

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG

KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

NGÀNH NGOẠI NGỮ

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HAI PHONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

GRADUATION PAPER

A STUDY ON DOWNTONERS

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Class:

NA 1003

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HAI PHONG- 2010

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG

Nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

Sinh viên :.....Mã số :.....

Lớp :.....ngành :.....

Tên đề tài :.....

.....

.....

Nhiệm vụ đề tài

1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp (về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).

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2. Các số liệu cần thiết để thiết kế, tính toán.

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.

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CÁN BỘ H- ỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI

Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất :

Họ và tên :.....

Học hàm, học vị:

Cơ quan công tác :.....

Nội dung hướng dẫn:.....

Người hướng dẫn thứ hai :

Họ và tên:

Học hàm, học vị:

Cơ quan công tác :

Nội dung hướng dẫn:.....

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày...tháng...năm....

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày....tháng....năm 20

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Sinh viên

Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Người hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày....tháng....năm 20

Hiệu trưởng

GS.TS.NGT Trần Hữu Nghị

PHẦN NHẬN XÉT TÓM TẮT CỦA CÁN BỘ H- ỚNG DẪN

1. Tinh thần và thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp:

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2 Đánh giá chất lượng của khóa luận (so với nội dung, yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T.T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu...)

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3. Cho điểm của cán bộ hướng dẫn (ghi bằng cả số và chữ)

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Hải Phòng, ngày....tháng....năm 2010

Cán bộ hướng dẫn

(Họ tên và chữ kí)

NHẬN XÉT ĐÁNH GIÁ
CỦA NG- ỒI CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

1. Đánh giá chất lượng đề tài tốt nghiệp về các mặt thu thập và phân tích tài liệu, số liệu ban đầu, giá trị lí luận và thực tiễn của đề tài.

2. Cho điểm của người chấm phản biện:

(điểm ghi bằng cả số và chữ)

Ngày....tháng...năm 2010

Người chấm. phản biện

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale of the study:

Nowadays, in the era of science and technology, language as a means of communication, has shown its great effects in many fields of our life. It takes part in people's activities, such as economy, education, society and so on. Thus, language is also considered as a decisive factor for the development process of the society. When a language is developed, its vocabulary is always in constant development. At that time, the vocabulary is used to express new ideas, concepts to reflect people's activities, characters and mentalities.

However, in the grammatical system, there is a distinction which is called language barrier. Especially, the important distinction is downtoners. During my study time at University I have found that many students meet problems in using English downtoners and Vietnamese equivalence. They, maybe, don't understand clearly enough the types of downtoners, which lead to misunderstand the usages of these words.

Therefore, being aware of the importance of vocabulary in communication and the distinction in the grammatical system, I finally decided to choose English vocabulary as the study for B.A research paper. My objective focuses on downtoners and analyze on English downtoners and Vietnamese equivalence.

In this paper, the word "downtoners" is defined as the lowering effect on the force of the verb and many of them scale gradable verbs. Besides, in this graduation paper, errors and mistakes are unavoidable. All remarks and contribution are always welcome gratefully.

2. Scope of the study:

Because of my frame of knowledge, experience, size and time, it is very difficult to study all classes of intensifiers. That's why; my graduation paper is only focused on downtoners.

The way of using English downtoners is so considerable that the people of English-speaking countries usually use downtoners in everyday conversation.

The core of this paper is to study on downtoners and find out the analysis of English downtoners and Vietnamese equivalence. Concerning downtoners, there are many aspects such as definition, types, syntactic features, position, and homonym of intensifiers and so on. Therefore, this research is aimed at:

- Helping the learners identify some characters, types, and positions of downtoners.
- Expressing the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese downtoners.
- Analysis on equivalence in usage of English downtoners into Vietnamese
- Expressing the benefits of downtoners.

3. Methods of the study:

In fact, I myself find that English is the most popularly used language for all aspects in our society: economy, society, culture, science, and education, etc. I have been doing my best to study for further fields of English. This paper is based on a lot different sources specialized in English downtoners.

Thanks to the knowledge gained from:

- Discussion with my supervisor and friends
- My own experiences

- Internet accessing
- Personal observation
- Documents and reference books

4. Application places:

The role of downtoners is very important and necessary in our life. Furthermore, this paper is studied in order to apply not only in education, but also in the social exchange. Importantly, it helps us gain a better insight into the structures and limit mistakes by the students.

5. Design of the study:

This graduation paper provides a clear organization consisting 3 main parts that the second part is the most important one.

❖ Part I: is **Introduction**, which gives the rationale for choosing this topic on study not only brings out the aims, the scope but also provides the method of the study.

❖ Part II: is **Development** that consists 3 chapters:

- ✓ Chapter I: Theoretical background.
- ✓ Chapter II: An investigation into analysis on English downtoners and Vietnamese equivalence.
- ✓ Chapter III: Solution for non-equivalence case

1 Part III: **Conclusion:**

1. Summary of the study
2. Suggestion for further study
3. List of references

Part II: DEVELOPMENT
CHAPTER I:
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 An overview of English downtoners:

1.1.1 Definitions:

Downtoners are regarded as a politeness strategy in different contexts. It could be said that downtoners belong to the realm of negative politeness. There are many definitions for the negative politeness. According to Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1990:129): “negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee’s negative face”. In English culture, negative politeness is the most elaborate and the most conventionalized set of linguistic strategies for FTA (face-threatening act) redress.

James Keirstead (1995:38) stated that “negative politeness is concerned with other people’s need not to be intruded or imposed upon (as opposite to “positive politeness”, which is concern with their need for inclusion and social approval).

According to “about.com Guide”-the research was supported by Richard Nordquist define a downtoner that decreases the effect of a modified item.

Douglas Biber and Susan Conrad, ("Register Variation: A Corpus Approach," in The Handbook of Discourse Analysis, ed. by Deborah Schiffrin et al. Wiley-Blackwell, 2003:74) adds “many downtoners are roughly synonymous in meaning. However it turns out that the most common downtoners have quite different distributions across registers”.

In conclusion, I see that downtoners are used in the negative politeness, they have a generally lowering effect on the force of the verb or predication and many of them apply a scale to gradable verbs

1.1.2 Types of English downtoners:

1.1.2.1 Compromizers:

Compromizers have only a slight lowering effect; they slightly reduce the force of the verb and tend to call in question the appropriateness of the verb concerned.

Kind of /sort of (informal A.E) , quite /rather (B.E)

Enough, sufficiently, more or less...

Example 1:

"Kevin ***kind of*** plays the piano." (He knows a little bit about playing the piano, but not very much.

(Kevin ***hơi*** biết chơi piano).

Example 2:

He ***kind of*** likes politics.

(anh ấy ***khá là*** thích các hoạt động chính trị).

Example 3:

I felt ***sort of*** tired.

(tôi thấy ***hơi*** mệt).

Example 4:

My daughter ***quite*** enjoyed the cartoon.

(con gái tôi ***khá là*** thích phim hoạt hình).

Example 5:

I've ***more or less*** finished reading the book.

(tôi ***ít nhiều*** cũng đã đọc xong cuốn sách rồi).

1.1.2.2 Diminishers:

Diminishers scale downwards considerably and roughly mean “to a small extent”, they show a small amount of positive meaning).

Mildly, moderately, partially, partly, slightly, somewhat, in part, in some respect, to some extent, a little, least (of all)

Example 6:

He arrived at the meeting ***slightly*** late. (just a few minutes).

(anh ấy đến cuộc họp **hơi** muộn).

Example 7:

I was ***somewhat*** surprised to see him.

(tôi đã **hơi** ngạc nhiên khi thấy anh ấy).

Example 8:

I ***partially*** disagree with him.

(tôi **phần nào** không đồng ý với anh ta).

Example 9:

They admire his courage ***to some extent***.

(ở **một khía cạnh nào đó**, họ ngưỡng mộ lòng dũng cảm của anh ấy).

Example 10:

The trend was ***slightly*** increasing.

(xu hướng tăng được **đôi chút**).

1.2.2.3 Minimizers:

Minimizers differ from other downtoners in providing a modification towards a version that is more strictly true rather than a denial of the truth value of what has been said; they scale downwards considerably and modify the degree of truth of what the verb says.

- negatives: *barely, hardly, little, scarcely*
- non-assertives: *in the least, in the slightest, at all*

Example 11:

"We *scarcely* knew what to say." (We were so surprised that we had difficulty making a comment.)

(chúng tôi **hiếm khi** biết phải nói gì).

Example 12:

"We could *hardly* catch our breath." (We could certainly breathe, but we were feeling out of breath; breathing hard from running fast, or being extremely surprised, frightened, etc.)

(chúng tôi **hầu như không** thể nắm bắt nhịp thở của mình).

Example 13:

It doesn't matter *in the least*.

(**ít nhất** thì nó cũng không quan trọng).

Example 14:

We don't like it *at all*.

(chúng tôi không thích nó **chút nào**).

1.1.2.4 Approximators:

Approximators serve to express an approximation to the force of the verbs, while indicating that the verb concerned expresses more than element. They deny the truth of what the verb states.

Almost, nearly, practically, virtually, as good as, all but

Example 15:

"Saturday is ***just about*** the last chance he has to retake the test. (It isn't definitely the last chance; there may be one more.)

(thứ bảy này là cơ hội cuối cùng ***nữa*** cho anh ấy thi lại).

Example 16:

The problem is ***as good as*** settled.

(vấn đề ***hầu như*** đã được giải quyết).

Example 17:

We ***all but*** had finished work when he arrived.

(chúng tôi ***hầu như*** đã hoàn thành công việc khi họ đến).

Example 18:

He ***virtually*** promised me the job.

(ông ta ***hầu như*** đã hứa cho tôi công việc).

Example 19:

There's ***practically*** nothing left.

(***thực tế là*** bên trái không có gì).

1.2 Syntactic features of downtoners:

- They can come with the scope of clause negation and can be the focus of the negation.

Example 20:

She didn't go to bed early, but late

| _ Scope of _ |

Negation

(cô ấy không đi ngủ sớm, mà muộn).

- They can come with the scope of predication proforms or predication ellipsis.

Example 21:

John **sort of** admires Bob, and so does Mary.

| _ Predication _ |

proform

(John **khá là** ngưỡng mộ Bob và Mary cũng vậy).

- Some downtoners can be focused by “**only**” and “**also**”

Example 22:

The book is not recorded in the standard bibliographies but is considered to be the rare first and **possibly only** edition.

(cuốn sách này không được ghi lại trong thư mục tiêu chuẩn nhưng được coi là phiên bản hiếm đầu tiên và **chỉ có thể** được ấn bản).

Example 23:

He plays several instruments and **also possibly** writes music.

(anh ấy chơi được vài nhạc cụ và **cũng có thể** viết nhạc).

- Many serve as the response to questions “**how much**”

Example 24:

How much do you like her?

Abit.

- **Possibly/conceivably** co-occur with **can/could** in a non-assertive clause

Example 25:

They **can't possibly/conceivably** leave now.

(They can't under any circumstances leave now).

(họ **không thể có khả năng** rời đi bây giờ).

Example 26:

I will leave as soon as I **possibly can**.

(tôi sẽ đi ngay khi **có thể**).

- In question, “**ever**” can replace “**never**” as minimizers

Example 27:

Will he **ever/never** go to bed tonight?

(liệu anh ấy **bao giờ/không bao giờ** đi ngủ đêm nay?)

- **Never** is a negative minimizer in:

Example 28:

You will **never** catch the train tonight.

(It is utterly impossible that you will catch the train tonight)

(bạn sẽ **chẳng bao giờ** bắt kịp chuyến tàu đêm nay).

1.3 Position of downtoners:

Downtoners have active positions, which make downtoners more interesting. In this type of downtoners, there are five ways of position:

- Most downtoners favor Medial 2(M2) position but they can also occur in End position (E). Medial 2 positions are the position immediately standing before the verb or before the complement in the intensive sentence.

Example 29:

He ***more or less*** agrees with you.

(anh ấy **ít nhiều** cũng đồng ý với bạn)

He agrees with you ***more or less***.

(anh ấy cũng đồng ý với bạn **ít nhiều**).

- Some downtoners are restricted to M2: ***quite, rather, as good as, all but***

Example 30:

I ***quite*** like him.

(tôi **khá là** thích anh ấy).

Example 31:

We ***all but*** finished the homework teacher gave.

(chúng tôi **hầu như** đã hoàn thành bài tập về nhà cô giáo giao cho).

- Others tend to be restricted to either to M2 or to Medial 1: ***barely, hardly, scarcely, practically, virtually, etc.*** Medial 1(M1) positions are the position immediately standing before the operator or standing between two auxiliary verbs.

Example 32:

He could ***hardly*** be seen as a scientist

(ông ấy **khó có thể** được xem như một nhà khoa học).

Example 33:

Tom ***virtually*** will have finished by the time they

arrived.

(Tom **hầu như** sẽ hoàn thành trước khi họ đến).

- A few downtoners are restricted to M2 in positive clause, but can precede a negative phrase in M1: **kind of, sort of, almost, nearly**

Example 34:

The students **almost** decided to go camping on Sunday.

(các em **hầu như** đã quyết định đi cắm trại vào Chủ Nhật).

In example 34, the downtoner “**almost**” stands in the M2 position in the positive clause “**decided to go camping on Sunday**” but in example 35 we can see that the downtoner “**sort of**” can precede a negative phrase “**didn’t want to say any thing**” in M1 position.

For example 35:

I **sort of** didn’t want to say anything about that the plan.

(tôi **khá là** không muốn nói bất cứ điều gì về kế hoạch đó).

- A few others favor E position: **a bit, at all**

End position is the position standing after an intransitive Verb or standing after an Object or Complement.

For example 36:

We don’t like his personality **a bit**.

(chúng tôi không thích tính cách của anh ấy **chút nào**).

Example 37:

They don’t support her **at all**.

(họ không ủng hộ cô ấy **chut nào cả**).

In conclusion, there are five ways of downtoners position. It shows us that different positions have the different meanings.

1.4 Homonyms of intensifiers:

Intensifiers used to denote a measure of quantity or of duration or frequency in time

- All the minimizers: ***barely, hardly, little, scarcely, in the least, in the slightest, at all***

Hardly.....when: chưa kịpthì

Scarcelywhen: vừa mới ...thì

- The compromizers: **enough, sufficiently**
- The boosters: **much, a lot, a good deal, a great deal**
- The diminishers: **a little, least, somewhat, to some extent**

Example 38:

I like it **a lot** (to a great extent-booster intensifier).
(tôi thích nó **rất nhiều**).

Example 39:

I saw him **a little** (rarely-frequentative).
(tôi **ít khi** nhìn thấy anh ta).

Example 40:

He paid me **a lot** for my work (a large amount quantifier).
(anh ta trả tôi **rất nhiều** cho công việc của mình).

Example 41:

She doesn't drink **very much**
(A very large amount quantifier or very often frequentative).
(cô ấy không uống **nhiều**)

- Some of the quantifiers must be analyzed as the direct object because they

can be the Subject of the passive form of the sentence

For example 42:

He paid me **a lot** for my work.

-> **A lot** was paid me for my work.

- Many boosters have hyponymous process adjuncts

Example 43:

He **bitterly** regretted his mistake (booster).

(ông ấy **cay đắng** hối tiếc về sai lầm của mình).

Example 44:

He spoke **bitterly** about the way he had been treated (in a bitter manner).

(ông ta nói **một cách cay đắng** về cái cách ông ta bị đối xử)

CHAPTER II

AN INVESTIGATION INTO ANALYSIS ENGLISH DOWNTONERS AND VIETNAMESE EQUIVALENCE

2.1 Notions of English downtoners:

Downtoners have lowering effect on the force of the verb and many of them scale gradable verbs. They related to hedges. Normally hedges are a feature of negative politeness, but downtoners can have positive-politeness functions: *sort of, kind of, like, in a way*.

Example 45:

It's really beautiful, *in a way*.
(trong một mức độ nào đó, nó thật sự đẹp).

Example 46:

I *kind of* want Florin to win the race, since I've bet on him.
(từ khi tôi cá với anh ta, tôi **khá là** muốn Florin chiến thắng cuộc đua).

Example 47:

I don't know, *like I think* people have a right to their own opinions. (Californian English).
(tôi không biết, **như tôi nghĩ** mọi người có quyền có ý kiến riêng của họ).

Example 48:

Ah, the weather's bad *like*. (Welsh English).
(ah, xấu **như** thời tiết).

These downtoners may be used to soften FTAs (Face-Threatening Acts) of suggesting or criticizing or complaining, by blurring the speaker's intent.

Example 49:

You really **sort of** botched it, didn't you?
(không phải bạn thực sự **kiểu như là** làm hỏng nó chứ?)

Example 50:

You really should **sort of** try harder.
(bạn thật sự nên **kiểu như** cố gắng hơn nữa).

Example 51:

A: What the matter?

B: Well my husband **sort of**, never does anything, you know...

(A: có chuyện gì vậy?)

B: cậu biết đấy, **kiểu như** chồng tớ ấy à, chẳng bao giờ làm cái gì cả.)

The downtoners in these sentences serve to avoid a precise communication of speaker's attitude. Perhaps this derives from the fact that these downtoners also function as a markers of metaphors, as in:

That knife sort of chews bread.

That is, expression like sort of in FTAs may mark the word that they modify as being a metaphor of some sort, leaving it up to the addressee to figure out how to interpret it. So the use of these downtoners assumes some degree of common knowledge to interpret speaker's attitude.

- Approximators imply a denial of the truth-value of what is denoted by the verb. Hence we can say, with the approximator ***almost***:

I ***almost*** resigned (but in fact I didn't resign).

(tôi ***gần như đã*** từ chức).

- The negative minimizers partially deny the truth-value of what is said:

I ***can scarcely*** ignore his views.

(In fact I can't ignore his views).

(tôi **khó có thể** bỏ qua quan điểm của anh ấy).

- The second clause converts the partial denial in the first clause into a full denial.

"She **nearly** left him." (She did not leave, but she had been planning to.)

(cô ấy **gần như đã** rời bỏ anh ta rồi).

- Compromisers reduce the force of the verb. If we say:

I **kind of** like him.

(tôi **khá là** thích anh ấy).

We do not deny liking him, but we seem to be deprecating what we are saying, "I might go as far as to say I like him".

- Diminishers are not usually the focus of negation, but when they are, the effect is to push the scaling towards the top:

They didn't praise him **slightly**.

(They praise him a lot).

(họ **không phải là hơi** ca ngợi anh ấy)

- On the other hand, the effect of negation on those minimizers that accept negation is to deny the truth-value of what is denoted by the verb:

We don't like it **a bit**. (We don't like it).

(chúng tôi không thích nó **chút nào**).

Four of the minimizers –barely, hardly, little, scarcely- are themselves negative and can not be negated.

Further analysis shows that downtoners are also used for different purposes in conversation and academic prose:

The downtoner **pretty** in conversation often occurs as a modifier of evaluative adjectives, as in **pretty good, pretty bad, pretty cool, pretty**

easy, pretty sure. . . .

Moreover, downtoners in academic prose occur with a much wider range of descriptive adjectives.

The downtoner *fairly* occurs repeatedly with adjectives such as *resistant, consistent, constant, simple, obvious, common, recent, and direct*.

Downtoners have generally a lowering effect on the adjective. Many of the *downtoner + adjective* collocations in academic prose have to do with marking the extent of comparison between two items:

slightly smaller, somewhat lower

Each of downtoner has its own feature so, now, we will concentrate on some specific downtoners.

- The downtoner *relatively* always has an implied comparison, as in *relatively simple, relatively stable, relatively unimportant*.

Example 52:

The young lady who stepped out of the car was *hardly pretty*.

To what degree was the young lady

PRETTY?- HARDLY

Actually, she was **rather ugly!**

(người phụ nữ trẻ bước ra khỏi xe trông *hầu như không xinh*).

Example 53:

She was *rather late* when she came to the appointment.

To what degree was she *late*?

Not *too late*, but *late* enough.

(cô ấy đến cuộc hẹn *hơi muộn*).

Example 53:

Your drawing is *quite good*.

quite good: not really good but not too bad.

(bản vẽ của bạn **khá là** tốt).

- **Fairly** can be used to modify an adjective or an adverb which expresses a desirable quality. If we say that we find a place quite homely, we can intensify the adjective by using the adverb **fairly**:

Example 54:

This place is **fairly cosy**.

(nơi đó **thật sự** ấm cúng).

If, however, we do not find it comfortable enough, we will use the adverb **rather**:

Example 55:

This place is **rather cosy** .

(nơi đó **khá là** ấm cúng).

- **Rather** can be used with favourable and unfavourable meaning and differs from **fairly** and **pretty** because only **rather** can be used as an intensifier in:

(i) a comparative construction:

-**rather smaller** but we cannot say **fairly smaller** or **pretty smaller**

-**rather quicker** but we cannot say **fairly quicker** or **pretty quicker**

(ii) A too construction:

-**rather too slow** but we cannot say **fairly too slow** or **pretty too slow**

- **rather too expensive** but we cannot say **fairly too expensive** or **pretty too expensive**

(iii) certain noun phrases with adjectival qualities:

- **Rather a pity** but we cannot say **fairly a pity** or **pretty a pity**

- **Rather a chance** but we cannot say **fairly a chance** or **pretty a chance**

(iv) certain verbs:

- John **rather** annoys me but we cannot say John **fairly** annoys me
or John **pretty** annoys me

- Laura **rather** bored me but we cannot say Laura **fairly** bored me
or Laura **pretty** bored me

(v) with nouns only when preceded by an adjective. **Rather** intensifies the adjective. **Rather** has a variable position in relation to the indefinite article. **Rather** can either precede the indefinite article or precede the adjective without changing the meaning of the sentence:

Example 56:

- This is **a rather big** house.

- This is **rather a big** house.

(đây là một căn nhà **khá** lớn).

Example 57:

- You have posed **a rather important** question.

- You have posed **rather an important** question.

(bạn đã đặt ra một câu hỏi **khá quan trọng**).

- **Pretty** is the strongest of the three adverbs. Like **rather** it can be used with favourable or unfavourable meaning. We can say:

- **Pretty clean** as well as **fairly clean**

- **pretty dirty** but we cannot say **fairly dirty** but **rather dirty**.

- **Kind of, sort of** are used as downtoners for adjectives and adverbs:

- She behaved **kind of haughty** with us.

(cô ấy cư xử **kiểu như kiêu căng** với chúng tôi).

- It was **sort of strange** of them to call us so early in the morning.

(thật **khá là lạ** khi họ gọi chúng tôi sớm vậy vào buổi sáng).

- **A little, a bit** are downtoners of adjective in the absolute degree with

unfavourable meanings and an implication of more than wanted.

-The weather is ***a bit too hot***.

(thời tiết ***thật là quá nóng***).

- The racecourse was ***a bit too tricky***.

(trường đua ngựa ***thật là quá phức tạp***).

2.2 Vietnamese downtoners

In Vietnamese, downtoners are used as the hedging opinions. Alternatively, the speaker may choose to be vague about his own opinion, so as not to be seen to disagree. But the most important thing is that the speaker must use the hedges to make their opinions or their disagreements fuzzy meaning so decrease the face-threatening of the speaker. Downtoner is a kind of hedge which is a particle, word or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set.

-Kiểu như

-kiểu như là

-kiểu như cũng

For example:

Cái đu ***kiểu như là*** một đồ chơi ấy mà.

(A swing is ***sort of*** a toy)

(Nguyễn Quang, 2001:127).

-thật cũng đáng

For example:

Vẫn tưởng kiếm cho no bụng, ai ngờ phải đến nát thân. Nhưng bày ra mưu này là tại lão thủy thần kia. Hắn là chủ mưu mà được khỏi nạn còn chúng ta theo hắn mà phải chịu vạ, ***thật cũng đáng*** phàn nàn lắm.

(Nguyễn Dữ, *truyện kì mạn lục*, NXB Văn học HN, 1999:146).

-không lấy gì làm...lắm

For example:

Hai vị linh mục, chú bé hát lễ và người bồ đi đến, họ tiến hành tất cả những nghi lễ xứng đáng với giá tiền bảy mươi quan trong một thời kì mà tôn giáo **không lấy gì làm giàu lắm** để cầu kinh làm phúc.

(Honore de Balzac, *đoạn trích đám tang lão Gorio*, sách VH 11 tập 2, 43).

-không có gì đáng kể

For example:

Sự việc này tự nó **không có gì đáng kể**, đã gây cho Raxtinax một cơn não lòng ghê gớm.

(Honore de Balzac, *đoạn trích đám tang lão Gorio*, sách VH 11 tập 2, 43).

-tưởng như

For example:

Nhìn sững xuống con bài ác hại nay, hắn **tưởng như** trông thấy con đầm pích đang nháy mắt và mỉm cười chế nhạo hắn

(Puskin, *Con đầm pích*, NXB Cầu Vồng, Matxcova, 1985)

-cứ

-cứ như:

-trông như

For example:

-Đôi khi những khoảng đen ấy lại **trông như** những đám mây. Đôi khi trời lại **trông cứ như** cao lên dần, cao lên mãi; đôi khi bầu trời lại **trông như** hạ thấp hẳn xuống, đến nỗi có thể với tay đến được.

(Lep Toonxxtoi, *chiến tranh và hòa bình*, sách đã dẫn, tập IV, trang 207).

-Tôi **cứ** nghĩ điều đó là vô vọng.

(I **rather** think it is hopeless)

(Nguyễn Quang, 2001:127).

-**khá là**

-**hẳn là**

-**quả thật là**

For example:

-Tôi **khá chắc là** trước đây tôi đã đọc cuốn sách đó.

(I'm **pretty sure** I've read the book before).

(Nguyễn Quang, 2001:127).

-**hẳn là** các thần trên núi Olympos đã ban cho nàng một trái tim sắt đá **hơn ai hết** trong đám đàn bà yếu đuối, vì một người khác chắc không bao giờ có gan ngồi cách xa chồng như thế, khi chồng đi biệt hai mươi năm trời, trải qua bao nỗi gian truân, nay mới được trở về xứ sở.

(Sử thi Odixê, khúc ca XXIII)

-Vậy ra **quả thật là** chàng muốn, ngay bây giờ, trở về nhà ở xứ sở thân yêu đó ư?

(Sử thi Odixê, khúc ca XXIII).

-**một chút**

-**chút đỉnh**

For example:

-Chàng đợi em **một chút**, em sẽ trở lại ngay.

(Shakespeare, Romeo và Juliet, hồi 2, cảnh 2).

-Nếu như chàng có hiểu biết thiếp **chút đỉnh**, thì xin hãy từ bỏ mọi ngờ vực không căn cứ đó đi.

(sử thi Ramayana, khúc ca thứ 6, chương 79)

Speaker can use this to deny responsibility for the truth of the utterance, and can make statements as though they were “contrary to fact” or vaguer than they really are:

-ở một mức độ nào đó

For example:

Ở một mức độ nào đó, những cuộc nghiên cứu nhằm thay đổi thuật ngữ này đã diễn ra và đã tạo nên những cuộc tranh cãi trong nội bộ của chính phủ từ trước khi Obama lên nắm chính quyền.

(Vietnamnet.vn)

-ở một mức độ nhất định

-ở một điểm nào đó

-theo một nghĩa nào đó

The strategies to minimize the imposition of the negative politeness are clearly more suitable in the situations like: “vexation”, “need for help”... The speaker can use some downtoners:

-chỉ

-chỉ xin

-chỉ có thể

For example:

-Dạ, tôi **chỉ dám xin** ông bà dăm ba đồng bạc lẻ.

(In fact, it's over 100 dong).

(Nguyễn Quang, 2001:170).

-tôi **chỉ xin** trình đề tôn ông được rõ rằng, mặc dầu tôi hoàn toàn tin cần các bạn hữu của tôi, nhưng tôi **chỉ có thể** đánh bài với tiền mặt giao ngay mà thôi.

(Puskin, *Con đầm pích*, NXB Cầu Vồng, Matxcova, 1985)

2.3 English downtoners versus Vietnamese downtoners:

2.3.1 Similarities:

Although to be the two different languages, English and Vietnamese downtoners have some similarities.

- Both English and Vietnamese downtoners belongs to negative politeness. In general, urban citizens tend to use the negative politeness more than rural people

In Vietnamese:

- Dạ thưa thầy **cho phép** em hỏi sáng thứ tư thầy có ở văn phòng khoa không ạ?
- **Cảm phiền** bác sĩ khám lại giúp cho mẹ tôi.

In English:

Couldn't you **possibly** pass the salt, could you?

(bạn **không thể nào** vượt qua được sự chầm chọc phải không?)

(Brown, P. & Levinson, 1987:135, *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.)

- In the position of downtoners, most of them favour Medial 2

In English:

This may be **a bit** confused, but I remember being in the car.

(không chắc chắn lắm, nhưng tôi nhớ là đang ở trong ô tô.)

(Th.s Trần Thị Bích Thủy, *so sánh cách nói rào đón dựa trên nguyên lí công tác và phép lịch sự trong hội thoại Anh-Việt*, 64)

In Vietnamese:

Đôi mắt chàng gắn chặt **gần như** thềm thuồng vào khoảng giữa cột đồng trụ của quảng trường Văngđôm và đỉnh mái vòm điện Anhvalit, khoảng đó là nơi sinh hoạt của cái xã hội thượng lưu chàng muốn

thâm nhập. Chàng nhìn cái tổ ong rào rào ấy bằng con mắt **hình như** hút trước nước mật của nó, và chàng nói những lời to tát này: “giờ đây còn mày với ta”.

(Honore de Balzac, *đoạn trích đám tang lão Gorio*, sách VH 11 tập 2, 43).

- A few are restricted to Medial 2 in positive clause, but they can precede a negative phrase in Medial 1

In English:

We **kind of didn't want** to watch TV too much.

(chúng tôi **khá là không muốn** xem ti vi quá nhiều).

In Vietnamese:

Nhưng chỉ một phút thôi-đủ thì giờ để nhét bông hoa vào bên trong áo, gần ngay trái tim, hay gần dạ dày chưa biết chừng, vì chú **không hiểu biết lắm** về các bộ phận trong cơ thể con người; và **được cái cũng chẳng lấy gì làm khó tính**.

(Mark Twain, *Tom Xoyơ*, NXB Văn học, HN, 1979)

- A few other favours End position

In English:

I don't like his job **a bit**.

(Tôi chẳng thích công việc của anh ấy **chút nào**).

In Vietnamese:

“Xin tôn ông cho phép tôi thưa lại rằng, số tiền đặt cửa của tôn ông **quả có hơi cao một chút**. Ở đây chưa có ai đặt quá hai trăm bảy mươi lăm rúp một cửa đánh đâu”.

(Puskin, *Con đầm pích*, NXB Cầu Vồng, Matxcova, 1985:221)

- In the indirect speech acts which are expressed by the assertion or questioning

of their felicity conditions, we can make some generalizations about their relative politeness. Thus:

In English:

You ***could perhaps*** open the window.

In Vietnamese:

Có lẽ anh có thể mở cửa sổ.

is fine as a request. Although it might be claimed that “you could perhaps open the window” (Có lẽ anh có thể mở cửa sổ ra được đấy) is a suggestion

- They can be focuses by “***only***”

In English:

You ***possibly only*** do a job.

(Bạn chỉ có thể làm được một công việc thôi)

In Vietnamese:

Mà thấy ghét những thằng trai trẻ, giá làm con bà không đáng, mà thấy bà đâu cũng đùa. Chúng đùa nhạt như nước ốc, ***chỉ được cái*** thô tục, mà gặp ai đâu cũng cười! Chẳng nghĩ gì đến địa vị cả, người đâu mà vô tâm! Tức lạ! Cụ chỉ muốn cho tất cả những thằng trai trẻ đi ở tù...

(Nam Cao, Chí Phèo, sách Văn học 11 tập 1, trang 233).

2.3.2 Differences:

Between any two languages, the differences seem to be evident. Thus, beside the similarities represented above, English and Vietnamese downtoners have some differences.

- Some English downtoners are restricted to Medial 2 position:

For example:

He ***quite*** likes walking in the rain.

(Anh ấy khá thích đi dạo dưới mưa).

For example:

Children **all but** believe in old story

(trẻ em hầu như đều tin vào truyện cổ tích)

But in Vietnamese, some downtoners are not restricted to any position

For example:

- **Hình như** có một thời hắn đã ao ước có một gia đình nho nhỏ.

Chồng cuốc mướn cày thuê. Vợ dệt vải.

- Chí Phèo **hình như** đã trông trước thấy tuổi già của hắn, đói rét và ốm đau, và cô độc, cái này còn đáng sợ hơn đói rét và ốm đau.

- Là vì lúc ấy trong người hắn rượu đã hơi nhạt rồi, không còn kêu gào chửi bới, và không còn nghe kêu gào chửi bới, hắn thấy **hình như** không hăng hái nữa.

- Hết ngạc nhiên thì hắn thấy mất **hình như** ươn ướt

(Nam Cao, Chí Phèo, sách Văn học 11 tập 1).

- the strategy “be pessimistic” gives redress to hearer’s negative face by explicitly expressing doubt that the conditions for the appropriateness of speaker’s speech act obtain. In English, this strategy is regarded as the polite request

For example:

I don't suppose there'd be any hope of you picking me up tomorrow morning.

(tôi không cho rằng sẽ có hi vọng về việc anh đến đón tôi vào sáng mai.)

but a normal Vietnamese may possibly regard it as the blame

2.4 An analysis on English downtoners and Vietnamese equivalence

2.4.1 Equivalence case in English downtoners and Vietnamese downtoners

Equivalence is considered as the key factor in translating one language into another

one. The equivalence here is both in structure and meaning. Therefore, in translation, translators must have much time consuming in order to find out the words or phrases that must be the most equivalence to the sources text.

In the scope of this part I would like to analyse the formation of English downtoners to find out their Vietnamese equivalences.

- **A word (or phrase) + adjective**

This is one of the most popular structures in English downtoners

For example:

“It does seem to me that so many of our citizens remain **quite** oblivious to the critical illness that now characterises the UK economy”.

—*Tony Blair: The Next Labour Prime Minister?*

In this example, the word “**quite**” refers to “not really oblivious but not to care”. In Vietnamese it means “đường như tôi thấy rằng rất nhiều công dân của chúng tôi vẫn còn khá thờ ơ với các căn bệnh trầm trọng đặc trưng của nền kinh tế Vương quốc Anh”.

For example:

“She was **rather late** when she came to the appointment”

(<http://www.robertabarresi.com/Prepositionsadverbs2.html>)

“**Rather late**” denotes “not too late but late enough”. In Vietnamese, it means “cô ấy đến cuộc hẹn khá muộn”

For example:

“This place is **fairly cosy**”.

(<http://www.robertabarresi.com/Prepositionsadverbs2.html>)

“**Fairly cosy**” expresses the desirable quality of the place. So the equivalence of this in Vietnamese is “nơi đó khá là ấm cúng”.

For example:

"Stuart felt **slightly** ill." (Not seriously ill; just a little sick.)

In Vietnamese, it means “Stuart cảm thấy hơi mệt”

For example:

“The young lady who stepped out of the car was **hardly pretty**”.

(<http://www.robertabarresi.com/Prepositionsadverbs2.html>)

“**Hardly pretty**” means “hầu như không xinh”, “hơi xấu” so it means “người phụ nữ bước ra khỏi xe trông hầu như không xinh”.

For example:

“She behaved **kind of haughty** with us”.

(<http://www.robertabarresi.com/Prepositionsadverbs2.html>)

“**Kind of haughty**” means “khá kiêu căng, ngạo mạn” so the equivalence in Vietnamese is “cô ấy đối xử với chúng tôi khá là ngạo mạn”

This type of equivalence can be seen in many downtoners such as:

Sort of strange -> **khá lạ**

Barely noticeable -> **vừa đáng chú ý**

Relatively simple -> **tương đối đơn giản**

Somewhat lower -> **thấp hơn một chút**

Slightly smaller -> **hơi nhỏ**

- **A word or phrase + verb**

For example:

"We **scarcely** knew what to say." (We were so surprised that we had difficulty making a comment.)

(Chúng tôi hiếm khi biết phải nói gì)

For example:

"Jacob **sort of** blushed when Ramona spoke to him." (**sort of** and **kind of**, mean 'just a little bit'.)

(Jacob hơi bối rối khi nói chuyện với Ramona)

For example:

"Aunt Tilly's dinner was **almost** ruined because we arrived late."

(Dinner was nearly ruined, but it wasn't.)

(Bữa tối của dì Tilly đã gần như bị phá hỏng vì chúng tôi đến trễ)

For example:

"As you **probably know**, I am terrified of bugs".

(Chắc là bạn biết tôi rất sợ những con rệp)

For example:

"He **virtually finished** work when they arrived"

"**Virtually finished**" means "hầu như đã kết thúc" -> "anh ấy hầu như đã kết thúc công việc khi họ đến".

For example:

"The problem is **as good as settled**"

"**As good as settled**" means "coi như đã được giải quyết"

-> "vấn đề coi như đã được giải quyết"

Some **word or phrase + verb** with their equivalences in Vietnamese such as:

Slightly increasing->tăng nhẹ

Quite enjoy->khá thích

Almost decide->hầu như đã quyết định

- **Word or phrase in End position**

Some downtoners favour End position such as: a bit, at all

For example:

"We do **not** like his personality **a bit**"

“Not...a bit” means “không...chút nào”

-> chúng tôi không thích nhân cách của anh ta chút nào

For example:

“They do **not** support her **at all**”

“Not...at all” means “không...nữa”

-> Họ không ủng hộ cô ấy nữa.

For example:

“Interview questions and answers can only be predicted and prepared for **to a certain extent**”.

-> “các câu hỏi phỏng vấn và các câu trả lời có thể chỉ được dự đoán và chuẩn bị ở một mức độ nhất định”

Other downtoners also have this pattern such as:

Not...in the least->không...một chút nào

Not...in the slightest->không...một chút nào

2.4.2 Non-equivalence case in English downtoners and Vietnamese downtoners

To be the two different languages, so non-equivalence between English and Vietnamese downtoners is unavoidable. This phenomenon happens in the position and meaning of word.

According to position, some is equivalence and some of them are non-equivalent. In this position, we can not always find out equivalence of downtoners in Vietnamese with the same position like: “**not...a bit**”-> “**không...chút nào**”. Many English downtoners are translated into Vietnamese in a different position.

For example:

“They admire his courage **to some extent**”

-> In this example, the downtoner “**to some extent**” is in the End position. However, we can not say that “They admire his courage **to some extent**” means

“chúng tôi ngưỡng mộ lòng dũng cảm của anh ấy *ở một mức độ nào đó*” but “*ở một mức độ nào đó*, chúng tôi ngưỡng mộ lòng dũng cảm của anh ấy”

For example:

“Darwin was right. Up to a point”

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global/2009/feb/12/simon-conway-morris>)

We can say “Darwin đã đúng *ở một điểm nào đó*” or “*ở một điểm nào đó* thì Darwin đã đúng”.

2.4.3 Benefits of downtoners

We can see that using downtoners bring many benefits. The use of downtoners help make the request more tentative, It could be said that downtoners belong to the realm of 'negative' politeness. Downtoners are also used for different purposes in conversation and academic prose. They may have more than one function. Unless you are a student of grammar and planning to be a teacher of the English language, you don't have to know these terms. It is important, though, to understand what kind of meaning they give to the words they modify. Downtoners have lowering effect on the force of the verb and many of them scale gradable verbs. These are the types of expressions which speaker use to record that they are at risk is not fully attached to the cooperative principles in a conversation.

- Downtoners show the politeness, especially, negative politeness. Where positive politeness is free-ranging, negative politeness is specific and focused; it performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA unavoidably effects.

For example:

Could you *possibly by any chance* lend me your car *for just a few minutes*?

(Anh có thể có khả năng bởi bất cứ cơ hội nào mà cho tôi mượn xe của anh trong vài phút được không ạ?)

- Using downtoners we can avoid losing the hearer's face and show the respect to the hearer; make the comprehend communication and the friendly between two people taking part in conversation in order to prevent the negative reaction of the hearer when receiving these informations. When forced to perform acts or threatening language may offend the audience of positive behavior such as crab, criticism or advice ... speaker usually use downtoners in order to reduce any face threatening act while speaking. Thanks to downtoners we can get a better communication.

For example:

She is **hardly pretty**!

(Cô ấy hầu như chẳng xinh đẹp gì)

- Downtoners help speakers and writers communicate less precisely the degree of accuracy and truth in assessments.

For example:

"He **kind of** likes politics"

(Anh ấy khá là thích các hoạt động chính trị)

"**Kind of**" is a downtoner that indicates the degree of the speaker's assessment instead of making a certain statement "he likes politics".

For example:

"I'm not **quite** certain, but it seems to me that nothing has been done about it so far"

(Tôi không chắc lắm, nhưng theo tôi thì hình như là lâu nay người ta vẫn chưa làm được gì để giải quyết vấn đề này).

"**Not quite certain**" indicates the degree of the speaker's accuracy about the assessment.

- Many of the **downtoner + adjective** collocations in academic prose have to do with marking the extent of comparison between two items

For example:

slightly smaller

somewhat lower

relatively unimportant

- Downtoners also show personal characteristic of the speaker. If a speaker chooses the downtoners such as: ***more or less, to some extent, to a certain extent, up to a point, in a sense***, etc, they suggest that the speaker is not taking full responsibility for the truth of his utterance.

For example:

He gave some ten rupees, **more or less**.

(ít nhiều thì anh ta cũng đã đưa vài đồng 10 rupees).

- Downtoners maybe show educational and cultural background

For example:

I don't know, ***like I think*** people have a right to their own opinions.

(Californian English).

(tôi không biết, **như tôi nghĩ** mọi người có quyền có ý kiến riêng của họ).

For example:

Ah, the weather's bad ***like***. (Welsh English).

(ah, xấu **như** thời tiết).

CHAPTER III

SOLUTION FOR NON-EQUIVALENCE CASES

Translation is the process of transforming all part of a source text into a text image that contains all the information. In other words, it is the process translators must try to find out all meanings of one text between two languages. Therefore, equivalence is considered to be the root in translation. Finding equivalence in translation involves decoding the source language text and making attempt to find an appropriate equivalence in the target language to encode whatever has been decoded in source language.

However, between two different languages, there are always many differences and non-equivalence in translation is unavoidable. During the process of learning translation subject in university, my friends and I sometimes have some difficulties in translating especially translating English downtoners into Vietnamese. These difficulties are illustrated from non-equivalence cases between English and Vietnamese downtoners.

In the scope of this chapter, I would like to express some non-equivalence cases in using English downtoners and Vietnamese equivalence and my own solution for them.

3.1 differences in position

Each language has its own regulations for the position of downtoners.

Sometimes some English downtoners must favour End position but we can not translate it into Vietnamese that they still in End position. When meeting this problem, it is important for students to understand the meaning and expressions of the downtoners. Both English and Vietnamese also have downtoners in the End position but it is not any time we can find a Vietnamese downtoner which is equivalent to the same position.

For example:

“I saw him *a little*”

It is not “tôi nhìn thấy anh ấy ít khi” but “tôi *ít khi /hiếm khi* nhìn thấy anh ấy”

For example:

“They admire his courage *to some extent*”

It is not “họ ngưỡng mộ lòng dũng cảm của anh ấy ở một điểm nào đó” but “*ở một điểm nào đó*, họ ngưỡng mộ lòng dũng cảm của anh ấy”

So, by changing the position of English downtoners when we translate it into Vietnamese we make the translation better.

Beside, the strategy “be pessimistic” gives redress to hearer’s negative face by explicitly expressing doubt that the conditions for the appropriateness of speaker’s speech act obtain. In English, this strategy is regarded as the polite request

For example:

I don't suppose there'd be any hope of you picking me up tomorrow morning.

(tôi không cho rằng sẽ có hi vọng về việc anh đến đón tôi vào sáng mai.)

but a normal Vietnamese may possibly regard it as the blame. In this case, in order to make the equivalence, Vietnamese tend to say:

không hiểu sáng mai bạn có thể qua đón tôi được không ạ

PART III: CONCLUSION

1. Summary of the study:

Thanks to the supportive help of my supervisor, teachers, and encouragement of my friends and my family, I have finally finished the research study. Once more, I would like to impress on readers the importance of English. If you want to go to any countries in the world, accept job anywhere and settle down. When you communicate with the foreigners, English is a means of expression of thought, emotions, actions, etc. I try my best to research the graduation paper: “A study on downtoners”. I really hope that my study, to some extent, will help the readers who want to learn more about English culture. And they can find useful ways to use downtoners in writing and communicating. Besides, I also point out an analysis on English downtoners and Vietnamese equivalence. In part, I give some solutions to overcome. To summarize, the matter of downtoners still has large aspects. However, in my study, I only mention some main fields as concerned above.

Each part in my graduation paper is mentioned its content. The theoretical background knowledge about definitions and types of English downtoners gives an overview of the study. The syntactic features, positions of downtoners are classified clearly in chapter I. It is necessary to list an analysis on English downtoners and Vietnamese equivalence in chapter II. Chapter III also presents some suggestions to solve problems.

In summary, understanding all the fields of downtoner as well as making much progress in English are not quite easy, but is also not impossible. The learners should spend much time practicing daily and keep on studying. I really would like readers to be interest in my study. And the research study can help readers to get more knowledge to learn English grammar better.

2. Suggestion for further study

As far as I am concerned in the scope of the study, my graduation paper is not extensive due to the frame of time and knowledge. Beside downtoners, there are other ways of intensifiers in English adjuncts according to semantic classes, which can be a topic for another study, emphasize, and amplifiers. As well as I can not mention all types of downtoners specifically. All those topics require much time to research. I hope that I will be given encouragement of reader the help of my teachers, my friends to spend time to concentrate on studying more about related fields.

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