signals that are given before, during, and after meals. This finding is against the commonly-held misperceptions that mealtime invitations are limited in the scope of their occurrences. I have also used ideas of sociolinguistics and critical application of Speech Act Theory as an interpretative framework to analyse the linguistic aspects of mealtime invitations and to discuss their social and pragmatic functions, which can be a

---

[61] Reviewed in Part B

solution to the discrepancies in interpretations of VMRIs found in previous studies. An initial analysis suggests that VMRIs can more satisfactorily be interpreted as multiplex discourses. They integrate the complexity of single acts (inviting combined with other acts, such as offering, requesting, greeting, thanking) and the repetitiveness and the multiplicity of both inviting acts and other accompanying acts (refusing and/or accepting) within discourses.

The aim of this chapter is to develop an interpretative framework for a typology of invitations and also to expand the conceptual boundaries of the language and use of mealtime invitations in Vietnamese culture.

Chapter 4. Part A - Invitation discourses

4.1. Invitations in English and other languages

The act of inviting is a social activity which may occur daily in all cultures. It has been of great interest to researchers world-wide. A series of investigations into invitations from a variety of perspectives range from the universal construction of invitations (Hancher, 1979; Searle, 1979; Wierzbicka, 1987), to detailed descriptions of invitations and disinvitations in different languages, such as English (Bardovi-Harlig, 2014; Edmondson & House, 1981; Isaacs & Clark, 1990; Wolfson, 1981, 1983, 1989), Greek (Bella, 2009), Vietnamese (Đào, 2011), and Chinese (Mao, 1992; Tseng, 1999), to cross-cultural studies of invitations (Dang, 2001; Eslami, 2005; García, 2008; Rakowicz, 2009,Yaqubi, M., Saeed, K. M., & Khaksari, M., 2016), and to religious studies of biblical invitations (Johnson-Siebold, 2005; McKinlay, 1996). Especially, there has recently emerged a trend of investigating written wedding invitations in different cultures (Nahar, 2006; Momani & Al-Refaei, 2010 in Jordanian; Mirzaei & Eslami, 2013; Faramarzi, Elekaei & Tabrizi, 2015 in Iranian; Soucy, 2014 in Vietnamese). However, given the focus on mealtime invitations as secular practices and spoken discourses in this study, this investigation reviews accounts of spoken invitations, but not written or religious ones. Therefore, the following review of spoken and secular invitations will range from early studies that investigate them as speech acts to later ones that orient to their social and interactional aspects or recognise the need to examine them as discourses.

Investigations into invitations as speech acts tend to use the pragmatic framework of Speech Act Theory (SAT), introduced by Austin in the 1960s. Under SAT, inviting is a speech act, the action performed via utterances that can be named by a 'performative verb' (or a performative) (Austin, 1962). The produced utterance contains three interrelated acts: a locutionary act (or locution): an act of saying actual words in the communicative activity; an illocutionary act (or illocution): an act of doing what is

intended through the speaker's utterance (speaker's intention is either explicit or implicit); and a perlocutionary act (or perlocution): the possibly consequential effect on the hearer's attitudes, behaviours, or actions. These three acts constitute what people 'do with words'. Of the three acts, the illocution is the most crucial one because the minimal units of human communication are not linguistic expressions, but rather the performance of acts in which the speaker's intention can be recognised. That could be why Austin later termed it 'speech act'. The speech act of inviting, like others, is often referred to by this notion.

Inviting belongs to the group of 'Directives' as proposed by Searle (1979, p. 13) because to invite someone is to direct him/her to a specific action mentioned in the proposition. Inviting is also 'a Commissive' ('a Commissive Directive'), according to Hancher (1979, p. 6), because when speaker invites the hearer to do something, s/he is trying to direct the hearer's behaviour, and also commits the speaker him/herself to a future course of action which is beneficial to the hearer. In this way, inviting is a speech act with cooperative characteristics of commissive and directive although in different cultures, it can be more oriented to one characteristic than to the other (García, 2007, 2008).

Inviting acts have degrees of imposition weighing on the invitee. However, scholars have different views about the imposition of invitations. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the less imposition the acts have, the more polite they are and therefore, invitations with less imposition on the invitee are more polite than those with more imposition. Because of the imposition that invitations might weigh on the invitee, Brown and Levinson classify invitations as Face Threatening Acts. However García (1999, 2007, 2008) also sees invitations as a type of requests. She partly supports Brown and Levinson's classification although she also claims that invitations may be face boosting rather than face threatening. Other scholars (e.g., Gu, 1990; Mao, 1992; Tseng, 1999; Vu, 1997) also argue that invitations in certain non-English languages such as Chinese, Persian, Igbo, and Vietnamese are not Face Threatening Acts because in these cultures, imposition indexes the sincerity and politeness of the invitations. For example, Vu (1997) stated that the high coerciveness of invitations in Vietnamese is not perceived as a threat to the negative face of the receivers. Moreover, imposition signals that the invitees' positive face is respected and admired and that the inviters are really

sincere. Therefore, according to these scholars, in these cultures, the imposition increases the politeness of invitations.

Inviting, like other speech acts, has been classified into direct and indirect in previous studies. Direct speech acts are defined as those whose surface forms satisfy the interactional functions (Saville-Troike, 1986, p. 36), or those with a direct relationship between the structures and the functions (Searle, 1975), or those whose speakers say literally and exactly what they mean (Brown & Levinson, 1978). In indirect speech acts, there is no direct relationship between the structures and the functions (Searle, 1975) or the speakers do not say literally and exactly what they mean (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Based on these definitions, "*I would like to invite you to my birthday party at 7 p.m this Saturday"* is an example of a direct inviting act and "*Recently, you haven't come to visit my family*" (T. M. D. Dang, 2001, p. 47) is an indirect one (inviting act is performed via a complaint or a reproach and the speaker means more or other than literally complaining).

However, I will not apply the distinction between directness and indirectness to investigating Vietnamese mealtime invitations for several reasons. Firstly, the (in)directness distinction approach is limited in the complex act of inviting (Edmondson & House, 1981; Rakowicz, 2009; Yaqubi, M., Saeed, K. M., & Khaksari, M., 2016). (In)directness of acts is often assessed according to the relationship between the illocutionary acts and their expression forms, as illustrated in the examples above, but this relationship becomes hard to identify in other examples. For example, "*Come to my place at 7p.m this Saturday*!" can be either a direct or an indirect inviting act. On the one hand, it is a direct speech act with a direct relationship between structure and function (Directive-Imperative performed by a command). On the other hand, it is also an indirect invitation because the invitation is performed via a command, not an overt invitation. Secondly, the correlation between indirectness and politeness scales in both English and Asian languages has been unclear (Archer et al., 2012). Leech (1983) considers indirectness one of the main 'Tact Maxims' in English although he recognises no absolute correlation between politeness and indirectness, especially in such Hearer-Beneficial-Acts as invitations. However, indirectness has a range of functions with politeness in certain non-English languages. For example, in Japanese, indirectness is not relevant to politeness (Matsumoto, 1988); it does not increase politeness in Vietnamese (Vu, 1997); but, it functions partly as a politeness device in Chinese (Gu,

1990; Tseng, 1999). Moreover, although politeness is related to the degree of imposition (see earlier), (in)directness itself is not related to the degree of imposition, although in some cultures indirectness is used to judge politeness in invitations. For all these reasons, especially that indirectness does not increase politeness in Vietnamese invitations (Dang, 2001; Vu, 1997), the (in)directness distinction will not be discussed in VMRIs.

Other researchers have also proposed semantic and pragmatic features to distinguish inviting from other similar speech acts. Wierzbicka (1987), for example, defines inviting acts by the following semantic characteristics:

> *I assume that people can't do X if I don't say that I would want them to do it*
> *I think it would be good for you to be able to do it*
> *I say: I would want you to do X if you wanted to do it*
> *I say this because I want to cause you to do it and if you want to do it*
> *I don't know if you will do it*
> *I assume that you don't have to do it*
> *I assume that you would want to do it* (pp. 81-82)

However, this breaking down of different semantic features of invitations is limited. The first characteristic, for example, contradicts the nature of invitations because in many cases, people still extend invitations even when knowing that if they would not, the hearer can still do the activity.

Researchers often liken invitations to other speech acts in the same 'Directive' group (requests, orders, and commands) because in all these acts the speaker indicates s/he wants the hearer to do something. The difference is that in invitations, when the speaker wants the hearer to complete the action, the hearer has his/her own discretion to take the action. The hearer is entitled to options whether to accept or decline; the decision is enforced more by his/her personal consideration than by outside authorities such as the speaker as in the other three acts. Additionally, in requests, orders, and commands, the speaker is likely to benefit if the hearer completes the actions as the speaker expects; meanwhile, in inviting, at least the hearer can benefit since the speaker believes or assumes that it would be good for the hearer to complete the action. Therefore, invitations are categorised into 'Hearer-Beneficial-Acts' while requests, orders, and commands are 'Hearer-Cost-Acts' (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

As Hearer-Beneficial-Acts, invitations are viewed as most similar to offers. In both acts, the speaker wants the hearer to do something and assumes that the hearer also wants to do it; the hearer can decline or accept the invitation or the offer based on his/her own preference. For those features, Leech (1983) calls invitations and offers as 'convivial directives'. The difference between these two acts is that, in invitations, the invitee normally declines by saying the reason for not accepting it as in this example:

> A: Are you doing anything later?
>
> B: Oh, yeah! Sorry! Busy, busy, busy!
>
> A: Oh, okay (Yule, 1996, p. 68)

To decline an offer, however, the hearer could simply say s/he does not want to. For example, "No, thanks" can be used as a refusal to such an offer like "Have some more cake!" (Yule, 1996, p. 53).

I agree with most of these distinctions between invitations and other acts in general. However, invitations in reality are more complex. Many invitations could be considered 'Hearer-Cost-Acts', or at least to have an element of cost to the hearer, like polite requests. Invitees may not always see the invitations as beneficial to them. The speaker in the poem '*Vers de Société*' by Phillip Larkin (1971), for example, expresses his reaction to unwanted invitations. He considers this fashion of socialising meaningless and wasteful, at least in terms of time, particularly in the lines:

> *"Just think of all the spare time that has flown*
> *Straight into nothingness by being filled*
> *With forks and faces ..."*

Moreover, using the need to explain a refusal as a criterion to distinguish invitations from offers does not always work. The need to explain a refusal may be determined more by other factors, such as the context, the relationship between speakers, and the content. Refusals to things that people consider minor such as offering cake may need no explanation. However, the hearer may feel a social obligation to justify turning down weightier offers, for instance, 'You must be busy. Why don't I come round and clean your house?' rather than just 'No thanks'.

Invitations have, however, been classified differently by Edmondson and House (1981). According to Edmondson and House, invitations, which they term as 'invites', are not as simple as any other acts to fit neatly into the schema for illocutionary categories developed by them[62]. They place invitations in a particular category although they claim that invitations can be placed in the same category as offers, a type of willings. However, these scholars note that the characterisation is not the whole truth since invitations are also similar to requests; invitations combine elements of both requests and offers. Invitations are initiating and belong to the situations in which cost and benefits to the speaker are linked with benefits to the hearer.

Edmondson and House (1981) restrict invitations to 'Invite-then' category for the character of the future event and refuse to categorise invitations into 'Invite-now' due to the immediate future relative to the time the invitation is made. The fulfilment of invitations in 'Invite-now' category would be immediate and, thus, they should be a suggestion, a request, or an offer. Therefore, these scholars see this 'Invite-now' example "Let me get you a drink" (p. 132) as an offer, not an invitation, and this 'Invite-then' example "Can you come round for a drink" (p. 132) as an invite. However, they do not always have a clear-cut distinction between offers, invites, and requests. They admit that they find it "cheeky" to view "John can I come to your party next weekend?" (p. 132) as a request only, since they say it can also well be an initiating invitation among familiars because of its initiation from the speaker with the assumption that his/her presence is a social benefit for the hearer.

Edmondson and House's analysis of invitations has shown that invitations are more complex than they seem, with which I totally agree. Their dilemma in fitting invitations into a certain category of illocutions, unlike other acts, and their contradiction in refusing to categorise invitations into 'Invite-now', but acknowledging that a request, which is a type of 'Invite-now', can be acceptably initiated as an invitation are further evidence for the complexity of invitations. If a request can be viewed as an invitation among familiars, invitations can hence be 'Invite-now', like requests. Evidence from my analysis also illustrates that offers can also be invitations, particularly in Vietnamese context. My analysis of mealtime invitations in the following chapters, therefore, challenges their exclusion of invitations from 'Invite-now' category. However, I agree

---

[62] This might also be the reason why inviting was not included in any categories of illocutionary act classification by the founding father of Speech Act Theory, Austin (1962)

with Edmondson and House in viewing invitations with special treatment for their 'particular significance in social life' and 'particular forms of behaviour'. I also see their contribution in pointing out that a request can also be viewed as an invitation in certain situations (e.g., among familiars). This means that the views about functions (illocutions) of utterances can expand when other interactional elements such as context and interlocutors are also taken into account besides linguistic forms.

Speech Act Theory paves the way to research into linguistic functions rather than linguistic forms because it helps to view language as actions, and to look at language through its actual use, rather than its forms. However, SAT has been criticised for customarily orienting to the speaker only, relating speech acts to single sentences (Van Dijk, 1981), and consequently, being primarily confined to single speech acts (Searle, 1992), but failing to account for the fact that the nature of conversation depends on interaction between both speaker and hearer. To overcome this limitation, a number of researchers have introduced notions of 'speech act set', 'multiple speech acts', and 'communicative acts' or suggested examining acts as discourses.

'Speech act set' was proposed by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) in their study on apologies. Apologies were argued to be a speech act set since they consisted of five main realization patterns, including two general strategies. These were the explicit expression of an apology with formulaic, routinised expression containing some explicit performative verbs (e.g. "I'm sorry," "Excuse me,") and the expression of responsibility. There were also three situation-specific strategies: an explanation, an offer of repair and a promise of non-recurrence; and some additional strategies, such as an external and an internal modification as intensification for an apology. This proposal has been limitedly applied to electronically written disinvitations, the acts of rescinding an invitation or an anticipated invitation containing components such as greeting, solidarity move, problem statement, explanation, disinvitation, offer of future redress, appeal for understanding, apology, thanking, and closing (Bardovi-Harlig, 2014).

'Multiple speech acts' was proposed in studies of Chinese invitations (e.g., Mao, 1992; Tseng, 1996, 1999/2003). Researchers of Chinese invitations criticised the application of SAT in analysing inviting as a single speech act for leading to "an incomplete and idealised account of inviting" (Mao, 1992, p. 81). They also argued that definitions of inviting proposed by researchers based on the English language could not account for

features of inviting in the Chinese context. Therefore, they suggested treating inviting as a particular type of speech, 'multiple speech acts' and 'invitational discourse'. According to Mao (1992), Chinese invitations should be multiple speech acts because they were characterised with a tripartite structure including three constituents with invite/refuse-invite/refuse-invite/accept schema which enact together to make a tripartite invitational discourse. However, Mao did not define clearly what multiple speech acts meant. Later, Tseng (1999) clarified that in the tripartite structure, "the multiple speech acts performed in the whole invitational conversation typically occur in the following order: inviting, refusing, inviting, refusing, and finally inviting followed by accepting, thereby fitting the tripartite invitation into the invite/refuse-invite/refuse-invite/accept schema" (p. 19). She also pointed out that Chinese invitations involve not only tripartite structures but also bipartite interactive structures.

However, it could be inferred that Chinese invitations were investigated from the perspective of single speech acts, the approach criticised by researchers of Chinese invitations themselves. Through Tseng's clarification, what makes inviting in Chinese contexts multiple speech acts is that the inviting act is repeated several times (two or three) after the refusing acts and finally completed with the invitee's acceptance. In this way, inviting is treated individually and similarly to other single acts of refusing and accepting; multiple speech acts in Chinese invitations mean a combination of repeated single speech acts of inviting with refusing and accepting. Inviting was, therefore, analysed as single speech acts. Despite these limitations in studies of Chinese invitations, their (also Edmondson and House's, see earlier) suggestions of treating inviting as a particular type of speech contribute to my investigation of Vietnamese mealtime invitations in this study.

'Communicative acts' is an aspect of Hymes's theory of communicative competence (1972), which foregrounded his foundational work in the ethnography of communication (1974) or sociolinguistics. 'Communicative acts' can be comprehensively understood in relation with 'speech community', 'speech event' and 'speech situation'. According to Hymes (1972, 1974), 'speech community' is a group of people that often use common signs or people who share "rules" for when and how to speak. Occurring within a speech community, speech situations are when people talk or do not talk; speech events can be restricted to activities that are directly governed by rules or norms for the use of speech. Communicative acts are smaller units of speech to

describe what action is to be achieved when particular words are used in the interaction. A party, for example, is a speech situation; a conversation at the party is a speech event; a group of people sharing that conversation is a speech community; and examples within that speech event such as requesting to pass the salt, or complimenting on someone's new shirt are communicative acts. Communicative acts are relatively similar to speech acts, but they focus more on the interactional aspects and the roles of both speaker and hearer (Archer et al., 2012). This term was not applied exactly in studies of invitations, but its ideas, together with ideas of communicative competence, have been greatly influential.

Amongst these studies of invitations are Wolfson's (1981, 1983, 1989) series which are the earliest empirical studies of authentic English invitations and types of invitations. Her approach was later followed by studies of invitations in both English (e.g., Isaacs & Clark, 1990) and other languages (e.g., Eslami, 2005; Rakowicz, 2009).

Wolfson proposed a dichotomy between '*unambiguous invitations*' and '*ambiguous invitations*'. Unambiguous invitations, according to Wolfson, have two properties: 1) reference to time and/or mention of place or activity, and 2) a request for response, which is signalled by a "kernel" that makes an unambiguous or completed invitation a direct one with its actual meaning the same as its apparent meaning as in this example:

"….do you want (REQUEST FOR A RESPONSE) to go to Atlantic City (ACTIVITY/ PLACE) on Thursday (TIME)?" (Wolfson, 1983, p. 117)

Unambiguous invitations have been defined similarly but termed differently in other research, such as 'sincere or completed invitations' (Searle, 1975), 'genuine invitations' (Isaacs & Clark, 1990), 'substantive invitations' (Chen et al., 1995), and 'definite invitations' (Dang, 2001; Nguyen, 2004).

'Ambiguous invitations' were first investigated in English (Wolfson, 1981, 1983, 1989) and were further studied in comparison with Polish (Rakowicz, 2009). They were also mentioned in other studies in other names such as 'indefinite invitations' (T. M. D. Dang, 2001; Nguyen, 2004); and 'pseudo-invitations' (T. H. Dang, 1992). According to these scholars, ambiguous invitations, rather than the unambiguous ones, make up the majority of invitations. An ambiguous invitation, for example "*Let's have lunch together when things settle down*", has the following overall common features: (1) time

is always left indefinite; (2) a response is not required; (3) it can be realised with formulaic expressions of indefinite time such as "*sometime', "anytime"* or *"soon*"; a modal auxiliary like '*must'*, '*should';* verb '*have to*"; adverb '*definitely'*; or indefinite adverbial clauses beginning with '*when'*. However, English ambiguous invitations are treated more as a politeness formula or a way of expressing interest in continuing the relationship (Wolfson, 1989); Polish ambiguous invitations are claimed to be sincere since their primary function is to indicate a good intention for relationship development (Rakowicz, 2009).

Following the similar approach of investigating invitations by their types and focusing on interactional aspects and the roles of both speaker and hearer, Isaacs and Clark (1990) proposed a slightly different type, 'ostensible invitations', as opposed to genuine invitations. According to these scholars, English ostensible invitations, for example, "*Let's do lunch sometime*" (p. 493) are not intended to be taken seriously. They possess five defining properties: (1) pretence of sincerity to make a sincere invitation; (2) mutual recognition of the pretence; (3) collusion on the pretence; (4) ambivalence about its acceptance of sincerity; and (5) off-record purpose (i.e., the inviter's main purpose is tacit). Of all five properties, mutual recognition of pretence is the key factor in making the distinction between genuine and ostensible invitations.

Isaacs and Clark's (1990) analysis of English ostensible invitations has been applied to those in other languages, such as Chinese (Zhao & Li, 2004), Farsi or Persian (Eslami, 2005; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2005). Ostensible invitations in these languages share relatively similar contexts and functions with those in English, such as to start conversations, to end phone conversations (pre-closing/closing), to end face-to-face planned or unplanned conversations (closing), to change topics, to cancel half-arranged invitations, to invite unexpected visitors out of courtesy, and/or to show politeness to someone passing by the house. Cross-cultural differences have also been pointed out. For example, features of ostensible invitations in English were insufficient to distinguish between ostensible and genuine invitations in these non-English cultures. Unlike English speakers, these non-English speakers used ostensible invitations much more frequently and as a manifestation of ritual politeness to enhance their face as well as that of the hearers. Ostensible invitations were consequently characterised as face-enhancing acts in these non-English cultures.

In short, previous investigations of spoken invitations in English and other languages are relatively intensive and they will be critically selected to base for my arguments of Vietnamese mealtime invitations in Part B. However, a review of them has shown that individual types of oral invitations in their communicative events such as mealtimes, weddings, meetings, or informal gatherings are lack of specialists' attention.

Invitations encompass many communicative types, such as wedding invitations, mealtime invitations, or meeting invitations. Carrying specific communicative functions, each type has its particular discourses, contexts of use, means of expressions, and various other mediating factors. Therefore, the review above (also the review of invitations in Vietnamese in the section below) can illustrate that investigating mealtime invitations is a gap in the literature that needs filling. The focus on wedding invitations (yet in their written genre only) in many high-context cultures in recent studies (Nahar, 2006; Faramarzi, Elekaei & Tabrizi, 2015; Momani & Al-Refaei, 2010; Mirzaei & Eslami, 2013) can be an indication of a future trend in research into mealtime invitations and other types of invitations. Furthermore, due to the lack of studies on mealtime invitations, this study on mealtime invitations may further an understanding of invitations in general and may be a base for future research into mealtime invitations in other languages and cultures.

4.2. Vietnamese invitations

Invite is literally translated as *'mời'* in Vietnamese. The Vietnamese verb *'mời'* (invite)[63] is one among the most common verbs in the Vietnamese language (Đ. H. Nguyễn, 1979) and inviting acts are popular in Vietnamese culture of hospitality and solidarity (see Chapter 3). However, this verb and the acts of inviting in Vietnamese have not been explored in as much depth and breath as invitations in English and other languages. This might be because this verb and the acts of inviting in Vietnamese present a great deal of complexity in their real use, especially in regards to meal contexts, on which this study focuses. Most studies of Vietnamese inviting acts rarely distinguish between the verb and the acts, which are both expressed in the same form of *'mời'* [64] ; whereas, the inviting acts can be performed and described by a number of

---

[63] 'mời' has another less common meaning 'to eat' with a politeness connotation (see Chapter 5)
[64] Vietnamese verbs have no inflections denoting gender, person, number, tense, mood, or voice like English verbs (Nguyễn, 1979), so the same form of Vietnamese *'mời* can be equivalent to all English forms of *invite, invited, inviting, invitational, invitation, invitations,* or *invites*

variants in reality[65]. Furthermore, studies of Vietnamese inviting acts included examples of invitations at mealtimes but tended to decontextualise when interpreting them.

'*Mời*' (invite) was defined in an authoritative Vietnamese dictionary as 'to politely and respectfully request or show the desire or want for other people to do something'[66] (Hoàng, 1994, p. 624). Examples such as 'to invite you to come and visit' or 'to invite you to have a seat' were given to illustrate this definition. Another example, "*Mời cơm thân mật (mời ăn cơm)*" (cordial and amicable invitations at meals, i.e., to invite someone to eat rice/to have meal) was also provided. This example referred to the invitations extended frequently in and around Vietnamese meals that are known as Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations (VMRIs), the focus of this study. Under this definition and with illustrated examples, '*Mời*' (invite) was presented here as both an act of inviting and a verb.

The semantics of the verbs '*mời*' and '*rủ*', were investigated in Nguyễn (1979). The verb '*mời*' was classified into causative verbs; equivalent to the English verbs 'invite', 'make', 'permit', 'urge', or 'forbid'. It had a synonym of '*rủ*', which was in the same group and defined similarly as "to invite [informally, for a Dutch treat]" (p. XXX). These verbs were also called 'telescoping' verbs since, according to Nguyễn (1979), they followed the construction of V1 N V2 with N (noun) working at the same time as the object of the main verb V1 and as the subject of the second verb V2. Nguyễn (1979, p. XXVII) also pointed out that Vietnamese '*mời*' is different from English '*invite*' in that the structure, *X mời Y ăn cơm* [X invited Y to have dinner] can be shortened to either:

     X mời Y [X invited Y]

   or: *X mời ăn cơm* [X invited (someone) to have dinner]

Seeing the verbs '*mời*' and '*rủ*' sharing the same function as invitations and finding formal differences in the grammatical structures between '*mời*' and its English equivalent '*invite*' are great contributions in Nguyễn (1979), which could rarely be comprehensively achieved in later studies of these verbs and Vietnamese invitations. Although the given examples are food/meal-related, Nguyễn (1979), however, did not point out that the shortened structures with '*mời*' are common only in meal-time contexts, and rarely found in other contexts. He did not either refer to the essential

---

[65] see Sections 4.2, 4.3, and Chapter 5
[66] "Tỏ ý mong muốn, yêu cầu người khác làm việc gì một cách lịch sự, trân trọng"

difference between '*mời*' and '*rủ*' that the latter is not a performative verb, and therefore, it cannot substitute for '*mời*' in the above invitations although they are synonyms in reporting acts of inviting.

Đào's works (2011a, 2011b) are amongst few pragmatic studies focusing on Vietnamese inviting acts. Her analysis was theoretically framed by SAT and based on the examples collected from literature (novels and short stories), but not natural data.

According to Đào (2011a, p. 16), '*mời*' (inviting) and '*rủ*' (asking/requesting others to do something together[67]) are two different acts although they are very close to each other. Framed by Searle's illocutionary act classification, '*mời*' was grouped by Đào (2011b) into demand acts, which is a subset of directives. '*Mời*' (inviting) was characterised by both forces of 'demand' (tính cầu) and 'request' (tính khiến), but the 'demand' force was stronger than the 'request' force. In Đào's table of 18 demand acts[68], ranked on the basis of the force of the illocutionary act (declining force of demand and increasing force of request), '*mời*' ranked 11th with an 'average' force of demand. It was ranked below '*rủ*' (asking), which was ranked 10th with a 'low' force of demand. This means that the force of request in '*mời*' was higher than in '*rủ*'. They were, therefore, two different acts in Đào's categories, as opposed to Nguyễn's (1979) categorising them both as invitations (see earlier).

Đào (2011a) also distinguished the act of '*mời*' from the act of '*rủ*' in terms of their means of expression. She offered two types for the acts of inviting. Explicit expression, or K1 expression (her term), contained the verb '*mời*'; implicit expression, 'K2 expression', did not contain this verb. In her opinion, '*mời*' was a performative demand verb *(vị từ ngôn hành cầu khiến)*. It was a 'common and standard verb' and could be substituted with the 20th-Century synonym '*rước*' (invite solemnly), but not with '*mời mọc*' since this synonym was not a performative demand verb. According to Đào, implicit expression contained a modal predicate with demand meaning *(vị từ tình thái cầu khiến)* '*hãy*' (please) and/or four demand-meaning particles '*đi*', '*đã*', '*nào*', '*nhé*'.

---

[67] She cited this definition of the verb '*rủ*' in a Vietnamese Dictionary (Hoàng, 1992, p. 836)

[68] She listed 18 Vietnamese verbs *ra lệnh* (Command), *cấm* (prohibition), *ngăn* (forbid), *giục* (urge), *cho/cho phép* (allowance), *yêu cầu* (requirement), *đề nghị* (request), *dặn* (tell), *khuyên* (advice), *rủ* (invitation), *mời* (invitation), *nhờ* (ask), *chúc* (wish), *xin/xin phép* (ask for permission), *cầu* (solicitation), *nài* (insist), *van* (plea), *lạy* (pray), but she provided only 14 English equivalents as Command, prohibition, forbid, urge, allowance, requirement, request, advice, invitation, ask, wish, ask for permission, solicitation, and playfulness (Đào, 2011b, p. 66). '*Rủ*' is clearly amongst the verbs that were not provided with their equivalents by this author.

She pointed out that '*rủ*' had only the implicit expression that used a modal predicate with demand meaning '*hãy*' (please) and six demand-meaning particles '*đi*', '*xem*', '*đã*', '*thôi*', '*nào*', '*nhé*'. Thus, unlike the act of '*rủ*', the act of '*mời*' had both explicit expression and implicit expression; the act of '*mời*' did not go with two demand-meaning particles '*xem*' and '*thôi*'.

In terms of meaning, Đào (2011a) claimed that all explicit expressions, utterances with the verb '*mời/rước*' (invite), were performing the act of '*mời*' (inviting); those that were not explicit (utterances without these verbs) could be identified by the 'request'. If the utterances were clear in requesting the hearer to do the actions with the speaker, they were the act of '*rủ*'; otherwise, they were the act of '*mời*' (inviting).

I partly agree with Đào's distinction between '*mời*' and '*rủ*' as two different acts only when they refer to actions that are not related to eating or drinking. However, when eating/drinking is the action, especially in the implicit expressions at meal context, the distinction may be blurry and even confusing. For example, she cited "*Ăn cho vui, cô Nga*" (Please eat together for rejoicing, aunt Nga) as an act of '*mời*' (p. 15). However, based on her distinction in terms of meaning, this utterance is also an act of '*rủ*', because by extending this utterance, the extender clearly requests the hearer to do something with (eating together).

Đào considers that '*mời*' and '*rủ*' have different functions, but my findings do not support this conclusion in the setting of meals. Take this example, "*Thôi, vào ăn cơm đi anh*" (Honey, please come in to have meal!), which is commonly extended by a participant to get her husband to join their everyday meals. In Đào's (2011a) distinction, it will be categorised as an act of '*rủ*' rather than '*mời*', because it contains the demand-meaning particle '*thôi*'. However, it is the stakeholder of this utterance who reported this act, in her words, both formally as '*mời*' and informally as '*rủ*', and even as '*kêu*[69]'(calling/asking/telling).

Therefore, in the meal context, I suggest that '*mời*' and '*rủ*' are both acts of extending mealtime invitations. This suggestion is consistent with Nguyễn's (1979) proposing that '*rủ*' is an informal synonym of '*mời*'. Indeed, relating to food and meals, there are no clear boundaries between them. They both share inviting functions, which differ from

---

[69] A Southern dialect for '*gọi*'

each other just in terms of formality. The formality of contextual situations that often depends on interlocutor relationship or social distance and personal perceptions towards that relationship can mediate the choice of which verbs to describe the utterances, yet the utterances are invitations (further discussed in Section 4.5.3 below).

A number of comparative or contrastive linguistic works (e.g., T. H. Dang, 1992; T. M. D. Dang, 2001; Luru, 2007; T. K. Q. Nguyen, 2004; V. T. Nguyễn, 2012) examined cross-cultural similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese invitations. Framed by SAT, these studies all viewed invitations in the two languages as speech acts despite their discrepancies in being defined as direct or indirect invitations. They proposed that invitations in the two languages contained either Pre-invite+Invite (head act) or no Pre-invite (termed 'Lead' by Wolfson, 1981), but in Vietnamese, the head act (Invite) could be repeated. Regarding the structures, invitations in both languages were found to be performed by expressions with and without performative verb (invite/mời), but the structures in Vietnamese had more variety. However, the types of variation were not yet clearly explained in these studies.

Differences between English and Vietnamese invitations were found mainly in the use of politeness strategies, whose analyses were based on the universal concepts developed by English politeness theorists such as Brown and Levison (1987), Lakoff (1973), and Leech (1983). Some studies also found differences in that Vietnamese invitations were more influenced by socio-cultural variables such as status/power, age, and gender on language use. In this way, these studies have oriented to societal aspects and their influences on the language. However, interactional functions of the language use in relation with these societal aspects have not been focused on.

It can also be seen that studies of Vietnamese invitations have commonly used a comparative approach to show their similarities and differences in relation to English invitations in some speech situations. However, these cross-cultural studies tended to view Vietnamese invitations through the lens of viewing English invitations. In this way, they did not explore invitations as cultural acts despite their attempts to compare the language of inviting acts in the two cultures. They exposed their limitations in the lack of focuses also on socio-cultural conventions, which co-construct meanings of invitations.

Studies of Vietnamese invitations included examples of mealtime invitations in their discussions; however, they interpreted them using the same interpretative framework as for all Vietnamese (and English) invitations. In other words, these more language-oriented studies tended to describe mealtime invitations like any other types of invitations, disregarding their contextual dependence and socio-cultural attribution. They, therefore, lack what Nahar (2006) regards as "the necessary sensitivity to the versatility of genre description" (p. 692). Furthermore, none of these cross-cultural studies gathered data in their natural settings, but from non-natural sources such as questionnaires, discourse completion tasks, or role-plays, which tended to provide 'obvious language' types of data. Meanwhile, regarding meal contexts, Vietnamese invitations drawn from 'real-world' and daily-use offer a wide range of data, which go far beyond their 'obvious' linguistic convention. Only exemplary utterances are not enough to thoroughly interpret mealtime invitations and mealtime invitations are not fully identified in isolation from their meal contexts. Mealtime invitations need to be situated in their particular discursive contexts for comprehensive explanations. Therefore, when these studies treated examples of mealtime invitations as all other invitations (and as speech acts), discrepancies in their interpretations happened (discussed further in Section 4.5.2 below).

In short, the limitations in previous studies of invitations in terms of interpretative frameworks require a more comprehensive interpretative framework for mealtime invitations. Mealtime invitations are instances of what Agar (1996) defines as 'languaculture', which integrates both linguistic and cultural elements. The interpretations of their language, hence, cannot be separated from the socio-cultural norms that are always in the background that native speakers make sense of them when issuing and receiving them. This means that the more language-oriented interpretative framework or the one that restricts the interpretation of mealtime invitations to linguistic acts only would not work well with mealtime invitations. In the next section, I will propose a framework for interpreting (Vietnamese) mealtime invitations.

4.3. Theoretical framework

4.3.1. An integrative interpretative framework

I employ an integrative interpretative framework with theoretical ideas from Sociolinguistics, Cultural Anthropology, and critical application of SAT to investigate oral Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations (VMRIs) as an individual communicative event.

What VMRIs are, how communities perceive VMRIs, and what they do with them will be examined to explain what is going on and at stake in everyday uses of language and how language use plays the role in the creation and affirmation of cultural identity. Therefore, this investigation will mainly employ a sociolinguistic approach. This is because sociolinguistics explores the way people use language in context to convey social meanings, to provide information about the way language works and the way people construct their social identity through their language use (Holmes, 2013). Moreover, recent studies of wedding invitations apply sociolinguistics (Faramarzi, Elekaei &Tabrizi, 2015; Momani & Al-Refaei, 2010; Mirzaei & Eslami, 2013) and anthropological perspectives (Soucy, 2014) to explore their socio-cultural and discursive values although these studies focus on either their written forms or cultural aspect only.

Additionally, as mentioned above, mealtime invitations integrate linguistic and cultural elements; their linguistic acts cannot be thoroughly comprehended separately from their cultural acts. Therefore, my investigation of VMRIs as cultural acts also apply ideas from cultural anthropology, the study of human cultures, beliefs, values, practices, and others primarily based on cultural understanding gained through first-hand experience or observation (Marcus & Fischer, 1999).

SAT is applied to my linguistic investigation of VMRIs at the level of acts although the linguistic aspect of VMRIs will be investigated primarily at the level of discourses, mainly framed by the sociolinguistic approach. Despite the limitations in describing invitations at their discursive level and their interactional and cultural aspects, SAT is still useful in investigating single speech acts linguistically. Therefore, my interpretations of Vietnamese mealtime invitations will partially and critically frame on the previous interpretations of invitations in English and other languages as well as of

Vietnamese invitations although they used SAT and analyses of English inviting acts have been critiqued for not being generalised to other languages' use of invitations (e.g, Eslami, 2005; Mao, 1992; Tseng, 1999). I expect the effective integration of sociolinguistic and anthropological ideas with SAT can provide a full linguistic account of Vietnamese mealtime invitations.

4.3.2. Vietnamese mealtime invitations as discourses

Vietnamese mealtime invitations are investigated as discourses with two common notions of discourses coming together. The first one ('little d' discourse) refers to the more linguistic-oriented meanings made in interaction with the contributions of context and interlocutors' tones of voice, facial expressions, and gestures. In this notion, VMRIs will be analysed to see what they linguistically mean and function or what interlocutors do with them (see Part B and the next chapters).

The second meaning of discourse (the 'big D' discourse) refers to Foucault's (1972) broad concept as ways of talking about the world and ways of making sense of the world (ways of seeing and understanding it) that shape meanings. The concept has been greatly developed by sociolinguists, including Gee (1999) who explains discourse with 'big D' as:

> To pull off being an 'X' doing 'Y' (e.g. a Los Angeles Latino street-gang member warning another gang member off his territory…) it is not enough to get just the words 'right', though that is crucial. It is necessary, as well, to get one's body, clothes, gestures, actions, interactions, ways with things, symbols, tools, technologies (be they guns or graphs), and values, attitudes and beliefs and emotions 'right', as well, and all at the 'right' places and times (p.7).

Language is rarely alone in making meanings. The wider context in which language is produced, including the socio-cultural conventions and historical values are always in the background of meaning construction. The wider context of VMRIs, as discussed in Chapter 3, is not only the meals in which they are made but also Vietnamese cultures of food and sharing food/meals. In particular, VMRIs are discourses displaying values of food-honour, commensality, company, hospitality, respect, gratitude, and interpersonal sentiment. Viewed from this broad concept, VMRIs can reveal how their practisers construct their individual identities and community practice.

Aligned with both notions, VMRIs as discourses imply the language in actions or language in use to do something. The 'language' (the expression forms of VMRIs themselves) could be monologues, dialogues, and multi-logues with verbal utterances in the form of sentences, phrases, or single words, and non-verbal signals. The 'something' can be the VMRI-extenders' intentions, VMRI-recipients' interpretations of those intentions and the possible consequences.

I will illustrate how this view of VMRIs as discourses manifests in real-life examples. In one example of an invitation with the obvious linguistic expression form like "*Con mời bố mẹ xơi cơm*" [Child invite parents eat rice] (Dad and Mum, please enjoy the meal!) (VideoVN#2, 10:20), the inviter (a son) extended his words to explicitly invite his parents to start and enjoy their meals. The invitation also expresses the inviter's respect and filial piety for his parents. These values can be inferred from various means, such as his respectful words, his proper manner, his acknowledgment for their presence at the meal, and others when placed in the Vietnamese socio-cultural context. These two discursive meanings cannot be separated from each other in interpretation of this invitation; they are interwoven with each other in the form of the invitation.

Take another example of an invitational discourse in a less obvious expression form, with only a single word, described in a meal diary entry (D2#4). At the meal-start, a Vietnamese man signalled to his American son-in-law, pointing at the food and uttering his endearment name, "*Ni!*" This was the addressee's endearment name only and it did not contain any additional words to express an invitation. However, the extender's intention was known to the recipient and was interpreted by the recipient straight away as an invitation, which was consequently responded to by his acceptance (saying *"Ok, Ok",* nodding head, picking up a food-piece, and eating it). This discourse, whose invitational language is amongst the shortest and apparently least 'obvious' and in which one participant might be considered to have an exotic cultural background[70], is a good example of the incorporation of both discursive meanings in operationalizing the extender's intentions, the recipient's making sense of those intentions, and the possible consequences. It can communicate more than the word expresses because of the common knowledge in the background to shape its meanings. The example also shows that in VMRI-discourses, the broader meanings can elaborate the more linguistic-

---

[70] Similar VMRIs are commonly used amongst people of the same culture background, e.g., "*Lâm này!*" *(Hey, Lâm!)* (VideoVN#14); "*Chị?*" (Sister (how about trying this)?) (VideoNZ#3)

oriented meanings and therefore, help extenders' intentions become exoteric. This once again emphasises that the interpretations of VMRI-discourses should not rely only on their linguistic forms and should integrate their two layers of meanings ('big D' and 'little d' discourses).

In summary, VMRIs are discourses, regardless of whether they are linguistically expressed in the forms of single words, phrases, sentences, or nonverbal signals. They are viewed, interpreted and analysed in their discursive context and from a discourse perspective. More importantly, in this study, I shift from the 'little d' discourse (the more linguistic-oriented discourse) in studies of invitations in the past to combine it with the 'big D' discourse (the broader social, historical and cultural discourse) (Foucault, 1972; Gee, 1999) for viewing mealtime invitations. In the next part, I will bring in more data to illustrate how the proposed interpretative framework works on VMRIs and present exploratory findings of VMRIs.

Chapter 4. Part B –Vietnamese mealtime invitation discourses

As mentioned above, no specific studies of mealtime invitations were identified during a comprehensive search of the extant literature. Vietnamese mealtime invitations (VMRIs) have not been paid adequate academic attention despite their significance in Vietnamese culture. Examples of VMRIs were used in previous studies. However, they were examined in the same way as general invitations, only through the lens designed for viewing English invitations; or they were interpreted out of their discursive context, without accounting for the language users (neither speakers nor hearers), and confined to single speech acts and misinterpreted as greetings or requests. The unique features of mealtime invitations, which could only be fully comprehended when situated in their particular contexts of use, might also consequently be lost in interpretation.

In meal contexts, Vietnamese invitations are multifaceted. The verb '*mời*' both performs inviting acts when naming the verb itself (performative) and reports the invitations. This Vietnamese verb entailing broader meanings (inviting plus offering or giving) can also be used with various structures besides numerous structures without it (Chapter 5); these invitations can be simultaneously described by other Vietnamese verbs, whose use is contingent on circumstances. In this part, the data will be presented to illustrate what VMRIs are and how they share both similarities and differences with invitations in other cultures, including English (with reference to some technical terms used in Part A). Sub-contexts or situations in which VMRIs occur throughout the meals are also presented. Moreover, VMRIs are illustrated to carry layers of discursive meanings and combine multiple functions that are situated and governed by the particular Vietnamese meal contexts. All these points will be examined below, starting from the reasons for participants' extending their VMRIs.

4.4. Reasons for extending VMRIs

Extending VMRIs is a long-standing ritual, a deeply-rooted tradition in Vietnamese cultures. No scholars or participants could say when this ritual started but most have suggested that it was from 'our ancestors' (*do tổ tiên ông bà ta để lại*)[71]. Many interviewees even associated the extending of VMRIs with 'Vietnamese national identity' and responded that, 'there are no Vietnamese who do not extend mealtime ritual invitations'. Thus, extending VMRIs cannot be what Visser (2008, p. 32) refers to as a meaningless ritual with 'an empty form' despite the fact that the practice of this ritual might have been lost or of rare use by certain individuals and families due to social and personal life upheavals (Hữu Ngọc, 2007). Indeed, it has embedded within itself numerous cultural values, which are reflected in a wide variety of reasons for its practice.

The following reasons, illustrated in Tables 4-1 and 4-2 below, have been documented in my fieldwork data, mainly from interviewees as answers to the questions "why do you (and/or others) do/say so (extending VMRIs)?" Based on their meanings, given reasons have been divided into two categories: one is more reflective of cultural context and the other is more linguistically functional, although some reasons (such as the modelling one) can be both linguistically and culturally functional and can, therefore, belong to both. The reasons in each category have also been placed into smaller groups based on their similarities. (A fuller list of reasons cited verbatim, in participants' own words can be seen in the glossary).

---

[71] I suggest that extending VMRIs originates from the rituals of offering rice cakes in the semi-mythological era of the Hùng Kings four millennia ago and that it, like these rituals, can represent Vietnamese culture (Section 3.1.2.2 Chapter 3)

Table 4-1 Participants' reasons for extending their VMRIs (more culturally reflective reasons)

1.	Cultural tradition, social custom, national identity, social order and convention, fear of losing face
2.	Reciprocity, hospitality, and generosity
3.	Family regulation and hierarchy, filial duty, responsibility
4.	Gratitude to ancestors, caregivers, food providers, and the food itself
5.	Respect for others, politeness, Face-Saving-Acts (one's and others' face)
6.	Spiritual benefits: happiness (for oneself and others), sense of inclusion, feelings of being like others, being cultured, being more mature like adults
7.	Other benefits: better meal atmosphere, better appetiser
8.	Personal habit, routine, self-discipline
9.	Means to express love, concern, emotional sentiment, and others (cuddling, wishing infants, small children to grow fast)

Table 4-2 Participants' reasons for extending their VMRIs (more linguistically functional reasons)

1.	Inviting, telling, or asking others to join together for meals, to start their meals, to continue their meals, to partake in some food/drink from the meals, to eat more
2.	Responding to others' invitations (thanking, accepting, or refusing others' invitations) and greeting or departing on-going diners
3.	Giving permissions to start or finish meals
4.	Requesting permissions to eat, to finish meals
5.	Letting others know one's meal-starts and/or meal-ends
6.	Declaring reasons for meals
7.	Modelling for others

Apart from the reasons, which were expressed literally and explicitly in participants' own words, documented above, there are underlying reasons. The participants could not name these reasons, but they gave explanations instead. For example, a nine-year-old interviewee said 'I extend VMRIs to be aware of who is dining with me' (IVN10, 13:50). This reason can be deciphered as 'acknowledging other diners' presence and company' in the secular language use of ordinary people. It can also be interpreted as a form of 'practising Mindful Eating techniques' [72], in Buddhism terms, which were

---

[72] See Chapter 3

similarly reported by one Vietnam-based middle-aged participant, who is a Buddhist pagoda-goer, and two Auckland-based Buddhist monk and nun.

There can be other reasons for extending VMRIs that have not been explicitly reported on in my limited fieldwork. However, the long list of clear, thorough, and consistent reasons documented above already exceed my expectations prior to the fieldwork. This implies that to native speakers, extending VMRIs is not simply a habit or daily routine. It can also be seen that VMRIs are extended not only for a 'socialising' purpose, which is in common with that of issuing general invitations, but also for concerns of morals, ethics, health, happiness, and for educational purposes. The reasons also reveal that mealtime invitations are issued not only because of the illocutionary forces (to invite to get people to do something) but they are also extended under the influence of the cultural norms on interlocutors' relationship. My distinction between the more culturally reflective reasons and the more linguistically functional ones is for the clarity purpose in this study; indeed, these reasons are mingled in participants' answers. This implies that in native speakers' perceptions, linguistic and cultural elements in their reasons for extending VMRIs are interwoven. Therefore, a thorough interpretative framework for these mealtime invitations must be the one that can uncover both their linguistic and socio-cultural aspects. It must be able to decode the illocutionary forces of the invitations and the contextual messages conveying the information about the interactants' relationship and simultaneously conform to the native speakers' interpretative framework that often foregrounds their cultural norms (Goddard, 1997). Therefore, viewing VMRIs as discourses aligned both 'little d' and 'big D' notions[73] and analysing them using the interpretative framework, which integrates ideas from sociolinguistics, cultural anthropology, and a critical application of SAT, has been again illustrated as a desirable model.

---

[73] See Part A

4.5. Contexts and sub-contexts

4.5.1. Contexts and sub-contexts

As expressed by the extenders of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations, food and meals trigger the extending of these invitations. In other words, VMRIs occur on the pretext of food/drink or meals. Meals and food are, therefore, both pretexts and contexts for VMRIs. In Chapter 3, food and meals were discussed in relation to Vietnamese culture, society, and history to provide a broad socio-cultural context of VMRIs. Here, meals are their situated context. Within meals, there are numerous situations or situated contexts triggering situational VMRIs, called sub-contexts (contexts within contexts) in this study. Table 4-3 on the next page illustrates 20 sub-contexts identified from my fieldwork data (collected in Vietnam and New Zealand between 2011 and 2013).

These sub-contexts have also been found in research, fiction, nonfiction, documentaries, films, and personal communications. Illustrations of their uses with examples of verbal VMRIs and images are presented below (see the video p. 11 for visual illustrations of some of these sub-contexts). Only one or two sources will be cited whether the sub-contexts have also been noticed in other sources.

Sub-context#1 (Towards late attendees): At mealtime, a child went upstairs to ask her father, who had not turned up inside the meal areas, to attend the lunch, "*Bố ơi, con mời bố dậy ăn cơm*" (Daddy, I invite you to come down for lunch) (D2#7).

Sub-context#2 (In response to others' invitations): In response to the child's invitation (exemplified above), the father said, "*Bố không ăn đâu. Cứ ăn đi!*" (I do not eat. Go ahead with the meal) (D2#7).

Sub-context#3 (Welcoming invited guests before the main meals): In ceremonial feasts or formal meals at occasional events such as wedding parties, before the main meals, 'open-up invitations' in the form of invitations to come in, to have a seat, to have small talks, to drink/eat something light (tea, water, sweets, seeds) are often extended to welcome guests (D1#7, IVN9).

Table 4-3 Sub-contexts of VMRIs

	Sub-contexts
BEFORE MEAL	Sub-context#1. Towards late attendees
	Sub-context#2. In response to others' invitations
	Sub-context#3. Welcoming invited guests before the main meals
	Sub-context#4. To invite honoured spirits, such as Buddha, divinities, or ancestors or towards newly deceased persons to come to enjoy the offerings.
	Sub-context#5. Extended in the excuses by the one who would be late or who unexpectedly cannot attend the meal
	Sub-context#6. Towards the one who is offered food/drink, or eating utensils like spoons, chopsticks, etc. by the givers and the attendees nearby
	Sub-context#7. For others to start their meals
MEAL START	Sub-context#8. At one's own meal-starts (to present dining partners and to visible non-dining partners)
	Sub-context#9. At one's own meal-starts (to the non-attendants or those who are not physically present at the meal including the deceased loved ones)
	Sub-context#10. At one's own meal-starts (a self-invitation to the extender him/herself)
	Sub-context#11. In response to others' VMRIs
DURING MEAL	Sub-context#12. Among diners and to nearby non-dining partners
	Sub-context#13. Towards visiting guests or late-comers
	Sub-context#14. In response to the hosts' invitations
	Sub-context#15. A self-invitation from the guests when popping in
	Sub-context#16. As a goodbye from the non-diner when leaving the meal scene
MEAL END	Sub-context#17. At one's own meal-ends, towards on-going diners
	Sub-context#18. At others' meal-ends, towards the one who has just finished eating
	Sub-context#19. In response to others' meal-end invitations
	Sub-context#20. Closing mealtime invitations

Sub-context#4 (To invite spirits, ancestors, or newly deceased persons): Invitations are in the forms of the solemn and formal prayers, vows or pledges that are performed with Namaste praying rites (hands joined at chest and head bowed in deference, illustrated in Figure 4-1 below) in front of the ancestral altars, e.g., *"Hôm nay là ngày [….], tín chủ chúng con thành tâm sửa biện [….] dâng lên trước án, cúng dâng [….] đốt nén tâm hương dốc lòng bái thỉnh"* (Today, on the occasion of […], we, the whole-hearted followers, have prepared [offerings] on the altar and lit the incense-sticks to solemnly and sincerely invite you […] to enjoy them) (Thích, 2010, p. 10)[74].

Figure 4-1 Extending VMRIs towards ancestors in an annual death anniversary meal
(Photo by author)

These invitations often take place on special occasions such as in annual death anniversary meals. They are not extended by all diners but by certain well-respected people like the lineage head, the eldest capable members, or invited professional prayers (i.e., monks, nuns).

---

[74] My videos recorded instances of invitations to spirits and ancestors (sub-context#4), but they are not audible. VideoVN#11 recorded a man standing in front of the ancestral altar extending his invitations to the spirits and his ancestors before the meal, but it did not record his verbal invitations because his invitations were not clearly uttered. This is because the extenders in this situation do not often say the words as loud as when they extend the invitations to the living; many people even say them in silence because they believe that the spirits and their ancestors can hear their silent invitations anyway. These invitations are often learned by heart or cited in the memory of or read from those written in a book of prayers/oration. This is the reason why I used the photo extracted from the video together with the specific example of invitations from the renowned book of prayers/oration to illustrate the documentation of this sub-context as the man in the photo acknowledged that his prayer was a recitation of a learned prayer. These invitations were not used inthe quantitative data analysis as the focus of my study is the VRMIs used in everyday meals shared by family and friends.

Sub-context#5: Invitations are extended by the one who would be late or who unexpectedly cannot attend the meals. For instance, at lunch time, a husband, who could not go home to join his wife for lunch as usual, phoned her and said, "*Anh ăn bên anh Tám. Em cứ ăn đi*" (I'll have lunch at Tam's place. Please go ahead with your meal) (D4#1).

Sub-context#6 (Towards the one who is offered food/drink, or eating utensils like spoons, chopsticks, etc. by the givers and the attendees nearby): In a meal described in a participant's diary entry, a hostess in her thirties, as a rice-server, delivered a bowl of rice to her invited guest while verbally inviting: "*Chị xơi cơm ạ*" (Please have rice, sister!) (D3#5). This common sub-context is also reflected in a family meal scene in the film '*Hai phía chân trời*' (Trần, H. V., Trần, Q. T., & Vũ, 2012). A young woman, as a person sitting next to the rice-cooker with the responsibility of serving rice for diners, gave her mother in-law a bowl of rice, accompanied with a verbal invitation: "*Con mời mẹ*" (I invite mother). In seeing that, her husband also said, "*Con mời mẹ*" (I invite mother) to that old woman, his mother.

Sub-context#7 (For others to start their meals): "*Thôi, cơm đi!*" (Well now, eat!) (VideoVN#5, 00:11) was extended by the head of a family to his son, the son's girlfriend and his niece who were sitting at a nearby dining table waiting for a late attendee.

Sub-context#8 (Extended at one's own meal-starts towards present dining partners and visible non-dining partners even in virtual sharing via video-calls): "*Con mời bố mẹ ạ*" (I invite parents, please!) (VideoVN#2, 01:00) was regularly extended by an eight-year-old boy to his parents at the start of his meals with them. Even when people start having their meal during a video-call chats with others, they also often extend meal-start invitations to these people (FNNZ#5).

Sub-context#9 (Extended at one's own meal-starts towards non-attendants or those who are not physically present at the meal including the deceased loved ones)**:** An eight-year-old boy, as the youngest diner at his daily family meals, often extended invitations not only to all present diners including himself but also to his deceased father, whose photo was placed in his family's ancestral altar in the same room where they had meals (FNVN#1). Extending meal-start VMRIs to the deceased in daily meals,

which appears uncommon in the wider population at the present time, was reported, however, as being common in the past (Tân Việt, 1997, p. 159).

Sub-context#10 (A self-invitation extended towards extender him/herself at one's own meal-starts): Just before starting the meal, a two-year-old boy invited his parents, then invited himself, too, using the term that people used to reference him 'em Bin' (younger sibling Bin): "*Con mời bố Hiếu, con mời mẹ, mời em Bin...ăn cá!*" (I would like to invite Dad Hiếu, Mum and myself, 'em Bin', to eat … fish!) (D12#3).

Sub-context#11 (In response to others' VMRIs): "*Con mời bố ăn cơm*" (I invite Dad to enjoy your meal) (IVN10, 02:34) is a response by an eight-year-old boy to his father's meal-start invitation to all present diners.

Sub-context#12 (Extended among diners and towards nearby non-attendants): A granddaughter picked up some food and placed it in her grandmother's rice bowl and said, "*Bà ăn đi cho béo!*" (Grandmother, please eat this to be healthier!) (VideoVN#14). A hostess extended invitations to her dining guest, without offering food, "*Chị cứ ăn tự nhiên đi nhé!*" (Please make yourself at home!) (D3#5).

Sub-context#13 (Extended towards visitors or late-comers): A hostess extended invitations to her daughter's friends who visited her house while she was having lunch, "*Các cháu vào ăn cơm!*" (Come in to join our meal, children!) (IVN1, 18:40p1); or a diner already eating invited a visitor "*Vào ăn cơm, em!*" (Please join for the meal, bro!) (VideoVN#8).

Sub-context#14 (In response to the hosts' invitations): In response to the hosts' invitations, a guest said, "*Em mời anh chị xơi cơm đi, em vừa ăn rồi*" (I invite you to continue your meal. I have already eaten!) (IVN1, 18:50p1)

Sub-context#15 (A self-invitation from the guests when dropping in): A self-invitation from the guests when popping in "*Cho cô xin miếng nào!*" (Give me a piece of food, please!) (IVN2, 09:37)

Sub-context#16 (As a goodbye from the non-diner when leaving the meal scene): A girl came to offer her neighbours some food while they were having meal. At her departure, she said, "*Thôi mời gia đình ăn cơm tiếp đi, cháu xin phép về ạ!*" (Well now, I invite you to continue your meal. Please permit me to leave now) (D5#2)

Sub-context#17 (Extended at one's own meal-ends towards diners who have not yet finished their meal): After finishing his meal while other diners were still in progress, a young male said, "*Cháu xin phép cả nhà. Mời cả nhà ăn cơm tiếp. Cháu ăn xong rồi ạ!*" (Please permit me, I have already finished my meal. (I) invite you to continue your meal!) (IVN2, 05:30)

Sub-context#18 (Extended at others' meal-ends towards the one who has just finished eating): A wife, who was still having her meal, said to her husband, who was about to finish his meal, "*Anh ăn cơm nữa đi*!" (Honey, please have some more!) (IVN1, 10:14p1)

Sub-context#19 (In response to others' meal-end invitations): "*No rồi. Cứ ăn đi*!" (I'm full. Keep eating!) (IVN1, 10:20p1) was a response by a husband to his wife's meal-end invitation.

Sub-context#20: There are other situations where invitations are extended at the very end of meals, which can be termed as 'closing mealtime invitations', such as invitations to use toothpicks and tissues, drink teas or something else, and have fruits or other desserts. These invitations are commonly extended by children towards their superiors, e.g., "*Con mời tăm bố*" (Daddy, here are some toothpicks for you) (IVN3, 14:30) or by hosts towards their dining guests, e.g., "*Mời bác ra nhà ngoài uống nước*!" (Please go to the living room for tea and dessert!) (D3#5).

Sub-contexts in which VMRIs are extended are different from meal to meal due to factors such as food and occasion, meal situations, regions, and others. For example, the difference can be seen clearly in the frequency of VMRIs extended when the food marks a special occasion, such as Tết, wedding parties, a death anniversary, or a family reunion. Extending invitations to welcome guests or ancestors (Sub-context#3 and Sub-context#4, respectively) occurs more frequently in the meals on these special occasions but less frequently in other meals. Moreover, not all these sub-contexts occur in every meal, because not all daily meals have late attendees (Sub-context#1) or visitors (Sub-context#13). Additionally, VMRIs in these documented sub-contexts are not equally observable throughout one meal or equally shared across generations in different regions. Mealtime invitations might be observed more in certain sub-contexts than in others; they may also be practised more or less frequently by individuals, generations, families, and communities. This anomaly might be a reason for the commonly held

misperceptions of the present practice of VMRIs (see further discussion in Section 4.5.3 below).

VMRIs extended in different sub-contexts may also be linguistically different. They may not be of equal propositional and affective information. For instance, VMRIs in Sub-context#4, invitations extended to the spirits, have a higher degree of formality, deference, and propositional content than VMRIs in Sub-context#15 (self-invitations from the meal visitors) such as "*Cho cô xin miếng nào!*" (Give me a piece of food, please!) (IVN2, 09:37), which sounds like a request (not a demand) although it is an informal VMRI. VMRIs extended by the same extender to the same invitee in the same meal can also be different in terms of formality due to the different sub-contexts in which they are extended. For example, a granddaughter extended a more formal invitation (with the invite verb *mời*) to her grandmother at her meal-start "*Cháu mời bà, con mời mẹ ăn cơm!*" (Grandmother and mother, I invite you to eat) and a less formal one (without the invite verb *mời*) during her meal, "*Bà ăn đi!*" (Grandma, please eat this!) (VideoVN#14). This may cause discrepancies for any studies using more-linguistic interpretive frameworks to discuss VMRIs as more than purely invitations. The discrepancies in previous studies and native speakers' commonly-held misperceptions of VMRIs will be further explained in the sections below.

4.5.2. Discrepancies and limitations

Certain sub-contexts for VMRIs were recognised in previous studies, but there were discrepancies and limitations in their interpretations.

Sub-contexts#8 and #13 were recognised in my earlier cross-cultural work on inviting acts in English and Vietnamese (T. M. D. Dang, 2001) as two situations namely meal-starts and during meals, respectively. Invitations at meal-starts were noted to have English equivalents in the form of short requests in informal cases, e.g., *'Dig in!', 'Tuck in!', 'You can play mum!', 'Come on!',* or *'Go for it';* or in a more formal atmosphere, e.g., '*Please help yourself (to anything you want)!', 'Make yourself at home', 'Enjoy the meal!', 'Would you like to serve?';* or in the form of a request for "*the salt*" as a politeness strategy and pretext for their meals: '*Pass (me) the salt please!', 'Can I have the salt?'* (pp. 41-43). Based on examples gathered in the survey questionnaires, patterns of meal-start invitations were proposed to have seven elements:

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Honorific	self-addressing	invite	title/kinship	eat	rice	honorific
Dạ,	con	mời	bố	xơi	cơm	ạ

(I invite father to have meal, please) (p. 41)

During-meal invitations were found to vary according to their governing factors such as age, relationship, gender, position and so on, of both the speaker and the hearer. The inferior-superior relation was then selected as a base to pattern the utterances. The presence and absence of the verb *mời* (invite) was earlier thought to distinguish status of participants. Examples such as "*Cháu mời bác xơi cơm!*" [I-invite-uncle-eat-rice-honorific] and "*Cháu ngồi xuống đây ăn cơm với bác!*"[You-sit down-here-eat-rice-with-me] (p. 42) were noted to be more frequent from inferiors to superiors and from superiors to inferiors, respectively. It was not explicitly stated, but it could be inferred from my earlier examples that the most common pattern used by inferiors to superiors included the verb '*mời*' (invite) and the one used by superiors to inferiors did not (Dang, 2001).

However, evidence provided in my present study illustrates that invitations extended from superiors to their inferiors may also contain the verb '*mời*' (invite) although the frequency is low (see Chapter 5). My present study also illustrates that not only VMRIs during meals but those issued at meal-starts also vary. They do not necessarily follow a fixed pattern although those based on these seven items are relatively common. The variety of VMRIs in the present findings might be attributed to the application of multiple data collection methods, especially the ethnographic approach, rather than relying on only one source that of questionnaires, as in Dang (2001).

Moreover, my present data also shows that the same invitational structures are employed in different situations in which those invitations take place. For example, a 19-year-old female participant, like many others, extended the same invitation "*Con mời bố mẹ xơi cơm*" (I invite parents to have meal) to her parents in several situations, namely her meal-starts, meal-ends, and during meals if parents would come late; and a nine-year-old boy responded to his father's invitation by inviting him back with a similar invitation using the same verb. Consequently, in my present study, I can not categorise invitations only according to the situation or relationship between participants, or status variable between participants. Instead, the sub-contexts are

realised when the invitations are performed. In other words, sub-contexts are worked out by observing the use and significance of language in real-life events as they unfold and then, the linguistic VMRIs are patterned within their discursive contexts. With this reverse approach, all sub-contexts where VMIRs occur can be identified and the diversified linguistic variants of VMRIs would not be missed.

Two similar during-meal situations when invitations were issued by the hosts and by the visitors (documented as sub-context#13 and #15, respectively) were recognised in T. H. Dang (1992), a cross-cultural study of Vietnamese and Australian invitations. However, this researcher regarded them as "problems" of Vietnamese invitations (p. 64) and found "no equivalent" in Australian invitations (p. 82). She classified invitations in these situations into 'non-invites' and 'self-invites'. 'Non-invites' included utterances issued by the hosts to the visitors during meal, for example "*Cháu mời bác xơi cơm*" (I invite you to have meal) (p. 67). These invitations, in her opinion, had an identical surface structure to an invite, but they did not have anything 'to do with inviting' because they were "never thought to have felicitous conditions to be realised" (p. 67) and the responses to them were always negative (refusal). Nevertheless, she regarded the utterances issued by the pop-in guest towards the host, e.g., "*Hôm nay đến xin cơm đây*" (Today (I) come to beg for a meal!) (p. 66) as a type of 'invites' and termed them as 'self-invites'. She also suggested not overlooking them because they presented "a sub-division of the invite in real life" (p. 65). However, the researcher did not explain why the latter was categorised as 'invites' while the former was not, although she said both types acted as a greeting or a show of politeness (and joking as well for the latter type).

In fact, both of what Dang (1992) termed as 'self-invites' and 'non-invites' have something to do with inviting in meal contexts, especially when they are performed by the hosts who are governed by the Vietnamese high hospitality and food-sharing culture. The felicitous conditions in 'non-invites' are therefore, not harder (if not to say even easier) to realise than in 'self-invites', which are uttered by the guests. Moreover, the recipients' negative responses (refusals) are dependent on various factors. They, therefore, should not be used to assess if the invitations are sincere or substantive. One interviewee, representing many others, for instance, argued for and confirmed about the felicity of her invitations extended towards her guests who dropped in during her meals that, 'my invitations are candid (vô tư), extended with my whole-hearted sincerity and

from my emotional sentiment' (INV1, 18:14). Additionally, the responses to these invitations in practice are not always negative (refusal) but also positive (acceptance), as exemplified in meal-diary entries (e.g., D4#1, D18#4), interviews (e.g., IVN2, IVN15, INZ4), and in videoed meals (VideoVN#8, VideoVN#12). Therefore, my study, which is based on participants' perceptions, regards all of these examples as invitations, unlike Dang (1992) who excluded invitations which were refused.

A couple of other situations, meal-starts and during meals (known as sub-context#8 and #18, respectively in my research) were identified in a sociolinguistic study of Vietnamese directives (Vu, 1997). They were both judged by their illocutionary points as acts of invitations. For instance, *"Con mời bố mẹ xơi cơm"* (I am inviting mom and dad to eat!) (p. 74) was categorised as "inviting the superiors at the dining table" and *"Anh xơi cơm nữa đi!"* (Please have some more!) (p. 141) was exemplified as an invitation towards the guest during a meal. Vu's interpretations of these utterances in two situations as invitations were consistent with T. M. D. Dang's (2001) and linguist Nguyễn's (1979), as well as many cultural scholars' (e.g., Hữu Ngọc, 2007). However, the sociologist Phạm (1999) interpreted similar utterances in the same situation (sub-context#8) differently as 'requests' although he added *mời* (invite) in brackets (p. 25).

What might be the reasons for the different interpretations of utterances in the same recognised sub-context, i.e., sub-context#13, as invitations in T. M. D. Dang (2001), as 'non-invites' in T. H. Dang (1992), and as 'greetings' in T. K. Q. Nguyen (2004) although these cross-cultural studies used the same interpretative framework of SAT? A likely reason is that the applied interpretative framework was more language-oriented and isolated from the language users' cultural norms, which are always in the ways they talk and perceive others' talk. These examples were interpreted only from the researchers' different views and based merely on the formal language use, not necessarily based on the wider sociocultural contexts of utterances or accounting for the language users, who also included the hearers. As a consequence, utterances in the same sub-context were interpreted differently in these studies and inconsistently with language users' cultural norms.

4.5.3. Misperceptions

Besides the discrepancies and limitations in interpreting VMRIs in certain recognised sub-contexts in previous studies, a common misperception in the general Vietnamese

public is that many Vietnamese people generally overgeneralise mealtime invitations in certain sub-contexts (commonly at meal-starts) as mealtime invitations in a whole context (meal) and overlook those practised in other sub-contexts. They tend to refer to or think only of meal-start invitations (although some others also think of other sub-contexts) but not mealtime invitations in general. The overgeneralisation has led to mistakes in limiting the nationwide traditional practice to that of particular regions (e.g., the North and Central Vietnam) or of specific people (e.g., intellectuals).

These misperceptions are illustrated in the following graphic design, for instance, by Lê (2012) in his personal project[75] depicting the typical differences between Hanoi and Saigon[76], the two biggest cities representing the North and the South, respectively in Vietnam:
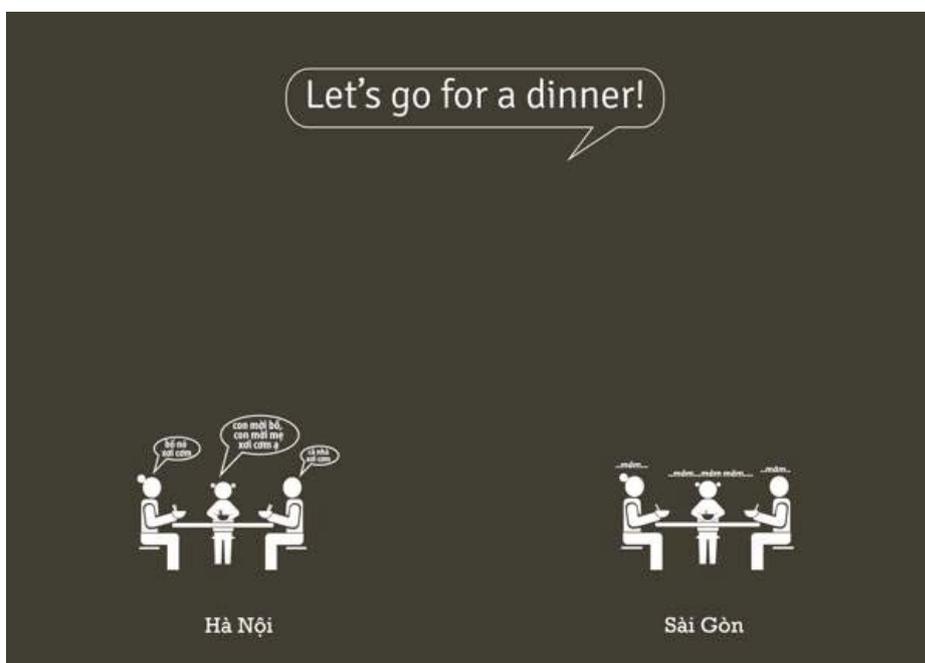
This piece of graphic design contrasts two images: a family in Hanoi starting their meals with each member's invitations that the author called ""*phép tắc" mời cơm*" (norms of extending VMRIs) and the other in Saigon without this practice at their meal-start to illustrate that Hanoians practise VMRIs while Saigonians hardly do. The designer assumes that this asymmetrical difference is one among a series of typical social differences which distinguish Hanoi and Saigon.

---

[75] https://www.behance.net/gallery/The-difference-between-Hanoi-and-Saigon/8173495
[76] Currently renamed as Ho Chi Minh city

This cartoon exemplifies misperceptions commonly held by not only its designer but also many Vietnamese people, including myself prior to this research. We mistakenly under-interpreted mealtime invitations when taking into account invitations in only few sub-contexts (mainly at meal-starts) and overlooked invitations in other sub-contexts. Consequently, we overgeneralised the non-practice of meal-start invitations as the non-practice of overall mealtime invitations; we also misjudged the loss of practice of meal-start invitations amongst certain types of individuals and within certain families as the typical non-practice within the whole region.

Indeed, the ritual practice of mealtime invitations occurs throughout the meals and is nation-wide rather than specific to certain people or certain regions. My research data reveals that numerous Southern participants (including Saigonians), like participants from the North and the Central Vietnam, have been extending invitations throughout their meals, including meal-starts and other sub-contexts, especially towards guests who spontaneously drop in, or late arrivals for meals. Some participants, regardless of their living locations, Auckland or throughout Vietnam, do not always issue meal-start invitations to their regular dining partners at home, but they do at their convenience in more formal meals to non-regular diners, such as business partners, in-law relations, or amongst politicians, for instance. Thus, extending fewer or no invitations at the meal-starts does not entail the non-practice in other meal sub-contexts. The practice might be lost amongst certain individuals or certain families due to many factors (Hữu Ngọc, 2007), but not within the whole region although these families may be centred in the same areas. The evidence for the current nation-wide practice of mealtime invitations and their occurrences throughout meals could also be found when integrating individual comments (279 total) by numerous Vietnamese speakers from various regions discussing local customs and traditions in eating and drinking throughout Vietnam (the topic was set up in 2009 in a forum online[77]).

These common misperceptions may be partly because sub-contexts for VMRIs have not been clearly identified before. Meanwhile, the extending of invitations in certain sub-contexts has been overgeneralised much like that of the whole meals. Narrowly based on the practice of VMRIs in certain sub-contexts, which are not necessarily typical for

---

[77] http://ttvnol.com/threads/phong-tuc-an-uong-cua-nguoi-nam-co-nhieu-dieu-khac-so-voi-ngoai-bac-khong.493954/

other sub-contexts, the practice of overall VMRIs in meal context was consequently under-interpreted. Besides, in realising their practice, VMRIs were commonly noticed through their obvious verbal utterances marked with conventional words and formulaic structures; those with unconventional structures and nonverbal signals tended to be neglected. Incomplete knowledge of this daily-life ritual, misjudgement of other people's behaviours, and break-down in relationship can be the negative consequences.

In brief, the division of sub-contexts can contribute to a thorough comprehension of VMRIs in different sub-contexts and help to avoid overgeneralization, bias, and/or prejudice in judging people's behaviours as the negative consequence. Moreover, explanations for those sub-contexts with an account for their contexts of use and language users, speaker and hearer, rather than the more language-oriented and subjective interpretations of researchers, help to thoroughly comprehend the nature of mealtime invitations. Additionally, the division of sub-contexts can also answer the question of where my data of VMRIs locates in the whole meal discursive interactions. Last but not least, the classification of these sub-contexts together with my ethnographic documentation of participants' reasons for extending their VMRIs are the bases for a discussion of what are and what are not VMRIs and a proposal of treating them as multiplex discourses in the next two sections.

4.6. Definitions and features of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations

4.6.1. Definitions

It is not adequate enough to define what VMRIs are in a certain sentence, a certain paragraph, or a certain section. What characterises and constructs the different aspects of VMRIs is discussed throughout this study. However, for the purpose to identify what are and what are not VMRIs and before discussing their linguistic features, meanings, and functions in the next sections (and also next chapters), a brief and operational definition of VMRIs is given here. VMRIs are all verbal and non-verbal signals extended around everyday meals that are intended and/or interpreted as offers or invitations for food and/or company at meals. Therefore, verbal, oral, or spoken VMRIs mentioned in this study can encompass all utterances of various surface structures (and whether they are accompanied by non-verbal means such as gestures, poses, and facial

expressions or not) extended in a meal context with invitational meanings and/or functions for someone to partake in or join others for that meal.

4.6.2. Meals as a governing context and the relatively immediate time

As mentioned above, VMRIs have meals as their governing contexts. Having meals as a governing context means that VMRIs not only take place at and around the current meals, which both the extenders and recipients are aware of, but also take these meals as their propositional contents. In other words, the meals that people are invited to join or to have food/drink from are also the same meals in and/or around which the invitations are issued, e.g., "*Con mời bố xơi cơm*!" (I'd like to invite you to have (this) meal!). This feature makes VMRIs different from general invitations for food or meals. For example, '*Tiện đây, em mời bác trưa Chủ Nhật tới sang nhà em làm cơm giỗ ông em*' (By the way, I'd like to invite you to be here again, next Sunday, for the lunch to commemorate the anniversary of my grandfather's passing) is a general invitation to a meal, not a VMRI even when it is made within a meal. This is because the meal indicated in the invitation (next Sunday lunch) and the meal in which the invitation is made are not the same and the recipient may not be aware of this referential meal in advance. General invitations for meals can be similarly comprehended if made in other contexts than a meal while VMRIs, unlike general invitations for meals, have to be made within a meal context and refer to that meal. Therefore, invitations for food and meals are VMRIs only when they are issued at the relatively immediate time of a current meal, which is known to both the inviters and invitees, and use the same meal as the propositional contents of the invitations.

VMRIs are invitations or offers to partake in or join a meal, which is happening at or around the time the invitations are made. In other words, VMRIs are made at a relative immediate time of the meal[78] which the invitations refer to. Therefore, in terms of performing time, VMRIs include features of both what Edmondson and House (1981) proposed as 'Invite-now' and 'Invite-then' (see Part A). On the one hand, the fulfilment of VMRIs is often immediate or right after they are made within a meal, for example, "*Ăn cơm thôi*!" (Let's have meal!) or "*Bà ăn đi cho béo!*" (Grandmother, please eat this to be healthier!) (D2#4). These VMRIs can, therefore, be placed into Edmondson and

---

[78] It is also significant to see this point in relation to the way Vietnamese people perceive the relationship between their meals and mealtimes (see Chapter 3)

House's 'Invite-now' category, which are similar to English offers, suggestions, or requests. In the other hand, many VMRIs are made shortly before meals (before-meal sub-contexts) or during meals (during-meal sub-contexts), for example, "*Bố ơi, con mời bố dậy ăn cơm*" (Dad, I invite you to come down for lunch) (D2#7) or '*Bác vào làm chén rượu đã?*" (Can you come in for a drink?). These VMRIs have their future fulfilment and are not necessarily fulfilled at the relatively immediate time they are made. They are, hence, what Edmondson and House categorised as 'Invite-then' or 'Invites'.

4.6.3. Ambiguous and unambiguous

Due to the contextual information such as time, space, and propositional contents embedded in VMRIs, VMRIs are still informative to the recipients even when all these elements are not articulated in the utterances, "*Cháu mời bác xơi cơm*!" (Uncle, please come and join me for meal!). Analysis of this feature of VMRIs challenges Wofson's (1989) distinction between ambiguous and unambiguous (see Part A). VMRIs illustrate that they can be unambiguous in the form of ambiguous invitations or that time and place may not always be present in unambiguous invitations. Like ambiguous invitations, VMRIs do not always mention definite time or place in the invitations. However, these VMRIs are still unambiguous because the omitted time and place are evidently known to VMRI-recipients as (relatively) NOW and HERE (the mutually-known current mealtime and dining-area).

4.6.4. Genuine and ostensible

The ambiguity in VMRIs is, however, in the distinction between genuine invitations and ostensible ones since the distinction between them proposed by Isaacs and Clark (1990) and other followers is not always applicable to VMRIs. Some VMRIs might be ostensible invitations (called '*mời lơi/rơi*' or '*mời xã giao*' in Vietnamese) when they are issued for the purpose of fulfilling politeness and the recipients also treat them purely as polite ways of greeting or thanking, for instance, at meals. For example, the self-invitation "*Cho cô xin miếng nào!*" (Please give me a bite!) (IVN2, 09:37) was extended by a neighbour popping in while the host was having meal. The host (my participant) reported that his neighbour never invited herself for some food by saying this (and the like) because she always declined any food offered to her after; he then concluded that the neighbour's self-invitations were her usual greetings at the host's

meal. However, this mutual recognition of pretence is not a defining property in most other VMRIs. They are, therefore, not ostensible invitations. When issuing invitations, VMRI-extenders might also expect some subsequent actions, such as the recipients' refusals or acceptances, in response to the inviters' asking them, for instance, to join meals or have more food at the meal-ends. Therefore, these VMRIs are extended seriously and intentionally and they can be genuine as opposed to ostensible.

4.6.5. Ritual

I categorise Vietnamese mealtime invitations as ritual invitations due to their cultural meanings. Extending VMRIs is ritual. Rituals are hardly known simply through observation like daily routines. Extending VMRIs is ritual social behaviours for the essential element that their practisers believe it have a meaning beyond the function. People practise VMRIs not just because of a simple belief in traditions being handed down for generations. The practisers of VMRIs enact their practice with ethical conducts; the practice benefits individuals, groups, communities, and all. It is then being accepted and being lived up to for generations. The practice carries cultural meanings of its own and collects more social values along the way of its evolution. That might explain why the practisers of VMRIs have numerous reasons for practicing and keeping their meal-time rituals (see Section 4.4).

VMRIs are rituals from various perspectives. Ritual is widely defined in anthropology as "a repetitive social practice composed of a sequence of symbolic activities in the form of dance, song, speech, gestures, or the manipulation of objects, adhering to a culturally defined ritual schema, and closely connected to a specific set of ideas that are often encoded in myth" (Schultz & Lavenda, 2001, p. 145). The practice of VMRIs is rituals, also following Casey's (2005) definition on rituals as forms of communicative activities that people do "on a regular basis in which certain cultural values significant and unique to them are engendered, expressed, or otherwise reaffirmed" (p. 89). Ritual features embodied in VMRIs are consistent with those characterised by the sociologist Goffman (1967) as "acts through whose symbolic component the actor shows how worthy he is of respect or how worthy he feels others are of it" (p. 19). From a psychology perspective, extending VMRIs is ritual, as opposed to routine, because rituals are symbolic, enduring, and affective and their language is multi-layered and dense with meanings extended across generations of practisers although it may appear

mundane to the outsiders (Fiese, 2006). Of the four types of rituals categorised by family therapists, Imber-Black and Roberts (1993), VMRIs can belong to the day-to-day essentials[79] (dealing with eating, sleeping, hello, and goodbye) and these daily rituals provide a sense of life rhythm to make daily transition, a sense of familiarity, continuity, and security to feel connected as a family.

In terms of linguistics, what I mean by 'ritual' in Vietnamese meal-time ritual invitations is far different from the 'ritual invitations' mentioned in Chen et al. (1995, p. 152) referring to the type of Chinese invitations that are "a pure social gesture" without sincerity condition (Searle, 1969) as opposed to substantive ones. To some extent, Chen et al. using 'ritual' is in a similar way to the earlier writers' use of 'ostensible'. However, according to Chen et al., the decisive factor to distinguish ritual invitations from substantive invitations is linguistics rather than situational contexts. Ritual inviters use suggestory formulae "*How about staying here for dinner*?" rather than impositives "*Tomorrow come eat dinner*" (p. 154). Therefore, implied ritual characteristics in Chinese invitations do not entirely align with Vietnamese meal-time ritual invitations, which do not necessarily exclude sincerity and substantiveness or realness.

'Ritual invitations' is also used by Nwoye (1992) to refer to invitations to eat or offers for food in Igbo society. According to Nwoye, Igbo ritual invitations are not merely courtesy; they are sincere; and it is a normal and frequent practice without any imposition. The performance of these invitations is the expected social conduct that "the failure to fulfil it is a serious breach of etiquette" (p. 321). The implications of Nwoye's analysis for ritual aspects in Igbo invitations are consistent with my views of those in VMRIs except for that the non-practice of VMRIs is not widely regarded as misconduct in contemporary Vietnamese society.

In sum, VMRIs are rituals because their practisers treasure the symbolic values and meanings of their courtesy and sincere social conduct and prolong its continuity for generations. VMRIs also have both similarities and differences compared with general invitations in Vietnamese and in other languages and cultures. All findings above have suggested that VMRIs should be treated as a special type of discourses.

---

[79] The other three types are family traditions (the inside calendar), holiday celebrations (the outside calendar), and life-cycle rituals (from birth to death)

4.7. VMRIs as multiplex discourses

4.7.1. Multiplex discourses

'Multiplex' used here means the combination of multiplicity and complexity, following the term widely used, especially in communication and construction to refer to the grouping of sub-groups (e.g., channels, services, buildings) that can perform multiple functions in a highly compressed format. I view VMRIs as multiplex discourses. My adoption of 'multiplex' covers the phenomena recognised and termed by De Felice et al (2013) as 'multifunctionality' (the utterances genuinely function as more than one speech act) and 'multi-utterances' (the illocutionary effect comes the entire sequence of utterances rather than just a single one) in linguistics in general. It also encompasses the notions of 'multiple speech acts' suggested in studies of Chinese invitations (Mao, 1990; Tseng, 1999/2003) and 'speech act set' proposed by Olshtain and Cohen (1983). The multiplicity and complexity of VMRIs will be detailed below.

VMRIs are multiplex discourses because of not only two layers of meanings ('big D' and 'little d' discourses) in each discourse (as discussed above) but also the two levels in the more linguistic-oriented meanings ('little d' discourses) which I have called the linguistic discourse level and the linguistic act level (discussed further in the next sections). Moreover, within the linguistic discourse level, there are several acts; within the level of linguistic act, VMRIs also carry several functions (illocutions and perlocutions). Layers of meanings, acts, and functions in VMRIs as multiplex discourses can be visually and simply illustrated in Figure 4-2 below.
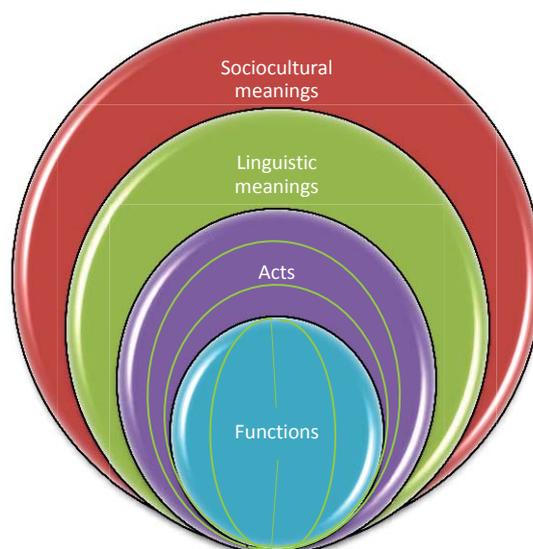
Figure 4-2 VMRIs as multiplex discourses

4.7.2. The linguistic discourse level

Examining the linguistic discourse level, VMRIs combine multiple inviting acts and the multiple acts of repetitive inviting plus refusing and/or accepting within one discourse. The repetition of inviting acts (by one extender) in combination with refusing and accepting acts within one discourse is described as '*mời mọc*'[80] (inviting again and again) in Vietnamese. It is featured in several situations, especially at during-meal sub-contexts between hosts and guests, although it does not typically characterise all VMRIs. This feature is implied in Mao's (1992) concept of 'multiple speech acts' in his works on Chinese tripartite invitations. In addition to repetitive invitations from one extender, invitations are also extended simultaneously by several extenders towards one recipient. The inviting acts are, therefore, multiple. This feature of multiplicity was not highlighted in Mao's concept.

The repetitiveness and the multiplicity of inviting acts themselves and of other accompanying acts (refusing and/or accepting) could be exemplified in the following discourse described in one meal-diary entry (D18#4). A guest popped in when the host-family were having their meal. VMRIs from all diners (his mother, sister, brother-in-law, nieces, and nephews) were simultaneously extended towards him, e.g., *"Cậu vào ăn cơm với cả nhà"* (Please come in to share our meal, uncle!). The visitor refused once but to all, *"Bà, anh chị với các cháu cứ ăn đi. Em ăn cơm rồi đi có chút việc nên ghé*

---

[80] a synonym compound of '*mời*' (inviting) (Nguyễn, 1979)

qua đây chơi thôi" (Please keep eating. I have already had my meal. I just pop in to visit you on my way). However, one host still issued one more invitation *"Cậu không ăn thì vào đây uống với tôi cốc bia!"* (Come in to join me for some beer if you don't want to eat!).

4.7.3. The linguistic act level

Examining the linguistic act level, the same VMRI-locutions can simultaneously carry several illocutions and perlocutions, which include the primary function of inviting (merging both inviting and offering) and secondary functions, such as requesting, greeting, thanking, and others.

4.7.3.1. Inviting acts: merging both inviting and offering

The notion of inviting in VMRIs broadly covers concepts of both inviting and offering. In other words, VMRIs are invitations that encompass both inviting and offering acts and functions. This might be because, as mentioned earlier, unlike in English, there is no clear distinction between these two notions in Vietnamese native speakers' cognition, particularly in relation to food/drink. Offering and inviting are merged into Vietnamese inviting acts. This can be seen in the fact that the verb '*mời*' (invite) is extensively used to report and to perform both the acts of inviting and offering.

In inviting acts, '*mời*' (invite) is used as a performative verb to perform the acts of inviting someone to have/share meals, for example *"Con mời ông bà ăn cơm!"* (I (child) invite you (grandparents) to have meal!). It is also used to report the inviting acts in all sub-contexts, for example before meal, "*bữa nào bọn em cũng sang **mời** bà sang ăn cơm*" (before every meal, we go to our grandmother's place to extend invitations to her) (IVN5, 21:53); at meal-starts, "*cả nhà **mời** nhau ăn cơm*" (all family extended meal-start invitations Towards one another) (D23#2); during meals, "*chúng tôi **mời** chị xơi cơm, chị tươi cười **mời** lại chúng tôi*" (we invited her to join us for meal, she smiled and returned us with her invitation) (D1#7); at meal-ends, "*Mọi người còn hăng say lắm nhưng tôi đã no rồi. Tôi **mời** mọi người ăn rồi đứng dậy*" (Others were still enthusiastically eating, but I was already full. I extended meal-end invitations to them and then stood up" (D5#4). This notion of '*mời*' (invite) can substitute for numerous contextually specific variants such as '*thỉnh*', '*rước*', '*rủ*', '*gọi*', '*giục*', '*kêu*', '*bảo*',

depending on factors such as the formality of the situations, the speaker-hearer relationship, or personal habit of language use.

In offering acts, '*mời*' (offer) is also used both to perform the offering acts, e.g., "*Cháu mời dì*" (Aunt, please have this piece!) (VideoVN#2, 17:38) and to report the acts, e.g., "*Tôi mời bà miếng nem*" (I offered her a spring-roll) (D2#7). In this notion, '*mời*' can be a general substitute for its contextually specific synonyms such as '*hầu*', '*cho*', '*biếu*', '*cúng*', whose usage depends on the similar factors mediating the use of verbs denoting the notion of '*mời*' (invite) above.

As mentioned earlier, depending on factors such as the formality of the situations, the speaker-hearer relationship, or personal habit of language use, '*mời*' (invite/offer) can substitute for numerous contextually specific variants. Some participants might use particular variants to describe the extending of VMRIs to specific recipients. For example, an interviewee reported that she used '*mời*' towards her husband, but not towards her children, to whom she used '*bảo*' (tell) instead (IVN1, 14:23p1). Another participant protested against using '*mời*' towards her husband and used '*rủ*' (informally invite) instead, '*I only **mời** my parents. Why do I have to **mời** my husband? I just **rủ** (informally invite) him to join the meal*' (FNNZ#18). However, when referring to the acts of extending VMRIs in general, not in specific relationships, '*mời*' is always used. For instance, the latter participant said, '*when I was in Vietnam, both my family and my in-laws didn't practise **mời** (extending meal-start VMRIs), but now (here in Auckland), I find it a good practice so I want my children to **mời**. We often **mời** one another at meals*' (FNNZ#18). As such, '*mời*' (invite) is a general notion embracing all inviting and offering acts at meals. Therefore, what I mean by inviting in VMRIs is also a comprehensive concept, merging both acts and functions of inviting and offering.

4.7.3.2. Inviting as a primary function

Inviting is the primary function in VMRIs for numerous reasons. Firstly, as mentioned in Chapter 3, Vietnamese cognition tends to associate activities relating to eating, drinking or enjoyment with inviting, shown in the saying "*Ăn có mời, làm có khiến*"[81] that literally means 'Eat with/by invitations and do with/by requests'. This association is also noted by Đào (2011a, p. 15) who wrote that people often extend invitations for

---

[81] Speak when you are spoken to, come when you are called

actions of eating and drinking, playing, or enjoying. Moreover, according to Hymes (1989, 1972, 1974), native speakers in a community share knowledge of linguistic code, socio-cultural rules, norms and values which guide the conduct and interpretation of speech and other channels of communication; communities, therefore, share certain patterns of speech or ways of speaking that occurs within a specific context. Additionally, Kuiper and Lin (1989) stated that native speakers code culture in their language use, particularly clearly in formulaic expressions. VMRIs are the type of meal-time formulae, regardless of any expressions forms, that can be culturally and linguistically coded as food offerings or invitations to join ones for the meals. Therefore, VMRIs are firstly to do with inviting.

Inviting is the primary function in all VMRIs, regardless of their forms of expression. They primarily function as invitations or have the invitational nature in whatever forms they may have, such as requests, demands, or jokes. Many VMRIs sound like 'requests' or 'demands', especially those in imperative forms, for instance "*Thôi, cơm đi!*" (Now, have meal!) (VideoVN#5, 00:11) and they were referred as 'requests' in Pham (1999, p. 25). However, neither 'requests' nor 'demands', but 'invitations' can reflect the VMRI-extenders' good intention (wanting the recipients to eat/drink something and/or to enjoy the company) and the VMRI-recipients' own discretion rather than their obligations to take the assumed benefits.

The inviting function is noticeable even in joke-form VMRIs, such as "*Thế ăn thật chưa? Không tí về nhà lại bảo ra nhà thằng Bình, nó ăn cơm mà nó không mời mình được một bát.*" (Have (you) really had meal or not? Otherwise, later (you) may think that I didn't offer you even a rice-bowl when you appeared at my meal) (D2#6) or "*Chủ nhà chưa ăn thì sao khách dám ăn!*" (How dare I (the guest) eat if you (the host) haven't attended the table!) (D2#6). Those VMRIs were issued in cheerful manners (after numerous conventional or formal VMRIs had been made by others), but the extenders' intentions of inviting were still realised and acknowledged through the recipients' responses of a refusal (towards the former) or an acceptance (towards the latter).

4.7.3.3. Secondary functions

Greetings

Extending VMRIs in some situations is similar to greeting in the ways that the acts weigh more on politeness; their utterances are both low in information; and they can be expressed verbally with both formulaic and unconventional structures and nonverbally with gestures and facial expressions. In daily spoken Vietnamese language, the verb '*mời*' (invite) can sometimes be used interchangeably with '*chào*' (greet)[82]. The extending of VMRIs at meal-starts (sub-context#8) and at meal-ends (sub-context#17) is to some extent similar with the Japanese culture of saying something like 'Itadakimasu' or 'Gochisosama', which Burke (2013, p. 26) regards as 'greeting' although according to Ishii, D. and Ota, Y. (personal communication, March 2015 and April 2013, respectively), these Japanese utterances are not greetings. The extending of during-meal VMRIs (sub-context#13), e.g., "*Mời bác xơi cơm*" [invite uncle to eat rice], was similarly considered "a greeting routine" in Nguyen (2004, p. 10) with an inadequate argument that "when uttering this, the host is simply performing an act of greeting; he or she does not intend to invite the guest to have dinner with the family". However, those similar-to-greeting VMRIs are still to do with inviting. Firstly, it seems unreasonable to judge these utterances as greetings only, but not invitations when they are issued in the meal discourse with the native hospitality and food-sharing culture. Secondly, the extenders' negative intention (only greeting, but not inviting), which was subjectively claimed by the researcher rather than by the speakers themselves or the recipients should not be criteria to deny inviting function in the extenders' utterances. Moreover, all the expressions explicitly marked by performative verb '*mời*' (invite) are regarded as invitations (Đào, 2011a). Therefore, although greeting function can be recognised in few similar-to-greeting VMRIs, treating them as greetings only may lose their apparent invitational nature.

Polite requests for permission and acts of giving permission

VMRIs in certain situations could also function as polite requests for permission to eat or to finish meals. Some inferiors extend their meal-start and/or meal-end VMRIs, for instance "*Con mời cơm cả nhà!*" [Child invite rice all family] (IVN2, 05:49), indirectly seeks their seniors' permissions to start to eat first. The responses from recipients might

---

[82] E.g., Lời mời/chào hàng (greeting and inviting customers to buy goods)

sometimes be nonverbal (e.g., head nods or smiles) and/or verbal (e.g., "*ừ, ăn cơm đi!*" (Ok, go ahead!), which mean to accept the requests and permit the extenders to start/finish their meals. The responses imply that the preceding actions had been interpreted as requesting for permissions.

Many VMRIs extended by superiors or hosts, in contrast, could also function as acts of giving permission to eat. "*Thôi, cơm đi!*" (Now, have meal!) (VideoVN#5, 00:11), for instance, uttered by the head of the family can be interpreted as both acts of inviting and giving permission for his inferiors to have meal. These VMRIs include an act of giving permission because after that, recipients assume that it is appropriate to start their meal. Many young participants (e.g., IVN3, IVN11, IVN15) reported that they did not often start eating until their superiors had already said something or had extended some signals implying their permission. Inferiors often wait for these invitational permission unless they initiate their own VMRIs as requests for permission to eat, as illustrated in Figure 4-3 below

Figure 4-3 Children waiting for invitational permission from their superiors
(Photos from video-clips, VideoVN#1 and VideoVN#7)

In both cases, VMRIs manifest either acts of politely requesting for permission or giving permission in situation of power variables in which there is "legitimate demand for recognition, deference, obedience or the service of others" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 167) and is, according to Foucault, diffused not on the agents but in social relations and exercising in discourse (as cited in Nguyen, 2014). This power is inherent in the statuses of VMRI-extenders and recipients are also aware of it. VMRI-extenders such as the hosts or the heads of the family, whose statuses are superior to recipients', tend to claim or be given more power and their VMRIs can, therefore, also function as giving permission. Conversely, VMRI-extenders of lower given or acclaimed statuses, such as children or guests, often minimise their power and their VMRIs would be treated as polite requests for permission.

Declarations

VMRIs in a number of situations could also function as declarations, which change the world via utterances (Searle, 1976). VMRIs from the extenders such as the hosts or the chief meal-organisers who are given the authority to declare reasons for the meals before people can start can be declarative. Even when diners, who do not have such authority, extend their regular meal-start or meal-end VMRIs, they are indirectly announcing or informing others that they are going to start or finish their meals. Then, they can do these without the necessity of the others' consent or agreement. This indirect announcing or informing function is one reason for extending VMRIs, verbalised by some young interviewees (see above). After VMRIs, both extenders and recipients feel that they can proceed to start, join, or leave their meals. These VMRIs to some extent changes the situations. Therefore, these VMRIs also embody declarative function.

My argument on the declarative function in VMRIs challenges Tseng's (1999) claim that inviting cannot be declarative because it does not embody an institutional force that requires the illocutionary act to be issued by the authorities whose status, as a speaker, are always superior to the hearer (p. 15). However, my argument is consistent with Nahar (2006) in his noting that written wedding invitations have the function of informing recipients about something. It also accords well with Bardovi-Harlig's (2015) assessment of the immediate declarative effect of disinvitations: "You are not invited" so "Do not come" (p. 94). The declaration in disinvitations is to some extent similar to the declaration in invitations, as I argue, "You are invited" so "You can". In this way, VMRIs can function as declarations and this supports Bardovi-Harlig's claim that disinvitations are declaratives.

Refusing, thanking, and leave-taking rituals

Numerous VMRIs are also extended as rituals of refusing and thanking for preceding VMRIs. For example, a visitor responded to her hosts' invitations to join their on-going meal with: "*Em mời anh chị xơi cơm đi, em ăn rồi*" [Younger sibling invite elder brother and sister eat rice, younger sibling eat already!] (IVN1, 18:50p1), which is a reciprocal invitation for the hosts to keep eating, but pragmatically means 'No, thank you. Please have your meal. I have already eaten'. Certain VMRIs can also function as leave-taking rituals. A girl went over to her neighbors' place while they were having a

meal. At her departure shortly after, her goodbye utterance was accompanied with a polite invitation for the hosts to keep eating, *"Thôi mời gia đình ăn cơm tiếp đi. Cháu xin phép về ạ!"* (Well, please continue your meal. Please permit me to leave now!) (D5#2). In the Vietnamese culture of avoiding disturbing others' eating, these reciprocal invitations can politely act as compensation for the disturbance and gratitude for the hosts' hospitality.

In sum, the primary act and function of inviting (merging inviting and offering acts) and a number of secondary functions (multifunctionality), all embedded within the act of extending VMRIs, have expressed the multiplicity and the complexity of VMRIs at single act level. Additionally, the repetitiveness and the multiplicity of inviting acts themselves and of other accompanying acts (refusing and/or accepting) at a larger linguistic discourse level, intertwined altogether with their sociocultural discourses, have characterised VMRIs as multiplex discourses.

4.8. Summary

The review of invitations in English, Vietnamese, and other languages has not identified any prior research specific to mealtime invitations. Examples of Vietnamese mealtime invitations in certain situations were included in studies of Vietnamese invitations, but they were (mis)interpreted in the same way as any kinds of invitations and through the same analytical framework designed for English invitations. This high level of generalisation, together with the lack of account for socio-cultural conventions in the interpretative frameworks, has resulted in misinterpretations of VMRIs. Besides, there are also commonly-held misperceptions of Vietnamese people that the occurrences of mealtime invitations are limited to certain situations, specific to certain people and regions.

Participants' reasons for extending their VMRIs and numerous situated sub-contexts in which VMRIs are issued have distinguished multifaceted VMRIs from general invitations for food and invitations in some other languages. Besides illustrating that VMRIs occur throughout meals and are nation-wide rituals, the initial findings emphasise the need to contextualise VMRIs. Meals are their powerful and governing contexts, not only providing time, space, and proposition for the invitations but also yielding numerous sub-contexts that trigger and ritualise VMRIs.

The initial analysis suggests that VMRIs should be interpreted in their two discursive meanings, the more linguistic-oriented and the socio-cultural. VMRIs have been viewed as multiplex discourses. VMRIs integrate the complexity of multifunctional acts (inviting and offering combined with other functions, such as greeting, thanking, giving permissions, informing, and others) and the repetitiveness and the multiplicity of both inviting acts and other accompanying acts (refusing and/or accepting) within discourses. This suggestion, achieved by the adaptation of sociolinguistics in integration with critical applications of SAT, has been an effective interpretative framework for VMRIs beyond a solution to limitations, discrepancies in studies and misperceptions held amongst common people. Further linguistic aspects of VMRIs will be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 5. LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES AND VERBS USED IN MEALTIME INVITATIONS

The previous chapter reviewed theories of invitations in general and presented preliminary discussions and arguments on Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations. The purpose of this and the next chapter (Chapter 6) is to examine the language use of these invitations. Researchers, such as House and Kasper (1981) or Vu (1997), have acknowledged that linguistic elements perform not only semantic or syntactic functions but also different pragmatic functions in directives, including invitations. Therefore, in the following two chapters, three other significant linguistic aspects of mealtime invitations will be discussed, namely (i) the actual performative verbs and grammatical structures of invitations and their mood (declaratives, interrogatives, etc.), (ii) the specific eating and drinking verbs that are used and (iii) what and how reference terms are used to address and reference people in invitations. Chapter 5 covers the first two areas and Chapter 6 covers the last one.

The evidence provided in both chapters corroborates earlier research, which examined Vietnamese invitations in general only rather than focusing on invitations at mealtimes, in findings about the diversity of their structures and their mood (Luru, 2007; V. T. Nguyễn, 2012) and about the influences of socio-cultural factors on the structural choice (T. M. D. Dang, 2001; T. H. Dang, 1992; V. T. Nguyễn, 2012). Moreover, the language of mealtime invitations also provides evidence of diversity at a lexical level and the mediation of the key sociocultural variables including age, gender, status, familiarity, and perception of politeness and respect in shaping lexical choices.

5.1. Explicit and implicit mealtime invitations

Austin (1962), the father of Speech Act Theory, uses the terms '*performative verbs*' or '*performatives*' to refer to the verbs which perform an expressive act simultaneously with the naming of that expressive act, for example, 'promise' in 'I promise!', or 'declare' in 'I declare you husband and wife!'. He also uses this term to distinguish between what he call '*explicit speech acts*', speech acts with the presence of

performatives and '*implicit speech acts*', speech acts without performatives. This explicitness and implicitness distinction model has been widely applied in previous studies of invitations, including Vietnamese invitations (e.g., T. L. Đào, 2011a; Lưu, 2007; V. T. Nguyễn, 2012).

I propose to use this term to dichotomise Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations (VMRIs) into explicit VMRIs to mean invitations containing Vietnamese performative verbs meaning 'invite', and implicit VMRIs to mean invitations without these verbs. My adaptation of using performative verbs meaning 'invite' to distinguish explicit VMRIs from implicit VMRIs is not only because the presence of a performative meaning 'invite' is a marking language expression in Vietnamese invitations, but also because native speakers' perceptions of these two types of invitations and their uses of structures and mood can be a differentiating indicator for sociocultural variables. All these points will be discussed below.

5.1.1. Explicit VMRIs

As discussed in Chapter 4, VMRIs of various surface structures function as invitations in meal context. When invitations contain performatives, they function as performatives and their structures including certain verbs that mean 'invite' affect the performative function and affective meanings of making an invitation. I categorise these as explicit VMRIs because they explicitly mention a verb meaning 'invite', for example, "*Con **mời** cả nhà ăn cơm*!" [Child invite all house eat rice!] (I'd like to invite all of you to enjoy the meal!). There are three performatives, namely '*mời*', '*rước*', and '*thỉnh*' with different nuances and connotations. All invitations with these performatives are explicit VMRIs by definition. However, only one of these verbs, '*mời*', was found in my data; the other two, '*rước*', and '*thỉnh*' are archaic and have very specific uses[83]. '*Mời*' is a

---

[83] The performative '*rước*' is an old-fashioned verb (Đào, 2011a) with an ultra-polite and ultra-formal connotation, whose use could reflect social distance of status or rank between interlocutors. '*Rước*' is seldom used and appears in explicit VMRIs found in the feudal-time literature, e.g., "*Bẩm, xin **rước** quan thủ khoa và các quan xơi tạm chén rượu!*" (Ngô, 1939, chapter 19) (Please, (I) would like to formally invite you, Mr First-Laureate and other officials, to enjoy the meal!).
Similar to '*rước*,' the performative '*thỉnh*', which is an archaic verb and of Sino-Vietnamese origin (the other two are of purely Vietnamese origin) was not used at all in any invitations at everyday meals. With its defined meaning 'invite formally and solemnly' (Hoàng, 1994), it is found only in ritual prayers expressing solemn and formal invitations extended by a respectfully-assigned representative to the spirits and ancestors in special meals (sub-context#4 in Chapter 4). Examples were seen in written forms in various popular collections of Vietnamese prayers, e.g., "*Chúng con xin cung **thỉnh** ngài [….] hiển linh trước án thụ hưởng lễ vật*" (Thích, 2010, p. 4) (We would like to solemnly invite you […] to virtually

polite (Lưu, 2007) and standard (Đào, 2011a) verb. It does not have ultra-polite, ultra-formal and solemn connotations like the other two performatives. That might be one of the reasons why, of all three performatives,'*mời*' has been acknowledged in all studies of Vietnamese invitations, but the other two have hardly been recognised in any, with the exception of T. L. Đào (2011a), who collected data in Vietnamese literary works. The use of '*mời*' and the non-use of the other two ultra-polite and ultra-formal performatives in currently collected VMRIs may indicate a preference or a tendency to narrow the social gap and distance through language use amongst present-time communicators.

The presence of '*mời*' in VMRIs can not only identify explicit invitations but also generally make them sound formal, polite, and respectful because performative verbs are used mainly to increase the politeness of directives in certain directions (Vu, 1997, p. 174). *Mời',* a polite verb itself, can increase the formality and politeness of the invitations in which it appears. It also characterises explicit VMRIs as being formulaic and conventional invitations. The verb can stand alone or it can also be preceded by honorifics such as '*kính*' and '*xin*', e.g., "*Xin mời!*' [Honorific invite] (IVN9, 08:12), to make explicit invitations more polite, respectful, and formal. The words such as '*hân hạnh*', '*trân trọng*', '*xin trân trọng*', '*xin trân trọng kính*', '*có nhã ý*' (with great honor or pleasure), that can be added to the verb to enhance the deference and distance between interlocutors in invitations in general (Lưu, 2007) were not found in daily mealtime invitations. This might indicate that users of everyday explicit VMRIs tended to retain cordiality and closeness rather than to keep or create a distance while being polite and formal.

The performative '*mời*' was presented in 149 out of 501 VMRIs[84]. Explicit VMRIs, therefore, make up only 30% of VMRIs while implicit VMRIs (see Section 5.1.2) make up the majority (70%), as can be seen in Figure 5-1 below.

---

present at the altar to enjoy the offerings). These solemn and formal invitations are not extended amongst common diners in every-day meals.

[84] Findings with the statistics were calculated on 501 VMRIs taken from ten diaries, 17 interviews (12 in Vietnam, five in New Zealand), four video/audio-clips (two in New Zealand and two in Vietnam), and five observations and informal talks in both New Zealand and Vietnam. However, discussions were also based on all other collected data (36 interviews, 53 diaries, 20 video-clips, field-notes)
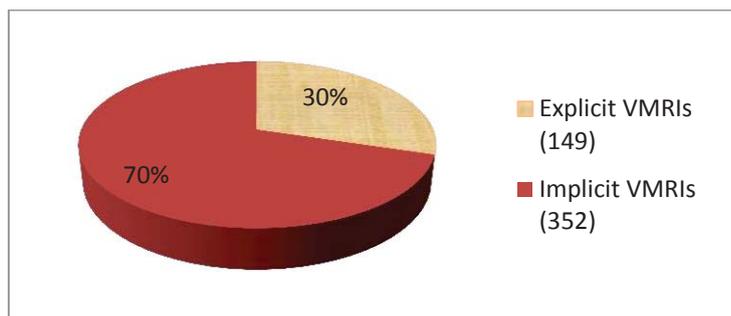
Figure 5-1 Explicit and implicit VMRIs

When the stakeholders generally perceived explicit VMRIs as being more formal than implicit VMRIs, their far lower use of explicit VMRIs compared with implicit VMRIs (30% vs. 70%) may indicate that present users of VMRIs had a tendency to be less formal. However, the verb '*mời*' (invite) can appear more than once in one utterance or one time of extending invitations. It occurred 184 times in these 149 explicit VMRIs. For example, it was used up to six times in this meal-start invitation,

"*Con mời ông, con mời bà, con mời dì Minh, con mời bố, con mời mẹ, mời em Bin!*" (D12#2)

[Child invite grandfather, child invite grandmother, child invite aunt Minh, child invite father, child invite mother, invite younger sibling Bin]

(I invite you all to eat).

Besides the presence of the polite performative '*mời*', the grammatical structures used with this verb also contribute to the formality and politeness of explicit VMRIs. Whether the explicit VMRI is a full complex clause construction or a reduced clause of various types affects the pragmatic meaning and the degree of politeness. The politeness effect of syntactic constructions in Vietnamese utterances has been widely noted (e.g., Hoàng, 1991; Vu, 1997). On this basis, six structures[85] of explicit VMRIs were distinguished in what I have called Structures#1-6, illustrated with examples in Table 5-1 below and explained further underneath.

---

[85] Particles such as discourse markers (e.g., đi, đã, nhé, thôi, rỗi) and honorifics (e.g., ạ, dạ) are not indicated here for the primary purpose of a clear realization of the structures of explicit VMRIs, but they can be seen in examples.

Table 5-1 Structures of explicit VMRIs

Explicit VMRIs structures	Examples
Structure#1, X mời (invite) Y do Z	(1) *Con mời bố, con mời mẹ ăn cơm* (VideoVN#3) [Child invite father, child invite mother eat rice] (Dad and Mum, please have meal!) (2) *Con mời mẹ ăn sáng* (D28#1) [Child invite mother eat morning] (Mother, please have breakfast!)
Structure#2, (a), X mời (invite) Z Y; (b), X mời (invite) Y Z	(3) *Con mời cơm bố!* (IVN#10) [Child invite rice father] (Father, please have meal!) (4) *Cháu mời bà miếng này!* (VideoVN#14) [Child invite grandmother piece this] (Please have this piece, grandmother!)
Structure#3, (a), X mời (invite) Y; (b), X mời (invite) do Z	(5) *Dạ, cháu mời ông ạ!* (IVN2) [Honorific, grandchild invite grandfather, Honorific] (Grandfather, please have meal!) (6) *Con mời ăn cơm*! (IVN11) [Child invite eat rice] (Please, have meal!)
Structure#4, Mời (invite) Y do Z	(7) *Mời mẹ xơi cơm!* [Invite mother to eat rice] (Mother, please have meal!) (8) *Mời bố mẹ xơi cơm đi ạ!* (INZ1) [Invite parents eat rice imperative honorific] (Parents, please have meal!)
Structure#5, Mời (invite) Y	(9) *Mời ông!* (IVN9) [Invite grandfather] (You, please!) (10) *Kính mời ông!* (IVN9) [Honorific invite grandfather] (You, please!) (11) *Mời ông ạ!* (IVN11) [Invite grandfather, honorific] (You, please!)
Structure#6, Mời (invite)!	(12) *Mời!* [Invite!] (Please!) (VideoNZ#3) (13) *Xin/ Kính mời!* (IVN9) [Honorific invite] (Please!) (14) *Mời ạ!* (IVN11) [Invite honorific!] (Please!)

A common feature of these six structures is that they all use the performative '*mời*' (invite) and there is no infinitive marker (to). The verb may be used with or without verbs in the complement or arguments, which are represented by X, Y, and Z.

Arguments X, Y, Z refer to nouns; X is a subject of the verb invite, (the inviter); Y is the invitee; and Z is the meal or food to be consumed. Both the verbs in the complement and these nouns can be optional[86] in some of the structures.

Table 5-1 shows that explicit VMRIs include both the full (Structures#1&2) and the reduced structures (Structures#3-6) of the performative '*mời*'. Structure#1 contains a full complement with all arguments present, which is similar to that of English verb 'invite': '*mời*' is preceded by X (the inviter), followed by Y (the invitee), then a verb complement (without infinitive marker) and Z (the meal or food). This structure is the most formal and polite (see below for further discussion). In Structure#2, '*mời*' is used with subject X and both objects Y and Z, but the two objects can appear in either order, similar to the dative alternation of English (see Newman (1997) for a comparison of grammatical structures of verbs of '*giving*' in different languages). In Structure#3, the verb goes with X and there is a minimal complement, either (a) Y only, (the invitee is the object of the verb invite but there is no clausal complement) or (b) a verb complement with Z, but no subject of the complement (Y). In Structures#4 and #5, there is no subject X. In Structures#4, '*mời*' is also used without a verb complement. Structure#6 is a minimal invitation containing only the verb and no arguments.

This list of grammatical structures used with the verb '*mời*' indicates that explicit invitations used in meal context can be more diverse than those used in other contexts, as found in previous studies. Two structures of '*mời*', with and without subject (the inviter), have been described as explicit invitations in general (Lưu, 2007; Nguyễn, V. T., 2012). Or as mentioned in Chapter 4, Section 4.2, Nguyễn, Đ. H., (1979) found out one full structure of '*mời*' and two shortened ones, which I have called Structure#1 and Structures#3 (a, b) respectively. They were all illustrated with examples of invitations at meals although he did not mention that the shortened ones were likely to be used in a meal context only. A possible explanation for the greater diversity of explicit invitations at meals is that meals provide not only the context but also the time, place and the proposition for these invitations even when the information is not explicitly marked (already discussed in Chapter 4). Therefore, the reduced invitations within meal contexts can be pragmatically as comprehensive or informative as the full-structured ones.

---

[86] Explicit VMRIs are called explicit purely because they all explicitly use performative verbs meaning 'invite'; they can include implicit information when certain elements are missing.

Whether an explicit VMRI is a full complex clause construction or a reduced clause of various types affects the degree of politeness, formality and respect, which are also greatly dependent on what structures are used to whom. This might be results of Vietnamese communicative style with respect to rules and principles of social intercourse (Nguyễn, Đ. H., 1956) and culture-based assumptions about what it means to be polite and respectful that impact greatly on language performance (Nguyen & Ho, 2012). Additionally, as socially conceptualised in Vietnamese society that upward-directed respect is the rule of appropriateness, more respect needs paying to the superiors than to the inferiors and equals (e.g., Đào, D. A., 1938; Nguyễn, V. H., 1944). These social statuses (superiors, inferiors, and equals) are mainly defined by age merit and lineage rank. Native speakers generally perceived that (1) standard invitations included all three elements: the inviters, the recipients, and the inviting propositions; (2) the use of these standard invitations could bring about formality; (3) the more these elements are included, the more appropriate the invitations could be to extend towards superiors. These general perceptions mediate native speakers' use of what structures of explicit VMRIs to use with whom.

Participants considered explicit invitations with full structures (Structures#1&2) standard since these invitations included all three elements: the inviters, the recipients, and the inviting propositions. These standard invitations were observed to be used more towards superiors than towards equals and inferiors. This might be because of their perceptions that these invitations would be polite and respectful when extended to superiors but would become too '*khách sáo*' (ceremonial or superfluous) when extended towards inferiors and in informal situations. Superiors also extended these standard-structured invitations towards inferiors when recipients were small children rather than grown-up children. This special delivery may also be interpreted as being for modelling purposes.

Explicit invitations with Structures#3&4 lack one element (either the inviters, or the invitees, or the inviting propositions). They were not perceived as standard as the full-structured ones (Structures#1&2). However, native speakers still considered them polite, respectful, and appropriate enough to extend towards their superiors and not too ceremonial or formal to extend towards their inferiors. This might be why explicit invitations with these two structures seemed the most frequent of the six.

Explicit VMRIs with Structures#5&6 were perceived as respectful and formal when used towards equals and inferiors. However, these invitations, especially those with Structure#6, which lack at least two elements, including the inviters and the recipients in their expressions, were inappropriate to extend towards superiors despite the presence of the polite performative '*mời*' and honorifics such as '*ạ', 'dạ'*. When neither the extenders nor the recipients were explicitly marked within the invitations, the use of them to address superiors might be regarded as '*ăn nói trống không*' (bare style of non-person reference) or '*xách mé/hỗn/láo*' (impolite/rude/uncultured).

In short, viewing the prevalent use of longer and more detailed structures in explicit VMRIs above shorter ones seems to violate the Quantity (be as informative as necessary), one of four conversational maxims for effective communication proposed by Grice (1975). Instead, the use of these highly structured and conventional VMRIs begs the question of them being examined upon native speakers' perception of respect, standard, and appropriateness that strongly govern their language use.

5.1.2. Implicit VMRIs

There is a wide variety of VMRIs that have various other structures and are not in the form of invitations using the verb '*mời*' (invite), for example, "*Cả nhà ăn cơm*!" [All house eat rice!] (Let's enjoy the meal!). These I am calling implicit VMRIs. They are found in forms of expression (narrative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamative; or requests, demands, jokes, and the like).

Implicit VMRIs are reportedly not as formal or conventional as explicit VMRIs. However, the selection of certain structures and particular kinds of addressee likewise allow speakers to express different levels of politeness and respectfulness. Based on their structural features and also on their expression forms and mood, implicit VMRIs are categorised into six structures, demonstrated in Table 5-2 below.

Table 5-2 Structures of implicit VMRIs

Implicit VMRIs structures	Examples
Structure#7: Imperatives without addressees	(1) "*Ăn cá đi!*" (Have some fish!) (D2#4) (2) "*Thưởng thức thôi!*" (Enjoy now!) (VideoNZ#4)
Structure#8: Imperatives with addressees	(3) "*Các con ăn cơm đi*!" (Children, have the meal!) (IVN1, 11:25)
Structure#9: Declaratives	(4) "*Tao ăn đây*" (I eat now) (D9#1)
Structure#10: Interrogatives	(5) "*Thùy có ăn cơm cùng bác không*?" (Would you like to join me for the meal, Thùy?) (INV4, 12:54)
Structure#11: Sequences of utterances	(6) "*Thế ăn thật chưa? Không tí về nhà lại bảo ra nhà thằng Bình, nó ăn cơm mà nó không mời mình được một bát.*" (Have (you) really eaten or not? Otherwise, later (you) may think that I didn't offer you even a bowl of rice when you appeared at my meal) (D2#6)
Structure#12: Off-records	(7) "*Tiết nóng đây nhé*!" (Here is hot-boiled-pig-claret!) (D2#4) (8) "*Lâm này!* (VideoVN#14) (Hey, Lâm!) (9) "*Đến bữa rồi! Cơm nào*!" (Mealtime! Rice/meal, now!) (IVN3, 08:47)

All implicit VMRIs with what I have called Structures#7-11 contain verbs, mostly eating and drinking verbs, e.g., '*ăn*' (eat) (examples 1, 3-6), '*thưởng thức*' (enjoy) (example 2). Implicit VMRIs with Structure#7 start with verbs, but they do not explicitly mark the recipients or the inviters. I, therefore, entitled them with the pragmatic term 'imperatives without addressees'. Sounding like requests or demands and barely naming the recipients, these implicit VMRIs were normally extended to equals or inferiors rather than to superiors. This type of VMRI is the most restricted.

Unlike implicit VMRIs with Structure#7, implicit VMRIs with all the other structures (Structures#8-11) were perceived as appropriate to extend to recipients of all statuses since they also contain at least one of the two elements (the recipients and the extenders) in their structures. These four structures are distinguished from one another due to their expression forms, which were also adopted as the only basis to categorise implicit invitations into forms of declaratives, imperatives, and interrogatives in previous studies (Lưu, 2007; Nguyễn, V.T., 2012). For example, what I have called 'imperatives with addressees' (Structure#8) are imperatives starting with verbs, using discourse markers with imperative modality such as '*đi', 'thôi','nào',* and also naming the recipients (example 3). Implicit VMRIs with Structure#9, called 'declaratives', are statements announcing that the extenders are about to eat and containing discourse markers with declarative modality such as '*đây'* (example 4). Implicit VMRIs with Structure#10 are interrogatives asking if the recipients want or would like to join the meal or have something (more) to eat/drink (example 5). Those with Structure#11 are sequences of utterances. The illocutionary effect of an invitation spans across a sequence of utterances with different structures rather than a single utterance (example 6). This multi-utterance phenomenon is not uncommon in speech acts (De Felice et al., 2013).

Unlike all other implicit VMRIs, invitations with what I have called structure#12 do not contain verbs. They also lack the inviters. Containing words denoting only either food/meals or the recipients (examples 7-9), these invitations do not explicitly mention ingestion or directly ask the hearers to eat/drink something as other implicit VMRIs do. I, therefore, termed them 'off-records', the term coined by Brown and Levinson (1987) for an indirect strategy to avoid the potential of imposing. However, contrary to Brown and Levinson's claim regarding on the politeness of off-records in general, these off-record implicit VMRIs were perceived by my participants as being inappropriate or impolite to extend to superiors. They were, like invitations with Structure#7, normally extended to equals or inferiors, but not to superiors.

The intention of extenders of implicit VMRIs is well-recognised although these invitations neither explicitly say '*mời'* (invite) nor directly ask the hearers to eat/drink something (Structure#12). The hearer's recognition that they have been invited to eat/drink appears to be based on what Kuiper and Lin (1989) called 'formulaic knowledge', both linguistically and culturally. Here, that knowledge is formulated by the governing meal-time context (a culturally perceived tie between invitations and

meal-context that has already been mentioned in Chapter 4) and also by accompanied non-verbal clues such as gestures, poses, eye-gazes, and facial expressions.

Non-verbal invitational signals

These non-verbal invitational signals are common features of implicit VMRIs (and explicit VMRIs as well). They contribute to characterising implicit VMRIs. For example, the short utterance articulating only the name of the recipient (8) is identified as an implicit VMRI. Its accompanying non-verbal invitational signals were described in a meal diary entry as follows: '*Uncle Long signalled to bro Johnny (Long's son-in-law, a non-Vietnamese speaker) and called "Ni!" (Johnny's endearment name), then pointed at the plate of stewed pork. "Ok, Ok" bro Johnny nodded his head straight away and picked a piece of pork up and ate it*' (D2#4). Here, non-verbal invitational signals and the context of use help the hearer to recognise the speaker's intention and interpret the single word mentioning only his name "*Ni!*" which does not mean 'invite' or indicate food at all, as an invitation.

Other examples of facial expressions with smiles and eye-gazes and gestures accompanying offering food are illustrated in Figure 5-2 and Figure 5-3, respectively, below.

Figure 5-2 Nonverbal VMRIs (smiles and eye-gazes)
(Photo from video-clip VideoVN#1)

Figure 5-3 Nonverbal VMRIs (food offerings)
(Photo from video-clip, VideoVN#6)

In summary, implicit VMRIs are significant. The use of implicit VMRIs, together with that of non-verbal invitational signals, has illustrated that mealtime invitations are not restricted to only verbal expressions or limited to the formulaic and conventional forms of expression with the performatives as in explicit VMRIs. Evidence from both implicit and explicit VMRIs has illustrated that VMRIs are diverse and have various grammatical structures and forms of expression. People identified the type of invitations and their structures and moods in accordance with norms of interactions, but their major use of implicit VMRIs, 70%, which is more than twice the frequency of explicit VMRIs (30%) also indicates a tendency to be informal in the present use of VMRIs. Moreover, both implicit and explicit VMRIs reveal much about the influence of gender, age, and other socio-cultural factors on this dyad, which will be discussed below.

5.1.3. Explicit and implicit VMRIs with gender and age

The performative '*mời*', as discussed above, distinguishes explicit VMRIs from implicit VMRIs. It is also a verb that varies in usage across age grades because of the huge differences in uses of these two types between two age groups (the 25 years old and under (≤25) and the older (>25))[87].

Figure 5-4 below shows the uses in percentages and raw numbers (in brackets) of total VMRIs and their two types, explicit and implicit VMRIs, between two groups of users, the ≤25 and the >25 years old.

---

[87] See Chapter 2 for age-grading reasons
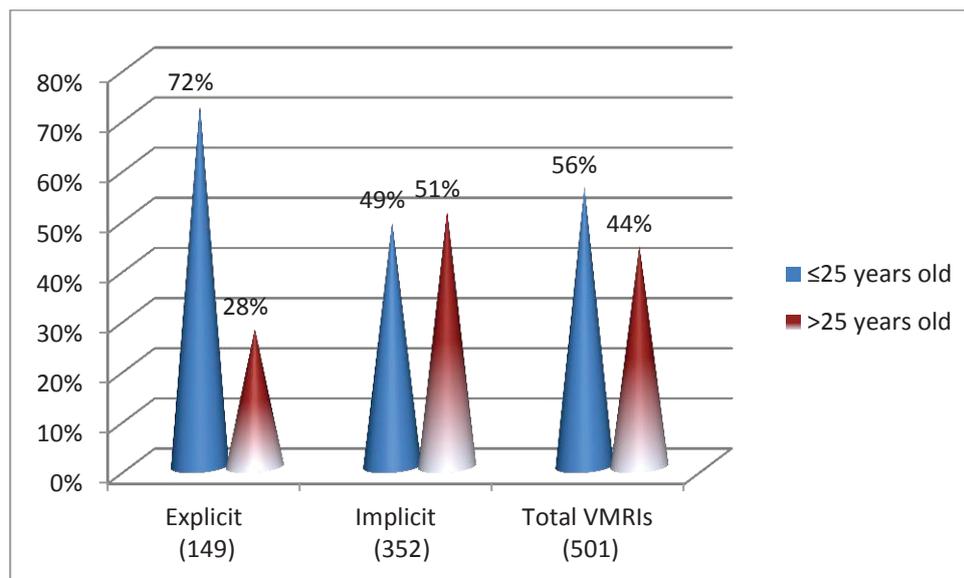
Figure 5-4 VMRIs used between two age-groups

As can be seen from the figure, there are great differences in the uses between these two age groups. The younger tended to use more VMRIs than the older (56% vs. 44%). They were also much greater users of explicit VMRIs, 72%, nearly three times as much as the usage of the older counterparts (28%). However, their use of implicit VMRIs was marginally less than that of the older (49% vs. 51%). The younger used 23% of explicit VMRIs more than implicit VMRIs (72% vs. 49%) and this is the same percentage that the older group used more implicit VMRIs than explicit VMRIs (51% vs. 28%).

These differences can be explained in two ways. Firstly, there exists a hierarchical bias which means that the inferiors need to be more polite and respectful to the superiors. The inferiors are, therefore, expected to use more VMRIs and more explicit VMRIs. This might explain why the younger speakers, who are often seen as inferiors, extended more VMRIs than the older speakers, who often regard themselves as superiors. In terms of types, explicit VMRIs with the presence of polite performative '*mời*' (invite) were generally perceived as more appropriate to extend towards superiors; whereas, implicit VMRIs were considered more appropriate to extend to equals and inferiors because the verb was perceived by the native speakers as superfluous in invitations towards these recipients. By that, the younger group extended more explicit VMRIs than implicit VMRIs as they might have more superior recipients. Conversely, the older group extended more implicit VMRIs than explicit VMRIs and were more likely to have inferior recipients. Briefly, the younger group's higher use of VMRIs and

especially much more explicit VMRIs can be interpreted as a reflection of their inferior status.

The second explanation lies in differences in language uses between the two age groups. The younger group tended to extend implicit VMRIs, which were regarded as casual and informal, to their equals and inferiors and explicit VMRIs, which were considered formal, to their superiors. Hence, the younger group seem to be concerned in associating the type of VMRIs with the status of their recipients. On the contrary, the older group seem to be relaxed with recipients of their implicit VMRIs. With the small percentage of explicit VMRIs (28%), the older group tended to extend their mainly-used implicit VMRIs towards recipients of all statuses-superiors, equals, and inferiors. This might also explain why implicit VMRIs were perceived as 'adults' typical invitations'.

The younger's much higher use of formal explicit VMRIs than casual implicit VMRIs (72% vs. 28%) and the older group's roughly equal use of the two types (49% vs. 51%) also imply that the younger users of VMRIs seem to be more formal and the older appear to be more informal and casual. The considerable differences in uses between two types of VMRIs by two age groups suggest that they are age-graded features of VMRIs. In other words, the performative '*mời*' (invite) that distinguishes this dichotomy is an age-graded verb in VMRIs.

The frequencies of the various types of structure of VMRIs in each type also vary according to the age of the users. The frequency of explicit VMRIs with the most fully-structured (Structures#1-4) was much higher in the younger group, but that of the most reduced ones (Structures#5-6) was higher in the older group. When implicit VMRIs were used, those containing at least two elements (the extender, the recipient, and the ingestion) (Structures#8-10) were more frequent in the younger group and those lacking at least two elements (Structures#7,12) or having unusual structures (Structures#11) were more frequent in the older group. These indicate that the younger group's VMRIs seemed more standard and the older group's VMRIs seemed more casual or less standard. This interpretation works when VMRI-users associate standard VMRIs with the presence of linguistic elements in the structures.

My findings about the uses of types and structures of VMRIs by two age groups support Holmes's (2008) interpretations of the usage of vernacular forms by age in New Zealand despite her different findings and her different age grades (0-30, 30-50, 50-70).

She found out that "as people get older their speech become gradually more standard, and then later it become less standard and is once again characterised by vernacular forms" (p. 175). Moreover, her explanation for the vernacular usage in terms of societal pressures helps to explain the uses of VMRIs by age, which is highly structured in Vietnamese society (e.g., McLeod & Nguyen, 2001). Therefore, following her interpretation, greater frequency and standardisation of VMRIs on the part of the younger group may be attributed to the greater societal pressures of respect and deference in Vietnamese culture. As those societal pressures reduce for the older group, they are more relaxed in using a low number of VMRIs in total, but with a relative high proportion of casual or less standard ones. This interpretation once again supports my view of the differences in using types and structures of VMRIs between two age groups as evidence of status hierarchy related to age.

In terms of gender, the data also revealed differences in the uses of VMRIs and the two types between males and females. The differences are firstly illustrated in Figure 5-5 below, which presents the usage in percentages and the raw numbers (in brackets) of three categories: explicit VMRIs, implicit VMRIs, and total VMRIs between males (M) and females (FM).
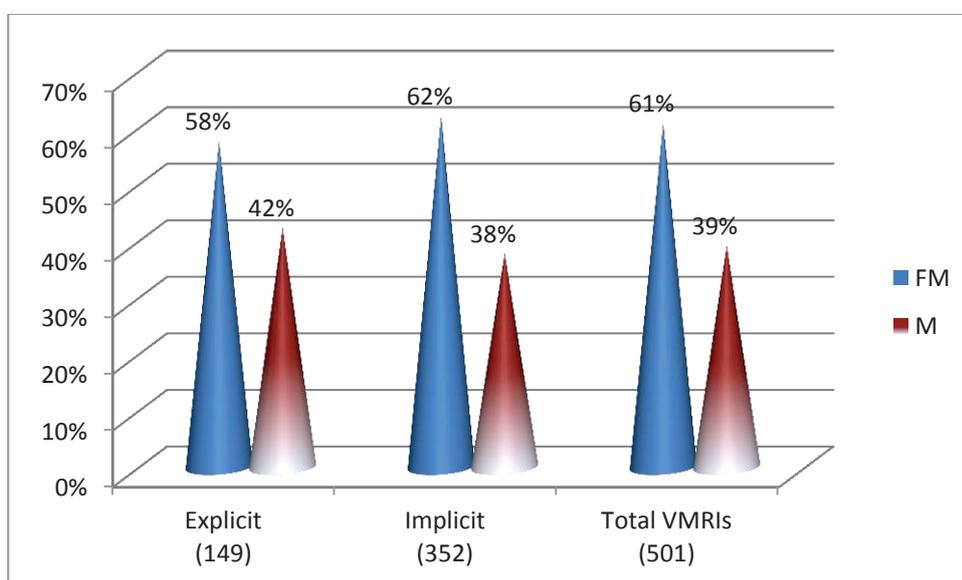
Figure 5-5 VMRIs used by genders

As can be seen from the figure, in all those three categories, the usages by females surpass those by males (58%, 62%, 61% vs. 42%, 38%, 39%). This indicates that females tended to extend more VMRIs than males. When extending VMRIs is

perceived as respectful and polite behaviour, issuing them more can indicate that females seemed more polite. 'Being more polite' was also what Lakoff (1975) suggested about American women in court and was interpreted as a reflection of their inferior status. However, I am not going to view females' being more polite as evidence of their lack of status although this was also my interpretation for the younger group's using more VMRIs than the older group. Instead, I see females' being more polite in using more VMRIs as their concern for their conversational partners. This interpretation is consistent with Holmes's explanation for the high frequency of politeness patterns among New Zealand women (1990, p. 270) as evidence of women's interactional maturity relative to men. That might be because females extended VMRIs to their conversational partners of all statuses, whether they were older or younger (but females chose different types of VMRIs to extend to their conversational partners of different statuses, as discussed below). Another possibility is that around a meal, the hostess is likely to be the one serving and offering food, so females may be in a role with more chances than males to extend their invitations. This positive explanation can also be supported by further findings below.

Females' higher use of implicit VMRIs than explicit VMRIs (62% vs. 58%) and males' higher use of explicit VMRIs than implicit VMRIs (42% vs. 38%) do not indicate that females are more casual or less formal than males. Contrarily, these differences in percentages suggest turning the interpretation around when combined with grading the age (at 25 years old) of the extenders. Figure 5-6 and Figure 5-7 present the percentages of using explicit and implicit VMRIs by four categories: younger and older males (≤25M, >25M), younger and older females (≤25FM, >25FM).
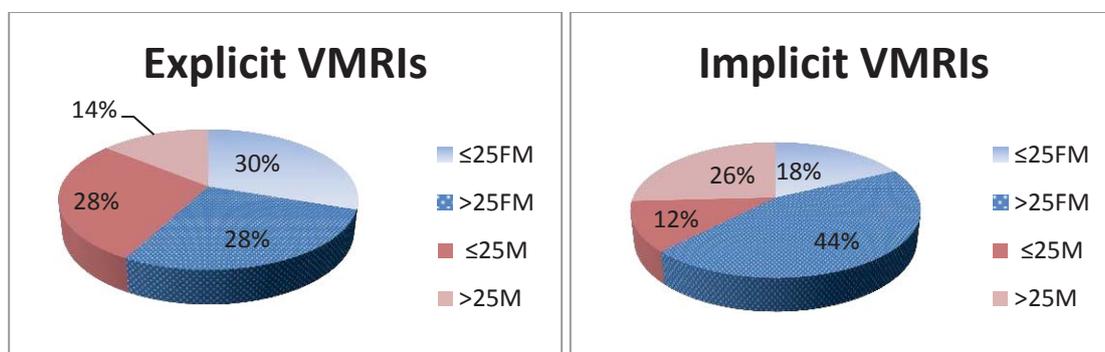
Figure 5-6 & Figure 5-7 Explicit and Implicit VMRIs used by age-graded males and females

Figures 5-6 and 5-7 show that differences in the uses of two types of VMRIs are not noticeable when males and females are younger (≤25 years old). Both younger males

(≤25M) and younger females (≤25FM) used the highest proportions of explicit VMRIs and smallest proportions of implicit VMRIs. The percentages of uses of two types between younger males and females are relatively similar (28% vs. 30% of explicit VMRIs and 12% vs. 18% of implicit VMRIs). These indicate little, if any, gender difference among the younger users of VMRIs. This might be explained from Vietnamese socio-cultural perspectives that at and prior to 25, the users of VMRIs are mainly single. Unlike in Western societies, Vietnamese singles, even if they are over eighteen, generally remain attached to their parents' families. They are, therefore, still treated as 'children', who are under family regulations. Children are disciplined, without gender identifications, to be obedient, respectful and deferent. These expectations would lend themselves to the use of VMRIs, especially the explicit type, which are generally perceived as more respectful than the implicit type. Consequently, the frequencies of each type among younger males and younger females are quite similar. Their choice of structures in each type does not differ according to their gender, either.

However, gender differences in the uses of two types are much more noticeable between older males and females. The figures show that older males used the smallest proportion of explicit VMRIs (14%), but their use of implicit VMRIs was the second highest (26%). On the contrary, older females' uses of both implicit VMRIs (44%) and explicit VMRIs (28%) were the first and second highest of all four categories in each type. Older males' relatively high use of casual implicit VMRIs and low use of formal explicit VMRIs imply that older males seem to be casual and informal in making these invitations. Whereas, older females seem more formal than older males due to their double use of formal explicit VMRIs compared with that of older males (28% vs. 14%).

The gender differences were not only reflected in these percentages of usage but also in the recipients of these percentages. Recipients of older females' explicit VMRIs were mainly superiors and inferiors as small children; recipients of their implicit VMRIs were mainly inferiors and equals. On the contrary, older males tended to extend their implicit VMRIs to recipients of all statuses since their small use of explicit VMRIs (14%) are mainly directed towards inferiors, often small children. Regarding the conventional perception associating the appropriateness of formal explicit VMRIs to superior recipients and implicit VMRIs to equal and inferior recipients, these differences imply that older males seemed more relaxed while older females appeared

more conventional in using which type to whom. Another implied difference is that older females seemed more concerned about the statuses of their invitation recipients; inasmuch as, older males tended to assert their superior status in their main use of implicit VMRIs, which is nearly double that of explicit VMRIs (26% vs. 14%). These findings are consistent with Holmes's (1998) findings that both male and female genders tend to be status-concerned. However, their concerns seem to have opposite orientations, with males' orientations towards maintaining and increasing their own status and females' orientations towards maintaining and increasing the status of their communicational partners rather than their own.

My findings also suggest that females have more integrity than males in their use of this VMRI dyad. This means that the uses of two types are greatly different between younger and older males, but are more consistent between younger and older females. Older males used the smallest proportion of explicit VMRIs (14%), which is half as much as the use by their younger counterparts (28%). On the contrary, their use of implicit VMRIs is the second highest (26%), which is over twice as much as the younger males' use (12%). These differences indicate a shift in the use of two types of VMRIs by males between two age grades. At the younger age, males' VMRIs tend to be more formal and conventional; being older, their VMRIs tend to be more informal and casual. While on the contrary, there is not such a sharp difference in the uses of two types of VMRIs between younger and older females. The difference in the use of implicit VMRIs between older and younger females is similar to that of between older and younger males (over two times more by the older), but the difference in use of explicit VMRIs between two age grades in females is only 2%. This suggests that unlike males, females' VMRIs appear to be highly formal and conventional when they are either younger or older.

Males and females are also different in their use of structures in each type of VMRIs. Regarding explicit VMRIs, the first four structures (Structures#1-4), which are perceived as more grammatically standard than the last two (Structures#5-6), were used more by females and the last two were used more by males. Regarding implicit VMRIs, those in forms of imperatives with addresses (Structure#8) and questions (Structure#10) were used more by females. These implicit invitations sound softer, less imperative, and more grammatically standard than those with other structures. However, explicit VMRIs of the most reduced structures (Structures#5-6), and implicit VMRIs of

imperatives without addresses (Structure#7), declarative statements (Structure#9), and short and casual structures (Structure#12) were typically made by males. Thus, females' VMRIs seem softer and more grammatically standard; those of males appear more imperative, casual and shorter.

These features are compatible with what Lakoff (1975) found out about the language features used by American women in the 1970s, including women's high frequency in the use of (super) polite forms, hypercorrect grammar, and questions or question intonations in declarative context. In other words, females' language in VMRIs seemed similar to American women's language in Lakoff (1975) in that their language use appeared more standard, more formal, less imperative than men's. However, unlike Lakoff, I do not associate these features with women's subordinate or inferior status relative to men. Data has shown that females tended to be polite (extending more VMRIs) to both their superiors and inferiors. Their politeness is, therefore, enacted beyond the common perception that subordinate people must be polite. Females' politeness seemed to stem from their concern for feelings of their communication partners. It might also come from their awareness of their roles towards the practice of VMRIs (see Chapter 7 for further discussion). Hence, my interpretation, which is accordant with Holmes's (1990), is that these features reflect feminine identities in VMRIs. These identities are merged with masculine ones when both sexes are younger (mainly ≤25 years old), but become more noticeable when they are older (>25 years old).

5.1.4. Other factors affecting the choice between explicit and implicit VMRIs

Apart from age and gender, the choice between explicit and implicit VMRIs also depends on numerous other factors.

The choice appears to vary according to the familiarity or distance between interlocutors. This means that extenders may issue either explicit or implicit VMRIs depending on how familiar their recipients are. This was reflected noticeably in informal talks with my participants after several meal observations at their place in Auckland. In the first two meals, two male hosts, one older (36) and one younger (33) than me, extended explicit VMRIs to me, the visitor who had not been at their meals before: "*Mời cô Duyên nhé*!" [Invite aunt Duyên declarative!] "*Mời chị ăn cơm*!" [Invite older sister eat rice] (FNNZ#4). But in my third visit during their meals some days later when we were

much more familiar to one another, they extended only implicit VMRIs instead of explicit VMRIs: "*Làm bát cơm, Duyên!*" [Do bowl rice, Duyên!] and "*Chị vào ăn cơm!*" [Older sister come in eat rice!], respectively. In our informal talk right after that, I asked them why that day they used the VMRIs without the verb meaning invite (implicit VMRIs), which were unlike their VMRIs extended to me in the two previous meals. The younger host's wife gave me the answer in a joking voice, on their behalf: '*When they extended invitations containing mời, you always declined. So, today they extended invitations without the verb to you*'. The older man then followed with '*Ah, they (implicit VMRIs) are less formal and consequently sound more sincere. Now, you are already more familiar and closer to us, so we use these invitations to you*!' These two responses implied that Vietnamese people distinguish between the use of explicit VMRIs and implicit VMRIs although they do not have special terms for these invitations and not few of them regard only VMRIs containing the verb '*mời*' (invite) as invitations. In these participants' perceptions, explicit VMRIs, which sound more formal and indicate courtesy, are often used when there is a distance between the invitation-extenders and recipients; implicit VMRIs, which sound more informal and sincere, are extended when extenders and recipients become closer and more familiar. This example expresses the way in which the forms and usage of VRMIs are related to social-cultural factors, age/generation, but also social familiarity.

Familiarity affects not only the selection of each type of VMRIs but also the use and non-use of VMRIs in general. Three interviewees reported that they and their regular dining partners did not extend VMRIs to one another at their everyday meals, but they did upon the presence of non-regular diners. They explained that on accompanying both regular and non-regular diners, they would extend their invitations to all of them. One of them added that regarding the presence of non-regular diners, it should be polite to extend VMRIs also to regular diners, but doing so at everyday meals would disregard them as 'insiders' and distance them to be 'outsiders' (INZ4). My observation conducted on a Vietnamese family (a husband and a wife in thirties, and a 5-year-old daughter) migrating to Auckland in 2013 during the time of my data collection here, also provided evidence of the mediation of familiarity on their use and non-use of VMRIs in the setting of their meals with non-regular diners. In those very first meals with me and others, all these family members extended their meal-start explicit invitations towards us (the daughter's invitations were often as a result of her parents'

reminding). Their practices of explicit VMRIs were observed in all settings: hot meals in their private place, at their guests' houses, or even in picnic meals. However, gradually, after nearly two years settling down here with numerous meals sharing with others, the parents did not remind their daughter to extend her VMRIs; they did not extend their VMRIs so frequently and their invitations were mainly implicit VMRIs, with the exception of their much older dining partners. Their recent little use of meal-start VMRIs might be the result of familiarity between them and their dining partners although it might also be the mediation of other factors, as well.

The use of explicit and implicit VMRIs also depends on individual perceptions in associating each type with hierarchy and respect. Many individuals perceived that being superiors (e.g., parents, elder siblings), their explicit VMRIs were not expected by people who are their juniors. For instance, a mother said that she strongly expected her children to use explicit VMRIs, but she did not need to respond with explicit ones herself, but implicit ones instead. The association of two types of VMRIs with hierarchy is also expressed in individual perceptions of husband-wife relationship. For example, a wife reported that she extended explicit VMRIs to her husband every meal because of her greater respect for him, but she thought explicit VMRIs were too '*khách sáo*' (ceremonial) for her husband to return to her; instead he extended implicit VMRIs to her. On the contrary, another female said she extended implicit VMRIs instead of explicit VMRIs towards her husband because to her, husband and wife were equal. Thus, in these representatives' perceptions, explicit VMRIs and implicit VMRIs are commonly attached with upward-directed respect and downward-directed respect, respectively; however, the association of relationships with hierarchy varies on an individual level. Consequently, the choice between two types is also dependent on individual perceptions.

The choice between explicit or implicit VMRIs is also affected by the concern for socio-family statuses of the extenders and the recipients. Explicit VMRIs with grammatically standard structures (Structures#1-2) were seldom extended towards inferiors except for small children. The extenders of these standardly-structured invitations were also often the parents or grandparents of small children. This special use can be viewed as using child-directed language to model the standard invitations at meals for the 'novices'. By extending their own standard invitations, the extenders are also performing an educational function, training both linguistic and cultural acquisition for the small

children. This makes parents/grandparents of small children different from other users of standardly-structured explicit VMRIs because their choice of VMRIs type was also governed by their concern for their socio-family statuses.

5.1.5. Summary

In summary, the performative '*mời*' (invite) is a linguistic element identifying the dichotomy of explicit VMRIs and implicit VMRIs. The implicit and explicit difference has been illustrated to be important. It shows the interrelationship between making sense of the language use and form and understanding key aspects of socio-cultural context. The difference in the use of between explicit VMRIs and implicit VMRIs also indicates the tendency to be informal among present speakers of VMRIs.

In terms of age, '*mời*' (invite) is an age-grading verb in VMRIs because of the apparent differences between two age groups in their uses of explicit and implicit VMRIs. The differences have implied that the younger group's VMRIs seemed more formal, conventional and the older group's VMRIs appeared more informal and casual. This generational difference was interpreted as the consequence of hierarchical statuses.

In terms of gender, there was little gender difference in VMRIs when the users were younger. Both younger males and females had similarly high use of explicit VMRIs and low use of implicit VMRIs. The uses of structures in each type between them were also identical. However, when the users were older, the differences became noticeable. These differences in uses of VMRIs in the data imply following gender differences. First, males seemed to be more relaxed; females seemed to be more conventional in extending which types of VMRIs to whom. Second, females appeared more polite and more concerned for their conversational partners than males. Third, females tended to be more concerned for the status of the communicators; males tended to be more concerned for their own status in extending their VMRIs. Fourth, female VMRIs sounded more standard, more formal, and less imperative; male VMRIs sounded more casual, informal, imperative and shorter. Fifth, females seemed to remain consistent; males seemed to change more in their uses of VMRI-dyad when they got older.

Besides ages and genders of both extenders and recipients, the choice between two types is also governed by other numerous factors, such as the familiarity or distance

between interlocutors, possibly 'insider' and 'outsider' distinctions, individual perceptions in associating each type with hierarchy and respect, and the social-family statuses of the extenders and the recipients.

5.2. Eating and drinking verbs

Eating and drinking verbs are words describing the ingestion of food and drink. They are also known as ingestion verbs in Newman's (2009) collection of studies of these verbs in different languages although Vietnamese ones were not included in his comparison. This exclusion might be because of limited attention to Vietnamese eating and drinking verbs even though great attention has been paid to certain verbs and classifications of verbs in general (e.g., Nguyễn, 1979; Đào, T. L., 2011a,b). Among numerous eating and drinking verbs, the verb '*ăn*' (eat) has been much investigated (reported in Vietnamese). However, these studies mainly focus on its extended meanings, which are created through semantic-shift (Phạm, 2011) or on listing its collocations and explaining their usage and meanings (Nguyễn, 1979; Tran, n.d.)[88] rather than emphasising the verb itself and the social aspects of eating.

Discussions on eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs play an essential role in understanding these invitations. VMRIs are invitations predicating eating and drinking activities. In other words, the social aspects of these activities are what VMRIs are about. Eating and drinking verbs are presented in most VMRIs. However, not all these verbs can be employed in VMRIs; meanwhile, VMRIs extenders have contributed more variants to the existing stock of Vietnamese eating and drinking verbs. Moreover, the choice of these verbs in VMRIs reveals much about language use of ages and genders; also about Vietnamese perceptions of politeness and hierarchical respect. Therefore, this section will discuss the use of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs with an emphasis on the social aspects of eating rather than the individual physical functions.

5.2.1. Eating and drinking verbs in use

Table 5-3 below lists 51 Vietnamese eating and drinking verbs, documented from various sources including my collected ethnographic data in both New Zealand and Vietnam (36 interviews, 53 diaries, 20 video-clips, and numerous observations and informal talks). These verbs describe various types of ingestion, e.g., eating, chewing,

---

[88] See Chapter 3

biting, licking, sucking and etc., with different nuances and connotations, ranging from local dialects to Sino-Vietnamese words. The majority of them are commonly defined in dictionaries or writings as ingestion verbs. Others are widely used in daily life, but their daily-used ingestion meanings have not been recorded in published accounts of Vietnamese language. However, the total of only 15 verbs was employed in my collected VMRIs. The choice of these 15 verbs and the avoidance of certain verbs (discussed below) in VMRIs are evidence to illustrate that eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs express the social and cultural aspect of sharing and enjoying food rather than the individual physical act of "ingesting" it although they are alternatively called ingestion verbs in this study.

Table 5-3 also illustrates the use of eating and drinking verbs in 501 VMRIs, identified in participants' ten diaries, 17 interviews, four video-clips, and the researcher's field-notes on observations and informal talks. Blank fields in the table mean the non-use. Numbers indicate the frequency of eating and drinking verbs employed in these 501 collected VMRIs; percentages (%) reflect the ratio of frequency of each verb on the total occurrences of all employed verbs.

Table 5-3 Eating and drinking verbs used in VMRIs

Ingestion verbs	Features & connotations	Frequency	Percentages
cạp/đớp/ngốn/hốc/nốc (eat), ngoạm (grab by teeth), liếm láp (lick), chấm mút/mút mát (suck), ực/ tợp (drink), nghiến/ nghiền/ nghiến ngấu (crush)	colloquial, slangy, abusive, insulting, vituperative		
căn (bite), nuốt/nút (swallow), nhai/nhơi (chew), hút/mút (suck), ngậm (pouch), nhấm nháp/nhâm nhi/nhấm (sip or eat/drink slowly), hớp (sip), ăn nếm (taste), thử ăn (try) liếm (lick)	neutral, standard/vernacular		
thời (eat)	polite, local dialect		
xực/thực (eat)	Sino-Vietnamese, archaic		
nhậu/đánh chén/phá mồi (eat and drink)	casual, informal, slang		
ăn (eat)	neutral, standard	435	82.7%
xơi (eat)	polite	10	1.9%
dùng (eat)	polite	22	4.2%
mời (eat)	polite	17	3.2%
thưởng thức (enjoy)	casual, informal, slang	1	0.2%
làm (eat)	casual, informal, slang	9	1.7%
triển khai (eat and drink)	casual, informal, slang	1	0.2%
chiến (eat and drink)	casual, informal, slang	2	0.4%
chén (eat and drink)	casual, informal, slang	1	0.2%
mần (eat and drink)	casual, vernacular	2	0.4%
nhăm (eat and drink)	casual, informal, slang	1	0.2%
uống (drink)	neutral	16	3.0%
nếm (taste)	neutral	1	0.2%
thử/ăn thử (taste, try out)	neutral	8	1.5%
Total		526	100%

5.2.1.1. Avoided verbs

It can be seen from the table that ingestion verbs with colloquial connotations that evoke derogatory, insulting, vituperative, and profane, such as '*cạp*', '*đớp*', '*ngốn*', '*hốc*' (eat), '*ngoạm*' (grab by teeth), and others are not present in any VMRIs. These terms are for the way animals, not human beings, eat. They might be used in few utterances with similar surface structures of invitations, for example, '*Mời bà đớp đi cho con nhờ*!' [Invite grandmother eat (impolite) for child sake] or '*Này thì hốc đi này*' [Now, particle eat up (impolite) imperative now]. But, those utterances are not invitations because they do not convey respect for the recipients. On the contrary, they are extremely disrespectful language with the inappropriate use of ingestion verbs with vituperative and abusive connotations to request the hearers to do the task of eating. The invitational structures are employed to amplify insulting purposes with profanity. Someone might also use them in a joking way to play with language in a VMRI to a close friend, for instance, but this likelihood was not found in my collected data.

Verbs with neutral connotations and precise descriptions of physical states of ingestion, such as *cắn* (bite), '*nhai/nhơi*' (chew), '*nuốt/nút*'' (swallow), and the likes are not observed in any VMRIs, either. These verbs are avoided in the invitations, possibly because the nuances of the exact physical consuming activities that they describe might not be elegant or delicate enough in the invitations. They also denote specific actions as a subset of eating; refer to phases of the physical process of eating, rather than the socially shared enjoyment of food. They evoke the sound of consumption and the manners of intakes that are typically associated with animals rather than civilised human beings. Graceful diners tend to be encouraged to minimise the noise of their ingestion activities or to close mouth when chewing food so that others cannot see or hear the food-processing in their mouths.

The verb '*thời*', a dialectal verb meaning 'eat' with a polite connotation is widely used in mealtime invitations in the South Central Highlands of Vietnam. It was nevertheless not found in my collected VMRIs. This might be because my collected data did not cover participants from this area.

Eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs do not consist of '*xực*' and '*thực*' (eat), which are two old or archaic Sino-Vietnamese words (Hoàng, 1994). Their absence from my data may be explained by their relative rarity in everyday and present language use. They

could now be seen only in idioms such as, "*Có thực/xực mới vực được đạo*" (being fed prior to being taught) or in a pair of Sino-Vietnamese word '*ẩm thực*' [drink eat].

In short, verbs with impolite connotations and those with neutral ones but evoking the nuances of precise ingestion activities were not employed in VMRIs. Additionally, eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs comprised neither any Sino-Vietnamese words nor words specific to all local dialects.

5.2.1.2. Employed verbs

Of 15 verbs employed in VMRIs, the verb '*ăn*' (eat) had the highest frequency (435/526). Its usage (82.7%) was over four times the total usages of the remaining 14 verbs put together (17.3%), making '*ăn*' the most common ingestion verb in VMRIs. This might be because of this verb's neutral connotation that makes its usage appropriate in all situations. Moreover, it has a common meaning as 'eat', but covers 'drink' concept as well. Additionally, '*ăn*' is a 'socially sharing' verb in the ways that it does not indicate phases of the physical process of ingestion like many avoided verbs mentioned above and that it is widely used also with numerous extended meanings in general usage (Phạm, 2011; Tran, n.d.)

'*Dùng*', '*xơi/sơi*,' and '*mời*' [89] (eat) merge both concepts of eating and drinking like '*ăn*' but have polite connotations. They make the invitations that include them polite and formal. The frequency of these polite verbs was relatively high (49 times altogether), second highest after the neutral verb '*ăn*'. '*Dùng*' and '*xơi*' were used more widely than '*mời*', which was used mainly by participants from only two Northern provinces (Nam Định and Hòa Bình) and one central province (Nghệ An) in Vietnam even though the frequency of '*mời*' (17 times) was higher than '*xơi*' (10 times). '*Mời*' (eat) was strictly required as an appropriate verb in some reported cases. For example, a 19-year-old student reported that in her family (in Hòa Bình), this polite verb was strictly observed in invitations extended towards superiors, while the neutral verb, '*ăn*', could only be an alternative in the invitations towards equals and inferiors (IVN12, 10:30). In other cases, it was, nevertheless, adopted more relaxingly, as a result of imitating or of habit forming. For instance, another daily user of this polite verb revealed that she copied the word from other users from an early age and it appeared automatically in her everyday

---

[89] Its more common meaning is 'invite', see Chapter 4 and Section 5.1

VMRIs towards all recipients. However, she did not know its ingestion meaning, apart from its much more common meaning as 'invite'. As a result, she thought it sounded so funny to use '*mời*' to mean ingestion and it should be replaced with '*ăn*' (the most commonly-known ingestion verb) to be correct (IVN14, 05:08).

There are many verbs whose primary and common meanings or definitions in authorised dictionaries are different from eating and drinking meanings, such as '*Làm*', '*mần*', '*chiến*', '*nhắm*, '*chén*', '*đánh chén*', '*thưởng thức*' and '*triển khai*'. However, they were used in VMRIs with the shifted-meanings[90] to denote eating and drinking activities. For example, a 35-year-old male hosting a meal in his home in Auckland said to his invited friends, who were readily sitting around the hot-pot on the dining mat, waiting for him to attend, "*Triển khai thôi anh em*!" [Implement now, bros!] (Let's eat, brothers and sisters) (VideoNZ#4). Similar examples of "*Làm miếng!*" [Do piece] (Have some!) or "*Chiến thôi!*" [Fight now!] (Let's eat!) were the daily mealtime invitations of a middle-aged man living in Hanoi towards his dining partners (IVN2, 13:50). When used with the shifted-meanings, these verbs made the invitations casual, humorous, and playful, which is similar to English way of playing with language, like '*Dig in*!'. Their colloquial connotations evoked informality, familiarity, and solidarity between the invitation extenders and the recipients. Their frequencies were not high, just one or two times for each verb except for '*làm*' (9 times). Amongst these semantic-shifted verbs, the only local dialect is '*mần*', meaning '*làm*' (do), which could refer to both eating and drinking activities. It was observed in the invitations of a 52-year-old man, who left his local home-town (in a central province of Nghệ An) as a young man to live overseas and then in places where his local dialects were rarely spoken, for example, "*Mần miếng đi con*!" [Do (local) a piece imperative child!] (Child, have some!) (IVN2, 13:50).

'*Thử*' (try out) and '*nếm*' (taste) are special ingestion verbs since they could precede or follow after another ingestion verb (e.g., *ăn thử, thử ăn, ăn nếm*), or act alone like other ingestion verbs in the invitations. Here is an example with '*ăn thử*' extended by a female host towards her pop-in neighbour, "*Nay Chủ Nhật, cháu làm nem. Bà ăn thử cái xem có ngon bằng bà làm không*!" (Today is Sunday, I make spring rolls. Please try one to see if the taste is as good as those made by you) (D4#1). These verbs have neutral

---

[90] Semantic-shift/change phenomenon is common in Vietnamese everyday language (e.g., Phạm, 2011).

connotations. But, they also connote the effects of weakening the imposition on the invitees to fully or officially join the meal by inviting the recipients to taste or to try the food/drink out first. In this way, the illocutionary force of the invitation is, however, strengthened since the invitation imposes more on the invitees to accept the offers. In Vietnamese and other Asian languages, imposition in invitations implies politeness and sincerity (Hori, 1986; Tseng, 1999; Vu, 1997). Therefore, invitations with these verbs appear more polite because they reflect the inviters' deference and sincerity. Their relatively high frequencies (nine times), together with the high frequencies of other neutral verbs (435 times for '*ăn'* (eat), 16 times for '*uống'* (drink)) suggest that VMRI-extenders prefer using words with neutral connotations.

These 15 verbs occurred 526 times and they were presented in 467 out of 501VMRIs. This makes up 93% of VMRIs with eating and drinking verbs, which is over 13 times as much as of VMRIs without eating and drinking verbs (7%), as illustrated in Figure 5-8 below.
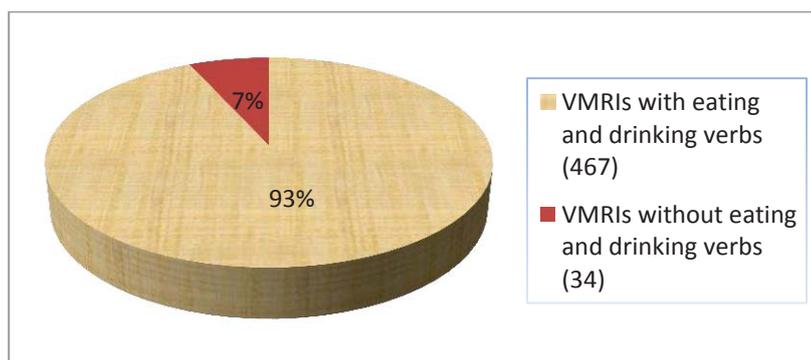
Figure 5-8 VMRIs with and without eating and drinking verbs

VMRIs without eating and drinking verbs (7%) can have any structures. They can contain verbs, but those verbs denote other actions rather than eating and drinking although these actions (sitting, opening beer bottles, for instance) might lead to eating and drinking activities after, as in these examples, "*Sit down, sit down*!" (D2#4) or "*Bật nắp đi anh*!" (Bro, please open your beer bottle!) (D45#1). VMRIs without eating and drinking verbs may contain only nouns denoting recipients, food/drink or meals. These VMRIs exclude ingestion verbs, but their proposition of 'eating/drinking', which is the kernel activity of VMRIs, is well-interpreted in the mealtime contexts. The proposition is formulated in the mealtime invitations regardless of whether ingestion verbs are marked or not. Therefore, high occurrence of VMRIs with eating and drinking verbs

(467/501) and high frequency of eating and drinking verbs (526 times on 467 VMRIs) suggest that VMRI-extenders prefer using eating and drinking verbs in their utterances. This interpretation is consistent with the findings in my Master's thesis (Dang, 2006) regarding the pervasive use of verbs in the Vietnamese translations compared with their original English versions of some selected Australian short stories. The findings also support the comments of a scholar that Vietnamese people tend to prefer using verbs: they use verbs to describe each action in an utterance, as opposed to Western nominalization (Trần, 2006). This scholar attributed prevalent use of verbs amongst Vietnamese people to their flexibility and dynamics expressed in language use.

The prevalent use of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs can be viewed as stemming from the characteristics in language use of Vietnamese native speakers; the choice and the avoidance of certain verbs in VMRIs can be seen as an indication of emphasis on social and cultural aspect of enjoying and sharing food rather than physical aspect of digesting it. However, the above analysis also begs the question of what other functions eating and drinking verbs play in VMRIs, given their considerable degree of delexicalisation in this context. Discussions in the following section propose another interpretation that their usage is to express degrees of politeness and hierarchical respect in VMRIs. Besides, preliminary analysis also shows that age and gender rather than migration, education, profession, wealth, power, or others constituted differentiating factors in the use of eating and drinking verbs. This preliminary finding is consistent with earlier research of politeness and respect in Vietnamese language (e.g., Nguyễn, 1956; Vũ, 1997). Therefore, politeness and hierarchical respect expressed in the use of eating and drinking verbs by two mediating factors of age and gender will also be discussed.

5.2.2. How eating and drinking verbs are used?

Vu (1997) proposed three politeness indicators (neutral, polite, and impolite) for linguistic elements in Vietnamese Directives and claimed that replacement could identify the politeness effects of elements with different paradigmatic variants. She took an example of a meal-time invitation "*Anh ăn cơm nữa đi*!" (Have some more!) (p. 141) and replaced the verb '*ăn*' with the variants of '*hốc*' and '*xơi*'. Here, she found out that when replaced with the formal variant of '*xơi*', the invitation became more polite "*Anh xơi cơm nữa đi*!" (Please have some more!), and when replaced with derogatory variant

of '*hốc*', it became impolite "*Anh hốc cơm nữa đi*!" (Eat up!). Her conclusion was that '*ăn*' was a neutral indicator, '*xơi*' was a polite indicator, and '*hốc*' was an impolite indicator. I adopted her replacement strategy to assess the formality and politeness of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs.

However, politeness and formality effects of linguistic elements in use are not always truly expressed through semantic replacement. For instance, some verbs, which have polite (*thưởng thức*-enjoy), or neutral connotations (*triển khai*-implement) make the original invitation above become very formal. Nevertheless, they were used in informal, casual, and playful manners in my collected VMRIs, as in the example "*Triển khai thôi anh em*!" [Implement now, bros!] (Let's eat, bros!) (VideoNZ#4) extended by a male amongst his equals. Therefore, politeness and formality effects of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs were also assessed in their contextual use through the manner of delivery and to use them with whom.

Based on the politeness and formality effects of 15 eating and drinking verbs employed in VMRIs assessed both by replacement strategy and through the manner of contextual use, these verbs have been categorised into three groups. Polite & Formal group comprises three verbs *xơi, dùng, mời*; Neutral group covers five verbs *ăn, uống, nếm, thử, ăn thử*; and seven verbs *làm, chiến, chén, mần, triển khai, thưởng thức, nhắm* belong to Playful & Casual group. There is no group of impolite verbs because employed verbs neither had impolite connotations nor were used in an impolite manner. The usage of the Polite & Formal group was nearly three times as much as that of the Playful & Casual group (9.3% vs. 3.2%). This implies that the use of verbs in VMRIs tended to be formal rather than casual. The Neutral group covered the highest percentage (87.5%), which was many times higher than that of the other two groups put together (12.5%). This prevalence of neutral ingestion verbs suggests that VMRI-extenders preferred using verbs with neutral connotations.

The politeness of the VMRI-extenders in their usage of eating and drinking verbs is not only reflected in their selection of the verbs but also in the selection of the recipient and the extender of the invitation they are used to refer to. Depending on who is selected as the subjects of the used verbs or as the actors of ingestion, I have categorised eating and drinking verbs used in VMRIs into three categories: (a) '*others' ingestion*' to mean the recipients as the actors, (b) '*one's own ingestion*' to mean the extenders as the actors,

and '*mutual ingestion*' to mean both the extenders and the recipients as the actors. For example, the verb '*ăn*' (eat) in '*Con mời bố mẹ ăn cơm*' [Child invite parents to eat rice] is categorised into '*others' ingestion*' because the recipients (the speaker's parents) are the actors or subjects of eat. This verb used in "*Tao ăn cơm nhé!*" [I eat rice now] (IVN16, 02:43), is categorised into '*one's own ingestion*' because the extender (the speaker) is the actors or subjects of eat. The verb '*làm*' (do) used as a drinking-verb in "*Anh em mình làm tí rượu chứ nhỉ?*" (Let's have some wine, shall we?) is categorised into '*mutual ingestion*' because both the extender and the recipient are the actors or subjects of drink.

The relation in the use (shown in percentages and raw numbers in brackets) of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs between three groups of verbs (Polite & Formal, Neutral, and Playful & Casual) and three categories (Others' ingestion, One's own ingestion, and Mutual ingestion) is illustrated in Figure 5-9 below.
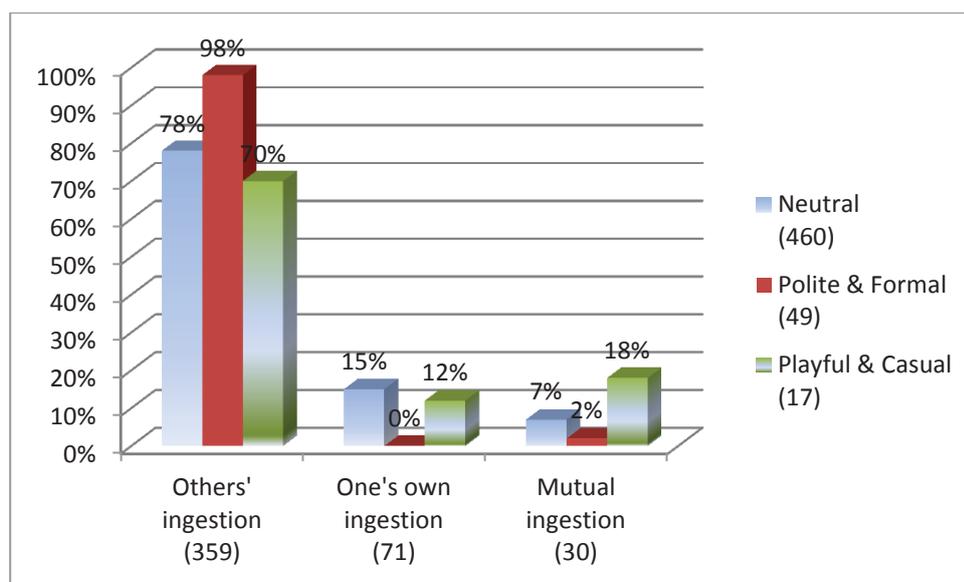
Figure 5-9 Politeness and formality in eating and drinking verbs

It can be seen from Figure 5.7 that percentages of eating and drinking verbs in all three groups are highest in the category of Others' ingestion and lowest (except for the Neutral group) in the category of One's own ingestion. This implies that VMRI-extenders preferred mentioning ingestion of others and minimised referring to their own. The highest percentage of polite and formal eating and drinking verbs (98%) was used, in comparison not only with other groups of verbs within the category of Others' ingestion but also with the usage of polite and formal ingestion verbs in the other two

categories. These indicate that VMRI-extenders mainly selected polite verbs when their recipients were the subjects of these verbs. Possibly, this was to pay the highest deference and respect to their communicators because these values are highly appreciated in Vietnamese sentiment-oriented culture (văn hóa trọng tình) (Trần, 2014). Whereas, in talking about one's own ingestion, no polite eating and drinking verbs were used (0%); instead, neutral verbs were used the most (15%). The minimization of mentioning about one's own ingestion and the avoidance of polite verbs if doing so may be explained as adherence to social norms of modesty and deference, which are highly regarded attributes in Vietnamese society (Trần, 2014).

When both the extenders and recipients of invitations were the actors of eating (mutual ingestion), the percentage of playful and casual verbs was highest (18%) in comparison with 7% of neutral and 2% of polite and formal ones. As mutual ingestion means no identification of whose ingestion, extenders or recipients, the highest use of playful and casual verbs in this group indicates that VMRI-users tend to create the informal and casual solidarity between the invitation-extenders and the recipients.

In short, minimizing mentioning one's own ingestion, avoiding polite and formal verbs when doing so, and referring to others' ingestion with a high frequency of polite and formal verbs are some politeness strategies in VMRIs. They are likely ways of expressing the humility of VMRI-extenders, showing the concern towards their conversational partners, and paying deference and respect to them. In other words, they are the inflection of the highly-regarded value in Vietnamese sentiment-oriented culture, 'lowering selves down while raising others up', which governs language use including eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs.

5.2.3. Use of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs by gender

The use of eating and drinking verbs also reflects users' gender. The percentages and raw numbers (in brackets) of eating and drinking verbs in total and in three groups (Polite & Formal, Neutral, and Playful & Casual) used by males (M) and females (FM) can be seen in Figure 5-10 below.
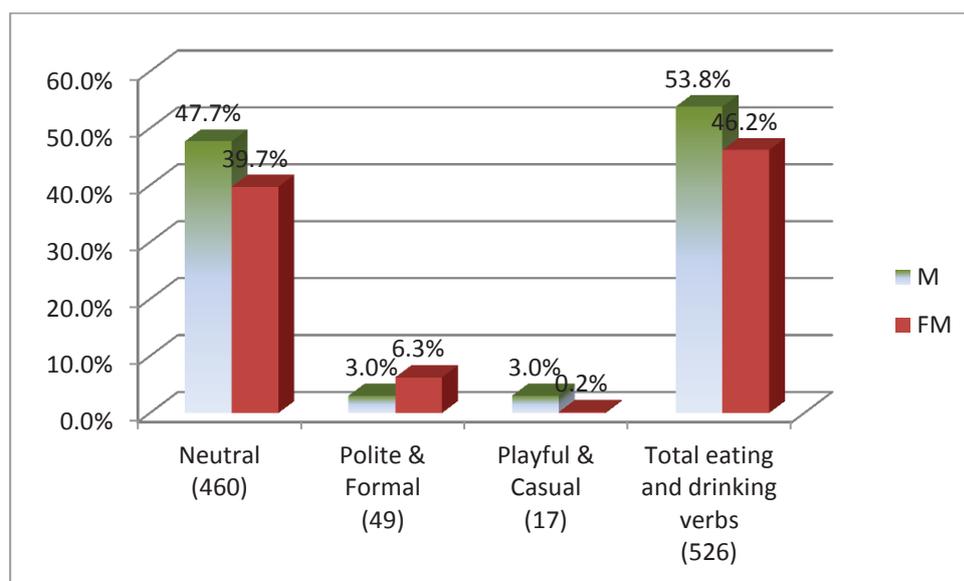
Figure 5-10 Use of eating and drinking verbs by gender

The figure data shows that eating and drinking verbs were used more by males than females (53.8% vs. 46.2%). This might be because males, as found in previous section, preferred extending VMRIs in forms of imperatives; meanwhile, those imperatives often start with eating and drinking verbs. Males' uses of both neutral verbs (47.7%) and playful and casual verbs (3.0%) were higher than those of females (39.7% and 0.2%, respectively). However, their use of polite and formal verbs was less than half of females' use (3% vs. 6.3%). These statistics indicate that females' verbs were more polite and formal than males' while males' were more playful and casual than female'.

These differences could be clearly seen in following representative examples of VMRIs extended by two different couples of husbands and wives, recorded in an interview and a diary. The first couple extended VMRIs towards each other. The wife used the verb '*xơi*' (eat-polite) in her invitation, which was reported the same every day, "*Em mời anh xơi cơm*" [younger sibling invite elder brother eat (polite) rice] (I invite you to have your meal) (IVN1, 09:20) while the husband only used '*ăn*' (eat-neutral) in his various invitations, "*Ăn đi rỗi!*" [Eat imperative imperative] (Have your meal!) or "*Em ơi, ăn cơm!*" [Younger sibling vocative eat rice] (Mealtime, darling) (IVN1, 10:50). Regarding the second couple's VMRIs extended towards the wife's mother, who stayed with them baby-sitting their infant, their invitations were relatively identical, except for the choice of ingestion verbs: "*Mẹ mời cơm đi ạ!*" and "*Mẹ ăn cơm đi ạ!*" (Mother, please have meal!) (D5#3). The former containing the polite verb "*mời*" (eat) was the wife's invitation; the latter with the neutral verb '*ăn*' (eat) was the husband's. That females

used more polite ingestion verbs in VMRIs is consistent with findings in Lakoff (1975) about American females' vocabulary, which is more polite and standard than males' vocabulary.

It is mainly playful and casual ingestion verbs which undergo semantic-shift. Through semantic-shift, more eating and drinking verbs are added to the existing stock, besides those that have been well-defined. The much higher frequency of playful and casual verbs in males (3% vs. 0.2%) can imply that males, but not females, offered more variants of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs. This indicates that males displayed greater creativity and flexibility in using eating and drinking verbs, while the nearly non-use (0.2%) of these verbs amongst females indicates that females' verbs were mainly those that are already well-defined. This reflects females' conventionality in their use of eating and drinking verbs. These findings are different from those in most gender-based studies including Chambers (1992) and Holmes (1997) in which women were found to "command a wider range of linguistic variants […] and have the linguistic flexibility to alter their speech" (Chambers, 1992, p. 199). However, there is no conflict at all between these interpretations of gender language use. VMRIs are not only highly-structured language themselves, but these formulae are also cultural rituals carrying society's values that females are 'the guardian' of (Holmes, 2013, p. 168). Therefore, in VMRIs, consistency with the conventional forms, structures and even vocabulary can be considered conventional and standard; whereas, creativity (creating more variants of eating and drinking verbs) and flexibility in using types and structures (in previous section) can be regarded as being casual and less standard. Hence, in the use of eating and drinking verbs, females' standard vocabulary use can be attributed to conventionality, which is adherence to socio-cultural norms. Males' creating more variants of ingestion verbs and their flexibility with these verbs could be indicators of their casualness, which might be the consequence of lower socio-cultural pressure to conform.

5.2.4. Use of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs by age

Eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs differentiate the older users from the younger ones. The percentages and raw numbers (in brackets) of three groups of eating and drinking verbs (Polite & Formal, Neutral, and Playful & Casual) used by two age groups:

twenty-five and under (≤25) and older than twenty-five (>25) are illustrated in Figure 5-11 below.
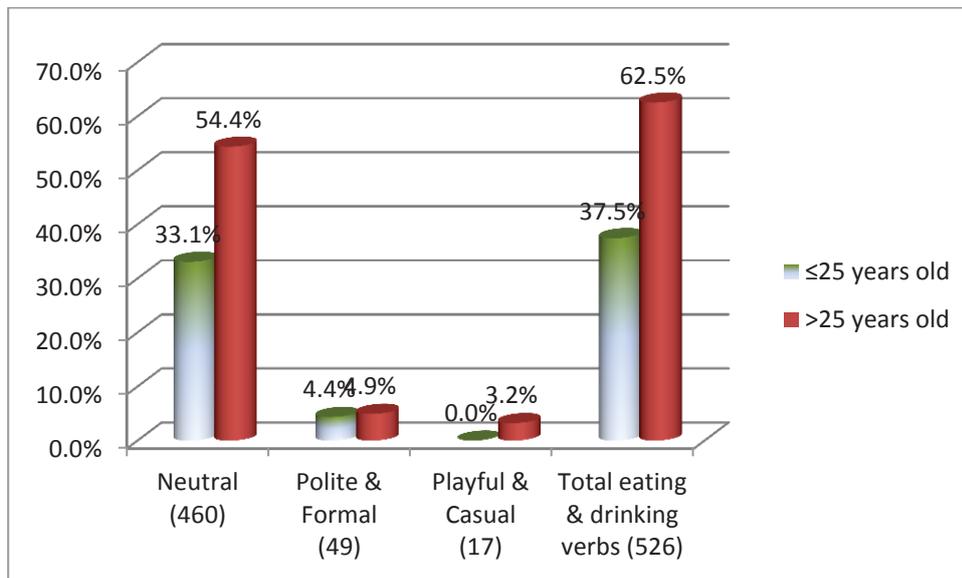
Figure 5-11 Use of eating and drinking verbs by age

Data in the figure shows that the older VMRI-extenders had greater uses of eating and drinking verbs in total (62.5% vs. 37.5%) and in all three groups of verbs than the younger VMRI-extenders. The difference between them in Polite & Formal verb group was little, only 0.5%. However, the percentage of neutral verbs among the older people was about one and a half as much as that among the younger people (54.4% vs. 33.1%). Though playful and casual uses were generally infrequent, those few which did occur were entirely restricted to older speakers (3.2%). These imply the restriction to only neutral and polite variants amongst younger VMRI-extenders but the flexibility in using playful and casual verbs as well amongst older extenders.

That the younger participants' percentage of polite and formal verbs was about as high as the older participants' but their playful and casual verbs was 0% also implies that the younger VMRI-extenders' ingestion verbs tended to be more polite while the older extenders' tended to be more casual. Apart from the use of more explicit VMRIs, which are perceived as the more polite and conventional type with the presence of the polite verb of '*mời*' (invite), and their more standard structures (discussed in previous section), the younger participants' restriction to the use of only neutral and polite vocabulary in this section is further evidence of their lack of status in relation to the older participants',

their superiors. This is possibly because of a wide assumption that children must be polite to adults or the inferiors must be polite to their superiors.

In brief, perceptions of politeness in VMRIs derive from a complex interaction of linguistic and lexical choices on the part of the speaker. These include the avoidance and use of certain eating and drinking verbs and whose ingestion they refer to. VMRI-extenders followed the politeness conduct of 'lowering self and raising others up'. They expressed their humility or modesty in using neutral verbs to describe their own ingestions, while paying deference and respect towards communicating partners by using polite verbs to refer to their partners' ingestion and referring to others' more than to their own. Moreover, the use of eating and drinking verbs can also identify gender differences in the way that females' ingestion verbs tended to be more polite and formal while males' appeared to be more casual. Males used more variants of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs and, therefore, enriched the list of ingestion verbs in use; whereas, females seemed to be conventional in using verbs that were well-defined. Females' conventionality tended to be associated with their role of 'guarding society's values' in VMRIs in terms of language. It included their consistency in using what they considered keeping highly-structured or formulaic VMRIs linguistically standard and conventional. In terms of age, differences in the use of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs can be attributed to the Vietnamese age hierarchy of '*kính trên*' (respecting the superiors), which restricts the younger extenders to the use of only neutral and polite variants while expanding the older speakers' flexibility in using playful and casual verbs as well.

5.3. Summary

In conclusion, this analysis of explicit, implicit VMRIs and eating and drinking verbs has revealed the role of key sociocultural variables in shaping lexicogrammatical choices in VMRIs. The role of familiarity was consistent with findings from other sociolinguistic research across a wide range of languages and functional areas; namely, that increased familiarity between participants was associated with lessened use of formal linguistic and lexical features. The role of gender, however, was less consistent with other sociolinguistic research, in that males, rather than females, produced VMRIs with greater variety and innovation although female issued more VMRIs. This apparent

anomaly was tentatively attributed to the influence of the overriding sociological norm of conformity, acting as a brake on female linguistic creativity in this context. The role of age was not anticipated in that the younger extenders of VMRIs seemed to frame their choices within more standard vocabulary and structures while this restriction tended not to apply to the older ones. This disparity is likely the influence of Vietnamese age hierarchy on language use: the younger people are more likely to be giving invitations to their parents, older people, or people of higher status hence the expectation that they would use more standard forms. As such, the linguistic forms of VMRIs are seen as an evolving equilibrium produced by complex and contradictory contextual and cultural drivers.

Chapter 6. PERSON REFERENCE

The previous chapter, Chapter 5, examined linguistic features of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations (VMRIs) through their two main aspects, types and structures of VMRIs and eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs. This chapter examines another linguistic aspect, person reference in VMRIs. By person reference, I mean the use and non-use of person reference terms and the way people are referenced in these invitations. Reference includes self-reference (referencing oneself, i.e., the speaker or the first-person interlocutor), second-person reference (referencing the hearer or the second-person interlocutor, including address and vocative), and third-person-reference (referencing the third parties or other people than the first-person and the second-person interlocutors). In particular, I explore following aspects:

- Document person reference in VMRIs by age and gender in terms of politeness and respect

- Examine the diversity, flexibility, and dynamic of person reference in VMRIs through person reference terms and patterns of person reference.

- Uncover how VMRI-extenders construct themselves and how they position the recipients through their choice of person reference terms

This investigation of person reference in VMRIs is worthy of discussion because it contributes to build up knowledge of person reference, a great interest of researchers world-wide. Moreover, it reveals much about the linguistic and socio-cultural values that underlie the use of the Vietnamese vivid system of person reference terms, variation in their usage, and perceptions of politeness and appropriateness across genders and generations of users. Especially, the discussions can fill the gap in studies of Vietnamese person reference since little attention has been paid to the way person reference terms are used or not used/omitted from utterances and the way users of person reference terms position others and construct themselves.

This chapter starts with an overview of Vietnamese person reference in section 6.1. Section 6.2 provides findings and discussions of above three aspects of person-reference in VMRIs, with steering questions, such as What and how person reference terms were employed in VMRIs? What factors governed the choice? In what cases were they omitted? Who were the typical users and omitters of those terms? How did invitation extenders position their invitation recipients and construct themselves? Section 6.3 summarises the whole chapter.

6.1. An overview of Vietnamese person reference

Person reference is a topic of great interest for a large number of scholars in different languages (Barbour, 2015; Blum-Kulka, 1989; Burling, 1970; Enfield, 2007; Garde, 2013). It is commonly agreed that person reference in language is reconciled differently in different cultures (Levinson, 2007). Thus, I am convinced that it is worthy investigating person reference in a particular language like Vietnamese and exploring it in a specific cultural context like language of invitations at mealtimes.

Vietnamese person reference, commonly known in extant literature as the use of Vietnamese person reference terms (e.g., Luong, 1990) or terms of address and first-person reference (e.g., Shohet, 2013), has been studied widely since and from the first systematic investigation of Vietnamese kinship system by Spencer (1945) to the pragmatic explanations of person reference from perspectives of socio-culture and ideology (Luong, 1987, 1989, 1990; Nguyễn, 1956), politeness (Vu, 1997; Tran, 2010), diversity and problems (Nguyễn, 1998; Shohet, 2013), or gender and social change (Pham, 2002). However, commonly-shared knowledge of Vietnamese person reference and only works of three scholars (Luong, 1987, 1989, 1990; Vu, 1997; and Nguyễn, 1998), which are most noticeably supportive for my discussions on person reference in VMRIs, are reviewed below.

A common finding about Vietnamese person reference is that Vietnamese language possesses one of the most vivid reference systems (e.g., Luong, 1990; Pham, 2002; Wardhaugh, 2006). Apart from the common use of pronouns, names, and titles, there is an extensive use of kinship terms as forms of address, e.g., '*con*' (child), '*cháu*' (grandchild/niece/nephew), '*bác*' (uncle/aunt), for both relatives and non-relatives. Vietnamese kinship terms reflect family and lineage orders; kinship on both paternal and maternal sides; and relations by blood or marriage. For example, Vietnamese

speakers commonly reference their aunt with at least seven kinship terms (bác, bá, thím, mợ, o, dì, cô)[91] as in the Figure 6.1 below.
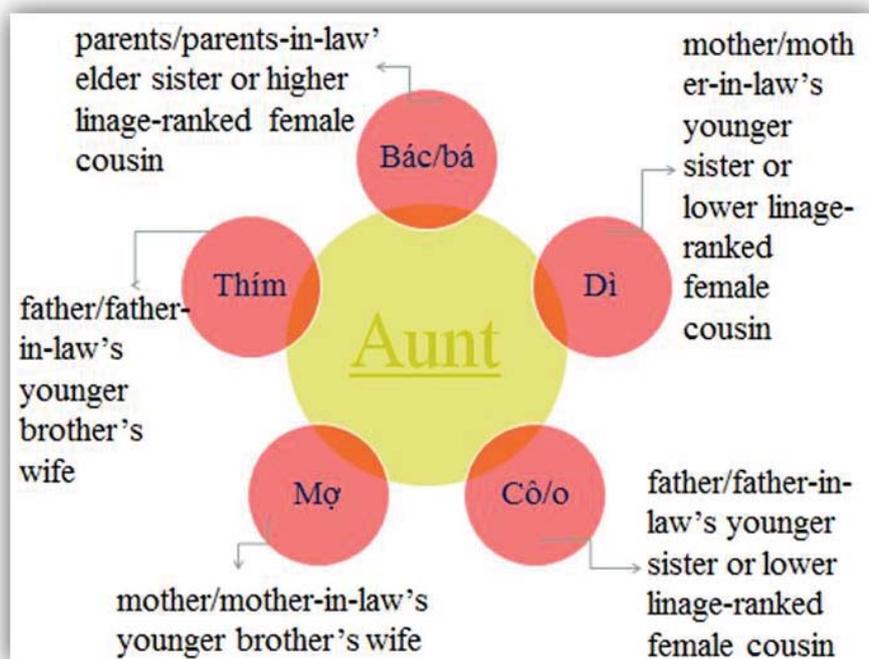
Figure 6-1 Vietnamese kinship terms for one's aunt

These terms are often referenced in various ways, such as with or without first names or birth orders[92] in different regions. They are also used for other kinships apart from one's aunt and for non-relatives as well. For example, a child commonly uses '*Cô*' (aunt) to address his/her father's younger sister, but his/her father, for instance, can also address the lady by '*Cô*' (aunt) (though he is the lady's older brother). This kinship term is also commonly used in social interactions to reference a non-relative woman, like a female teacher by her students and also by her students' parents. Commenting on the Vietnamese system of reference terms, Wardhaugh (2006, p. 271) wrote: Vietnamese language employs "what we regard as kinship terms for use as address terms [….]. Bare English translation of Vietnamese terms into English words like aunt, cousin, etc., always seem deficient to Vietnamese [….]. The English equivalents fall far short of Vietnamese understanding of social relationships".

---

[91] Some terms such as *Bá* and *O* are dialectal
[92] Birth orders, which are represented by numbers starting from Two, are commonly used as names after kinship terms, for example, thím Tư (aunt Four) is used to reference the aunt who was born as the third child in her family

The use of person reference terms (hereafter RTs) in Luong (1987, 1989, 1990) and other scholars' studies is found to be governed by a native ideology, which is complemented by both Confucian doctrine (emphasizing the socio-political order and lineage continuity) and Buddhist belief system (emphasizing the notion of cyclical reincarnation). Luong distinguishes two pragmatic models of RTs. The 'organic unity model', using kinship terms and title terms, emphasises hierarchical formality and stability, pragmatically implied in the names:

> Names or role terms ("father", "son", "younger sibling", "prince",
>
> "minister") should be appropriately used in accordance with the
>
> order of the universe, and that a person should behave in accordance
>
> with what the "name" of his role (e.g., father, son, younger sibling,
>
> prince, minister) would pragmatically entail (1990, p.6).

The 'communitas model', using proper names and personal pronouns, emphasises informal solidarity. According to Luong, the former is the dominant model and the latter is an alternative one. He notes that the Vietnamese kinship term system orients toward ages and generations of both the paternal and maternal sides, but gives more weight to males. The author also highlights that the choice of RTs in certain communicative contexts is strategic and intention-based. The governing ideology and those socio-cultural values pointed out by this scholar will frame my arguments on the socio-cultural aspects of person reference in VMRIs.

Vietnamese RTs are claimed to function as (im)politeness devices (e.g., Vu, 1997; Tran, 2010). This is consistent with findings from other languages in a great number of studies (e.g., Barbour, 2015; Blum-Kulka, 1989; Enfield, 2007; Garde, 2013). However, the use of Vietnamese RTs to express (im)politeness is found to depend primarily on the interlocutors' relationship, age, status, and rank, which are much upon relations of hierarchy. Amongst studies focusing on politeness aspect of Vietnamese RTs, Vu's (1997) overview is the most comprehensive.

In particular, Vu (1997) focuses on how politeness, which she categorises into respectful and strategic politeness, is manifested in Vietnamese (Hanoian) directives through the use of RTs. Following Brown & Gilman's (1960, 1972) distinctions of RTs

basing on power and solidarity[93], Vu offers two groups, which mark formality and solidarity. The first group, which includes kinship terms, titles, and status terms, expresses formality; the second group, which includes kinship terms, proper names, and personal pronouns, is characterised by solidarity. This author also likens her formality group and solidarity group to Brown & Levinson's (1987) negative politeness (the use of RTs such as Sir, Madam as group identity markers) and positive politeness (the use of RTs such as Mom, Daddy as deference markers), respectively. However, Vu challenges Brown and Levinson's hypothesis of considering the use of RTs (those indexing both positive politeness and negative politeness) as strategies to defuse the degree of face-threatening-acts. Rather, she suggests considering the pervasive use of polite RTs as markers of the status and solidarity between interlocutors in accordance with the social norms of interaction. In other words, she means the use of polite RTs in Hanoians' directives is dependent upon only two values of Power and Distance, rather on all three (Power, Distance, and Imposition) as claimed by these founders of politeness theory. In this way, she argues that RTs in Hanoians' directives are devices of respectful politeness, which operates with rules of respect and solidarity. Vu's distinctions between groups of RTs and suggestions for politeness rules of RTs will be a basis for my discussions in using RTs in VMRIs from the perspective of politeness.

Of various studies claiming diversity and dynamics of Vietnamese RTs, Nguyễn (1998) is amongst the few focusing also on the diversity of pairing RTs (RTs used for the speaker (I) and the hearer (You)) and the dynamic use of these pairs in reality, especially in giving and responding to comments. He states that no prefabricated units in Vietnamese have equivalents to the I-You pair in English; those in Vietnamese reflect various factors of ages, genders, status, power, kinship, attitude, emotion, etc. of interlocutors. Within kinship terms in Northern dialects only, he proposes 34 address pairs, accounting for six generations of 'ego'.

Nguyễn also discovers the diverse and dynamic ways that RTs are paired in interactions. The author claims that the pairing of RTs diversifies in at least one of three main relationship patterns, as follow:

---

[93] Brown & Gilman (1960/1972) distinguish two groups of RTs basing on power and solidarity: the V-group reflecting power and/or not-solidarity; the T-group reflecting non-power and/or solidarity. The T/V distinctions get the initials of Latin words VOS (deferential pronouns) and TU (familiar pronouns)

1-The 'Circular-relationships' describe the Vietnamese system of kinship terms, used amongst members of both families and social communities to express inequality, solidarity, and respect towards superiors, and closeness towards inferiors. Nguyễn illustrates this circular relationship using Figure 6-2 below, without explaining how it is circular.
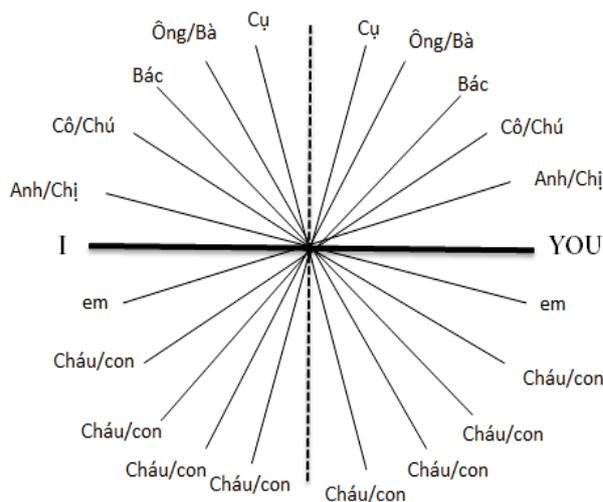
Figure 6-2 The Circular relationship of address terms

(Nguyễn, 1998, p. 85)

2-The Horizontal-relationships have two types. Type I is for non-kinship address pairs used amongst power equals expressing equality, solidarity, and/or closeness. It is compared by the author as the equivalents to the use of Brown & Gilman's (1960/1972) group of RTs with non-power and/or solidarity in English and other European languages but of less popularity (mainly amongst the young as close friends). This type includes some 'interchangeable pairs', in which the terms are used to reference both first-person and second-person interlocutors. The context of the utterances can help identify which one the terms refer to, first-person interlocutor (I) or second-person interlocutor (You). Type II is for pairs TÔI (I)-Title/kinship terms above ego (such as grandfather, uncle, aunt), which are regarded as the equivalents to Brown & Gilman's group of RTs with non-power and/or solidarity to express the relatively equality, non-solidarity, and formality. Two types (I and II) of horizontal-relationships are visualised by Nguyễn's two images below, in Figure 6-3 and Figure 6-4, respectively.
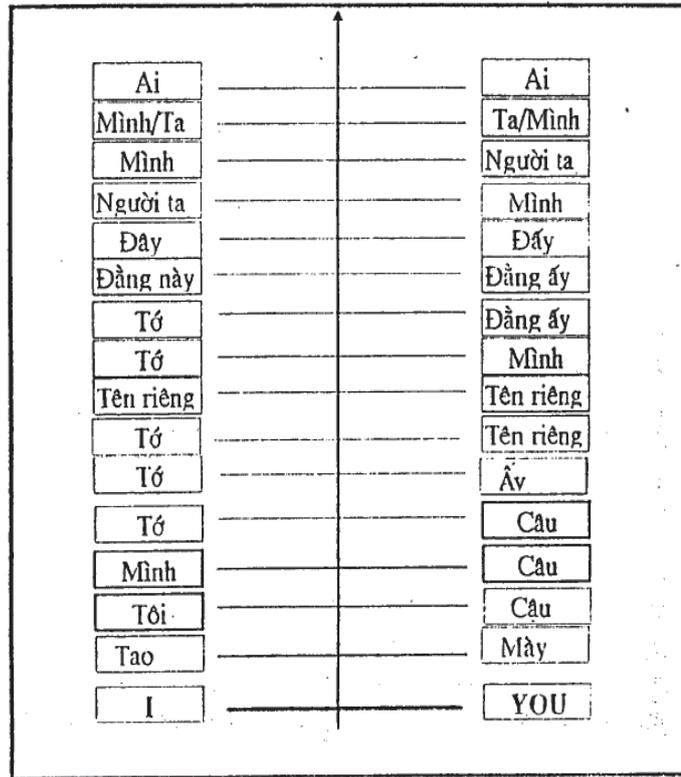
Figure 6-3 The Horizontal-relationships type I

(Nguyễn, 1998, p. 86)
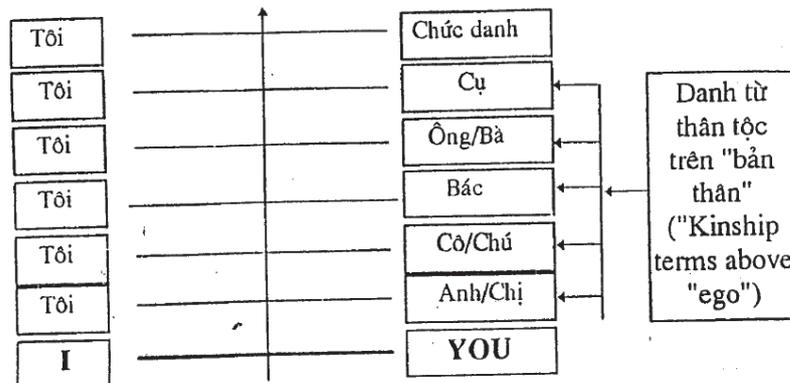
Figure 6-4 The Horizontal-relationships type II

(Nguyễn, 1998, p. 89)

3-The Dynamic-relationships include three types. Types I and II are for addressing people of higher and lower statuses, respectively, using the pairs TÔI-CHỨC DANH (I-Title) first but then changing flexibly to the address pairs in other patterns (Circular or Horizontal) to express closeness and respect. In type I, first-person RTs often change; in type II, second-person RTs often change. Type III is for addressing people on a child's

behalf, which reflect closeness, deference, and familiality or family-orientation (tính gia đình).

Three types of Dynamic-relationships can be illustrated in Figure 6-5, which adapts and combines the author's five original diagrams of dynamic relationships.
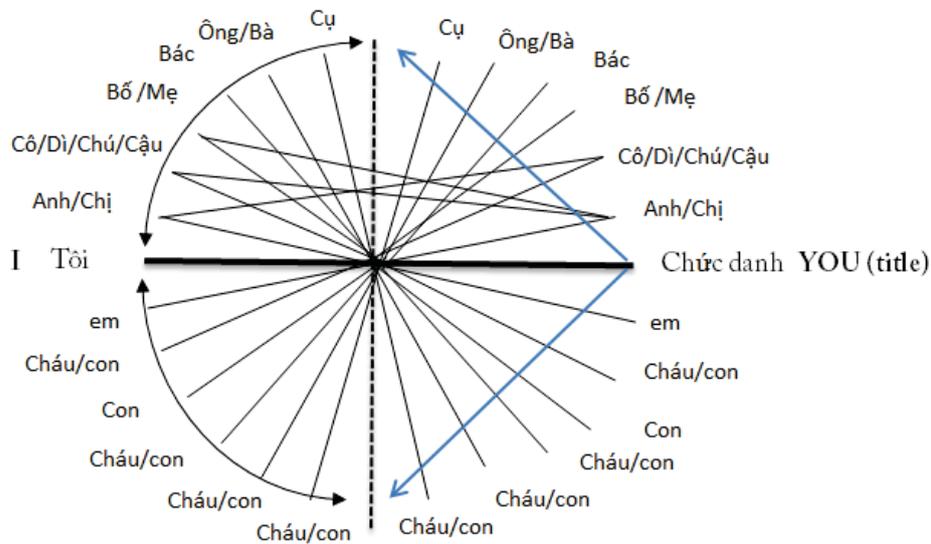
Figure 6-5 The Dynamic-relationships

(Adapted from Nguyễn, 1998)

Nguyễn's (1998) relationship patterns of address pairs establish the frame for my discussions on the real-use of RTs in VMRIs, through which RTs diversify themselves in their peculiar ways and yield more pairs and more patterns of pairing that contribute to the completeness of this scholar's patterns.

In short, three scholars reviewed above focused on different aspects of Vietnamese person reference, represented their findings in different terms, based on the data collected at different times and places, and followed different research approaches, but they all share commonness or support one another. For example, what Nguyễn (1998) has called Circular relationships and Dynamic-relationships Type III could be clear evidence of what Luong (1990) has found as the combined influence of both Confucian doctrine (emphasizing the socio-political order and lineage continuity) and Buddhist belief system (emphasizing the notion of cyclical reincarnation) on Vietnamese person reference. Similarly, the principles of using RTs in terms of politeness and respect outlined by Vu (1997) could be seen in patterns of pairing RTs found in Nguyễn (1998) and also in what Luong (1990) has found as the governing of Vietnamese native

ideology over person reference. I will mainly use models of these three scholars to discuss person reference in VMRIs in the light of age and gender, the choice of RTs as politeness strategies to show respect for status and solidarity and diversity, dynamic, and flexibility in pairing RTs. However, my discussions will also focus on what I define (later) as non-person reference and how speakers of VMRIs construct themselves and position others through their ways of person reference, based on other scholars' concepts as well.

6.2. Person reference in VMRIs

As already mentioned above, what I mean by person reference in VMRIs includes both the use and non-use of person reference terms (RTs) to reference people and the way people are referenced in these invitations. The use of RTs in VMRIs means the use of linguistic expressions to reference the inviters and/or the invitation extenders themselves (self-reference or self-address by the addresser), the invitees (second-person addressee), and the third parties (third-person-addressee). RTs include kinship terms, personal pronouns, titles, names (common names, proper names, endearment names, nick names, etc.), and even common nouns. Non-verbal means such as eye-gazes and gestures are also commonly found in meal-time invitations to address or reference specific people without overtly mentioning them. However, I have grouped the use of these non-verbal means together with the absence or omission of RTs into what I have called the non-use of RTs or 'non-person reference' category.

Reference in VMRIs has a broader meaning than address. It includes self-reference (referencing oneself, i.e., the speaker or the first-person interlocutor), second-person reference (referencing the hearer or the second-person interlocutor in address and vocative), and third-person-reference (referencing the third parties or other people than the first-person and the second-person interlocutors). However, the third-person-addressees are not always treated as the third parties, who are normally out of the interaction; instead, they are related or engaged in the interaction between the first and the second interlocutors (discussed further later). Vietnamese culture of sharing food at meals may be attributed to this relatedness or closeness among three parties referenced in invitational utterances in meal context. These are partly the reasons why the terms 'person reference' and 'person reference terms' were preferred in this study to other

terms including 'address terms' or 'terms of address and reference' (Pham, 2002; Shohet, 2013) commonly used in previous studies.

6.2.1. Person reference in VMRIs by age and gender

Person reference (referred to both person reference and non-person reference categories) in VMRIs used by age and gender was examined in verbal VMRIs recorded in a wide range of situations. Depending on the presence and absence of RTs in the invitations, verbal VMRIs were coded as RT-invitations and no-RT-invitations, respectively. For the purpose of documenting the (non-)person reference and pairing RTs used for interlocutors later, I coded this example of a verbal VMRI towards three listed recipients, '*Cháu mời bà, con mời bố mẹ ăn cơm, các em ăn cơm!*' [Grandchild invite grandmother, child invite parents eat rice, younger siblings eat rice] as three single VMRIs from a grandchild towards grandmother, a child towards parents, and an older sibling towards younger ones. Following that way, 549 single VMRIs were found in ten diaries, 17 interviews, four video-clips, and field-notes, on which the statistics in Table 6.1 below were based although discussions of person reference in VMRIs were also based on all collected VMRIs in 53 diaries, 36 interviews, 20 videos, and other field-notes.

Table 6-1 Person reference in VMRIs by gender and age

RTs	Total		To By	Sub-total		Superiors		Inferiors, equals, and oneself		Mixed recipients	
RT(-)	95	17%	FM	51	54%	0	0%	47	92%	4	8%
			M	44	46%	5	11%	33	75%	6	14%
			≤25	24	25%	3	13%	17	71%	4	17%
			>25	71	75%	2	3%	63	89%	6	8%
RT(+)	454	83%	FM	281	62%	174	62%	96	34%	11	4%
			M	173	38%	84	49%	73	42%	16	9%
			≤25	202	44%	149	74%	42	21%	11	5%
			>25	252	56%	109	43%	127	50%	16	6%

Table 6.1 above presents the raw numbers and percentages of RT-invitations and no-RT-invitations (coded as RTs(+) and RTs(-), respectively) which were used by males (M) and females (FM) and the 25-year-old-and-under speakers (≤25) and the older

speakers (>25) towards three groups of recipients namely, the group of superiors[94], the group of inferiors, equals, and oneself, and the group of mixed recipients (including superiors, inferiors, equals, and oneself).

6.2.1.1. RT-invitations (VMRIs with RTs)

The results in Table 6.1 show that RT-invitations were used nearly five times more than no-RT-invitations (83% vs. 17%). Since RTs function as politeness devices (Blum-Kulka, 1989; Vu, 1997; Barbour, 2015), the much higher use of VMRIs with RTs can imply that person reference was a communicative strategy to express respect and politeness in VMRIs.

The use of RT-invitations by females far exceeded that by males (62% vs. 38%). These invitations were extended towards superiors more by females than by males (62% vs. 49%); whereas, the percentages of these invitations used towards the other two recipient-groups (the inferiors and the mixed recipients) by females were lower than by males (34% and 4% vs. 42% and 9%). These results imply that in VMRIs, females paid greater attention than males to person-reference.

When compared in terms of ages, RT-invitations were used more by the over-25-year-old participants (56%) than the younger participants (44%). However, the younger participants extended these more appropriate invitations mainly to their superiors (74%), which is far more than the percentage of RT-invitations extended by the older participants towards their superiors (43%), and only 26% towards the other two recipient-groups in combination. These figures imply that although older participants referenced people in their invitations more than younger participants, younger participants paid much more attention than older participants to referencing recipients as their superiors in the invitations while scantily referencing their recipients as equals and inferiors. This may be inferred that both the older and younger VMRI-extenders seemed to conform to the norm of person reference; person reference by younger participants in VMRIs towards their superiors seemed conventional but informal in VMRIs towards their equals and inferiors.

---

[94] Extenders of VMRIs regarded those who were older or higher in family lineage rank as their superiors, younger and lower in family lineage rank as their inferiors (see Chapter 5)

When extended to the superiors-group, RT-invitations in four categories (M, FM, ≤25, >25) were of the highest percentages, except for the second-highest in the older participant category, compared to no-RT-invitations, which had all lowest percentages. These results can indicate that VMRI-extenders cared much for the age of their recipients. This also means that age is still a subject of great respect in Vietnamese culture at present and that Vietnamese contemporary society is still highly structured by age-hierarchy.

6.2.1.2. No-RT-invitations (VMRIs without RTs)

No-RT-invitations were used far less than RT-invitations (17% vs. 83%). It can be inferred that VMRI-extenders tried to avoid non-person reference in their invitations. Thus, avoidance of non-person reference is also politeness strategies in VMRIs.

It is noticeable that the percentages of no-RT-invitations extended to the group of superiors were the lowest of all three recipient groups in all four categories (M, FM, ≤25, >25), with even 0% from females. In contrast, the percentages of no-RT-invitations to the group of inferiors, equals, and selves were the highest in all four extender-categories. These findings imply that VMRIs-users, especially females, tended to avoid non-person-referencing when addressing their superiors. This might be because non-person reference or bare-naming (nói trống không) is perceived inappropriate or rude in communicating with superiors (yet acceptable in talking to equals and inferiors; and totally normal in talking to oneself) in Vietnamese culture. That might also be the reason why younger participants used no-RT-invitations three times fewer than their older counterparts (25% vs.75%). These results match with findings in previous section on younger participants' little uses of the structures that lack both extender and recipient elements especially when extended towards superiors.

Females used more no-RT-invitations than males (54% vs. 46%), but they extended 92% of their no-RT-invitations towards the groups of recipients as their inferiors, equals, and oneself, which is higher than males' use to this group (75%). Using fewer, but males extended more no-RT-invitations than females towards their superiors (3% vs. 0%) and the mixed recipient groups (14% vs. 8%). These percentages of no-RT-invitations used between two genders and who they were used for imply that females seemed to care more about their communicators' statuses and tended to be more careful

of recipients of their no-RT-invitations than males; males seemed more relaxed with their non-use of RTs and not to closely conform to the norm of person reference.

There are other differences in the non-person reference between males and females that numbers and percentages could not tell. The first difference is that unlike females, males did not regularly direct their eye-gazes to their recipients, especially when recipients were their inferiors, as exemplarily illustrated in images extracted from my participants' video-clips in Vietnam in Figures 6-6 and 6-7 below. The middle-aged man, while picking up the chopsticks, extended his no-RT-invitation "*Thôi, cơm đi!*" (Well now, eat!), but without directing his eye-contacts towards any recipients, his children and niece:

<div align="center">(VideoVN#5, 00:11)   (00:12)   (00:13)</div>

Figure 6-6 Males' eye contacts

The lady, on the contrary, glanced at all her invitations' recipients, including the hosts, other invited guests, and her children:

<div align="center">(VideoVN#6, 00:38)   (00:39)   (00:40)</div>

Figure 6-7 Females' eye contacts

Another difference is that females' no-RT-invitations tended to be pragmatically directed or oriented to specific recipients although the recipients were not overtly mentioned. For example, when offering food for the niece during a meal, the aunt issued a no-RT-invitation "*Người đã mập mạp quá đấy mà chê thịt*" [body already fat too refuse meat] (the body isn't fat enough to refuse this meat-piece) (D5#1). No RTs were used in this offer. The word '*người*' (body) was articulated but without indicating anyone's body. However, it was added with a more specifically descriptive comment

'the body isn't fat enough', and it became more obvious that her niece's body was meant (the niece looked thin in people's eyes and she was often encouraged to eat more). The recipient of this no-RT-invitation was specific and referential yet expressed implicitly. In this way, the invitation sounds less 'trống không' (bare-naming) and remains respectful to the recipient and any other hearers.

In contrast, men's no-RT-invitations remained non-specific whether they were extended to a specific person or multiple hearers. For example, "*Làm miếng*" (Have this piece!) (FNVN#2) was extended by a man to a specific recipient in accompanying his food-offering for this person, but it, unlike the female's no-RT-invitation above, contained no linguistic elements to specify the recipient. Other examples such as "*Thưởng thức thôi!*" [Enjoy, now] (VideoNZ#4), or "*Chiến thôi!*" [Fight now!] (Start eating now!) (IVN2, 13:50) did not mention any specific recipients either, but they were addressed to all hearers. This might be a male strategy for VMRIs: their no-RT-invitations appeared short but often directed to multiple hearers rather than any specific recipients.

The use of no-RT-invitations to the mixed group, despite having quite low percentages, was still higher than that of RT-invitations. Moreover, RT-invitations in all four categories of extenders to the mixed group had the lowest percentages. These findings imply that VMRI-extenders tended to avoid referencing the mixed groups. This avoidance may be attributed to the attempt to avoid mixing their invitation-recipients altogether when referencing them collectively. In other words, they seemed to prefer identifying each of whom they were extending their invitations to. This preference might be governed by respect for recipients' status and relationship, which were also formed and established mostly by age in this context. Thus, person reference in VMRIs was strongly affected by age besides gender.

6.2.2. Diversity, flexibility, and dynamics

Diversity, flexibility, and dynamics are features of Vietnamese person reference that have already been discussed by a large number of researchers including Luong (1987), Đ. H. Nguyễn (1956), and V. Q. Nguyễn (1998). These features were examined mainly on two aspects: multi-functions of reference terms and the pairing of terms referenced both speaker and hearer. In particular, Đ. H. Nguyễn, (1956) noted each kinship term was used not only as designative or vocative, but also as personal pronoun to show the exact relationship between speaker and hearer. Luong (1987) also stated that functions

of self-reference and address in Vietnamese were not limited to personal pronouns, but pervasively enacted in 'common nouns', including kinship and status terms (p. 50); names are also added to the list (Pham, 2002; Shohet, 2013). In regarding pairing RTs (those used for the addressors and for the second-person addressees), as mentioned earlier, V. Q. Nguyễn, (1998) proposed 34 address pairs, accounted on Northern Vietnamese dialects of kinship terms only. He also claimed that both kinship and non-kinship address terms were dynamically paired in three main relationships (the Circular-relationships, the Horizontal-relationships, and the Dynamic-relationships).

Following them, I also see diversity, flexibility, and dynamics in RTs used in VMRIs, but not in the separation between pragmatic uses of RTs and how RTs were paired between speakers and hearers. Instead, I view these features through the combination of both aspects which cover both categories of person reference and non-person reference in VMRIs (as already defined above).

6.2.2.1. Used RTs

Diversity, flexibility, and dynamics in VMRIs were firstly viewed through the use of a wide variety of RTs. RTs in VMRIs included kinship terms (*mẹ/má/bu/u/bầm/đẻ*-mother; *con*-child/offspring), personal pronouns (*tao/tui/tôi/mình*-I; *mày/cậu/ấy/đằng ấy/mình*-You), titles or status terms (*thầy/sư phụ*-master/teacher, *giám đốc*-director), names including proper names (Linh, Hồng), endearment names (*cưng*-honey, *ông xã*-hubby), and nick names (*Ốc, Bee*). They also encompassed the flexible combination of at least two elements such as titles plus names (*thầy* Long-Master Long), or kinship terms plus names (father Hiếu), or kinship terms plus names and nicknames (brother Long Còi[95]). Full names and surnames were not used in any VMRIs. Perhaps, the extenders tried to avoid the distance and the ultra-formality that might result from using them at meals. Especially, RTs in VMRIs also covered numerous common nouns including '*bố nó*' (his father), '*chủ nhà*' (the host), *gia đình* (family), *bạn* (friend) that were not found in Luong's category of 'common nouns'. Moreover, my category of common nouns excluded what I categorised separately as kinship terms (*mẹ*-mother) and title/status terms (*thầy*-master/teacher, *giám đốc*-director), which were included in 'common nouns' in Luong (1987, p. 50). These common nouns might function only in 'third-person reference' in other languages, but in VMRIs, they were also used in first-

---

[95] Long was a personal name; Còi was used as a nickname meaning as little, small, thin, or skinny

person reference (to self-reference) and second-person reference (both to address and to name the recipients).

RTs employed for self-reference in VMRIs were often in the first-person singular form (I), such as *em* (I-younger sibling)*, con* (I-child)*, tôi* (I-servant)*.* They were also in plural form (we). Plural self-reference terms were formed either by combing both the inviters and the invitation-recipients in the same self-reference inclusive terms such as *cả nhà mình, cả nhà, nhà mình, nhà ta* (we-family/ all family members); *chúng ta, chúng mình, bọn mình* (we); *anh em mình* (we-brothers); *mẹ con mình* (we-mother and child) or by including the third parties into groups of inviters such as *cả nhà em, nhà em, gia đình, gia đình em* (we-my family)*, ông bà* (we-grandparents)*, hai bác* (we-two uncles/aunts)*, anh chị* (we-brother and sister)*.* The latter case of plural self-reference terms was used even when the addressors were singular[96]. This feature might be the influence of company, solidary, and hospitality in Vietnamese food-sharing culture on language use in meal contexts. RTs employed for second-person reference were also both singular and plural. Plural second-person RTs could reference recipients in pairs such as *ông bà* (you-grandparents), *bố mẹ* (you-parents); or in groups, which included groups of people with similar ranks and relations like *các bác* (you-uncles and aunts), *các anh* (you-elder brothers), *các con* (you-children) and mixed groups like *mọi người* (you-everyone), and *cả nhà* (you-family). Therefore, in terms of functions and types[97] of words, RTs employed in VMRIs are of a wide diversity, dynamic, and flexibility.

6.2.2.2. Patterns of reference

Diversity, flexibility, and dynamics in VMRIs were also reflected in patterns of reference. By reference patterns, I mean patterns of both person reference and non-person reference: which parties in invitations (inviters and/or invitation extenders, invitees or recipients, and the third parties) were and were not explicitly mentioned in VMRIs. Based on the presence of RTs in the invitational utterances to reference these parties, patterns of reference in VMRIs have been developed and illustrated in Table 6-2 below.

---

[96] how they were used in plural forms will be discussed further later
[97] Types of pragmatic RTs will be further discussed later, in terms of politeness

Table 6-2 Patterns of person reference in VMRIs

Patterns	Explanations		Examples
Ø→Ø	no RTs	1	*"Xin mời!"* [Honorific, invite!] (IVN9, 10:20)
Ø→RT	RTs of only recipients.		**Ø→Bà (grandmother)**:
		2	*"**Bà** ăn đi!"* [Grandmother eat imperative!] (VideoVN#14)
		3	**Ø→H (proper name)**:
			*"**H**, gắp cá ăn đi!"* [H, eat fish imperative!] (D2#4)
RT→Ø	RTs of only extenders	4	**Tao (I)→Ø**: *"**Tao** ăn đây!"* [I eat now!] (IVN16)
			Nhà mình (We)→Ø:
		5	*"**Nhà mình** ăn đi!"* [house body eat imperative!] (D37#2)
RT→RT	Unidirectional pairs of RTs of both extenders and recipients. RTs are not convertible	6	**Em (Younger sibling)→Giám đốc (Manager/title)**, *"**Em** mời **giám đốc**!"* [Younger sibling invite manager!] (VideoVN#6); but seldom Giám đốc (Manager/title)→Em (Younger sibling)
		7	**Con (child)→Các bạn (friends/common names)**, *"**Con** mời **các bạn** ăn cơm!"* [Child invite friends eat rice] (IVN#10); but not Các bạn (friends/common names)→Con (child).
RT↔RT	Bidirectional pairs of RTs of both extenders and recipients. RTs are convertible		**Mẹ (mother)↔Con (child)**:
		8a	Mother: *"**Mẹ** mời **con** ăn cơm!"* [Mother invite child eat rice!]
		8b	Child: *"**Con** mời **mẹ** ăn cơm!"* [Child invite mother eat rice!] (D11#3)
			H (name)↔Đ (name):
		9a	H: *"**Đ** vào ăn cơm với **H** cho vui!"* [Đ come in eat rice with H for joy!]
		9b	Đ: *"**H** ăn đi. **Đ** ăn rồi!"* [H eat imperative. Đ eat already!] (IVN13, 11:20)

In Table 6.2, the symbols RT and Ø indicate the use and non-use, respectively, of reference terms; the arrows (→, ↔) indicate the orientation of those symbols: symbols preceding the arrows mean the first-person reference for the speaker (inviters and/or invitation-extenders) and symbols pointed by arrows indicate the reference for the hearer (invitees or invitation-recipients). There was no code for third-person reference in this section although third parties were occasionally referenced. Depending on their conjunction with the invitation-extenders and/or the recipients (identified by the context in which the utterances occurred), referenced third parties were coded as inclusive RTs for either extenders or recipients rather than in a separated pattern.

Table 6-2 above shows that patterns of person reference in VMRIs were diverse. Users of VMRIs often referenced both parties, namely themselves (as invitation extenders) and recipients in each invitation, represented in RT→RT and RT↔RT patterns (examples 6-9). They also referenced just one party, either the speaker in RT→Ø pattern (examples 4-5) or the hearer in Ø→RT pattern (examples 2-3) or no one in Ø→Ø pattern (example 1).

RT→RT and RT↔RT patterns included all relationship patterns of address pairs in Nguyễn (1998). RT→RT pattern means unidirectional pairs of RTs, which were not normally convertibly used when roles of extenders or recipients were interchanged (examples 6-7); RT↔RT pattern means bidirectional pairs of RTs, which were convertibly used when roles of extenders or recipients were interchanged in the next response by the addressee to the extender (examples 8-9). Bidirectional pairs of RTs in RT↔RT pattern were similar to what were called 'reciprocal pairs' in Sidnell & Shohet, 2013 and included 'interchangeable pairs' and pairs of 'Circular relationships' in Nguyễn, 1998. However, bidirectional pairs in VMRIs encompassed not only kinship terms (Kinship term↔Kinship term) and personal pronouns/nouns (*Mình-Người ta)* but also names (Name↔Name and Kinship term↔Name).

The bidirectional pair of Kinship term↔Kinship term in VMRIs included more cases than in Nguyễn's (1998) pairs of 'Circular relationships'. It included not only the pairs of RTs, which truly and conventionally indicated named roles and the given relationships between interlocutors such as *Con* (offspring)↔*Bố/mẹ* (father/mother), or *Em* (younger sibling)↔*Anh/chị* (elder brother/elder sister), or *Cháu* (grandchild/nephew/niece)↔*Ông/bà/cô/chú/bác* (Grandfather/grandmother/aunt/uncle).

It covered also unconventional pairs such as *Em* (younger sibling)↔*Ông/bà/bố/mẹ* (Grandfather/grandmother/ father/mother). This diversity might be because recently, in some areas, 'em' (younger sibling) has also been used in self-reference and second-person reference for a child in interactions between him/her and not only his/her elder siblings but also other relatives, including parents, grandparents. The use of these unconventional pairs was different from the use of unidirectional pairs *Em* (younger sibling)→*bác* (uncle/aunt), for example, because in this pair, the inviter self-referenced in relation to the invitee and referenced the invitee in relation to their children rather than to themselves.

The bidirectional pair of Name↔Name was commonly used amongst age-mates or equals. As in VMRIs exchanged between two friends in examples 9a, 9b above (also in notes paged iii), both extenders referenced themselves with their own names and addressed the other with his/her name. Therefore, employed RTs did not change when their functions switched between first-person reference and second-person reference. This might cause ambiguity to speakers of English and other languages, in which names are used for vocative and third-party reference only. But in Vietnamese, the same forms of names can be used also for self-reference and second-person reference (H. Pham, 2002; Shohet, 2013). The pair Kinship term↔Name, for example Bố (Daddy)↔Bill (name) was also common between interlocutors of hierarchy relationships (e.g., father-offspring) in VMRIs although name avoidance was widely practiced in Vietnamese hierarchically-structured interactions [98] and also in other languages and cultures (Fleming, 2011; Barbour, 2015). Therefore, the frequent reference of only names for inferiors (both as self-referents and second-person referents) in interactions between them and their superiors in VMRIs may indicate a likely change in Vietnamese person reference to a system which may be less hierarchical, simpler, or more diverse? If it is so, it might be attributed to Vietnam's early recognition of children's rights[99]. This interpretation is consistent with H. Pham (2002), who claimed that the change in Vietnamese person reference in the 20th Century was due to the contemporary social change.

---

[98] Regarding self-reference, people seldom self-referenced their only names in talking to others, particularly between interlocutors of hierarchal relationships. In addressing and third-party-reference, superiors' only names were customarily avoided. Superiors' names could be appropriately referenced only when preceded by titles or kinship terms such as Uncle Long.
[99] children's rights were first stated in Vietnam state law in 1946 and Vietnam is the first Asian country to ratify the international conduct of children's rights (20/02/1990)

Although all patterns were simply coded by only two ends of arrows to indicate the separate referents as either extenders or recipients in VMRIs, the reference was multidimensional. Apart from the majority of referencing extenders and recipients separately from each other in two terms, extenders and recipients were sometimes jointly mentioned in inclusive RTs such as '*nhà mình', 'anh em mình'* (we). Extenders and recipients were also occasionally referenced together with third parties. For example, extenders (me) and third parties (my daughter) were reference together in "*Bà vào ăn cơm với mẹ con cháu!"* (Please join me and my daughter for the meal, nanny!); recipients (Big sister T) and third parties (your younger cousin K) in "*Chị T ăn miếng đậu cùng em K nhé*!" (Big sister T, please join your younger cousin K to have this piece of tofu!). Therefore, in reality, person reference in VMRIs was multidimensional and dynamic while diverse in the number of patterns although patterns have already been simplified in coding.

6.2.2.3. Principles of person reference in pairs

Reference in VMRIs was not only diverse in the types of patterns used but also dynamic in principles of reference in pairs. A common principle of reference pairs in VMRIs, which was also found in studies including Luong (1990), Nguyễn (1998) and Vu (1997), was that RTs were normally paired basing on the relationships between the invitation-extenders and recipients, which were indicated in the pragmatics of the employed RTs such as mother-child, uncle-niece. Put in other words, the choice of RTs used in an interaction between invitation-extenders and recipients was based on the conventionally named roles and the given relationships (both relatives and non-relatives) between them. For example, the pair *con-bố/ba/bá/thầy/tía/cậu* (child-father/daddy/dad) was often used between extenders and recipients calling each other as children and fathers or the pair *con-mẹ/má/bu/u/đẻ/bầm* (child-mother/mum/mommy) between those calling each other as children and mothers.

Referents in VMRIs were also designated beyond their given relationships. Take the following example of VMRIs exchanged between a hostess and her pop-in guest,

> Hostess: "*Em mời chị vào xơi cơm*"
>
> [Younger sibling invite elder sister come in eat rice]
>
> Guest: "*Cô mời cơm đi, tôi ăn rồi!*"
>
> [Aunt eat rice imperative, I eat already] (D1#1)

The hostess used the kinship pair *Em→Chị* (younger sibling→elder sister), which fits into Nguyễn's (1998) pattern of Circular relationships. However, the guest did not return with the bidirectional pair *Chị→Em* (elder sister→younger sibling). Instead, she self-referenced with a personal pronoun *Tôi* (I) and addressed the hostess with *Cô* (Aunt), a kinship term denoting a relation between the host and the addresser's children rather than her. Thus, the latter pair (*Tôi→Cô*) was used beyond the given relationships between the hostess and the guest due to their multiple relations. It fits into Nguyễn's (1998) pattern of Dynamic relationships type III.

Pairing RTs in VMRIs was also mediated by factors including habits of language use and how speakers linguistically dealt with the situations. For example, Figure 6-8 below illustrated reference patterns in invitations extended by three speakers towards three recipient groups, all comprised of three generations of regular dining partners and guests.
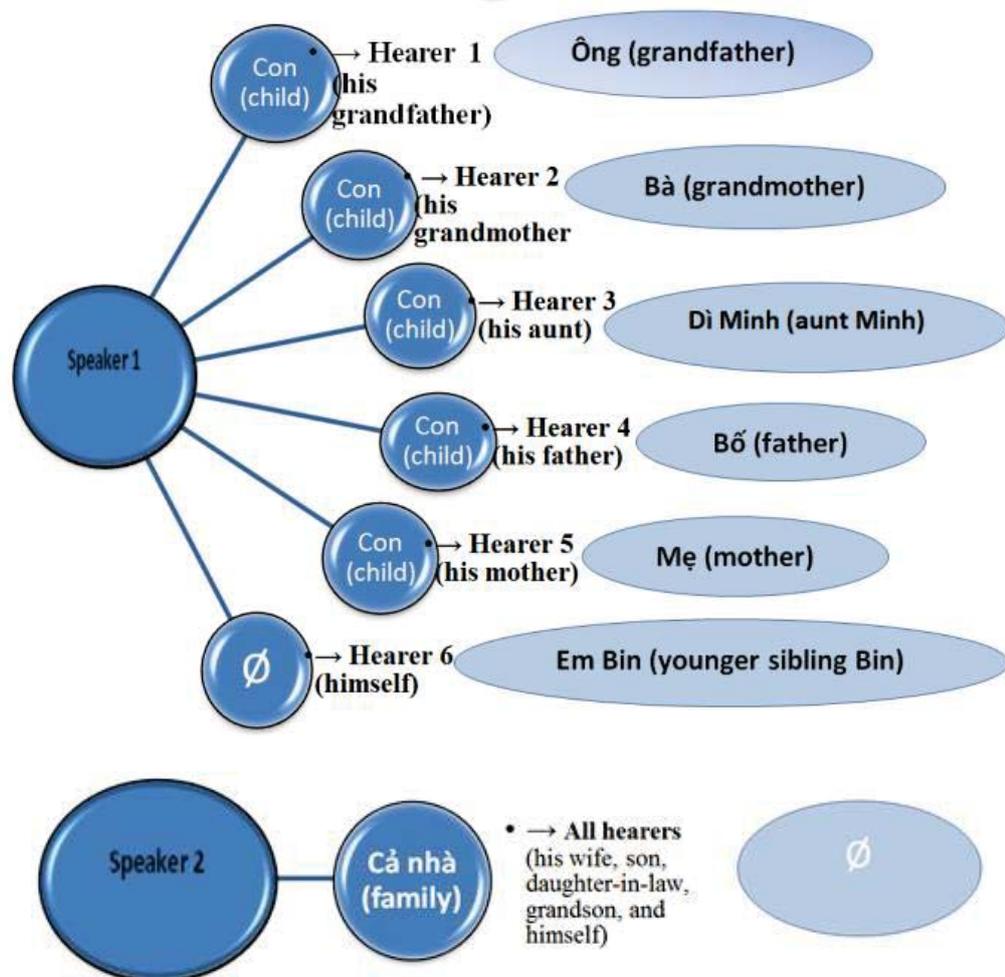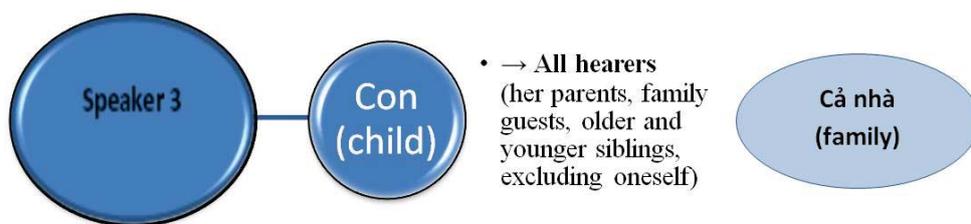
Figure 6-8 Three examples of pairing RTs

Speaker One referenced each pair *Con (child)→ông (grandfather), con (child)→bà (grandmother), con (child)→dì Minh (aunt Minh), con (child)→bố (father), con (child)→mẹ (mother), Ø→em Bin (younger sibling Bin)*, (in two patterns RT→RT and Ø→RT) for each relationship between him and six recipients including himself,

"*Con mời ông, con mời bà, con mời dì Minh, con mời bố, con mời mẹ, mời em Bin*" [Child invite grandfather, child invite grandmother, child invite father, child invite mother, invite younger sibling Bin (himself)] (D12#2).

Meanwhile, both speaker Two and speaker Three used just one pair, but in two different patterns: *cả nhà* (family including himself)→Ø in *"Cả nhà ăn ha!"* [All house eat suggestive!] (D12#3) and *Con* (Child)→*cả nhà* (family excluding herself) in "*Con mời cả nhà ăn cơm*!" [Child invite all house eat rice!] (VideoVN#1, 01:22), respectively.

These different ways of pairing reference terms might result also from the habits of language use (as in case of speaker Two, who is an old-aged man) or how speakers linguistically dealt with the situations (as in case of speaker Three, an eight-year-old boy, who might prefer extending invitations just once rather than many times towards a big group of diners). They might also be results of other factors. The way speaker One, a two-year-old boy, paired RTs might be the influence of his mother's regulation. His mother often modelled him to reference each person in each invitation. Once, he was so hungry that he reduced the number of his meal-start invitations by collectively referencing all recipients in just one inclusive RT *cả nhà* (all people), but she asked him to re-extend invitations, referencing each recipient one by one.

In short, the principles of reference in pairs in VMRIs were dynamic. RTs were paired on the given relationships between the invitation-extenders and recipients, and also in relation to other people. Pairing RTs was also mediated by other factors, such as habits of language use and how speakers linguistically dealt with the situations.

6.2.3. Politeness and respect in reference terms used

Politeness and respect in RTs have often been assessed through (in)formality, and (non)solidarity based on pragmatic meanings of the terms used (cf. Brown & Gilman, 1960/1972; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Luong, 1990; Vu, 1997). Like in previous studies, (in)formality and (non-)solidarity in the use of RTs in VMRIs were assessed on the pragmatics meanings of RTs. Therefore, RTs used in VMRIs were categorised into two groups, namely the formality group (including formality and non-solidarity RTs) and the solidarity group (including informality and solidarity RTs).

However, unlike in previous studies, (in)formality and (non-)solidarity in the use of RTs in VMRIs were also assessed on the users' social and family statuses, intimacy and distance in relationships of not just two but all related parties, including invitation-extenders, inviters, invitation-recipients, and the third parties in the speech event. Besides, other factors such as the users' language habits and personal histories, the local communication conventions, the meal-discourse itself and its situations and settings were also taken into account. This is because, according to Foucault (1972), all these factors co-construct small and big discourses, which delimit and define what it is possible and not possible to say (and this can be extendedly applied to what RTs to use and not to use in certain situations).

The additional criteria in assessing politeness and respect in the use of RTs in VMRIs might result in slight differences in categorising RTs in terms of formality and solidarity between this studies and previous studies. For example, the personal pronoun pair 'tao-mày' (I-you) was considered impolite (applied to superiors and strangers) and neutral (applied to friends and subordinate family members) in Vu (1997). However, in VMRIs, it was used between equals and close friends to express equality, solidarity, and closeness, which supports Nguyễn's (1998) categorising this pair in what he called 'horizontal relationships type I'. They were, therefore, grouped into solidarity RTs. The pairs tôi (personal pronoun)-kinship terms, *tôi-ông/bà* (I-grandfather/grandmother) for example, were claimed in Nguyễn's (1998) 'horizontal relationships type II' (figure 6-3 above) as the pairs of non-solidarity and formality; nevertheless in practice, when used by children towards their superior kin such as parents, grandparents, they might be perceived inappropriate or even rude[100]. Both usages for these pairs were, however, not

---

[100] Although this usage was not rare in reality

found in VMRIs. On the contrary, in VMRIs, they were used amongst equals and friends to create closeness, informality, and solidarity. They, hence, belonged to solidarity group. Meanwhile, *tôi-bạn* (I-friend) sounded formal amongst friends and equals and they were categorised as formality RTs, which also include other pairs of tôi-title/status, such as *tôi-giám đốc* (I-manager) or *tôi-ông thông gia* (I-Mr marriage connection).

Based on this assessment, all RTs used in VMRIs were polite ones. There were not any RTs with impolite or insulting pragmatic meanings such as '*con/đồ chó cái*' (bitch), '*con mụ/lão/thằng già*' (old black-guard) or '*đồ đê tiện*' (scoundrel) in any collected VMRIs. All polite RTs employed in VMRIs belong to either the formality group (including formality and non-solidarity RTs) or the solidarity group (including informality and solidarity RTs). Formality and non-solidarity RTs included the RTs whose use was governed by communication conventions which required the use of correct RTs for the pragmatically named roles. The distance was, hence, maintained or even amplified with the interlocutors' more awareness of others' status, rank, or title. These RTs often included kinship terms, personal pronouns, titles, and status terms. Solidarity and informal RTs were characterised more by kinship terms, proper names, personal pronouns, nick names, endearment names, and others, whose use could close the distance or narrow the gap amongst all parties in the speech event and consequently create closeness and solidarity.

The section below will discussed further how (non)solidarity and (in)formality governed the way RTs were used particularly in self-reference and second-person reference in terms of politeness and respect. Additionally, its description of self-reference and second-person reference would also illustrate how speakers of VMRIs constructed their selves and positioned others.

6.2.4. Reference of selves and others

According to Pham (2002, p. 292), Vietnamese RTs since the 20th-Century have become 'highly context-sensitive' and been chosen in accordance with the 'social nuances of the situation', which results in the avoidance of certain terms in specific contexts. She attributes Vietnamese socio-political change in the second half of the 20th Century to the change (particularly in females' use) of Vietnamese person reference, which used to be 'relative well-defined' due to the 'relative static' social relations in the first half of the

century. This scholar uses the RTs employed in a 20th-Century well-known witticism below to illustrate the avoidance.

Wife: *Ai ơi, về ăn cơm!*

            [someone vocative return eat rice]

            (Someone, please go home for lunch!)

Husband: *Ai gọi ai đấy?*

            [someone call someone particle]

            (Who is calling whom?)

Wife: *Ai gọi ai chứ còn ai gọi ai nữa?*

            [someone call someone particle still someone call someone]

            (I (someone) is calling you (someone), who else (someone else) is

            calling you (someone else?))

In the witticism, the wife extended a before-meal invitation towards her husband. She used *ai*, an indefinite personal pronoun meaning as 'someone, anyone, everyone' to address him and avoided using any specific RTs. This triggered her husband to play with the word in his question since the word also commonly functions as an interrogative pronoun 'who, whom'. The wife then used this word again, both to reference herself and to address her husband in her answer and also to question him back. However, H. Pham does not explain further about the avoidance of the terms which specify human referents in this witticism although she interprets that addressors in her other given examples did not use specific terms but intentionally used a common noun *người ta* (people) instead to convey messages of emotion and/or intimacy.

I do agree with Pham (2002) that changes in the use of RTs are an indicator of social change, especially when the vivid system of Vietnamese RTs well expresses (non)solidarity and (in)formality, which include emotion and intimacy. However, viewed at a micro-level, the way addressors reference (and do not reference) people choosing certain RTs rather than others also reflects how the addressors construct themselves and position others. This argument will be made clear using evidence of self-reference and second-person reference in VMRIs below.

6.2.4.1. Self-reference: where are the selves?

There was a small percentage of self-reference in VMRIs. RTs of self-reference, which included RTs used for referencing invitation-extenders themselves and inviters as the

third parties, were presented in only one third of RT-invitations (34%) while RT-invitations were used nearly five times more than no-RT-invitations (83% vs. 17%). This implies that extenders of VMRIs did not put importance on their self-reference or referencing selves was put behind referencing others in VMRIs although person-reference was regarded as a communicative strategy to level up politeness and respect in VMRIs. This might be the influence of the attitude of perceiving selves as small on language use and the attitude of small selves can be attributed to Vietnamese (or extended to Asian) collectivist culture of group, family, and community rather than individuals.

The attitude of small selves was also expressed in the way invitation-extenders referenced themselves. Six facets of this phenomenon will be described below.

1. *Little use of personal pronouns*

The attitude of small selves was firstly reflected in the little use of personal pronouns[101], *tôi/tao/tớ/mình* (I), which referenced the speakers or the addressers themselves directly and assertively as 'I'. Instead, there was a pervasive use of kinship terms, *mẹ/má/bu/u* (mother) or *anh* (older brother), for example. Semantically, these self-reference terms did not indicate the speakers directly as 'I' but through the relationships with the hearers (I-as your mother; I-as your older brother). The use of kinship terms for 'I' instead of personal pronouns could, therefore, show the relatedness between interlocutors and help the addressers avoid sounding as assertive as independent individuals as that of personal pronouns.

2. *Choosing self-deprecating kinship terms indicating low and modest role or rank*

When using kinship terms for self-reference in invitations extended towards recipients as a mixed group of various relationships and roles, invitation-extenders often used the terms that indicated their lowest role or rank (and also closest relationship). For example, the invitation-extender referenced herself as '*con*' (child) in "*Con mời cả nhà ăn cơm*" (IVN1, 28:00) when issuing it to a group of recipients with whom she had different kin roles such as an offspring, a grandchild, a niece, a younger sister, an older cousin. These roles required the conventional use of several RTs such as *con, cháu, em, chị* to indicate her kinships with each of them. Of all these self-reference terms, '*con*'

---

[101] Some grammarians claim that there are no personal pronouns in Vietnamese (Pham, 2002)

(child) denoted both the closest kinship (child-parent vs. grandchild-grandparents, sibling-sibling, niece-uncles/aunts, and cousin-cousin) and the relatively lowest role (child vs. sibling, cousin, niece) of all. Thus, choosing the self-reference terms that pragmatically indicated the relatively lowest (and closest) role means that the addressors have taken their relatively lowest role or modest rank in addressing others. This is another indicator of humility in self-reference in VMRIs.

The kinship term '*con*' was used the most (104 times out of 178 RTs of self-reference) in VMRIs. The use of '*con*' was not only conventional for relatives (as above) but also pervasive to non-relatives. For example, despite no marriage- or blood-relationship between my sister's shop-assistant and me, she referenced herself as '*con*' (child) in her meal-time invitation extended to me at my very first visit during her meal: "*Con mời dì mời cơm*" [Child invite aunt eat rice] (FNVN#8). She reported her self-reference of '*con*' (child) as her habit in language use addressed to all relatives and non-relatives who were of and above her parent generations. The use of '*con*' for other relationships rather than just a conventional child-parent relationship and also for non-relatives was never considered a wrong use of RTs or violation of right person reference. Indeed, its pervasive use indexed solidarity, the tendency of narrowing the relationship distance and making the invitees closer to the invitation-extenders. It also shows the addressers' humbleness or modesty, deference, and respect towards the addressees.

The use of '*con*' also denoted the humbleness and even self-deprecation possibly because this term used to be self-employed in the feudal times by those (e.g., slaves; servants, peasants) who regarded themselves as inferiors when addressing their superiors (e.g., slave-owners, mandarins). Other possible reasons are that in Vietnamese present daily language use, '*Con*' is also humbly self-referenced by spiritual followers in their prayers to honoured spirits such as Buddha, Gods, Saints, and ancestors; the word can also denote animate things such as animals[102] ('*con mèo*' a cat) and insects ('*con ong*' a bee) and even inanimate things ('*con dao*' a knife).

3. Lowering oneself down

Invitation-extenders' perceiving selves as small could thirdly be seen in the way they lowered themselves down in their self-reference. For example, in inviting the late

---

[102] which might be the reason why Avieli (2012) misinterpreted that Vietnamese parents called their children (con) as animals

attendant (the female host) to join the meal at the same time altogether, the extender as the recipient's elder brother, who was also her invited guest, referenced himself in the third-person term '*the guest*' as opposed to the term '*the host*' used for his sister, instead of using the conventional kinship pair '*anh-em*' (elder bother-younger sibling) in "*Chủ nhà không ăn thì sao khách dám ăn!*" [Host not eat how guest dare eat!] (How dare I (the guest) eat if you (the host) haven't attended the table!) (D2#6). Guests were generally positioned as inferior to hosts while elder brothers were supposed to be superior to younger sisters in Vietnamese families. Therefore, the elder brother's way of self-reference in his invitation has indicated that he lowered himself from being a superior down to the status of an inferior to the recipient, his younger sister. It was perceived by both the extender and the recipient as an expression of respect and deference, besides the informality and the closeness created by the choice of a joyful way of delivering the invitation. This is clearly evidence of humility or modesty in Vietnamese self-reference (*xưng nghiêm*).

Humility or modesty expressed by lowering oneself down could elucidate the avoidance of certain self-reference terms in VMRIs. For instance, the invitation-extenders who had higher social status than their invitees often omitted self-referencing or selected other self-reference terms than title or status terms. That may be why no self-reference terms in collected VMRIs were in forms of socially-respected status terms such as '*thầy*' (master/teacher), '*giám đốc*' (manager) although research data showed that extenders of VMRIs were in a wide range of social status.

4. Selves in groups

'Small selves' attitude could fourthly be inferred in the way an invitation-extender referenced him/herself in a group of inviters (we) rather than as an individual (I) although that person was not a representative for the group. This is typical of what McLaren (1998) sees as collectivism: 'We' before 'I' as opposed to individualism: 'I' before 'We'.

Grouping oneself with others was done in two ways. Firstly, invitation-extenders included other dining partners (the third parties) together with themselves as inviters (we). For example, in "*Nhà em mời bác vào ăn cơm!*" [house younger sibling invite uncle come in eat rice] (D25#1) the invitation-extender referenced *nhà em* (we-my family), which included the invitation-extender herself and other family members, in

her during-meal invitation addressed to a pop-in guest. Similarly, in "*Bà vào ăn cơm với mẹ con cháu*" [grandmother come in eat rice with mother child](D4#1), by naming *mẹ con cháu* (we-mother and daughter), the invitation-extender referenced herself together with her daughter, who was dining with her, rather than just herself as the inviter. Secondly, the invitation-extenders grouped both the inviters and the invitation-recipients in the same self-reference terms (we), without separating the inviters and the invitees. In "*Nhà mình ăn đi nhỉ!*" (Let's have meal, shall we?) (D2#5), for example, the invitation-extender used one inclusive term *nhà mình* (our family), which included both himself and the invitation-recipients.

The use of inclusive self-reference terms in two cases above could bring about closeness and solidarity, not only between the invitation-extenders and the recipients but also amongst all parties in the speech events. This usage might be governed by the Vietnamese highly solidarity-respected value, which regards solidarity as a device of politeness and respect. However, solidarity might not be the only answer to the question: why did the invitation-extenders need to include others as a group of inviters rather than assert oneself as an individual inviter? It might also be because of the extender's diffidence or lack of self-confidence as an individual inviter when perceiving the invitation as stronger or more effective if the inviter is in the name of a group of people rather than an individual.

5. Hidden self or self-avoidance

Perceiving selves as small could also be seen in self-avoidance in person reference in VMRIs. Invitation-extenders referenced someone else (the third parties in third-person reference), not themselves as the inviters even though the extenders of VMRIs were indeed the inviters. In other word, invitation-extenders were not self-referenced as the inviters; inviters were referenced as different people from the invitation-extenders. The third-person referents as the inviters were seen as those having a higher rank or status than the invitation-extenders. For example, in a before-meal invitation extended by a granddaughter to her grandmother, "*Bố mẹ cháu mời bà sang xơi cơm!*" (My parents would like to invite you to come over for meal) (IVN5, 21:53), the invitation-extender referenced her parents as the inviters, rather than herself although she was the one who actively (and regularly) extended this invitation to her grandmother, not by her parents' request. By referencing inviters as the superiors to the extender herself in the invitation,

the extender may imply that the invitee deserved the invitation from the inviters who were higher-ranked than her. In that way, more respect and deference were thought to pay to the invitee. The invitation was, therefore, believed to be more polite and respectful. However, this way of reference may also indicate that the extender tried to hide herself or avoided referencing herself directly as an inviter in the invitation. This self-avoidance might come from the humility of invitation-extenders, who thought of themselves as being too 'small' or not having enough authority to be the inviters.

Referred inviters could also be the one perceived by the invitation-extenders as being closer to the invitees than to the invitation-extenders themselves. For instance, during a meal, a male host wanted a teenage girl as one of his family invited guests to have more food. He referenced his wife as the one who should offer food for the girl, using the address term indicating the relationship between his wife and that girl '*cô Nhưng*' (aunt+ proper name) in "*Cô Nhưng gắp cho cháu*" [Aunt Nhưng pick for niece] (VideoVN#6, 02:38). He initiated the offer, but he did not reference himself; the term referencing the offered (Aunt Nhưng) did not indicate the relationship with him, either. This might be because the male host thought that his wife would be closer to the girl than him or that the girl might feel more comfortable when being offered food by the female host. This reflects the invitation-extender or the host's hospitality, which is seen as an indication of Vietnamese politeness.

Similarly, invitation-extenders often chose from the dining group the one who were closest or shared the most common things with the invitees to reference as the inviters instead of themselves. For example, a male host offered a food piece for his 1-year-old niece, who dropped in with her mother while his family were having meals, together with his verbal invitation "*Chị Trang ăn miếng đậu cùng em Khánh nhé*!" [Elder sister Trang eat piece tofu with younger sibling Khánh suggestory!] (D3#4). He referenced his son, who was the invitee's age-mate, cousin, buddy, and neighbour. His choice might come from the thought that his son was closer to the invitee and shared more common things with her than any other on-going diners (his mother, his wife, and himself). The chosen term '*em Khánh*' (younger sibling+ proper name) for the third-person referent also showed the relationship between the invitee and the third-person referent (as her younger cousin[103]) rather than with himself (as his son).

---

[103] normally called as 'younger sibling' in Vietnamese

By referring those being closer and/or having more similarities with invitees as inviters, extenders might expect recipients to feel more familiar or more included to the existing group, as well as engage more parties to the on-going event. The invitations could, therefore, enhance solidarity and relatedness and consequently express the extenders' sincerity and hospitality. However, initiating invitations in which the inviters were referenced as the third parties without explicitly indicating the role of the extenders in the invitations (as the inviters) or the relationship between the extenders and the invitees and the inviters can also be seen as evidence of hidden self or self-avoidance in person reference in VMRIs.

6. Rebellious children?

Extenders of VMRIs as small children in at least three reported cases (a two-year-old boy in his father's meal diaries, an eight-year-old boy in an anonymous participant's informal talks, and an adult interviewee talking about herself during her childhood) self-referenced in an interesting way. These children extended invitations towards both others and themselves. They all followed the way of self-reference as discussed above in their invitations extended towards others. However, in their self-invitations, they referenced themselves using the terms indicating their higher status (elder siblings) than the terms (younger siblings) referencing the invitees, who were also themselves: *'anh/chị'* (elder brother/ elder sister) as opposed to *'em Bin'* (younger sibling Bin), *'cu Bill'* (lad Bill), or *'em Hà'* (younger sibling Hà). This way of self-reference tended to assert or state their higher status than they were (or were treated by others when being often referenced by diminutive terms) rather than lowering them down or hiding their selves. However, this way of self-reference was rare amongst invitation-extenders as grown-up children and adults. Its disappearing when children grew older might be because it was not encouraged by others (in the case of the two-year-old boy) or it was seen as funny or childish way (inferred through the talks and laughs of reporters in two latter cases). This implies that hiding selves or perceiving selves as small but asserting or claiming selves was encouraged in Vietnamese society, at least in the context of self-reference in VMRIs. This is clearly an evidence to illustrate my argument that the way extenders of VMRIs self-referenced expresses how they constructed their selves.

In summary, the way extenders of VMRIs self-referenced has reflected that they valued closeness, relatedness, (in)formality, and (non)solidarity as devices to express politeness

and respect. It has also shown that they had a tendency to perceive themselves as small and carry this humble or modest attitude in their self-reference in VMRIs.

6.2.4.2. Second-person reference: how extenders of VMRIs positioned their recipients?

RTs referencing invitation-recipients (the invitees only) appeared in nearly 98% of invitations with RTs, which is much higher than the appearance of self-reference RTs referencing extenders, inviters, and third parties altogether (34%). Moreover, not only having a much greater number, second-person RTs were employed in a much more diverse and dynamic way (detailed later) than self-reference RTs. These imply that to VMRI-extenders, second-person reference was preferable and more important than self-reference. The significance of referencing hearers (second-person referents) in utterances to increase level of politeness and respect has already been claimed by numerous researchers including Blum-Kulka (1989) and Vu (1997). Therefore, findings in this section support previous studies of second-person reference in terms of politeness and respect. Additionally, the description of second-person reference through both pragmatics of second-person RTs used and the way the invitees were referenced in VMRIs below will illustrate that VMRI-extenders positioned their invitees high and close to express politeness and respect.

1. Raising others up

Pragmatics of second-person RTs used in VMRIs showed that invitation-extenders tended to raise other people up by positioning their invitees at their highest role or rank and/or in a closer relationship with the extenders. Positioning invitees at their highest role or rank was shown firstly in the fact that while highly-respected status terms such as '*thầy*' (master/teacher), '*giám đốc*' (manager) were seldom used for self-referents due to the practice of modesty or humility in Vietnamese self-reference (*xưng nghiêm*), as discussed earlier, they were used widely for second-person referents. Secondly, VMRI-extenders intentionally avoided referencing invitees with titles that pragmatically indicated their inferior position or status. For example, these two during-meal invitations '*Mời cô vào xơi cơm!*' [Invite aunt enter eat rice] (VNI9, 09:29) and "*Anh vào ăn cơm với gia đình!*" [Older brother enter eat rice with family] (D39#3) were extended towards two strangers, who appeared at the hosts' meals to collect rubbish and

bills[104]. The hosts avoided mentioning them with their real profession titles 'a rubbish-collector' and 'a bill-collector' although they might do so if the visitors had professions such as teachers or doctors, which were seen as having relatively higher status in Vietnam. Instead, the visitors were referenced with kinship terms '*cô*' (aunt) and '*anh*' (older brother), respectively[105]. The avoidance of referencing hearers with titles of low-social status has been noted in other studies including Nguyễn, Q. (1998). By avoiding addressing people with their modest social status VMRI-extenders tended to be polite with the hearers; and/or when naming hearers with their highly-respected profession titles or the highest status they had in the situations, VMRI-extenders tended to express more deference and respect towards the second-person referents.

2. Closer relationship

Second-person referents were also positioned in a closer relationship with the addressers than their de facto one. This could be seen in the addition or deletion of certain pragmatic elements after kinship terms used for second-person referents. Words denoting lineage-relation (*họ*) in cousin-relationships as '*anh/chi/em họ*' (cousins) and other lineage-relations such as '*cô/chú/bác họ*' (parents' cousins) is commonly used in person reference in general contexts (Luong, 1990; Nguyễn, 1956). However, in VMRIs, '*họ*' (lineage-relation) was often omitted and therefore, cousins (*anh/chi/em họ*) were always referenced as siblings (*anh/chi/em*) and parents' cousins were referenced as one's uncles/aunts or parents' siblings (*cô/chú/bác*). Similarly, extenders of VMRIs often referenced *mẹ* (mother) when addressing their mothers-in-law rather than referenced in full as '*mẹ chồng*' (husband's mother) and '*mẹ vợ*' (wife's mother). This was also the terms they addressed their own mothers. The deletion of '*họ*' (lineage-relation) and *chồng*' (husband) or *vợ*' (wife) in the RTs used for second-person referents could, therefore, indicate closer kinships between invitation-extenders and recipients. In contrast, invitation-extenders added the words '*gái*' (girl/female) and '*trai*' (boy/male) after kinship terms. For instance, *anh/chi/em* (elder brother/elder sister/younger siblings) became *anh trai* (elder brother), *chị gái* (elder sister) or '*em trai/ gái*' (younger brother/sister). The denotations (kinships and genders) remained the same, but the terms with additional pragmatic elements had different connotations: they tended to

---

[104] Due to the design of some houses (and other factors), their dining places can sometimes be visible even to passers-by

[105] In these situations in Vietnam, people do not normally ask for visitors' names; therefore, names are not normally referenced.

emphasise relationship[106] and closeness and enhance solidarity between the addressers and the referents even when they were non-relatives[107].

However, I see these phenomena not simply as the deletion and addition of words in the RTs employed. Rather, it is the way the addressers positioned their hearers closer to them than their de facto kinships or relationships (e.g., siblings vs. cousins; uncles/aunts vs. parents' cousins; one's mother vs. husband/wife's mother).

Thus, referencing others with RTs that indicate their highest role or rank and/or a closer relationship with the extenders in context of VMRIs is a way of raising other people up. This is a principle known as '*hô tôn*' (raising others up when referencing them) beside the other principle of '*xưng khiêm*' (humility in self-reference), as already discussed above, in Vietnamese person reference.

3. Relatedness

VMRI-extenders referenced the invitees not always under the kinships or relationships between them but also under the kinships and relationships with others (the third parties) rather than with the addressers themselves. This phenomenon occurring in self-reference has been argued before as self-avoidance or hiding self, but in second-person reference, it showed relatedness. When the addressers reference hearers with the RTs explicitly indicating kinships or relationships between the second-person referents and others, it is indeed a way of relating others to the relationships between the addressers and the second-person referents. What I see as relatedness in second-person reference includes what was known as 'addressing on behalf of a child' in other studies (eg., Nguyễn, 1998).

Relatedness in a broader sense can be seen in the way the addressers see others in relation to themselves, which can be explained by the use kinship terms for non-relatives. For instance, the same non-relative hearer might be referenced by the first addresser as '*anh*' (older brother) but as '*chú*' (uncle) by the second addresser. This may be because he is related (probably through the similar age range and gender) by the first addresser to his/her older brother and by the second addresser to his/her uncle. So,

---

[106] Rather than to emphasize gender, since both *anh* (elder brother) and *anh trai* (elder brother), for instance, equally denote male gender

[107] I still remember the sweetness in the term '*chị gái*' (elder sister) that the host, who was my friend's wife, referenced me instead of an usual term '*chị*' (elder sister) in her during-meal invitation with food-offering, "*Chị gái ăn miếng này đi*!" [Elder sister eat this piece, imperative] (VideoVN#7).

in this way of reference, the addressers see the second-person referents in relation to themselves (i.e. as one's brother or uncle) rather than an independent referent like 'You'[108].

In a narrower sense, relatedness could be seen in the use of second-person RTs indicating kinships or relationships with the third parties. Children and grandchildren were often the subjects of relations in second-person reference in VMRIs. The selection of either children or grandchildren often depended on the family-social status of both the invitation-extenders and recipients. Invitation-extenders having children tended to use second-person RTs in relation to their children; and when they reached the social status of grandparents, they often chose their grandchildren as their representatives. For example, a man would address his parents as '*ông bà*' (grandparents) and his wife as '*mẹ/mẹ nó*' (mother/one's mother) with relation to his children; he would also address his parents as '*cụ*' (great-grandparents) and his wife as '*bà/bà nó*' (grandmother/one's grandmother) when relating to his grandchildren. My 66-year-old interviewee is a particular example. She reported that she used to reference her husband as '*anh*' (elder brother), like others, but when they had their first daughter, whose name was Yến, she addressed her husband as '*bố Yến*' (Yến's father): "*Bố Yến ăn cơm đi*!" [Father Yến eat rice, imperative]. Now, they had grandchildren and she often referenced him as '*ông*' (grandfather): "*Mời ông xơi cơm*!" [Invite grandfather eat rice] (IVN9, 02:43).

Interestingly, in VMRIs, extenders also used second-person RTs with relation to the third-parties, who were not necessarily children or grandchildren. For example, in a meal described in a participant's' diary, a girl was having meal with her flatmate when her uncle popped in. They both extended invitations towards him. The girl addressed her uncle as '*cậu*' (uncle) with all three kinship denotations, including blood-relation, mother's side, and younger than mother (mother's younger brother). In spite of having no such relations with this man, the flatmate also addressed him as '*cậu*', instead of other RTs such as *anh* (older brother) or *chú* (uncle[109]) commonly used in similar social relations. By referencing the invitee as the addresser's *cậu*, the addresser tended to reference him in relation to her friend. In other words, she related her friend to the reference when acknowledging this relationship between her friend and the second-

---

[108] Seeing and treating patients as one's own relatives (parents, siblings, children) is commonly applied in Eastern medical traditions by many medical doctors including Dr Steven Aung
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qPBL8O5JEk
[109] father's younger brother

person referent and enacted this acknowledgement by calling her friend's *cậu* as her *cậu* .

Thus, second-person reference with relation to the third parties is a way to show respect for both the second-person referents and the third parties. The addressers acknowledge the relationships between the second-person referents and the third parties and enact this acknowledgement by taking the position of the third parties to address the second person referents. It is also a way to relate all parties in person reference and create a sense of belonging or inclusion for all parties. Relatedness in second-person reference in VMRIs, therefore, also enhances closeness and solidarity within the community of diners.

4. Respect for age and family lineage order

Speakers of VMRIs expressed their respect for age in numerous ways, as already discussed above and in previous chapters. In this section, respect for age was illustrated in second-person reference. Second-person referents were often referenced with the descending age-oriented order, i.e., second-person reference starting from the oldest members, oldest pairs, or oldest groups. The descending age-oriented order always complied with the family order. Take an example of a meal-start invitation,

> "*Cháu mời bà ăn cơm, cháu mời bác Long ăn cơm, cháu mời bác Hiền ăn cơm, em mời anh chị ăn cơm*" (D2#4)
>
> [Granddaughter invite grandmother eat rice, niece invite uncle Long eat rice, niece invite aunt Hiền eat rice, younger sibling invite older siblings eat rice]
>
> (I invite you all to eat).

In this invitation, the invitation-extender referenced her grandmother first since she was the oldest member in the group of diners, then her uncle, her aunt, and lastly her elder cousins, who was the youngest and lowest family-ranked diners. In another example, a mother referenced her children with a second-person RT '*chị em mày*' [Elder sister younger sibling thou] (INV1, 14:20), in which '*chị*' (elder sibling) also came before '*em*' (younger sibling). Rarely any VMRI-extenders were observed to break this well-established order. One participant reported that when she was small she thought she should refer her parents in the invitations first then to others, including her grandparents, but she was corrected by her parents to reference her grandparents as the oldest first.

However, the descending age-oriented order in second-person reference became controversial when applying to meals with both guests and family members. Numerous informants said parents needed to be referenced first and guests later as in *"Mời bố mẹ ăn cơm, mời cô chú ăn cơm"* [Invite parents eat rice, invite aunt uncle eat rice] (D3#3). Others had opposite opinions, i.e., guests should be referenced before family members to respect them. For example, a boy referenced his family's guests (grandparents and aunt) before his parents although he knew his aunt (his mother's younger sister) was younger and in a lower family order than his parents, in his meal-start invitations,

> *"Con mời ông, con mời bà, con mời dì Minh, con mời bố, con mời mẹ, mời em Bin"* (D12#2)
>
> [Child invite grandfather, child invite grandmother, child invite father, child invite mother, invite younger sibling Bin (himself)]
>
> ((I invite you all to eat).

Meanwhile, a large number of participants revealed their strategy in grouping recipients to avoid ranking their invitees in their second-person reference. For instance, by terming *'hai anh'* (two elder brothers), a 30-year-old lady could reference her husband and a male guest simultaneously in her invitation (D3#1). Similarly, another lady referenced her mother and her mother-in-law simultaneously with *'hai bà'* (two grandmothers) without having to deciding who should be referenced first or second (D2#4); or a boy used the inclusive RT *'cả nhà'* (all), which included all recipients, to avoid listing and ranking ages of so many RTs (VideoVN#1).

When there were discrepancies between younger ages and higher lineage ranks, the descending age-oriented order was negotiable and lineage ranks seemed more decisive. For example, in the communal meal to commemorate my mother-in-law's memorial anniversary, my husband's niece referenced me, her aunt, before referencing her cousins in her meal-start invitations although her cousins were much older than me (VideoVN#11). This was because in the lineage order in relation to the invitation-extender's 'ego', aunts (ranked equally to ego's parents) were higher-linage-ranked than cousins (ranked equally to ego).

Invitation-extenders could reference all invitees as a mixed group in inclusive RTs like *mọi người* (everyone) and *cả nhà* (all), but tended to avoid doing so if the group also included much older people or superiors of higher ranks than them. Instead, they often

ranked invitees and referenced them as pairs or groups of second-person referents according to their similar age ranges or family-lineage orders (or family social status) such as *ông bà* (grandparents), *bố mẹ* (parents), or *các ông* (grandfathers), *các bác* (uncles and aunts), *các anh* (elder brothers), *các con* (children). When recipients were referenced in pairs, the terms indicating male-gender often came first, for example, '*ông bà*' (grandfather-grandmother), '*bố mẹ*' (father-mother), '*anh chị*' (elder bother-elder sister), with the exception of the pair '*cô chú*' (aunt-uncle), in which *cô* (aunt), the female, was named first. This can be implied as gender bias, which was found to be male-oriented in Luong (1990) and others. However, it is noticeable that age and family lineage order rather than gender governed second-person reference in VMRIs.

6.3. Summary

In summary, this chapter has analysed patterns of person reference (including both person and non-person reference) and pragmatics of RTs used in VMRIs. Person reference was employed as a means to express (in)formality and (non)solidarity to increase politeness and respect in VMRIs. This finding supports other studies of person reference in general and Vietnamese person reference in particular. However, person reference in VMRIs was employed differently between males and females and between the older group and the younger group as speakers of VMRIs.

Person reference in VMRIs was diverse, dynamic, and flexible not only in the pragmatics and functions of RTs used but also in patterns of (non-)person reference and in ways of pairing RTs. Findings about diversity, dynamics, and flexibility of person reference in VMRIs support findings in previous studies and contribute more illustrations, which might be attributed to the peculiar context of use of VMRIs.

Person reference in VMRIs was governed by many factors, including relatedness, inclusion, solidarity, family-orientation, and respect for age and family lineage order. The principles of '*xưng nghiêm, hô tôn*' (humbleness in self-reference; deference and respect in reference of others) was also a factor mediating the use and the avoidance of certain RTs. Self-reference and second-person reference in VMRIs also revealed how speakers of VMRIs perceived their selves and positioned others. In general, VMRI-extenders tended to step down to the lowest role or rank and even hide themselves in self-reference, but position second-person referents in their highest status or closest

relationships. From all these findings, it can be concluded that person reference in VMRIs is a strong reflection of a collectivist culture on language use.

Next chapter will not investigate VMRIs in detail through their different linguistic aspects as in this chapter and other two previous chapters. Instead, it will view VMRIs in a whole, as a language ritual, a speech behaviour pattern, or a cultural practice, through which the role of women is highlighted.

Chapter 7. THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Previous chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) discussed linguistic features of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations (VMRIs). This chapter, like Chapter 3 (Food and mealtimes), examines these invitations as cultural ritual practices from an anthropological perspective. By discussing the broad social-cultural context of food and eating in Vietnam, Chapter 3 identified the need for this contextualising in the more linguistic-oriented chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6). This chapter, Chapter 7, is returning to look at one specific social aspect, which has emerged from the research. The discussions, framed by socio-cultural theory (regulation) and the Vietnamese socio-historical context, focus on the role of women in these ritual practices with attempts to answer questions such as: Is the role consistent with restrictive sociocultural expectations of 'being females'? Or does the role permit agency of females through their participation in a daily-life practice of traditional customs? The answers have made arguments about the way in which women's relationships with VMRIs are different from men's and unfolded women's use of speech forms for social purposes. The findings also emphasise that the continuity of intergenerational practices is attributed to the role of women.

The purpose of this chapter, as well as of Chapter 3, which highlights the values of food and company in meals, is to answer the research question: What are the socio-cultural features of VMRIs?

7.1. Why women?

Women here refers not just to mothers but to females of all ages and social and family statuses. By discussing the role of women only, I do not mean to suggest that the role of their opposite-sexed counterparts is unimportant or explicitly compare the two although comparison is sometimes unavoidable. The role of women rather than of men is mainly discussed here for several reasons.

The principal reason is that the data from all sources including informal conversations, observations, video-recordings, diaries, and interviews display females' prominent role

•••
217

"Eating alone is painful": An interdisciplinary and ethnographically inspired sociolinguistic investigation into Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations

in VMRIs although no interview questions or any diary instructions focused on gender differences. The manifestation of women's role is not simply because of the greater number of female participants (25 out of 36 interviewees, 41out of 53[110] diary-writers, and numerous anonymous female participants) but mainly because of the data themselves, which were also provided by males. The greater involvement of women should not be the issues of methodology in recruiting participants. It is natural since the topic was perceived by my participants as related to child bearing and rearing and cultural transmission, the tasks to which women are socially central but men are actually marginal (Kuiper, 1998, p. 103).

The second reason for orienting toward the role of women is that families are where the speech behaviour pattern of VMRIs is primarily cultivated and nurtured although these mealtime invitations also take place in the workplace and other public dining places (see Chapter 3). The role of families in nurturing the practice of VMRIs was emphasised by a male interviewee, for example, "*the practice of VMRIs starts and is nurtured mainly in families rather than in schools because schools provide just general moral lessons or conducts*" (IVN9, 15:30). Inasmuch as these invitations are strongly associated with families and involve socialization of behaviours besides communication of information, they are understandably attached to women. Women are those who manage behaviours in families (Merrilla, Galoa, & Fivusha, 2014); families have so far been regarded as females' realm, where women are home-makers and the domestic generals (nội tướng).

Another reason for my focus on women, which is also explanations for their prominent role in VMRIs, is the dynamic change of family structure in Vietnamese society. The change is widely attributed to the complex influences of the three following components: the indigenous matrifocal culture in early Vietnamese society (pre-Chinese domination); the exotic Confucianism's patriarchy emanating from China's sinicization; and the socio-historical conditions of Vietnam since the late 19th Century. This is discussed further in the section below.

7.2. Vietnamese socio-historical context

Vietnamese society before Chinese occupation, which began in 111BC, was matriarchal with the leading role taken by women (e.g., Đào, D.A., 1938; Huỳnh, 1986; Trần, 1996)

---

[110] Ten out of 63 diaries were not used (see Chapter 2)

or bilateral (e.g., Taylor, 1983; Whitmore, 1986). The high or leading status of women in all political, societal, and domestic domains has been put forward as a Vietnamese indigenous cultural pattern (e.g., Hoskins, 1975). Matriarchal survivals remain today in various life aspects. For example, in Vietnamese language, the word '*cái*', literally meaning mother, female gender, or something chief, important, or paramount (Taylor, 1986), is used as an adjective to describe its preceding noun as the main or chief things such as: *sông Cái* (Cái river), the principal river[111]; *ngón cái* (thumb), the biggest finger. It is also used as an article preceding nouns, for example, '*cái thìa*' (a spoon), '*những cái gậy*' (sticks) even when things are not of female gender. Matriarchy also survives in social life with children adopting mothers' surnames and daughters rather than sons carrying family name and receiving inheritance among some minority ethnic groups such as the Cham (Nguyễn, K., 2006).

The strongest and most enduring matriarchal vestige might be Đạo Mẫu, the Goddess worship or the worship of Holy Mothers (Đặng, N. V., 1997; Nguyễn, M. S., 1996; Vu, 2006). Worshipped Goddesses are not only spiritual personification of nature (e.g., the Earth Mother, the Rice-Goddess) or of Vietnam's land, water and people (e.g., Mother Âu Cơ (Viet nation's mother), Mother of Land, Goddesses of Forest and Water) but also real-life national heroines such as Vua Bà[112] (Empress) and Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh[113]. These real-life heroines are the most famous goddesses venerated in Vietnam (Taylor, 2003), which makes Vietnamese Goddess worship different from other Goddess worshiped cultures. Another distinct feature is that Goddess worship in Vietnam is an important component of its folk ideology or belief system that is used by common people to make their life decisions and to guide their daily life (Vu, 2006) or even a critically important factor in shaping the contemporary political and intellectual interpretations of societal and cultural change (Taylor, 2003). Particularly, this cult provides the potential for common women to use their power and their models to transform the society since it recognises "the power of women as mother", "universalises and deifies her qualities as a mother then offers this vision as an ideal for

---

[111] To refer to the Hồng river as the "principal" or "paramount" river among all the other channels in the plain (Taylor, 1986)

[112] To refer to Trưng Trắc, who together with her heroic sister, Trưng Nhị, well-known as Trưng sisters (Hai Bà Trưng), led and defended Vietnamese people against Chinese domination, gained independence for the nation, and became Vietnam's first Empress in 40-43AD

[113] The lady whose many reincarnated lives were devoted to protecting Vietnamese people against poverty, ignorance, and foreign invasion

real life women and mothers to follow as a guide for living in today's society" (Vu, 2006, p. 39).

I believe that the strong matriarchal heritage of Vietnam that dates back to early history while its remnants still remain today, especially the strong impact of veneration of Vietnamese female spirits, can elucidate the role of women in VMRIs.

Family structure and the role of women in Vietnamese society since Chinese domination (111BC-938AD) changed with the adoption of the exotic Confucianism's patriarchy. By definition, under patriarchal structure, women were placed in a subordinate position, ruled over by men, submissive and obedient to men, even to their sons[114]. They had only obligations and forbiddances but no rights or allowances. A woman, regarded by Confucius ideology as 'a weak and helpless creature' that was "ignorant, filled with bad instincts and hard to educate", (as cited in Mai, 1990, p. 186) were, therefore, deprived of education and the right to educate their children, especially their sons. They were burdened with labour and domestic chores including childcare (according to Belanger & Khuat, 1996; Krowolski, 2002; Liljestrom & Lai, 1991 as cited in Jayakody & Phuong, 2013, p. 233) and bounded in the humid and dark kitchen corner (Mai, 1990, p. 186). Moreover, stipulated by Confucian doctrines, women were required to uphold regulations of morality[115], in which their proper speech and behaviours were emphasised (Endres, 1999, p. 156). In patriarchal families, wives had to use formal respectful language and an attitude of deference towards their husbands (Hoskins, 1975). In this way, the Confucian patriarchy framed women with being moral models in their own behaviours while they were also constantly conscious of the strict social expectations imposed upon their morality. Given the Chinese occupation in Vietnam for more than a thousand years, the influence of its patriarchy on the role of Vietnamese women is undeniable.

However, the extent of the influence is arguable and it is widely agreed that Confucian patriarchy did not entirely succeed in the Vietnamese context (e.g., Marr, 1981; Nguyễn, 1956; Taylor, 1983). Confucianism could only establish itself in Vietnam as an institution only after ten centuries since Chinese first domination and its influence was

---

[114] Under Confucian doctrines, a woman was framed with 'Three obediences' (tam tòng): complete obedience to her father before marriage; then to her husband after marriage; and to their sons after her husband's death.

[115] Good morality included four virtues (tứ đức): labour (công), physical appearance (dung), appropriate speech (ngôn) and proper behaviour (hạnh)

more at the institutional level than on local people's daily life (Thich, 1967). Marr (1981) also noted, "*Vietnam was hardly a moral wasteland ready to be injected with new seed and cultivated at will according to the gardening metaphor*" (p. 71). This might be because native traditions and indigenous customs were obstacles to block Chinese sinicization: "*the Vietnamese, who were under the Chinese rule from 111BC to AD939 and under the Han were subjected to intensive sinicization, developed a culture which, while owning an immense amount to China, nevertheless preserved its own identity, with its roots going back to a pre-Chinese past*" (Hall, 1956, p. 4).

In reality, Vietnamese women were conferred a much higher status than that of Chinese women; their husbands were required by law to fulfil some duties towards them (the Le Code, 1777). Vietnamese women also had the position superior to that of other Asian women. They were ranked almost equal to men and "*so little treated as inferior that she plays an important and sometimes preponderant role in the deliberation of the family councils*" (according to Maitre & Crayssac as cited in Nguyễn, Đ. H, 1956). Not only occupying high status and positions in their families, Vietnamese women enjoyed their husband's love and care and children's adoration and respect (Nguyễn, V. H., 1944/1995).

Vietnam's socio-historical circumstances of continual wars and then the Western influence, especially since the late 19th Century, added further complexities to the role of Vietnamese women. Wars kept men from families and left women overtime primarily responsible for home affairs. Stories provided by participants were exemplary evidences. According to a 73-year-old interviewee, during the war for national independence and unification (in the 1960s and 1970s), he was permanently away from home; most of the household tasks including providing food, care, and education for the two first children were, therefore, thrown in his wife's hands. Similarly, a 49-year-old interviewee of a younger generation shared that her parents both died in the war when she and her younger brother were just toddlers. Thus, they were both brought up by her grandmother, whose husband was also killed in the war. Her behaviours, including the practice of VMRIs were, therefore, mainly taught and shaped by her grandmother.

Presently, in the time of gender equality enacted by laws, women have remained invested in their roles as primary caregivers and homemakers beside the 'working mother model' (Nguyen, M. T. N., 2014). According to the nationwide survey of the

Ministry of Culture and Information in 2006, women spent at least three hours daily caring for children aged 15 and younger while men spent less than an hour daily with them. Matsuda's survey, 1997, also revealed that 60% of men and 70% of women as workers in Ho Chi Minh city agreed on women's main responsibility for household chores and taking care of family members, even when working full-time outside (as cited in Jayakody & Phuong, 2013). Those studies also revealed that when working women sought childcare help from their extended families, it was also more available from females such as from grandmothers, aunts, or older sisters.

Women engage in most of children's time, both at home and at school. When help from extended families and older siblings became less available due to numerous factors (e.g., the increasing rates of rural-to-urban migration, national family planning policies, children's rights, or educational demands), domestic services become an indispensable source of help for household tasks. The majority of domestic workers are females (Nguyễn, K. H, 2007; Nguyen, M. T. N, 2014). Besides domestic services, childcare providers such as childcare centres, nursery schools or kindergartens also increase. Working with children in those institutions are also mostly women. Females make up a major proportion of teachers, especially 80% in pre- and primary schools (Nguyễn & Đỗ, 2010, p. 6). Women not only engage in most of children's time but their involvement with children is also mostly in critical periods of children's shaping habits, attitudes and behaviours, from zero until after the age of 12 (e.g., Newman et al., 2015; Yorio, 1976). Their influence on children is, therefore, relatively strong. Vietnamese women play a critical role to the development of children both at home and in the society.

Recently, there has been an increase of overseas factors in Vietnamese families such as families settling down overseas, or families with members who reunite after sometime residing overseas; or families mixing with foreign member(s). The role of Vietnamese women in those overseas-related families in general seems dynamic and complex. For example, Vietnamese refugee women were claimed to have 'relative autonomy' and 'far more active roles' in various domains, including rearing children, in comparison not only with other South East Asian female refugees but also with Vietnamese refugee men (Haines, 1986). Whereas, the expectation of mothering duties in Vietnamese immigrant families residing overseas at modern time remains high, as pointed out by Cheung and Nguyen (2001) in their study about Vietnamese immigrant families in the

USA. They found that the change in cultural environment did not influence the perception of bringing up children much; traditional parenting styles were still preferred in those families. Thus, mothering duties are still highly expected among overseas families with more international cultural exposures.

The high expectation for women's homemaking duties is also reflected in Vietnamese overseas fictions. The television series '*Hai phía chân trời*' (Vũ, 2012[116]), based on the novel '*Máu của tuyết*' (Trần, 2006), about the life of Vietnamese immigrants in the Czech Republic in the 2000s is an example. In one scene right before dinner, the husband, a young lawyer, blames his wife for their about-5-year-old daughter's inappropriate ways of greeting her grandmother at her first visit from Vietnam. At the meal, not long after, upon the toddler's non-use of mealtime ritual invitations and then her improper invitation after being modelled by her mother, the husband blames his wife again for not spending enough time on teaching the child more Vietnamese to know how to behave politely. The husband's complaints, repeated even after his wife, who is working full-time outside like her husband, however, has already explained her difficulty in managing to do that while fulfilling other housework tasks and running the restaurant at the busy season, show his strong expectation of his wife's sole responsibility in nurturing their child's behaviours at home.

Socio-historical circumstances and folk ideology, in one way, tend to assign individuals' behaviours to women's responsibility, reflecting in numerous sayings, proverbs, or idioms, which are often employed as moral regulations. Besides her own, women are supposed to be responsible for the misdeeds of other family members, including their children[117], their grandchildren[118], and even their husbands[119]. The practice of VMRIs, regarded as a form of etiquette in eating or a traditional custom at meals, is referred to each individual's behaviours showing their eating manner. Women are consequently implicitly supposed to be responsible for their family members' practice of VMRIs. Moreover, the common belief that emphasises the importance of early childhood nurturing[120] tends to associate the task of making VMRIs be practiced (properly) among children to one child-nurturing task among many other female domestic tasks. In this

---

[116] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8b4eJe_AH4
[117] '*Con dại cái mang*' (Children's misdeeds are mother's responsibility)
[118] '*Con hư tại mẹ; cháu hư tại bà*' (Spoiled children are mothers' and grandmothers' faults)
[119] '*Xấu chàng, hổ ai*' (A husband's misdeeds are his wife's shame)
[120] '*Dạy con từ thuở còn thơ*' (Children should be nurtured at an early age)

way, women's domestic tasks tend to be perceived to include not only their own practicing VMRIs but also making VMRIs be practiced (properly) in their families. However, in the other way, Vietnamese people perceive the nurturing of manners as the most important of all and hence, the role of mothers as more significant than that of fathers, reflected in sayings such as "*Cha sinh không bằng mẹ dưỡng*" (An adoptive mother is incomparable with a birth father) or "*Đức hiền/phúc đức tại mẫu*" (Children's beneficence is thanks to their mother).

However, given the complex influences of Vietnamese socio-cultural and historical circumstances on the role of Vietnamese women, some questions arise, including: (i) Whether contemporary women's practice of VMRIs is the model offered to transform the society or the realization of a patriarchal framework for female morality? (ii) Whether women really perceive their own practice and making VMRIs practiced as their female domestic tasks or if women really do those tasks as they are expected? Discussions on the role of women in VMRIs below in two aspects, namely their attitudes and their practice will address these questions.

7.3. Women's role in VMRIs

7.3.1. Attitudes towards VMRIs

Women's attitudes towards VMRIs will be examined throughout their opinion about the importance of VMRIs and their desire to retain the practice of VMRIs. These two facets are discussed below.

7.3.1.1. The importance of VMRIs

Women have strong positive attitudes towards VMRIs, which reflects firstly their opinion that VMRIs are important. Women put more importance on VMRIs than their male counterparts, which is illustrated in Table 7.1 below. The table presents the attitude towards the importance of VMRIs between male (M) and female (FM) interviewees in Vietnam (VN) and New Zealand (NZ) in percentages and numbers of participants (in parentheses).

Table 7-1 Male and female interviewees' attitude towards the importance of VMRIs

Interviewees		Important		Not very important		Not important at all	
FM (25)	VN (15)	100% (15)	88% (22)	0% (0)	12% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)
	NZ (10)	70% (7)		30% (3)		0% (0)	
M (11)	VN (7)	86% (6)	63.6% (7)	14% (1)	36.4% (4)	0% (0)	0% (0)
	NZ (4)	25% (1)		75% (3)		0% (0)	

Table 7.1 shows that, no females (0%) or males in either Vietnam or New Zealand expressed anywhere in the interviews that VMRIs are not important at all. This means that to Vietnamese people, regardless of their present living locations, of their genders, and of whether they are practicing VMRIs or not, VMRIs are important to some extent. However, the degree of importance differs in practisers' attitudes. 100% (15/15) of female interviewees in Vietnam and 70% (7/10) of counterparts in New Zealand expressed that the practice of VMRIs is important in comparison with around 86% (6/7) and 25% (1/4) of male interviewees in Vietnam and New Zealand respectively. This means that 88% (22/25) of female interviewees placed importance on VMRIs in comparison with just around 63.6% (7/11) of male interviewees in both research sites. None of female interviewees in Vietnam perceived VMRIs as not important. In Auckland, only three out of ten females, making 12% (3/25), which is three times less than that of males (36.4%, 4/11) in both research sites, were of this view. These figures show that VMRIs are considered more important by women, especially those residing within Vietnam.

Women's ways of expressing the importance of VMRIs are also noticeable in interviews. For the question if they think VMRIs are important, unlike men's 'yes' answers with short explanations or hedges with uncertainty such as: 'I think they are important' or 'yeah, they seem important to me', most women often emphasised their 'yes, of course' answers with long explanations and repeated assertive words and phrases, quotations and sayings together with stronger tones of voice and remarkable facial expressions. They often verbalised the importance of VMRIs with such phrases as '*social norms*', '*deeply-rooted cultural tradition passing over from Vietnamese*

ancestors', 'an exquisite cultural tradition', 'a communicative convention of showing respect and politeness'. One female even referred VMRIs to 'national identity' (IVN7, 02:25). Most women attached extending invitations to eating, using assertive words with certainty like: '*đã ăn là phải mời*' (extending invitations is a must when eating); '*cứ ăn là phải mời*' (extending invitations whenever eating); or '*hễ/cứ ăn là mời*' (eating cannot go without invitations). They, especially young female interviewees in their 20s, regarded the use of VMRIs as their responsibility (*trách nhiệm*), duty or what needs to do   (*việc phải/cần làm*) towards their superiors. A female aged 30 even attached the responsibility for the use of VMRIs to the fulfilment of filial piety or the 'cult of being dutiful children' (*đạo làm con*) (IVN4, 10:41). To her, extending VMRIs to parents is a 'must'.

Besides verbalizing the importance of VMRIs with various expressions, women also quoted old sayings or proverbs for more emphasis. For example, a 66-year-old female started her explanation for the importance of VMRIs by quoting the saying "*Lời mời cao hơn mâm cỗ*" (invitations are more important than the feast) (IVN8, 11:32). Sharing a similar way of expressing positive attitudes, a younger female (aged 30) referred to one sentence that she claimed to be a Vietnamese saying: "*ở Việt Nam có câu: 'làm con, ăn cơm phải mời bố mẹ*'" (in Vietnam, there is a saying that: 'being children, extending meal-time invitations to parents is a must') (IVN4, 02:30). Although the sentence that she quoted was not a Vietnamese formulaic saying or a set expression, her possibly exaggeration or maybe mistake reflects her view that VMRIs are really important and necessary. IVN1, a middle-aged female, is best exemplified for women with strong attitude towards VMRIs. Many times in her interviews, she repeated expressions showing the importance of VMRIs. She used the saying: "*ăn có mời, làm có khiến*" (eating with/by invitations and doing with/by requests) (17:00p1) and stated '*ăn uống là phải mời chào*' (inviting and greeting is a must in eating) (22:25p1). Before concluding that VMRIs were important, she also explained that VMRIs reflected the interpersonal sentiment that tops everything (*tình người là trên hết*) (17:20p1). Moreover, her voice and her facial expressions when answering interviewing questions also reflected her strong view of the importance of practicing VMRIs. For example, she strongly disagreed when being asked for her opinion about the suggestion that 'VMRIs should be discarded because VMRIs would sound impractical and superfluous in rushed meals'. Staring at me as if I had just said something unacceptable, she repeated strong words

with a raised intonation: '*No, it can't be like that*'; '*how can it be like that*', and '*Never. It is unacceptable to have meals without extending VMRIs, especially towards superiors*' (13:00p2).

Apart from viewing the importance of VMRIs in terms of their meaningful cultural values, many women, like men, also viewed VMRIs' importance in terms of their practical benefits such as making diners feel more comfortable ('*thoải mái hơn*', '*dễ chịu hơn*'), happier ('*vui hơn*'); and creating a more harmonious and cosier eating atmosphere ('*tạo không khí ấm cúng và thân mật*') at the dining table.

Women's attitudes towards the importance of VMRIs were also strongly expressed in diaries and followed disclosures. Unlike interviews, where participants were more directed or oriented towards judging the importance of VMRIs through questions, diary writers were generally asked to write about their attitudes or feelings for specific meals in each entry. No male diary writers directly mentioned the importance of VMRIs in their writings although they, like many female writers, recorded the use of VMRIs in diaries. However, many females expressed their direct opinions in their writings. This reflects that VMRIs are constantly on most women's minds when talking about meals. A 19-year-old female diary writer, for example, showed her unhappiness about her nephew's frequent absence of VMRI-practice in her first entry, which recorded her re-union lunch with her family members in her hometown after a long time being away for her tertiary education:

> *I laid all the food that I had already prepared on the table and invited all my family's members to go down to have lunch. Sharing meals with my family is always what I love most. But, my nephew has no habit of extending VMRIs at meal-starts although he is already five years old. I am really upset with such kind of behaviour. I have many times advised my parents to teach him right at this age about VMRIs to make him extend invitations at meal-starts since it is a conventional politeness. However, my parents just say that: "We have already told him many times but he only extends invitations when he remembers, and does not when he forgets". I think the present society is now all like that: grandchildren are too spoiled by grandparents and have become so rude. Perhaps, I am the only one in my family to be strict enough. In any meals in my presence, I am the only one to ask the boy to extend his meal-start VMRIs to his superiors and I am also the only person to tell him off if he is not listening* (D27#1).

The girl was happy with her rare chance to share the reunion meal with her family members after a long time living away from them, but her 5-year-old nephew's lack of use of VMRIs in the meal concerned her. Her concern occupied nearly the whole entry, which included few more sentences describing the meal. To her, the boy's not extending VMRIs to superiors in meals was rude. She not only expressed her unhappiness with his behaviour but also showed her discontent about other adults' (the boy's grandparents) neglect in shaping the boy's proper behaviour as she thought the absence of practice was getting more common among children due to being spoiled in present society. Thus, it can be interpreted from her writings that she thought not only diners should extend VMRIs but adults (including her) should also be responsible for nurturing the practice among children. All the points have shown that to this young female diary writer, the use of VMRIs is really important and necessary.

Attitudes of other females apart from the female writers themselves were also revealed in their dairies. Entries and disclosures of D18, a newly-wed bride, about her very-first meals after her marriage best exemplified this. In the first meal with her husband, parents-in-law, and sisters-in-law, she reported no meal-start VMRIs being extended by any members, including her although frequent during-meal VMRIs were extended, especially towards her, a new family member. She disclosed later that her husband, who had been working and living in the South for quite a long time and no longer kept the habit of extending meal-start VMRIs, had told her that his family did not expect meal-start VMRIs from any members. However, she admitted that not extending meal-start VMRIs, despite being told not to, made her feel like lacking something when having meals. Her feeling of lack implies that VMRIs have been an indispensable part of her meals. Her second meal entry described that she was warned by her husband that his grandmother, who was very strict, would attend the meal together with her in-laws and that meal-start VMRIs should be extended to her. Hence, unlike the first meal, in the second meal in the presence of her husband's grandmother, all diners exchanged their meal-start invitations. This reveals the old lady's strong expectation of meal-start VMRIs, which was known to her inferiors. This also implies that VMRIs were important to her. Noticeably, the fifth entry recorded the meal that the newly-wed couple had with the bride's parents and her siblings in her parents' house. Here the writer reported the exchange of VMRIs amongst all members, except for her husband extending VMRIs. Her mother's notice of her husband's absence of VMRIs was

confidentially reported to her in their after-meal normal conversations. Although the writer explained that her mother's remark did not indicate her unhappiness or criticism because she had known about her son-in-law's non-practice before, her noticing and mentioning about it can imply that it drew her attention and she cared for the use of VMRIs.

7.3.1.2. Desire for retaining VMRIs

Women's positive attitudes towards VMRIs are secondly reflected in their desire for retaining the practice of VMRIs, especially among children and future generations. All females indicated in their interviews, diaries or informal talks that they would like their children, either existing or future-imagined ones, to know about VMRIs and practice them. The desire was even articulated by three females who did not consider the practice very important and one of whom did not currently practise VMRIs.

However, based on what females in interviews thought out loud, they were categorised into two groups. The first group, which included two young females residing in Vietnam and six in Auckland, appeared more relaxed: they would like to retain practice of VMRIs among their children and future generations by telling them about the tradition, but not by coercing the practice among them. To them, children would be totally free to choose to practice or not. The other group, which included 13 females in Vietnam and four in Auckland, seemed more insistent on or even more controlling over their children and future generation's use of VMRIs. They indicated that retaining the practice of VMRIs among future generations was necessary and they would regulate the practice among children at their early age, making the practice first a habit and then a regulation (e.g., IVN1, IVN5, IVN7). They would tell them off for their mis-practicing VMRIs (IVN1). The ratio of women residing in Vietnam and Auckland in these two groups of opinions can also indicate that Vietnamese women living overseas seemed more relaxed than those living inside the country in terms of regulating their children to practice this language ritual.

Numerous female diary writers also shared their strong view with the second group. They even reported their attempt to retain the practice of VMRIs despite the negative influence of a non-practice environment. For example, after emailing me her diaries recording seven very-first meals with her in-laws after her marriage, in which the

practice of meal-start VMRIs was reportedly not very common, D18, a newly-wed bride and a regular VMRI-practiser, disclosed that when having meals with them again later (she and her husband left them for another city one week after the marriage), she would still keep her practice of VMRIs at meal-starts regardless of others' practicing or not. She also stated she would teach her future children to use VMRIs wherever they might live and whoever they would often share meals with; and she would not let other people's non-practice habit control her practice or her future children's use of VMRIs.

With such strong views on the importance of VMRIs, and strong desire for the continuity of VMRIs in future generations, women have shown the role of being models in their actual practice, which can be comprehensively explained using socio-cultural concepts as below.

7.3.2. Self-regulation

Regulation is termed in socio-cultural theory to mean the mediation or control of human behaviour by object (object-regulation), people (other-regulation) and the self (self-regulation) (Vygotsky, 1978). Other-regulation and object-regulation, the earlier developmental processes that are strongly related to the zone of proximal development in general genetic law of cultural development, refer to the mediational processes whereby "the individual's activity and thinking are facilitated, shaped, or guided by another's, words, tone of voice, gesture, eye gaze, facial expressions, and deployment of other artifacts" (Ohta, 2013, p. 651). Self-regulation means the ability to control or mediate one's own behaviour (Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2011) or the ability to make decisions, work out how to solve problems, and become aware of his/her own action (Wall, 2015). Self-regulation, according to Vygotsky (1986), emerges as a result of a person first being regulated by objects and by others. Therefore, self-regulation, preceded by other-regulation and object-regulation, is a form of higher mental functions (Frawley & Lantolf, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978). The ontogenesis of mental functions in the general genetic law of cultural development is explained by Vygotsky as follows: "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people (inter-psychological), and then inside the child (intra-psychological)" (p. 57).

Vygotskian concept of regulation, which has been widely applied in language and culture learning (e.g., Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Ohta, 2013; Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2011; Wall, 2015), has its origins in social interactions. The practice of VMRIs as a language ritual or a speech behaviour pattern can, therefore, be well situated in Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory. In Vygotskian terms, practicing VMRIs with prompts, reminders, and corrections can be seen as indications of object-regulation and other-regulation and practicing VMRIs without these outside supporting forces as self-regulation. Using these concepts to interpret the role of women in VMRIs helps to analogise degrees of regulation and identify levels of self-regulation that women display in the cultural practice of VMRIs.

7.3.2.1. Object-regulation and other-regulation

When practicing VMRIs with prompts, reminders, and corrections is seen as indications of object-regulation and other-regulation in Vygotskian terms, these mediational processes among females are relative brief. Data revealed that few females needed prompts, reminders, or correction from others for their practice of VMRIs. Prompts, reminders, or correction if needed were reported to occur just few times when females were very young, but not at all when they grew up. It was not because people did not care to prompt, remind or correct females' practice, but because females of all ages often showed their autonomy in extending VMRIs.

Women of various age ranges were reported (in their own reports and others') hardly forgetting to extend VMRIs to other diners and therefore, rarely being reminded about their practice. In interviews, for example, a 20-year-old female interviewee revealed that she had never been reminded to extend VMRIs in expected situations because VMRIs seemed to become an indispensable part of her meals and she never forgot them. She had similar comments about her high-schooled younger sister's practice: '*like me, she has never been reminded because she extends VMRIs whenever she starts her meals in others' presence*' (IVN12, 4:10). Similarly, a 21-year-old male interviewee answered '*No, never*' immediately when being asked if his younger 17-year-old sister had ever been corrected or reminded about her VMRI practice. He added '*No, she extends invitations regularly, in every meal and in every situation*' (IVN15, 03:59) with his laugh and a bit higher voice, which sounded as if he had never had any 'funny' thoughts about reminding such a regular practiser as his sister. IVN1, a middle-aged regular

practiser of VMRIs also had a similar confirmation about the regular practice of her children, including one 26-year-old daughter: '*never have they been observed not to extend VMRIs. If ever, I would stare at them and remind them immediately. But, they have never forgotten their VMRIs*' (11:27p1).

The practice of VMRIs of young-aged girls was also positively commented in diaries. For instance, a six-year-old niece was captured in her aunt's diaries with, '*she rarely forgets to do that [extending VMRIs] although she is still young. She is really good and obedient*' (D3#3); a seven-year-old daughter was reported in her mother's entry, '*she always actively extends invitations. Her invitation today (the daughter thought her mother was unwell), which was full of her care and love, moved me. It showed that her maturity and cognition was above her age*' (D28#5).

Among all females whose practice of VMRIs was commented on in interviews and diaries, there was only one exception for IVN2's nine-year-old sister, who was reported not having a habit of extending VMRIs at her meals despite being sometimes reminded. Meanwhile, a greater number of males were reported regarding their frequent non-use of VMRIs or their improper use of VMRIs that needed reminding and/or correcting. Examples include young-aged boys such as D27's nephew (mentioned above); IVN15's seven-year-old brother who was reported '*never extending VMRIs at his meals*' (04:09); or IVN3's eight- year-old brother who '*extended invitations just from time to time*' (03:28) and who was often reminded to do so (07:30). Older-boys were also reported to be reminded and corrected sometimes as in the example of IVN11's 17-year-old brother, who '*forgot to extend invitations occasionally; and sometimes, he just muttered in his mouth. His invitations, therefore, sounded bare, with only "cơm ạ" [rice honorific], but he did not change despite others' reminders and corrections*' (08:30p2). Husbands and fathers were also reported not to extend VMRIs frequently. INV1, for instance, said that her husband '*just extended invitations occasionally*' (11:02p1); or INZ10 commented that he rarely heard his father's VMRIs, '*my father hardly extended invitations to anyone, even his parents or parents-in-law. He seemed to set up in his mind that extending VMRIs was others' responsibility, but none of his*' (12:24).

It should not go without mentioning my observation that, young-aged girls residing in Auckland did not extend VMRIs as frequently as those residing in Vietnam; however, they were not reminded or prompted to do so by others. In this case, few or no prompts

and reminders should not necessarily be interpreted as the result of autonomy in extending VMRIs among Auckland-based young-aged girls. Instead, they may indicate another way of transmitting cultural practices to others in a new social environment which is different from Vietnamese society. This interpretation can be backed up by the fact that their older counterparts (including young adults and middle-aged women) still put VMRIs into frequent practice in all the recorded and/or observed meals.

In brief, females in the data were shown to practice VMRIs with few prompts, reminders, or corrections. This means that the period of being object-regulated and other-regulated among girls/women is brief or the amount of object-regulation and other-regulation directed towards them is little compared with that among men. In other words, women's practice of VMRIs is less other- or object- regulated, and therefore, more self- regulated than men's.

7.3.2.2. Self-regulation

Women's self-regulation in VMRIs means their individual autonomy or spontaneity in their own practice or their capability of practicing VMRIs independently from outside supporting forces such as prompts or reminders. Women's self-regulation in VMRIs will be described in three facets below.

1. Regular extenders of VMRIs

Women's self-regulation in VMRIs is shown firstly in their regular VMRI-practice. All 15 female interviewees in Vietnam said that they extended meal-start and during-meal VMRIs in every meal in other people's presence. Nine out of ten female interviewees in New Zealand claimed to issue during-meal invitations to pop-in guests (except for those who did not speak Vietnamese). All 41 diaries written by women recorded their practice of VMRIs. Amongst the women who provided at least two data sources (e.g., interviews, video-clips, writing diaries, informal talks and observations), their claims of regular VMRI-practice in one source were also illustrated in others. For example, a 49-year-old female responded to the interview question, "*Are there any situations in any meals that you do not extend VMRIs?*" that '*Never have I not extended invitations in any meals*' (IVN1, 25:20p1). Indeed, her VMRIs were also recorded in two video-clips for two different meals and in all ten entries of her diaries and were observed in every single meal she had with my observation. Similarly, a 30-year-old female diary-writer

recorded five meals in her entries. None of them went without her meal-time invitations. Her regular VMRI-practice was confirmed in the interviews following the diaries and reaffirmed in two video-clips and a couple of meals under my observation. The data have identified women as regular extenders of VMRIs.

However, there were exceptions when regular VMRI-extenders would not extend their verbal VMRIs. For example, a 20-year-old girl, whose practice of VMRIs was in nearly every recorded meal (two videoed meals, one observed meal, and seven diary entries) wrote in her entry (D2#5) that in one dinner out with her family members and her parents' friends, she decided not to extend VMRIs to her superiors because the restaurant was too crowded and noisy for them to hear her invitations. She added that it was a rare case, especially now when she was already grown-up. Another 30-year-old interviewee also said that she might start her meal without extending verbal invitations to others who were then engaged in conversation so as not to interrupt them. What these two regular VMRI-extenders reported about cases of their non-use of VMRIs is consistent with other interviewees' comments on certain situations in the public video in which the movie characters did not extend invitations that non-use of VMRIs was appropriate in certain situations (as above). They also added that they did not mind when others did not extend verbal invitations to them and they allowed themselves to skip verbal VMRIs (and use nonverbal signals such as smiles instead) in these certain situations. These examples have shown that females, regular extenders of VMRIs, also knew when it seemed appropriate for them not to extend verbal VMRIs. This can also be seen as an indicator of their maturity and sensibility in frequently delivering their VMRIs in particular and in interactions in general.

2. High frequency of VMRIs

Females' self-regulation is also expressed in the high frequency of their VMRIs. The statistics in the previous chapter showed a much greater use of VMRIs by females than males in general (60.88% vs. 39.12%). Here, this section will additionally provide evidence of females' greater use of VMRIs in similar situations in the same meals (in meals with both males and females). A man, for example, revealed in an informal talk that he and his wife were often invited to meals with a couple as their friends. Being familiar with the hostess's hospitality to usually extending so many invitations to them during meals, he joked during one meal, '*if you keep inviting and offering food for us,*

but not for yourself, I will stop eating' (FNVN#3), which made everyone burst into laughter.

The high frequency of invitations used by women was shown most clearly in diaries and video-clips. Count and compare invitations extended by diners including two males and two females in a meal described in a diary-entry (D2#3) as an example. Among four diners, the two invited guests included a 20-year-old female and her eight-year-old brother; the two hosts were their aunt, 37 years old, and her husband, 42 years old. The meal was at the hosts' place. Table 7.2 below illustrates VMRIs extended immediately at the guests' arrival.

Table 7-2 VMRIs extended at a meal in a diary-entry

Before meal	1.Female host	→	Guests
Meal start	2.Female host	→	Guests
	3.Female guest	→	Hosts
	4. Male guest	→	Hosts, female guest
During meal	5.Female host	→ (Verbal with nonverbal food offering)	Male guest
	6.Female host	→	Female guest
	7.Female host	→ (Verbal with nonverbal food offering)	Male host, guests

The whole meal involved seven invitations, but six of them were from the females. All five invitations extended to guests were from the female host; none was from the male host. This happened in the context that all diners were relatively equal in terms of rights to initiate their VMRIs. Therefore, the examples given above have indicated women's highly frequent use of VMRIs.

The finding of the much higher frequency of VMRIs used by women than by men may be consistent with findings in gender-based language research, in which women are portrayed as talkative or 'addicted' to talk (Fisher, 2011; MacRae, F., 2006). However, for the types of talk which are highly ritualised and culturally observed like VMRIs, the finding would rather be interpreted as women's high degree of self-regulation in this cultural practice.

3. Self-discipline

Women's self-regulation is also reflected in their self-discipline for their own practice of VMRIs. With self-discipline, females practice VMRIs regularly even when there are no pressures or expectations from others. For example, a 49-year-old interviewee said she extended meal-start invitations to her husband in every meal with him although the practice from wives to husbands was uncommon in her neighbourhood and she was sometimes teased about that. Therefore, this lady's practice, which was reportedly her way of showing him her love and respect (IVN1, 10:44p1), was under no peer-pressure and came purely from her self-discipline and volition. Similarly, INZ1 said about the practice of her elder sister-in-law in their family, '*she extends VMRIs to my parents whenever having meals with them although we (INZ1 and her elder brother) do not*' (12:48). INZ1 explained that she and her brother had lost the habit of extending VMRIs and that their parents did not mind it at all because their family had been for a long time living in a neighbourhood where VMRIs were not common and also because they said religious prayers at meal-starts instead. INZ1's explanations imply that there was no pressure or expectation from her family on the regular practice of VMRIs of her sister-in-law. Her sister-in-law's VMRIs came, therefore, totally from her self-regulation or her self-discipline.

Highly disciplining themselves, women's regular practice of VMRIs is not much affected by mediating factors such as age, moods, social distance, or life changes. Women mostly answered 'no' when being asked if they had had any changes with their habit of extending invitations at meals, any changes when being in an unusual mood, or any differences when having meals at unusual places such as others' house, restaurants, unfamiliar public dining places etc. According to the data, 97% (35/36) female interviewees said they extended invitations to others, especially to pop-in guests and late comers at their meals, no matter whether they would join the meal or not, or how old they were, or what their relationship or social distance was. A common answer among female interviewees in Vietnam, regardless of being teenage, single, married with small children or grown-up children, or becoming grandmothers, was 'extending invitations under any circumstances' (e.g., IVN3, 02:51; IVN4, 04:44; IVN11, 08:00; IVN1, 25:20p1). Even some female interviewees in Auckland reported that although

they rarely had pop-in guests while they were having meals at home in New Zealand, they strongly confirmed that they would extend invitations to visitors at their meals.

Recipients' ages have no or little influence on women's discipline with VMRIs. Women did not select their VMRIs' recipients in terms of their age, although they clearly differentiated types and structures of VMRIs when extending them to people of different age ranks (see Chapter 5). Unlike men, who often said they did not need to extend VMRIs to their inferiors, many women said they extended invitations to anyone whose presence was at or nearby their meals. They extended invitations not only to their superiors and equals, but also to their inferiors, even babies. For example, a 29-year-old female interviewee said she extended invitations to both her husband and her six-year-old son in every meal, even when her son was an infant. She explained, if adults were about to eat or eating something with an infant's presence there, they needed to ritually or virtually put the food on his/her lips[121] to wish for his/her fast growth (*đấm mồm, đấm miệng cho trẻ hay ăn chóng lớn*) (IVN7, 01:56). Similarly, a 30-year-old mother revealed she often extended VMRIs to her one-year-old son, after inviting her mother-in-law and husband, "*Con ăn cơm cùng mẹ không*?" (Would you like to join me for the meal, my child?) (IVN4, 02:11), although she thought he was still too young to respond to her invitations. She explained she did that to show her love to and cuddle him, too.

Mood does not much affect women's self-discipline in extending VMRIs. Most women said they were always (or needed to be) happy or comfortable at meals. However, when bad mood was unavoidable, they still extended their VMRIs although the manners of extending invitations might be different, for example done with a lower voice or unhappy facial expressions. The answer '*I still extend my VMRIs despite anger, but unhappily and precipitately*' (IVN13, 07:41) is a typical example for the little effect of women's emotional state on their practice of VMRIs. However, there are exceptions. IVN8, for example, reported that she would not extend invitations to her husband when she was angry with him although that anger did not prevent her from inviting others. A 19-year-old female diary-writer is another exception when she wrote in one entry (D26#1) that she and other diners were so unhappy with their grumpy landlady popping in during their meal to ask them to keep quiet that they intentionally did not extend any invitations towards her then.

---

[121] In the case that infants cannot eat adult food

Other factors such as social distance or relationship, familiarity, and life-style changes do not much influence the regular practice of VMRIs of numerous women. Although some women revealed they only issued VMRIs to those they knew, many others said the recipients of their invitations would not be necessarily those of certain relationships like relatives, friends, or acquaintances, but could be strangers who appeared at their meals. For example, they extended their invitations to the customers or to the door-to-door bill-collectors or postmen coming to their shops or houses, respectively during their meals. Similarly, in terms of familiarity, only two out of 24^{122} (8%) females said in interviews, they did not practice VMRIs with their regular dining partners, but they resumed their practice when having meals with non-regular ones. However, 22 (92%) females reported no influence of familiarity on their practice. They did not differentiate their VMRIs' recipients as those they regularly or irregularly had meals with and their practice was without changes whether they had meals in familiar or unusual places. In terms of life-style changes, only one out of 25 interviewees reported that she had completely lost her habit (no VMRIs at all in any sub-contexts) for several reasons, including changing the neighbourhood since an early age and adapting new life-styles with fewer opportunities to dine with family members and more emphasis on religious rites of praying before meals. Few other cases reported temporary changes in different domains or situational contexts such as no practice at work-places or boarding houses. They withheld their VMRIs there when being aware of the non-practice of people surrounding them, but resumed their practice at the other times or places. This implies adapting to the situations rather than being influenced by the changes in life. All others said they had not changed their practice even after life-events such as migration or marriage.

In brief, women's self-regulation in VMRIs is embodied in their own practice with no or few prompts, reminders, or corrections from others; in their high frequency of use and regular practice; and in their high self-discipline that places their practice under no or little influence of mediating factors such as recipients' ages, their mood, social distance or relationship, familiarity, and life-style changes. Said in Vygotsky's words, the cultural development in women at social level proceeds quickly, arrives early, and occurs to a wide extent on the individual level. This can be seen clearer in the discussion of levels of women's self-regulation in VMRIs below.

---

[122] Totally 25 female interviewees but one with non-practice of VMRIs

7.3.2.3. Levels of self-regulation in VMRIs

Levels of self-regulation in VMRIs can be seen through the stages of autonomy in practicing VMRIs. Basing on the practice of VMRIs provided by participants, I have categorised self-regulation in VMRIs into three following stages.

What I have called the first stage is self-regulation without consciousness, referring to individuals' autonomy in practicing VMRIs as their habits or routines. Their habit-formation is completed and has no room for forgetfulness. Individuals issue their invitations automatically at meals in well-acquainted situations without being prompted or reminded. However, at this stage, they extend VMRIs unconsciously, with no or very little awareness of their practice, which is treated more like a habit or routine. They practice them without caring about the reasons, meanings, or possible influences.

The second stage is seen as self-regulation with consciousness coming from individuals' internal-pressures or self-imagined forces of face and power to push their own practice of VMRIs. Face-pressure regulates the VMRI-practice when the practice is purportedly for saving the good face of the practicers and/or of their community. They create face-pressure for their practice because, otherwise, they fear being judged as '*láo/hư/hỗn*' (rude, impolite, misbehaved) or their caregivers or parents' image being damaged due to children's uncultivated demeanour as '*không biết dạy con, nhà mất dạy*' (inadequately educating their children). Besides, they also regulate their VMRI-practice due to the pressure of someone's power that can be manifested as their imagined strictness, family regulations, or social norms.

I have termed the third stage for self-regulation with consciousness coming from individuals' volition. The practice is under no compulsion from others or no self-pressures of invisible forces such as face and power. VMRI-extenders are aware that they are not compelled to extend their invitations and they are aware of no pressures for doing that. They simply do it because they think the practice is good or right to do. Thus, their practice is less influenced by both external and internal factors. They discipline their own practice with the awareness of showing respect, deference, and hospitability to others, to pay gratitude to their caregivers, and also to benefit others, materially (food offerings) and spiritually (creating a happier and healthier atmosphere during meals). Their desire to bring the goodness and the benefits of their practice to others rather than

just to themselves, which Shohet (2013) calls 'sacrifice', is the essence of ethical conduct.

These three stages of self-regulation are in one continuum with the first and the third stages as of the lowest and the highest mental levels, respectively. The three stages are sometimes interwoven in one individual and cannot be clearly separated from the others. The reported practice of a 30-year-old lady is an example. Her practice, reported in the interviews, shown in the video-clips, illustrated in written diaries, and observed in meals that I had with her identified her as a regular VMRI-extender. She disclosed that she did not expect others to extend VMRIs to her, but she would not permit herself eating without extending invitations to others, including her one-year-old son, whom she would like most of all to know and practice VMRIs later. Therefore, her practice is done with the mindfulness or consciousness that is not noticeable in the first stage of self-regulation. She claimed practicing VMRIs as her responsibility, to pay her filial piety towards parents and to respect others. Moreover, her practice could convey her love and affection towards her infant child. In this way, this lady's self-regulation, which was associated with the consciousness from her volition, is definitely at the third stage. However, she also admitted that her practice was sometimes under the face- and power-pressure, especially when she newly moved in to stay with her in-laws after her marriage. She said she needed to be more careful with her practice in front of the in-laws to save face for her parents and for herself. Moreover, thinking that the old people would be very strict and would have critical judgement on her possible misbehaviours, her self-regulation returns to the second stage with consciousness coming from her internal-pressures.

The manifestation of practice over three stages have indicated that women's self-regulation in VMRIs is of high levels. Women's autonomy in practice is most observed at the second and third stages, but rarely the first stage, like in the example above. Investigations into the self-regulation of two groups of interviewees, 11 females and six males, with similar education level (tertiary students), age (around 18 to 27), and marital status (single), residing in both Auckland and Vietnam can show that the self-regulation of females is mostly at the third stage while that of males is more at the first and second stage. In the female group, apart from one female (INZ1) with complete non-practice of VMRIs, all ten females reportedly extended their invitations regularly

and frequently at well-acquainted situations since it had been their full-formed habit. Moreover, they reportedly disciplined their VMRIs to respect others and to benefit others and also themselves, rather than because they were afraid of being judged as impolite or rude or being punished if they would not do so. Additionally, while only three (IVN2, IVN14, INZ14) admitted their face-pressure in extending VMRIs in special cases, all ten entitled their regular practice with awareness that the practice was a meaningful cultural tradition inherited from their ancestors. The practice of females in this interviewee-group is, therefore, mostly at the third stage of self-regulation with consciousness coming from their own volition.

Meanwhile, responses from the male group revealed that only three out of six males engaged in regular practice with their intention being to respect others (IVN15, IVN16, IVN17). Others practiced irregularly with occasional forgetfulness, which indicates their practice simply as incompletely-formed habits. This was indeed thought out loud by two males (IVN2, INZ10). Those infrequent VMRI-extenders also reported that their practice was mainly to serve their own benefits, including obtaining a favour from others (IVN2), feeling more comfortable and having a better appetite (IVN2), or creating a good image (INZ13). Their practice was also reported under power-pressures of parents' strictness (IVN16) rather than from their own volition. Thus, the practice of the group of young male single students is mostly at the first and second stage of self-regulation (habits without consciousness and self-regulation with consciousness of face- and power-pressures), which were rarely or less observable amongst their female-counterparts.

Discussions above about levels of women's self-regulation have shown that women's relationships with VMRIs are different from men's. The section below will describe the influence of women's practice of VMRIs on others to unfold their use of speech forms for social purposes.

7.3.3. Influence

Female practisers of VMRIs have expressed their influence on others. Firstly, bearing in mind the intention to set examples in practice for others, some women oriented their regular practice of VMRIs to exemplify and guide others. IVN8, for example, said that as the eldest sister-in-law, her regular practice of VMRIs would work as examples for

her husband's younger siblings, who were reported infrequently extending VMRIs towards their superiors. Similarly, another middle-aged female revealed her frequent VMRI-practice with her opinion that self-practice was needed if one expected the practice and its continuity amongst others (IVN1, 28:00p1). A young and single girl who had been living in Auckland for over twenty years since her migration with her parents from the South of Vietnam at the age of nine also thought children could follow the tradition of extending VMRIs by seeing and copying adults' practice. Therefore, she claimed in the interview that her own practice of VMRIs would help at least her own future children to practice these invitations. Thus, by self-practicing VMRIs, women enact their desire and intention to cultivate the practice among others, especially their own children and future generations.

Apart from regularly practicing VMRIs, females intended to cultivate and nurture the practice among others by being models in their linguistic use. The findings in Chapter 5 show that females were the greater users of polite and standard language. They used more explicit VMRIs with full elements as the more polite and standard invitations, more VMRIs with person reference, and more polite ingestion verbs than men. The polite and standard forms are seen as females' language features in gender-based research (e.g., Eckert, 2009; Holmes, 1990; Lakoff, 1975). However, here I argue that the use of polite and standard language is also women's intention to model other people's language use, especially amongst young children. The intention was disclosed by a 31-year-old female diary-writer, for instance, that her daily meal-time invitations towards her six-year-old son were always "*mẹ mời con ăn cơm*" [Mother invite child eat rice] (D11#1), which contained the performative verb (*mời-invite)*, both the inviter (*mẹ-mother)* and the invitee (*con-child)*, and the invitation proposition (*ăn cơm-to have the meal*). They were, she added, different from her mother's invitations towards her, a grown-up daughter, which were often "*Ăn đi*" [eat imperative], an implicit invitation (without the performative verb *mời*) without person reference and with imperative modality. She said that her mother's invitations were totally common and proper from superiors to inferiors, but she preferred doing the way around with her six-year-old son because she wanted him to copy and extend the full-structured explicit invitations to others, who were mostly his superiors. Similarly, IVN7, a mother of another six-year-old boy also reported in the interview that she extended the full-structured and explicit

VMRIs to her son in every meal with the expectation that he could imitate or copy these invitations, which she perceived as standard and polite, and then extend them to others.

With the intention to linguistically model their children, women's invitations extended to others rather than to their children but made in front of children are also of polite and standard forms. A man reported in his meal-diary that his wife became 'critically careful with her language use' upon the presence of their two-year-old son and that she also queried him, the father of the little boy, to be like that. Therefore, the polite and standard forms of her full-structured explicit invitations with honorifics extended to her parents-in-law and her husband in front of the boy, for example, "*Con mời ba mẹ, anh ăn tiếp nhé, con ăn no rồi ạ*" (I would like to invite you to continue the meal. I am already full!) (D12#4) were features of her language use, which was not simply because of this lady being female but also because of her intention to model the little boy's propitious behaviours.

Besides regularly self-practicing VMRIs and being models in their linguistic use, females, especially mothers of small children and elder sisters of young boys, also often prompt, remind, and correct others' practice. Of three interviewees who reported reminding their siblings to practice VMRIs, there were two girls (IVN3 and IVN11) who both were elder sisters of young boys. IVN3 said she often reminded her eight-year-old younger brother upon his forgetfulness, '*next time, don't forget to extend invitations at meals; otherwise, I will report this to our uncle*' (07:38). IVN11 complained she corrected her 17-year-old brother about his 'precipitate and not proper enough' invitations so many times, but he did not 'improve' (8:30p2). D12's wife is best exemplified for this type of mothers. All four entries of her husband's meal-diary recorded her reminding their two-year-old son to extend invitations at his meal-starts, either by requesting him '*Bin, please extend your meal-start invitations*' (D12#2,3,4) or by prompting '*Have you extended your meal-start invitations yet, Bin?*' (D12#1). This 27-year-old lady was also captured in her husband's diary as the strict mother who often corrected the boy's precipitate invitations as well as other improper behaviours. Being discontent with her son's extending an inclusive meal-start invitation towards all his superiors at a time, "*Con mời cả nhà*" (I invite you all) (D12#3), she asked the boy to do it again, but one invitation to each recipient. Therefore, in one meal-entry, this diary-writer, after observing his son's cultivated demeanour during the meal, praised his wife,

attributing the boy's propriety to her effort, '*truly, children are good thanks to mothers, honey!*'[123] (D12#3).

Not only cultivating and nurturing the practice amongst children and younger siblings, women can also make their husbands practice VMRIs. A 29-year-old interviewee claimed that when first marrying into her husband's family including her husband and his parents and finding his non-practice of VMRIs, she, a regular extender of VMRIs, advised him, '*Why don't you extend VMRIs at meals? It should be fine when you would not issue them towards me, but you'd better extend them at least towards your parents*' (IVN6, 07:07). His habit reportedly changed. Since then, he regularly extended VMRIs not only to his parents but also to her, his wife. This was the only reported case; however, it could tell the influence of this lady in transforming her husband, at least in the practice of a ritual in everyday meals.

Given Vietnamese not being the primary language spoken in mixed families with foreign spouses, the influence of women in the practice of VMRIs is not much noticeable, but it can still be detected. For example, in Auckland-based families of three Vietnamese-speaking women living with their New Zealander husbands or de-facto-partners and children[124], communication was mostly in English and food was often prepared in both Vietnamese and Western-style. However, their meals were usually served with the Vietnamese commensality. They usually had meals together, communally sharing food placed on the dining table, instead of each individual having their own food portion. One of these three New Zealander men informed me that this way of sharing meals was totally different from his living style before the marriage and said in a joking voice that he was now taking over his wife's job of seeking for other members to attend the table.

7.4. Summary and implications

In conclusion, women have shown their active and influential roles in the practice of VMRIs. They are active in showing their strong positive attitude towards the

---

[123] His words are similar to those in the old saying, *'Con hư tại mẹ'* (spoiled children are mothers' faults); yet, with opposite meanings
[124] I shared the same house with one family and paid numerous visits to the other two families and had various occasions to join them for meals. This offered me opportunities to have informal talks and observations

importance of VMRIs and in expressing their desire for the continuity of this tradition amongst the future generations. Women's self-regulation in the practice of VMRIs reaches the high conscious level. It comes mainly from their own individuals rather than from outside forces and more from their own volition than from expectations and pressures of peers, face, and power. Therefore, women's practice of VMRIs is under no or little influence of factors such as age, mood, familiarity or social distance, and life-events. Moreover, women anchor their influence in their own practice, which is intended to set examples for others' practice and model others' language use. They also empower the practice by cultivating and nurturing the practice amongst people around them. Women, on the surface, might seem to have a subservient position, but an analysis of the practice of VMRIs demonstrates their agency in this daily cultural practice. Therefore, VMRIs can be evidence of women having 'powerful language', which supports the established claim of Vietnamese women having 'power' (Hoskin, 1975).

By describing the role of women in the cultural practice of VMRIs, I suggest valuing female potential in changing the society for better social environment. However, I do not support the association of this role with their responsibility to take the role or social expectations for them to fulfil the role. The study has shown women as guardians of the cultural practice of VMRIs, but this should not be misunderstood as their duty or responsibility, for the unfulfilment of which they are to be blamed. They should not be expected to guard social values while men can be free to conform to the norms. Women do not have to sacrifice their selves to meet the biased expectations. They can be model in their practice of VMRIs, but they should be free to demonstrate their model role.

The chapter implies that in retaining the continuity of a tradition, women's role cannot be neglected. However, it is also implicitly indicated in all reported examples above that women's agency in the practice of VMRIs is with others' positive cooperation. Thus, females can enhance their transformability and boost their active and influential roles to make a ritual practice endure within their communities with support from other community members. Besides, cultivating and nurturing any cultural practices amongst children require a positively influential environment since children's cultural development is obtained mainly via their observation and imitation and it can be maximised with the contributions of surrounding people, rather than women only.

Chapter 8. CONCLUSION

This conclusion chapter gives a summary of the main findings and discussions of the present study and draws some theoretical and methodological critical reflections and implications. Limitations of the study are also pointed out before offering recommendations for future research.

8.1. Summary of the main findings

This study has documented Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations (VMRIs), invitations or offers for food and company in daily meals, used by Vietnamese speakers in New Zealand (Auckland) and Vietnam. It has explored the linguistic and socio-cultural features, meanings, and functions of VMRIs in their contexts of use, examined mediating factors that have an influence on their discourses, and investigated perceptions of behaviours that underlie the language use.

The study has investigated VMRIs from both linguistic and socio-cultural perspectives, using theoretical ideas from the inter-disciplines of sociolinguistics and anthropology. The analysis drew upon ethnographic data collected in participants' diaries, interviews, video-clips, observations and informal talks to answer three main research questions:

1. What are the socio-cultural and linguistic contextual characteristics, meanings, and functions of Vietnamese ritual invitations around meals? How have they been used traditionally by different generations?
2. What factors may mediate the discourse of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations?
3. What are people's attitudes to language use and their perceptions of Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations?

The main findings and discussions of the study were categorised thematically and their subsections were connected to the topics of chapters, as follows:

8.1.1. Socio-cultural contexts

I have proposed that two aspects of the socio-cultural context for VMRIs are food and family meals. The high cultural value attached to food - and rice in particular - and company at mealtimes provide the cultural context for VMRIs. Vietnamese meals with their dining practices are characterised by convivial commensality, customary dining time, and a strong communal and familial spirit, which are consistent with a collectivistic culture. This interpretation implies the influence of an agricultural culture in the Vietnamese societal, historical, and natural conditions that require company or cooperation of collective groups rather than individuals. People extend VMRIs for various reasons, including to invite other people to join for daily meals, to share or to partake of food and drinks at meals, or just to acknowledge the presence of other people at one's meals. All these reasons are associated with food and company at meals. Moreover, framed by the argument that meal manners are more important than the food itself in Vietnamese food-sharing culture, extending invitations during meals is regarded as food-related etiquette or speech behaviour patterns at meals. They embody respect (including gratitude and filial piety), politeness, hospitality, solidarity, and personal sentiments. Thus, interpretations of VMRIs cannot be separated from their cultural context, which are grounded in food and family meals.

Family meals are where VMRIs start and are mainly nurtured. The frequency of family meals is one of the societal conditions for the practice and continuity of VMRIs by individuals. This suggests that the practice of VMRIs should be viewed in their socio-cultural context, not in isolation from either their societal or cultural aspects.

8.1.2. VMRIs as discourses

VMRIs as discourses include two layers of meanings, namely the socio-cultural and the more linguistic-oriented meanings. They are 'big D' discourses and 'little d' discourses, respectively, in Foucault's (1972) or Gee's (1999) terms. These two discursive meanings are interwoven with each other in VMRIs.

The socio-cultural context, grounded in food and family meals, has provided the layer of socio-cultural meanings for VMRIs. Food and meals also make up a situated context

for the more linguistic-oriented discourses of VMRIs. Within meals, there are numerous situations, termed sub-contexts, triggering and characterising situational VMRIs. However, few of these situational VMRIs were recognised in previous studies and were (mis)interpreted with discrepancies as different single speech acts.

I have also proposed to treat VMRIs as 'multiplex discourses'. Apart from two layers of meanings in each discourse of VMRIs, within the more linguistic-oriented discourses, there may be several acts (multiple inviting acts and the repetitive acts of inviting plus acts of refusing and/or accepting within one discourse) and within the level of linguistic act, VMRIs are also multifunctional, carrying several functions. The function of inviting in VMRIs is broad, incorporating the function of offering. Apart from the primary functions of inviting and offering, situational VMRIs in different sub-contexts may also carry a number of secondary functions, such as giving permission, asking for permission, declaring or informing, thanking, greeting, and departing.

The proposal to treat VMRIs as multiplex discourses highlights VMRIs as invitational discourses incorporating both socio-cultural and linguistic meanings. It also avoids the potential of VMRIs being understood as individual speech acts, which are prone to different (mis)interpretations. Moreover, this special treatment resolves the discrepancies in extant literature dealing with the complexity of invitations.

8.1.3. Linguistic aspects

8.1.3.1. General features

VMRIs have a wide diversity of invitational structures, expression forms, moods, and performative functions. Their word order is flexible and their structure can be reduced by the ellipsis of arguments and complements. Information such as time, space, and proposition, which makes invitations unambiguous (Wolfson, 1989), is not always articulated in the invitations. Nevertheless, it is provided by the context of food and meals and known to both extenders and recipients of VMRIs, as shared or common knowledge between them. Therefore, VMRIs can be unambiguous even though at a formal level, they may appear ambiguous.

Type of VMRIs and their structures, eating and drinking verbs, and person reference are some key devices to express respect and politeness in VMRIs. The use of these devices

can also construct identities of their users and index their perceptions of appropriateness, respect, and standard norms of interpersonal communication. Perceptions of practice of VMRIs are generally subject to the classification of interlocutors into superiors, inferiors, and equals, which is largely based on age and lineage rank rather than criteria such as education, gender, financial status, social and political position, or others in this context.

8.1.3.2. Type of VMRIs and their structures

VMRIs were dichotomised into explicit VMRIs and implicit VMRIs based on the presence of performative verbs in the invitations. In the category of explicit VMRIs, only the performative '*mời*' with a polite connotation was used, as opposed to the non-use of other two performatives '*thỉnh*' and *'rước',* which have ultra-polite and ultra-formal connotations and are archaic and one of which is of Sino-Vietnamese origin.

Participants generally perceived explicit VMRIs as more formal and conventional than implicit VMRIs; implicit VMRIs were more informal and sincere than explicit VMRIs; and the full structures of invitations in both types were more formal, more standard, more respectful than the elided forms. Hence, explicit VMRIs and the full structures of invitations in both types were considered more appropriate to extend towards superiors while implicit VMRIs and reduced invitations were seen as appropriate to extend towards inferiors and equals, or to reduce the distance between interlocutors in informal situations. Many participants also believed that extending reduced invitations, especially those without articulating both the recipients and the extenders, to superiors and extending none when they seem highly-expected, were misbehaviours. However, to some participants, the distinction between types and structures of VMRIs made no difference in terms of respect and appropriateness.

8.1.3.3. Eating and drinking verbs

Participants used a large number of eating and drinking verbs in their invitations. This was interpreted as a characteristic of language use by Vietnamese people, who prefer using verbs rather than nominalisation. Their preference for verbs was attributed to their dynamic adaptation to their agriculture conditions. Participants' avoidance of certain eating and drinking verbs as well as the selection of other ones in VMRIs have

reflected their emphasis on social aspects of eating rather than the individual physical functions of ingesting.

Participants also associated the use of eating and drinking verbs with respect and appropriateness of their invitations. Certain verbs were perceived by participants to be more polite and standard than others and some variants were perceived as completely inappropriate to use in VMRIs. Using more-polite verbs to refer to other people's ingestion and neutral ones for one's own ingestion was also viewed as a polite norm in extending VMRIs. Participants avoided employing verbs with impolite connotations or using polite and neutral verbs in an impolite manner in VMRIs. The prevalence of neutral verbs and creation of numerous verbs in daily informal use indicate that present VMRI-extenders preferred using verbs with neutral connotations and tended to be less formal. Participants' use of eating and drinking verbs in VMRIs also emphasises the social-cultural aspect of enjoying and sharing food rather than the physical ingesting of food.

8.1.3.4. Person reference

Another strategy that VMRI-extenders used to increase respectfulness, politeness, and appropriateness of invitations was person reference, which means the (non)use of reference terms (RTs) such as pronouns, names, kinship terms, and nouns to reference inviters, invitees, and the third parties in the invitations. This strategy was seen as the reason why VMRIs with RTs (RT-invitations) were much more common than VMRIs without RTs (no-RT-invitations). The use of RTs in VMRIs was flexible, dynamic, and diverse but also followed the communicative rule of "*xưng khiêm, hô tôn*" (humbleness in self-reference; deference and respect in referencing others) to raise others up and lower oneself down while enhancing solidarity, family-orientation, and a sense of inclusion and relatedness.

8.1.4. Socio-demographic factors

8.1.4.1. Age and gender

Findings

Gender and age were two key factors affecting the use of VMRIs, the types of VMRIs used, the types of eating and drinking verbs used, and the use of person reference terms. The younger group (25 years old and under) used more VMRIs in total than the older group (above 25 years old). The younger group used more explicit VMRIs than the older group while the older group used more implicit VMRIs than the younger group. The younger group did not use VMRIs in forms of imperatives, questions, and jokes as much as the older participants. They extended VMRIs of full structures towards their superiors and used imperatives with addressees towards their inferiors and equals. These findings indicate that the younger group's VMRIs seemed more formal, conventional and the older group's VMRIs appeared more informal and casual. This may imply that in this speech behaviour pattern, the younger people's use of invitational structures was more constrained to the norms while the use of the older people seemed to be more relaxed and free from constraints. It may also indicate that the use of VMRIs did not weaken over the generations although it might be less formal.

Females used more VMRIs than males; females' use of both explicit and implicit VMRIs was higher than males'. Females extended explicit VMRIs more to their superiors and small children and implicit VMRIs more to other inferiors. Males used more implicit VMRIs than explicit VMRIs. Males' VMRIs were more in the form of imperatives without addressees, declaratives, and jokes; females' VMRIs were more in the form of imperatives with addressees, interrogatives rather than declaratives, and with full structures rather than reduced forms. These findings support the arguments of numerous gender-based studies in English that females' language use is more grammatically standard and sounds less imperative than males'.

The use of both explicit and implicit VMRIs by females in two age groups was higher than males' use. Males of two age groups, however, had a noticeable difference in their uses of types of VMRIs. The younger males used both types nearly as much as the younger females' use, but the older males' use of VMRIs dropped greatly compared

with females' use and their explicit VMRIs was largely reduced. This means that the uses of the two types differ greatly between younger and older males, but are more consistent between younger and older females. This implies that females had more integrity than males in their use of VMRIs and older males' use of VMRIs was not as conventional as the use by their opposite sex counterparts and their younger counterparts.

The older group had greater use of eating and drinking verbs than the younger group. Younger VMRI-extenders were restricted to the use of neutral and polite variants while older extenders had more flexibility in using playful and casual verbs as well. Males' use of eating and drinking verbs was higher than females'. Males used more neutral verbs and playful and casual verbs than females; their use of polite and formal verbs was far less than that of females. This finding of high use of polite verbs by Vietnamese speaking females supports the findings of gender-based studies in English that females use more polite and standard vocabulary than males. The much higher frequency of playful and casual verbs used in place of eating and drinking verbs (created through semantic-shift) by males means that males created more variants of these verbs in VMRIs than females. This suggests that males displayed greater creativity and flexibility in using eating and drinking verbs. The virtual non-use of these verbs amongst females indicates that females' verbs were mainly those that are already well-defined. This reflects females' conventionality in their use of eating and drinking verbs.

These interesting findings of this study related to the creativity and flexibility in language use by Vietnamese males were different from those in most gender-based English studies in which women were seen as superior language users (Cameron, 2003; Chambers, 1992; Fisher, 2011). However, the findings do not necessarily challenge the general view of female creativity and flexibility in language use. It can rather be interpreted as the influences of cultural factors overriding gender-related language behaviours. In the use of eating and drinking verbs, females' standard vocabulary use can be attributed to conventionality. This is adherence to socio-cultural norms and values, of which females are 'the guardian' (Holmes, 2013, p. 168). The creation of more variants of eating and drinking verbs by males and their flexibility with these verbs could be indicators of their casualness or informality, which might be the consequence of lower conformity to socio-cultural norms.

In terms of person reference, both the older and younger participants used more RT-invitations than no-RT-invitations and extended the least of their no-RT-invitations towards the superiors. This avoidance of no-RT-invitations when addressing their superiors might be because non-person reference or bare-naming (nói trống không) was customarily perceived as inappropriate or rude in communicating with superiors; yet acceptable in talking to equals and inferiors; and totally normal in talking to oneself. The older participants employed more RT-invitations than the younger ones. However, this does not mean that VMRIs by the older group were more polite or that VMRIs by the younger group were less appropriate. Indeed, the younger group extended these more appropriate invitations mainly to their superiors and no-RT-invitations mainly towards the recipients as equals, inferiors, and themselves while the older group extended both RT-invitations and no-RT-invitations towards all these groups of recipients without significant difference. This implies that the young tended to be aware of who should be recipients of invitations with or without reference terms and the old do not necessarily conform to norms.

Both males and females used more RT-invitations than no-RT-invitations. Females' use of RT-invitations exceeded that of males by a large margin. Females employed these invitations to address their superiors and extended no-RT-invitations only towards inferiors, equals, and themselves. Males, however, extended no-RT-invitations towards recipients of all groups (group of superiors, group of inferiors, equals and themselves, and group of the mixed recipients. RT-invitations by males and females are also different in that males tended to reference their recipients as an inclusive group while females tended to mention specific recipients in each invitation. This is one of the reasons why in this study females extended a much greater number of invitations relative to males. These findings imply that females placed more importance on their communicators' status and tended to pay more attention than males to who should be recipients of invitations with or without reference terms.

Discussions of differences in language use by age and gender

The differences in the use of invitational types and structures, eating and drinking verbs, and person reference between two age groups and between males and females indicate that age and gender are key sociocultural variables in shaping lexicogrammatical choices in VMRIs. The differences in terms of age were interpreted as the consequence

of hierarchical status. That is, the younger extenders of VMRIs seem to frame their choices within more standard vocabulary and structures while this restriction tends not to apply to the older ones, showing evidence of the young's lack of status in relation to the old, their superiors. This disparity is likely due to the influence of Vietnamese age hierarchy on language use. This is possibly because of the widely-held belief among Vietnamese that children must be polite to adults or inferiors must respect their superiors. This is further evidence for the conclusion that age and family lineage are held in great respect in Vietnamese culture.

However, the association of age-hierarchical respect with language use may be amongst the causes of generational conflict at present. The asymmetrical expectation model (i.e. only the superiors' expectation can be recognised) seems no longer to be widely taken for granted, especially by the people who value not the age hierarchy but equality in treatment relative to older people. They may acknowledge age differences in language expressions (i.e. language used by the old can be different from that by the young), but they may expect equal respect in language use. That is, when inferiors are expected to show respect towards their superiors through the selection of linguistic elements, inferiors may also have expectations to receive such respect in the language that their superiors use to them although the superiors' language expressions can be different. That is why when people perceive age-hierarchical respect as unequal treatment, they might express their disagreement by not meeting the superiors' expectations for their language use and this may bring about negative consequences.

Differences between males and females in their language use of VMRIs were interpreted as the consequence of gender identities (cf. Fisher, 2011; Holmes, 2014) rather than gender hierarchy (cf. Lakoff, 1975). There was little gender difference in VMRIs when the users were younger[125], but when the users were older, the gender differences in language use became noticeable. Many of these differences might be predictable in relation to other sociolinguistic research. However, the less consistent findings relate to gender differences in language use in this study are that males, rather than females, produced VMRIs with greater variety and innovation although the number of invitations extended by them was much lower than by females. This apparent

---

[125] Both younger males and females had similarly high use of explicit VMRIs and low use of implicit VMRIs. There were also no significant differences in the uses of structures in each type, word choices, and the ways of referencing people in invitations between younger males and females

anomaly is tentatively attributed to the influence of the overriding sociocultural norm of conformity, acting as a constraint on female linguistic creativity in this context.

8.1.4.2. Other factors

Besides age and gender, the language use of VMRIs is also mediated by numerous other factors, such as the familiarity or distance between interlocutors, individual perceptions in associating the dichotomy of explicit and implicit VMRIs with hierarchy and respect, and the family-lineage order and social-family statuses of the extenders and the recipients. The change of life style was also found to affect the use of VMRIs though the influence of financial status or education was hardly noticeable. As such, the linguistic forms of VMRIs are seen as an evolving equilibrium produced by complex and contradictory contextual and cultural drivers.

8.1.5. The role of women

Seen as a speech behaviour pattern and a cultural act, the practice of VMRIs highlights the role of women. The role was discussed through the lenses of Vygotsky's socio-cultural concepts (regulation) and the Vietnamese socio-historical circumstances. Women showed an active and influential role in VMRIs. They were active in showing their strong positive attitude towards the importance of VMRIs and in expressing their desire for the continuity of this tradition amongst the future generations. Moreover, women anchored their influence in their own practice. Women extended VMRIs with great autonomy and few reminders, prompts, or corrections. These were expressed in Vygoskian terms as women displayed little or brief object- regulation and other-regulation and high levels of self-regulation.

Women's self-regulation in the practice of VMRIs can be seen as indication of attainment of the high level of consciousness, given that it arose from their own volition more than from expectations and pressures of peers, face, and power. Women's use of VMRIs was hardly influenced by factors such as age, mood, familiarity or social distance, and life-events. They practised with the intention of setting examples for others' practice and model others' language use. They also empowered the practice by cultivating and nurturing it amongst people around them.

The findings support the view that the continuity of ritual practices over generations may be attributed largely to the role of women. Their gendered role permits agency

through their participation in a daily-life practice of traditional customs; it is beyond restrictive sociocultural expectations of 'being females'. Women, on the surface, might seem to have a subservient position, but this analysis of VMRIs demonstrates the influence and agency contained in the usage of the invitations. Therefore, VMRIs can be evidence of 'powerful language'[126], which supports the established claim of Vietnamese women having 'power' (Hoskins, 1975).

The findings suggest that in pertaining to the continuity of a cultural tradition, the role of women cannot be neglected, but they also indicate that women's agency in the practice of VMRIs is enacted with positive cooperation of other forces. Females can enhance their transformability and boost their active and influential roles to make a ritual practice endure within their communities when other community members let females do so. Besides, cultivating and nurturing any cultural practices amongst individuals requires both individuals' self-regulation and a positively influential environment, especially amongst children. This is because children's cultural development is attained mainly via their observation and imitation and it can be maximised with the contributions of surrounded people, rather than women only, to build a social and cultural environment for any cultural practices.

8.2. Theoretical and methodological critical reflections and implications

The study has employed ideas from sociolinguistics and cultural anthropology as methodological foundations to collect and code data and theoretical bases to analyse the data. There have been some critical reflections and implications as follows:

8.2.1. Methodological aspects

1. I used a pilot study before the main investigation because not all the selected research sites were familiar to me and the topic had not been intensively explored before. The pilot study helped me to work out feasible ways to approach and recruit participants in different research sites, to select the most suitable methods to gather data from informants, and to decide the reasonable procedure for data collection to ensure the effectiveness of the employed

---

[126] Adapted from the term 'powerless language' used by O'Barr and Atkins (2009) in their study of American women's language in court

methods given the potential sensitivity of the topic. Therefore, a pilot study is recommended for an explorative study and a multiple-sited ethnography, especially when conducted in unfamiliar research sites.

2. My research aimed to authentically capture the rituals as they were expressed in daily life so I applied multiple ethnographic approaches to the data collection. In particular, video-recordings and observations helped to collect utterances (examples of VMRIs) in natural settings so that the data could be real-world, naturally occurring, true-to-life and more diverse than the limited sets which may have been collected by using questionnaires (as in the pilot study and in my earlier research). At the same time, interviews, informal talks, public video-recordings, and diaries were effective means to elicit participants' opinions, perceptions, beliefs, and their reflections of the practice. Moreover, as already argued in the study, it is hard to know if something is a ritual through observation only; meanings and functions of ritual acts are not always comprehensible through analysis of quantitative data alone. Therefore, multiple ethnographic approaches were required for investigation into language rituals.

3. In the earliest stage of the pilot study, I did not have any opportunities to visit Auckland-based participants in their private places during their meals although Vietnam-based participants seemed at ease allowing me to do so. Only after having developed certain relationships with Auckland-based participants, did I have the chance to attend and observe their home meals and then I was allowed to record their meals. Therefore, to stimulate the effectiveness of multiple ethnographically-inspired research approaches, the researcher needs to establish rapport with participants. Moreover, given the potentially sensitive nature of the topic, relationships with participants need to be carefully and flexibly negotiated. This is to minimise the negative effect of 'observer's paradox' (Labov, 1972) or 'sociolinguistic paradox' (Wilson, 1987) to ensure the validity and reliability of the gathered data and the conformity to ethical considerations of the research. In this way, participants should be research collaborators rather than the subjects of information only (Cain, 2011).

4. Mixed methods were appropriate for this study, which focused on exploring language rituals linguistically and socio-culturally drawing on the dataset of two

types (namely, utterances actually performed in daily life and opinions, perceptions, and beliefs regarding the performance). The quantitative analysis provided the empirical basis for the qualitative analysis; the qualitative analysis was the focus. They complemented each other to comprehensively describe the topic of speech behaviours not only as linguistic-oriented discourses but also as components of wider sociocultural discourses. This approach allowed a more critical analysis and expanded view of people's utterances and increased the understandings of other people's speech behaviours.

8.2.2. Theoretical aspects

1. The evidence presented here strongly suggests that performed utterances such as mealtime ritual invitations in a high-context culture like Vietnamese should be interpreted on the basis of not only linguistic analysis but also the background of the communities' perceptions and beliefs and socio-cultural norms. This integrative view was not seriously applied in studies of invitations, particularly Vietnamese invitations. The application of only the more-linguistic oriented framework designed for utterances in low-context cultures to analysing invitations in high-context cultures yielded limited results in previous studies. The interpretative framework, which integrated ideas of sociolinguistics and cultural anthropology, has been a desirable model, from linguistic and socio-cultural perspectives, for this study. It was helpful in the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data gathered by the ethnographically-inspired research methods. This integrative framework also offered a basis for analysing language performance from a broad view.

2. Based on this integrative framework, performed utterances were viewed as discourses and proposed as multiplex discourses. This view helped not only to recognise layers of socio-cultural and linguistic meanings of utterances but also to identify both multiplicity and complexity of the more linguistic-oriented discourses. One discourse may contain multiple acts and an act can be multifunctional. Acts can be multiple in three ways: (1) the same type of acts is simultaneously performed by several speakers (a common communicative style in a collectivist culture); (2) and/or the acts (particularly convivial acts) are repetitively extended by the same speaker to the same hearer (typical of cultures

which value hospitality and associate the repetition of hearer-beneficial acts with hospitality); (3) and/or one act entails other different acts as consequences. Accordingly, the characteristic multiplicity of multiplex discourse covers both notions of 'speech act set' (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983) and 'multiple speech acts' (Mao, 1992). Moreover, acts are often multifunctional (De Felice et al., 2013) and multiplicity of multiplex discourse also includes this multifunctionality.

Given the undeniable dependence of interpretations of functions of acts on context (De Felice et al., 2013), the model of multiplex discourses is also useful in determining the primary function and secondary (additional) functions of a multifunctional act within a discourse. This is because the model was based on the integrative interpretative framework, which takes into account relevant knowledge of both sociocultural and linguistic context. The application of this model helped this study avoid the potential discrepancies of interpreting similarly situated utterances as different single speech acts. Indeed, the different single speech acts that were found in the more linguistic-oriented studies discussing examples of mealtime invitations were multiple functions of a multifunctional invitation in a multiplex discourse.

3. The treatment of a performed utterance (or utterances in multiple-utterance cases) as a multiplex discourse highlighted utterances as discourses incorporating both socio-cultural and linguistic meanings. It also highlighted the significance of context in shaping and reshaping the interpretations of utterances. Contextual information is an indispensable resource for comprehensible interpretations of any utterances which are socially and culturally regarded as speech behaviour patterns since their use is also likely under moral judgement besides communication. Context can be as broad as socio-historical circumstances and cultural values attached to the talks and as specific as the relationship between connotative meanings of the words or structures used and perceptions of that use, the interrelationship of interlocutors, the settings or when, where, and why the utterances take place, and any relevant extra-linguistic information.

4. To thoroughly explore speech behaviour patterns like Vietnamese mealtime ritual invitations in a 'languaculture' (Agar, 1996), the research needs to obtain strong congruence between its aims and purposes, research questions, the

requirements of the nature of the topic, data collection methods, and data interpretation framework. There has been such congruence in this study. The research aimed to explore performed utterances of VMRIs socio-culturally and linguistically. The whole study was also designed and explored in a similar way, uncovering various layers, from socio-cultural layers to the more linguistic ones and then from the more linguistic layers to the socio-cultural ones, to illustrate the inter-relationship between socio-cultural and linguistic layers. These dual perspectives and dual directions could be seen in the intended design (see Chapter 1). The chapter about food and mealtimes (Chapter 3) was uncovered first, as recognition of the socio-cultural context for the more linguistic analysis of VMRIs in details in the middle (Chapters 4, 5, and 6); the chapter about women's role (Chapter 7) also explored the socio-cultural aspect of VMRIs, but wrapped up findings when VMRIs were viewed as a whole cultural practice of language ritual at meals. The model of multiplex discourses was the result reflecting both socio-cultural and linguistic aspects of VMRIs.

The research design with dual perspectives and dual directions and the result of VMRIs as multiplex discourses can both be visually and metaphorically illustrated using the same image in Figure 8.1 below.
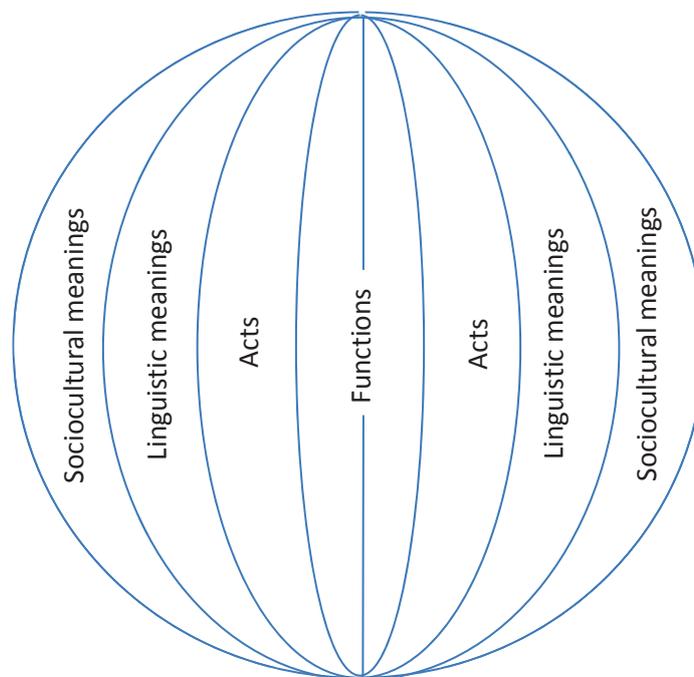
Figure 8-1 Performed utterances as multiplex discourses

8.2.3. Final implications

For interpersonal communication

The study has revealed that the linguistic forms in VMRIs are an evolving equilibrium produced by complex and contradictory contextual and cultural drivers and that their cultural practices are mediated by numerous sociocultural variables. The study also reveals the evolution of the practice, particularly in the lexico-grammatical choice, the frequency of practice, the (in)formality and manner of delivering the utterances, and perceptions of the usage. Therefore, VMRIs should be properly understood especially when they are likely judged as communicators' speech behaviours.

The study suggests increasing understandings of people's speech behaviours by taking contextual information into account. Recognisability of contextual information for people's utterances can be improved by getting to know one's communication partners, especially in cross-gender, cross-generational, and cross-cultural communication. Communicators can recognise the discourse of respect, for example, in others' utterances when they understand the others' different ways of representing their respect. These ways may include examples such as women's preference of referencing specific recipients in their mealtime invitations and men's tendency to reference no particular recipients so that their inclusive invitations are performed once but can be addressed to all hearers; or the younger people's use of explicit invitations (those with performative verbs) towards their superiors and the older people's use of implicit invitations (those without performative verbs) towards their inferiors in this study. Being aware of this extra contextual information and respecting communication partners' differences help communicators avoid imposing biased expectations and narrow judgments on others, which might result in communication breakdown.

For intercultural communication and intergenerational communication

Speaking the same language does not always mean that the speakers can perform the utterances culturally or view things with the same values, as bilinguals are not often bicultural (Kuiper & Lin, 1989). Therefore, to avoid biased judgement in intercultural communication, communicators need to reach deeper understanding of communicative partners' cultures. Cultures can be learned and cultural intelligence, which is the capacity to adapt in interaction in different cultural regions (Early & Ang, 2003) can be improved. Specific things like speech behaviour patterns, such as invitations in different

communicative events (e.g., mealtimes, weddings, and meetings), greetings, comments, and many others, which are windows into cultures, are recommendable subject of inquiry.

A need to reach deeper understanding of culture is also applicable to the transmission of cultural customs, family traditions, or social norms over generations. People, especially children, acquire these practices primarily by observing and imitating. However, as already argued in the study, ritual meanings of practices, particularly in language rituals such as mealtime invitations, are not always noticeable under observation only or as transferable as linguistic elements. Therefore, to enable comprehensive understandings of cultural practices and to prolong their continuity, people, particular adults, should be initiators of the practice, addressing not only to their superiors but also to their inferiors with an equal respect. Practisers should also be the interpreters so that the practices are transmitted not only in their form.

For society

The study showed the role of women and family in the continuity of cultural practices; likewise, the participation into these practices has enabled women's agency and enhanced family bonds, at least in the Vietnamese context and within the practice of mealtime invitations. The interrelationship of these three factors (women, family, and culture) should, therefore, be subject of attention for the development of each.

The study indicated that women performed an active and influential role in preserving the cultural practice of VMRIs. However, it raises the question: is it women's obligation to accept that role?

By describing the agency of women in the cultural practice of VMRIs, I support the recognition of female potential to work towards a better social and cultural environment. It is also valuable to recognise and acknowledge the agency of women for bettering gender equality. However, I do not support the association of women having an active and influential role with their responsibility to accept that role. Women exercising their role in VMRIs (and other cultural practices as well) should not be misconstrued as their obligation. Gender equality is not entirely observed if the potential or the qualities that women instinctively possess are associated with their duties or responsibilities to fulfil them. People, not only women, should liberate themselves from the widely-held

perceptions that when people possess the relevant qualities they are obliged to do the jobs and be judged or blamed if they do not choose such duty or responsibility. It would be fair if these people were given more choices instead of more obligations and restrictions on what to do or what duties to fulfil. In this way, women do not have to be the guardians of cultural practices and social norms if they do not happily choose to do so. They should not be expected to sacrifice their selves to unwillingly meet the social expectations, especially when there may be change in progress (as VN participants used more VMRIs than NZ ones). They can be models in their cultural practices, but they should be free to demonstrate their model role.

Vietnam has a tradition of retaining its indigenous cultural patterns despite its turbulent historical events. However, it is, like any other countries at the present time, facing global conflict of values, particularly these days with high rates of returnees from overseas (756,974 returnees through Tan Son Nhat international airport in 2014, according to the Ho Chi Minh City immigration branch). Social and cultural values might be interpreted differently. For example, the principle of '*Kính trên nhường dưới*'' (respecting the superiors, yielding to the inferiors), which means the inferiors are expected to display deference, respect, and devotion towards the superiors who in turn must yield to and care for the inferiors, is seen as Vietnamese 'sacrifice' in Shohet (2010) and age-hierarchical respect in this study. This principle may be challenged by those who value age equality, for example. Therefore, if we would like to retain our own cultural values in the globalisation era, we need to be open also to other cultures' values to understand them comprehensively in their socio-cultural contexts. Knowing other cultures' values helps increase the awareness of our own.

New Zealand can be a good model to follow in terms of language and culture in society. As an immigrant-receiving country and a superdiverse society (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012), New Zealand is made up of bi/multi-lingual communities, bi/multi-lingual families, and bi/multi-lingual individuals. It would be a culturally 'super-harmonious' place when New Zealand-residing individuals can also be bi/multicultural or at least culturally flexible or culturally adaptable. Therefore, exposing its citisens to a wide variety of languages and cultures is undoubtedly its strategic plan to transform the dwellers into cultural citisens and global thinkers who can speak and act culturally while thinking inter-culturally. It would be good for Vietnam, and other countries as well, to provide its people with a knowledgeable view by both revitalising languages

and cultures of its minority ethnic groups and introducing new languages and cultures of other ethnicities in the world while maintaining its language and culture homogeneous society.

8.3. Limitations of the study

By focusing on a type of invitations (mealtime invitations), my research has increased the degree of specificity rather than the generalisation achieved in studies of invitations. However, it has unavoidable limitations of generalising the findings. The study has employed a limited number of participants and the findings, therefore, cannot be generalised to a larger population. For example, the findings from Auckland-based participants might not be representative for all Vietnamese people living in Auckland or New Zealand; the information provided by Vietnam-based participants from few geographical areas might not be true to that provided by all Vietnamese people.

Although the study gathered ethnographically-inspired data in a reasonably long period of fieldwork time (the pilot study plus eighteen-month further investigation) and from the informants of a wide range of age, the findings about the practices of mealtime invitations are just a snapshot of time relatively to their lifespan over generations.

Moreover, given the complexity of the topic and the limited scope of the study, not all aspects of VMRIs have been comprehensively uncovered or not all questions have been satisfactorily answered. For example, I would like to explore also the use of VMRIs by school children in their communal meals shared with other schoolmates at school, but due to the scope of the study, the information I was able to obtain was mainly from participants' descriptions rather than the first-hand visual data. Consequently, this aspect was not discussed much in this study. Additionally, there were more female interviewees and diary-writers than male ones; I did not have any interviewees or diary-writers who were seven and under to explore this age group's attitudes to and perceptions of the use of VMRIs. This limitation in gender and age groups, being numerically not consistent, has made a picture of VMRIs not fully seen.

8.4. Recommendation for future research

This research is grounded in the linguistics of Vietnamese language, but interfaces with anthropology and has relevance to studies of the cultural and linguistic transition processes of migrants more generally. It is desirable for future research to explore mealtime language rituals and eating and food-sharing practice amongst the Vietnamese speakers inside and outside Vietnam, or to investigate mealtime invitations across languages and cultures, such as Western, Pacific, African and Asian cultures. It is also highly recommended to investigate language and politeness acquisition in this certain speech behaviour pattern of mealtime invitations by Vietnamese speaking children residing inside and outside Vietnam in three mealtime contexts (at home, at school, and elsewhere). Another desirable domain to explore is how men in particular present themselves in the (non)use of mealtime invitations.

REFERENCES

Abbots, E., & Lavis, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Why we eat, how we eat: Contemporary encounters between foods and bodies*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

AFMGhari, A. (2007). A sociopragmatic study of apology speech act realization patterns in Persian. *Speech Communication, 49*(3), 177-185. Doi: 10.1016/j.specom.2007.01.003

Agar, M. (1996). Linguistic peace work. *Peace & Change, 21*(4), 424-437. Doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0130.1996.tb00281.x

Aljaafreh, A., & Lantolf, J. P. (1994). Negative feedback as regulation and second language learning in the Zone of Proximal Development. *The Modern Language Journal, 78*(4), 465-483. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.1994.tb02064.x

Ames, R. T., & Rosemont, H. (1998). *The analects of Confucius: A philosophical translation*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Ang, S., & Van, D. L. (Eds.). (2008). *The handbook of cultural intelligence*. New York: ME Sharpe.

Archer, D., Aijimer, K., & Wichmann, A. (2012). *Pragmatics*. London: Routledge.

Aristotle. (1895). The Nichomachean Ethics of Aristotle (F. H. Peters, Trans.) (5th ed.). London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner & Co.

Aristotle. (1926). *Nicomachean ethics.* Retrieved from http://ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat00245a&AN=massey.b3306834&site=eds-live&scope=site

Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Avieli, N. (2005). Vietnamese New Year rice cakes: Iconic festive dishes and contested national identity. *Ethnology, D44*(2), 167-187. Doi: 10.2307/3773995

Avieli, N. (2007). Feasting with the living and the dead: Food and eating in ancestor worship rituals in Hôi An *Modernity and re-enchantment* (pp. 121-160). Singapore, Plymouth, England: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Lexington Books.

Avieli, N. (2012). *Rice talks: Food and community in a Vietnamese town*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bailey, K. M. (1991). Diary studies of classroom language learning: The doubting game and the believing game. In E. Sadtono (Ed.), *Language Acquisition and the Second/Foreign Language Classroom*.

Bailey, K. M., & Ochsner, R. (1983). A methodological review of the diary studies: Windmill tiling or social sciences? In K. M. Bailey, M. H. Long, & S. Peck (Eds.), *Second language acquisition studies* (pp. 188-198). Boston: Heinle & Heinle/Newbury House.

Ball, M. J. (Ed.). (2010). *Routledge handbook of sociolinguistics around the world*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Bàng, B. L. (1985) Đói, đói, đói... [They starved, they starved...]. *The Vietnam Forum: Vol. 5*: Yale Southeast Asia Studies.

Bành Châu (Writer) & Đ. T. Lê (Director). (1987). Thằng Bờm [motion picture]. Vietnam: Hãng phim truyện Việt Nam.

Barbour, J. (2013). To the field, and back…. *40th Anniversary of Studies in Symbolic Interaction, 40*, 247-268. doi: 10.1108/S0163-2396(2013)0000040014

Barbour, J. (2015). Small stories and associated identities in Neverver. In F. Gounder (Ed.), *Narrative and identity construction in the Pacific Islands* (Vol. 21, pp. 81-100). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2015). Disinvitations: You're not invited to my birthday party. *Journal of Pragmatics, 75*, 92-110.

Barthes, R. (2008). Toward a psychosociology of contemporary food consumption. In C. Counihan & P. V. Esterik (Eds.), *Food and culture* (pp. 28-35). New York: University of California Press.

Basso, K. H. (1996). *Wisdom sits in places: Landscape and language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Bauer, M. W., & Gaskell, G. (Eds.). (2000). *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound: a practical handbook*. London: SAGE.

Beebe, L., & Takahashi, L. (1989). Sociolinguistic variation in face-threatening speech acts. In M. Eisenstein (Ed.), *The dynamic interlanguage* (pp. 192-218). New York: Plenum.

Bella, S. (2009). Invitations and politeness in Greek:The age variable. *Journal of Politeness Research, 5*, 243-271. doi: 10.1515/JPLR.2009.013

Bieswanger, M., Motschenbacher, H., & Muehleisen, S. (Eds.). (2010). *Language in its socio-cultural context: New explorations in gendered, global and media uses*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Blommaert, J. (2009). Ethnography and democracy: Hymes's political theory of language. *Journal of Language, Discourse & Communication Studies, 29*(3), 257-276. Doi: 10.1515/TEXT.2009.014

Blum-Kulka, S. (1982). Learning how to say what you mean in a second language: A study of speech act performance of learers of Hebrew as a second language. *Applied Linguistics, 3*, 29-59.

Bouma, G. D., & Atkinson, G. B. J. (1995). *A handbook of social science research*. Buckingham,   England: Oxford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Bouton, L. F. (Ed.). (1996). *Pragmatics and Language Learning* (Vol. 7). Illinois: University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign.

Boxer, D. (1993). Social distance and speech behavior: The case of indirect complaints. *Journal of Pragmatics, 19*(2), 103-125. Doi: 10.1016/0378-2166(93)90084-3

Braudel, F. (1987). A history of civilizations. New York/London: Penguin Books.

Brewer, J. D. (2003). Triangulation. In R. B. Miller & J. D. Brewer (Eds.), *The A-Z of social research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage

Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Burke, R. S. (2013). *Bodies in context : a comparative study of early childhood education in New Zealand and Japan.* (PhD Thesis), Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10179/4663

Burling, R. (1970). *Man's many voices; language in its cultural context*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Burns, R. B. (1997). *Introduction to research methods* (3rd ed.). Melbourne, Australia: Longman.

Cain, T. (2011). *Bounded bodies : the everyday clothing practices of larger women.* (PhD Thesis), Massey University, Auckland, New Zealand. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10179/3611#sthash.nm4oy55n.dpuf

Cao, X. H. (1998). *Tiếng Việt: Mấy vấn đề ngữ âm, ngữ pháp, ngữ nghĩa [Vietnamese: Some discussions on phonetics, syntax, and semantics]*. Hà Nội, Vietnam: NXB Giáo Dục.

Casey, M. K. L. (2005). Communicating Chinese heritage in America: A study of Bicultural education across generations. In W. L. Hurwitz (Ed.), *From generation to generation: Maintaining cultural identity over time* (pp. 75-98). New York: Hampton Press, Inc.

Chang, Y. (2011). Interlanguage pragmatic development: The relation between pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence. *Language Sciences, 33*(5), 786-798. doi: 10.1016/j.langsci.2011.02.002

Cheng, X., Ye, L., & Zhang, Y. (1995). Refusing in Chinese. In G. Kasper (Ed.), *Pragmatics of Chinese as native and target language* (pp. 119-163). Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Second Language Teaching Curriculum Center

Cheung, M., & Nguyen, S. M. H. (2001). Parent-child relationships in Vietnamese American families. In N. B. Webb (Ed.), *Culturally diverse parent-child and family relationships* (pp. 261-282). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Clark, E. V. (2003). *First language acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Clark, H., & Clark, E. (1977). *Psychology and language*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Clynes, A., & Henry, A. (2004). Introducing genre analysis using Brunei Malay wedding invitations. *Language Awareness, 13*(4), 225-242. Doi: 10.1080/09658410408668809

Coffin, C., Lillis, T., & O'Halloran, K. (Eds.). (2010). *Applied linguistics methods: a reader*. Milton Keynes, U.K: The Open University.

Cohen, A. (1996). Investigating the production of speech act sets. In S. M. Gass & J. Neu (Eds.), *Speech act across cultures: Challenges to communication in a second language*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Counihan, C., & Van Esterik, P. (Eds.). (2008). *Food and culture: A reader*: Routledge.

Cramer, J. M., Greene, C. P., & Walters, L. M. (2011). *Food as communication. Communication as food*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Daly, R. (2003). Methodology. In R. B. Miller & J. D. Brewer (Eds.), *The A-Z of social research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Đặng, N. V. (1997). Culinary traditions of the Việt in the Red river delta. *Vietnamese studies, 55*(125), 31-40.

Dang, T. H. (1992). *A cross-cultural study on the way in which speakers of Vietnamese and speakers of English issue, accept, and decline spoken invitations.* (MA thesis), University of Canberra, Canberra.

Dang, T. M. D. (2001). *Some English - Vietnamese cross-cultural similaries and differences in Inviting* (BA Unpublished Thesis), Vietnam National University- College of Foreign Languages, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Dang, T. M. D. (2006). *A study on a translation equivalence type achieved in Trinh Lu's Vietnamese translations of some selected stories in "Australian short stories".* (Master Unpublished Thesis), Vietnam National University- College of Foreign Languages, Hanoi.

Đào, D. A. (1938). *Việt Nam văn hóa sử cương [An outline of Vietnamese cultural history].* Sài Gòn, Vietnam: NXB Bốn Phương.

Đào, T. L. (2004). Phân tích sắc thái nghĩa cầu khiến của các động từ: ra lệnh, cấm, cho phép, yêu cầu, đề nghị, khuyên, mời,chúc, xin trong câu tiếng Việt [An analysis of demand and request forces for the verbs 'ra lệnh, cấm, cho phép, yêu cầu, đề nghị, khuyên, mời,chúc, xin' in Vietnamese sentences]. *Tạp chí Khoa học, ĐHQG Hà Nội*, 13-18.

Đào, T. L. (2009). Nhận diện hành động nài/nài nỉ trong tiếng Việt [Identifying acts of insisting in Vietnamese]. *Tạp chí Ngôn Ngữ, 11*, 37-42.

Đào, T. L. (2011a). Nhận diện hành động mời và rủ trong tiếng Việt [Identifying acts of 'mời' and 'rủ' in Vietnamese]. *Tạp chí Ngôn Ngữ, 3*, 14-19.

Đào, T. L. (2011b). Về việc phân loại hành động cầu khiến tiếng Việt [Identifying requests in Vietnamese]. *Tạp chí Ngôn Ngữ, 11*, 59-66.

Đào, T. L. (2012). *Một số vấn đề ngữ pháp - ngữ nghĩa của lời [Some discussions on grammatical structures and meanings of Vietnamese utterances].* Hanoi, Vietnam: NXB ĐHQG Hanoi.

Davis, K. A., & Henze, R. C. (1998). Applying ethnographic perspectives to issues in cross-cultural pragmatics. *Journal of Pragmatics, 30*(4), 399-419.

De Felice, R., Darby, J., Fisher, AJ., & Peplow, D. (2013). A classification scheme for annotating speech acts in a business email corpus. *ICAME Journal, 37*, 71-105. doi: http://clu.uni.no/icame/ij37/index.html

Dean, K. C. (1996). Book reviews: Arts & humanities. *Library Journal, 121*(12), 120.

Diefenbach, D. L. (2008). *Video production techniques*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: OUP Oxford.

Douglas, M. (1972). Deciphering a Meal. *Myth, symbol, and culture, 101*(1), 61-81. doi: 10.2307/20024058

Dowrick, P. W., & Biggs, S. J. (1983). *Using video: psychological and social applications*. New York: Wiley: Chichester West Sussex

Durie, M. (2004). Māori. In C. R. Ember & M. Ember (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology* (Vol. 2, pp. 815-822). New York: Kluwer Academic Plenum Publishers.

Earley, P. C., & Ang, S. (2003). *Cultural intelligence: individual interactions across cultures*. Stanford: Stanford Business Books.

Eckert, P. (2009). Ethnography and the study of variation. In N. Coupland & A. Jaworski (Eds.), *The new sociolinguistics reader* (pp. 136-151). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Edmondson, W. J., & House, J. (1981). *Let's talk and talk about it: A pedagogic interactional grammar of English*. Munich: Urban and Schwarzenberg.

Eggins, S., & Slade, D. (1997). *Analysing casual conversation*. New York: Cassell.

Endres, K. (1999). Images of womenhood in rural Vietnam and the role of Vietnamese women's union: A microscopic perspective. In B. Dahm & V. Houben (Eds.), *Vietnamese villages in transition: Background and consequences of reform policies in rural Vietnam* (pp. 155-174). Passau, Germany: Passau University Southeast Asian Studies Centre.

Enfield, N. J., Stivers, T., & Levison, S. C. (2007). Person reference in interaction. In N. J. Enfield & T. Stivers (Eds.), *Person reference in interaction: Linguistic, cultural and social perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eslami, Z. R. (2005). Invitations in Persian and English: Ostensible or genuine? *Intercultural Pragmatics, 2*(4). doi: 10.1515/iprg.2005.2.4.453

Faramarzi, S., Elekaei, A., & Tabrizi, H. H. (2015). Genre-based discourse analysis of wedding invitation cards in Iran. *Journal of Language Teaching & Research, 6*(3), 662-668. Doi: 10.17507/jltr.0603.25

Fiese, B. H. (2006). *Family routines and rituals*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Fisher, A. J. (2011). Addicted to Talk: Newspaper representations of the female speaking subject. *Working with English: medieval and modern language,*

literature   and   drama   7,   14-32.   Doi:
https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~aezweb/working_with_english/

FitzGerald, H. (1996). Misunderstanding in cross cultural communication: The influence of different value systems as reflected in spoken discourse. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics, 19*(1), 21-38.

Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (Eds.). (1994). *Interviewing: The art of science*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse of knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.

Frake, C. O. (1972). How to ask for a drink in Subanun. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books.

Frawley, W., & Lantolf, J. P. (1985). Second language discourse: A Vygotskyan perspective. *Applied Linguistics, 6*(1), 19-44.

Frye, J. J., & Bruner, M. S. (Eds.). (2012). *The rhetoric of food: Discourse, materiality, and power*. New York: Routledge.

García, O., & Otheguy, R. (Eds.). (1989). *English across cultures, cultures ccross English: A reader in cross-cultural communication*. Berlin, Germany: Mouton de Gruyter.

Garde, M. (2013). *Culture, interaction and person reference in an Australian language: An ethnography of Bininj Gunwok communication*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Gay, L. R., & Airasian, P. W. (2000). *Educational research - Competencies for analysis and application* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Gee, J. (1999). *An introduction to Discourse analysis: Theory and method*. London and New York: Routledge.

Gillham, B. (2000). *Developing a Questionnaire*. London: Continuum.

Goddard, C. (1997). Cultural values and 'cultural scirts' of Malay (Bahasa Malayu). *Journal of Pragmatics, 27*, 183-201.

Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual*. Chicago, USA: Penguin.

Greene, C. P., & Cramer, J. M. (2011). Beyond mere sustenance: Food as communication, communication as food. In C. P. Greene, J. M. Cramer, & L. M. Walters (Eds.), *Food as communication. Communication as food*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Gu, Y. G. (1990). Politeness phenomena in modem Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics,*

14(2), 237-257. Doi: 10.1016/0378-2166(90)90082-o

Gumperz, J. J., & Hymes, D. (1989). *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication*. Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell.

Gumperz, J. J., & Hymes, D. H. (1964). *The ethnography of communication*. Washington, D.C: American Anthropological Association.

Guy, G.R. (2014). Words and numbers: statistical analysis in sociolinguistics. In J. Holmes and K. Hazen (eds.), *Research methods in sociolinguistics: a practical guide* (pp. 194–210). Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.

Hall, D. G. E. (Ed.). (1981). *A history of South-east Asia* (4th ed.). London: Macmillan.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1973). *Explorations in the functions of language*. London: Edward Arnold.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. Maryland: University Park Press.

Hamilton, A. (2009). Renovated: Gender and cinema in contemporary Vietnam. *Visual Anthropology, 22*(2-3), 141-154. doi: 10.1080/08949460802623580

Hancher, M. (1979). The classification of cooperative illocutionary acts. *Language in Society, 8*(01), 1-14. Doi: 10.1017/S0047404500005911

Hannas, W. C. B. D. W. (1998). MLJ reviews. *Modern Language Journal, 82*(2), 293.

Hassall, T. (2012). Sociopragmatics is slower: A reply to Chang. *Language Sciences, 34*(3), 376-380. Doi: 10.1016/j.langsci.2011.12.001

Heigham, J., & Croker, R. A. (Eds.). (2009). *Qualitative research in Applied Linguistics: A practical introduction* Macmillan, UK: Palgrave.

Hellinger, M., & Bußmann, H. (Eds.). (2002). *Gender across languages: The linguistic representation of women and men*. Philadelphia: J. Benjamins.

Herk, G. V. (2012). *What is sociolinguistics*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hickey, G. C. (1964). *Village in Vietnam*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hồ, X. H. (1993). Bánh trôi nước [Floating rice cakes]. In H. N. Lữ (Ed.), *Thơ Hồ Xuân Hương*. Hà Nội, Vietnam: NXB Văn học.

Hoàng, P. (1981). Ngữ nghĩa của lời [Meanings of utterances]. *Ngôn ngữ, 3*(4), 3-23.

Hoàng, P. (Ed.) (1994) Từ điển tiếng Việt (3rd ed.). Hanoi, Vietnam: NXB Khoa Học Xã Hội, Trung tâm từ điển học.

Hoàng, T. P. (1991). Nghi thức lời nói trong tiếng Việt [Speech etiquettes in Vietnamese]. *Art and Culture studies, 42*.

Hoàng, T. P., Mai, N. C., & Vũ, Đ. N. (1991). *Cơ sở ngôn ngữ học và Tiếng Việt [A*

foundation of linguistics and Vietnamese]. Hà Nội: NXB Đại học và giáo dục chuyên nghiệp.

Ho-Dac, T. (2003). *Vietnamese-English bilingualism: Patterns of code-switching*. New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

Holmes, J. (1990). Politeness strategies in New Zealand women's speech. In A. Bell & J. Holmes (Eds.), *New Zealand ways of speaking English* (pp. 252-276). Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Holmes, J., Bell, A., and Boyce, M. (1991) *Variation and change in New Zealand English: a social dialect investigation*. Wellington: Department of Linguistics, Victoria University.

Holmes, J. (1997). Women, language and identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 1*(2), 195-223. doi: 10.1111/1467-9481.00012

Holmes, J. (2013). *An introduction to sociolinguitsics* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.

Holmes, J. (2014). Doing discourse analysis in sociolinguistics. In J. Holmes and K. Hazen (eds.), *Research methods in sociolinguistics: a practical guide* (pp. 177–193). Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.

Holt, S. C. (2013). *Eating heaven: Spirituality at the table*. Victoria, Australia: Acorn Press Ltd.

Hoskins, M. W. (1975). Vietnamese women: Their roles and their options. In D. Raphael (Ed.), *Being female: Reproduction, power, and change*. The Hague: Mouton Publishers.

Hữu Ngọc. (1998). *Sketches for a portrait of Vietnamese culture*. Hanoi: Thế Giới Publishers.

Hữu Ngọc. (2007). Traditional meals in Vietnam. *Wandering through Vietnamese Culture*, 326-329. http://biologicaltranslation.blogspot.co.nz/2010/07/2-traditional-meals-in-vietnam.html

Huỳnh, S. T. (1985) Folk history in Vietnam. In S. T. Huỳnh (Series Ed.), *The Vietnam Forum: Vol. 5. Southeast Asia Studies* (pp. 66-80). New Haven: Yale Southeast Asia Studies.

Huỳnh, S. T. (1987) The quarrel of the six beasts. *The Lac Viet series Vol. 4. Lục súc tranh công*. New Haven: Yale Southeast Asia Studies.

Huỳnh, S. T. (2008). Interview. *Journal of Vietnamese studies, 3*(1), 220-239. Doi: 10.1525/vs.2008.3.1.220

Hymes, D. H. (1962). The ethnography of speaking. In T. Gladwin & W. Sturtevant

(Eds.), *Anthropology and human behaviour* (pp. 15-53). Washington D.C.: Anthropological society of Washington.

Hymes, D. H. (1964). *Language in culture and society: a reader in linguistics and anthropology*: Harper & Row.

Hymes, D. H. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics* (pp. 269-293). Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Hymes, D. H. (1974). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*. Phyladelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hymes, D. H. (1999). *Reinventing anthropology*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Imber-Black, E., & Roberts, J. (1993). *Rituals for our times: Celebrating, healing, and changing our lives and our relationships*. New York: HarperPerennial.

Isaacs, E. A., & Clark, H. H. (1990). Ostensible Invitations. *Language in Society, 19*(4), 493-509.

Ishida, H. (2003). *Interpretation of contextualization cues in Japanese conversation: Back-channel cues and turn-taking cues.* (PhD Thesis), Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Jacobs, G., & Slembrouck, S. (2010). Notes on linguistic ethnography as a liminal activity. *Text & Talk, 30*(2), 235–244. doi: 10.1515/TEXT.2010.012

Jaffe, A. (2014). Anthropological analysis in Sociolinguistics. In J. Holmes and K. Hazen (eds.), *Research methods in sociolinguistics: a practical guide* (pp. 213–229). Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.

Jaworski, A., & Coupland, N. (Eds.). (2006). *The discourse reader*. London: Routledge.

Jayakody, R., & Phuong, P. T. T. (2013). Social change and fathering change or continuity in Vietnam? *Family Studies, 34*(2), 230-251.

Johnstone, B., & Marcellino, W. (2010). Dell Hymes and the ethnography of communication. *Research Showcase @ CMU*. http://repository.cmu.edu/english

Kalman, B. (2002). *Vietnam. The Culture*. New York: Crabtree Pub. Co.

Kasper, G. (1996). Introduction: Interlanguage pragmatics in SLA. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 18*, 145-148.

Kasper, G., & Schmidt, R. (1996). Developmental issues in interlanguage pragmatics. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 18*, 149-169.

Khái Hưng. (n.d.). *Nửa chừng xuân [In the middle]* Retrieved from http://vnthuquan.net/truyen/truyen.aspx?tid=2qtqv3m3237nvn0nqn2n31n343tq8

3a3q3m3237nmn

Klein, M. (Ed.). (1990). *The Vietnam era: Media and popular culture in the US and Vietnam*. Winchester, Mass: Pluto Press.

Kleinen, J. (1999). *Facing the future, reviving the past: A study of social change in a North Vietnamese village*. Pasir Panjang, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Knottnerus, J. D. (2010). *Ritual as a missing link: Sociology, structural ritualization theory, and research*: Paradigm Publishers.

Konijin, E. A., Utz, S., Tanis, M., & Barnes, S. B. (Eds.). (2008). *Mediated interpersonal communication*. New York: Routledge.

Kramsch, C. (Ed.). (1998). *Language and culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kuiper, K. (1998). Thinking about gender, power and speech. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 2*(1), 101-104. doi: 10.1111/1467-9481.00032

Kuiper, K., & Lin, D. T. G. (1989). Cultural congruence and conflict in the acquisition of formulae in a second language In O. García & R. Otheguy (Eds.), *English across cultures, cultures across English: A reader in cross-cultural communication*: Mouton de Gruyter.

Kumar, R. (1999). *Research methodology: A step-to-step guide for beginners*. London: Sage.

Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lakoff, R. (1972). Language in context. *Language, 48*(4), 907-927. Doi: 10.2307/411994

Lakoff, R. (1973). Language and woman's place. *Language in Society, 2*(1), 45-80. Doi: 10.2307/4166707

Larkin, P. (1971). Vers de Société. In P. Larkin (Ed.), *High Windows*. UK: Faber and Faber books.

Lavrakas, P. J. (2004). Questionnaire. In M. S. Lewis-Bech, A. Bryman, & T. F. Liao (Eds.), *The SAGE encyclopaedia of social science research methods* (Vol. 3, pp. 902-903). Thousand Oaks: Sage

Lazaraton, A. (2009). Discourse analysis. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 242-262). Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lê, B. T. (1985) Some sociolinguistic aspects of Vietnamese. In S. T. Huỳnh (Series

Ed.), *The Vietnam Forum: Vol. 5* (pp. 122-126). New Haven: Yale Southeast Asia Studies.

Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (Ed.). (2006). *From generation to generation: Maintaining cultural identity over time*. Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.

Li, D. C. S., & Scollon, R. (2002). *Discourses in search of members: In honor of Ron Scollon*. Lanham: University Press of America.

Li, Y. (2003). *Video content analysis using multimodal information: For movie content extraction, indexing, and representation*. Boston, Mass: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Litosseliti, L., & Sunderland, J. (2002). *Gender identity and discourse analysis*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Co.

Livermore, D. A. (2011). *The cultural intelligence difference*. New York: AMACOM.

Luong, H. V. (1987). Plural markers and personal pronouns in Vietnamese person reference: An analysis of pragmatic ambiguity and native models. *Anthropological Linguistics, 29*(1), 49.

Luong, H. V. (1989). Vietnamese kinship: Structural principles and the Socialist transformation in Northern Vietnam. *The Journal of Asian Studies, 48*(4), 741-756. doi: 10.2307/2058112

Luong, H. V. (1990). *Discursive Practices and Linguistic Meanings : The Vietnamese System of Person Reference*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Pub. Co.

Luru, Q. K. (2007). An investigation into spoken direct invitations in English and Vietnamese. *Tạp chí Khoa học và Công nghệ, Đại học Đà Nẵng, 23*, 132-138.

MacKay, S. L. (2009). Introspective techniques. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 220-241). Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S. M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Macpherson, C., & Macpherson, L. (2009). *The warm winds of change: Globalisation in contemporary Sāmoa*. Auckland, NZ: Auckland University Press.

MacRae, G. (2006). 'Ethnography, ethnology and the ethnography of ethnologies'. *Sites: new series, 3*(2), 116-136.

MacRea, F. (2006). Women talk three times as much as men, says study. *Mail online*. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-419040/Women-talk-times-men-says-study.html#ixzz401WOOjgK

Mai, T. T. (1990). The Vietnamese woman yesterday and today. In M. Klein (Ed.), *The Vietnam era*. London: Pluto press.

Mao, L. R. (1992). Invitational discourse and Chinese identity. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication, 3*(1), 79-96.

Mao, L. R. (1994). Beyond politeness theory: 'Face' revisited and renewed. *Journal of Pragmatics, 21*(5), 451-486. doi: 10.1016/0378-2166(94)90025-6

Mao, L. R. (1994). *Focus-on issue: "Politeness across cultures"*: North-Holland Publishing.

Mao, L. R. (2003). Chinese communication studies: Contexts and comparisons. *Rhetoric Review, 22*(4).

Marcus, G. E., & Fischer, M. M. J. (1999). *Anthropology as cultural critique: An experimental moment in the human sciences*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.

Marquis, M., & Shatenstein, B. (2005). Food choice motives and the importance of family meals among immigrant mothers. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice & Research, 66*(2), 77.

Marr, D. G. (1984). *Vietnamese tradition on trial, 1920-1945*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mason, J. (2004). Semistructured interview. In M. S. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, & T. F. Liao (Eds.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Mathias, P. (2003). *Noodle pillows: a journey through Vietnamese food and culture*. Auckland, New Zealand: Exisle Publishing.

McAllister, P. (2012). Connecting places, constructing Tết: Home, city and the making of the lunar New year in urban Vietnam. *Jounal of Southest Asian Studies, 43*, 111-132. Doi: 10.1017/S0022463411000683

McCoy, D. (1996). *From hostel to home: Immigration, resettlement and community, the ethnic-Vietnamese in Australia, 1975-1995*. New South Wales: University of New South Wales.

McGregor, G. (1994). *Third person interpretation and the psycholinguistics of verbal communication.* (PhD Thesis), University of Newcastle, Tyne, UK.

McIntyre, K. (2002). *Eating the nation: Fish source in the crafting of Vietnamese community.* (PhD Thesis), University of Wisconsin, Madison.

McKay, S. L. (2006). *Researching second language classrooms*. Milton Park: Taylor &

Francis.

McKinlay, J. E. (1996). *Gendering wisdom the host: Biblical invitations to eat and drink*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press.

McLaren, M. C. (1998). *Interpreting cultural differences: The challenge of intercultural communication*. Norfolk: Peter Francis.

McLeod, M. W., & Nguyen, T. D. (2001). *Culture and customs of Vietnam*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood.

Merriam, S. B. (2002). Assessing and evaluating qualitative research: Examples for discussion and analysis. In S. B. Merriam & Associates (Ed.), *Qualitative research in practice* (pp. 18-33). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Company.

Merrill, N., Gallo, E., & Fivush, R. (2015). Gender differences in family dinnertime conversations. *Discourse Processes, 52*(7), 533-558. doi: 10.1080/0163853X.2014.958425

Meyerhoff, M., & Schleef, E. (Eds.). (2010). *The Routledge sociolinguistics reader*. London: Routledge.

Mills, S. (1988). Do men and women talk differently? *Language & Communication, 8*(2), 155-158. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0271-5309(88)90013-4

Mintz, S. W. (1985). *Sweetness and power: The place of sugar in modern history*. New York: Viking Penguin.

Mirzaei, A., & Eslami, Z. R. (2013). Exploring the variability dynamics of wedding invitation discourse in Iran. *Journal of Pragmatics, 55*, 103-118. Doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2013.06.001

Momani, K. R., & Al-Refaei, D. F. (2010, January 1). A Socio-textual analysis of written wedding invitations in Jordanian society. *Language For Special Purposes, Professional Communication, Knowledge Management, And Cognition, 1*(1), 61-80.

Moore, G. (2004a). Forms of belonging: 'Authenticity' in an Auckland Vietnamese temple. *New Zealand journal of Asian Studies, 6*(1), 176-203.

Moore, G. (2004b). The hazy moon: Oral history at an Auckland Vietnamese Buddhist temple. *Graduate Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies, 2*(1), 59-68.

Mullis, I. V. S., Kelly, D. L., & Haley, K. (1996). Translation verification procedures. In M. O. Martin & I. V. S. Mullis (Eds.), *Third international mathematics and science study: Quality assurance in data collection* (pp. 1-14). Chesnut Hill,

MA: Boston College.

Nahar, A. M. (2006, November 1). Religious affiliations and masculine power in Jordanian wedding invitation genre. *Discourse, 17*(6), 691-714.

Nam Cao. (1943). *Một bữa no [A mouthful meal]* N. Cao (Ed.) *Tiểu thuyết thứ bảy* Retrieved from http://www.truyenviet.com/truyen-dai/103-nam-cao/1724-mot-bua-no

Newman, A. J., Supalla, T., Fernandez, N., Bavelier, D., & Newport, E. L. (2015). Neural systems supporting linguistic structure, linguistic experience, and symbolic communication in sign language and gesture. *National Academy of Sciences, 112*.

Newman, J. (Ed.). (1998). *The linguistics of giving* (Vol. 36). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing company.

Newman, J. (2009). *The linguistics of eating and drinking* J. Newman (Ed.) *Typological Studies in Language* Retrieved from nlebk database Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,url,uid &db=nlebk&AN=267370&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Ngô, T. T. (1939). Lều chõng [For the examination]. http://vi.wikisource.org/wiki/L%E1%BB%81u_ch%C3%B5ng/Ch%C6%B0%C6%A1ng_4

Nguyễn, Đ. H. (1956). *Verbal and non-verbal patterns of respect-behavior in Vietnamese society.* (PhD Thesis), New York University, New York, USA. Available from http://worldcat.org /z-wcorg/ database.

Nguyễn, Đ. H. (1988) An outline of Vietnamese. *The Vietnam Forum: Vol. 11* (pp. 1-20). New Haven: Yale Southeast Asia Studies.

Nguyễn, Đ. H. (1999). *From the city inside the Red River: A cultural memoir of mid-century Vietnam*. California: McFarland.

Nguyễn, Đ. H. (1979). *201 Vietnamese verbs: Compounds and phrases for everyday usage*. Woodbury, NY: Barron's Educational Ser.

Nguyễn Đình Chiểu. (1861). Văn Tế Nghĩa sĩ Cần Giuộc [An oration for the Can Giuoc soldiers killed in actions]. Retrieved 11/03/2014, from Wikisource https://vi.wikisource.org/wiki/T%C3%A1c_gia:Nguy%E1%BB%85n_%C4%90 %C3%ACnh_Chi%E1%BB%83u

Nguyễn, K. (2006). *Các dân tộc ở Việt Nam: cách dùng họ và đặt tên [Minority ethnic groups in Vietnam: Names and family names]*. Hanoi, Vietnam: NXB Văn Hoá

Dân Tộc.

Nguyễn, K. Đ. (2007). Tập Thiền [Meditation]. In K. Đ. Nguyễn (Ed.), *Cõi lặng*. Hanoi: NXB Văn học.

Nguyễn, K. T. (12/06/2011). *Vai trò nữ trí thức trong việc duy trì bản sắc văn hoá dân tộc truyền thống [The role of female intelectuals in retaining cultural traditions]*. Ho Chi Minh city: Trung tâm nghiên cứu giới và xã hội, Đại học Hoa Sen. Retrieved from http://gas.hoasen.edu.vn/vi/gas-page/vai-tro-nu-tri-thuc-trong-viec-duy-tri-ban-sac-van-hoa-dan-toc-truyen-thong

Nguyễn, L., & Đỗ, T. B. L. (6-7/9/2010). *Tình hình thực hiện chiến lược phát triển giáo dục 2001-2010 và việc đảm bảo bình đẳng giới trong thực hiện mục tiêu 2-phổ cập giáo dục tiểu học trong các mục tiêu phát triển thiên niên kỷ [The implementation of education development 2001-2010 and gender equility in primary schools in MDGs]*. Paper presented at the Giới và việc thực hiện các Mục tiêu Phát triểnThiên niên kỷ (MDGs) tại Việt Nam [Gender and the implementation of MDGs in Vietnam], Đà Lạt, Lâm Đồng, Vietnam.

Nguyễn, M. S. (1996). *Những thần nữ danh tiếng trong văn hóa, tín ngưỡng Việt nam [Famous goddesses in Vietnamese cultural belief]*. Hanoi, Vietnam: NXB Phụ Nữ.

Nguyen, M. T. N. (2014). *Vietnam's socialist servants: Domesticity, class, gender, and identity* Retrieved from http://MASSEY.eblib.com.au/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1775341

Nguyen, T. C. L. (2009). *Learner autonomy and EFL learning at the tertiray level in Vietnam.* (PhD Thesis), Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.

Nguyễn Thông. (1867). Biệt vong đệ lữ phần [Farewell to a brother's tomb]. Retrieved 11/03/2014, from Wikisource https://vi.wikisource.org/wiki/T%C3%A1c_gia:Nguy%E1%BB%85n_Th%C3%B4ng

Nguyen, T. K. Q. (2004). *Cross-cultural study on inviting and responding to invitations in Vietnamese- English.* (MA Unpublished thesis), Vietnam National University-College of Foreign Languages Hanoi.

Nguyen, T. N., & Ho, T. L. (2012). The influences of age and power relations on Vietnamese tertiary students of non-English majors in making spoken invitations in English. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 2*(5), 902-908. Doi:

10.4304/tpls.2.5.902-908

Nguyen, T. T. M. (2005). *Criticizing and responding to criticism in a foreign language: A study of Vietnamese learners of English.* (PhD Thesis), The University of Auckland, Auckland, NZ.

Nguyễn Tuân. (2000). Phở [Rice-Noodle] *Tuyển tập I* (pp. 550-565). Hanoi: NXB Văn Học.

Nguyễn, V. H. (1995). *The ancient civilization of Vietnam*. Hanoi, Vietnam: Thế Giới Publishers.

Nguyễn, V. Q. (1998). *Vietnamse- American cross-cultural differences in extending and encounting compliments, as seen from communicative activities.* (PhD thesis), Vietnam National University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hanoi.

Nguyen, V. T. (2012). *A comparative study on invitations in English and Vietnamese in terms of cross-cultural perspective.* (BA Thesis), Dong Thap University, Dong Thap, Vietnam.

Norris, S. (2004). *Analyzing multimodal interaction: a methodological framework*. London and New York: Routledge.

Norris, S. (2006). Multiparty interaction: A multimodal perspective on relevance. *Discourse Studies, 8*(3), 401-421. doi: 10.1177/1461445606061878

Norris, S. (2011). *Multimodality in practice: Investigating theory-in-practice-through-methodology*. Milton Park: Taylor and Francis.

Norris, S., & Jones, R. H. (Eds.). (2005). *Discourse in action: introducing mediated discourse analysis*. New York: Routledge.

Norton, B. (2000) *Identity and language learning*. New York: Pearson Education.

Nwoye, O. G. (1992). Linguistics politeness and socio-cultural variations of the notion of face. *Journal of Pragmatics, 18*.

O'Barr, W., & Atkins, B. K. (2009). 'Women's language' or 'powerless language'? . In N. Coupland & A. Jaworski (Eds.), *The new sociolinguistics reader* (pp. 159-167). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ochs, E., & Shohet, M. (2006). The cultural structuring of mealtime socialization. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 2006*(111), 35-49. Doi: 10.1002/cd.154

Ogiermann, E. (2015) In/directness in Polish children's requests at the dinner table. *Journal of Pragmatics* 82: 67-82.

Ohta, A. S. (2013). Sociocultural theory and the zone of proximal development. In J. H.

M. Young-Scholten (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 648-669). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Olshtain, E., & Cohen, A. (1991). Teaching speech act behavior to nonnative speakers. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 154-165). Boston: Heinle & Hinle Pulishers.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Penelope, G. (2011). *Cook book*. Newcastle: The Central Coast Herald.

Peters, E. J. (2012). *Appetites and aspirations in Vietnam: Food and drink in the long nineteenth Century*. Rowman Altamira: AltaMira Press.

Pham, H. (2002). Gender in addressing and self-reference in Vietnamese: Variation and change. In M. Hellinger & H. Bußmann (Eds.), *Gender across languages* (Vol. 2, pp. 281-312). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Pham, M. (2001). *Pleasures of the Vietnamese table*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Phạm, T. P., & Phạm, N. T. (Writers) & D. D. Nguyễn & T. P. Phạm (Directors). (2004). Chuyện phố phường [Everyday stories] [Television series episode]. Vietnam: My Van Films.

Pham, V. B. (1999). *The Vietnamese family in change - the case of the Red River Delta*. Surrey: Curzon Press.

Pham, V. B. (2004). When women go fishing: Women's work in Vietnamese fishing communities. In L. L. Thang & W.-H. Yu (Eds.), *Old challenges, new strategies: women, work, and family in contemporary Asia*. Boston: Brill.

Phạm, V. T. (2011). Nhân TẾT đến nói chuyện ĂN [Discussing eating on the occasion of Lunar New Year]. *Tạp chí Từ điển học & Bách khoa thư, 1*(9).

Phan, K. B. (Ed.). (2005). *Việt nam phong tục [Vietnamese customs]*. Hanoi, Vietnam: NXB Văn Học.

Pirie, S. (1996). *Classroom video-recording: When, why and how does it offer a valuable data source for qualitative research?* . Paper presented at the The Annual Meeting of the North American Chapter of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education, Panama City, FL.

Rakowicz, A. (2009). *Ambiguous invitations: The interlanguage pragmatics of Polish English language learners.* (Ph.D. 3346268), New York University, United States -- New York. Retrieved from

http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1677012391&Fmt=7&clientId=13636&RQT=309&VName=PQD

Richards, J. R., & Schmidt, R. W. (1983). *Language and communication*. London: Longman.

Richards, K. (2009). Interviews. In J. Heigham & R. A. Croker (Eds.), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: A practical introduction* (pp. 182-199). Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Riner, P. (2006). Do invitations with selfish motives smell as sweet?, Editorial. *Journal of Invitational Theory & Practice,* pp. 1-5. Retrieved from http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=24003907&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Riner, P. S. (2010). East or West, the goal is the same: Buddhist psychology and its potential contributions to invitational education. *Journal of Invitational Theory & Practice, 16*, 88-104.

Rosenstrach, J. (2002). Prepare to share. *Real Simple, 3,* 112-121.

Roth, G. (2010). *Women, food and God: Asn unexpected path to almost everything*. New York: Scribner

Salmani-Nodoushan, M. A. (2006). A comparative sociopragmatic study of ostensible invitations in English and Farsi. *Speech Communication, 48*(8), 903-912. doi: 10.1016/j.specom.2005.12.001

Sandel, M. J. (2010). *Justice: What's the right thing to do?* London: Penguin.

Saville-Troike, M. (1989). *The ethnography of communication: An introduction*. New York, NY: Blackwell.

Scollon, R. (1998). *Mediated discourse as social interaction: A study of news discourse*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Inc.

Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. B. K. (2001). *Intercultural communication: A discourse approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. London: Cambridge University Press

Searle, J. R. (1975). A taxonomy of illocutionary acts. In K. Gunderson (Ed.), *Language, mind, and knowledge*. Minneapolis: Univeristy of Minnesota Press.

Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and meaning: Studies in the theory of speech acts*. New York Cambridge University Press.

Seligman, A. B. (2008). *Ritual and its consequences : an essay on the limits of sincerity*.

New York: Oxford University Press.

Shohet, M. (2010). *Silence and sacrifice: Intergenerational displays of virtue and devotion in central Vietnam.* (PhD thesis), University of California, Los Angeles. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/864741432?accountid=14574

Shohet, M. (2013). Everyday sacrifice and language socialization in Vietnam: The power of a respect particle. *American Anthropologist, 115*(2), 203-217. Doi: 10.1111/aman.12004

Si, L. (2011). An experimental study of the classification and recognition of Chinese speech acts. *Journal of Pragmatics, 43*, 1801-1817. Doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2010.10.031

Sidnell, J., & Shohet, M. (2013). The problem of peers in Vietnamese interaction. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 19*(3), 618-638. Doi: 10.1111/1467-9655.12053

Slembrouck, S. (2007). Transcription — the extended directions of data histories: A response to M. Bucholtz's 'Variation in Transcription'. *Discourse Studies, 9*(6), 822-827. doi: 10.1177/1461445607082582

Soucy, A. (2014). Wedding invitations and relationship management in Hanoi. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology, 15*(2), 141-157. Doi: 10.1080/14442213.2014.892527

Spagnola, M., & Fiese, B. H. (2007). A context for development in the lives of young children. *Infants & Young Children, 20*(4), 284-299.

Spencer-Oatey, H., & Jiang, W. (2003). Explaining cross-cultural pragmatic findings: Moving from politeness maxims to sociopragmatic interactional principles (SIPs). *Journal of Pragmatics, 35*(10–11), 1633-1650. doi: 10.1016/s0378-2166(03)00025-0

Spoonley, P., & Bedford, R. (2012). *Welcome to our world? Immigration and the reshaping of New Zealand*. Auckland, New Zealand: Dunmore Publishing.

Stivers, T., Enfield, N. J., & Levinson, S. C. (2007). Person reference in interaction. In N. J. Enfield & T. Stivers (Eds.), *Person reference in interaction: Linguistic, cultural, and social perspectives* (pp. 1-20). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Streeton, R., Cooke, M., & Campbell, J. (2004). Researching the researchers: Using a snowballing technique. *Nurse Researcher, 12*(1), 35-47.

Sutton, D. E. (2001). *Rememberance of repasts: An anthropology of food and memory*. Oxford, New York: Berg.

Suu, N. P. (1990). *A cross-cultural study of greetings and address terms in English and Vietnamese.* (Master Unpublished thesis), University of Canberra, Canberra, Australia. Retrieved from http://books.google.co.nz/books?id=Pze3twAACAAJ

Swain, M., Kinnear, P., & Steinman, L. (2011). *Sociocultural theory in second language education: An introduction through narratives*. Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.

Talmy, S., & Richards, K. (2011). Theorizing qualitative research interviews in applied linguistics. *Applied Linguistics, 32*(1), 1-5. doi: 10.1093/applin/amq045

Tân Việt. (1997). *Một trăm điều nên biết về phong tục Việt Nam [Hundreds of Vietnamese customs]*. Hanoi, Vietnam: NXB Văn Hóa Dân Tộc.

Tannen, D. (Ed.). (1988). *Linguistics in context: Connecting observation and understanding*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Taylor, K. W. (1983). *The birth of Vietnam*. California, US: University of California Press.

Taylor, K. W. (1986) Phùng Hưng: Mecian King or Austric paramount? , *Vietnam Forum: Vol. 8* (pp. 10-25). New Haven: Yale Southeast Asia Studies.

Taylor, K. W. (Summer-Fall 1986) Notes on the Viet Dien U Linh Tap. *Vietnam Forum: Vol. 8* (pp. 26-59). New Haven: Yale Southeast Asia Studies.

Taylor, P. (2003). The Goddess, the ethnologist, the folklorist, and the cadre: Situating exegesis of Vietnam's folk religion in time and place. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology, 14*(3), 383-401.

Taylor, P. (2004). *Goddess on the rise*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Taylor, P. (Ed.). (2007). *Modernity and re-enchantment: Religion in post-revolutionary Vietnam*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Thich, N. H. (1967). *Vietnam: Lotus in the sea of fire*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Thich, N. H., & Cheung, L. (2010). *Savor: Mindful eating, mindful life*. New York, NY: HarperOne.

Thích, V. T. (2010). *Văn khấn Nôm truyền thống [Collections of Vietnamese prayers]*. Hà Nội, Vietnam: NXB Văn hóa Dân tộc.

Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics, 4*(2), 91-112. Doi: 10.1093/applin/4.2.91

Thomas, M. (2002). Re-orientations: East Asian popular cultures in contemporary

Vietnam. *Asian Studies Review, 26*(2), 189-204. doi: 10.1111/1467-8403.00022

Thomas, M. (2004). Transitions in taste in Vietnam and the diaspora. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology, 15*(1), 54-67. Doi: 10.1111/j.1835-9310.2004.tb00365.x

Tobin, J. (2005). Quality in early childhood education: An Anthropologist's perspective. *Early Education & Development, 16*(4), 421-434.

Tobin, J., & Hsueh, Y. (2007). The poetics and pleasures of video ethnography of education. In R. Goldman (Ed.), *Video research in the learning sciences* (pp. 77-92). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Trần, D. N. (n.d.). Ăn nghĩa là gì [What does eat/eating mean?]. Retrieved 22 July, 2013 http://ttntt.free.fr/archive/Trandinhngocu.html

Trần, H. V. (Writer) & Q. T. Trần & T. K. Vũ (Directors). (2012). Hai phía chân trời [Two horizontal ends] [Television series episode]. Vietnam: Trung tâm Sản xuất Phim truyền hình Việt Nam.

Trần, N. T. (19 April 2008). Văn hóa giao tiếp và nghệ thuật ngôn từ [Communicative culture and arts of talk]. Retrieved from http://www.vanhoahoc.vn/nghien-cuu/t-mainmenu-114/van-hoa-viet-nam/2683-tuan-vn-trao-doi-voi-gs-tran-ngoc-them-ve-nguoi-viet-va-con-duong-phat-trien-cua-vn.html website:

Trần, N. T. (2006). *Tìm về bản sắc văn hoá Việt Nam [Vietnamese cultural identities]*. Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam: NXB Tp. HCM.

Tran, V. M. Y. (2010). Vietnamese expressions of politeness. *Griffith working papers in Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication, 3*(2), 12-21.

Trương, T. L. H. (28 March 2008). Bữa cơm gia đình trong quá trình đô thị hóa ở Việt Nam [Family meals during urbanisation in Vietnam]. *Khoa học Xã hội & Nhân văn, 42*.

Tseng, M. F. (1999). *A pragmatic study on speech acts in Chinese invitational conversations.* (PhD thesis), University of Illinois, Illinois, United States. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/304504731?accountid=14574 ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I database.

Tuomainen, H. (26 November 2014). Eating alone or together? Commensality among Ghanaians in London *Anthropology of food*. http://aof.revues.org/7718

Van, N. T. T. (1993). Address terms in Australia and South Vietnam. In U. Nixon (Ed.), *Discourse analysis papers*. Canberra: Canberra University.

Varghese, M., & Billmyer, K. (1996). Investigating the structures of discourse completeion tests in working papers. *Educational Linguistics, 12*(1), 39-58.

Visser, M. (1987). *Since Eve ate apples: Much depends on dinner*. New York: Grove Press.

Visser, M. (1988). *The rituals of dinner: The origins, evolution, eccentricities, and meaning of table manners*. Toronto: Harper Perennial.

Vu, H. T. T. (1997). *Politeness in modern Vietnamese: A sociolinguistic study of Hanoi speech community.* (Doctoral thesis), University of Toronto, Canada.

Vu, T. A. T. (2006). Worshiping the mother goddess: Explorations. *Southest Asian Studies, 6*(1), 27-44.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.

Wall, B. G. (2015). *Self-regulation during a reading-to-write task: A sociocultural theory-based investigation.* (PhD Thesis), University of Otago, Dunedin, NZ.

Walther, J. B. (2008). Problems and interventions in computer-mediated virtual groups. In E. A. Konijin, S. Utz, M. Tanis, & S. B. Barnes (Eds.), *Mediated interpersonal communication*. New York: Routledge.

Walton, M. D. (1998). Ostensible lies and the negotiation of shared meanings. *Discourse Processes, 26*(1), 27-41.

Wardhaugh, R. (2006). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (5th ed.). New York: Basil Blackwell.

Watson-Gegeo, K. A. (1988). Ethnography in ESL: Defining the essentials. *TESOL Quarterly, 22*(4), 575-592.

Wertsch, J. V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1991). *Voices of the mind: a sociocultural approach to mediated action*. Cambrige, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (1998). *Mind as action*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wertsch, J. V. (2002). *Voices of collective remembering*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wertsch, J. V., Río, P., & Álvarez, A. (Eds.). (1995). *Sociocultural studies of mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Whitmore, J. K. (Summer-Fall 1986) An outline of Vietnamese history before French conquest. In S. T. Huỳnh (Series Ed.), *Vietnam Forum: Vol. 8* (pp. 1-9). New Haven: Yale Southeast Asia Studies.

Wierzbicka, A. (1987). *English speech act verbs: A semantic dictionary*. Sydney: Academic press.

Wierzbicka, A. (2003). Cross-cultural pragmatics: The semantics of human interaction. *Studies and monographs, 53*, 502.

Wierzbicka, A. (2006). *English: Meaning and culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wierzbicka, A. (2010). *Experience, evidence, and sense: The hidden cultural legacy of English*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wilkinson, D., & Birmingham, P. (2003). *Using research instruments: A guide for researchers*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Wilson, J. (1987). The sociolinguistic paradox: Data as a methodological product. *Language & Communication, 7*(2), 161-177. Doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0271-5309(87)90006-1

Wolfson, N. (1981). Invitations, compliments and the competence of the native speakers. *International Journal of Psycholinguistics, 8*(4), 7-22.

Wolfson, N. (Ed.). (1983). *An empirically based analysis of complimenting in American English*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Wolfson, N. (1986). Research methodology and the question of validity. *TESOL Quarterly, 20*(4), 689-699.

Wolfson, N. (1989). *Perspectives: Sociolinguistics and TESOL*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Wood, L. A., & Kroger, R. O. (2000). *Doing discourse analysis: Methods for studying action in talk and text*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Yaqubi, M., Saeed, K. M., & Khaksari, M. (Jan 2016). Conversational Maxim view of politeness: Focus on politeness implicatures raised in performing Persian offers and invitations. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 6*(1). doi: 10.17507/tpls.0601.07

Yule, G. (Ed.). (1996). *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zhao, Y. L., & Li, S. F. (2004). Ostensible invitations in English and Chinese. *Jounal in Chinese, 6*(4), 123-126.

Zhu, F. (2012). *Interlanguage pragmatics: Invitation responses by advanced Chinese learners of English.* (PhD Thesis), University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina.

GLOSSARY

(List of reasons for participants' extending their VMRIs)

nét đẹp, phong tục tốt đẹp, phép, phép tắc, tục lệ, phong tục, tập tục,	Exquisite tradition, social custom, social norm
bản sắc dân tộc	National identity
phép xã giao, phép lịch sự	Communicative convention, politeness
tôn trọng, lễ phép, để họ thấy mình không khinh họ	Respecting others; saving others' face
để thể hiện tình cảm	Showing concern, emotional sentiment
nền nếp gia đình; tôn ti, trật tự gia đình và xã hội	Family regulation, social order, and hierarchy
thói quen, quen làm như thế	Personal habit, routine
tự mình thấy cần phải làm, không ai bắt cả	Self-discipline
trách nhiệm, phải (làm)	Duty, responsibility
người ta mời mình thì mình cũng phải mời lại	Reciprocity
Mời thật lòng, phóng khoáng, cứ mời chứ người ta ăn hết nhiều đâu mà cũng chẳng mấy khi người ta ăn	Hospitality, and generosity
Tỏ lòng biết ơn thành kính tới tổ tiên, cha mẹ. Tri ân nguồn thực phẩm nuôi dưỡng ta,	Gratitude to ancestors, caregivers, food providers, and the food itself
Cho người khác/mình vui	Making self and/or others happy
Để ghi điểm, để được quý, ngoại giao	Being liked by others, diplomatic strategy
Để giống người khác; Để thấy là mình đã lớn	Being like others; behaving like mature adults
thoải mái hơn, ngon miệng hơn	Better meal atmosphere, better appetiser

sợ bị đánh giá, sợ người ta nói là hư, láo, hoặc hỗn	Fear of losing self-face
sợ người ta nói là con nhà hư, láo, hoặc mất dạy	Fear of losing group-face
nựng yêu con, cho trẻ hay ăn chóng lớn	Others (cuddling, wishing recipients (infants, small children) to grow fast)

mời, gọi, rủ khách hoặc người về sau vào ăn trước bữa ăn, hoặc trong bữa ăn	Inviting others to join meals together
mời, gọi, bảo người khác ăn	Inviting others to start their meals
Mời chào khách khi mới đến hoặc lúc ra về	Greeting, departing on-going diners
mời để cho người khác ăn	Giving permission to eat
mời cho người khác tiếp tục ăn	Inviting others to continue their meals
mời lại, đáp lại lời mời	Responding to others' invitations
mời vì muốn ăn	Requesting permission to eat
mời khi dừng bữa	Requesting permission to finish meals
Cho người xung quanh biết mình chuẩn bị ăn hoặc đã xong bữa	Informing or letting others know one's meal-starts and/or meal-ends
tuyên bố lý do bữa ăn	Declaring reasons of meals
Làm gương cho người khác, để cho người khác học/bắt chước/làm theo	Modelling for others

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Human ethics approval

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

15 August 2011

Duyen Dang
AT3.48
ALBANY CAMPUS

Dear Duyen

Re: A Socio-Pragmatic Study on Vietnamese "Ritual Invitations" as Mediated Discourse

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 5 August 2011.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

> "This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.
>
> If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

John G O'Neill (Professor)
**Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)**

cc   Dr David Ishii   Prof Cynthia White, HoS
           School of Linguistics and International   School of Linguistics and International
              Languages   Languages
           Albany   **PN231**

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council

Te Kunenga
ki Pūrehuroa

Research Ethics Office, Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand
T +64 6 350 5573 +64 6 350 5575 F +64 6 350 5622
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz animalethics@massey.ac.nz gtc@massey.ac.nz
www.massey.ac.nz

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet, Consent Form, Confidentiality Agreement

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project title: A study on interactions around meals in Vietnamese culture

Researcher's name: Dang Thi Mai Duyen

I am a lecturer at Faculty of English, Hanoi National University of Education. At present, I am doing my PhD degree in Applied Linguistics at Massey University, New Zealand.

My research aims at documenting the language and culture in Vietnamese meals.

I would like to invite you to participate in this project by providing data for my research. The data collection will be carried out at your places from November 10th, 2012 to August 25th, 2013. The project does not involve with politics or religion; thus, your participation will not affect your status and it is completely voluntary. In total, it is estimated that your participation will take about 10 hours of your time.

If you agree to participate, the following procedures will be employed:

- Some of your meals with your family members or friends/ colleagues will be recorded (by writing, drawing, photo-shooting, or audio/video-recording).

- One of the video-recordings will be selected for playback in the face-to-face interview between you and me (maybe with other diners in that meal) to clarify your experience in the video clip, a copy of which will be provided to you. Questions designed for the interview are also based on the information provided in diaries and/or informal talks if available. Our interview will be audio-taped and note-taken. If you wish, you can listen to the recording of our interview when the interview is completed. A copy of the audio-recording will not be provided to you, but the transcript of the video-recording may be sent to you for your verifying its accurate transcription. You may also add additional comments or edit it to- ensure it represents what you wanted to say.

- During the data collection period, I would also like to take notes some of our conversations related to the research.

- The questionnaires, video-recordings, audio-recordings, and field-notes will be kept securely in password-enabled computers to be coded for my data analysis, and the final findings will be reported in the dissertation submitted for assessment of the PhD degree in linguistics at Massey University. They will also be used for scholarly publications and conference presentations. A summary of the main findings will also be sent to you at the completion of the study.

At any time during the data collection, you may withdraw from participation or withdraw any information you have provided. You are assured that your provided information during this research will not be discussed with anyone outside of the supervisors, the research assistant team, and other participants without your permission.

If you have any queries please contact:

Researcher	Supervisors	Head of School
Dang Thi Mai Duyen School of Linguistics and International Languages Massey University , New Zealand Telephone: 64 (09) 4140800 extn. 9056 Email: t.m.d.dang@massey.ac.nz	1. Dr David Ishii School of Linguistics & International Languages Telephone: +64 (09) 441 8163 extn 9529 Email: D.Ishii@massey.ac.nz 2. Dr Mary Salisbury School of Linguistics & International Languages Phone: +64 (09) 441 8163 extn 9062 Email: M.C.Salisbury@massey.ac.nz 3. Dr Graeme MacRae School of People, Environment and Planning Phone: 64 (09) 414 0800 extn 9045 Email: G.S.Macrae@massey.ac.nz	Professor Cynthia White School of Linguistics & International Languages Phone: +64 (06) 356 9099 extn 7711 Email: C.J.White@massey.ac.nz

Thank you for taking your time to consider this invitation. If you would like further information about the proposed research project, please phone me on + 64212086067 (New Zealand) or +84 989100279 (Vietnam) or send me an email at t.m.d.dang@massey.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,

Dang Thi Mai Duyen

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM

(Two copies of this form, one for the participant and one for the researcher's records, will be held for a period of six years)

Project title: A study on interactions around meals in Vietnamese culture
Name of researcher: Dang Thi Mai Duyen

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and have understood the nature of the research. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. The ticked items below (the 1st one has been done as an example) show my final choices for participation.

0.	I agree to ……	√
1.	I agree to take part in this research	
2.	I understand that I am free to withdraw participation and to withdraw any provided data at any time between November 2012 and August 2013.	
3.	I agree to be video-recorded	
4.	I agree to be interviewed	
5.	I agree to be audio-recorded	
6.	I agree to do the questionnaires	
7.	I wish to keep the video-recordings	
8.	I wish to have the transcripts returned to me for verification and review	
9.	I wish to receive the summary of findings	
10.	I understand that a third party who has signed a confidentiality agreement will transcribe the tapes	
11.	I understand that the collected data will be used for PhD dissertation submission, scholarly publications and conference presentations	

Name: ……..
Signature: ………………………………………………………………………………………………..
Date: …………………….

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Project title: A study on interactions around meals in Vietnamese culture

Researcher: Dang Thi Mai Duyen

Supervisors: Dr David Ishii

Dr Graeme MacRae

Dr Mary Salisbury

Transcriber/translator/recorder: …………………………

I agree to record, film, and/or transcribe the videotapes and audiotapes; and/or translate the questionnaires for the above research project. I understand that the information contained within them is confidential and must not be disclosed to, or discussed with anyone other than the researcher and her supervisors.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Questionnaires

QUESTIONNAIRES

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out what you would naturally say in the situations listed below and what you would think about them. Your answers will contribute to a further understanding of the research on mealtime human interactions. Please tick (√) the most applicable items or write down answers freely as you will remain anonymous.

Where have you lived and how much time did you spend there (*and tick (√) the present one only*):

+ In Vietnam: The North: ……□   The Middle: ……□   The South: ……..□

Urban: ………………□   Suburban: ………………□

Rural: ……………… □   Mountainous/ remote areas: ………………□

+ Outside Vietnam (*where you lived for at least 3 months only*): ……………..□

Your gender: ..…………… ……   Your age: ……………………
How many main meals on average do you have each week:

Alone: ……………..   With others: …………………

What time do you often have breakfast: …….; lunch: ………; dinner: ……….?

Who do you typically have meal with (e.g., your grandparents, parents, siblings)? And what are their ages?

..

Situation 1- It's time for your communal meal with others. Which of the following can be your habits? Which habits of others do you like and dislike most?

Habits	Your habits	Like most (others')	Dislike most (others')
a) quickly attend the dining place and have your meal right away	□	□	□
b) attend the dining place but do not have your meal until all other members have arrived	□	□	□
c) wait for other member(s) to request your attendance	□	□	□
d) request other members' attendance to the dining table	□	□	□
e) others: …………………………	□	□	□

Situation 2- At the beginning of the meal (and at the end in some areas in Vietnam), some Vietnamese people often extend invitational utterances and/or gestures such as *"Con mời bố mẹ xơi cơm"* **toward other dining partners.**

1. What do you think of this practice?

    ……………………………………………………………………………………

2. Do you think that it needs preserving or should be removed? Why so?

    ……………………………………………………………………………………

3. Do you practise it?   A, Yes ☐   B, No ☐

If you have answered Yes to question 3, please answer questions A1-A15; If No, please answer questions B1-B5
Questions A1-A15

A1.   When   and   where   did   you   learn   your   practice   of   that   tradition?
       ………………………………………………………………………………….

A2.   Could you please write down your typical invitational utterances and/or gestures in the past and at present in the following applicable cases?

If your dining partner(s) is:	Your past invitational utterances and/or gestures e.g: Look at father and say to him: *"Con mời bố xơi cơm"*	Your present invitational utterances and/or gestures e.g: *"Bố cơm, mẹ cơm"*
a) your seniors (grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, or elder siblings)	……………………………………	……………………………………
b) your juniors (your children, nieces, nephews, or younger siblings)	……………………………………	……………………………………
c) younger but in a higher lineage rank (e.g. your younger aunt, or uncle)	……………………………………	……………………………………
d) younger but in a higher social rank (your boss or teacher)	……………………………………	……………………………………
e) your same aged or equally-ranked (friends or colleagues)	……………………………………	……………………………………
f) your spouse or intimate mate	…………………………………	…………………………………
g) your regular dining partner(s)	……………………………………	……………………………………
h) your non-regular dining partner(s),	……………………………………	……………………………………
i) a mixed group of diners	……………………………………	……………………………………

A3.   Could you please copy your parents/ grandparents and your teenage children/ nieces/ nephews' typical invitational utterances and/or gestures in the following applicable cases?

If their dining partner(s) is:	Your parents/ grandparents' invitational utterances	Your teenage children/ nieces/ nephews' invitational utterances

	and/or gestures e.g: my father looks at his parents and say: "Ông bà *xơi cơm*"	**and/or gestures** e.g: "M*ời bố mẹ xơi cơm*"
a) their seniors (grandparents, parents, uncles, or elder siblings)	…………………………… …………… ………………………	……………………………… ……… ………………………………
b) their juniors (children, nieces, nephews, or younger siblings)	…………………………… ……………………………	……………………………… ………
c) younger but in a higher lineage rank (e.g. younger aunt, or uncle)	…………………………… ……………	……………………………… ………
d) younger but in a higher social rank (boss or teacher)	…………………………… ……………………………	……………………………… ………………………………
e) same aged or equally-ranked (friends or colleagues)	…………………………… ……………	……………………………… ………
f) their spouse or intimate mate	…………………………… ……………	……………………………… ………
g) their regular dining partner(s)	…………………………… ……………………………	……………………………… ………
h) their non-regular dining partner(s),	…………………………… ……………………………	……………………………… ………………………………
i) a mixed group of diners	……………………………	………………………………

A4. In what cases do you often extend your invitational utterances and/or gestures to each dining partner? What differences can there be in your utterances and/or gestures to each one?

…… …………………………………………………………………………………

A5. Is there any special order of receivers of your invitational utterances and/or gestures? If yes, who should you extend them to first? And why so?

………………………………………………… …………………………………

A6. In what cases do you often extend your inclusive invitational utterances and/or gestures to all other dining attendants in just one time? Please give an example of your utterances and/or gestures.

…………………………………………………………………………………

A7. What meanings and/or functions can your invitational utterances and/or gestures have? Please indicate the applicable cases and give examples.

Meanings and/or functions	☑ **if applied**	**Cases and examples of your invitational utterances and/or gestures**
For example: d)	☑	*"Thôi , các con ăn đi!"* when extended by father to children in regular family meals
a) To invite others to start the meals altogether	☐	………………………………………………… ………………
b) To request/ urge others to start the meals altogether	☐	………………………………………………… ………………
c) To declare that the meal starts	☐	………………………………………………… ………………
d) To give permissions to others to start the meal	☐	………………………………………………… ………………
e) To ask for permissions to	☐	…………………………………………………

start or finish the meal	☐	………………
f) To inform politely that you start or finish your meal	☐	……………………………………………… ………………
g) others: ………………		………………………………………………

A8.   What makes you extend invitational utterances and/or gestures to your dining partners?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

A9.   How would you extend your invitational utterances and/or gestures to present diners in the following applicable cases?

Applicable cases	Not extend ☑	Extend as usual ☑	Extend differently (☑ and examples please)
a) one important member's absence (e.g., father or mother)	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
b) your unusual state of mood (very excited)	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
c) your being very angry/upset with the same diner	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
d) your being very angry/upset with a different diner or not with diners	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
e) in unusual dining places (guest's place, restaurant)	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
f) breakfast	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
g) lunch	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
h) dinner	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
i) at the start of the meal	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
j) during the meal	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
k) at the end of the meal	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
l) special food	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
m) special occasions	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
n) when you are in a hurry	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………
o) others: ……….	☐	☐	☐ ………………………………………

A10.   How would you feel in the following cases (if applied)?

a)   after extending invitational utterances and/or gestures:

………………………………………………….

b)   after receiving invitational utterances and/or gestures:

………………………………………………….

c)   after not extending invitational utterances and/or gestures:

…………………………………………………..

d)   after not being extended invitational utterances and/or gestures to:

……………………………………….

A11.   In what cases would you not extend your invitational utterances and/or gestures to one or some particular dining partners?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

A12.　What would you think or do if someone missed extending invitational utterances and/or gestures to others?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

A13.　How do you often respond to other people's invitational utterances and/or gestures? For example: keep silent, or (father) nods head and replies to children: *"Ờ, con ăn đi!"*

…………………………………………………………………………………………

A14.　What changes have you had in your habits of extending invitational utterances and/or gestures so far, e.g. frequency of your practice, attitude toward the practice and non-practice, word choice? (If there are not any changes, please go to situation 3)

………………………………………………………………………………………….

A15.　What has prompted you to have those possible changes, e.g., changes in your psychology, life style, living environment, or other people's attitude toward your practice, information on the practice/non-practice from other cultures through media, communication?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Questions B1-B5:

B1.　When and where did you learn your non-practice of invitational utterances and/or gestures amongst your dining partners?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

B2.　What do you often do or say to your dining partners at the start of your meals?

…………………………………………………………………………………………….

B3.　How would you feel in the following cases (if it applies to you)?

　　a) after doing or saying usual things as answered above (B2): ……………………………………………

　　b) after not being extended invitational utterances and/or gestures to: ……………………………..

　　c) after receiving invitational utterances and/or gestures: ……………………………………………….

　　d) after extending invitational utterances and/or gestures: ……………………………………………….

B4.　In what cases have you ever seen or heard others extending invitational utterances and/or gestures to each other? How did you feel then if ever?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

B5.　In what cases have you ever extended invitational utterances and/or gestures to other dining attendants? Why did you do so if ever?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

Situation 3- Some Vietnamese people have the habit of extending invitational utterances and/or gestures to join the meal that they are having toward the late arrivals, the unexpected guests popping in or passing by, such as by saying *"Cháu mời cô chú vào xơi cơm"* **or by arranging places with bowls and chopsticks at the dining table for them.**

1.　What do you think of this practice?

..……………………………………………… ………………………………………………

2.　Do you think that it needs preserving or should be removed? Why so?

……………………………………………… ………………………………………………

3.　Do you practise it?　　　　A, Yes ☐　　　　　　B, No ☐

If you have answered Yes to question 3, please answer questions A16-A22; If No, please answer questions B6-B10

Questions A16-A22

A16.   When and where did you learn your practice of that tradition?

    …………………………………………………… …………………………………………

A17.   What changes have you had in your practice of that tradition so far? What makes you have those possible changes?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

A18.   How would you and your grandparents/ parents or your teenage grandchildren/ children extend invitational utterances and/or gestures in the following applicable cases?

If your dining partner(s) is:	Your invitational utterances and/or gestures	Your grandparents/ parents or teenage grandchildren/ children's invitational utterances and/or gestures
a) Your regular dining partner but arrives late	…………………………… ……………………………	…………………………………… ……………………………………
b) Pop-in guest or passer-by, who is your intimate mate (e.g., lover, close friend)	…………………………… ……………………………	…………………………………… ……………………………………
c) Pop- in guest or passer-by, who is unfamiliar to you (e.g., tradesman, postman)	…………………………… ……………………………	…………………………………… ……………………………………
d) Pop- in guest or passer-by, who is younger but higher-ranked (e.g. your boss)	…………………………… ……………………………	…………………………………… ……………………………………
e) Pop- in guest or passer-by, who is your junior (e.g., your young cousin)	…………………………… ……………………………	…………………………………… ……………………………………
f) Pop-in guest or passer-by, who has the same age or social status as yours (e.g., your friend)	…………………………… ……………………………	…………………………………… ……………………………………
g) Pop- in guest or passer-by, who is your seniors (e.g., your boss, uncle)	…………………………… ……………………………	…………………………………… ……………………………………
h) Pop- in guest or passer-by, who is older but lower-ranked (e.g., your staff)	…………………………… ……………………………	…………………………………… ……………………………………

A19.   What meanings and/or functions can your invitational utterances and/or gestures have? Please give applicable examples.

Meanings and/or functions	☑ if applied	Examples of your invitational utterances and/or gestures
E.g., An indirect way of greeting	☑	A host' child remains sitting and eating, but looks at a parent-aged neighbour and says: *"cháu mời bác xơi cơm!"*
a) An indirect way of greeting	☐	…………………………………………………………………

b) Sincerely invite him/her to join the meal	☐	……………………………………………………
c) To request or urge him/her to join the meal	☐	……………………………………………………
d) others: …………………….	☐	……………………………………………………

A20.   How would you feel in the following cases (if it applies to you)?
     a)   after   extending   invitational   utterances   and/or   gestures: ……………………………………………….

     b)   after   not   extending   invitational   utterances   and/or   gestures: …………………………………………….

     c)   after   receiving   invitational   utterances   and/or   gestures: ……………………………………………….

     d)   after   not   being   extended   invitational   utterances   and/or   gestures   to: …………………………………..

A21.   In what cases would you not extend your invitational utterances and/or gestures to the newly-appearing person in your mealtime? Why not?
     ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

A22.   How would you often respond to other people's invitational utterances and/or gestures in the situation? Why would you do so?
a, you as the meal late arrival: …………..………..………………………………………...
b, you as the unexpected guest: …………………………………..…………………….........

Questions B6-B10:
B6.   What do you often do in the situation? Why so?
     ……………………………………………………………………………………………….

B7.   What do you think your dining partners (e.g. your parents, siblings) often do in the situation?
     ……………………………………………………………………………………………….

B8.   If you were the newly-appearing person in other people's mealtimes and received their invitational utterances and/or gestures, how would you respond or what would you do?
a, you as the meal late arrival: ……………………………..………..……………………
b, you as the unexpected guest: …………………………………………………….........

B9.   In whatever cases would you ever extend your invitational utterances and/or gestures to the newly-appearing person in your mealtime? Why so?
     ……………………………………………………………………………………………….

B10.   How would you feel in the following cases (if it applies to you)?
     a)   after doing what you often do as answered in B1:
………………………………………………….
     b)   after not extending invitational utterances and/or gestures:
……………………………………………
     c)   after not being extended invitational utterances and/or gestures to:
……………………………..
     d)   after receiving invitational utterances and/or gestures:
…………………………………………………
     e)   after extending invitational utterances and/or gestures:
……………………………………………

Thank you for your support!

Questionnaires (in Vietnamese)

CÂU HỎI KHẢO SÁT

Mục đích của các câu hỏi là muốn tham khảo lời nói và cử chỉ thường ngày cùng suy nghĩ của bạn trong các tình huống giả định sau. Trả lời của bạn sẽ góp phần làm nên thành công của nghiên cứu về ngôn ngữ giao tiếp trong bữa ăn. Mong bạn hãy yên tâm khi đánh dấu (√) hay trả lời các câu hỏi và tình huống vì danh tính của bạn sẽ hoàn toàn không bị tiết lộ.

Nơi từng sinh sống và khoảng thời gian sống ở đó (và đánh dấu ☑ vào nơi ở hiện nay):

+Việt Nam: Miền Bắc: ....□   Miền Trung: ....□   Miền Nam: ......□

**   Thành thị: ....□   Ngoại ô: ....□**

Nông thôn: ....□   Vùng sâu - xa- miền núi: ....□

+ Ngoài Việt Nam (*nơi ở từ 3 tháng trở lên*): ....□

Giới tính: ....   Tuổi: ....

Trung bình 1 tuần bạn ăn bao nhiêu bữa chính một mình: ....; cùng người khác: ....

Bạn thường ăn các bữa chính vào giờ nào: bữa sáng: ....; bữa trưa: ....; bữa tối: ....

Bạn thường ăn cùng ai (ví dụ: bố, mẹ, ông, bà, anh chị, bạn học, đồng nghiệp) và họ bao nhiêu tuổi?
..

Tình huống 1- Đã tới giờ ăn cùng với các thành viên khác, bạn thường có những thói quen nào sau? Đánh dấu các thói quen của bạn và các thói quen của người khác làm bạn thích và không thích nhất.

Thói quen	Của bạn	Thích nhất (của người khác)	Không thích (của người khác)
a, Nhanh chóng tới nơi ăn và ăn luôn	□	□	□
b, Tới nơi ăn nhưng chưa ăn luôn mà chờ người khác nếu thấy họ chưa tới	□	□	□
c, Chờ người khác tới gọi/ rủ/ mời	□	□	□
d, Gọi/ rủ/ mời người khác tới nơi ăn nếu thấy họ chưa tới	□	□	□
e, Hoặc:	□	□	□

Tình huống 2- Một số người/ gia đình ở Việt Nam thường mời cơm các thành viên khác khi họ bắt đầu ăn cơm (và sau khi vừa ăn xong ở một số địa phương), ví dụ *"Con mời bố mẹ xơi cơm"*

4.   Bạn thấy việc đó như thế nào?
....

• • •
305

5. Theo bạn, việc đó nên được duy trì hay nên bỏ? Vì sao?

……………………………………………………………………………….

6. Bạn có làm như thế không?   A, có ☐   B, không ☐

Nếu trả lời "có" cho câu hỏi 3, mời bạn trả lời tiếp các câu hỏi A1-A15; Nếu trả lời "Không", mời bạn trả lời tiếp các câu hỏi B1-B5

Câu hỏi A1-A15

A1.   Do đâu và từ khi nào bạn có thói quen mời/ không mời?

……………………………………………………………………………………

A2.   Trước kia và hiện nay bạn mời cơm các thành viên khác như thế nào trong các trường hợp (nếu có) sau:

Nếu (những) người cùng ăn với bạn là:	Ví dụ lời mời trước kia của bạn: Nhìn bố, nói: "*Con mời bố xơi cơm*"	Ví dụ lời mời hiện nay của bạn: Nhìn bố mẹ, nói: "*bố cơm, mẹ cơm*"
a) lớn tuổi hơn bạn (ông, bà, bố, mẹ, anh, chị)	……………………………… ………………………..	……………………………… ………………………………
b) ít tuổi hơn bạn (con, cháu, em)	……………………………… …………………………………..	……………………………… ………………………………
c) ít tuổi hơn nhưng có quan hệ họ hàng cao hơn bạn (anh, chị họ)	……………………………… ……………………………	……………………………… ………………………………
d) ít tuổi hơn nhưng có địa vị xã hội cao hơn (lãnh đạo, giáo viên của bạn)	……………………………… ……………………………	……………………………… ………………………………
e) cùng tầm tuổi và ngang hàng quan hệ với bạn (bạn, đồng nghiệp)	……………………………… ……………………………	……………………………… ………………………………
f) là chồng/ vợ của bạn (nếu có)	……………………………… …………………………………..	……………………………… ………………………………
g) thường xuyên dùng bữa với bạn	……………………………… ………………………………….	……………………………… ………………………………
h) không thường xuyên dùng bữa với bạn	……………………………… ……………………………	……………………………… ………………………………
i) gồm nhiều người từ các nhóm nhỏ khác nhau	……………………………… ……………………………	……………………………… ………………………………

A3.   Bố mẹ hoặc ông bà và con hoặc cháu (dưới 18 tuổi) của bạn thường mời như thế nào trong các trường hợp (nếu có) sau:

Nếu (những) người cùng ăn với họ là:	Ví dụ lời mời trước kia của ông bà/bố mẹ: Nhìn bố, nói: "*Con mời bố xơi cơm*"	Ví dụ lời mời hiện nay của con/cháu (dưới 18 tuổi): Nhìn bố mẹ, nói: "*bố cơm, mẹ cơm*"
a) lớn tuổi hơn họ (ông, bà, bố, mẹ, anh, chị)	……………………… ………………………	……………………… ………………………
b) ít tuổi hơn họ (con, cháu, em)	……………………………… ……………………………	……………………………… ………………………
c) ít tuổi hơn nhưng có quan hệ họ hàng cao hơn họ (anh, chị họ)	……………………………… ……………………………..	……………………………… ………………………

d)	ít tuổi hơn nhưng có địa vị xã hội cao hơn (lãnh đạo, giáo viên của họ)	………………………… ………………………… ……..	………………………… . …………………………
e)	cùng tầm tuổi và ngang hàng quan hệ với họ (bạn, đồng nghiệp)	………………………… …………………………	………………………… …………………
f)	là chồng/ vợ của họ (nếu có)	………………………… …………………………...	………………………… …………………………
g)	thường xuyên dùng bữa với họ	………………………… …………………………	………………………… …………………………
h)	không thường xuyên dùng bữa với họ	………………………… …………………………	………………………… …………………………
i)	gồm nhiều người từ các nhóm nhỏ khác nhau	………………………… …………………………	…………… …………………………

A4.   Khi nào bạn thường có các lời mời và cử chỉ khác nhau dành cho từng thành viên trong nhóm? Các lời mời và cử chỉ có gì khác nhau?

…………………………………………………………………………….………

………………………………………………………………

A5.   Bạn có chú ý đến thứ tự người được mời không? Nếu có, bạn mời ai trước ai sau và tại sao?

…………………………………………………………………………

A6.   Khi nào bạn thường gộp một lần mời nhưng cho tất cả mọi thành viên trong nhóm? Cho ví dụ về lời mời và cử chỉ kèm theo của bạn nếu có?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

……

A7.   Lời mời và cử chỉ của bạn có những nghĩa hoặc chức năng gì và trong trường hợp nào?

Nghĩa hoặc chức năng	☑ nếu đúng	Trường hợp và ví dụ về lời mời
Ví dụ: d)	☑	Bố nói với các con trong bữa ăn gia đình: *"Thôi , các con ăn đi!"*
a) mời người khác cùng ăn	☐	…………………………………………
b) yêu cầu/ thúc giục người khác ăn	☐	…………………………………………
c) tuyên bố rằng bữa ăn bắt đầu	☐	…………………………………………
d) cho phép người khác bắt đầu ăn	☐	…………………………………………
e) xin phép để bắt đầu ăn hoặc kết thúc bữa ăn	☐	…………………………………………
f) lịch sự thông báo là bạn bắt đầu ăn hoặc đã dùng xong bữa	☐	…………………………………………
g) hoặc: ……		…………………………………………

A8.   Điều gì khiến bạn mời cơm các thành viên khác?

………………………………………………………………… …………………………

A9.   Bạn mời những người đang có mặt trong bữa cơm như thế nào trong các trường hợp (nếu có) sau:

các trường hợp	Không mời ☑	Mời bình thường ☑	Mời khác đi (cho ví dụ)

a)	vắng mặt một thành viên quan trọng (ví dụ bố, mẹ bạn)	☐	☐	…………………………
b)	bạn đang rất phấn khích	☐	☐	…………………………
c)	bạn đang tức giận/ buồn với chính người đó	☐	☐	…………………………….
d)	bạn đang tức giận/ buồn nhưng không phải với người đó	☐	☐	…………………………
e)	ở nơi không thường xuyên như nhà khách, nhà hàng	☐	☐	…………………………
f)	bữa sáng	☐	☐	…………………………
g)	bữa trưa	☐	☐	…………………………
h)	bữa tối	☐	☐	…………………………
i)	bắt đầu ăn	☐	☐	…………………………
j)	trong bữa ăn	☐	☐	…………………………
k)	vừa ăn xong	☐	☐	…………………………
l)	có thức ăn đặc biệt	☐	☐	…………………………
m)	vào dịp đặc biệt	☐	☐	…………………………
n)	khi bạn đang vội	☐	☐	…………………………
o)	hoặc: ……….	☐	☐	…………………………

A10.   Hãy cho biết cảm giác của bạn trong các trường hợp (nếu có) sau:
   a) Sau khi bạn mời cơm các thành viên khác:
   …………………………………………………………
   b) Sau khi bạn nhận được lời nói và cử chỉ mời cơm:
   …………………………………………………...
   c) Sau khi bạn không mời cơm thành viên khác:
   …………..………………………………………
   d) Sau khi bạn không nhận được lời mời cơm:
   ……………………………………………………..

A11.   Trường hợp nào bạn **không mời cơm một hoặc vài** thành viên khác?
   …………………………………………………………………………………..

A12.   Bạn nghĩ gì hoặc sẽ làm gì khi một ai đó không mời cơm người khác?
   …………………………………………………………………………………

A13.   Bạn thường đáp lại lời mời cơm như thế nào và cho ví dụ? (Ví dụ: Im lặng hoặc gật đầu, nói với con: *"Ờ, con ăn đi!"*)
   …………………………………………………………………………………

A14.   Có gì thay đổi trong thói quen mời hoặc lời mời của bạn từ trước đến nay, ví dụ trong cách dùng từ ngữ trong câu mời, tần suất mời, thái độ của bạn đối với việc mời/ không mời? (Nếu không có gì thay đổi, mời bạn trả lời tiếp tình huống 3).
   …………………………………………………………………………………

A15.   Điều gì khiến bạn có những thay đổi đó, ví dụ do thay đổi về tâm lý, môi trường sống, phong cách sống, thái độ của người khác đối với thói quen mời của bạn, thông tin từ các nền văn hóa khác về việc mời/ không mời qua phim ảnh, báo chí, truyền thông, giao lưu ?
   …………………………………………………………………………………

• • •

Câu hỏi B1-B5 (Nếu trả lời "không" cho câu hỏi 3)

1. Do đâu và từ khi nào bạn có thói quen không mời cơm giữa các thành viên trong bữa ăn?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Bạn thường nói gì hoặc làm gì khi bắt đầu bữa ăn với người khác?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Hãy cho biết cảm giác của bạn trong các trường hợp (nếu có) sau:

a) Sau khi bạn làm như trên (B2):

………………… …………………………………………………

b) Sau khi các thành viên khác cũng không mời cơm bạn:

………………………………………………

c) Sau khi bạn mời cơm thành viên khác:

………………………………………………………..

d) Sau khi bạn nhận được lời mời cơm:

…………………………………………………………..

4. Trường hợp nào bạn từng **nghe hoặc chứng kiến** việc mời cơm trong bữa ăn giữa các thành viên với nhau (nếu có)?

……………………………………………………………………………………

5. Đã bao giờ bạn từng **mời cơm những người** cùng ăn cơm với bạn chưa? Nếu có, trong trường hợp nào và vì sao?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

Tình huống 3- Khi đang ăn cơm, một số người Việt Nam thường đưa ra lời mời cơm, ví dụ nói "*Cháu mời cô chú vào xơi cơm*" **hoặc xếp chỗ ngồi và bát đũa cho mới xuất hiện (ví dụ: người quen bất chợt ghé chơi hoặc đi ngang qua, hoặc** thành viên về muộn)

1. Bạn thấy việc đó như thế nào?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Theo bạn, việc đó nên được duy trì hay nên bỏ? Vì sao?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Bạn có làm như thế không?   A, có ☐   B, không ☐

Nếu trả lời "có" cho câu hỏi 3, mời bạn trả lời tiếp các câu hỏi A16-A22; Nếu trả lời "Không", mời bạn trả lời tiếp các câu hỏi B6-B10

Câu hỏi A16-A22

A16. Do   đâu   và   từ   khi   nào   bạn   có   thói   quen   mời?

………………………………………………………………………………………

A17. Có gì thay đổi trong thói quen đó của bạn từ trước đến nay? Điều gì khiến bạn thay đổi (nếu có)? ………………………………………………………………………………

A18. Bạn và ông bà, bố mẹ hoặc con, cháu (dưới 18 tuổi) mời cơm người mới xuất hiện như thế nào trong các trường hợp sau

Nếu (những) người đó là	Ví dụ về lời mời và cử chỉ của bạn	Ví dụ về lời mời và cử chỉ của ông bà, bố mẹ hoặc con, cháu (dưới 18 tuổi)
a) thành viên cùng ăn với bạn nhưng đến/về muộn	…………………………… ……………	………………………………… .....
b) khách ghé chơi hoặc đi ngang	……………………………	…………………………………

qua, rất thân với bạn (người yêu, bạn thân)	……….……	
c) khách, xa lạ hoặc không có quan hệ gần với bạn (người thu tiền điện, nước, đưa thư)	…………………… ……………………	………………………… …………………....
d) khách ghé chơi hoặc đi ngang qua, ít tuổi hơn nhưng vai vế cao hơn bạn (lãnh đạo, anh họ)	…………………… ……………………	………………………… …..…………………....
e) khách ghé chơi hoặc đi ngang qua, ít tuổi hơn, vai vế thấp hơn bạn (nhân viên, em họ)	…………………… ……………………	……………………….. ……………………....
f) khách ghé chơi hoặc đi ngang qua, cùng tầm tuổi với bạn	…………………… ……………………	………………………… …………………......
g) khách ghé chơi hoặc đi ngang qua, lớn tuổi hơn, vai vế cao hơn bạn (lãnh đạo, anh họ)	…………………… ……………………	………………………… …………………………
h) khách ghé chơi hoặc đi ngang qua, lớn tuổi hơn, vai vế thấp hơn bạn (nhân viên, em họ)	…………………… ……………………	…………………….. …………………………

A19.   Lời nói và cử chỉ mời cơm của bạn có thể có những nghĩa hoặc chức năng gì sau và trong trường hợp nào:

Nghĩa hoặc chức năng	☑nếu đúng	Trường hợp và ví dụ về lời mời và cử chỉ
Ví dụ: mời lịch sự xã giao thay lời chào người đó	☑	Vẫn ngồi ăn bình thường, nhìn bác hàng xóm và nói: *"cháu mời bác xơi cơm!"*
a) mời lịch sự xã giao thay lời chào người đó	☐	………………………………………………………
b) thật lòng muốn mời người đó cùng ăn với bạn;	☐	………………………………………………………
c) yêu cầu người đó cùng ăn	☐	………………………………………………………
d) hoặc: …………………	☐	………………………………………………………

A20.   Hãy cho biết cảm giác của bạn trong các trường hợp (nếu có) sau:
   a) Sau khi bạn đưa ra lời mời cơm:
   ………………………………………………………………………
   b) Sau khi bạn không đưa ra lời mời cơm:
   ………………………………………………………………
   c) Bạn là người mới xuất hiện và nhận được lời mời cơm:
   …………………………………………………..
   d) Bạn là người mới xuất hiện và không nhận được lời mời cơm:
   …………………………………………....

A21.   Trường hợp nào bạn không đưa ra lời mời cơm trong tình huống này và vì sao?
   ………………………………………………………………………

A22.   Bạn thường nói và làm gì để đáp lại những lời mời cơm và cử chỉ đó? Vì sao như thế?
   a, khi bạn là thành viên cùng ăn nhưng về muộn:

…………………………….…………………………

b, khi bạn là khách xuất hiện khi người khác đang ăn:

…………………………………………

Câu hỏi B6-B10 (Nếu trả lời "không" cho câu hỏi 3):

B11. Bạn thường làm gì trong tình huống đó? Tại sao?

…………………………………………………………………

B12. Bạn thấy người khác mà cùng đang ăn với bạn (ví dụ bố mẹ, anh, chị, em) thường làm gì trong tình huống đó?

…………………………………………………………………

B13. Nếu bạn là người khách trong tình huống đó và nhận được lời nói cùng cử chỉ mời cơm, bạn sẽ đáp lại như thế nào? Vì sao như thế?

a, khi bạn là thành viên cùng ăn nhưng về muộn:

……………………………….……………………

b, khi bạn là khách xuất hiện khi người khác đang ăn:

……………………………………………

B14. Đã bao giờ bạn từng mời cơm người mới xuất hiện trong bữa cơm của bạn chưa? Nếu có, trong trường hợp nào và vì sao?

……………………………………………………………………….

B15. Hãy cho biết cảm giác của bạn trong các trường hợp (nếu có) sau:

a) Sau khi làm việc thường làm như trả lời câu B1:

…………………… ……………………………………

b) Sau khi bạn không mời cơm người đó:

…………………………………………………………

c) Sau khi bạn không mời cơm người đó:

…………………………………………………………

d) Bạn là người mới xuất hiện và không nhận được lời mời cơm:

…………………………………

e) Bạn là người mới xuất hiện và nhận được lời mời cơm:

………………………………………….

Trân trọng cảm ơn!

Appendix D: Mealtime diaries

<div align="center">

MEALTIME DIARY

</div>

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research into mealtime human interactions. You are given this diary to write and/or describe your mealtime experiences. Before completing the diary, please answer some questions about you below freely as you will remain anonymous. If you may have any suggestions or questions related to the mealtime diary or the research, please contact me (the researcher) via my email: t.m.d.dang@massey.ac.nz **or mobile number: 0989100279.**

Where you are living now (*for at least 3 months continually***): ……………………………**
Your gender: ..……………………   Your age: ………………………………
Who do you typically have meal with (e.g., your grandparents, parents, siblings)? And what are their ages?
..

What can be a mealtime diary?

A mealtime diary is a record of your experiences of any meals in your life. You can describe them entirely by your writings and/or illustrate them with your drawings, photos and/ or video/audio clips. It will be ideal if done in various ways. Daily entries with different experiences (e.g., having meals alone, having meals with regular dining partners, non-regular dining partners, having meals with unexpected guests, having meals at home, at workplace, at guests' place, and so on) are highly encouraged. The diary can also include your narratives reflecting your thoughts, your feelings on other people's interactions during their mealtimes.

How can a diary completed?

 On each entry, you can record as many details as possible about one mealtime experience, which can include:

+ dining times, dates, places, dining situations, diners and their relationship with you (older/ younger, familiarity, social distance),

+ what and how you and other diners interact with each other, with late-arriving diners, with unexpected guests during mealtime

+ what you think and/or feel about other diners' behaviours in the meals

(Your meals can be video-recorded with the researcher's help if needed; otherwise, some guidance for video-recording a meal is provided at the back of this diary for your reference).

You will be invited to follow up with a discussion or an interview with questions based on your diaries if you would like to.

Format of the diary can be like:

Date: .... Time:	Dining participants and the relationship: Dining situation:
(A sample of my mealtime diary)	

#1 Date: .... Time:	Dining participants and the relationship: Dining situation:
....	

#2 Date: .... Time:	Dining participants and the relationship: ……………… Dining situation: ………………………………………….
....	

#3 Date: .... Time:	Dining participants and the relationship: ……………… Dining situation: ………………………………………….
....	

Mealtime diaries (in Vietnamese)

NHẬT KÝ BỮA ĂN

Cảm ơn bạn đã tham gia vào nghiên cứu về ngôn ngữ giao tiếp trong bữa ăn. Bạn có thể hoàn toàn yên tâm khi hợp tác trong nghiên cứu này vì các thông tin do bạn cung cấp chỉ phục vụ cho mục đích nghiên cứu và danh tính của bạn sẽ không bị tiết lộ. Nếu có bất kỳ băn khoăn gì với nhật ký cũng như với nghiên cứu này, mong bạn hãy liên lạc với tôi (người làm nghiên cứu) theo địa chỉ email: t.m.d.dang@massey.ac.nz **hoặc số di động: 0989100279 để được giải đáp.**

Nơi ở hiện tại của bạn *(từ 3 tháng trở lên):* …………………………………………
Giới tính của bạn: ………………   **Tuổi của bạn:** …………………………………
Bạn thường ăn cùng ai (ví dụ: bố, mẹ, ông, bà, anh chị, bạn học, đồng nghiệp). Họ bao nhiêu tuổi? …………………………………………………………………………
Nhật ký bữa ăn là gì?

Nhật ký bữa ăn là những ghi chép (bài viết, hình vẽ, hình ảnh, băng hình – videoclips hay băng tiếng – audioclips) được lưu lại về các bữa ăn.

Thông tin về các bữa ăn được lưu lại càng chi tiết càng tốt. Chúng có thể bao gồm:

+ Thời gian, địa điểm, tình huống cho bữa ăn, những người tham gia bữa ăn, và mối quan hệ của họ với bạn (bao gồm tuổi, độ thân mật, vị thế xã hội, quan hệ họ hàng)

+ Lời nói, cử chỉ giao tiếp giữa bạn và những người cùng ăn, những người đến/về muộn, những người khách bất chợt trong bữa ăn

+ Suy nghĩ, cảm nhận của bạn về hành vi, cử chỉ, lời nói của bạn và của những người xuất hiện trong bữa ăn của bạn

Khuyến khích bạn viết hàng ngày và viết về các bữa ăn đa dạng (một mình, cùng người khác; đang ăn khi có người khác xuất hiện; ăn ở nhà, nhà hàng, nhà người khác, ở Việt Nam hoặc ở nước khác, vân vân). Tuy nhiên, bạn cũng có thể chọn viết về ít nhất ba bữa ăn. Tiếng Việt và tiếng Anh đều có thể sử dụng để viết nhật ký.

Bạn có thể minh họa các ghi chép bằng hình vẽ, hình chụp, băng hình hoặc băng tiếng. Rất khuyến khích các nhật ký **sử dụng băng hình** (videoclips). Tôi có thể trợ giúp việc quay camera; nếu không, bạn có thể tham khảo hướng dẫn quay bữa ăn ở trang cuối nhật kí).

Sau đó, bạn có thể sẽ được mời vào một thảo luận hoặc phỏng vấn nhỏ cùng nhật ký bữa ăn của bạn nếu bạn đồng ý.

Ngày: 21/01/2012 **Giờ**: 6:30 p.m. **Tình huống bữa ăn**: bữa tối đầu tiên khi gia đình tôi đến ở nhà mới thuê cùng với chủ nhà ở Auckland, New Zealand	**Ai cùng ăn với bạn, tuổi và mối quan hệ của họ với bạn là gì?** Chồng (43 tuổi) và con gái (8 tuổi)
(Ví dụ)	
Hôm nay thứ 7, chúng tôi …… (Trích trong "Nhật ký New Zealand")	

#1 **Ngày**: **Giờ**: **Tình huống bữa ăn**:	**Ai cùng ăn với bạn, tuổi và mối quan hệ của họ với bạn là gì?**

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
……
…………

#2 **Ngày**: **Giờ**: **Tình huống bữa ăn**:	**Ai cùng ăn với bạn, tuổi và mối quan hệ của họ với bạn là gì?**

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………

#3 **Ngày**: **Giờ**: **Tình huống bữa ăn**:	**Ai cùng ăn với bạn, tuổi và mối quan hệ của họ với bạn là gì?**

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………

SOME GUIDANCE FOR VIDEO-RECORDING A MEAL (in Vietnamese)

MỘT SỐ CHÚ Ý KHI QUAY BỮA ĂN

1. Đặt máy quay ở khoảng cách và độ cao sao cho có thể thu được hình ảnh của toàn bộ những người ăn, và thu được tiếng nói của họ.

2. Có thể bắt đầu quay khi thức ăn được dọn ra hoặc khi mọi người bắt đầu ngồi vào bàn ăn và quay cho tới khi kết thúc bữa ăn (lúc thu dọn bát đũa, hoặc lúc mọi người rời bàn ăn).

3. Nếu bữa ăn theo dự đoán kéo dài từ 1,5 giờ (90 phút) trở lên, có thể chia làm 2 hoặc 3 phần để quay. Nếu quá dài, có thể bỏ bớt 1 vài cảnh nhưng cần quay được phần đầu và phần kết thúc bữa ăn và những cảnh chính khác trong bữa ăn, ví dụ như khi có người mới đến trong bữa ăn, có người ăn xong,

4. Khi lưu lại video clips, cần lưu lại cả thời gian và địa điểm của bữa ăn.

Appendix E: Sample questions for interviews

PRELISTS OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Part I- General questions

1. What time/ where do you often have breakfast/ lunch/ dinner?
2. How many main meals on average do you have each week alone and with other people? Which one do you prefer, having meal alone or with others? Why?
3. Who do you often have your meals with? What make you like or dislike having meals with them?
4. What typical things or/and words do you do and/or say in most of your meals (apart from eating)? What do they mean?
5. What makes you do and /or say so? How do you feel when you do and /or say so? Do you think that it is necessary to do and/or say so?
6. What typical things or/and words do other people/ your dining partners do and/or say in most of their meals (apart from eating)? What makes them do and /or say so?
7. Are there any other utterances/ actions/ gestures that have the similar meaning/ function as yours? What are they?
8. What do you think is the appropriate way of doing and/or saying them? How do you feel when you do and /or say so?
9. How would you feel when you did not do and /or say them or did and said them in an inappropriate way?
10. What do you think would happen if you did not do and /or say them or did and said them in an inappropriate way?
11. How would you feel and/ or do when other people/ your dining partners did not do and /or say them or did and said them in an inappropriate way?
12. What changes would you make to your typical actions during the meal if there were some situational changes such as with non-regular diners, in different places, or in unusual state of mood?
13. What are some typical topics in most of your meals? What in a meal can normally make you feel happy?
14. What typical things or/and words do you do and/or say to late arrivals and unexpected guests in your meals (apart from eating)? What do they mean?
15. What makes you do and /or say so? How do you feel when you do and /or say so? Do you think that it is necessary to do and/or say so?
16. What typical things or/and words do other people/ your dining partners do and/or say to late arrivals and unexpected guests in their meals (apart from eating)?

17. How do the late arrivals and unexpected guests often respond to your sayings and/or actions toward them?

18. How do you (as a late arrival or an unexpected guest at other people's meal) often respond to their sayings and/or actions toward you?

19. In what cases would you not do or say anything to the new comer in your mealtime? Why not? How would you feel then?

20. How would you feel if diners would not do or say anything to you as the newly-appearing person in their meal?

21. Have there been any possible changes in your practice of ritual invitations and in your thoughts about them so far? What prompts those changes if yes?

22. What do you think about your senior generations and have you got any expectation for your future generations regarding practice of ritual invitations

Part II- Questions based on participants' personal video clips/ diaries/ informal talks

1. Do you often have meals with the people in this video? Who are your dining partners? What are their ages and their relationship with you?

2. What was the meal situation, setting (time and place)?

3. In the video, when you were about to have your meal, what did you do/ say? What does this utterance/ verbal/ non-verbal signal mean? Why did you do like that?

4. Does what you do/ say in this meal typical for your actions/ behaviours in your other meals? Are there any other utterances/ signals that have the similar meaning/ function as yours that can be used in this situation? What are they?

5. What did others react to your doings/ sayings? Why so? What did you think and how did you feel then?

6. What did this/that person do and or say?

7. What did you think/ how did you feel about their doings/ sayings?

8. What are your general thoughts and feelings about this meal? What makes you think/ feel like that?

9. Are there any other situations (different from the one in this video) that you act like that? If yes, what are they?

10. Who in the video do you think does not behave appropriate in his/her position? Why do you think so? What should be corrected and how?

11. Are you doing/saying as in the video in your normal state of mood? Are there any differences if you would be in different state of mood? What are they?

Part III- Questions based on public video clips

1. What do you think their utterances/ gestures/ actions mean? Why do you think they do/ say so?

2. Why do you think they (the father, and the daughter, but not the little boy) do not

3. Why do you think the daughter insists on waiting for the guest and does not follow her father's asking her to start eating, not to wait any longer?

4. Do you think that they extend their utterances/ gestures/ actions appropriately? Why/ why not?

PRELISTS OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (in Vietnamese)

Phần I

1. Bạn thường ăn sáng/ trưa/ tối lúc mấy giờ và ở đâu?

2. Trung bình 1 tuần, bạn ăn bao nhiêu bữa chính 1 mình và bao nhiêu bữa với người khác? Bạn thích ăn một mình hay ăn cùng người khác hơn? Tại sao?

3. Bạn thường ăn cùng ai? Điều gì khiến bạn thích/ không thích ăn cùng họ?

4. Lời nói hay hành động điển hình của bạn lúc bắt đầu bữa ăn là gì? Chúng có nghĩa gì?

5. Điều gì khiến bạn làm/ nói như thế? Bạn cảm thấy như thế nào khi nói/ làm như thế? Bạn có nghĩ điều đó là cần thiết không?

6. Lời nói hay hành động điển hình của những người cùng ăn cơm lúc bắt đầu bữa ăn là gì? Chúng có nghĩa gì? Điều gì khiến họ nói/làm như thế?

7. Ngoài ra còn có lời nói/cử chỉ / hay hành động nào có cùng nghĩa hay chức năng như những lời nói hành động điển hình trên của bạn không? Đó là gì?

8. Trong bữa ăn, bạn hay những người khác có thường mời người cùng ăn ăn món này món kia hoặc gắp thức ăn cho họ không? Bạn nghĩ gì về việc đó (ý nghĩa của nó, thái độ của bạn đối với việc đó?

9. Bạn thường nói/ làm gì lúc bạn đã ăn xong bữa trong khi những người khác vẫn còn đang ăn? Điều đó có ý nghĩa gì? Những người khác có làm như bạn không?

10. Các thói quen nói/ làm như thế có thay đổi ở các bữa ăn có các tình huống khác, ví dụ như ăn với khách, ăn ở nhà người khác, ăn khi đang tức giận?

11. Đã bao giờ bạn được người khác chỉnh đốn hay nhắc nhở về việc mời cơm trong bữa ăn chưa? Vì sao?

12. Đã bao giờ bạn chỉnh đốn hay nhắc nhở người khác về việc họ mời cơm trong bữa ăn chưa? Vì sao?

13. Bạn cảm thấy thế nào khi không mời cơm những người cùng ăn? Theo bạn chuyện gì sẽ xảy ra nếu bạn làm như thế?

14. Bạn cảm thấy thế nào khi người cùng ăn với bạn không mời cơm bạn, hoặc có mời nhưng không phù hợp?

15. Việc mời hay không mời cơm của bạn có khi nào bị áp lực từ bên ngoài: ví dụ phải mời nếu không sẽ bị mắng, hoặc phải mời nếu không những người xung quanh sẽ đánh giá ,….?

16. Chủ đề nói chuyện trong hầu hết các bữa ăn của bạn là gì? Điều gì trong bữa ăn thường làm bạn vui nhất?

17. Bạn thường nói/ làm gì khi đang ăn thì có người tới hoặc đến ăn muộn? Điều đó có ý nghĩa gì?

18. Điều gì khiến bạn nói/ làm như thế?

19. Bạn cảm thấy thế nào sau khi nói và làm như thế? Theo bạn việc nói và làm như thế có cần thiết không?

20. Có khi nào bạn không nói/ làm như thế? Bạn cảm thấy thế nào hoặc theo bạn chuyện gì sẽ xảy ra nếu bạn không nói/ làm gì với người đó?

21. Người mới đến howacj người đến muộn thường đáp lại lời nói/ hành động của bạn như thế nào?

22. Nếu bạn là người đên muộn hoặc mới xuất hiện trong bữa ăn của người khác, bạn cảm thấy như thế nào khi không có ai trong số họ có lời nói hay cử chỉ mời cơm bạn?

23. Từ trước tới nay, thói quen mời/ không mời cơm của bạn có gì thay đổi không? Theo bạn điều gì khiến bạn thay đổi như thế?

24. Bạn nghĩ gì về việc mời cơm của các thế hệ trước bạn? Bạn có nguyện vọng gì đối với thế hệ sau của bạn trong việc thực hành mời cơm không?

25. Theo bạn việc mời cơm có xuất xứ từ đâu? Bạn biết đên lời mời cơm từ đâu

Phần II

26. Những người ăn cùng bạn là ai? Họ bao nhiêu tuổi và có mối quan hệ gì với bạn?

27. Tình huống của bữa ăn là gì (thời gian, địa điểm, lí do của bữa ăn)?

28. Bạn nói gì? Điều đó có nghĩa gì? Tại sao bạn nói như thế?

29. Câu nói/ hành động đó có tiêu biểu ở cả các bữa ăn khác không?

30. Theo bạn, những người cùng ăn có phản ứng gì/cảm thấy như thế nào đôi với lời nói/hành động này của bạn?

31. Người này/kia nói/ làm gì? Bạn nghĩ thế nào về lời nói đó của họ?

32. Cảm nghĩ chung của bạn về bữa ăn này? Điều gì làm bạn nghĩ như thế?

33. Trong nhật ký bữa XX bạn có viết: "…", điều đó nghĩa là gì?

Phần III

34. Các nhân vật ông bố, cô con gái, anh cháu trai, và cậu bé nói gì, làm gì trong các tình huống?

35. Bạn nghĩ gì về hành vi, lời nói, cử chỉ củahọ trong các tình huống đó?

36. Theo bạn lời nói, cử chỉ của họ có phù hợp/ chuẩn mực không? Vì sao? Nếu không, theo bạn cần phải như thế nào?

37. Theo bạn tại sao cô con gái vẫn muốn cùng bố đợi khách về ăn cùng mà không ăn trước theo lời yêu cầu của ông?

Appendix F: Interview participants

Interview participants in Vietnam

Ps	Gender	Age	Profession	Growing-up areas	Present living areas	Additional information on Ps
IVN1	FM	49	nurse	Namdinh (rural)	Namdinh (rural)	married, mother of 1 son (25) and one daughter (27), living and sharing daily meals with husband (50)
IVN2	M	19	student	Hanoi (urban)	Hanoi (urban)	single, living and sharing daily meals with parents (54, 45) and a younger sister (9)
IVN3	FM	20	student	Hai Phong (Urban)	Hanoi (urban)	single, live temporarily in Hanoi, sometimes go home in a different city to see family with parents and a younger brother (7)
IVN4	FM	30	housewife	Namdinh (Rural)	Namdinh (Rural)	used to live with her mother and had almost all meals with her at her mother' house. She moved in to live in her husband's house in another village after her marriage two years ago. now living and sharing daily meals with her mother-in-law (54), husband (29), and son (1).
IVN5	FM	30	worker	Hung Yen (rural)	Hai phong (suburban)	married with one daughter (5), living and sharing daily meals with husband and daughter in Hai Phong. Interview was carried with her daughter sitting beside (08022013)
IVN6	FM	29	worker	Namdinh (Rural)	Namdinh (Rural)	married with one daughter (1 year old). She moved in to live in her husband's house in another village after her marriage two years ago and share daily meals with her parents-in-law (54, 54), her husband (32), and her daughter (1).
IVN7	FM	29	salesperson	Thai Binh (rural)	Hanoi (urban)	married with one son (5 years old). living and sharing daily meals with husband (35) and a son (5); born in a family with 2 daughters, as the elder one.
IVN8	FM	66	pensioner	Thai Binh (suburban)	Thai Binh (suburban)	Married with 5 children; now lives with her husband (73) at her house in her hometown. One of her daughter and her family live nearby and often share meals with her. Interview (24/02/2013)
IVN9	M	73	pensioner	Thai Binh (suburban)	Thai Binh (suburban)	married with 5 children; now lives with his wife (66) at his house in his hometown. One of his daughters and her family live nearby and often share meals with him. Interview (18/02/2013)
IVN10	M	9	school pupil	Hanoi (suburban)	Hanoi (suburban)	living and sharing daily meals with parents and a 5-month sister. interviewed (20/01/2013) - at his house, right after a meal with him (with observations).
IVN11	FM	19	student	Ninh Binh (rural)	Hanoi (urban)	Single, stay with parents and a younger brother (17). Now Living temporarily in Hanoi at uncle's house with uncle (32), his

						wife (25), her aunt's mother (52), her cousin (20)
IVN12	FM	19	student	Hoa Binh (rural)	Hanoi (urban)	Single, stay with parents and a younger sister. Now living temporarily in Hanoi while having tertiary education
IVN13	FM	19	student	Nam Dinh (rural)	Hanoi (urban)	Single, stay with grandmother (83) and mother (45). Now living temporarily in Hanoi while having tertiary education
IVN14	FM	21	student	Nghe An (rural)	Hanoi (urban)	Single, stay with parents and a younger brother. Now living temporarily in Hanoi while having tertiary education
IVN15	M	20	student	Nghe An (rural)	Hanoi (urban)	Single, lives with parents and one younger brother (7) and one younger sister (17). Now he is living temperoraly in his uncle house in Hanoi during his tertiary education. Interviewed on 30/01/2013
IVN16	M	21	student	Nam Dinh (rural)	Hanoi (urban)	Single, as an only child, used to live with parents in the hometown,with many of his relatives closeby. Now temperoraly living and sharing daily meals with flatmates in Hanoi during his tertiary education. Interviewed on 02/02/2013
IVN17	M	22	service soldier	Ha nam (rural)	Hanoi (urban)	Single, used to live in his hometown with parents and one younger brother (20) and one younger sister (13). Now living in a military base in Hanoi and sharing daily meals with his comrades from different provinces during his military service. Interviewed on 31/01/2013 - right after his agreement to participate in the research at our first meeting in his army base.
IVN18	FM	22	student	Tuyen Quang (rural)	Hanoi (urban)	Single, used to live with parents and an elder brother (). Now Living temporarily in Hanoi at uncle's house during her tertiary education; Interviewed in 2/2013 - right after her agreement to participate in the research at our first meeting in her work place (a shop) at her break
IVN19	FM	22	student	Bac Ninh (rural)	Hanoi (urban)	Single, used to live with parents and a younger brother (). Now Living temporarily in Hanoi sharing house with friends during her tertiary education; Interviewed in her work place (a shop) at her break,
IVN20	FM	45	farmer	Nam Dinh (rural)	Nam Dinh (rural)	Widow, mother of a daughter (19), live with mother (83) and daughter who is temporarily away for tertiary study
IVN21	M	37	army officer	Thai Binh (rural)	Hanoi (suburban)	married, with one son (9), one daughter (4 months); works and lives in Hanoi with his wife (35) and two children; seems to be strict with family regulations; born in a traditional family with several children; he is the youngest of all siblings.
IVN22	FM	31	University lecturer	Hanoi (urban)	Hanoi (urban)	Divorced, lived with a son (6) and her mother (pensioner)

Interview participants in New Zealand

Participants	Gender	Age	Professions	Growing-up areas	Length of stay in NZ	Additional information on Ps
INZ1	FM	26	student	HCM city (urban)	2 months	Single, student, to NZ 02/2013; stay in one apartment, but sharing daily meals with a group of Vietnamese students in another apartment.
INZ2	FM	26	student	Hanoi (urban)	15 months	Single, student, to NZ 02/2012; stay in one room, but sharing daily meals with another Vietnamese flatmate
INZ3	FM	27	student	Hanoi (urban)	15 months	Single, student, to NZ 02/2012; stay in one room, but sharing daily meals with another Vietnamese flatmate
INZ4	FM	34	official	Ben Tre (Rural) + NZ	22 years	Single, living and sharing meals with parents at her parents' house
INZ5	FM	31	worker	Hanoi (urban)	1 month	married; sharing meals with husband (35) and daughter (4); North Auckland
INZ6	FM	36	housewife	Hanoi (urban)	7 years	married, lived with husband (38), 2 sons (6&3); North Auckland
INZ7	FM	45	worker	Hai Phong (urban)	15 years	a daughter (23), a son (15). In a de facto relationship and cohabiting with a non-Vietnamese; sharing meals all together.
INZ8	FM	65	pensioner	Ben Tre (suburban)	22 years	Married with 2 children (son, 38; daughter 34); living and sharing meals with her husband (in his 70s but still works part-time) and her daughter in West Auckland. Her son is married and is living separately. Interview (24/02/2013)
INZ9	FM	63	pensioner	Bac Lieu (suburban)	appr. 20 years	married, 3 grown-up children and some grandchildren; South Auckland
INZ10	M	24	official	HCM city (urban)	3 years	Single, stay and share meals with flatmates; North Auckland
INZ11	M	35	student	Hanoi (suburban)	6 months	married, live with a wife (31), a daughter (4); North Auckland
INZ12	M	38	worker	Hanoi (suburban)	11 years	married, lived with wife (36), 2 sons (6&3); North Auckland
INZ13	M	26	student	Ho Chi Minh city (urban)	4 years	Single, stay and share meals with flatmates; North Auckland
INZ14	FM	19	student	Hanoi (urban)	4 years	single, used to live with parents and a younger sister; now temporarily living and having daily meals alone; North Auckland