

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

**AN ENGLISH-VIETNAMESE CROSS-CULTURAL
COMMUNICATION STUDY ON
USING ADDRESSING FORM
AND ITS POTENTIAL CULTURE SHOCK**

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NA1401

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HAI PHONG - 2014

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG
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NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

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NA1401

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

“As the world becomes smaller, the need to understand each other's faith grows”, said Tony Blair. The understanding mentioned by the UK president is the one in both culture, economy, politics and so on. In this integrating world, there will be no single country that can any longer develop alone. Thus, the understanding is critical. And the understanding should start with cross-cultural one and typically with linguistic understanding.

Linguistic understanding as well as cultural one is performed first by translators who transfer meanings from a language to another. But different languages have different systems which are not easy to be translated equivalently.

Both English and Vietnamese languages also have their unique addressing term system. In these two languages, a few basic addressing terms share the same semantic constants. However, cross-cultural researchers find that addressing terms of a society that uses one system cannot be fully translated equivalently into the language of a society that uses a different system. Thus, as an English major student, I would like to have a modest ***Cross Cultural Communication Study on Using Addressing Form and its potential culture shock*** in my minor thesis.

2. Aim

As aforementioned, the aim of this study is to show the different Addressing systems in English and Vietnamese thus it's easier for myself as well as other translators to have the best possible translation in different contexts. Besides, the

study will also focus on the potential situations that can cause culture-shock when using addressing forms.

3. Scope of the study

Since addressing terms are used in any communications including in society, family, work place, politic relations, and so on; it is impossible for me to present them all. In this study, I would like to limit it to addressing terms used in certain communication including one among friends, family members, neighbors, at working place and at school. Besides, Vietnam is a multicultural country. Different regions have their typical culture and hence, some differences in addressing form. This study is limited to the addressing form used in the Northeast of Vietnam.

4. Method

This study is done by using library research. I use books and many other sources as references that I think related to the subject matter that is being analyzed. All the information includes theory which are carefully selected for the purpose of this study and examples of the certain communication situations which are deeply analyzed.

The study is also done by survey on foreigners who study and speak Vietnamese as a second language and Vietnamese who are living or studying in English speaking countries. The aim of the survey is to figure out the problems those people have in using addressing form in their new environment.

5. Design

The study is divided into three main parts.

Part one is ***Theoretical Background*** from which the study is built. There are four terms often used in this study. They are *Culture*, *Language*, *Cross Cultural Communication* and *Culture Shock*.

The second part is **Development** in which the differences between English and Vietnamese addressing form are presented. The differences will be shown in *Pronoun* systems, *Kinship* systems, *Usage Of Proper Name And Titles* and *Occupational Status*. It is evident that these differences will cause culture shock for a Vietnamese or English sojourner entering a new culture. In this part, the *Potential Culture-Shock* situations will also be shown. After that, I would like to present some *Suggestions for Culture-Shock caused by contrasting Addressing systems*.

The study is ended with the third part - **Conclusion** which sums up what to be learnt from the study. There are *Teaching Implication* and *Translating Implication*.

In short, this Cross-cultural Communication study brings out an overall view at the differences between English and Vietnamese addressing form which is the 1st potential culture shock and its some solutions for this head-aching problem.

PART TWO

DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Addressing form is one part of Communication which is the main purpose of language. Discussing Language, it is impossible not to mention Culture since they have mutual effects on each other. In addition, the differences of Addressing form only happens and cause Culture-Shock when they are Cross-Cultural Communication. The objective of this Chapter is to present these terms which are the basis of this study.

1.1. CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

1.1.1. Culture

No one can make a unity definition for Culture. The reason is that there are so many different ones.

Culture, as Nguyen Quang's thought (1998:3), is *"a share background (for example, national, ethnic, religious) resulting from a common language and communication style, custom, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Culture in this text does not refer to art, music, literature, food, clothing styles, and so on. It refers to the informal and often hidden patterns of human interactions, expressions, and viewpoints that people in one culture share. The hidden nature of culture has been compared to an iceberg, most of which is hidden underwater! Like the iceberg most of the influence of culture on an individual cannot be seen. The part of culture that is exposed is not always that which creates cross-cultural difficulties; the hidden aspects of culture have significant effects on behavior and on interactions with others."*

Integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behaviour that is both a result of and integral to the human capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations. Culture thus consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies, and symbols. It has played a crucial role in human evolution, allowing human beings to adapt the environment to their own purposes rather than depend solely on natural selection to achieve adaptive success. Every human society has its own particular culture, or sociocultural system. Variation among cultures is attributable to such factors as differing physical habitats and resources; the range of possibilities inherent in areas such as language, ritual, and social organization; and historical phenomena such as the development of links with other cultures. An individual's attitudes, values, ideals, and beliefs are greatly influenced by the culture (or cultures) in which s'he lives.

For the above mentioned features, I see the shortest and most concise definition of culture in Moore's words (1985:4): *"culture is the whole of knowledge, ideas and habits of society that are transmitted from one generation to the next."*

1.1.2. Language

It is impossible to separate culture and language. The ability to create and use language is the most distinctive feature of humans. Language is a system of conventional spoken or written symbols used by people in a shared culture to communicate with each other. Language can be viewed as an expression of culture. People use language to communicate, to express their ideas, to pass their achievements from generation to generation. Thus, culture is transmitted through language and people learn their culture through their language.

Language, as David Crystal (1992: 2) stated, is *"the systematic, conventional use of sounds, signs, or written symbols in a human society for communication and self-expression."*

Language is shortly defined as a "human system of communication that uses signals such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols." But frankly, language is far too complicated to be adequately explained by a brief definition. Vladimir Lenin identified language as "*the most important communication mean of human being.*"

Each language has a complex structure that can be analyzed and systematically presented. All languages begin as speech, and many go on to develop writing systems. All can employ different sentence structures to convey different meanings. They use their resources differently for this purpose but they seem to be equally structurally flexible. The principal resources are word order, word form, syntactic structure, and, intonation in speech. Different languages keep indicators of number, person, gender, tense, mood, and other categories separate from the root word or attach them to it.

1.1.3. The relationship between Culture and Language

Wardhaugh (2002, 219-220) reported that there are two claims to the relationship between language and culture:

The structure of a language determines the way in which speakers of that language view the world or, as a weaker view, the structure does not determine the world-view but is still extremely influential in predisposing speakers of a language toward adopting their world-view.

The culture of a people finds reflection in the language they employ: because they value certain things and do them in a certain way, they come to use their language in ways that reflect what they value and what they do.

Of course, just because people talk differently, they think differently. The idea that language, to some extent, determines the way we think about the world around us is known as linguistic determinism with 'strong' determinism stating

that language actually determines thought, and ‘weak’ determinism implying that our thought is merely influenced by our language (Campbell, 1997).

In another word, language is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties. A language both reflects and affects a culture's way of thinking, and changes in a culture influence the development of its language.

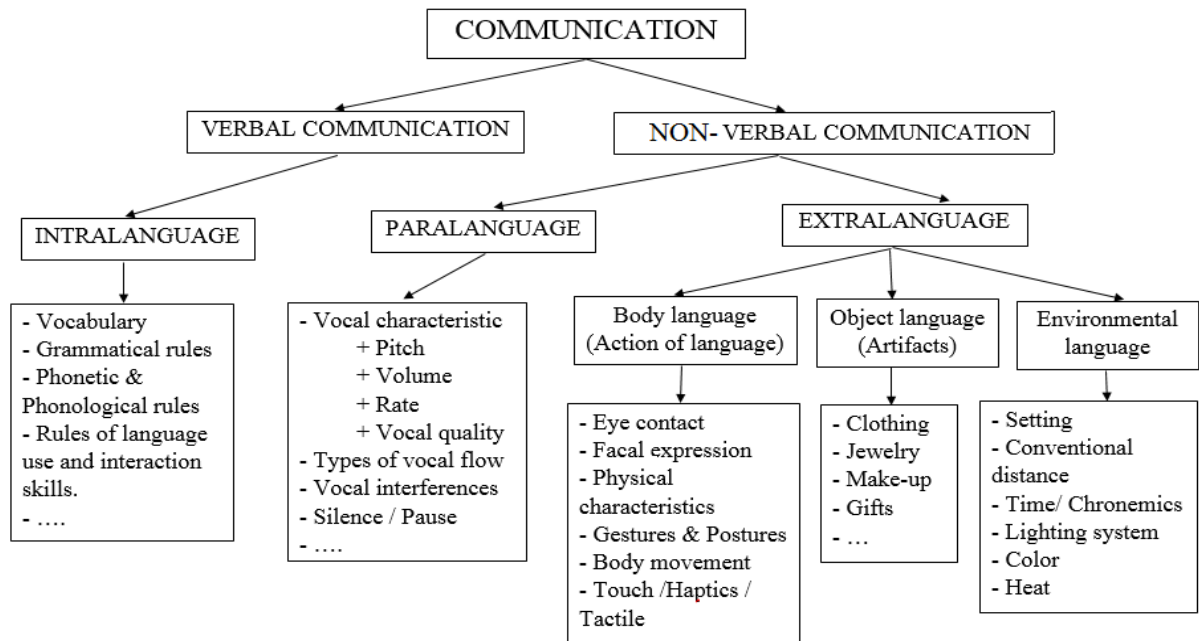
1.2. CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE SHOCK

1.2.1. Communication

Communication is the process of exchanging information, thoughts, and opinions to someone by speech, writing or signs. Communication serves as a foundation for planning and organizing, promoting motivation, altering individual's attitudes and in socialization. It is the basic method through which humans interact.

Communication is important because it allows people to share ideas, interests, and develop relationships. Without communication, the world could not work together to promote common interests and advancements in society.

Communication can also be defined as the sharing of meaning through the transmission of information via mutually understood signs. Thus, it can be classified as in the chart below:



Source: **Nguyen Quang (1998:3), Intercultural communication**

All forms of communication can be categorized as either verbal or nonverbal. In turn, both verbal and nonverbal communication can be subdivided into either vocal or non-vocal.

Because of the limited scope of this study, I would like to focus just only on Verbal communication.

Much of the communication that takes place between people is verbal; that is, it is based on language.

- Verbal communication of the vocal category includes spoken language.
- Non-vocal verbal communication involves written communication as well as communication that is transmitted through sign language, finger spelling, Braille, or other similar alternatives to verbal language.

The purpose of any communication is to transfer the Speaker's (S) idea and/or information to the Hearer (H). To get the purpose done, the first task that both S

and H have to do is to point out the subject/object to be mentioned in the communication. This can only be done by using Addressing Form, which is the main subject of this study.

1.2.2. Cross-cultural communication

Today the world we live in is “a global village” where no nation, group or culture can remain anonymous. What happens in one part of the world affects all parts of the world. As the world is becoming smaller, we are increasingly interacting with people from many different cultures. While modern technology has made it easier for us to communicate with people anywhere in the world, such interactions can be difficult if we do not know how to deal with people and cultures different from our own.

Language and cultural misunderstanding can clearly be avoided if we increase our knowledge and understanding of other people and their cultures. The study of cross-cultural communication addresses this need by examining the communication and interactions between people of different cultures.

Cross-cultural communication is an awareness that specific cultural and/or social and/or linguistic and/or historical and/or gender-based differences matter in cross cultural interaction, demonstrated through appropriately shaping one’s discourse with individuals of different backgrounds from one’s own.

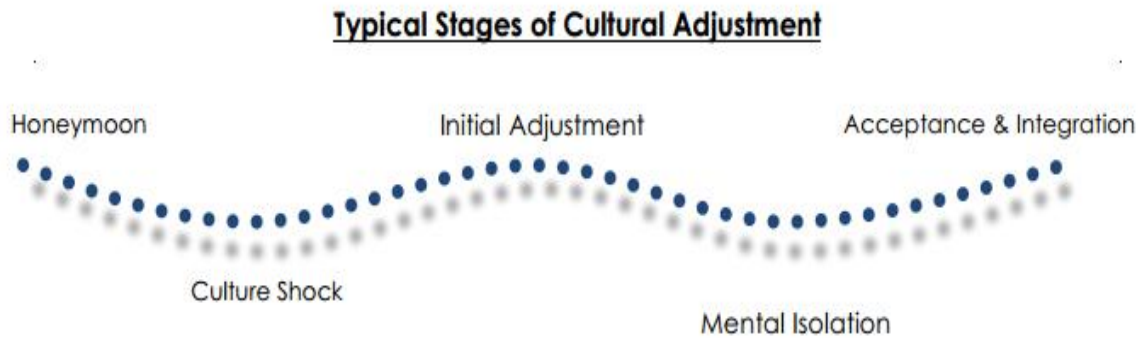
Samovar & Porter (1997: 70) point out that as cultures differ from one another, the communication practices and behaviours of people will inevitably vary as a result of their different perceptions of the world. Cross-cultural communication, more precisely then, is defined as “*the study of communication between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter their communication.*”

The phrase cross-cultural communication describes the ability to successfully form, foster, and improve relationships with members of a culture different from one's own. It is based on knowledge of many factors, such as the other culture's values, perceptions, manners, social structure, and decision-making practices, and an understanding of how members of the group communicate--verbally, non-verbally, in person, in writing, and in various business and social contexts, to name but a few. Like speaking a foreign language or riding a bicycle, cross-cultural communication involves a skill component that may best be learned and mastered through instruction and practice: simply reading about it is not enough.

1.2.3. Culture shock

Culture-shock (or communication breakdown) often and easily happens in Cross-cultural communication. Culture shock exactly means the impact you may feel when you enter a culture very different from one to which you are accustomed. It does when a person learns a second language in a second culture or s/he moves to live in another cultural environment. The term Culture Shock was first mentioned in literature by Kalvero Oberg in 1960. In his article Oberg defined Culture Shock as follows: "*Culture Shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life.*" Culture shock results from different values, perceptions, norms that lead to the different inference as well as misinterpretation in both verbal and non-verbal communication.

In "Beyond Language Intercultural Communication for English as a Second Language" (1982), Levin and Adelman present a W-curved diagram illustrating the periods of adjusting to a culture:



W-curveddiagram of Culture-shock stages - Levin & Adelman (1982)

Starting with **Honey Moon Stage**, a “new comer” starts a new adventure. This stage is dominated by enthusiasm and fascination about the foreign culture. Everything is great, new, and exciting!

The **Culture Shock Stage**, which can also be called **crisis stage**, is the one when the new comer perceives differences in languages, values and symbols between the own and the foreign culture. A general unease is provoked by the feeling of uncertainty about himself (herself) and the surroundings, and increased due to the lack of familiar signs of orientation and belonging. S/he may feel frustrated, sad, upset, confused, overwhelmed and out of control.

The crisis stage is followed by recovery. The sojourner accepts his/her problem and starts working on it. This period is known as **Initial Adjustment Stage**. The sojourner starts to understand how the system works. The relationship to host nationals starts to improve as well. S/he may have already created some new routines in his/her life and feel okay about the new environment.

After a while, the sojourner feels lonely and just wants to remove himself/herself from the situation. Some of the relationship with others might not be going smoothly and s/he loses his/her self-confidence. This is when s/he experiences the **Mental Isolation Stage**.

In the final stage of **Acceptance and Integration**, the adaptation reaches its final extent. Anxiety vanishes almost completely and the habits and behavior of the host society are accepted. The sojourner becomes functional, can work effectively, and is able to be more flexible.

The typical potential culture-shock caused by using different addressing forms shall be further discussed in Chapter 3.

We can come to a conclusion from the theories presented in this Chapter that when there is interference between two different culture, there is cross-cultural communication. In the second part of this study, the differences in Addressing systems used in Vietnamese-English cross-cultural communication shall be more deeply discussed.

CHAPTER II

ADDRESSING FORM IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

As mentioned in the previous Chapter, Vietnamese culture and English one are different. Thus, the languages are different and hence the Addressing systems are not the same. The difference is even so clear that they are hardly translated equivalently.

2.1. Definition of addressing form

According to Nguyen Van Khang (2008, Address forms in translation), *addressing terms are words used to call oneself and others*. In other words, Addressing words are the ones used to call the H or the S in communication. Each language has its own addressing system. They, however, both base on basic commons. Those commons are pronouns, kinship words which are divided into categories of number, gender and person.

In this study, I would like to point out the similarity and also the differences between English addressing system and Vietnamese one.

2.2. Pronouns

Personal pronoun is a word used instead of a noun that represents a specific person. Its usage depends on number (singular, plural), person (first, second, third) gender (male, female, neutral), and case (subject, object).

The following Tables will illustrate the difference between English and Vietnamese personal pronoun system.

Table 1: English Personal Pronouns

Person		Subject	Object	Possessive	Reflexive
I	Singular	I	me	mine	myself
	Plural	we	us	ours	ourselves
II	Singular	you	you	yours	yourself
	Plural	you	you	yours	yourselves
III	Singular	she	her	hers	herself
		he	him	his	himself
		it	it	its	itself
	Plural	they	them	theirs	themselves



**“Someone calling themselves
a customer says they want
something called service.”**

Table 2: Vietnamese Personal Pronouns

Number	Persons		
	P1 (addressor) (English "I/we")	P2 (addressee) (English "you")	P3 (third person referent) (English "he, she, it/they")
Singular	tôi	anh / chị	nó, hắn ta, y, ... / nó, cô ta, ả ta, mụ ta, ...
	tao	mày, mi	
	ta	mi, người	
	tớ	cậu, bạn	
	mình	bạn	
		mình	
Plural	chúng tôi	các bạn	chúng nó, chúng, họ, bọn họ, ...
	chúng tao	chúng mày, bây,	
	ta/ chúng ta	chúng bây ,tụi mày, tụi bây	
	chúng tớ	các cậu	
	mình, chúng mình, tụi mình	các bạn	

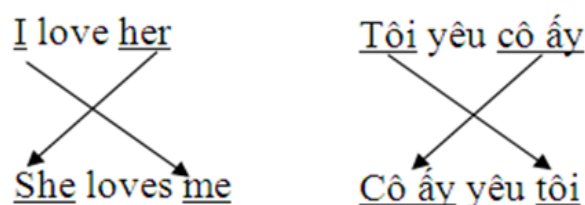
***Huỳnh Công Hiến - University of Social Sciences and Humanities -
Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh city***

As it can be seen in the 2 tables above, English personal pronouns as well as Vietnamese ones are used depending on correct gender and number of people being mentioned. This is an obvious similarity, not only between English and Vietnamese but among all languages. Vietnamese and English pronouns, however, are used in different ways:

Firstly, in terms of grammar, Vietnamese personal pronouns, unlike English personal pronouns, do not have transformation from subjective form to objective

one, which means they can be used as either a subject or an object in a sentence. See the following example:

E.g.



In English, a Subjective pronoun always has an equivalent Objective form. In the above example, “*I*” becomes “*me*” and “*she*” becomes “*her*”. In Vietnamese, there’s no transformation from Subjective form to Objective form of pronouns as English does. This means a pronoun can be used as both subject and object in sentences.

Secondly, there are more forms of personal pronouns in Vietnamese than there are in English. Almost all Vietnamese people were peasants in the past. They lived in their agricultural society. To cope with any changing difficulties, they lived in an organized society and thought flexibly. This flexibility is reflected in their addressing system which is still remained nowadays. The addressing system is extremely flexible. There exist the distinction in illustrating **age gap, social relations, attitude of Addresser towards Addressee, time and place**. English pronouns, however, rarely express those features. The first person and singular pronoun “*I*” in English can be translated into Vietnamese as “*tôi/tao/tớ/mình/ta*” depending on specific situations. Similarly, “*she*” can be translated as “*cô ấy/cô ta/nó/mụ ấy/bà ta*”.

Take the pair “*I - you*” as example, if “*I*” is in higher social position than “*you*”, this pair might be translated into Vietnamese as “*ta - người / tao - mày*”.

In terms of age gap, the singular third person pronoun “*she*” might be translated as “*bà ấy / bác ấy / cô ấy / chị ấy / em ấy ...*”

With different attitudes towards addressee, a Vietnamese addresser can use different pronouns. An old might can be called “*ông ấy / cụ ấy / lão ta ...*”. A young girl might be mentioned as “*cô ấy / em ấy / bé ấy / nó ...*”.

Social relationship, age gap and Speaker’s attitude are usually combined in a pronoun to be used for an addressee. When addressing a man, if the S use the pronoun “*anh ấy*”, without an explanation, it can be inferred that the man is not much older than the S and the S has a good or neutral attitude towards that man. That man, if called “*lão ta*”, is a man who is much older than the S and his appearance in S’s mind is certainly not good.

In conventional Vietnamese communication, no one is allowed to address himself / herself “*tôi*” when speaking to an old person or someone at higher social / familial position. In communication between two people from the same generation, there hardly exist the “disordered” addressing forms. The social order is kept in almost all conversations. People who are older or at higher position can address the lower by “*nó*” but the lower are never allowed to address the higher that way.

But it does not mean that all Vietnamese pronouns show the age gap, social status and attitude of addressers towards addressees. There are also the ones showing the equality in power / age. If “*I*” is a peer to “*you*” in terms of social relationship, the pair becomes “*tớ - cậu / tôi - anh (chị)*” in relations among friends or “*tôi - mình*” between a husband and his wife. This pair can even turn into “*đồng này - đồng ấy*” in an intimate relationship between a boy and a girl as the example:

E.g.

Boy: **Đằng ấy** cho **đằng này** hỏi một câu nhé?

(May I have a question to you?)

Girl: Vâng, **đằng ấy** cứ hỏi ạ.

(Yes, please go ahead!)

The equal personal pronouns can also be used when there exist differences between addresser and addressee. The pronoun “**Tôi**” can be used even the addresser is at higher or lower position than the addressee. For instance, a father, with a higher position, can refer himself as “**tôi**” when calling his son / daughter “**anh/chị**”. This is as keeping the distance between the two subjects of the conversation. However, the son / daughter cannot refer themselves “**tôi**” in this case. The pair “**tôi**” - “**anh/chị**”, similarly, can be used in a class room between a teacher and his students, and in a company between a boss and his staff. When seeing someone for this first time, if you do not know his/her age and social status (or if it is not necessary to know), you can call him/her “**anh/chị**” and yourself “**tôi**”. For example, when asking for the direction: “**Anh/chị** cho **tôi** hỏi đường đến sân bay đi thế nào ạ?” (Could you please show me the way to the airport?). Or in a restaurant: “**Anh/chị** dùng gì ạ?” (What would you like?).

2.3. Kinship terms

Kinship terms, according to E. R. Leach (as cited in Leach, 1958, p. 143), are “category words by means of which an individual is taught to recognize the significant groupings in the social structure into which he is born”. All languages have their own kinship system, which are clearly highlighted in addressing forms of a language. All kinship terms use of factors as age, gender, generation, blood and marriage in their society. There are both similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese kinship terms shown in the following table 3 and table 4:

Table 3: Lineal relations

Relation to addresser	English term	Vietnamese term
paternal grandfather	grandfather	Ông nội
paternal grandmother	grandmother	Bà nội
father	father	Ba, cha, tía, bố
mother	mother	Mẹ, má, u, bầm
elder brother	brother	Anh trai
elder sister	sister	Chi gái
son	son	Con trai
daughter	daughter	Con gái
son's son daughter's son	grandson	Cháu trai (cháu nội / cháu ngoại)
son's daughter daughter's daughter	granddaughter	Cháu gái (cháu nội / cháu ngoại)

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Table 4: Collateral relations

Relation to ego	English term	Vietnamese term
father's elder brother father's younger brother mother's elder brother mother's younger brother	uncle	Bác Chú Bác Cậu
father's elder/ younger sister mother's elder/ younger sister	aunt	Bác, cô Bác, dì
father's brother's son (elder / younger) father's sister's son (elder / younger)	cousin	Anh, em trai bà con Anh, em trai họ
father's sister's father's brother's daughter(elder / younger) daughter(elder / younger) mother's brother's daughter(elder / younger)	cousin	Chị, em gái họ Chị, em gái bà con
brother's son sister's son wife's sibling's son husband's sibling's son	nephew	Cháu trai

brother's daughter sister's daughter wife's sibling's daughter husband's sibling's daughter	niece	Cháu gái
mother's elder brother ' wife mother's younger brother's wife	aunt	Bác Mợ
father's elder brother' wife father's younger brother's wife	aunt	Bác thím
Father in law (paternal and maternal) Mother in law (paternal and maternal)	Father in law Mother in law	Ba, cha, bố chồng/vợ Mẹ, má chồng/ vợ
Elder/ younger brother's wife Elder/younger sister's husband	Sister in law Brother in law	Chị dâu, em dâu Anh rể, em rể
Elder/ younger brother in law(paternal and maternal) Elder/younger sister in law(paternal and maternal)	Brother in law Sister in law	Anh/ em chồng (vợ) Chi/ em chồng (vợ)
Son's wife Daughter's husband	Daughter in law Son in law	Con dâu Con rể

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In both Vietnamese and English, kinship words are based on the relation of blood and marriage (lineal and collateral) to be appropriately chosen to address each other in communication. The kinship words clearly show the different generations (between children and parents, between grandchildren and grandparents, etc.) and gender (between brother and sister, between grandmother and grandfather). Besides, both kinship systems distinguish blood and marriage (Son/daughter - *con trai/con gái ruột* and Son/daughter in law - *con rể, con dâu*).

But there exist more differences than similarities between English and Vietnamese kinship systems.

First of all, there are much more kinship words in Vietnamese kinship system than in English one. This difference is caused by the difference in culture. Vietnam is a family-centered tradition country, while English culture focuses on the independence of individuals. Vietnamese people treasure the close family relationship highly and like to live together with or near their families. Complicated Vietnamese family hierarchy is the dominant factor in choosing the right addressing term. By contrast to Vietnamese, **Individualism** has long been considered as a characteristic of the dominant ideology in English culture. They think much of privacy of individuals. Hence, they don't need so many kinship terms to keep together the familial relations.

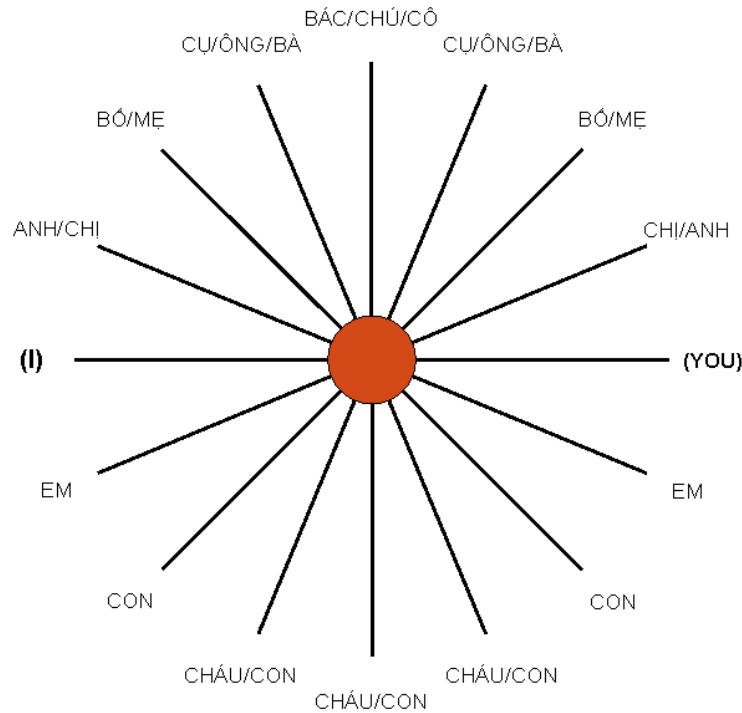
Second of all, grammatically, Vietnamese kinship terms are used for both first, second and third person in the communication. In English, kinship terms are used only for the third person.

E.g.

<i>Mẹ yêu con.</i> (mẹ: 1st person)	I love you. (no kinship)
<i>Con yêu mẹ.</i> (mẹ: 2 nd person)	I love you. (no kinship)
<i>Cháu yêu mẹ.</i> (mẹ: 3 rd person)	I love my mother. (mother: only 3 rd person)



This grammatical difference can be shown in the following circle. In which, it can be seen that Vietnamese kinship terms are used in a much more complicated way to address the 1st and the 2nd person in conversations than that in English conversations, which are only “*you*” and “*I*” as in pronoun system. Vietnamese kinship system is really flexible. In Vietnam, a man and a woman can have different ways to address each other. When they are little, they can be “*tớ - cậu/bạn, mày - tao*”. Then they become husband and wife with the addressing form used as “*anh - em*”. When they have children, they call each other “*bố nó - mẹ nó*”. Then they become grandparents and the addressing forms turn to “*ông nó - bà nó*”. A grandfather can call his grandson as “*cháu*” or “*con*” as the way a father/mother call his/her children. This addressing way is the same when an uncle/ant calls his/her nephew/niece. The following circle of familial relations clearly shows this.



Circular relation - Nguyen Quang (1999:163)

Thirdly, Vietnamese kinship emphasizes patrilineal relationship, while English one does not. In Vietnamese, it's easy to distinguish father's mother and mother's mother (*bà nội, bà ngoại*) but it seems not necessary to be clearly distinguished in English (*grandmother*). Another example is an aunt can be either father's sister (*cô / bác gái*) or mother's sister (*gì / bác gái*).

Besides, since Le dynasty when **Confucianism** was adopted to Vietnam, Vietnamese culture has complied with **Confucianism**, which strictly emphasizes the rule that “**senior controls junior**”. This is clearly reflected in its kinship system. Using wrong kinship words to address the elderly is considered against the traditional and social order. Exact kinship words are necessary in addressing elderly relatives. In English, you can call an older brother by his name but in Vietnamese, his name shall be preceded by kinship word “anh” (E.g. “*anh Nam*” but not “*Nam*” only). Kinship words are always used before an older person's name. The Confucianism is also shown in the order of addressing when

addressing two or more people at different ages and genders. The older shall be addressed first, then the younger such as “**Kính thưa các cụ, các ông, các bà, các anh, các chị.**”

Furthermore, the gender of a relative is more clearly distinguished in Vietnamese kinship system. In English, all male and female children of a father/mother’s brother/sister are called with the same term “**cousin**”. It’s impossible to know whether a “cousin” (in English) is a brother or sister without further information. In Vietnamese, there are “**anh họ / chị họ.**”

Finally, Vietnam has its longstanding agricultural tradition. This tradition has an enormous effect on Vietnamese lifestyle and thought. The agricultural tradition has created the society with its typical closeness in order to cope with natural disasters and irrigation. All people in the society are considered as relatives. Thus, Vietnamese kinship terms are used to address not only the Speaker’s relatives but also any others in the society. For example, Vietnamese people call an older neighboring male “**ông / bác / chú / anh**”, an older neighboring female “**bà / bác / cô / chị**” and a younger boy/girl “**em / cháu**”. Even people who are met for the first time are addressed by kinship words. Those are the kinship words used to call their blood-relatives. With this feature, Vietnamese society can be considered a huge family.

2.4. Usage of Proper Name and titles

2.4.1. Proper name

In Vietnamese language, addressers can call themselves and addressees by their own names instead of using personal pronouns. This would be strange if used in English. Take the following conversation for instance:

Nam: *Mai ơi, Mai đang làm gì thế?*

Mai: *Mai đang nấu bữa tối, Nam gọi Mai có việc gì thế?*

Nam: *Ừ, Phong nhờ Nam báo với Mai là Phong có việc bận nên hôm nay không đến được.*

Mai: *Tiếc nhỉ! Vậy cảm ơn Nam nhé!*

The above communication can be normally translated into English as:

Nam: *Hi Mai, what are you doing?*

Mai: *I'm preparing for dinner, what's wrong?*

Nam: *Yeah, Phong asked me to tell you that he's busy and cannot come tonight.*

Mai: *What a pity! Anyway, thank you, Nam!*

In Vietnamese it's considered friendly as close friends to call each other by names.

Proper names have the purpose of identifying individuals in the society but they are not able to show the relations. In Vietnamese, addressing by proper names is only used when a senior calls a junior. In contrast, a junior is only allowed to address a senior by name preceded by a kinship word.

E.g. *Anh Tân ơi, giúp em bê cái bàn vớ1.*

Bác Năm có khỏe không ạ?

It seems that English people always use “**I**” and “**you**” in any context. They can be used without concerning about their age, gender, social status, attitude and emotion. In reality, it is not simple as it is thought. Proper names are used in English conversation, not only to address 3rd person but also to address speaker and hearer. For example, to start a talk with a friend, you may say: “*Jenny, are you free now?*”. The use of proper names in English is even more complicated

than that in Vietnamese language. First name and family name are used with different meanings:

- First name is used to express the solidarity and closeness between S and H. Thus, it is often used among friends and people at equal social positions or when a senior calls a junior.
- Last name is used to express power semantic (equal and unequal), the formality and to keep distance between S and H. Last name, therefore, is often used after a title.

Another usage of proper names is calling a married woman. In western culture including English speaking countries, a married woman changes her family name to her husband's one, which is recognized by law as maiden name and married name. When *Mary **Smith*** gets married to *Jonathan **Wilson***, her name is changed into *Mary **Wilson*** and she can be addressed as ***Mrs. Wilson*** instead of ***Mrs. Smith***.

In Vietnamese culture, a married woman remains her family name as when she was born. Though there is no change from maiden name to married name, there exist the way of addressing by spouse's name. This addressing way can be applied to both the husband and the wife. If Mr. Mạnh gets married with Mrs. Hoa, they can be addressed as “***anh Hoa***” and “***chị Mạnh***”.

2.4.2. Titles

Whilst English personal pronouns rarely show age, social status and marital status, English titles do.

Here are the formal titles English speakers use:

1. Sir (adult male of any age)
2. Ma'am (adult female - North American)
3. Madam (adult female)

4. Mr. + last name (any man)
5. Mrs. + last name (married woman who uses her husband's last name)
6. Ms. + last name (married or unmarried woman; common in business)
7. Miss + last name (unmarried woman)
8. Dr. + last name (some doctors go by Dr + first name)
9. Professor + last name (in a university setting)

When calling someone who is older or in higher position than you for the first time, you use a formal address: Mr. or Ms. followed by the person's last name if you know it. If you can't find the last name, use a generic title such as Sir or Madam. In today's business world, the following correspondence is very important.

E.g. *Mr. Smith, may I talk to you?* or *Sir, may I talk to you?*

When addressing a child, a romantic partner, or a close friend or family member (usually younger) people often use these terms of endearment, also known as "pet names":

1. Honey (child, romantic partner, or younger person)
2. Dear
3. Sweetie / sweet heart
4. Love
5. Darling
6. Babe or Baby (romantic partner)
7. Pal (father or grandfather calls male child)
8. Buddy or Bud (very informal between friends or adult-to-child; can be seen as negative)

Thus, a husband can address his wife as ***honey, sweetie, darling, babe*** or ***baby***. This is an indirect way to show his love.



There are also informal titles in Vietnamese addressing system. This kind of addressing form is often used in family. A child is often called by another name which seems to be lovely, little and cute. These names are taken from ones of a famous characters, animals or food such as “*Bò, Cún, Gấu, Thỏ, Khoai, Tí*, etc.” These names are normally no longer used when the child gets mature.

2.5. Occupational Status

In hospitals, Vietnamese patients often have such kind of communication with doctors as the following:

Patient: *Bác sĩ ơi, tình trạng bệnh của em thế nào ạ?*

Doctor: *Không sao, bệnh của anh (chị) không có gì nghiêm trọng cả.*

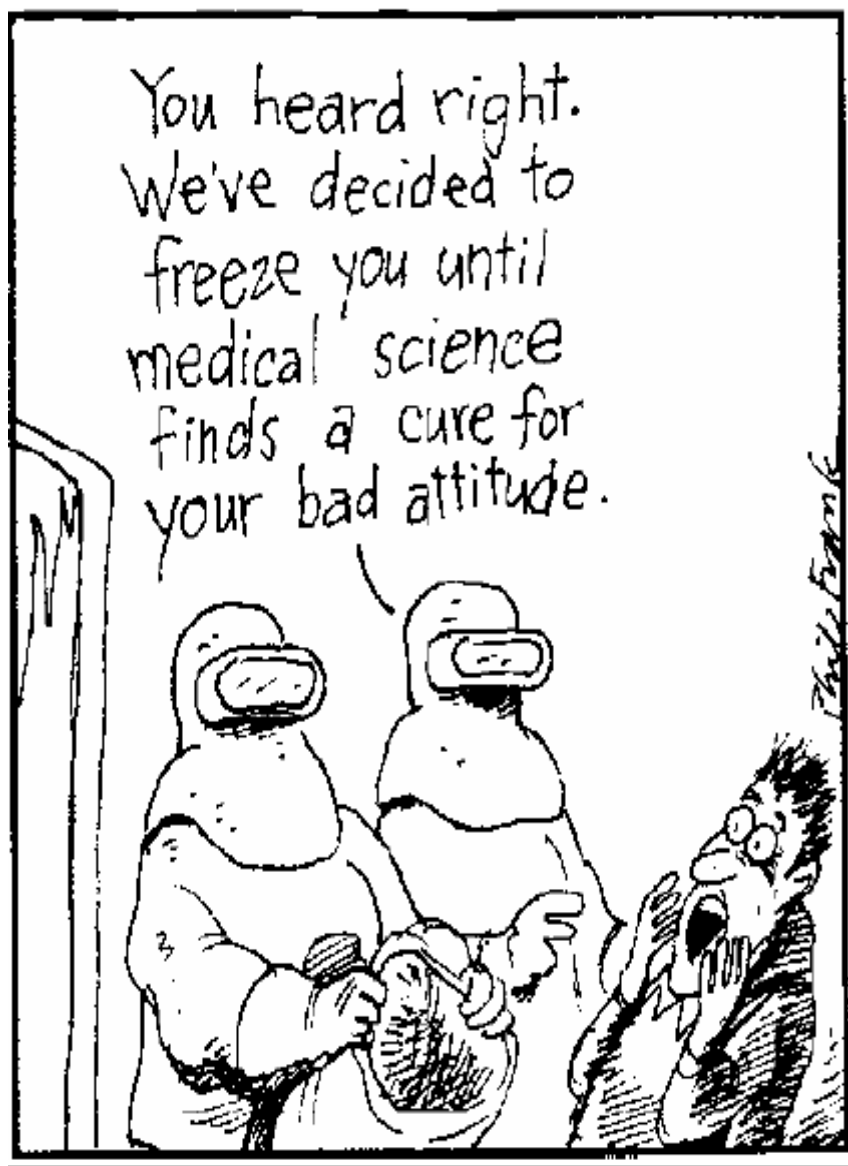
Occupational titles such as *đồng chí* (comrade), *giáo sư* (professor), *bác sĩ* (doctor), *thầy giáo / cô giáo* (teacher), *thủ trưởng* (captain), etc. are often used to address the 2nd and the 3rd person in conversations. This is considered as showing the respect of the addressers to the addressees.

Once again, in English conversations, there are only “***I***”, “***we***”, “***you***” and third personal pronouns (“***he, she, it, they***”) referring people mentioned. Occupational titles are only used to address 3rd person in formal content, for example, when introducing someone: “*Here comes Professor Thomson!*”

In conclusion, this Chapter has clearly shown the evident differences in all aspects of the two Addressing systems. These differences will obviously cause situations that put difficulty in sojourners’ integration to a new culture.

CHAPTER III
POTENTIAL CULTURE SHOCK
CAUSED BY CONTRASTING ADDRESSING SYSTEMS
AND SOME SUGGESTIONS

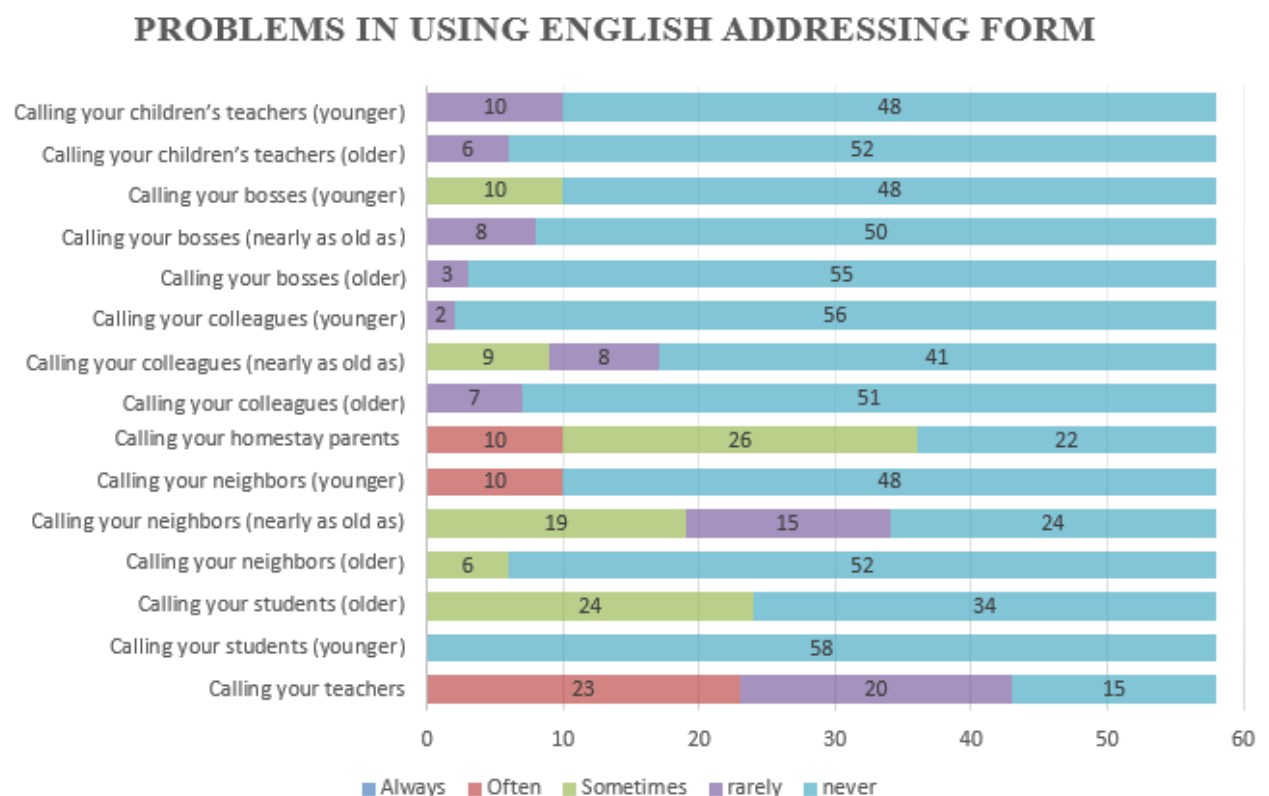
As mentioned in Chapter I, culture-shock happens when a sojourner enters a new culture. This means culture-shock may happen to both Vietnamese or English people. An English person shall find it embarrassed by Vietnamese form of address and vice versa.



3.1. PROBLEMS IN USING ENGLISH ADDRESSING FORM.

English addressing form seems easy to be used since they hardly illustrate age gap, social status and attitude of addresser and addressee. But there exist some situation in which speakers feel confused about how to address people properly. Many feel uncomfortable asking the question "What should I call you?". The following are some situations which may cause culture-shock when a Vietnamese sojourner enters an English speaking culture. These situations are hard ones that an English speaking person or an oversea student/teacher may have. A Vietnamese person who works or study in an English culture is more likely to encounter. Thus, they were put in my surveys sent to Vietnamese oversea students and people who are working in an English speaking culture.

The survey has been done by 58 people. And following is the result:



The above bar chart illustrates the problems that Vietnamese people have when using English addressing forms. The problems often seen are calling teachers,

students, neighbors and homestay parents. 43 out of 56 people asked show that they have problems in calling their teachers. 24 of them are teachers and they get difficulties when having students who are older than the. 34 of them have problems in calling their neighbors. And almost all the abroad students asked have had problems with addressing their homestay parents.

3.1.1. Addressing teachers

Vietnamese students often address their teachers by their occupational status - *thầy/cô*, which means *teacher* in English. With this habit, Vietnamese students call their English speaking teachers “*teacher*”. But “*teacher*” is not their name, it is there job. This also sounds as if the students do not know their teachers’ names. Some English speaking teachers feel uncomfortable to be addressed with this generic term, they suggest the students, for example, “*Please don’t call me teacher, call me Mr. Daniel.*” In this case, you should follow his/her suggestion.

3.1.2. Calling fellow students

In most classroom situations, teachers call their students by their first names. But if there are a few students who are older than the teacher, it seems unreasonable to call their first name. To show respect, the teacher should address these students by their last name (unless they suggest to use their first).

3.1.3. Calling neighbours

It seems easy to call neighbors who are obviously older or younger than you by their last names (with titles) for the former and their first names with their later. If your neighbor looks nearly at the same age with you, normally you can call him/her by his/her first name. But this sometimes matters. Some neighbors may feel unrespected. Since it is considered impolite to ask for their ages, if you are a new comer in the neighborhood, you had better introduce yourself using your first

name and wait to see how they introduce themselves. If you want to make a closer relationship, you can ask a question "*Is it okay if I call you [first name]?*"

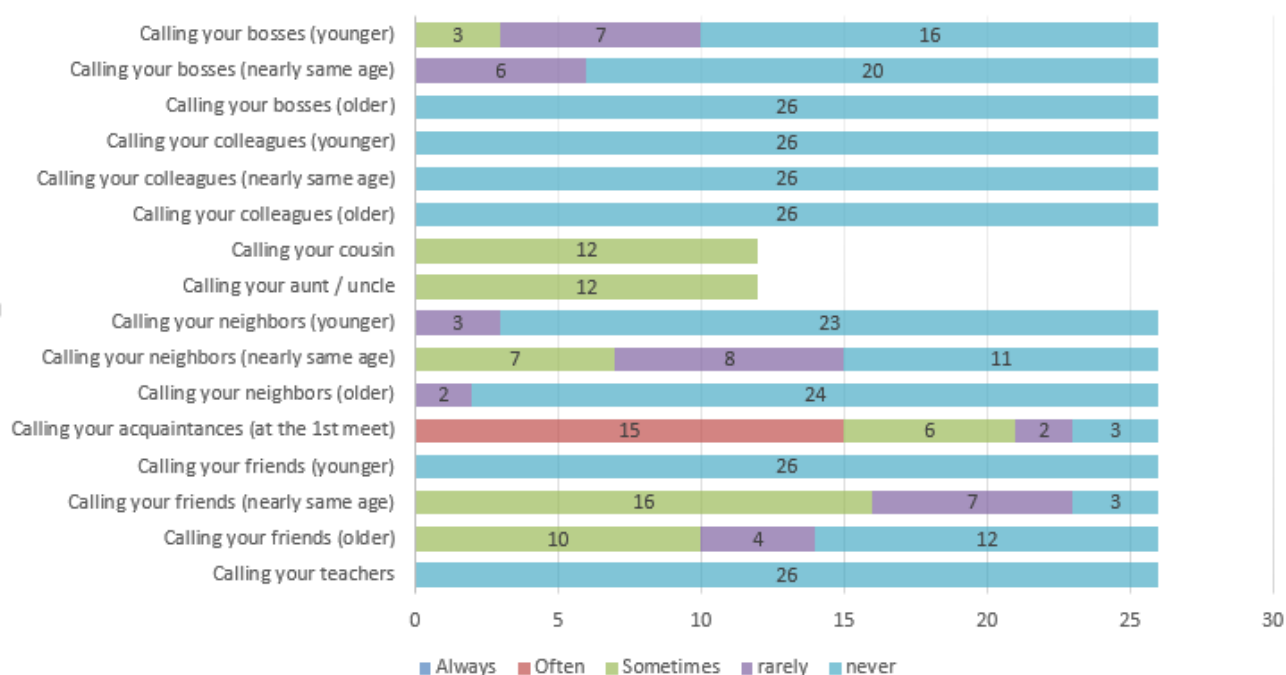
3.1.4. Calling homestay parents

An overseas student has to show his/her respect to his/her homestay parents. Thus, s/he can use titles (Mr or Mrs/Ms) and last names. But this way of addressing express a distance between his/her and the parents while they would prefer a close relationship. It is advised to use titles and their last names until they suggest differently.

3.2. PROBLEMS IN USING VIETNAMESE ADDRESSING FORM.

For aforementioned features, Vietnamese addressing system is much more complicated than English one. Vietnamese addressing form has its flexibility and meaningfulness. Thus, there are more difficulties that an English speaking sojourner may have than a Vietnamese new comer may do entering a new culture. Those problems have been put in another survey sent to 26 foreigners who are living in Vietnam and speak Vietnamese as their 2nd language (12 of them are married to Vietnamese people and live with their Vietnamese families). The following is the result of the survey:

PROBLEMS IN USING VIETNAMESE ADDRESSING FORM



The survey result seen above illustrates the problems faced by foreigners speaking Vietnamese. The problems are encountered when calling friends/acquaintances which is encountered by 23 out of 26 people asked, calling younger bosses with 10 out of 26 people asked. And the most difficulty faced is calling family members which has 12 out of 12 people asked say yes.

Now we can put it in the situation when an English speaking man immigrates to Vietnam and tries to speak Vietnamese, which is very common nowadays. To make it easy, I would like to name this man **Max**. Max gets to know some Vietnamese people. This is when he starts realizing how Vietnamese addressing system works.

3.2.1. Communication among friends / acquaintances

The first meeting may become Max's first culture shock. Some Vietnamese people keep the habit of asking for others' ages, which is considered impolite in English culture. But in Vietnamese culture, asking for others' ages (or asking for their year of birth) is nothing impolite. This is caused by the difference in

addressing systems. When addressing Vietnamese people, you should know whether they are older, younger or at the same age with you. Now that Max is asked for his age, he feels unpleasant with this custom at the very first times. Max is a man, an English speaking woman may even feel more unwelcome. After a while, he wonders the reason why and figures out the answer. Then he feels that it is normal to show his age. That is easy not only for others but also for himself to address each other properly.

Things, however, do not go easy. Max gets used to answering his age but he still finds it awkward to ask for others' ages. He starts with asking others' names and calls them by their names without titles or kinship words.

In this integrative world, many Vietnamese people see it is common for a foreigner to address them by their names. It is considered as expressing the equality and somehow keeping the distance with them. The exchange of first names usually runs without any problems, especially among people at nearly same ages. But with many other Vietnamese people, this exchange seems unreasonable since they feel like unrespected. For instance, a woman who is about 10 years older than Max would like to be called with the kinship word “**chị**”. The exchange of first names is even unacceptable with people who is obviously older than Max. In this case, Max should know how to use “**cô**”, “**chú**”, “**bác**”, “**ông**”, “**bà**”.

The use of addressing form goes even harder when Max meets a woman who is not old enough for Max to address himself “**cháu**” and not too young for him to be “**em**”. If he uses it wrong, the woman may think that Max sees her too old or may think Max lacks of respect to her. And sometimes a woman at the age of a “**cô**” wants to be called as “**chị**”, which makes her feel younger. Max has to ask the same question as “***How should I call you?***” in English.

Max is now at the end of the 2nd stage of culture-shock and he begins to get recovery in the **Initial Adjustment Stage**. He understands how Vietnamese addressing system works: it depends on ages of addresser and addressee. He has got some friends and knows how to address them properly. When meeting someone, Max introduces himself and takes it easy to show his age when someone asks him. He also gets used to with the way Vietnamese people address themselves by their first names and he finds that it is the easiest way to communicate with his friends. He also does the same.

But Max gets another small problem. He is introduced to a group of people at different ages, there are some people who are older and some others are younger than him. He is initially confused since he has no idea of how to address himself and the others. He cannot call himself “**em**” or “**anh**” to the whole group of people. He quickly figures out the neutral pronouns “**tôi**” or “**mình**” for himself and “**mọi người**” or “**các bạn**” to address the others depending on how close he wants to be with them. It is for sure that this is not suitable for all addressees, but it seems to be the best way.

Max gets a quick progress in practicing the use of Vietnamese addressing forms.

3.2.2. Communication at working place

Max starts working in Vietnam. Things seem alright at the beginning when he introduces himself to his colleagues and they tell him how should he calls them. The way Max addresses his colleagues appears as the way he does with his friends, normally by first names preceded by kinship words “**anh/chị/em**” and calls himself “**em/anh**” respectively, which creates close relations among them. With his older colleagues, he calls them “**bác/chú/cô**” and addresses himself as “**cháu**”.

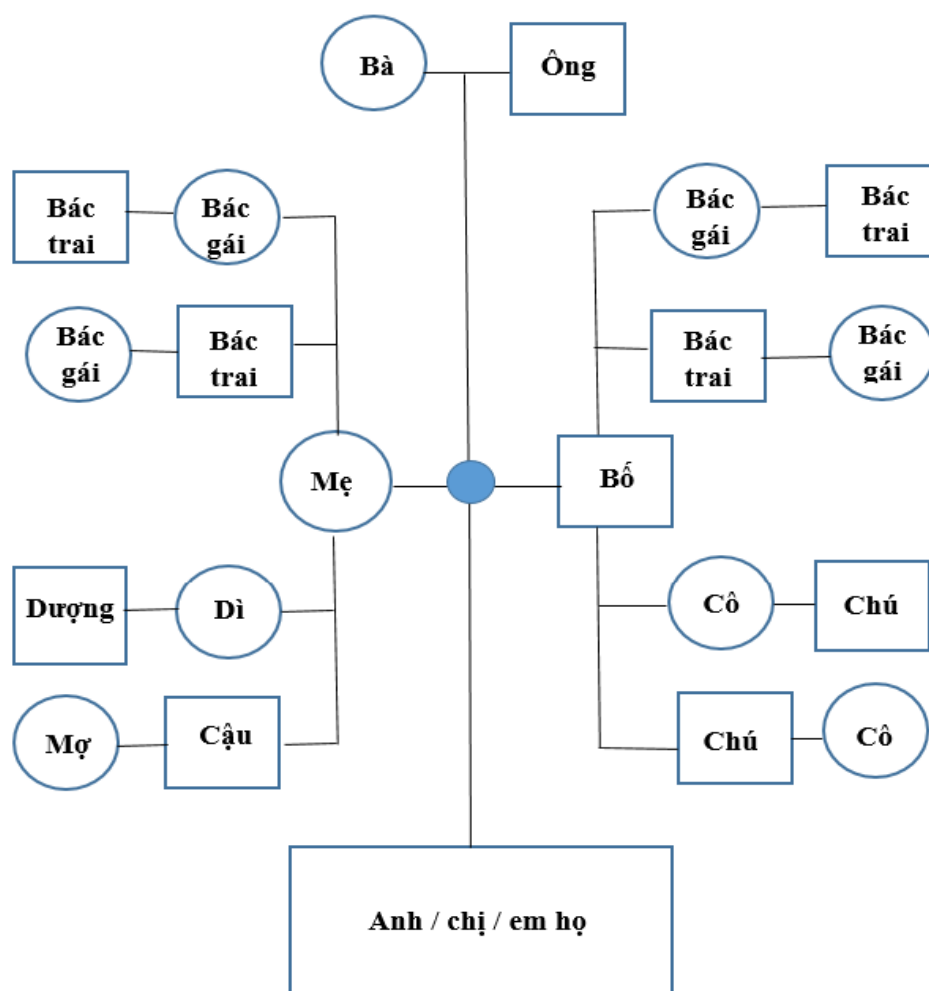
Max, however, finds it difficult to address his boss, who is younger than him. It is obvious that Max should not call himself and his boss “**anh - em**” at the begining.

This might be considered unrespected. The solution for Max is that he can use the neutral pronoun “*tôi*” and address his boss by his occupational status such as “*giám đốc*” or “*trưởng phòng*”. This is a safe way though it keeps the distance between them. Thus, Max is advised to keep this vocative until his boss suggests another one.

With his working ability, Max soon gets his promotion. Now he becomes a boss and has his own staff. Some of the staff are older than Max, and they have to change the way they call him instead of “*em*” or “*cháu*”. In this situation, Max has the right to choose how they call him, which is the same way his boss has done with him.

3.2.3. Communication among family members

Loving the country and deciding to live his life here, Max falls in love and gets married with a Vietnamese woman. This is also when he has got through the 3rd stage of Cultures-shock and he is about to experience the next one, ***Mental Isolation stage***.



Firstly, Max has *Chart of Basic Vietnamese Familial Relationship* ship terms in Vietnamese culture (shown in table 3 and table 4, Chapter II). This is much more complicated than what he expects.

The following previous chart illustrates the basic Vietnamese familial relations.

As seen at the chart, Vietnamese familial relations are clearly distinguished between paternal side and maternal one. A Vietnamese person has to know the exact relations of a relative to their mother or father to have the appropriate kinship word to address him/her.

It seems easy to address mother's older sisters/brothers and father's older sisters/brothers since they are addressed the same as "*bác*". Max has to call them the same as his wife does. He may find no difficulty in this addressing.

The addressing, however, is not that easy in the other branch of the family tree. Mother's younger brothers and father's younger brothers are addressed differently, "**cậu**" and "**chú**" respectively. Father's younger brother and father's younger sister's husband, contrastingly, have the same way to be addressed as "**chú**" and their wives are both "**cô**". In contrast, mother's younger brothers and mother's younger sister's husband have different references, "**cậu**" and "**đượng**" respectively, though they are counterparts of "**chú**". **Cậu's** wife and **đượng's** wife are "**mợ**" and "**đi**". This sounds really complicated. It is for sure that Max's wife finds it easy with this addressing. Max does since English addressing system does not have this distinction, "**cậu**", "**đượng**" and "**bác trai**" are both addressed as "**uncle**"; "**mợ**", "**đi**" and "**bác gái**" are both "**aunt**".

What's more, parents' nieces and nephews are both called "**cousin**" in English. In Vietnamese kinship system, they are clearly distinguished. Father/mother's older sister/brother's children are "**anh/chị**"; and father/mother's younger sister/brother's children are called "**em**" no matter how old they are. Cousins, in English culture, address each other by first names. Thus, they are equal in communication. In Vietnamese culture, they are not. As mentioned in Chapter II, Vietnamese culture emphasizes "superior controls junior", so if a person is a superior to another, his/her children are also in higher position than the junior's ones. This causes a very interesting phenomenon which only exists in Vietnamese culture. An older brother/sister may get married and give birth after his/her sibling. In this case, the younger sibling's children are older than the older's ones but they still have to address their **bác's** children as **anh/chị**. Thus, Max may have a brother who is much younger than him, which is a normal phenomenon in Vietnamese culture but seems really strange in English.

The previous is just only the basic Vietnamese familial relations system but there hidden many potential culture-shock situations a foreigner as Max to encounter. There are more difficulties to overcome since Vietnamese culture attaches much

importance on family history in which there are often more than 3 or 4 generations. Due to its limitation, this study cannot illustrate all, but it shows the intricateness of Vietnamese kinship system.

Addressing form is not the hardest cultural barrier that a foreigner has to pass before integrating into Vietnamese culture but it is the first barrier of all and it takes time for a foreigner to get used to with one of the most complicated addressing systems in the world. If a foreigner cannot cope with this barrier, s/he cannot pass the next, either. Therefore, the obvious conclusion to be drawn is that a foreigner should have some cues for his/her potential culture-shock in order not to be disconnected in the new culture.

3.3. SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR CULTURE SHOCK CAUSED BY CONTRASTING ADDRESSING SYSTEMS

It seems impossible for sojourner to avoid all potential situations that cause culture shock when integrating to a new culture. For decades, lessons have been drawn and there are lots of advices suggested to minimize the impacts of culture shock. The objective of this Chapter is also to give out some feasible solutions to reduce culture shock caused by contrasting in Vietnamese and English addressing forms.

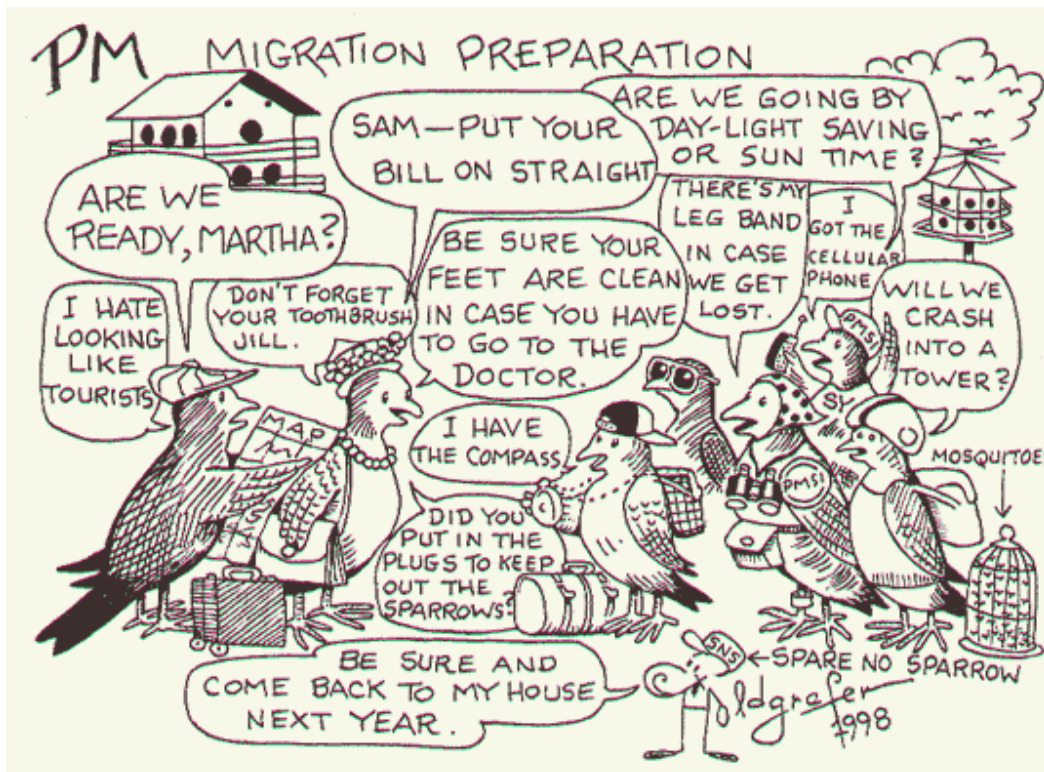


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3.3.1. Being prepared

“Prevention is better than cure”. Culture shock is somewhat an illness and we need prevention in order not to get it. What should be prepared when a sojourner enters a the new culture are knowledge, skills and attitudes. Here are some advices to be taken:

- Read some information about the differences in English and Vietnamese culture and languages. This will provide you the basic knowledge needed for your integrating process.
- Get in touch with someone you know who lives or studies in the new culture and speaks that language. Ask him/her some tips or pieces of advice about communicating in the language. You can even assume some difficult situations to practise. This shall provide you important skills.
- Always keep in mind that communication break down may occur any time in the new environment. It is about to happen. Thus, do not panic, be ready!



3.3.2. Overcoming the Culture shock

3.3.2.1. Basic skills

As culture shock is impossible to be avoided, being prepared is not enough. When facing a hard communication situation, you need your own basic skills to overcome. Here I would like to “show you the ropes”:

- Keep an open mind and do not automatically perceive the ways other people call you to be “wrong” or “negative”.
- Do not immediately interpret the addressing system in your culture to the one in the new. You had better acknowledge that there are many addressing forms in Vietnamese language system that have no equivalent to be translated in English.
- Make sure to know people in your new environment and respectfully ask questions as “***How should I call you?***” You should also spend a lot of time communicating with them to get used to the appropriate addressing forms.

- Take part in social activities which provide you with chances to get to know people at different ages and social status.
- Maintain a sense of humour! Do not be too hard on yourself if you make a cultural gaffe with wrong addressing words, laugh at yourself and others will laugh with you. Most individuals will admire your tenacity and effort to understand their ways.
- If you have already displeased someone by using unsuitable addressing form, you should try to apologize and explain that you do not mean so. They are likely to sympathize with you. Only by this way can you keep in touch with them. Lessons, however, ought to be drawn repetition should not be done since you may not have the second chance to say “sorry”.

3.3.2.2. Using neutral pronouns

As mentioned in Chapter II, addressing forms often illustrate the age gap, social gap and attitude of addressers towards addressees. There, however, exist many neutral pronouns that hardly hide these meanings. A sojourner is suggested to use these neutral pronouns when s/he does not know the most appropriate way.

It is easier to use neutral pronouns in English since “*I*” and “*you*” are you in any conversation. It is only when calling someone older or at higher position for the first time should you use neutral pronouns like “*sir*”, “*madam*” and it is even easier to start with “*excuse me!*”

E.g. Sir/Madam, may I know your name?

Excuse me! May I know your name?

Neutral pronouns, however, are harder to be suitably chosen in Vietnamese. When seeing someone who is nearly at the same age with you, it is polite to address them as “*anh/chị*” and yourself as “*tôi*”. It is, however, considered impolite and disrespectful to call yourself “*tôi*” when having conversation with a far older person. In this case, “*ông/bà/bác/cô/chú*” and “*cháu*” are suggested.

This usage depends only on the addressers' judgment on the addressees' ages, which can not be always correct. Despite that, this usage is safe to use.

3.3.2.3. Practising

After getting to know how to use neutral pronouns, a sojourner should keep on practising before going to the next stage: learning other pronouns, kinship words, proper names and titles as shown in Chapter 2. This stage takes time and lots of communication to reach. A sojourner has no choice but practising with native speakers in order to have a deep understanding of addressing system used in the new culture.

Shown in this Chapter are suggestion for any new comer trying to join the new culture. Following these steps, a sojourner will be able to initially integrate into the new environment and steadily become one part of the society instead of only being no more and no less than an immigrant.

PART THREE

CONCLUSION

From all the features of the two addressing systems, the potential culture-shock and the cure for it mentioned above, the obvious lesson to be drawn is that addressing system is the first cultural barrier to over pass when a sojourner tries to enter a new culture.

Address forms are a part of greeting and showing power and solidarity for us to know the relationship between an addressers and an addressees. And addressing forms are also culturally restricted, so we can expect different societies to devise different ways of handling the choice of addressing forms. Therefore, addressing forms play an important role in communication, and the appropriate choice of addressing forms are helpful for interpersonal relationship.

The above discussing also has two implications to be learnt: Teaching implication and Translating implication.

1. Teaching implication

It can be clearly seen the importance of teaching foreign language learners the differences of Addressing systems used in the two languages. Addressing forms are always taught in the very beginning of any foreign language book. For instance, in the textbook “*tiếng Việt cho người nước ngoài*” (Nguyễn Văn Huệ, 2003), basic pronouns such as “*tôi, chúng ta, anh, chị, ông, bà, em, các bạn,*” etc. are put in the first lesson.

It is critical for foreign language learners to be taught that depending on different references of communication, they have to figure out appropriate addressing forms. Familial, social relations and addressers’ emotion are the cause of different usage of addressing forms. The same reference but in different communicating situations may be addressed differently. Thus, teaching learners how to use

appropriate addressing forms shall create nice conversations and hence, good relations and positive effects.

2. Translating implication

According to Y. P. Solodub, *“Translation is a creative intellectual activity, denoting the transmitting of information from a source language into a target language.”*

As there are many Vietnamese addressing words that have no equivalent in English, translating of addressing forms is not only used to emphasize the rules of communication in addressing, but also gives clear differences between English and Vietnamese addressing forms.

There are some following rules to follow when translating Vietnamese addressing forms into English ones and vice versa.

1. Complying with the social and family hierarchies (eg: relation between parents and children, relation between employers and employees).
2. Paying attention to age, marital status and gender (distinction between married woman and unmarried woman).
3. Basing on the intimation of human relationship (such as friendship and neighborhood).
4. Considering the difference of addressing between social and familial relations.

When translating addressing terms from English into Vietnamese and vice versa, attention has to be paid to equivalent and none-equivalent of the rules in the communication in the target language. The translation is relevant to the original content of text and its culture. Finally, when translating these two languages into each other, not only the specific culture and the features of the native language

must be analyzed but also the value and culture of the other language are transmitted.

3. Recommendation for further study

Much information has been shown and discussed in this study. However, there are countless differences between the two Addressing systems and potential culture-shock situations caused by the contrasting. Another shortcoming of this study is that the Vietnamese Addressing system shown is also the standard one. It has not covered all the addressing form used in different regions of the country. Therefore, the recommendation for further study is to discuss deeper into these aspects. For this goal to be done, further research is suggested.

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