

Responding to Informational Inaccuracy in Family Talk: A Vietnamese Ethnopragmatic Perspective

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Abstract

This paper reports part of an in-progress study into the ethnopragmatics of Vietnamese. In particular, it discusses the Vietnamese common ways of thinking about responding to the inaccuracy of information to different interactional participants in family talk through a set of data elicited from a Discourse Production Survey. The findings showed that Vietnamese family interaction is, albeit relaxing and sincere, strictly hierarchical, which is evident in the way younger interactants respond to misinformation provided by the older interactants. Different ways of thinking about appropriate responses to information inaccuracy are articulated using cultural scripts – an analytical tool of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage framework. Furthermore, parental power in the family, as well as the psychological power of older siblings over younger siblings, is touched upon in the discussion, suggesting implications for both prospective research in the Vietnamese language and culture and non-Vietnamese who have intercultural encounters with Vietnamese.

Keywords:

Vietnamese, ethnopragmatics, Natural Semantic Metalanguage, cultural scripts, disagreement

Introduction

Family talk has been investigated in several studies across languages and cultures (Blum-Kulka, 1997; Schiffrin, 1984; Tannen, Kendall, & Gordon, 2007). As argued in these studies, family talk is a good source of investigation into discourse patterns. It is, in the words of Kendall (2007, p. 3), “a touchstone for talk in other contexts”. One of the common aspects that these studies have explored is the performance of speech acts. In a similar vein, Nguyen (2009) examined the sequence of the Vietnamese speech act *dặn* (‘giving recommendation/guidance’) in power-asymmetric interaction between parents and children. The study not only generalized the sequence of speech act *dặn* but also revealed “the ways that the participants invoked different participation frameworks as they negotiated their different levels of access to authorities and knowledge” Nguyen (2009, pp. 79-80). Nguyen’s study has remained the only study that touches upon Vietnamese culture specificity in speech acts. Clearly, there is a paucity of research into the Vietnamese language and culture, considering the number of speakers of this language, which is more than ninety million people in the mainland country, let alone the Vietnamese diaspora (GSO-Vietnam, 2015). This lends plausibility for the present paper, which reports part of the findings in an in-progress study into the cultural logic of Vietnamese interaction. Specifically, it discusses common ways of thinking about culturally accepted verbal behavior when Vietnamese speakers respond to informational inaccuracy. The paper adopts the ethnopragmatic perspective and conceptualizes Vietnamese ways of reasoning into a cultural script, which is an explanatory tool of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) framework.

Theoretical Background

Ethnopragmatics and the cultural script approach

Ethnopragmatics is defined as a study that aims at the understanding of language practices “in terms of indigenous values, beliefs and attitudes, social categories, emotions, and so on” from the cultural insider point of view (Goddard, 2006, p. 2). It is a research paradigm that reconceptualizes the Wierzbicka approach to cross-cultural pragmatics. The major (but not exclusive) analytical tool used in ethnopragmatics is *cultural script*. It is a metalinguistic script that explains cultural norms, attitudes and beliefs of a speech community in a simple set of language called *semantic primes*. These primes are argued to be universal in almost all languages (Goddard, 2015).

Table 1: *Semantic Primes*

Semantic Primes	Categories
I, you, someone, something~thing, people, body	Substantives
kind, part	Relational substantives
this, the same, other~else	Determiners
one, two, much~many, little~few, some, all	Quantifiers
good, bad	Evaluators
big, small	Descriptors
think, know, want, don't want, feel, see, hear	Mental predicates
say, words, true	Speech
do, happen, move	Actions, events, movement
be (somewhere), there is, be (someone/something)	Location, existence, specification
(be) mine	Possession
live, die	Life and death
When~time, now, before, after, a long time, a short time, for some time, moment	Time
Where~place, here, above, below, far, near, side, inside, touch	Space
not, maybe, can, because, if	Logical concepts
very, more	Augmentor, intensifier
like	Similarity

Source: Goddard and Wierzbicka (2014).

Cultural scripts can be seen as descriptions of common-sense cultural understandings about various interactions and activities in a speech community. In other words, cultural scripts ground evaluations of verbal encounters or of individual interactions because they are related to cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of the interactants. They are “a set of assumptions of what is good and what is bad to do – and what one can or cannot do – especially in speaking” (Wierzbicka, 2002, p. 401). As a depiction of the way of thinking about speech, a cultural script is seen from the first person perspective and composed of different levels of descriptions. The most general level describes a tendency in ways of thinking, which is scripted as “people think like this”. Other levels include descriptions about social scenarios and recommendations of what should be said or done. The following in [A], is an example of a cultural script for Vietnamese folk attitude towards strangers.

[A] Vietnamese cultural script for *trước lạ, sau quen* ('strangers first, acquaintances later'):

people think like this:	SOCIAL COGNITION
(a) when I am with a <i>người lạ</i> ('a stranger') in one place, it is good if it can be like this:	SOCIAL SCENARIO
(b) I say something to this someone, this someone says something to me	MAKING ACQUAINTANCE
(c) because of this, I know something about this someone, this someone knows something about me, after this time, I can say something to this someone, this someone can say something to me,	RELATIONSHIP ESTABLISHMENT
(d) if it happens like this many times, I can think like this: this someone is not <i>người lạ</i> ('stranger') any more, I know that this someone thinks the same about me	RELATIONSHIP CHANGE MUTUALITY

Since people often bring such commonly-held assumptions into their social interactions, the cultural script has certain influence on the interactant's verbal behavior (Goddard, n.d). The cultural script is important to provide cultural outsiders, as well as insiders, with insight into the social cognition of Vietnamese speech community because they can be easily rendered into Vietnamese, using Vietnamese equivalents of primes.

It should be noted that in the NSM tradition the cultural script does not contain labels accompanying script components, yet the scripts in the present paper are presented with labels in the right margins in order to speak to a wider audience who are not familiar with the NSM framework. In the next section, cultural scripts for expressing frank disagreement will be presented in this form, accordingly. In addition, some unavoidable words¹ (about family relationship) will be used although they are not semantic primes.

The act of responding to informational inaccuracy in Vietnamese: a frank disagreement

The act of responding to a piece of informational content, or a piece of "news" has drawn relatively little attention in pragmatic studies. It was first touched upon in Pomerantz's (1975) discussion of assessment as a second turn to an act of informing, during which "a Recipient becomes informed of the 'news' which is delivered. A Recipient has orderly ways of showing that the 'news' is understood/misunderstood, agreed with/disagreed with, appreciated/disappreciated, etc." (p. 33). In this sense, accuracy can be an aspect that calls for a reaction from the "Recipient". However, Pomerantz (1975) only addressed "the procedures which Recipients of 'news' use in producing assessment" (p. 33) and left the informational state of the "news" untouched. In another study, Takahashi and Beebe (1993) considered the reaction to content accuracy as an independent speech act under the banner of 'the speech act of correction'. Studies into 'correction' as a speech act includes Dogancay-Aktuna and Kamisli (1996) and Pishghadam and Kermanshahi (2011). The focus in the former study is the politeness markers Turkish speakers used when they performed the speech acts of 'disagreement' and 'correction' in status unequal situations. However, Dogancay-Aktuna and Kamisli (1996) did not provide a clear distinction between disagreement and correction. Pishghadam and Kermanshahi (2011) examined 'correction' within the context of EFL classroom, where 'correction' is arguable to be a speech act in its own right.

In her study into Vietnamese disagreement, Vo (2013) regarded the act of responding to informational content accuracy as a type of disagreement, which she labelled *disagreement over content accuracy*, or *frank disagreement* for its straightforwardness in nature. Vo (2013) also argued that *correction* should be seen as a functional unit that constructs the disagreement sequence. This is plausible inasmuch as *correct* is a common speech act verb within the scope of second language education. From a wider perspective, *correction* does not qualify as a speech act type, since it would be unusual to say as in (1):

- (1) I hereby correct that the meeting will be at 3:00 PM tomorrow.

¹ These words are conceptualized in recent NSM works as *semantic molecules* and *Minimal English*. However, due to its scope, this paper cannot cover a discussion of these concepts. Instead, they are taken for granted.

Nor is *correct* an indirect speech act verb because an English reported speech such as (2) would not be natural.

(2) “Actually, the meeting will be at 3:00 PM tomorrow,” she corrected.

Nonetheless, a description as in (3) is acceptable.

(3) There are some errors in my report that need correction.

From this, *correction* is a functional description of an utterance in a certain situation. Therefore, the act of responding to content accuracy should be broadly viewed beyond the label *correction*. Vo’s (2013) definition and categorization of disagreement in Vietnamese (which includes reaction to inaccurate information) is consonant with the new theorizing of disagreement, in which Angouri and Locher (2012, p. 1549) pointed out that disagreement is “an umbrella notion encompassing a range of acts,... which vary considerably in relation to their perceived effect on interaction.”

In the present paper, the response to informational accuracy will be considered, in light of Vo’s (2013) definition, as a type of the speech act of disagreement. For convenience of expression, the term *frank disagreement* will be used, henceforth, in lieu of *the act of responding to informational inaccuracy*.

Methodology

Research question

The discussion in this paper addresses the research question as to what are the cultural scripts for Vietnamese speakers to respond to informational inaccuracy in family talk.

Data

The data consisted of responses from 80 respondents to a scenario in which they reacted to a family member’s inaccurate information as follows:

Your family plans to eat out this Saturday evening. A family member says restaurant X will open this Saturday (and recommends going there for a big discount). You received a flyer yesterday saying the restaurant opens on Sunday. What would you say to this family member if he/she is your older sibling/ your younger sibling/ your father or mother/ your son or daughter?

The data was extracted from a Discourse Production Survey (DPS) data set utilized in an ethnopragsmatics research into Vietnamese language and culture. The DPS was carried out in the form of a questionnaire survey. The design of the DPS questionnaire was inspired by the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) which has been widely used in interlanguage pragmatics. Nonetheless, there are considerable differences in the prompts of this discourse production questionnaire, compared with a typical DCT. First, in the interests of articulating the cultural scripts underlying different “modes” of responding to informational inaccuracy, the survey respondents were asked provide their expected discourses with different types of people. Second, they had freedom to provide their responses rather than respond to a prescribed utterance as in a DCT. This is to say, the respondents were required to imagine the previous turn in the dialogue and respond to it. Additional space was provided for the respondents to further explain or comment on salient aspects of the discourse production and/or on how they mediate their real life experiences.

Survey respondents

The selection of the survey respondents was grounded on the premise that all of them must be Vietnamese-born adults to ensure they have experienced several communicative situations in different roles and have established social relationships that helped build up their experience in linguistic behaviors. Respondents recruited for the survey were 80 native Vietnamese speakers, aged from 18 to 55, who live and work in Hue, Vietnam.

Table 2: The demographics of respondents

Age group	Male	Female
18 – 25	8	12
26 – 35	9	11
36 – 45	10	12
46 – 55	9	9

Although the survey was conducted in Hue, the respondents were from different regions of the country. Therefore, they were identified as suitable because they were not confined to a regional dialect or culture. The age range of the respondents allows for experience in a wide range of social situations in life that have helped them shape their understanding of the language use for communication. The survey was approved by Griffith University ethics committee (GU Ref No: LAL/04/13).

Data Coding and Analysis

The discourse elicited from the survey was analyzed into a formula of constituent functional units and generalized in a cultural script. A functional unit is defined as a linguistic unit that performs a communicative act in a discourse. Although Vo (2013) identified that the frank disagreement sequence consists of three fundamental functional units *Correction*, *Evidence* and *Negation*, the DPS data shows that the functional unit *Negation*, which is a piece of information that contradicts the information given by the previous speaker, is not always included in the sequence. The centrality is on *Evidence* and *Correction*. *Evidence* is used to convince the addressee of the reliability of a piece of information while *Correction* gives the addressee a different piece of information. These functional units are scripted in the metalanguage as follows:

I know something about this well (Evidence)

it is like this: “___” (Correction)

it is not like you said (Negation)

It is interesting to note that, apart from these core functional units, the norms of interaction vary according to the hierarchy between the interactants, resulting in the addition of various functional units and several ways of thinking about how to deal with a piece of inaccurate information. *Comment* is a functional unit which a speaker uses to reflect on the cognitive process of the addressee on the assumption that the addressee did not know an exact piece of information:

you didn't know it well

Discontentment describes a speaker's immediate verbal reaction, which is often negative. It is expressed in the NSM as:

I don't feel something good when I hear this.

Suggestion is multi-functional. It can be a request for a double check for information, an offering or a recommendation. Thus, the metalanguage component for *Suggestion* in the cultural scripts will be scripted in accordance with the context of use.

In addition, when the functional units are put together in the cultural scripts, they can be slightly adjusted to suit the style of an NSM script.

Findings and discussion

This section presents the frank disagreements in Vietnamese and the associated cultural scripts in four subsections corresponding to four interactional situations in the survey scenario.

Frank disagreement with an older sibling

In expressing frank disagreement to an older sibling, younger sibling produced somewhat lengthy discourse. For example,

- (1) *Em mới đọc tờ rơi, nhà hàng X khai trương chủ nhật chứ không phải thứ bảy anh ạ!*
 ('I've just read the flyer. Restaurant X opens on Sunday. It's not Saturday, older brother [respect]')

The most common sequence of frank disagreement in this situation, which accounted for nearly 70% of the responses, is summarized as

Evidence – Correction (– Negation) – Comment/Suggestion

In some cases, *Negation* was optional but there was *Comment* or *Suggestion* at the end of the sequence:

- (2) *Anh nhầm rồi ạ!* ('You have mistaken it [respect]')
- (3) *Chị kiểm tra lại xem cho chính xác ạ!* ('Please check it again for accuracy [respect].')

The act of giving evidence first in the sequence can be regarded as both a harmony-seeking sign to avoid confrontation and an indication of respect of a younger shown to an older interactant. This is understandable because Vietnamese emphasize the collective harmony in interaction (Tran, 1996). This mild-mannered disagreement also implies the speaker's awareness of his/her positioning in the interaction, as well as the empathy for an effect of a possible loss of face as a result of a disagreement on the part of the addressee. Notably, the use of the sentence-final particle in Vietnamese was very important to reflect the speaker's attitude. The particle *ạ*, as in the provided examples, was often used by a younger person to an older to show respect, especially when the act underpinning the utterance may undermine the honor of the addressee. This way of thinking about the appropriateness for a younger sibling to respond to an older sibling's inaccurate information is articulated in the following cultural script.

[B] Cultural script for expressing frank disagreement to an older sibling

people think like this:	SOCIAL COGNITION
(a) when my older sibling says to me about something:	INFORMATIONAL CONTENT
I know that it is like this	
(b) if I know that it is not like this, it is good if I say something like this:	DISAGREEMENT:
I know something about this well	Evidence
it is like this: "____"	Correction
[it is not like you said]	Negation (optional)
(c) at the same time, I can say something more:	POST-DISAGREEMENT:
I think: you didn't know well about this before	Comment
you can know about it well if you do something else	Suggestion
(d) after this, it is good if I say a good word to my older brother/sister	HARMONY EXPECTATION
if I say this word, my older sibling doesn't feel something bad	

It is not necessary for speakers to choose either *Suggestion* or *Comment* for their disagreement as indicated in the sequence formula. A combination of them is, arguably, a natural way of responding to a piece of information if *Comment* is regarded as a reason for a double check displayed in *Suggestion*.

It should be noted that interaction within the family is treated as an experience base and model for broader social interaction (Vo, in press), thus emphasizing the accuracy and normativity in the content, although it is relaxing in atmosphere. Script [B] partly represents the general Vietnamese way of thinking about the appropriate performance of disagreement. However, there are potential variants in speech practice due to the entanglement of interpersonal relationships, especially the interactant's personality. In a further explanation a survey respondent noted that in some families that are deeply-affected by traditional norms, older siblings are empowered to the extent that they become domineering. The question is whether there is a "power" of an older sibling over a younger sibling. The next section will provide insight into this issue.

Frank disagreement with a younger sibling

While younger siblings tend to be mild-mannered in organizing their disagreement, the situation reverses when older brother/sisters think they would disagree with their younger siblings:

Discontentment – Correction – Evidence

The sequence of functional units in this situation is notable with the presence of *Discontentment* at the beginning of the sequence:

(4) *Ai nói thế? Chủ nhật mới khai trương. Anh có tờ rơi đây này.*

(‘Who said so? It won’t open until Sunday. I have a flyer here.’)

The way of responding to inaccuracy in this situation is, to a certain extent, a strong reaction. It is described in the following cultural script:

[C] Cultural script for expressing frank disagreement to a younger sibling

people think like this:	SOCIAL COGNITION
(a) when my younger sibling says to me about something: I know that it is like this	INFORMATIONAL CONTENT
(b) if I know that it is not like this, I can say something like this: I don’t feel something good when I hear this	PRE-DISAGREEMENT: Discontentment
(c) at the same time, it is good if I say something like this: it is like this: “_____” because I know something about this well	DISAGREEMENT: Correction Evidence
(d) when I say something like this, I want my younger sibling to know this: it is not good if he/she says something if it is not true	DIDACTIC EXPECTATION

Discontentment was typically displayed in the form of a rhetorical question asking for the source of information including who provided it, as in (4), or from what source the speaker had it. *Discontentment* not only conveys a message that the speaker doubts the information, but also foreshadows a different piece of information that follows, thus functioning as a pre-disagreement act. In some instances of the surveyed discourse, the *Discontentment* appeared to be sharp-tongued:

(5) *Không biết thì đừng tung tin vịt.* (‘Don’t hoax if you don’t know it exactly.’)

This toughness may be connected with the negative aspects of sibling relationship, such as rivalry and verbal aggression (Segrin & Flora, 2011). Although there has not yet been any research investigating interactions among siblings in Vietnamese families, the status competition was documented in literary works, for example, Khai Hung’s novel *Gia Đình* (1936) (cited in Jamieson, 1993). The power of older siblings over younger siblings presumably results from the imposed normative pressure that the older children in the family must be earnest in order to become a good exemplar for the younger, especially in traditional Vietnamese families where older children were expected to share with parents the responsibility for taking care of younger children, thus having the power to “teach” younger siblings. This is noted in the Vietnamese proverb *quyền huynh thế phụ* (‘a brother has power and responsibility on behalf of a father’). It is this traditional role that empowers older siblings in Vietnamese families, making them strong-minded in their interaction with younger siblings. In modern Vietnamese families, which have propensity to have two children, the older sibling is not expected to assume any practical supervisory responsibility towards the younger sibling. However, parents still teach the older child to be a good model for the younger child, resulting in a similar pressure on the older child in the family. Psychologically speaking, it is observed that the older child in the family sometimes feels competitive in showing his/her power over the younger child, especially when the age gap between the two children is only a few years.

Therefore, in Script [C] it is understandable that *Discontentment* acceptably exists. Yet it is scripted through the phrase ‘I can say’, rather than ‘it is good if I say...’ (a phrase that is usually used in cultural scripts to indicate a recommended expression). The traditional role distribution in the family causes speakers to focus on the informational value rather than on social tact. Simultaneously, they have a tendency to emphasize the normative principles of Vietnamese interactions such as *uốn lưỡi bảy lần trước khi nói* (‘roll your tongue seven times before speaking’) and *nói có sách mách có chứng* (‘say

things with evidence'). For these reasons, the last section in Script [B] shows a 'didactic' expectation in the sense that it conveys an experiential, or even moral, lesson to the addressee.

Moreover, it is worth emphasizing that the authoritativeness of an older sibling in family talk is sometimes an indication of the psychological influence rather than real power. In the next discussion of parents' frank disagreement to a son/daughter, there is a significant difference in the manifestation of familial power.

Frank disagreement with a son/daughter

The most observable characteristic of frank disagreement in this situation is that the discourse was definitive.

(6) *Chủ nhật mới khai trương. Thông tin trong tờ rơi này con.*

('It won't open until Sunday. The information is in this flyer, child [vocative]')

Nếu đi ăn tối thứ bảy, mình phải đến nhà hàng khác.

('If we dinner out this Saturday, we have to go to another restaurant.')

The basic sequence is as follows:

Correction – Evidence – (Decisive) Suggestion

It is worth noting the *Suggestion* in data elicited from this situation has a variant. Although it carries a recommending message, the nuance is given to a decisive attitude, which is scripted as

I thought about something else,
 I want you to do it because this is good

This 'decisive' *Suggestion* can be presented in a condition sentence, as in (9) above, or an offering as in (10):

(7) *Lần sau ba mẹ dắt các con đến nhà hàng X nhé!*

('We'll take you to restaurant X next time [dear].')

The way that Vietnamese parents think they would disagree with their sons/daughters over informational accuracy is captured in Script [C]:

[D] Cultural script for expressing a frank disagreement to a son/daughter

people think like this:	SOCIAL COGNITION
(a) when my son/daughter says to me about something: I know that it is like this	INFORMATIONAL CONTENT
(b) if I know that it is not like this, it is good if I say something like this: it is like this: "____" I know something about this well	DISAGREEMENT Correction Evidence
(c) at the same time, I can say something like this: I thought about something else, I want you to do it because this is good	POST-DISAGREEMENT Decisive Suggestion
(d) when I say these things, I want my son/daughter to know this: it is not good if he/she says something about something not true	DIDACTIC EXPECTATION

Compared with Script [C], the power of the speaker is displayed more clearly in Script [D]. First, while the older sibling has to foreshadow his/her response with sharp-tongued *Discontentment* before a strong frank disagreement, the parent in this situation starts with *Correction*, implying a rejection of the previously given information. He/she, then, supports it with *Evidence*, and concludes with a decisive *Suggestion*, hinting at an already-made decision about what is to happen next and an implicit request for the addressee's obedience. Accordingly, a parent's disagreement to a son/daughter is more powerful (but less unpleasant) than disagreement produced by an older to a younger sibling. It should be noted that a majority of parent respondents ended their projected discourse with a vocative or a particle which shows endearment and intimacy. The use of sentence-final particles in Vietnamese (that cannot be covered within the scope of this paper) is believed to be a rich source for further research, which is anticipated to contribute insightfully to the understanding of the Vietnamese speech culture. In

a frank disagreement situation, the use of a suitable particle helps to mitigate the unnecessary tension of the talk and hints at the parent's attentiveness to the feeling of the son/daughter.

This parental power, as well as the awareness of familial hierarchy, in interactions is reflected more clearly in the situation in which the speaker expresses a response to a parent's inaccurate information.

Frank disagreement with a parent

Discourse for this situation is somewhat similar to the frank disagreement that respondents provided in the situation between a younger sibling reacting to an older sibling's information, with the presence of *Evidence* first to convince the addressee, followed by *Correction*, [hedged] *Negation* and *Suggestion*.

(8) *Mẹ ạ! Con nhận tờ rơi nói chủ nhật mới khai trương.*

('Mother [respect]. I received a flyer that said the restaurant would open on Sunday.')

Mình đi nhà hàng khác mẹ nhé!

('Shall we go to another restaurant?')

(9) *Ba ơi, tờ rơi này nói chủ nhật mới khai trương.*

('Father [vocative], this flyer said that the restaurant would open on Sunday.')

Có lẽ không phải thứ bảy rồi. Bây giờ mình đi chủ nhật hả ba?

('Perhaps, it's not on Saturday. Shall we go on Sunday, Dad?')

The formula for frank disagreement in this situation is summed up as follows:

[Vocative/Respectful Expression] – Evidence – Correction – Hedged Negation – Suggestion

In the main sequence, there is a tendency to avoid a direct negation, as in (8). Even if the functional unit *Negation* exists, it is partial or hedged, as in (9). Interestingly, there is no respondent using *Comment* in the discourse. The likely explanation is that the speaker is conscious about a risk of embarrassing the addressee. In a further explanation for her discourse, one of the respondent noted that in Vietnamese culture, parents are exemplars for children's verbal behavior, thus making it difficult for sons/daughters to say that their parent have provided 'wrong' information. This is because the notion of filial piety is anchored in the Vietnamese folk experience:

Cá không ăn muối cá ươn, ('Fish without absorbing salt stinks.')

Con cãi cha mẹ trăm đường con hư. ('Children arguing against parents behave badly in many ways.')

As a result, before responding to the inaccuracy, the speaker uses a vocative or a respectful particle as a call for acceptance from the addressee. In addition, the *Suggestion* in most of the data for this situation was presented in the form of a recommendation, probing the addressee's decision about what happens next. For this characteristic, the metalanguage for *Suggestion* in this situation is adjusted as 'it is good if you do something else'. This functional unit serves as a post-disagreement act to blur the straightforwardness of the frank disagreement. This is evidence for the invisible parental power. The way children disagree with parents over informational accuracy is explained in the following script:

[E] Cultural script for expressing frank disagreement to a parent

people think like this:	SOCIAL COGNITION
(a) when my father/mother says to me about something: I know that it is like this	INFORMATIONAL CONTENT
(b) if I know that it is not like this, before I say something about it, it is good if I say some good words to my father/mother	PRE-DISAGREEMENT
(c) after this, it is good if I say these things: I know something about this well it is like this: "____" because of this, maybe it is not like you said.	DISAGREEMENT: Evidence Correction [Hedged] Negation
(d) at the same time, it is good if I say something like this: it is good if you do something else	POST-DISAGREEMENT: Suggestion

The prudence in responding to the accuracy of a parent's information was manifested in the lengthy full sequence with the existence of both pre- and post-disagreement acts. This begs a question as to why sons/daughters necessarily respond to their parents' inaccurate information if it is difficult for them to perform. The explanation is embedded in the assumed responsibilities among family members. Frank disagreement in family talk often aims at safeguarding family members' risk of losing face for inaccuracy in social interactions.

Conclusion

The way of responding to informational inaccuracy, or frank disagreement, discussed in this paper is a culture-specific phenomenon of Vietnamese speech practice. The frank disagreement has dual functions. On the one hand, it is a type of information exchange among family members. On the other hand, it is a sharing experience and, arguably, an implicit normative teaching that is articulated in the expectation section of the cultural scripts.

Although the paper reports an in-progress study, the discussion has some achievements and implications, both theoretical and practical. First, it helps provide an angle into family interaction and the significance of the hierarchy in Vietnamese family, which is a useful background study for researchers in linguistics and anthropology. Second, it helps non-Vietnamese people who are involved in an intercultural marriage to know more about the in-law culture and the administrators of educational institutions and multicultural societies where there are abundant Vietnamese populations comprehend the cultural traits of the Vietnamese-speaking community.

The discussion, however, has left some aspects untouched, for example, the sentence-final particles, due to the relevance and/or scope of the paper. This suggests that further research is necessary. In addition, the cultural script is an approach to the "meta" level of social cognition about speech. That is, it taps into the way of thinking about speaking, rather than the actual speech practice. Empirical studies of natural occurring data are necessary as complementary insight into the Vietnamese language and culture.

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