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PART A: INTRODUCTION

Rationale

In every language, personal names are linguistic objects and complex representations. In addition, personal name is considered as one aspect of culture. Many people believe that personal names reflect beliefs, thought of people about the world around them. In fact, there have been some scientific experiments which support these beliefs. Besides, personal names reflect the concerns and values of a society. This is particularly true in many cultures around the world. People form a name by exploiting the richness and inventiveness of their language, adapting, combining and re-combining nouns, adjectives and verbs to create new forms reflecting features of their landscape, and the values of their religious, cultural and political life.

Especially, a personal name is used to identify individuals, to distinguish sex, to perform aesthetic function, and so on. In many cultures, the selection of a child’s name and the presentation of the child to the community are important events. Naming children is of great importance to everyone. Almost parents take the choosing of names for their children very seriously. They want the name they choose to have special significance. Because some people believe that a child's name can influence his or her future, it is not only identification, but a way of expressing aspirations and expectations. So a name's meaning, how it sounds, and what it suggests to others are all important considerations.

However, the idea of personal name varies from country to country, and from person to person. Take Vietnamese and British personal names as example, when we learn English and its culture, we can find clearly that there are some differences between Vietnamese and English personal names. From my experience and observations, it’s these differences that cause many difficulties to our students.

To some extent, the study of personal names can be fascinating and personal name has been an interesting topic for many researchers so far.

Therefore, these are the reasons I am so interested in personal names and have been studying on naming traditions in Vietnamese and English culture. And SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON BRITISH AND VIETNAMESE PERSONAL NAMES has been chosen as the topic of my study.
**Aims of the study**

The purposes of the research study could be clearly identified as following:

- To provide an interesting picture of the differences and similarities between Vietnamese and English personal names which is considered as one part of culture.
- To investigate the influences of socio-cultural factors on English and Vietnamese personal names.
- To draw out cross-cultural implication for Vietnamese learners of English when using personal name in formal communication and in learning English.

**Research Questions**

In this study, the following questions are mainly focused on:

1. What are the differences and similarities between British and Vietnamese personal names from socio-cultural perspectives?
2. How do the socio-cultural factors affect the ways of naming a newborn in British and Vietnamese cultures?

**Method of the study**

To achieve the aims stated, a contrastive analysis (CA) and descriptive method are carried out throughout the study.

The sources of information include my knowledge, experience based on being a Vietnamese native; my knowledge of Vietnamese and English language and cultures.

I also make use of some works on personal names from Internet and reference books from the library because they are important source that provide comprehensive look at the study.

Consultation from the supervisor and other lecturers is the important input for the research. Discussion with Vietnamese natives in daily conversation can get more information and more knowledge of the topic.

The questionnaire is carried out with English native speakers, Vietnamese native speakers and Vietnamese learners of English. Multiple choice and open questions are exploited in the survey. Personal interview, mail collection, daily discussions and delivered questionnaires are adopted so that it could help to provide understandings how and why there are differences and similarities in socio-cultural influences on naming a child within the two cultures through. Inductive method can be considered the basis for the analysis of the study.
PART B: DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER I. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.1. Language, thought and culture

There is no doubt that language, culture and thought are closely related to each other, the most obvious influence of language and culture on thought is that of vocabulary. One of the best examples to illustrate this relation is the use of word in naming people in different cultures. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the relation between language, culture and thought.

People who live in different areas of the world have different cultural backgrounds and use different languages. Language and culture appear on the surface to be two distinct fields, but they have an intertwined relationship and affect each other mutually. Gleason (1961) indicated that languages are not only the products of cultures, but also are the symbols of cultures. The development of a language frequently affects its associated culture, and cultural patterns of cognition and custom are often explicitly coded in language.

We also know that our ability to use language and our ability to think and conceptualize develop at the same time and these abilities depend on each other. Firstly, it is obvious that language is a tool for expressing human thought. Each language has a characteristic worldview. It reflects the way people think and view the world around them. According to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, “language, culture and thought are all mirrors of each other”. In fact, language and thought are derivatives of cultures. Thought itself differs across languages and cultures because languages clearly differ from each other. Through language, we can understand people’s thought and language is clearly the representation of human thought. Secondly, does language affect human thought? The answer is yes. According to George Yule (1996-246), we can only think in the categories which our language allows us to think. Take the example, if two languages seem to have very different ways of describing the way the world is, it is possible that when you learn one of those language, the way your language is organized will determine how you perceive the world being organized.
1.2. Culture

According to Condon (1973), culture can be defined as a way of life. No matter where people live, their behaviors and thoughts follow and are generally based on their own cultures. Culture has many different dimensions. It includes ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools that characterize group of people in a given period; it is also the beliefs, values, and material objects that create our way of life. Culture establishes a context of cognitive and affective behavior for each person. It influences individual estimation and attitudes, and can have an effect on practical aspects of life such as hobbies.

Culture is also a matter of habit, and it is habit that becomes tradition and tradition that gives rise to culture. Local people begin with habitual actions and go on to create common stereotypes. Condon further explained that stereotypes assign group characteristics to individual purely on the basis of their cultural membership. The cultural stereotypes affect how people think, speak, act, and interact with one another. Samovar, Porter, and Jain (1981) also stated that culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, but also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted. In a word, culture is the foundation of communication. Without culture, we cannot understand the lives and motivations of others and connect with their concerns and interests. Culture is inherent in our being and a powerful human tool to develop our society, add to our knowledge, and establish the relationships between people. However, culture is fragile. The traits of culture are constantly changing and easily lost. If we do not value it, we will lose it eventually.

Learning about culture is absolutely enriching. The more one knows others, the more she sees her own culture more clearly. “By learning about contrasts, we can better understand how culture influences individuals and their communication with others” (Nguyen Quang, p 5).

1.3. How to compare two cultures

According to Robert Lado (1957), we cannot hope to compare two cultures unless we have more accurate understanding of each of the cultures being compared. We must be able to eliminate the things we claim to do but actually don't do. We must be able to
describe the things we do without being conscious of doing them, and we must make sure we are able to describe practices accurately, not haphazardly or ideally. And we must be able to describe the situations in which we do what we do.

The author of Linguistics across cultures also gave a definition of culture that can be useful in guiding cultural comparisons. It is stated that, “Cultures are structured systems of patterned behavior” (p. 40) that “have form, meaning, and distribution” (p. 41). This definition acknowledges that cultural patterns are systematic and shared, that they express culture-specific meaning and that they differ according to such variables as gender, age, ethnicity, race, education, power, income, religion, region, and other social and geographic variables, and that cultural patterns can change over time.

When comparing a linguistic phenomenon in terms of culture, we do not only mention or present it but also analyze the similarity as well as the differences between them so as to understand, and then use the language the most appropriately. CA in cultures aimed to compare culture phenomenon in languages, which are English and Vietnamese personal names in this study.

1.4. British and Vietnamese cultural identities

British cultural identities

Britain is a country with defined boundaries, a recognizable landscape, a long history, and a position in the various international economic, social, and political league tables. It is comprised of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It is important not only to be aware of these geographical distinctions, but also the strong sense of identity and nationalism felt by the populations of these four nations.

The terms 'English' and 'British' do not mean the same thing. 'British' denotes someone who is from England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. 'English' refers to people from England. People from Scotland are 'Scots', from Wales ‘Welsh’ and from Northern Ireland ‘Irish’.

In the past few decades, people from varied backgrounds have had greater access to higher education, wealth distribution is changing but the British class system still exists although in a more subconscious way. Class is no longer simply about wealth or where one lives; the British are able to find out someone’s class through a number of complex
variables including the way a person behaves towards others, their accent, manners and attitudes…

The British Isles has over-time incorporated other cultures into their own. The British Isles has traditionally been colonized by immigrants, though it has not been invaded for approx. a thousand years. The sights of many of their major towns were decided by the Romans as were our roadways. The judicial system of twelve jurors and a judge comes from Northern Europe. The Celtic romantic image comes from a body of people who invaded these shores before the Romans. The pageantry they have was probably brought by the Normans. Some of the best music they have was brought by mixing with and listening to the Caribbean rhythms and American-African blues. The English language is a hybrid of Latin, Greek, French, Flemish and Germanic tongues…

Moreover, since World War II, the UK has been an ethnically diverse country with people from various origins because of a large number of immigrant populations, particularly from its former colonies such as India, Pakistan and the West Indies. The mixture of ethnic groups and cultures make it difficult to define “Britishness” nowadays. According to Storry, M.(1997), nationality is a matter of allegiance and cultural affiliation. It has also been argued that nationality is no longer a powerful force in Britain, that it is simply a matter of circumstance, and that today it is far less significant than local or global identities: relatives, friends, and communities are more important to them and so is transnational culture.

Christianity is the major religion with many Christian churches, denominations, and groups. Many other religions have also established a presence in the UK, mainly through immigration, though also by attracting converts. After Christianity and the irreligious those religions with the most adherents are various forms of Islam and Hinduism. Other faiths include Jedi, Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhism, Rastafarianism and Neopaganism. There are also organizations which promote rationalism, humanism, and secularism.

The British are very reserved and private people. Privacy is extremely important. They rarely want to express their feelings, emotions to strangers. Especially they would prefer to keep silent in the public areas; they never talk on the bus, the train and so on. Another typical characteristic of the British is modesty, they don’t like to show off themselves and modesty is highly appreciated. The British also have the sense of humor and they hate to
laught at others’ mistakes. The British are exceptionally famous for their country ethos “England was at heart a rural country which had a country ethos” (J.B. Priesley)

**Vietnamese cultural identities**

Vietnamese culture is the fruit of thousands of years of creative labor and the indomitable struggle for national construction and protection by the multi-ethnic Vietnamese community. It is also the result of our exchanges with and inheritance from world culture. Vietnamese culture has built the soul, character, and abilities of the Vietnamese people. It has helped to glorify our national history.

The Vietnamese’s typical characteristics include: a strong hearted patriotism, closeness to their homeland (especially as home, village and country); collectivism; diligence and industriousness; good patience; good relationship with their surroundings; flexible behavior, good adaptability and integration.

The salient characteristic of the Vietnamese is sentimentality in relationships between people and people, people and nature; the behavior and responsibility towards the next generation is expressed in their involvement in charitable causes.

The majority Vietnamese live on wet rice cultivation, therefore agriculture is of utmost importance in the traditional social structure or in the culture of community organization.

To Vietnamese people, family tradition is very important. A traditional family is one in which the home is tidy and relations are hierarchical. All members of a family have to respect each other, the young respecting the old and the old making concessions to the young. Everybody always gets along well with each other. Children must be well behaved, have good characteristics, and set a good example for and be loved by other members of their families and communities. Today, this traditional pattern continues to be transmitted from one generation to the next. For many years, Vietnamese people believe that family is the social microcosm from which people originate the "cradle of peace" that is a foundation for all future interactions. Without a traditional family hierarchy or force of nation, society would risk losing its order and structure.

The role of a mother in a family is the most important, with the father making the next most important contribution. A well-known Vietnamese proverb (phúc đức tải mầu) means that children's luck in life depends on the education or sacrifices of their mothers.
Nevertheless, under the old feudalist system, men were well respected. People said “Nhất nam viết hữu thập nữ viết vô”. This meant that ten daughters were not equal to one son, or that one son was more valuable than ten daughters were. The reason for this is that at one time in Vietnam (when it was a backward agricultural nation), nearly all people worked manually to cultivate rice. In this economy, "manpower" (strength) was crucial to the success of each harvest, and men were the breadwinners because as a group, they tended to be physically stronger than women are. Of course, this opinion is now outdated.

Religion has exerted a deep influence on Vietnamese culture and the Vietnamese concept of life. The attitude towards life, death, and the world beyond bears a deep imprint of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. Regarding religious terms, there are no religious beliefs turning into religions in Vietnam. Major religions in Vietnam originally came from abroad. The folk religious beliefs in Vietnam were formed a long time ago and play a vital role in the cultural life of the agricultural community. The Vietnamese folk religious beliefs may be divided into three groups:

**Animism:** Animism is quite popular in most of the cultures in the world. The Vietnamese people live on wet rice cultivation; therefore, their belief of worshipping nature is connected to their profession. Wet rice cultivation depends much upon natural factors which ignite the belief of worshipping groups of gods. Agricultural culture inclines toward yin; they tend to feminize all natural gods. They are not young beautiful women but they are Bà (old ladies) and Mâu (mothers).

**Genitalia Worship:** Genitalia Worship expresses the desire of the growth of the human beings and things. They worship male and female reproductive organs and sexual intercourse. There are some forms of Genitalia worship: Reproductive organs worshipping belief: They worship natural or man-made columns/pilasters (male) and hallow, cave, canyon (female); cross bow (male) and bamboo tray (female); linga (male) and yoni (female). Sexual intercourse worshipping belief: The agricultural culture highlights the relationships in nature, the sexual intercourse worshipping belief is, therefore, quite unique and popular in Vietnam as well as South East Asia. We can easily find this religious belief in traditions, festivities and art. For examples: the reproductive organs procession in Bac Ninh, Ha Tay and Phu Tho... the statues of four couples having sexual intercourse on Dao Thinh bronze jar, decorations on the Dong Son bronze drum..
Human-revering belief: They worship people’s souls. As other ethnic groups in South East Asia, the Vietnamese believe that there is a soul and body in each human being. It is believed that being alive is yang and being dead is yin. Human-revering belief is to hold a commemorative anniversary for the deceased.

There are some forms of human-revering belief: The ancestor worship, the worship of the God of Home, the worship of the ancestors of professions, the worship of the Prosperity, the worship of the Fairy, the worship of the God of the village, the worship of the Four Immortal Gods: namely God Tan Vien (preventing flooding), God Giong (a legendary three-year old boy who became a national hero in the struggle against foreign invaders), God Chu Dong Tu (bright example in industrious labor to build a happy and prosperous life from dire plight and poverty) and Goddess Lieu Hanh (heavenly princess who left Heaven for the earth in the yearning for happiness).

In fact, although most of the major religions of the world, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity have been introduced to Vietnam at different stages of its history, the above folk religious beliefs still play a very important part in spiritual life of the Vietnamese all the time. Especially, ancestor worship is the most constant and deeply rooted belief by the Vietnamese people. In addition to the metaphysical aspect of believing in existence after death, ancestor worship is understood by the Vietnamese people as moral behavior.

To sum up, the Vietnamese religious beliefs represents: respect and a strong relationship between human beings and nature, the significance of yin-yang philosophy, Incline femininity and represent a strong sense of community.

1.5. Definitions of personal names and name components

Personal name is a word or a group of words used to refer to a person so that he or she can be distinguished from the others. It is nearly universal for a person to have a name. It is usually given at birth or at a young age, and is usually kept throughout life; there might be additional names indicating family relationships, area of residence, and so on.

Generally, a personal name includes given name (first name), surname (family name), middle name, and many people also have their nick names which are normally used at home or among close people.
A surname – family name or last name is a name used by all members of a family. Surname is the part of a person’s name that indicates to what family he or she belongs. In fact, most surnames pass from father, however in some cases from mothers to their children.

Crowther and Kawanagh (2005) stated that: the surnames sometimes reflect the origin of the family and many people are able to research their family history over many centuries. I think that the author’s remark is interesting and valuable. To my knowledge, most surnames of British and American reflect: Occupation (Smith, Baker, Archer); Geography (Hill, Wood, Fields); Place name (London, Hamilton) and so on. The names Bishop, Priest, or Abbot usually indicate that an ancestor worked for a bishop, a priest, or an abbot, respectively.

In some culture such as English and American, people rarely change their surnames except after marriage. Traditionally, women change their surname when they marry, repalcing their maiden name, the surname they had from birth, with the surname of their hasband. In English-speaking countries, married women traditionally have been called Mrs. [Husband’s full name], although in recent times they are often called Mrs. [Wife’s first name] [Husband’s surname].

A given name is a name which specifies and differentiates between members of a group of individuals, especially a family, all of whose members usually share the same family name. However, it happens that some brothers or sisters carry the same given name, so they can be distinguished with their middle names: Ngọc Linh, Mai Linh and Tuân Linh, etc. In some cultures, the mother and father name the baby; in others, the grandparents make the decision. In Greece, baby names are often decided by godparents (special friend chosen by parents). Babies may be named after a friend, relative, or a famous person, and so on.

Another point about given names is that almost of names are gender specific. A number of certain names are for girls, some others for boys. For example, names like: Jack, Thomas, Charlie, Joshua (British) and Công, Hùng, Danh, Trung, and Tuán (Vietnamese) are normally for boys meanwhile Grace, Olivia, Jessica, Rubby (British) and Hạnh, Tiến, Tuyết, Yến, Lan (Vietnamese) are for girls. Some names like Phương, Linh, Ngọc, Minh, Binh are for ether gender.
To many people, a first name is more than one word to name; it is first of all emotion, feeling. It is transmission of love, the child, commonly admitted, is the fruit of a love

**Middle name** is a name between the given name and surname. In some western cultures, the middle name is used to distinguish two people having the same first and last name. However, in some countries like Vietnam, a middle name does usually indicate the gender. Thi (for female) and Văn, Đình, Hữu (for male) were commonly used to differentiate between the two genders. However they are no longer used by many people today. Usually, a middle name makes a personal name more beautiful and it can glorify an individual’s fame. There have been many famous families whose last names and middle names affirm their hi-born social status like Tôn Thất and Nguyễn Lân, Hồ Đức… In the US, the middle name is rarely used on official documents and the middle initial is used on most identity documents, passport, university diploma, for example: George W. Bush; John F. Kennedy, and so on.

The order of name components also varies from culture to culture. [**Given name + family name**] is known as the western order and is used in the Americas and Europe. For example, Tony Blair would have the given name (Tony) going first, and then the family name (Blair). However, in East Asia (for example in Japan, China, Korea and Vietnam), and also in Hungary, the given names traditionally come after the family name regardless the gender: Nguyễn Ngọc Minh - Nguyễn (surname), Ngọc (middle name) and Minh (given name). Many people think that this order of name components indicates that the Vietnamese highly appreciate the family values. According to Macdonald (1999) this is an indication that naming system reflects essential values and important traits in their respective social organization.

Another interesting point is that in some countries (normally Asian countries like China or Vietnam) names also carry a powerful force. Tradition claims that evil spirits like to steal babies, particularly the attractive ones. Therefore in some parts of Vietnam, after a baby is born, the parents often chooses a meaningless, ugly name for him or her so that the use of an ugly name is intended to warn off the devil. This ugly name is widely used among family members, relatives, and neighbors. Indeed many children do not use their official name until they go to school for the first time when they are six years old. In small communities, these nicknames can be kept for life. Examples of such unpleasant names are
Leaf, Bark, Root, and even Bucket. However, this belief is not common nowadays. As far as I know, there is not the phenomenon in British naming customs.

1.6. Previous researches on the subject

Name is a special culture to everyone. Different names are given based on different reasons. It is also one of the most interesting subjects in the field of social-cultural anthropology. I’ve read some works that made direct and indirect references to the subject from different point of view. I can also get a lot of useful information as well as interesting ideas from them, thereinafter are some useful statements:

In concerning about the functions of a personal names, Macdonald (1999) states that it has two main functions: The first function is enabling individuals to possess a singular identity, a label that makes them unique and can be used to identify them while speaking about them (reference) and while speaking to them (speaking to them (address). The second function is qualifying the individual usually by incorporating him/her in a class or group, sometimes on the basis of a quality, virtue, or some other trait.

One must see both functions as the foundations of a theory of personal names. Function 1 is obvious. There is a need to identify members of a group and no human society lacks this kind of device. Function 2 is less obvious. It is the expression of a basic need—which is universal- to add a dimension to naming which makes the name “personal” (instead of being the name of a thing).

According to Hoang Tue (1984), there are two main functions of personal names: semantic function and social function. Dao Tien Thi (2005) added one more function that is the function of preserving cultural values because personal names reflect some features of nature, customs as well as the worldview of people in most cultures.

Roger Darlington (2006) stated that personal names define on large who we are, how we are perceived and even how we perceive ourselves. In daily communication, when we meet someone new, the first thing that we want to tell the person about our self is our name, also the first thing we want to know about him/ her is his/ her name. In the author’s point of view, at a societal level, names can tell us so much about gender, religion, class, nationality and ethnic origin.

Recently, in Vietnam, there’re also some works, articles discussing the meaning of personal name. Dao Tien Thi (2002) states that Vietnamese names mostly have meanings
meanwhile English and American names have no meaning or the meaning of their names is not transparent. His research has been controversial so far.

Besides, other researchers such as Crowther and Kawanagh (2005) Pastor (2006) David Nunan (2001) have their own ideas and statement on the term. To some extents, these studies provide a lot of useful and interesting knowledge of personal names of many cultures in the world. However, there’s still a quite little attempt in studying socio-cultural influences on personal names among Vietnamese and British communities.

So far, we have discussed the notion of personal names and some previous researches into the cultural phenomenon. This knowledge will help us with understanding the terms related to personal name and give us a closer look at the subject we are focusing. The following section is the methodology of investigating British and Vietnamese personal names from socio-cultural perspectives. The data of the study will be collected by some commonly used methods such as survey questionnaire, personal interview, daily group discussion. The Findings will be presented in the chapter following.
CHAPTER II. SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS ON NAMING CUSTOMS
WITHIN BRITISH AND VIETNAMESE COMMUNITIES

2.1. The procedure and data collection

As being mentioned in part I, there are delivered questionnaires (written in English and Vietnamese with equivalent values) consist of seven questions which discuss naming practice within the two communities (includes the meaning, the importance, and the trends in giving personal name...). It should be noted that the survey questionnaire are designed to deal with the two research questions highlighted in part I. Therefore, all of them are aimed to find out some differences and similarities in naming a child and major influences of socio and cultural factors on personal names in Vietnamese and British cultures.

The informants are asked to tick the appropriate choice. There is also a blank space at the end of each question in which the respondents are free to give their own opinion.

Besides, they are requested to tick the parameters chosen among age, gender, marital status, and occupation, place of living, foreign language competence that could help us have a clear look and draw appropriate conclusions on the cultural phenomenon.

The English versions are delivered to get the idea of the British also the Vietnamese ones are designed to see how Vietnamese people respond to the questions. 50 questionnaires delivered and selected from the Vietnamese who live in the North and the Centre of Vietnam are compared and analyzed together with 50 copies from the British who are from England, Wales, Scotland and North Ireland.

The age of the informants varies from 17 to 60 at the time of the survey. Their jobs are various: teacher, students, lawyers, businessman, managers, doctors and farmers. All of them spend more time living in the city than the countryside. 45% of the informants are male, 55% female.

All the data are collected and analyzed from socio-cultural perspectives. To get information from British informants, the researcher sends the questions in English by email to an English friend who is enthusiastic enough to deliver these questions to the right informants. Besides, the two common methods: face-to-face interviews, daily discussion (mostly with Vietnamese participants) are also conducted to get more information. When discussing or interviewing the participants, the researcher uses not only the survey questionnaire but also some open questions related to the subjects such as: Does your
name have any special significance to you and your family? What is the meaning of your name in your culture? Or: Do you think that a person name can make an effect on one’s characteristics or his future? and so on.

2.2. Data analysis

In this part all the questions in the questionnaire are shown worked one by one in order from 1 to 7 so that it could be easier for the analysis. The analysis is carried out carefully and is done basing on the data collected from the above-mentioned informants. The results received from the survey questionnaire, daily group discussion and interviews are reliable.

Question 1: In your opinion, naming a person in your culture is:

Data in Vietnamese

- 65% Very important
- 35% Important
- 0% Neutral

Data in English

- 58% Very important
- 22% Important
- 20% Neutral

Figure 1: The importance of naming custom in Vietnamese and British culture

This question is made to find out the importance of naming a newborn to British and Vietnamese people. Of all the Vietnamese informants being asked, 65% agree that naming a child is very important 35% says it is important and none of them chooses neutral. The question is delivered to those who are lawyers, engineers, teachers and managers, secretary even farmers. Especially, the ages of those who fall into the first group range from 28 to over 60, and they already have children or are going to have a newborn. The other group belongs to those who are students, single. Generally, the Vietnamese agree that name of a person plays an important part in the whole life and they have to take much time, thoughts to choose a good name for a child.
Meanwhile, English informants can be divided into three groups. 22% of them consider naming to be one of the most important events in a person’s life in British culture; at least it used to be. For them, naming could help with tracing bloodlines. 58% of the informants choose important, they explain that naming can give indication of your ethnic origin, class. However, there is 20% of the informants say they don’t mind about naming custom. It is explained by these respondents that parents have to give name to their child because of legal requirement to register the birth of the child and to give it a name to call. There are not any explanations like this of Vietnamese informants in concerning the importance of naming a child.

Both the British and Vietnamese have similar and different reasons to say it is very important or important. Vietnamese informants think of the need to express parent’s hope, love, and knowledge to their beloved child when giving it a name much more than other reasons. British informants pay more attention to the role of naming child in connection with religion and origins. The Vietnamese and British parents say they have to take time to think, to go through name books when they are having a baby to get ideas and choose a name for the baby.

**Question 2: Do you agree that almost British/ Vietnamese personal names have meaning?**

In this question, the informants are requested to discuss the meanings of personal names in their native languages and cultures. They may choose: Agree, disagree or may give their own opinion. Many Vietnamese and British choose to give their idea to clarify their choice.

It’s not unusual when 90% Vietnamese say agree to the question, 10% say that the meaning of a personal name depends the giver’s background and where he lives most of his time. People who live in the city think much more about name’s meaning than those in the countryside. In my own observation and experience, whenever there is a birth, great thoughts go into the name for the newborn in Vietnam nowadays regardless where and who you are.

The result from Vietnamese informants is a little different from that of British informant. Of 50 British ones, there’s about 73% choose agree. It means most British given names – like given name in any language – do indeed have meanings. Only 8% say
Disagree or not totally agree, they think that British parents don’t usually pick the child’s name for its meaning but they choose it because it goes well with their surname or it sounds nice; sometimes they name their children after someone they admire.

The last group of English respondents (makes up 19%) who make the remark: Originally, yes, but generally not today. They state that British names used to be meaningful in a medieval form of a living language, People rarely think about the given name’s meaning to day.

Data in Vietnamese

0% 10% 90%

Data in English

0% 8% 19% 73%

Agree  Disagree  Others  Agree  Disagree  Others

Figure 2: The meaning of personal names

Question 3: What are the functions of personal names in daily life? (You can choose more than one item)

Everyone needs a name not only for the legal requirement but also for many other reasons related to cultural and societal factors. After many thoughts, discussions, parents may choose a good name for their beloved baby. What are the functions of personal names? Why must we carry a name? The answers may be various, different from culture to culture and of course, personal name may have more than one function to many people. The result collected from survey questionnaire, interview and discussion seems to be amazingly different.

According to most of British participants, personal names play the role of identifying individuals and distinguishing sex. Of 50 selected answers, nearly one thirds of them choose Reflecting beliefs and hopes, preferences. There is a small proportion for the
function of preserving family traditional values. In contrast, 86% Vietnamese subjects choose reflecting parents’ beliefs and hopes, 40% accounts for preserving family traditional values; distinguishing sex choosers make up 35% and 75% for identifying individuals. Interestingly, when the researcher conducts some daily talks with close relatives, friends and colleagues, there are much more choices than that. The results from interviews with the Vietnamese can be summarized as followings: personal names firstly show the legal existence of individuals in a certain society through certificates of birth. Secondly, they prove the groups of people who have the same family names, and their descent relations. Personal names also reveal the people's sex. Besides, they express the traditions or powers of a descent. Last but not least, personal names might be the true pride to those who succeed in their living.

1 - Identifying individuals; 2 - Distinguishing sex; 3 - Reflecting beliefs and hopes, preferences; 4 - Preserving family traditional values; 5 – Others

Figure 3: Functions of a personal name in daily life

After investigating the question on the two groups of informants, we can see that, the Vietnamese are much more interested in various cultural and historical functions of personal names in social community than the British do. Meanwhile, the British tend to look at the social functions. A personal name to most of them is just a part of their identity.
Particularly, here in 21st Century Britain, where individualism is valued far more than community, who you are as a person is seen as far more important than what family you belong to.

**Question 4:** In your opinion, which factor (or factors) thereafter has great impacts on giving personal names? *(You can choose more than one item)*

![Data in Vietnamese](image1)

![Data in English](image2)

1 – Geography; 2 - Religions/ beliefs; 3 - Social status; 4 - Occupation

**Figure 4:** The impacts of Geography, Religion, Social status and Occupation on personal names

The chart showing Vietnamese data indicates that, social status is the most important factor ranged the first (65%). The next considerations are religion/ belief (60%), Geography (17%). 15% made up for the choice of occupation implies that it is not an important factor to affect the choosing of name in Vietnamese.

Look at the chart showing English data, Religion/ belief ranks the first (76%) Social status is also the next choice (60%) Occupations and Geography mostly played a part when giving someone a surname not a given names so it accounts for only 12%. As far as we
know, there are British surname has the meaning of occupation and geography such as Bakers, Ropers, Grangers, Masons or Warwick, Norfolk, Kent, Scot and so on.

The English result indicates the fact that people also like to choose biblical names of holy people. In fact, the Bible had the greatest impact, as evidenced by the widespread continual use of Jewish names in Western society. For a long time religion had an important place and names were chosen from the Bible such as the names of apostles (John, Peter, Thomas, etc) from the New Testament or those of characters from the Old Testament (David, Samuel, Josh, Rachel, Rebecca, Suzannah etc...).

What about social status? The higher proportion made for this choice (65% Vietnamese, 60% British) can be understood that it plays an important part in naming practice in both country. For Vietnamese people, it seems to be that the higher someone’s status is, the more attention to naming their newborn he pays. That is the reason why when the standard of living increases; people tend to take much more consideration into their newborn’s name more than it used to. In British, there is still class system existing although in a more subconscious way so the result is understandable. In fact, certain classes do choose a certain kind of first name that is traditional to their class. There are names that are deemed to be aristocratic while others denote a working class origin.

Although it’s a multiple choice question, many informants being asked tend to use their own words to show their various opinions. It implies that the impacts of these factors on the choosing of personal names differ not only from country to country but also from person to person. Question 5 will provide us with some more factors.

**Question 5: How do nationality, politics and education affect Vietnamese/ British personal name?**

The choice of personal names can also be prompted by many other factors: Nationality, Politics, Fashion and Trends, Education, Popularity and so on. In this question, the researcher focuses on the impacts of nationality, politics, and education only.

It is an open question so the informants can give their own opinions. As a result, the answers are rather various. The data collected from both informants show that the Vietnamese are much more highly appreciated the influences of these factors than the British. Only 10% Vietnamese informants say that nationality, politics and education have no impacts on giving names. The evident difference is that while most of Vietnamese
informants (90%) say that these factors have great impacts on a personal name, but there are a small proportion of those who share the same opinion in Britain (12%).

It can be proved from the fact that the names Vietnamese people choose to give their children change overtime and it reflects historical events of our country. For example, in the war time, Vietnamese families used to have many children, sometimes the names all of a family’s children were created as slogans like: Bác, Nam, Thống, Nhật/ Việt, Nam, Chiến, Thắng/ Cẩn, Kiểm, Liêm, Chính/ even đất, Dư, Thành, Tích, Thắm, Tưới…These might help to encourage Vietnamese people to fight and work hard and it also reflect the patriotism of Vietnamese people. Going back to medieval time, where noone dared to name their baby after the King or the royal family members. However, things are different in the UK. The influences of nationality, history or level of education turn out to be rare. It can be explained as “The UK is an ethnically diverse country with people from various origin,” and “nationality is no longer a powerful force in Britain” (Storry, M). Many informants also explain that people mostly use the popular names or biblical names and they hardly look at its meaning so there may not be much influence of education level of name giver like the Vietnamese.

**Question 6: Which of the following criterion (criteria) for choosing a personal name (You can choose more than one item)**

The question is designed to investigate the criterions for choosing a name. As we can see from the results found in question two, the Vietnamese tend to look at the meaning of a name but the British are more interested in their sound. As the result, it is easy to understand why there is no choice for the first one: *It sounds nice but also has no meaning* in Vietnamese data but it even accounts for 21% in British data. To Vietnamese informants, a name *reflecting beliefs, hope, preferences* is of the first choice and the most important criterion. There is a remarkable gap between the proportions of this criterion used by the Vietnamese and the British (95% vs. 21%) are. The most preferable choice to the British is a name after relatives’, ranged the first (60%) meanwhile the Vietnamese tend to avoid naming their child after relatives’ name (0%). The small proportion of fashionable, famous name (10% in Vietnamese, 12% in British) implies that they are equally not important criterion for naming a child.
More particularly, when being asked this question, both Vietnamese and British also express their own choice in addition to what the author presented. Some Vietnamese say that they like to give their child a name that sounds nice and has meaning such as Quỳnh Chi, Chí Mai, Kỳ Duyên; some choose to name their baby after a celebrity (Mỹ Tâm, Quang Dũng …). Interestingly, British respondents would rather give their own criterions. According to them, a name should be relatively unique, not a fashionable one because it will be so old fashioned and boring someday (E.g. Charclenes, Brooklyns are commonly used by too many people recently). Some suggest that a child needs to have a good name that has charm and enchantment when called; it is something nice that goes with the surname and will not provoke bullying at school nor spells something ridiculous when in initials. Generally, the answers of this question are various and it depends on the particular person as all the options mentioned can be applied.
Question 7: Which trends of naming a newborn child thereafter do you think popular in your community nowadays? (If it is of no popularity, please make a cross (X): 

The purpose of the question is aimed to consider the popular trends of naming a newborn child nowadays. Look at the above table we can see that the British informants appear not to be convinced by the categories the author presented. It means that they mostly don’t like any of those. According to some informants, biblical names are still dominated. That why only family religious beliefs accounts for 40%. It’s explained that whether parents are followers of any trends depends on many things, such as having a religious affiliation or not. The small proportion of names of beautiful flowers, fruits (10%) and precious things or jewelry (12%) means that they are not a popular trends in the UK.

![Data in Vietnamese](image1)

![Data in English](image2)

1 - Reflection of wishes; 2 - Much-prized quality; 3 - Noble animals; 4 - Terms of occupation; 5 - Family religious beliefs; 6 - Names of beautiful flowers, fruits; 7 - Precious things or jewelry.

Figure 6: Popular trends of naming a newborn child nowadays
The results collected from Vietnamese informants are much more different than that of the British. The table indicates that on average, the Vietnamese are much affected by many trends of naming a newborn child. The three following trends turns out to be used more often than the rest: Reflection of wishes (100%), Much-prized quality (80%) and Names of beautiful flowers, fruits (46%). More particularly, according to all informants, *Reflection of wishes* is not only the most popular trend but also is the first choice for them. *Terms of occupation* turns out to be old-fashionable, nowadays, very few people name their children after things related to job as they used to be. *Noble animals* is more popular than *precious things or jewelry* with a higher proportion (40% vs. 26%). Many British informants say that even these listed trends can be applied; it’s still rare in their community. Everyone can change their preferences and personal names hardly depend on any of them.

### 2.3. Discussion

The data analysis above provides us with some interesting information about British and Vietnamese personal name with some following similarities and differences:

- Naming a person is important to almost of people in every country. A person's name is valuable to many people. Although different names are given based on different reasons, name is a treasure of one’s whole life.

- Personal names in Vietnamese culture mostly have meanings. Although some people name their babies a certain name just because it “sounds nice,” most Vietnamese people usually give the children names filled with a literal meaning in Vietnamese language. For women, names often represent beauty, such as bird or flower names (Hoa, Mai, Lan) or much-prized quality (Đoan Trang, Thuệ Chung, Mỹ Tâm). For men, names often reflect attributes and characteristics that the parents want in their child such as Cuong (flourishing, healthy) Đại: (great) Danh (famous, prestigious)

- According to many people, British personal names names used to have a meaning, but they may be so old that the meaning is not apparent or impossible to realize. In other words, the relationship between first names and vocabulary words is not transparent now. Therefore, British parents name their child rarely for the 'meaning', but for reasons of polyphony (they like the sound of the name) or personality, (the name reminds them of a relative who they admire or respect, close friend or person in the public domain). Sometimes, the names come from English vocabulary words, they are often female names,
derived from nature, flowers, birds, colors, gemstones, or aspiring traits, but normally the spelling of the word is changed for the name. Examples, Lily, Mavis, Sky, Coral, Raven, autumn, Blue, Sunny...they all sound nice to the parents.

- To most of the British, a personal name is used to identify individuals meanwhile Vietnamese people think that a person's name is not only identification, but also a way of expressing aspirations and expectations.

- Both Vietnamese and British informants consider social status and religion or beliefs as the two dominating factors affecting naming customs. Besides, the Vietnamese think that nationality; politics and education have great impacts on naming custom but not many British think so.

- There are some popular trends in naming a baby in Viet Nam today such as name of reflection hopes, beliefs and name of much-prized quality. They seem not to be popular in Britain.

2.4. Findings

It should be noted that not all the information collected in the data analysis can reveal completely and exactly how people use and what people think about personal name because it may depend on many other sources. The findings of the study depend not only on the data analysis from survey questionnaire, personal interviews and daily discussions but also on my knowledge, experience of being a Vietnamese native; my knowledge of Vietnamese, English language and cultures learned from books and so on.

In trying to investigate the impacts of socio-cultural factors on naming custom in Vietnamese and British cultures, we can see that a personal name reveals different world-views or reflects traditional values of the community. Especially, the choice of names can be prompted by many factors: Nationality, Tradition, Politics, Religion, Beliefs, Culture, Social status, History, Education, Fashion and Trends, Popularity, and so on. The impacts of the most typical socio-cultural factors hidden in British personal names appear to be different from that in Vietnamese ones. Therefore, we will work on these impacts one by one, British names first and then next to the Vietnamese’s.

In British culture, the choice of names is very influenced by religion, especially, Christianity is the most dominated. The Bible had the greatest impact, as evidenced by the widespread continual use of Jewish names in Western society. names were chosen from the
Bible such as the names of apostles (John, Peter, Thomas, etc) from the New Testament or those of characters from the Old Testament (David, Samuel, Josh, Rachel, Rebecca, Suzannah etc. For a long time people liked to give their children names that embodied Christian qualities especially for girls: Faith, Charity, Patience, Sophie (wisdom) and they are constant in most religions or civilisations. Some people choose names from deities in antiquity (Juno, Venus), prophets, or beings with superhuman powers (Angel, Ariel, Gabriel, Michael).

The impact of social status is also remarkable. That is the influences of class. A boy called Jason, Wayne or Darren or a girl called Sharon, Tracy or Michelle is almost certainly from a working class family. A boy called Charles, Edward or Nigel or a girl called Felicity, Harriet is almost certainly from a middle-class family. A boy called Jasper, Rufus or a girl called Camilla, Davina, Jemima or Petunia is probably from an upper class family.

Another consideration is ethnicity; some children are given traditional English, Welsh, and Scottish or Irish names. Nationality impact hidden in British names is also reflected in the names with foreign origins. As we all know, the UK has had successive waves of immigration - from the Caribbean, India, Pakistan, parts of Africa and so on - and this has added to the stock of names in this country. When naming a baby, the British sometimes look for their origins. Therefore, the child may carry an Italian name, a Greek name. Someone called Winston is probably from a family of West Indian origin, while someone called Lakshmi will be from a family from India, Aglaia from Greece, etc.

Another social factor that has had a great impact on the choice of names is the popularity of culture through education and the media like radio, films and television. People will choose a name because they like a character in a book or a television series. British parents want to name their newborn baby after the name of some famous singers, football players, and film stars or even after their baby’s name like Brooklyn, Charchenes, and so on. Likewise because people travel much more easily even than fifty years ago, they have become aware of other names in other cultures and have picked them because they are unusual and will make their child more unique and distinctive where they live.

Geography and occupation, generally, also have a little effect. Some people chose a geographical first name for their child such as Paris or Florence, usually because these remind a good experience or certain glamour, but on the whole this is rare. In addition, if
we look at the English surnames, many of them also refer to an occupation (Barber, Baker, Bishop, Miller, Potter, Skipper) or a place (Close, Hall, Lane, Littlewood, Prior, Underhill, Wall).

In addition, when talking about the trends in naming a person nowadays we would say that celebrity names, religious names (from the bible, etc). Especially, it is extremely important to name the children after individuals with positive character traits who have led fortunate lives and have helped bring goodness to the world. It is either sentimental reasons or as a tribute to a relative whom they loved or admired (who may be alive or dead). To those who are not necessarily religious and are fond of nature pick names that evoke beautiful things: flowers or plants (Marguerite, Violet, Rose, Iris, Vinca etc.) or minerals (Amber, Opal, Pearl etc.) but this can run across social classes and even nationalities and simply reflect personal preferences.

Certain cultures retain personal names that have been traditional for them. In the following part, the impacts of these above factors on Vietnamese names will also presented.

In Vietnam, religious factor is traceable in names also. Parents with religion tend to name the babies connected to their belief. Confucians as well as Buddhists in Vietnam have names such as : Thiện Nhân, Đức Dũng, Hiếu Thào, Minh Đức, Đại Nghĩa, Danh, Chính, Tâm... in order to pursue their belief. In addition, folk religious beliefs (Animism, Genitalia Worship, Human-revering belief) have a great impact on traditional names. For example, some Vietnamese names like: Vân , Máy, Thuỳ, Nguyệt, Hằng…reflect their belief of worshipping nature. Unlike the British, naming a baby after relatives (previous generations or dead ones) or after deities in antiquity is considered a taboo. Therefore, parents always avoid to name their child such the names in order to show their respect.

Names not only label a person to the world, label who is a Vietnamese or a British, furthermore, the name is also a clue to people of the culture behind it. Different ethnic groups have name related differently to the things that is consider meaningful to the group. The image from nature, natural phenomenon, four seasons, color, arts, jewel, ocean, star, spring etc are used in a name as key words and they reflect the different world-views from different people of different ethnicities. Traditional Vietnamese names could be Lan, Mai, Long, Trúc, Tùng, or even Lúa, Xuân, Hạ, Thu, Đông…because one of the most salient characteristics of the Vietnamese is sentimentalism in relationships between people and
nature. These examples can be used to illustrate the influence of nationality or ethnicity on naming custom.

Patriotism is something frequently appears in Vietnamese names, especially in the war. The Vietnamese has strong belief of great victory. Therefore, it is understandable when we’ve heard of the slogans in the names of children in a family: Bính, Tĩnh, Chiến Đấu. Giỏi meaning 'Be yourselves, fighting well', or Bắc, Nam, Thống, Nhất meaning 'north and south are united', or Việt, Nam, Chiến, Tháng meaning 'Vietnam will win'. Other examples are: Anh Dũng (Gallantry), Quốc Thái (National peace), Hoà Bình (peace). These above examples also indicate that the way Vietnamese people name their baby may also influenced by social historical factor because they may reflect periods of history.

Psychology is also a factor in naming a baby. To many Vietnamese people, a person's name is not only identification, but also a way of expressing aspirations, expectations. When parents choose a name for their kids, they tend to associate it with some enjoyable and memorable object or incident. Especially, they use the name that reflects their hope, beliefs for the future of the child. They believe that a personal name can make an effect on one’s characteristics or his future. Parents hope the children to be intelligent, beautiful/handsome, and successful in the future, therefore, they name the children with these words such as Thao means nice, good, or kind. Nowadays, parents tend to avoid naming a girl with Liễu, Sương or some kind of flowers because of the fear that life would be hard to the one who carries such the names.

The way people name their baby may be affected by fortune/astrology factor. In the past, many scholars who have good knowledge of astrology attached great importance to the choice of names. They think that if the child has the right name, great future is predictable. In their opinions, with concrete form and meaning, name belonged to the positive symbol of characters. It functioned far more than just a code for every specific person. Therefore, when naming a child, they took several factors into full consideration: the astrological principles, the birth date, the array of five elements (metal, wood, water, fire, and earth)... Now superstition is being lessened, these factors still exist in Vietnamese society.

Besides, we can find the influences of economical and abroad factors in Vietnamese names. as globalization sweep through every country, parents of newborn babies want to find a very unique, beautiful name in the hope that it can help their child stand out from the
very beginning. Moreover, as the world becomes smaller and more connected through culture and movies, people become interested in names that are unique, sound strange and have sense of difference. Today, Vietnamese people are more and more flexible in the way they name their baby, some adopt foreign names like: Phan LeNa, Vonga. More particularly, almost of Vietnamese parents today take a foreign name as their child nickname: Bin, Tom, Lily, Sam.

Generally, the results collected from all the methods conducted in the study imply that, personal names can be affected by many socio-cultural factors. Names are not only a code used to identify individuals but also the presentation of many inner meaning including our culture, social status, nationality, education or our worldviews. A personal name is valuable to everyone through the whole life. That why someone said that: If a person had her name stolen, it could be like loosing a treasure.

2.5. Table of popular British and Vietnamese personal names and their meanings

If we have a quick look at popular baby name web sites we will find out that British and Vietnamese given names-like the given names in any language-do indeed have a meaning. The ways people use to give names can change by times and are related to many socio-cultural factors. From different names, we can see they reflect the value and thinking of people in particular times. The following tables provide a number of popular name commonly used recently

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JACK</td>
<td>From the name John</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRACE</td>
<td>Grace of God</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLIVIA</td>
<td>Peace- of the olive tree</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS</td>
<td>A Twin</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSHUA</td>
<td>Jehovah Saves</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUBY</td>
<td>A ruby Jewel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMILY</td>
<td>Admiring</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAMES</td>
<td>Supplanter</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAUREN</td>
<td>Crowned with Laurel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHLOE</td>
<td>Verdant and Blooming</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMUEL</td>
<td>God’s word</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LILY</td>
<td>Lily flower</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MADISON</td>
<td>Son of Matthew</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSIE</td>
<td>Like a rose</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBBY</td>
<td>Consecrated to God</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBIE</td>
<td>Father of joy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASHTON</td>
<td>Ash tree settlement</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVELYN</td>
<td>Hazelnut</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCARLETT</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAN</td>
<td>God is Gracious</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Celtic/ Gaelic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATASHA</td>
<td>Rebirth-From Anastasia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAYDEN</td>
<td>The rosy meadow</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACEY</td>
<td>From Normandy, France</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOPHIA</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANNAH</td>
<td>Grace of God</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN</td>
<td>God is Gracious, Merciful</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSEPH</td>
<td>God will increase</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACQUELINE</td>
<td>To Protect</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACOB</td>
<td>Supplanter</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEGAN</td>
<td>Soft and Gentle</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Celtic/ Gaelic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Popular Vietnamese personal names**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANH</td>
<td>Intellectual Brightness</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THÁO</td>
<td>Grass; Also Kind, Sweet, Nice</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HÀNG</td>
<td>Angel in the full moon</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TÂM</td>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUY</td>
<td>Sending Light Out; Brightness</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HƯNG</td>
<td>Prosperity; Heroic; Heroism; Strong</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ĐỊA</td>
<td>Accomplished, To Attain, To Achieve</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LỘC</td>
<td>Luck, Blessings</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THỤY</td>
<td>Friendly, Gentle, Water</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUỲENCE</td>
<td>A kind of birth</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINH</td>
<td>Gentle spirit</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHỨC</td>
<td>Luck, Blessings</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DƯNG</td>
<td>Heroism, Strength</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VÂN</td>
<td>Cloud</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HÀ</td>
<td>River</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAN</td>
<td>Orchid</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HƯƠNG</td>
<td>Fragrance</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BỊNH</td>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HƯNG</td>
<td>Prosperity</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ĐỨC</td>
<td>Virtue</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANG</td>
<td>Elegance, a kind of flower</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HẢI</td>
<td>Sea</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHÍNH</td>
<td>Correctness, Righteousness</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINH</td>
<td>Bright</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIEU</td>
<td>Dutiful to parents</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIỆT</td>
<td>Being Vietnamese</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHIEN</td>
<td>Fight, Battle, Combat</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THỊNH</td>
<td>Prosperity</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAI</td>
<td>Cherry blossom</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIỆN</td>
<td>Gentle, nice</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINH</td>
<td>Gentle Spirit</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: F (female) M (Male), B (Both Female and male)
PART C. CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS ON LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Summary and implication in learning and teaching English

From the data analysis and the findings in the previous chapter, we can assert that naming practice is a very important event in a person’s life. A name means so much to everyone because it can tell us so much about gender, religion, class, nationality, and ethnic origin of a person. Our name is the first thing that we tell about ourselves when meeting someone new. Conversely, the first thing we know about that person is his or her name. So much about us changes as we grow older, but most people keep the same name. When a name is changed, it usually marks a very significant event in a person’s life (for example, a Western woman adopting the surname of her husband on marriage).

Accompanying with social and cultural development, names develop from a symbol of people to thing that has complex meanings under the influences of many socio-cultural factors. Naming someone is also honor to everyone; especially it is the chance for parents to express their love, affection and expectations for their beloved children.

In an attempt to study the socio-cultural influences on British and Vietnamese personal name, the author can find out some interesting information and useful knowledge, which could help so much with acquiring a cultural aspect and with learning, teaching English.

As we mentioned above, there are many differences in the ways of choosing and giving personal names between Vietnamese and British culture. It’s the differences that cause a lot of misunderstanding among communicators and probably make the conversation unsuccessful. From my observation, the most frequently difficulty learners is the confusion of the order of names, they often take the given names for first name and vice versa, it’s due to the influence of mother tongue’s culture. For example, a person whose name is Nguyễn Thanh Hải. In formal usage, he is referred to by his given name ("Mr. Hải"), not by his family name ("Mr. Nguyễn"). This contrasts with the situation in British cultures, where the family name is used in formal situations. As a result, sometimes students say Mr. Bush. In Britain if someone says Mr. George people will never know whom she is talking about. However, if I say Mr. Bush, they all know I’m talking about the top leader of the USA.
Another problem is that sometimes student do not know which name is for female or which one is for male, so they may use she instead of he when they mention about a person who is a boy not a girl and vice versa.

The last but not least is the difficulty in pronouncing a number of British names. It’s because of the fact that the relationship between British first names and vocabulary words is not transparent, and because of the names added from successive waves of immigration - from the Caribbean, India, Pakistan, parts of Africa and so on. So students find hard to pronounce British names correctly.

In order to help students overcome these difficulties, we should clarify the differences between Vietnamese and British names from the very beginning. We should help them to do role-playing with English personal names through conversations in the textbook. To raise the students’ awareness of the importance in using appropriately personal name is not an easy but very necessary task because it can help avoid the misunderstanding and can make the conversation successful. Students should be encouraged to listen to conversation that using more personal names every day in order to know how to address someone and how to pronounce it correctly.

The study covers some culturally controversial issues in personal names of English and Vietnamese culture from cultural perspectives. Hopefully, it provides an interesting picture of one part of culture. It is perhaps necessary to include in the school curriculum the teaching of cross-cultural communication, which would prepare learners for further knowledge of Vietnamese and English culture. This will be useful for our students who should be very well aware of this very important issue and should use appropriate language items to avoid misunderstanding or culture shock when meeting.

2. Suggestions for further study

The entire of this study has drawn special attention to British and Vietnamese names from socio-cultural perspectives. Although some knowledge about the phenomenon has been investigated in the thesis, it can not cover all the aspects related to such broad subject. As the result, the author also hopes that many attempts will be worked on them, and there’re some suggestions for further study:

- The trends of giving nickname to a newborn in Vietnamese culture
- The changes in using middle in Vietnamese personal names
- Symbolic names and pennames of celebrities

In the end, the study hopefully provides an interesting picture about one part of British and Vietnamese culture. In trying to do the research, mistakes and shortcomings are unavoidable, so all the sympathetic comments and suggestions are highly appreciated.
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In English


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