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A STUDY OF LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF 
PROVERBS CONTAINING WEATHER TERMS  
IN ENGLISH VERSUS VIETNAMESE

Subject Area : The English Language  
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M.A. THESIS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
(A SUMMARY)

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Language can be considered to be one of the greatest advances in human evolution. However, its origins are still a controversial problem with many given different theories. Initially, primitive people use the very simple language together with body gestures to express their attitudes and feelings. Then when the speech articulator system is complete, the language they use is more and more complex and could satisfactorily meet human demands. Then different languages are formed due to difference in territories. Until now, we can see the diversity of language as it is perfected at the highest level. Each nation or each people has its own language. Language has become a separate cultural identity, property, and pride of every nation in the world.

In fact, as human beings, anyone does have feelings and thoughts. However, because of the difference in language, the expressions are not the same in their forms. Both languages may refer to a concept but the syntax and semantic rules are completely different. That is an interesting issue which interests many researchers among whom I am not an exception.

In addition, proverbs have always been such an endless inspiration that I feel something meaningful should be done, rather than just show admiration to this invaluable treasure. Hence, in learning and doing research into a language of a country, it would be deficient if we ignore the treasure of proverbs that are defined by Wolfgang (1993) as: “A proverb is a phrase, saying, sentence, statement, or expression of the folk which contains above all wisdom, truth, morals, experience, lessons, and advice concerning life and which has been handed down from generation to generation”.

The implied message of proverbs has guided people in their social interactions for thousands of years throughout the world. Proverbs contain everyday experiences and common observations in concise and formulaic language, making them easy to remember and ready to use instantly in oral and written communication. Learning this, many researches into proverbs have been done, such as those into stylistic devices, metaphoric devices, linguistic features through parallelism, and theme-rheme structure. Those researches have made a remarkable contribution to the development of language in general and helped younger generations discover the beauty and richness of their people’s proverb treasure in particular.

Moreover, proverbs are known as the sum-up of daily experiences and common observations about all things and phenomena surrounding human life. Of those, weather makes an indispensable part in humankind treasure of proverbs. However, there has been hardly a research into the linguistic features of proverbs containing weather terms in English Versus (Vs.) Vietnamese.

For all the reasons mentioned above, I have chosen the thesis title “A Study of Linguistic Features of Proverbs Containing Weather Terms in English Vs. Vietnamese”. I hope the study could, on the one hand, be significant and useful for those who are interested in proverbs and on the other hand, help Vietnamese learners of English and English learners of Vietnamese comprehend
and use proverbs better in order to decrease the risk of committing errors in cross-cultural communication.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims

The study is aimed at:

- Finding out the differences and similarities of semantic and syntactic features of proverbs containing weather terms in English Vs. Vietnamese.
- Helping Vietnamese learners of English and English learners of Vietnamese as a foreign language not only get a better insight into various cultural aspects of the English people and Vietnamese people and even those of their own people, but also to some extent see the beauty of language in general and that of proverbs in particular.
- Providing Vietnamese learners of English and English learners of Vietnamese with a practical knowledge of the field to enable them to use them effectively.

1.2.2. Objectives

The study is intended to:

- Identify and describe the semantic and syntactic features of English proverbs containing weather terms.
- Identify and describe the semantic and syntactic features of Vietnamese proverbs containing weather terms.
- Analyze and compare the semantic and syntactic features of proverbs containing weather terms in English Vs. Vietnamese.

1.3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This thesis is restricted to the study of English and Vietnamese proverbs containing weather terms. In this paper, I just try to narrow down to some such popular weather phenomena as rain or shower, wind, storm, snow, lightning, thunder, frost, dew and typhoon that are present in the proverbs. Yet, the researcher will not concentrate on proverbs containing weather terms that denote weather changes as well as weather’s influence on production and human life. I only focus on the didactic messages, advices, and meaningful lessons, which the proverbs containing weather terms offer. In addition, a semantic and syntactic comparison could be carried out in the two languages: English vs. Vietnamese.

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the aims and objectives above, this thesis tries to find out the answers to the following questions:

1. What are the semantic and syntactic features of proverbs containing weather terms in English?
2. What are the semantic and syntactic features of proverbs containing weather terms in Vietnamese?
3. What are similarities and differences of semantic and syntactic features of proverbs containing weather terms in English vs. Vietnamese?

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW OF PREVIOUS RESEARCHES

Since 2002 till now, there have been many studies as well as investigations into proverbs carried out and gone into details. Le Thi
My Nhat [18] did an investigation into the metaphoric devices in English and Vietnamese animal proverbs. Besides Le Thi My Nhat, Hoang Kim Anh [1] carried out an investigation into stylistic devices, but in a larger scope, in English and Vietnamese proverbs. Apart from these researchers, Dang Ngoc Cu [4] did a research into linguistic features of proverbs through parallelism in English versus Vietnamese. Tran Le Nghi Tran [24] contributed with a research on theme-rheme structure of English-Vietnamese proverbs. In general, most of the above pieces of work still focus on proverbs within a large scope. In recent years, a lot of researches on the proverb have been delved into its smaller areas such as Bui Thi Hoang Mai [12] with “an Investigation into Proverbs with Words Denoting Humans in English and Vietnamese”, Luu Thi Mai Thanh [22] with “An Investigation into Linguistic Features of Money Related Proverbs in English and Vietnamese”, and especially Do Thi Minh Ngoc [17], the early B.A degree and Nguyen Thi My The [23], the later M.A degree which did their researches into cross-cultural features on weather proverbs and syntactic and semantic features of English and Vietnamese proverbs denoting weather respectively.

In general, the above works present all the aspects related to proverbs as well as amount of proverbs carried out by big names, yet none has given fully detailed analysis of syntactic and semantic features of proverb containing weather terms, which offer didactic messages, advice, and meaningful lessons in English v.s Vietnamese. It is this very reason that makes me devote myself to this study.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Proverbs

2.2.1.1. Definitions of Proverbs

The definition of a proverb is found in the Oxford Dictionary (2001) as: “a proverb is a short pithy saying in common and recognized use; a concise sentence, often metaphorical or alliterative in form which is helped to express some truth ascertained by experience or observation and familiar to all.” Some folklorists share the same idea in which a proverb can be commonly thought of as a phrase, a sentence, a statement, or expression of folk that contain above all wisdom, truth, moral and experiences.

2.2.1.2. Typical Features of Proverbs

a. Form and Structure

b. Content and Function

2.2.1.3. Origins of Proverbs

2.2.2. Proverbs Versus Idioms

2.2.3. Definition of “Proverbs Containing Weather Terms”

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary [19], weather is defined as the condition in the air above the Earth such as wind, rain, or temperature, especially at a particular time over a particular area”.

In addition, term (language) or terminology is a noun or compound word used in a specific context meaning. Therefore, in this thesis, “proverbs containing weather terms” can be defined as a kind of proverbs that contains such weather terms as rain, wind, storm, lightning, snow, etc.

2.2.4. Syntactic Structure

The thesis is based on the viewpoint of Quirk et al on grammar for features of English grammar in A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language, Trần Hữu Mạnh in Ngôn ngữ
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURE
3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
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3.1.2. Sampling
3.1.3. Data Collection
3.2. RESEARCH PROCEDURE
3.3. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY
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CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
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4.1.1.14. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Changeability
4.1.1.15. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Others
4.1.2. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Human Virtue
4.1.2.1. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Personality
4.1.2.2. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Carefulness and Carelessness
4.1.2.3. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Saving
4.1.3. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Career
4.1.3.1. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Wealth and poverty
4.1.3.2. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Fame
4.1.3.3. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Power
4.1.3.4. Didactic Advices and Lessons about Success and Failure
4.2. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.2.1. The Distribution of Weather Terms in EPCWT and VPCWT

The distribution of weather terms varies from EPCWT to VPCWT because of the differences in culture and regions. In the scope of my thesis and the limit of my data, PCWT occur in ten weather terms such as rain or shower, wind, storm, snow, lightning, thunder, frost, dew and typhoon. The table below will describe the distribution of weather terms in EPCWT and VPCWT in more details.

Table 4.46: The Distribution of Weather Terms in EPCWT and VPCWT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weather terms</th>
<th>EPCWT</th>
<th>VPCWT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occur</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Rain or rainy or shower</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Wind</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Storm</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Snow</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lightning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Thunder</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Frost or dew</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Typhoon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Mixture</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2. Semantic Features of PCWT in English and Vietnamese

Table 4.47: Relative Frequency of Semantic Fields of PCWT in English and Vietnamese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic fields</th>
<th>EPCWT</th>
<th>VPCWT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occurrence</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Life</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Human Virtue</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Career</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the table 4.43, the amount of proverbs in term of semantic field is in descending order with life, human virtue, and career respectively in both EPCWT and VPCWT. Especially, there is a coincidence that both EPCWT and VPCWT share the same highest percentage of proverbs giving didactic advices about life (69.2%) with 83 sentences. In addition, with the same second rank, EPCWT offering lessons about human virtue take up 25% with 30 sentences, which is three sentences more than that of VPCWT (27 sentences) with 22.5%. Moreover, both EPCWT and VPCWT sending messages about career occupy the same third rank with 5.8% (7 sentences) and 8.3% (10 sentences) respectively. In brief, from above mentioned things, English people and Vietnamese people both have the same tendency to use PCWT offering didactic advice as well as meaningful lessons about life, human virtue, and career.
Overall, it is necessary to note that the table 4.43 only covers the meanings expressed by PCWT in English versus Vietnamese under discussion rather than deals with all senses of PCWT

4.2.3. Syntactic Features of PCWT in English and Vietnamese

| Table 4.48: Relative Frequency of Syntactic Patterns of EPCWT and VPCWT |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Syntactics                      | Language        | Occur | Rate | Occur | Rate |
| Simple Sentences                | English         |       |      | Vietnamese |      |      |
| [1] S+V                         | 1               | 0.8%  | 2    | 1.8%  |      |      |
| [2] S+V+C                       | 10              | 8.4%  | 2    | 1.8%  |      |      |
| [3] S+V+A                       | 22              | 18.3% | 5    | 3.7%  |      |      |
| [4] S+V+O                       | 16              | 13.3% | 17   | 14.2% |      |      |
| [5] S+V+O+C                     | 5               | 4.2%  | 3    | 2.5%  |      |      |
| [6] S+V+O+A                     | 12              | 10%   | 0    | 0.0%  |      |      |
| Complex Sentences               | English         |       |      | Vietnamese |      |      |
| [7] Nominal Clause              | 5               | 4.2%  | 16   | 13.3% |      |      |
| [8] Adverbial Clauses           | 22              | 18.3% | 0    | 0.0%  |      |      |
| [9] Relative Clauses            | 8               | 6.7%  | 0    | 0.0%  |      |      |
| Compound Sentences              | English         |       |      | Vietnamese |      |      |
| [10] Syndetic Coordination      | 6               | 5%    | 2    | 1.8%  |      |      |
| [11] Asyndetic Coordination     | 7               | 5.8%  | 73   | 60.9% |      |      |
| Irregular Sentences             | English         |       |      | Vietnamese |      |      |
| [12] Aphoristic                 | 3               | 2.5%  | 0    | 0.0%  |      |      |
| [13] Omitted                    | 3               | 2.5%  | 0    | 0.0%  |      |      |
| Total                           | 120             | 100%  | 120  | 100%  |      |      |

The above statistics show some noticeable characteristics of EPCWT and VPCWT. Firstly, in term of types of sentences, there are some similarities and differences between EPCWT and VPCWT. As observed in the table, irregular sentences in EPCWT and in VPCWT account for the lowest percentage among the four main kinds of sentence (5%) with 6 sentences and (0.0%) with 0 sentence respectively. This does not mean that Vietnamese people do not employ irregular sentences in PCWT. The reason is that according to Diệp Quang Ban [26, p.22], Vietnamese only exists three main types of sentence structures: simple sentences, complex sentences and compound sentences; and instead of irregular sentences, Vietnamese people proudly possess some kinds of special simple sentences that are given more details in “Ngữ Pháp Tiếng Việt” of Diệp Quang Ban [26, p169]. Meanwhile, compound sentences in PCWT tend to be strongly used by Vietnamese (62.7%) with 75 sentences, which is approximately six times more than that in EPCWT (10.8%) with only 13 sentences. According to Nguyễn Thái Hòa [36, p55-56], most of Vietnamese proverbs use parallel construction which is popular in compound sentences; among 5000 proverbs, only 150 ones do not have parallel construction. Therefore, that compound sentences dominate in VPCWT is obvious. Complex sentences in EPCWT take up 29.2% with 35 sentences, which is double the amount of complex sentences in VPCWT (13.3%) with 16 sentences. Because in accordance with Diệp Quang Ban [26, p301], Vietnamese compound sentences also consist of hypotaxis that plays a remarkable role in English complex sentences, it is true that complex sentences in VPCWT take up the smaller percentage than that of EPCWT. Last but least important, simple sentences in EPCWT
occupy the highest percentage (55.0%) with 66 sentences. It means that English people enjoy using simple sentences in PCWT because of their simplicity. Compared with EPCWT, Vietnamese people also have a tendency to apply simple sentences in PCWT (24%) with 29 sentences, which, however, is nearly a half less than of EPCWT. Trần Ngọc Thêm [46, p14] states that Vietnam has the origin of agricultural culture with interdependent relationships while Western countries possess the origin of nomadic culture that appreciates individualism and freedom. This affects the way human beings communicate together. In addition, English people enjoy getting to the point while Vietnamese people tend to go around. Hence, EPCWT tend to use simple sentences while VPCWT enjoy compound sentences. Secondly, in term of sentence patterns, pattern S+V+A is the most popular pattern in form of simple sentences in EPCWT while S+V+O is enjoyed in VPCWT. This can be explained [46, p116] that Vietnamese people tend to use dynamic forms (verbial structures and flexible semantic grammar) to talk about static content (psychology, emotion, etc) while western people tend to employ static form (cohesive grammar) to mention dynamic content (actions, facts, matter, etc). In form of complex sentences, adverbial clauses are mainly employed in EPCWT but VPCWT enjoy using nominal clauses. In form of compound sentences, EPCWT tend to use both asyndetic coordination and syndetic coordination while VPCWT mainly focus on using asyndetic coordination.

4.2.4. Similarities and Differences in Semantic and Syntactic Features of PCWT in English and Vietnamese

4.2.4.1. Similarities

After comparing and analyzing all PCWT in English versus Vietnamese, I have found out some similarities in terms of distribution of weather terms, semantic features, and syntactic features.

In term of distribution of weather terms, both EPCWT and VPCWT employ various weather terms in proverbs such as rain, shower, wind, storm, snow, lightning, thunder, frost, and dew. In addition, wind and rain are widely used in both EPCWT and VPCWT with the largest numbers. They account for the highest percentages in EPCWT and VPCWT. Moreover, both EPCWT and VPCWT use the mixture of some weather terms in proverbs.

In term of semantics, both EPCWT and VPCWT firstly occur in three semantic fields. Secondly, the semantic fields are together ranked in the descending order of life, human virtue, and career in EPCWT and VPCWT. Thirdly, PCWT offering didactic lessons and advice about life have a coincidence in the number between EPCWT and VPCWT, which means that English people and Vietnamese people enjoy employing weather terms in proverbs in order to convey some didactic lessons about life. Of aspects of meaning about life, “behavior” and advantages and disadvantages occupy the highest percentages in both EPCWT and VPCWT. Fourthly, PCWT offering didactic lessons and advice about human virtue are also ranked in the descending order of personality, carefulness and carelessness and saving. Lastly, PCWT offering didactic lessons and advice about career together occur in such two aspects of meaning as wealth and poverty and fame.
In term of translation, it is interesting that EPCWT have some Vietnamese equivalents:

1. Tall trees catch much wind.
   Cây càng cao thì gió càng lay
2. Many drops make a shower.
   Góp gió thành bão, mưa lâu nên lụt.
3. Thatch your roof before the rain begins.
   Kín gianhhör lành gió.
4. No wind, no waves.
   Không có mây, sao có mưa.
5. Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.
   Cây gió chử bão
6. Catch the wind with a net
   Tay không bắt gió trời
7. Save for a rainy day.
   Khi nắng, còn có khi mưa.

In term of syntactic features, it is obvious from the above contrastive analysis that both EPCWT and VPCWT employ three main types of sentences such as simple sentences, compound sentences and complex sentences. In term of each type of sentence, there are some similarities between EPCWT and VPCWT as follow:

Firstly, simple sentences in EPCWT and VPCWT occur in five types of clauses: SVA, SVO, SVC, SV and SVOC. Moreover, SVA and SVO occupy the highest percentage among all types of simple sentences. In addition, in both languages, SV takes up the lowest percentage in PCWT. Lastly, SVOO does not appear in both EPCWT and VPCWT.

Secondly, compound sentences in both EPCWT and VPCWT contain two kinds: syndetic and asyndetic. Moreover, asyndetic tends to be employed much more than syndetic in both EPCWT and VPCWT. This means that parallel structures are very popular in compound sentences in both languages. Furthermore, IR. Galperin [6, p17] claims that the necessary condition in parallel construction is identical or similar syntactical structure in two or more sentences or parts of a sentence. It is clear that the large number of EPCWT and VPCWT is in the shape of single parallel couplets, where the two successive clauses or phrases of the couplet are similarly structured and are generally related to each other. This makes it easy for the readers and listeners to concentrate on the messages.

4.2.4.2. Differences

Through above detailed analyses and illustrative examples, there are some differences between EPCWT and VPCWT despite the fact that PCWT in English and Vietnamese share a lot of same features in term of distribution of weather terms, semantics, and syntactics.

In term of distribution of weather terms, wind and rain take turns to rank first, second in EPCWT while rain ranks first, and wind ranks second in VPCWT. In addition, storm occupies the third highest percentage in EPCWT with 11 sentences while storm is present in only two sentences of VPCWT. Moreover, VPCWT occur in most of weather terms except for snow and typhoon but EPCWT cover all. This can be explained that Vietnam belongs to tropical area with dry season and rain one but Western countries belong to a cold area with dry climate [46, p13]. Thus, Vietnam cannot possess snow.
Last but not least, VPCWT use more various mixtures of weather terms than EPCWT do. Particularly, VPCWT occur in all five types of mixture while EPCWT cover only two types.

In term of semantics, EPCWT and VPCWT have some differences in each semantic field. Firstly, VPCWT cover all aspects of meaning of life while EPCWT ignore such four aspects of meaning as love, unjustness, changeability, and sudden news. In addition, first rank and second rank belong to behavior and advantages and disadvantages respectively in EPCWT while advantages and disadvantages ranks first and behavior ranks second in VPCWT. Secondly, most of EPCWT offering didactic lessons and advice about personality send messages about optimism while VPCWT discuss various personalities. Thirdly, EPCWT have more plentiful aspects of meaning about career than VPCWT do. VPCWT do not occur in such two aspects of meaning as power and success and failure while EPCWT cover all four. In spite of occurring in only two aspects of meaning, VPCWT give a clear gap between the two aspects. Meanwhile, EPCWT stretch over four aspects of meaning with only 7 sentences.

In term of syntactics, there are some remarkable differences between EPCWT and VPCWT. Firstly, simple sentences rank first in EPCWT while they just come second in VPCWT. Among seven types of simple sentences, EPCWT occur in six types but VPCWT take place in only five types. While SVA takes up the highest percentage in EPCWT, SVO ranks first in VPCWT. In addition, SVOA in EPCWT possesses 12 sentences (10%); whereas, SVOA is not present in VPCWT.

Secondly, compound sentences take up the highest percentage in VPCWT, which is quite opposite to EPCWT with the low percentage of compound sentences. In term of classification of compound sentences, the two languages are so different that I must cope with some difficulties in making a contrastive comparison between EPCWT and VPCWT. If PCWT are considered in respect of conjunction, adverbs, and expletives, VPCWT have a strong tendency to use no conjunctions. On the contrary, EPCWT tend to use both conjunctions and no conjunctions with equivalent percentage.

Thirdly, it is very difficult to make a comparison about complex sentences between EPCWT and VPCWT. In respect of classification of complex sentences, both English and Vietnamese are very different. At some extent, English complex sentence is similar to Vietnamese compound sentences. Nonetheless, if complex sentences are regarded in terms of theoretical background and results of analyses, I have uncovered some different points. EPCWT cover all three kinds of complex sentences while VPCWT just use one.

Fourthly, EPCWT occur in irregular sentences but VPCWT do not. That is because Vietnamese grammar does not contain this kind of sentence.

Finally, EPCWT cover all the four kinds of sentences: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and irregular sentences. Still, VPCWT occur in three main kinds of sentences: simple sentences, compound sentences, and complex sentences.

4.3. SUMMARY
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
5.1. CONCLUSIONS

As previously stated, the main goal of this study is to describe and compare the semantic and syntactic features of EPCWT and VPCWT to find out the similarities and differences about types of sentences as well as semantic fields between EPCWT and VPCWT. In order to achieve these goals, the researcher carries out a contrastive analysis into EPCWT and VPCWT so as to describe and analyze three semantic fields which contain many subfields and four types of sentences based on the views on sentence types of Quirk et al [21], Trần Hữu Mạnh [42] and Diệp Quang Ban [26].

From the discussion, it can be recognized that every country could have similar and different ways in using PCWT in order to express what they want to say or communicate normally for offering moral lessons as well as didactic advices. The findings gained from the analysis of one hundred and twenty PCWT of each language in the data allow the researcher to come to the following remarks.

In term of semantic features, this thesis is related to three semantic fields: life, human virtue, and career. After describing and analyzing the data, some similarities and differences have been found in both EPCWT and VPCWT.

As for distribution of weather terms, both EPCWT and VPCWT employ various weather terms in proverbs such as rain, shower, wind, storm, snow, lightning, thunder, frost, and dew. Trần Ngọc Thêm in “Cô Sở Văn Hóa Việt Nam” [46, p 13] claims that if cultures are far from each other or never meet together but share some social and natural conditions, they may have some similarities. Consequently, wind and rain are widely used in both EPCWT and VPCWT with the largest numbers. They account for the highest percentages in EPCWT and VPCWT. Moreover, both EPCWT and VPCWT use the mixture of some weather terms in proverbs. However, snow and typhoon are present at EPCWT but are absent from VPCWT. This is completely true because Vietnam belongs to tropical area with dry season and rain one but Western countries belong to a cold area with dry climate [46, p13]. As a result, snow cannot appear in Vietnam and so do Vietnamese proverbs.

As for semantics, both EPCWT and VPCWT firstly occur in three semantic fields. Secondly, the semantic fields are together ranked in the descending order of life, human virtue and career in EPCWT and VPCWT.

In term of syntactic features, there are some interesting similarities and differences between EPCWT and VPCWT. It is obvious from the above analysis that both EPCWT and VPCWT employ three main types of sentences such as simple sentences, compound sentences and complex sentences. However, some differences are found in EPCWT and VPCWT. According to Trần Ngọc Thêm [46, p116], grammar of European languages is cohesive and rigid but Vietnamese grammar allows users to be able to employ flexibly; grammar of Western countries is in favor of the form while Vietnamese grammar is semantic grammar. As a result, EPCWT cover 13 patterns of sentences but VPCWT just cover 8 patterns of sentences. Pattern [asyndetic coordination] takes up the prominent percentage in VPCWT with 75 sentences but the prominent percentage in EPCWT is occupied by both pattern...
[S+V+A] and pattern [adverbial clauses] with only 22 sentences for each. EPCWT occur in irregular sentences but VPCWT do not.

In summary, there are some similarities and differences in syntactic and semantic features of EPCWT and VPCWT which reflect the structures of PCWT and didactic advices, moral lessons as well as messages about life, human virtue and career in EPCWT and VPCWT.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING PROVERBS

Teaching and learning a language is necessarily accompanied with teaching and learning its culture. The teaching and learning of these proverbs has significant meanings. Proverb is, in general, among the most effective tools for the exploration into the “mysterious and uncovered land” of each culture. Both teachers and learners could gain a lot of benefits thanks to the teaching and learning of proverbs. The idea of teaching and learning proverbs in addition to other linguistic features is becoming more and more appealing to all of us, especially for PCWT.

5.2.1. Implications for Teaching Proverbs Containing Weather Terms

In order to achieve the full efficiency, the researcher suggests that PCWT could be applied into teaching as illustrated in the followings.

PCWT could be applied to teaching grammar such as simple sentences, complex sentences, compound sentences and irregular sentences. They could serve as examples for some particular structures, for instance double comparatives as in: “The sharper the storm, the sooner it’s over”. The teacher could modify the original sentence a little bit in order to make it fit the accurate structure. So, the above proverb may be changed to “The sharper the storm is, the sooner it’s over.” Instead of spending much time and effort fabricating some examples, proverbs are available fixed structures for teachers to employ. Also, they often appear to be rather impressive thanks to their rhythm, and impression which tends to facilitate the memorizing process. In addition, teaching grammar through proverbs helps learners understand more about their culture as well as the culture they are studying.

PCWT could also be employed in the warm-up activity in which a set of proverbs is given and students are required to put them under the proper themes or topics. They could also be used as a topic for a writing essay or for an open discussion in speaking activities.

In short, the application of proverbs into teaching could be feasible but it depends to a large extent on the competence of teachers. Unexpected results may arise if teachers fail to fit it into the teaching process. The most important thing is that teachers while introducing proverbs into their lectures need to make students understand its significance, engage students in the process of finding out the linguistic and cultural values of proverbs, and appeal for their real interests.

5.2.2. Implications for Learning Proverbs Containing Weather Terms

Normally, language learners pick up and learn proverbs as they randomly appear in a reading or listening contexts. Still, to get highest result, learners had better learn proverbs by selected groups, for example proverbs having the same structure or belonging to the same semantic features, etc. The most preferable way to group
proverbs is depending on the key word they contain: proverbs containing weather terms offering didactic advices and lessons about life, human virtue, and career.

Most of PCWT have more than one sense: literal meaning and figurative meanings. To decode these proverbs, we can base on either their literal meanings or figurative meanings. There are still some proverbs which we can get the literal meaning when looking at their constituent words; however some of proverbs are opaque in meaning. As a result, if learners only pay attention to the words and get the literal meaning of proverbs, they are likely to misuse the proverbs carrying figurative meanings. In this case, identification of the semantic mechanism of the proverb plays an important role in decoding its sense. Specifically, proverbs’ meaning is motivated by the existence of symbolic characteristics or is determined on the basis of real-world situation, history allusion, and cultural background. On the one hand, as for some proverbs whose meaning is constructed on the basis of describing events and phenomena by means of metaphor, metonymy, and symmetry, learners should equip themselves with the knowledge of principles of meaning transfer. On the other hand, proverbs are not only a special form of language, but also the embodiment of culture. So it is necessary for people to accumulate as much cultural background knowledge as possible. No matter when we learn English proverbs or Vietnamese proverbs, we must bear in mind that we are not only to learn proverbs but also to learn their correspondent cultures. In practice, the most effective way to possess the cultural background knowledge of proverbs is reading. We can read professional books about English and Vietnamese cultures. In addition, we can use dictionary as a source of help when facing to unfamiliar proverbs. Furthermore, we can gain some knowledge about proverbs by communicating with foreigners. In general, it is indispensable for us to have cultural background knowledge to help us have better understanding of proverbs.

5.3. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCHES

5.3.1. Limitations for the Thesis

Due to the limited time and materials, the researcher could only conduct the data collection process on around 120 proverbs in each language. This obviously does not guarantee a full collection of PCWT, even though the researcher has tried hard to avoid any biases which may result from an insufficient amount of data. Moreover, under the constraint of ability, the researcher could only point out some similarities and differences of PCWT in both languages in terms of syntactic and semantic features, which may not be totally adequate for a thorough understanding of cross-cultural similarities and differences.

In brief, there are many things that need considering and investigating more thoroughly. Therefore, any comments or extra contributions are warmly welcome for the completion of the research.

5.3.2. Suggestions for Further Researches

Discovering the linguistic features of English and Vietnamese PCWT still leaves the possibilities for further study. Further research could focus on pragmatic and cultural features of PCWT offering didactic advice, moral lessons and messages, or metaphor device used in PCWT offering didactic advice, moral lessons, and messages.