

A Study on the Vietnamese Listening Teaching Using the Drama “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice”



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ABSTRACT: The study of teaching methods for foreign language listening skills has been a topic of interest and early research, particularly with languages widely used such as English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, etc. However, these studies are quite scarce when it comes to the Vietnamese language. Furthermore, alongside the recent increase in foreign investment in Vietnam, there has been a higher demand for learning the Vietnamese language by foreigners. Hence, this study has chosen to investigate teaching methods for Vietnamese language listening skills in order to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of instruction.

This study aims to look into how certain materials could be selected and incorporated into a Vietnamese language lesson plan for foreigners, the Vietnamese drama “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” – that attracted a huge number of viewers on both on TV and in the internet – will be utilized in this research. The primary goal of this undertaking is to contribute in the creation of innovation teaching and learning interesting and effective at the same time.

KEYWORDS: listening teaching, Vietnamese drama, “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice”

1. INTRODUCTION

According to information from the Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment, as of June 20, 2023, the total registered capital for new registration, adjustments, and capital contribution to purchase shares or contribute capital from foreign investors reached nearly 12.43 billion USD, equivalent to 95.7% compared to the same period in 2022. In the first six months of 2023, there were investments in Vietnam from 90 countries and territories. Among these, Singapore led with a total investment capital of over 3 billion USD, accounting for more than 22.3% of the total investment in Vietnam, a 27% decrease compared to the same period in 2022. Japan followed in second place with nearly 2.21 billion USD, making up 16.4% of the total investment, nearly 2.1 times over the same period. China ranked third with registered investment capital of over 1.95 billion USD, comprising 14.5% of the total investment, a 53.5% increase compared to the same period before. Following them are South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and so on¹. Amidst the backdrop of globalization and the increasing trend of investing in Vietnam, there is a growing demand for learning the Vietnamese language in countries engaged in trade and cultural exchange with Vietnam. Additionally, the number of foreigners coming to Vietnam to learn Vietnamese has also risen, driven by the convenience it offers for investment and job-seeking. Furthermore, in the academic realm, various fields of study in Vietnam, including Vietnamese Studies, are experiencing growth, attracting significant interest from students and researchers interested in Vietnam. This is evident through the current high demand for learning Vietnamese at Vietnamese Studies research and training institutions, both domestically and internationally.

In this context, the need to innovate teaching materials and methods for teaching Vietnamese to foreigners has been highlighted in order to enhance the effectiveness of education. However, the current Vietnamese language curriculum and teaching methods in the country have not seen many changes or improvements to align with this trend. Most Vietnamese language teaching textbooks were published less than 10 years ago, resulting in certain limitations in terms of relevance, practicality, level of interest for learners, etc. Furthermore, teaching Vietnamese as a foreign language is still a relatively new academic field, hence there is still a lack of research in this area. Notably, while studies applying audiovisual media in foreign language instruction have flourished in teaching English, Japanese, Korean, etc., in Vietnam, there hasn't been any notable research in this regard.

Kim Hyun Ju (2004: 9) summarized the value of using television dramas for foreign language instruction with three advantages: their authentic language content, their effectiveness in enhancing communication skills, and their ability to stimulate learning motivation. This study also selected television dramas as the subject to develop a teaching plan for teaching Vietnamese listening to foreigners. We conducted a survey of popular and highly-watched television dramas such as “Family is Number 1” (Gia

¹ Source: <https://www.mpi.gov.vn/portal/Pages/2023-6-28/Tinh-hinh-thu-hut-dau-tu-nuoc-ngoai-6-thang-dau-nafv0c86.aspx>

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đình là số 1), " *Sticky Rice and Plain Rice* " (Gạo nếp gạo tẻ), " *The Arbitrator* " (Người phán xử), " *Living with the Mother-in-Law* " (Sống chung với mẹ chồng), etc to choose a suitable series for teaching Vietnamese language. Subsequently, we carefully selected appropriate segments to effectively integrate into Vietnamese language instruction. Furthermore, based on the list of selected segments for Vietnamese language instruction, we developed a tailored teaching approach to enhance the effectiveness of comprehension, understand and speak Vietnamese in the most natural way.

2. CONTENT

2.1 *The Significance of Applying Films in Foreign Language Teaching*

Tomlinson (1998) proposed the view that textbooks and language teaching materials should cater to the learners' needs, emotions, and must focus on constructing content that is practical and applicable in real-life situations. Similarly, teaching Vietnamese as a foreign language should go beyond mere grammar structures and prioritize learner-centered approaches through practical materials. Furthermore, the objective of teaching Vietnamese extends beyond language knowledge acquisition; it aims to help learners experience and engage with Vietnamese culture directly or indirectly.

Television dramas are a highly effective medium for incorporating into Vietnamese language instruction for several reasons.

Firstly, they can introduce Vietnamese culture in a rich and diverse manner. Such instructional materials effectively foster motivation and enthusiasm for learning the Vietnamese language. Watching Vietnamese television dramas, foreign learners not only gain insight into Vietnamese lifestyles, relationships, and everyday social interactions, but also access various cultural phenomena.

Secondly, television dramas feature extensive dialogue and authentic language, making them valuable teaching resources. The dialogue in Vietnamese television dramas represents spoken language, providing learners with an understanding of the unique features of spoken Vietnamese, which is often harder to grasp from written text. Additionally, this spoken language rapidly introduces different types of vocabulary, such as neologisms and in-word, both of which reflect contemporary cultural elements. Consequently, these elements greatly contribute to enhancing learners' abilities in expressing themselves in Vietnamese and understanding Vietnamese language and culture.

Thirdly, television dramas can be applied to develop all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (such as writing impressions, character descriptions, vocabulary learning through dialogue, script rewriting).

2.2 *Criteria for selecting dramas to teach foreign languages.*

2.2.1 *Criteria for Choosing the Television Series " Sticky Rice and Plain Rice " for Teaching Vietnamese to Foreigners*

This study aims to develop a teaching approach that utilizes Vietnamese television dramas for teaching Vietnamese to foreign learners. For this purpose, we selected 15 episodes from the first part of the television series " *Sticky Rice and Plain Rice* " ² which consists of a total of 109 episodes, broadcasted on HTV2 in Vietnam. These selected episodes form the basis of our teaching plan for intermediate-level foreign learners..

In selecting Vietnamese television dramas as teaching materials, it's important to note that not all domestically produced television shows in Vietnam are suitable for educational purposes. We must consider the educational value and necessary conditions before making a decision. MacGovern (1983) proposed eight criteria for selecting video materials as follows.

- ① The video must have impactful segments suitable for generating learning motivation;
- ② The setting, characters, and thematic content should be realistic and credible;
- ③ The video's duration should not exceed 30 minutes, with content that captures learners' attention. Ideally, the content can be divided into 3 to 4 segments for deeper focus;
- ④ The educational content should be comprehensible and straightforward, avoiding excessive breadth or complexity;
- ⑤ The content should be useful and engaging when incorporated into language teaching and learning;
- ⑥ The material should contain content in which characters guide learning activities;
- ⑦ To enhance language skills, the video should offer content suitable for discussion;
- ⑧ The content should allow learners to perceive actions, gestures, attitudes, and nurture language expression abilities;

Additionally, four criteria are introduced when considering the selection of television dramas for foreign language teaching, tailored to the learners' proficiency level.

Firstly, choosing a film with many supporting images helps viewers understand the overall situation of the plot even when watching without sound.

² "Sticky Rice and Plain Rice " (Gạo nếp gạo tẻ) is a television series produced by Vie Channel, directed by Nguyen Hoang Anh and Vo Thach Thao. The show is an adaptation of the famous South Korean drama "Wang's Family" (2013). The first part of the series aired at 8:00 PM on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays weekly, starting from May 7, 2018, and concluding on January 15, 2019, on the HTV2 - Vie Channel.

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Secondly, attention should be paid to language density during selection. The word density of a scene plays a vital role in determining the video's difficulty level. If the language spoken in the video is too dense, learners may find it challenging to absorb.

Thirdly, consideration of the linguistic content within the segment is essential. A low word density does not always equate to simplicity. Even with few words, the presence of complex terms can pose difficulties for learners.

Fourthly, attention should be given to the applicability of the chosen segment.

Based on the theoretical foundations of MacGovern (1983) and Park Kyung Shik (1996), we have selected the TV series “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” among numerous beloved Vietnamese television shows for the following reasons.

“Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” is a relatively new series that holds great appeal for learners compared to other Vietnamese shows today. This series originated in South Korea and gained widespread popularity throughout Asia, amassing a massive viewer base. The Vietnamese version has also garnered a substantial fan following. As a result, we anticipate that foreign learners studying Vietnamese through the Vietnamese adaptation of “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” will find strong motivation and achieve better learning outcomes.

Besides, the movie “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” has the main context of the family of Mrs. Mai - a housewife and Mr. Vuong - a history teacher at a secondary school who lives with Mr. Vuong's mother and younger brother. While exploring the familiar theme of family dynamics, “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” offers a unique perspective than others. The humorous situations in the series arise from the mother's favoritism toward her children. Each character has a distinct personality, and they interact in scenarios that reflect the everyday cultural behaviors of family, friends, and colleagues. The content is realistic and highly reliable.

We find that the majority of episodes in “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” have a runtime of under 30 minutes, which is an ideal duration for learners to focus effectively. Moreover, each episode can be divided into shorter segments of about under 5 minutes, allowing for more in-depth teaching plans.

Moreover, the content of the series features everyday situations that are relatable, straightforward, and authentic. The language patterns and linguistic structures used in “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” are neither too challenging nor too easy. Hence, this material is highly likely to be suitable for intermediate-level foreign learners of Vietnamese. If the series contained complex sentences, specialized terms, or advanced vocabulary, learners might struggle to comprehend, dampening their interest and enthusiasm for learning.

Throughout “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” every plot development and character interaction captures the audience's attention. This initial excitement acts as a stepping stone, evolving into interest and passion. The human psyche progresses from interest to concern, from concern to passion, and from passion to the motivation to learn. Especially in the genre of family drama, “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” serves as a source of encouragement for viewers, motivating them to uncover its appeal.

Lastly, the main characters within the series belong to three generations sharing the same household. Furthermore, the diverse personalities of each character lead to varied speech patterns, pronunciation, and intonations. This characteristic offers learners the opportunity to recognize the diverse phonetics of the Vietnamese language, exposing them to different speech patterns among children, adults, and the elderly.

2.2.2 Criteria and List of Segments for Teaching Vietnamese Listening Skills

Each episode of “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” meets suitable conditions for utilizing as teaching materials for intermediate-level foreign learners of Vietnamese. Selecting specific episodes from the 109 available episodes is a process susceptible to the subjective views of the researcher. Due to this, we conducted a survey of online viewership on Youtube.com to establish selection criteria. We assessed the viewership of each episode of “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” on Youtube.com and selected the top 7 episodes with the highest views: episodes 20, 42, 51, 81, 87, 90, and 109.

It would be ideal if each teaching session could cover one episode, each lasting under 30 minutes, over the course of three class periods. However, due to time limitations, we carefully chose the most engaging and suitable segments for teaching. Consequently, for each selected episode, we meticulously edited and cut scenes that maintain the context and story progression, ensuring each segment is under 5 minutes in length to fit within a class period. As a result, we edited 2 segments for each episode, forming a list of 14 film segments for teaching Vietnamese language to foreign learners over a 15-week semester, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: List of Segments from “Sticky Rice and Plain Rice” for Teaching Intermediate-Level Vietnamese Listening, Organized by Week.

Week	Episode	Main Content
1	Introduction to the course	
2	20	Segment of conversation between Kiệt and his father
3		Scene where the big family celebrates Hân and Kiệt, coming to live at their mother's house

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4	42	Scene of Minh and Nhân come to meet Nhân's father and the scene of the couple talking in the park.
5		Scene of Nhân's father and Mrs. Mai arguing at a café
6	51	Scene of Mrs. Mai and Kiệt in the dining room.
7		Scene of Mrs. Mai's family assigning household chores in the living room
8	81	Scene of Hương searching for a rental house
9		Scene of Mrs. Mai's extended family ordering food to eat in their garden
10	87	Scene where Han is trying to hold onto Kiet
11		Scene of Kiệt talking to Hân's father about their marriage.
12	90	Scene of the whole family discussing liver donation for Mrs. Mai
13		Scene of Hân talking on the phone with Mrs. Mai
14	109	Scene of Phúc bidding farewell at the airport
15		Scene of Tường and Hương chatting at the park

3. Method of Utilizing Segments from Vietnamese TV Series "Sticky Rice and Plain Rice" in Teaching Intermediate Vietnamese to Foreign Learners

The second objective of this study is to develop a teaching method for the Listening skill in Vietnamese using segments from Vietnamese TV series. Before proceeding to construct the teaching method, this study reviewed the existing theories on teaching models using video materials.

Drawing from the research surveys on teaching theories by Ju So Hee (2010) and Jin Myung Jin (2012), we have summarized six main teaching models used to formulate lesson plans that integrate TV series segments, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Models of Using Video in Foreign Language Classroom

	Author	Teaching Model		Sequence
1	Engen Hal (1967)	Situation Emphasis Model		Reflexive Practice → Repeat sentences → Activities
2	Saint-Cloud (1961)	Audiovisual Teaching Model		Presentation Phase → Explanation Phase → Repetition Phase → Transposition Phase
3	Allan (1991)	Video media model:	(1) Viewing straight through	Pre-viewing stage ↓ Viewing stage ↓ Post – viewing stage
			(2) Silent viewing stage	Pre-viewing stage ↓ First silent viewing stage ↓ Discussion stage ↓ Second silent viewing stage ↓ View with sound
5	Williams (1983)	Model using video in class		Simple introduction activity ↓ Watch the whole video without pausing ↓ Ask questions after watching ↓ Summarize what was seen through group discussion ↓ Present discussion results ↓ Review if necessary ↓ Write a report after finishing watching

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6	Keridge (1983)	Model using video in class	Summarize the content as a group after watching without sound 2 or more times ↓ Jot down dialogues inspired at that moment ↓ Watch with sound ↓ Compare differences between student-authored dialogues and video content ↓ Review for specific content ↓ Role – play
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Furthermore, taking the criteria of objectives, language proficiency levels, and language skills, Kim Young Hee (2000:34) presents a framework for common models of classes applying television shows, similar to Table 4..

Table 4: Classification of class models based on movies

Models	Classification of class models based on movies
Models Based on Classroom Objectives	Model in the direction of teaching culture
	Model towards language teaching
Models Based on Learner Proficiency Levels	Model for elementary level foreign language learners
	Model for intermediate level foreign language learners
	Model for advanced language learners
Models Based on Language Skills	Integrated Listening and Speaking Model
	Integrated Listening, Speaking, and Writing Model
	Integrated Reading, Listening, and Writing Model
	Integrated Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing Model

Building upon the theories mentioned earlier, we will now proceed to create a language teaching model while utilizing each segment from the list of segments designated for teaching Intermediate-level Vietnamese Listening skills, as presented in Table 2 of this study.

Table 5: Framework for Teaching Vietnamese Listening, Intermediate Level

Teaching Activities in Sequential Steps	
Pre-view Step	① Activities to expand vocabulary and phrases related to the film segment; ② Discussion activity on a topic relevant to the film segment.
Viewing Step	③ Watching the film segment without subtitles and not looking at the dialogue in the script to better prepare for improved listening comprehension; ④ Watching the film segment with the dialogue script to assess the vocabulary and phrases previously studied in the Pre-viewing Step; ⑤ Re-watching the film segment without the dialogue script; The teacher provides answer sheets for questions related to movie segments for students to answer. This activity helps students solidify their understanding of both vocabulary and studied phrases.
Post-viewing Step	⑥ Dividing the class into small groups to engage in result comparison activities; ⑦ The teacher asking questions, and students answering;

Following the teaching framework in Table 6, we proceed to develop a teaching plan for each week, utilizing different film segments. In this research, we create one detailed sample teaching plan for teaching Vietnamese Listening using the content from episode 51 as listed in the segment table of this study.

Table 6: Teaching Plan for Week 6, Episode 51, "Sticky Rice and Plain Rice" TV Series (Refer to Table 2 for reference)

Level	Intermediate
Objective	Understand the content of the selected segment through listening Understand Vietnamese culture and apply knowledge and skills in real-life situations
Materials	PPT; video; worksheet;

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Content	Episode 51: Mrs. Mai is discharged from the hospital after surgery, feeling regretful for her past mistreatment of Kiệt, her son-in-law.		
Implementation step	Activities	Materials	
	Teacher		Student
Pre-viewing	<p>Show PowerPoint presentation to discuss with student about forms of address in family and work relationships, mother-in-law/daughter-in-law dynamics, and sibling relationships in different countries when compared to Vietnam. (Require students to report their findings)</p> <p>② Provide students with vocabulary and sentence patterns that will appear in the video segment</p> <p><u>Vocabulary:</u> bún mọc, cày, vết thương, mở quán, bắt động, trần trọc</p> <p><u>Structures:</u> Subject + cứ + Verb+ mãi. Tuy... nhưng(Although..., but...) Đáng lý ra.... (Should have) Bộ (do you not).....</p> <p><u>Model expressions:</u> Thôi ăn cơm đi (Just eat, please). Dạ, không được đâu mẹ ơi. (No, that's not okay, mom) Mẹ đừng nói như vậy mà mẹ. (Mom, please don't say that) Tại sao mẹ lại cảm ơn con ? (Why are you thanking me, mom?)</p>	<p>① Write based on the understanding about different forms of address in family and workplace relationships on the worksheet provided by the teacher. (Students share their thoughts)</p> <p>② Understand vocabulary and related sentence patterns</p> <p><u>Vocabulary:</u> bún mọc, cày, vết thương, mở quán, bắt động, trần trọc</p> <p><u>Structures:</u> Subject + cứ + Verb+ mãi. Tuy... nhưng(Although..., but...) Đáng lý ra.... (Should have) Bộ (do you not).....</p> <p><u>Model expressions:</u> Thôi ăn cơm đi (Just eat, please). Dạ, không được đâu mẹ ơi. (No, that's not okay, mom) Mẹ đừng nói như vậy mà mẹ. (Mom, please don't say that) Tại sao mẹ lại cảm ơn con ? (Why are you thanking me, mom?)</p>	Video worksheet
Viewing	<p>③ Play the video without looking at the dialogue script³</p> <p>④ Provide the dialogue script to students and play the video</p> <p>⑤ Distribute question sheets and show video; Dialogue script are not allowed</p>	<p>③ Watch the video without looking at the dialogue script</p> <p>④ Watch the video while reading the dialogue script together</p> <p>⑤ Watch the video without looking at the dialogue script</p>	Video worksheet
Post-viewing	<p>⑥ Check the answers in the blanks</p> <p>⑦ Ask students to speak important phrases</p> <p>⑧ Pose questions related to the video content</p>	<p>⑥ Review and correct answers if incorrect</p> <p>⑦ Practice and absorb important phrases through speaking</p> <p>⑧ Answer teacher's questions and review to ensure understanding of the content.</p>	Video worksheet

4. CONCLUSION

This study has constructed a list of television show clips from the series "Sticky Rice and Plain Rice" for teaching Vietnamese to intermediate-level foreign learners. Based on the selected lists, we have proposed a suitable teaching approach to ensure teachers can deliver lessons conveniently and engagingly, allowing learners to acquire knowledge smoothly and effectively. In terms of research outcomes, we processed 7 episodes with the highest viewership on YouTube.com, cut the scenes of the same episode into 14 short segments under 5 minutes. Within the scope of this study, we have only designed a teaching plan for just one 2-minute

³ Appendix 1: Dialogue Transcript of excerpt episode 51, Dining Room Scene at Mrs. Mai's House

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segment clip. While this research has its limitations, we believe that developing a teaching approach for Listening (Vietnamese) using audiovisual materials like television shows can provide intermediate-level learners not only with the ability to comprehend the content but also to understand nuances of sentences, conversational styles, Vietnamese culture, etc. We believe this is a reasonable and effective teaching approach.

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Website:

- 1) <http://youtube.com>

Appendix 1: The script of the scene of Mrs. Mai and Kiệt in the dining room

Bà Mai	Con.
Kiệt	Mẹ.
Bà Mai	Con mới về hả?
Kiệt	Dạ, con mới về. Chân của mẹ sao rồi, có còn đau nữa không?
Bà Mai	Không sao, mẹ không sao. Con đi lên lầu thay đồ đi rồi đi xuống dưới ăn sáng. Mẹ có nấu đồ ăn sáng cho con rồi. Ăn sáng xong rồi hãy đi làm, nha.
Kiệt	Dạ, con cảm ơn mẹ. Xin phép mẹ con lên lầu.
Bà Mai	Vô đây đi con, ngồi xuống đây ăn nè.
Kiệt	Dạ.
Bà Mai	Bún mọc đó. Này con, ăn đi.
Kiệt	Dạ, con cảm ơn mẹ. Mẹ à, chân của mẹ đỡ đau chưa? Mẹ làm búp đi tới đi lui á, nó sẽ cày vào vết thương đó.
Bà Mai	Cái món này đơn giản mà con. Với lại chân của mẹ cũng đỡ rồi, con yên tâm.
Kiệt	Dạ, con cảm ơn mẹ.
Bà Mai	Sao? Ngon không? Mẹ mở quán được không?
Kiệt	Dạ không được đâu mẹ ơi.
Bà Mai	Sao vậy? Bộ đỡ lắm hả?
Kiệt	Dạ không phải, ngon lắm mẹ à. Mẹ mà mở quán ăn á, thì chỉ nấu cho khách thôi còn ở nhà không có được ăn đâu. Nhưng mà mẹ phải thật sự nghỉ ngơi đó mẹ à.
Bà Mai	Thôi ăn đi con.
Kiệt	Dạ.
Bà Mai	Kiệt à,
Kiệt	Dạ
Bà Mai	Mẹ cảm ơn con.
Kiệt	Sao mẹ lại cảm ơn con chứ? Đáng lý ra con phải cảm ơn mẹ về bữa sáng mà mẹ đã nấu cho con mà.
Bà Mai	Không, cái người phải cảm ơn là mẹ. Sau tất cả những chuyện mà mẹ đã làm với con, đáng lý ra con phải ghét mẹ chứ. Vậy mà, con vẫn quan tâm lo lắng cho mẹ. Con cũng mẹ tới trạm y tế, con la rầy cô bác sĩ, còn miệng của con thì cứ “Phải cứu mẹ tôi trước, phải cứu mẹ tôi trước”, mẹ cảm động lắm, con à.
Kiệt	Mẹ biết không, khi con thấy mẹ nằm bất động trên giường bệnh, con lo sợ lắm. Con nhớ lại lúc má con cũng nằm im lìm như vậy, rồi má con rồi bỏ con đi. Mãi tới khi bác sĩ xác nhận mẹ sẽ không sao thì con mới yên tâm được một chút. Bắt đầu từ đó, con tự nhủ với lòng mình là phải thương yêu và lo lắng cho mẹ nhiều hơn. Con không muốn như trước đây chỉ mãi lo làm ăn mà không quan tâm đến má con nhiều hơn, đến khi má con đi rồi, con có đau buồn hay hối hận như thế nào đi nữa thì cũng đã quá muộn rồi.
Bà Mai	Con à, cả đêm hôm qua mẹ không thể nào ngủ được. Mẹ cứ trằn trọc mãi. Nghĩ lại tất cả những chuyện mẹ đã đối xử với con, mẹ thấy sao mình tệ quá, mình ích kỷ quá con à.

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Kiệt	Mẹ?
Bà Mai	Kiệt?
Kiệt	Vâng.
Bà Mai	Mẹ xin con một việc được không?
Kiệt	Kìa mẹ, mẹ đừng nói như vậy mà mẹ.
Bà Mai	Con hãy coi mẹ như mẹ ruột của con nha. Mẹ biết là khó để cho con quên được tất cả những gì mẹ đã đối xử với con, nhưng mà mẹ hứa mẹ sẽ bù đắp cho con. Tuy là quan hệ mẹ con mình không phải là máu mủ nhưng mà chúng ta vẫn là người cùng một nhà mà, đúng không con?
Kiệt	Đạ



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