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AN INVESTIGATION INTO SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF MULTI-WORD VERBS DENOTING VERBAL PROCESS IN ENGLISH AND HOW TO TRANSLATE THEM INTO VIETNAMESE

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Multi-word verbs are complex problems for learners both in their grammatical form and lexical meaning. Learners tend to avoid expressing their ideas with multi-word verbs because they are not confident of using them. Many multi-word verbs carry more than one meaning. Thus, it is difficult for learners to determine accurately the meaning of a multi-word verb as in *"He turned down the radio"*, and "*He turned her down*"(rejected her). It is said that "*Knowing a word means knowing its different meanings* (polysemy)."

The following are some of English multi-word verbs denoting a verbal process :

- speak to *(nói với),* speak about *(nói về),* speak for *(biện hộ),* speak of *(đề cập đến),* speak out *(nói thẳng, nói toạc),* speak up *(nói to lên),* speak at *(ám chỉ ai).*

- talk to *(chuyện trò , nói chuyện),* talk about *(xì xào về),* talk over *(dỗ dành),* talk round *(thảo luận),* talk out *(ca ngợi , tán dương),* talk up *(nói át đi , chen ngang).*

- tell sb off for sth *(phân công),* talk down to sb *(lên giọng kẻ cả)*

- talk out of *(bàn ra),* speak up for sb *(nhân danh, nói hộ)*

From my teaching and translating experience, I find it is difficult for Vietnamese learners to accurately use multi-word verbs in speaking and writing English. Meanwhile, not much of research on

verbal process verbs has been done. For that reason, I hope that this work will be a start for further studies on *multi-word verbs denoting verbal process* in English.

1.2.. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims

The study is aimed to:

- Investigate English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process (MVDVP) derived from *Say, Speak, Tell and Talk* in terms of syntactic and semantic features and how to translate them into Vietnamese.

- Finding similarities and differences among these English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process.

- Offer some suggestions for learning and teaching English as well as for further studies.

1.2.2. Objectives:

The study aims to achieve the following objectives :

- To examine the syntactic features of English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process derived from *Say, Speak, Tell and Talk*

- To examine the semantic features of English MVDVP derived from *Say, Speak, Tell and Talk*

- To find out translational equivalents in Vietnamese of English MVDVP derived from *Say, Speak, Tell and Talk*

- To provide some suggestions for language teachers and learners to better use of English multi-word verbs.

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Through the thesis, we hope to help Vietnamese learners to firmly grasp the nature and the uses of English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process (MVDVP) derived from *Say, Speak, Tell and Talk* and how to translate them into Vietnamese. Besides, the research will also help to raise the awareness of the dramatic effect created by English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process in language in teaching and learning English.

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is basically drawn on the works of Halliday [5], Downing and Locke [2], Locke [8], and so on. In Vietnamese, the study mainly relies on the works of Cao Xuan Hao [19], Hoang Van Van [24], Diep Quang Ban [17], and Tran Huu Manh [21].

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this study, we will try to answer the following questions :

1. What are the syntactic features of English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process derived from *Say, Speak, Tell, and Talk* ?

2. What are the semantic features of English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process derived from *Say, Speak, Tell, and Talk* ?

3. What are the Vietnamese translational equivalents to English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process derived from *Say, Speak, Tell, and Talk* ?

1.6. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The thesis consists of five chapters, as follows :

Chapter 1: "**Introduction**"

Chapter 2: "**Literature Review**"

Chapter 3: "**Method and Procedures**"

Chapter 4: "**Findings and Discussion**"

Chapter 5: "**Conclusion**"

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW
AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Halliday [5], there are three principle types of process found in English clauses: Material, Mental, Relational, and three subsidiary of Mental processes and Relational processes is the category of Verbal processes. Verbal processes are processes of saying, participants referred to in the verbal process.

According to Lock [8, p.109], "verbal process clauses normally have participant, the Sayer, plus in most cases a representation of what is said, called the Saying. This participant is called the Addressee," as in the following examples:

1. My grandmother	told me	a fairy tale
SAYER	ADDRESSEE	SAYING
2. Could you	ask him	to get in ?
SAYER	ADDRESSEE	SAYING

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Language and Context

Language is used to make sense of experience, and to carry out our interactions with other people. This means that the grammar

has to interface with what goes outside the language; with the occurence and conditions of the world, and with the social processes we engage in. Making sense of our experience and acting out our social relationships are the two basic functions of language. Halliday [4] states language is a complex semiotic system, having various levels or strata. We have made the same assumption here, referring to the sound system, the writing system and the wording system, that is, phonology, orthography and grammar.

2.2.2. The Textual Function

One function of the clause is the Textual Function which gives the clause its character as a message, analyzing it as a two part structure with the elements Theme and Rheme. Examples of this Theme + Rheme structure are show in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 Analysis from Textual Perspective

The duke	had given my aunt that teapot
On Friday night	I go backwards to bed
Very carefully	She put him back on his feet again
Theme	**Rheme**

2.2.3. Process, Participant and Circumstance

Process:

Participants:

Circumstances*:*

We can express this in Table 2.2

Table 2.2: Typical Experiential Functions of Group Clauses

Type of Element:	Typically realized by
(i) process	Verbal group
(ii) participant	Nominal group
(iii) circumstance	Adverbial or prepositional group

2.2.4. Transitivity

2.2.5. Types of Process

There are three principal types of process in the English clauses which are the *Material, Mental, Relational*. On the borderline of each major process, we need to recognize three other subsidiary types*: Behavioral, Verbal, Existential* in the English transitivity system, as show in examples table 3. below.

Table 2.3 Examples of Different Process Types [5, p.170-171]

Process type	Example (process + participants underlined; Process in bold; circumstances in italics)
Material	*During the European scramble for Africa, Nigeria fell to the British and the British ruled it until 1960.*
Behavioural	*People are laughing.*
Mental	*The lbos did not approve of kings.*

Verbal	*So we say → that every fourth African is a Nigerian.*
	Can you tell us about the political and cultural make – up of Nigeria?
Relational	*that every fourth African is a Nigerian.*
Existential	*So today there's Christianity in the south.*

2.2.6. Verbal Process

Table 2.4 Target and Recipient in a Verbal Process

I	'm always praising	You	To my friends
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Target	Recipient

Accordingly, the verbs that denote verbal process, from now on called VPVs, (Verbal Process Verbs) may be further classified both syntactically and semantically as follows:

Table 2.5 : Syntactic and Semantic Classification of Participants Involved in a Verbal Process

Participants involved			
Verbal Process Verbs	*Intransitive*	*Monotransitive*	*Ditransitive*	*Complextransitive*

	Intransitive	Monotransitive	Ditransitive	Complextransitive
Speak /Talk	+	+		
Say / Ask				+
Tell/ Ask			+	+
Talk/ Call	+			+

2.2.7. Multi-word Verbs

Multi-word verb consists of a basic verb and another word or words which can be prepositions and (or) adverbs.

Phrasal verbs are multi-word units consisting of a verb followed by an adverbial particle. These adverbial particle all have core spatial or locative meaning (out, in, up, down, on, off). However, they are commonly used with extended meaning. Biber et al [1] categorized multi-word verbs into 4 groups and pointed out the combinations functioning as different structural categories, which are based on postpositions:

i. Verb + Adverb particle (Phrasal verbs)

ii. Verb + preposition (Prepositional verbs)

iii. Verb + particle + preposition (Phrasal prepositional verbs)

iv. Other multi-word verb constructions, which can be divided into the following sub-groups:

a. Verb + Noun phrase + Preposition: e.g. take a look at,

b. Verb + Noun phrase + Prep. phrase: e.g. take sth to heart, take sb into account.

c. Verb + verb: e.g. make do, go get.

Halliday [5] divides phrasal verbs (multi-word verbs) into three types:

    i.   Verb + adverb (can be intransitive or transitive)

    ii.   Verb + preposition (transitive)

    iii.   Verb + adverb + preposition (transitive)

The classification of general common, phrasal verbs or Multi-word verbs, including phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs and phrasal-prepositional verbs may be seen in the following table

Table 2.6: Classification of Multi-word Verbs

Group	Multi-word Verbs	Realisation	Meaning
1	Verb + Adverb particle (Phrasal verbs)	look up (intransitive) get back (transitive)	-search for and find information in a reference book -recover something or somebody that appeared to be lost
2	Verb + preposition (Prepositional verbs)	look after (transitive)	take care of
3	Verb + particle + preposition (Phrasal prepositional verbs)	look forward to (transitive)	anticipate with pleasure

2.2.8. Multi-word Verbs Denoting Verbal Process

As discussed above, multi-word verbs denoting verbal processes can carry some extracted elements of meanings. They include verbal communication and non-verbal communication. The following table illustrates this:

Table 2.7. Examples of Verbs Serving in Process in Verbal Clause [5, p.255]

Type		Examples of verbs
Activity	Targeting	Praise, insult, abuse, slander, flatter, blame, criticize
	Talking	Speak, talk
Semiosis	Neutral quoting	say, tell, be like
	Indicating	tell (sb that), report, announce, notify, explain, argue, convince (that), persuade (sb that), promise (that)
		ask (sb whether), question, enquire

Type		Examples of verbs
		(whether)
	Imperating	tell (sb to do), ask (sb to do), order, command, require, promise, threaten, persuade (sb to do), convince (sb to do)

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This chapter describes research methods and procedures. It consists of the presentation of the methods used in the study, which supports in collecting and analyzing data. To reach the aims, the study is conducted with qualitative approach using descriptive and contrastive method to analyze multi-word verbs denoting verbal process in English and their Vietnamese equivalents.

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

To reach the aims, the study is conducted with both qualitative and quantitative methods. Also, statistical, descriptive and contrastive approaches are resorted to finding out the similarities and differences in syntactic and semantic features of English MVDVP and how to translate them into Vietnamese.

3.2. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

3.2.1. Data Collection

About 500 samples of English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process derived from *Say, Speak, Tell and Talk* and their Vietnamese

translational equivalents are collected from English short stories, novels and magazines and their Vietnamese translational versions.

3.2.2. Data Analysis

- Collecting and classifying into groups based on viewpoint of Biber and Halliday's functional grammar.

- Examining syntactic features of English MVDVP derived from *Say, Speak, Tell and Talk* through data collected.

- Examining semantic features of English MVDVP derived from *Say, Speak, Tell and Talk* through data collected and finding out translational equivalents in Vietnamese.

3.3. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

- Identifying the research topic by reviewing previous studies.
- Choosing the approach to the research.
- Collecting data related to the research
. - Analyzing data based on syntactic and semantic features of English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process and how to translate them into Vietnamese.

- Suggesting some implications of English multi-word verbs denoting verbal process to Vietnamese teachers and learners.

- Suggesting further research.

3.4. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is designed as the core of the study. We firstly name and classify syntactic lexical characteristics of English *Multi-*

word verbs denoting Verbal process derived from *Say, Speak, Tell, and Talk.* Then, we go on with analyzing, comparing and contrasting the similarities and differences among these verbs and finding out their Vietnamese translational equivalents.

4.1. Syntactic Features of English Multi- Word Verbs Denoting Verbal Process Derived from "Say", "Speak", "Tell", and "Talk

4.1.1. Syntactic Features of "Say", "Speak", "Tell", and "Talk" in English Multi- word Verbs Denoting Verbal Process

The syntactic features of "*Say*", "*Speak*", "*Tell*", and "*Talk*" can be expressed as follows:

a. SAY
- *Say to s.o*
- *Say sth (to s.o)*
- *Say + That + Clause*
- *Say + Adjunct*

b. SPEAK
- Speak sth to s.o
- Speak to s.o about sb/sth
-Speak to s.o

c. TELL
- Tell sb about sth
- Tell sb to do sth
- Tell s.o sth
- Tell s.o + that + Clause

d. TALK
- *Talk to s.o*
- *Talk about sth*

4.1.2. Syntactic Features of English Multi-word Verbs

4.1.2.1. *Group 1: Phrasal Verbs (PhVs)*

4.1.2.2. Group 2*: Prepositional verbs (Pre.Vs)*

4.1.2.3. Group 3*: Phrasal - prepositional verbs*

4.2. Semantic Features of English Multi- Word Verbs Denoting Verbal Process Derived from "Say", "Speak", "Tell" and "Talk"

Semantically, the four verbs *"Say, Speak, Tell, Talk"* all have the similar general shade of meaning of Verbal process, but each of them has its own distinguished features.

4.2.1. Semantic Features of "*Say***" and their Vietnamese Equivalents**

"*Say*" has commonly semantic features of reporting, indicating a message giving instruction or direction.

In sending a message, the verb "*Say*" is used as a reported verb. In general, when "*Say*" is introduced, it implies the fact that information is released and may not necessarily receive any response from the addressee.

Semantically, "*Say*" also introduces non-verbal communication in which the Speaker is referred to as some material signs such as an image, a piece of news or a thing.

"*Say*" is often utilised to give instructions or directions:

4.2.2. Semantic Features of "*Speak*" and their Vietnamese Equivalents

"*Spea*k" concerns the manner of holding a conversation in which Speaker expresses ideas or exchanges information with Addressee.

"*Speak*" is utilised to reveal information. Normally, social interaction is defined to be a process of either one-way or two-way type of communication. To some extent, communication introduced by "speak" is undirectional.

"*Speak*" can be used as an indication or evidence in conveying some information without suggesting any actual speech :

4.2.3. Semantic Features of "*Tell*" and Their Vietnamese Equivalents

"*Tell*" gives a message involves the act of putting into words so that it can be heard or read by the Addressee. The verb "*Tell*" suggests this kind of communicative process.

"*Tell*" is utilised to make requests, instructions or directions. As the Addressee is directly oriented at with this verb, "*Tell*" gives the best meaningful interpretation of making direct and strong orders or requests, and so on.

As "*Tell*" manifests the manner of presenting a message, it is widely used in narrating a sequence of events:

4.2.4. Semantic Features of "*Talk*" and Their Vietnamese Equivalents

"*Talk*" is utilised to introduce ideas or feelings, which can be communicated by other means rather than words.

"*Talk*" involves informal expression or communication:

In summary, *Say, Speak, Tell, Talk* are semantically related lexemes of the same field of "communication" in English. In Vietnamese, they generally are " *Nói*" for the same meaning interpretation: to describe the act of putting into speech or writing for a certain communicative purpose. However, they can be interpreted in various expressions in Vietnamese. The above examples may help to make it clearly. So we can summarize in the table below.

Table 4.1: Say, Speak, Tell, Talk and Their Vietnamese Equivalents

Verbs	Meanings					
	Kể	**Bảo**	**Chỉ**	**Yêu cầu**	**Nói**	**Thông báo**
Say	-	+	+	-	+	-
Speak	+	-	-	-	+	-
Tell	+	+	+	+	+	+
Talk	-	-	-	-	+	-

4.3. Semantic Features of Say, Speak, Tell, Talk in Multi- word Verbs Denoting Verbal Process and Their Vietnamese Equivalents

4.3.1. Semantic Feature of Verbal Multi-word Verbs Speak + Particle(s) in English and Vietnamese

Semantic feature of Multi-word verb derived from "*speak*" can be summarized as follows

Table 4.2: Vietnamese Equivalents to Multi-word Verb Derived from "Speak"

Multi-word Verb	Meanings	Vietnamese Equivalents
❖ **Speak to**	❖ Address, reprimand	❖ Trình bày, giải bày
❖ **Speak about**	❖ Discuss	❖ Đề cập, thảo luận,
❖ **Speak for**	❖ Represent	❖ Nói thay
❖ **Speak of**	❖ Bring up a topic, worth mentioning	❖ Đề cập, nói về, đáng để nói đến
❖ **Speak out**	❖ Talk openly and freely	❖ Nói ra
❖ **Speak up**	❖ Speak loudly; declare	❖ Nói lớn, lên giọng
❖ **Speak at**	❖ Talk about	❖ Nói chuyện
❖ **Speak down to**	❖ To speak condescendingly	❖Nói một cách trịch thượng

4.3.2 Semantic Feature of Verbal Multi-word Verbs Talk +Particle(s) in English and Their Vietnamese Equivalents

It is suggested that semantic features of *Talk* may be summarized in the table below

Table 4.3: Vietnamese Equivalents to Multi-word Verb Derived

from "Talk"

Multi-word Verb	Meanings	Vietnamese Equivalents
❖ **Talk of**	❖Debate as a possibility; discuss	❖ Thảo luận
❖ **Talk away**	❖ Spend or consume (time) in talking	❖ Nói suốt
❖ **Talk around**	❖ Persuade to one's opinion; to discuss	❖ Thuyết phục
❖ **Talk back**	❖ To reply to a command, request, in a rude or	❖ Đáp trả, trả treo
❖ **Talk over**	❖ Disrespectful manner weigh in conversation; consider; discuss	❖ Thuyết phục
❖ **Talk up**	❖ Promote interest in; discuss enthusiastically	❖ Nói rõ ra, nói dứt khoát, phơi bày hết
❖ **Talk round**	❖ Persuade to one's opinion; to discuss	❖ Thuyết phục, tranh luận
❖ **Talk out**	❖ Talk until conversation is exhausted; to attempt to reach a settlement or understanding by discussion	❖ Thảo luận rốt ráo

Talk down to	Speak condescendingly to, Patronize	Nói một cách trịch thượng
Talk at	Say a word at someone; to talk to someone in a desultory manner.	Nói át giọng
Talk through	Discuss s.th in detail, get sth approved by talking convincingly	Thảo luận rốt ráo
Talk out of	Convince s.o not to do s.th	Thuyết phục …đừng……
Talk into	Persuade s.o to do s.th	Thuyết phục

4.3.3. Semantic Feature of Verbal Multi-word Verbs Tell + Particle(s) in English and Their Vietnamese Equivalents

It is suggested that semantic features of *Tell* may be used in this case:

Table 4.4: Vietnamese Equivalents to Multi-word Verb Derived from "Tell"

Multi-word Verb	Meanings	Vietnamese Equivalents
Tell off	Separate from the whole and assign to a particular duty, to rebuke severely ; scold	Phản công, lăng nhục
Tell on	Give away	Mách lại, tâu

	information about somebody	lại
Tell away	Say something immediately	Nói ra

4.3.4. Semantic feature of Verbal Multi-word Verbs Say + Particle(s) in English and Their Vietnamese Equivalents

It is suggested that semantic features of *Say* may be summarized as follow:

Table 4.5: Vietnamese Equivalents to Multi-word Verb Derived from "Say"

Multi-word Verb	Meanings	Vietnamese Equivalents
Say against	Separate from the whole and assign to a particular duty, to rebuke severely ; scold	Phản bác, chống đối
Say over	Repeat something, perhaps many times	Mách lại, tâu lại, nói đi nói lại
Say to oneself	Mutter something to oneself so that no one else can hear, to think something to oneself	Tự nhủ, suy tính

4.3.5. Similarities and differences of "*Say*", "*Speak*", "*Tell*" and

**   "*Talk*"**

Though "*Say*" and "*Tell*" belong to the same field and have several semantic features in common, they are still distinctive. Componential analysis shows that there are some features carried by this lexeme but not or little by the other and vice versa. "*Speak*" and "*Talk*" concern the manner of holding a conversation where Speaker expresses ideas or exchange information with Addressee. The interaction suggested by *speak* and *talk* may be unidirectional or bidirectional.

Sometimes the particles can share meanings across a large number of multi-word verbs; therefore, some multi-word verbs with the same particle(s) have the same Vietnamese meanings, for example:

In many multi-word verbs, we can see that the basic physical meaning of the single verb is extended metaphorically and the particles also extend various concepts of physical movement.

And some multi-word verbs can be both transitive and instransitive based on their different meanings such as:

4.3.6. The Frequency of Say, Speak, Tell and Talk

From the 500 samples, the frequency of each type of Multi-word Verbs can be found as follows :

- 10% of them reveal *Say*
- 50% of them are *Speak*
- 10% of them are *Tell*

- 30% of them reveal *Talk*
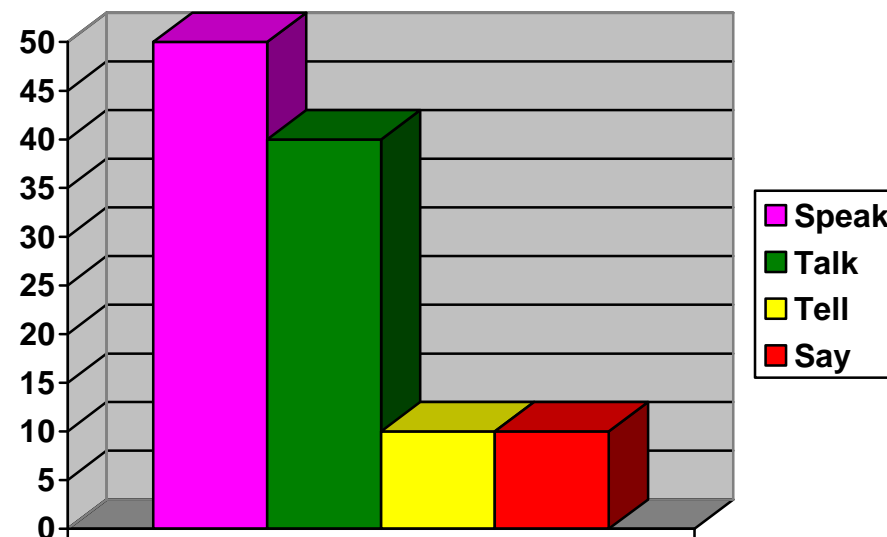
As illustrated in the chart below

Chart: The Frequency of Say, Speak, Tell and Talk

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. CONCLUDING REMARK

It is said to be very hard to learn a foreign language well, because this involves a considerable commitment of time and effort. Teachers and learners of languages in general, of English and Vietnamese in particular should make eclectic studies of the verbal process verbs in the language being learned.

In our particular case of the Vietnamese learning English, learners' attention should be paid to the following systematic ways of comprehending these:

      (i)   Morphologically

      (ii)   Syntactically

Verbal Verbs		Intransitive	Transitive	Vietnamese meanings
Verbs	Particles			
Speak	to		+	Trình bày, giải bày
	about		+	Đề cập, thảo luận, nói về
	for		+	Nói thay
	out	+		Nói ra
	up	+		Nói lớn, lên giọng
	at		+	Nói về, kể về
	down to		+	Nói một cách trịch thượng

In order to grasp firmly multi-word verbs denoting verbal process English learners are suggested to:

- Learn multi-word verbs in context. It is useless to memorize lists of multi-word verbs and their definitions out of context.

- Notice how they are being used. Test yourself about the multi-word verbs. Use them when talking to your teacher and ask your teacher if you've used them correctly.

- Understand the main meanings of important prepositions

5.2. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In teaching English to Vietnamese students (and vice versa) the teaching of verbal process multi-word verbs should be done systematically and gradually (from beginners to immediate and advances level students) so that they may master the use of these verbal clauses , among the other types of clauses (material, mental, relational….) .

5.3. SUGGESTIONS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MWVs

Some suggested approaches to teaching and learning Multi-word verbs

1. Focus on the verbs
2. Focus on the particle
3. Encourage learners to look for the equivalents of vocabulary items

Model Test of Multi-word Verbs

Test 1, 2, 3