

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
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**NGUYỄN ĐOÀN THẢO CHI**

**A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON  
HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHIES IN  
ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE**

**Field: The English language**

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Supervisor : Ngũ Thiện Hùng, Ph.D

Examiner 1: Trương Bạch Lê, Ph.D

Examiner 2: Trần Quang Hải, Ph.D

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. RATIONALE**

Nowadays, biography is considered the most popular category of non-fiction books. It is also a must-have type of reference in most libraries. The need for reading and researching biography is also increasing. Courses on researching and writing biographical forms are blooming in many countries. In addition, biography is such a valuable teaching resource for teachers who want to provide their students with inspiration and reflection in their studies. However popular biography may be, this genre of writing still receives little attention from researchers and linguists. The fact that little has been known about characteristics of biographical discourse causes difficulties for those who want to compose a biographical writing or those who wish to do research in genre analysis in particular and discourse analysis in general. Therefore, understanding discourse features of this genre turns out to be an effective tool for them, and this is also a task of this study on biographical discourse. For these reasons, the researcher made a decision to carry out a study entitled “A Discourse Analysis on Historical Biographies in English and Vietnamese”. It is hoped that through the use of discourse analysis approach, the genre of biography can be comprehensively investigated.

#### **1.2. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

Together with the popularity and importance of this genre of writing, the study is worth conducting as it is expected to provide useful knowledge to enable better understanding of this genre in the light of discourse analysis. Moreover, the findings of the study are presumed to be a potential source for the teaching of writing skills in

the genre of biography, which certainly brings benefits to Vietnamese students in writing classes.

### **1.3. AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The study is carried out with the aim to investigate the discourse features of historical biographies in English and Vietnamese. The finding of the study will be of great help to teachers, learners of English as a foreign language and those who are interested in this genre of writing.

### **1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study is intended to:

- Describe the discourse features of historical biographies in English and Vietnamese in terms of discourse structure, linguistic features and cohesive devices
- Find out the similar and different features of historical biographies of the two languages in terms of their discourse structure, linguistic features and cohesive devices
- Put forward some practical implications for teachers and learners of English as well as for those interested in writing biographies.

### **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the discourse features of English historical biographies (EHBs) and Vietnamese historical biographies (VHBs) in terms of their discourse structure, linguistic features, and cohesive devices?
2. What are the similarities and differences between EHBs and VHBs in terms of their discourse structure, linguistic features, and cohesive devices?

### **1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study just investigates historical biographies with the length from 500 to 1500 words. Biographies written in book format or short outline will not be taken into consideration. In addition, within the constraint of time and knowledge, the study cannot cover all discourse features of historical biographies in the two languages. Rather, the study is restricted to three aspects: discourse structure, linguistic features and cohesive devices of English and Vietnamese historical biographies collected from reliable sources. Also, the study just focuses on one type of biography, that is, historical biography.

### **1.7. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

## **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES**

Discourse analysis can be characterized as the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used. Many distinguished scholars such as Grice (1975), Halliday and Hasan (1976), Widdowson (1979), Brown and Yule (1983), etc. have made great contributions to the overall picture of discourse analysis. In Vietnam, linguists have joined in the trend of researching on discourse analysis as well. Tran Ngoc Them (1985) is considered the first linguist who studies this new field. More and more master theses and doctoral dissertations relating to studying genre types have been carried out such as travel advertisements by Ton Nu My Nhat (2005),

political speeches by Ngo Thi Thanh Mai (2007), film review by Truong Thi Thanh Hien (2011), fairy tales by Tran Thi Hoa (2012).

Regarding biographical genre, statistics shows that research on biography in the light of discourse analysis is limited. Nagarale (2011) conducted a comparative study that aimed at analyzing the discourses in the biographies of African-American and Dalit women. Strategies of language use were examined to find out distinctive characteristics in their personalities, characters, feelings and emotions. Domestically, Nguyen Thi Hoa (2006) investigated the discourse of biographies. However, in this study, she collected a small number of biography, namely 30 biographies in general and all of the biographies are written in English only. Therefore, it is necessary to have further research in terms of biographical discourse on a larger scale in both English and Vietnamese so that similarities and differences between the two languages can be withdrawn. Hopefully, this study can bring some contributions to the teaching and learning of writing skills, especially writing biographies.

## **2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.2.1. Discourse**

### **2.2.2. Discourse analysis**

### **2.2.3. Spoken and written discourse**

### **2.2.4. Genre analysis**

#### ***a. Defining genre***

#### ***b. Types of genres***

#### ***c. Theory of genre analysis***

### **2.2.5. Approaches to genre analysis**

#### ***a. The Swalesian Approach to genre***

#### ***b. The Systemic Functional Approach to genre***

According to the systematic functional theorists, the concept of genre is approached from the perspective of the relationship between form, function, and context. Particular aspects of a given context define the meaning likely to be expressed and the language likely to be used to express those meanings. Halliday conceives of the social context in terms of the situational variables of the field, tenor, and mode of the discourse which define the register. These contextual variables of semiotic meaning correlate with “*the functional components of the semantic system of a language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual*” [Halliday & Hasan, 12:29].

The description of the experiential meta-function of language involves one major grammatical system - Transitivity. Transitivity refers to the way meanings are encoded in the clause and to the way different types of processes are represented in the language. According to Halliday (2004), a process consists potentially of three components: process, participant and circumstances. There are indeed six different process types: material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational, and existential. The system of Transitivity is also used to analyse the linguistic features of historical biographies in this study.

### **2.2.6. Coherence and cohesion in discourse**

#### ***a. Coherence***

Coherence has been applied to the concepts and relations underlying its meaning and to some general overall in the text. In other words, coherence has been identified as continuity in meaning and context in a discourse.

#### ***b. Cohesion***

According to Halliday & Hasan (1976), cohesion is a non-structural element of language. It is “*a semantic one; it refers to the*

*relation of meaning that exist within the text and that define it as a text*” [11:4]. Meanwhile, in Vietnamese, Tran Ngoc Them (1985) considers cohesion a structural element of language. He categorizes cohesion into two facets: content cohesion and form cohesion. Content cohesion is expressed through a system of form cohesive devices and form cohesion is embodied in content cohesion. The concept of Halliday and Hasan is said to be more convenient for discourse analysis as its focus is on form cohesion; content cohesion, according to this concept, will belong to coherence which decides the textuality of a text. For that reason, Halliday and Hasan’s view on cohesion will be taken for the analysis of historical biographies in this study.

### **2.2.7. Biography**

#### ***a. Definition of biography***

According to Désilets (2006), biography is a description of various aspects in a person’s life. It narrates the life story of a person and is written by another person. The basic facts in a biography often includes childhood, education, career, relationships, family and death arranged in a chronological order. When writing a biography, besides the description of the main character’s appearance and personality, the biographer may give comments or judgements about their achievements in history. A biographical work is supposed to be somewhat factual. However, certain type of biography like fictional biography may contain fictional narrative details added by the biographer based on the real facts.

#### ***b. Types of biography***

As regards sub-types of biography, five different sub-types include historical biography, popular biography, fictional biography, literary

biography, and collective biography. The focus of this study is on historical biography.

*c. Biography, life writing and narrative discourse*

**2.2.8. Labov's model of narrative structure**

Among different models of narrative analysis, Labov's model has become the standard model for researchers who want to examine the structure of narrative discourse. According to this model, a narrative begins with an *abstract*, proceeds to *orientation* and *complicating action*, is suspended at the focus of *evaluation*, concludes with the *resolution* and returns the listener/reader to the present time with the *coda*. Labov's model of narrative structure will be used as a reference for the researcher when the discourse structure of biographies is described.

**2.3. SUMMARY**

**CHAPTER 3  
METHOD AND PROCEDURE**

**3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN**

With the aim of achieving the set goal, several methods such as descriptive method, the qualitative and quantitative methods were simultaneously employed. Also, the study utilized the method of contrastive analysis to find out the similarities and differences between the two languages concerning aspects of historical biographies.

### 3.2. DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLES

The total samples for this study included 30 English historical biographies and 30 Vietnamese historical biographies with the average length from 500 to approximately 1500 words collected from reliable websites and books about biography. The websites and books used for data collection are listed as follows.

Websites:

[www.biography.com](http://www.biography.com)

[www.notablebiographies.com](http://www.notablebiographies.com)

[www.infoplease.com](http://www.infoplease.com)

[www.thefamouspeople.com](http://www.thefamouspeople.com)

[www.biographyonline.net](http://www.biographyonline.net)

[www.vietsciences.free.fr](http://www.vietsciences.free.fr)

Books:

- Hoàng Văn Tuấn (2014), *Những nhân vật nổi tiếng thế giới*, NXB Lao Động, Hà Nội.

- Lý Nhân Hân (2011), *100 gương phẫn đầu của người đoạt giải Nobel*, NXB Thời Đại, Hà Nội.

- Lương Văn Hồng (2009), *219 danh nhân thế giới - Tiểu sử và giai thoại*, NXB Kim Đồng, Hà Nội.

The collected samples included historical biographies of famous people who have significant influence on different aspects of life. They are leaders, entrepreneurs, writers, actors, artists, businessman, etc. chosen mainly from the Nineteenth, Twentieth or Twenty First Century.

### 3.3. DATA COLLECTION

When the data was being collected, the researcher always made sure that in the data corpus of each language, there had to be historical

biographies of famous people with different occupations from inventors, leaders, artists, actors, singers, reporters to businessman. The variety in the choice of historical biographies helped the researcher fully identify different linguistic features of this type of genre.

There were many different types of biographies. However, this study just focused on historical biographies which depicted the life of famous and notable figures as well as their influence to the society in their times. Historical biographies were chosen for this research because they were more academic than popular biographies and less literary than fictional biographies. This would therefore ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected. In addition, the data included contemporary biographies written in modern language only. This would certainly facilitate the process of data analysis. One more thing that should be taken into consideration is that the biographies were written by biographers or authors of different genders and professions with different writing styles in order to ensure the variation of the data. It is also worth noticing that the Vietnamese biographies were written by Vietnamese authors and they were not the translation of the English ones.

### **3.4. DATA ANALYSIS**

For the discourse structure, the study used the key concepts in the model of narrative structure suggested by Labov as a reference source when the structure of historical biographies was described. In addition, the researcher described the linguistic features of historical biographies in English and Vietnamese based on the analysis of different types of clauses in the Transitivity system according to the Systemic Functional approach to genre. In terms of cohesive devices,

grammatical and lexical cohesive devices were carefully examined. Qualitative method was used throughout the description and analysis of discourse features so that linguistic characteristics of historical biographies could be identified and categorized. The analysis results were then displayed via tables in percentage terms. This was when quantitative method was used to calculate the frequency of each characteristics or category of the samples in the corpus. From this calculation, distinctive discourse features of the biographical genre could be determined, discussed and evaluated. Finally, the data was compared by using the contrastive method to find out the similarities and differences in terms of discourse structure, linguistic features, and cohesive devices between English and Vietnamese historical biographies.

### **3.5. PROCEDURES**

### **3.6. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

## **CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. DISCOURSE STRUCTURE OF EHBs AND VHBs**

#### **4.1.1. Introduction**

##### *a. Introduction of EHBs*

##### *b. Introduction of VHBs*

##### *c. Similarities and differences in the Introduction of EHBs and VHBs*

Table 4.1. The Introduction of EHBs and VHBs

		EHBs	VHBs	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>Title</b>	MC's name	+	+
	<b>Synopsis</b>	Summary of MC's achievement and influence	+	+
		Quotes	+	+
		Rhetorical questions	+	-
		Setting of MC's time	-	+
	<b>Quick facts</b>		+	-

#### 4.1.2. Storyline

##### *a. Storyline of EHBs and VHBs*

##### *b. Similarities and differences in the Storyline of EHBs and VHBs*

Table 4.3. The Storyline of EHBs and VHBs

		EHBs	VHBs	
<b>STORYLINE</b>	<b>Background information</b>	Birth	+	+
		Origin	+	+
		Family	+	+
		Childhood	+	+
		Early youth	+	+
	<b>Main life events</b>	Actions	+	+
		Achievements	+	+
		Inventions	+	+
		Private life	+	+
		Personality	+	+
		Appearance	+	+
		Beliefs	+	+

<b>STORYLINE</b>	<b>Decease/ Present day</b>	Death	+	+
		Execution	+	+
		Current situation	+	+

#### 4.1.3. Conclusion

##### *a. Conclusion of EHBs and VHBs*

##### *b. Similarities and differences in the Conclusion of EHBs and VHBs*

Table 4.4. The Conclusion of EHBs and VHBs

		<b>EHBs</b>	<b>VHBs</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	Recapitulation of achievement and contribution	+	+
	Evaluations from the writer	+	+
	Evaluations from others	+	-

#### 4.1.4. A summary of discourse structure of EHBs and VHBs

## 4.2. LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF EHBs AND VHBs

### 4.2.1. Material process and lexical choice in English and Vietnamese historical biographies

#### *a. The use of the main character's name and personal pronoun as Actor*

This lexical choice has proved that the concentration of a historical biography is around the main character who plays the active role in the process. We call this feature of historical biography *The centrality of main character*, which is marked by the presence of name and personal pronoun in the position of Actor in the two languages.

***b. The use of expressions denoting time and place as Circumstances***

The investigation into material clause in EHBs and VHBs also reveals that when writing historical biographies, the writer always includes expressions denoting time and place. They are adverbials of time and adverbials of place in the form of prepositional phrases and they play a role as Circumstances in the material process.

***c. The use of verbs describing the main character's activities in their personal life as Process of doing***

Verbs denoting activities in the personal life of the main character can be found in both EHBs and VHBs. These verbs are used with an aim to introduce the person's doings as well as some key events happening in important landmarks in any human's personal life from birth, maturation, schooling, movements, marriage, to death.

Table 4.8. Verbs describing the main character's activities in their personal life

<b>VERBS</b>	<b>Verbs describing MC's birth and origin</b>	<b>Verbs describing MC's change of living place</b>	<b>Verbs describing MC's marriage life</b>	<b>Verbs describing MC's death</b>
<b>EHBs</b>	(was) born, grow up, (was) raised, (was) brought up	lived, studied, moved (to), went (to), traveled (to), returned (to), left	met, married, re-married, divorced	died
<b>VHBs</b>	sinh ra, ra đời, lớn lên	chuyển đến, sống (tại), theo học (tại), chuyển về, trở về	gặp, kết hôn, lập gia đình (với), ly dị, tái hôn	qua đời, mất, ra đi

***d. The use of verbs describing the main character's achievements in their career as Process of doing***

In historical biographies, these verbs are used to mention what the person did in their job or what they contributed to the world thanks to their talent and dedication.

Table 4.9. Verbs describing the main character's achievements in their career

<b>EHBs</b>	<b>VHBs</b>
created, produced, designed, invented, published, released, played, led	phát minh, chế tạo, thiết kế, tạo ra, sáng tác, xuất bản, lãnh đạo

***e. The use of verbs marking the recognition of the main character's contributions as Process of doing***

Another type of verb that also appears frequently in the material clauses of EHBs and VHBs is the one marking the recognition of the main character's contributions. It is noting that verbs of this type are always written in the passive form in both languages. Some examples in the two languages are listed as follows.

Table 4.10. Verbs marking the recognition of the main character's contributions

<b>EHBs</b>	<b>VHBs</b>
(is) regarded, (is) considered, (is) recognized, (is) seen, (is) awarded, (is) given	(được) biết đến, (được) xem, (được) nhìn nhận, (được) trao, (được) tặng

#### **4.2.2. Relational process and lexical choice in English and Vietnamese historical biographies**

##### *a. The use of adjectives describing the main character's personalities in EHBs and VHBs as Attribute of quality*

When depicting the main character's portrait, the writer provides readers with information about the person's personalities by the use of adjectives in relational clauses. These adjectives can be found in both EHBs and VHBs. Examine these examples:

[4.120] Jackson was **quiet** and **shy** when he was off-stage. [39]

[4.126] Thời nhỏ, cậu bé Edison rất **thông minh, sáng dạ** và đam mê khoa học. [76]

##### *b. The use of nominal phrases identifying the main character's position and contribution as Identifier*

Besides the presence of adjectives describing personalities, there also exist a number of nominal phrases in the examined relational clauses of the two languages. These nominal phrases aim to identify the position or contribution that the main character held in their career which is widely recognized in our time. For example:

[4.133] Mother Teresa was **a living saint who offered a great example and inspiration to the world**. [40]

[4.134] Turing là **cha đẻ của máy tính**, là **một trong những nhà khoa học lớn của thế kỷ XX**. [53]

#### **4.2.3. Verbal process and the use of verbs in direct speech in English and Vietnamese historical biographies as Process of saying**

A verbal clause can be written in a form of a direct or indirect speech. In the case of historical biographies, the analysis results reveal that English and Vietnamese writers have a strong tendency to use

direct speech in verbal clauses, and the most frequently used reporting verbs are: *said, told, nói*.

#### 4.2.4. Mental process and the use of verbs describing emotions and thinking in English and Vietnamese historical biographies as Process of sensing

In mental clauses, these verbs indicates the viewpoints, interests, beliefs, and feelings of the main character which then helps to characterize their personality. Examples in EHBs and VHBs are illustrated as below.

[4.149] *He loved chemistry and languages from a very young age.*

[23]

[4.155] *Danh tiếng vang lừng vẫn không làm cho văn hào Tolstoy vui sướng, mà chỉ làm cho ông cảm thấy cuộc đời trống rỗng, vô vị. Leo Tolstoy nghĩ về ý nghĩa cuộc đời và quyết định tìm hiểu về nó.* [61]

### 4.3. COHESIVE DEVICES OF EHBs AND VHBs

#### 4.3.1. Grammatical cohesion

Table 4.16. Grammatical cohesion in EHBs and VHBs

Type of grammatical cohesion	EHBs		VHBs	
	Number of clause	Percentage	Number of clause	Percentage
Reference	882	62.1%	721	58.4%
Conjunction	539	37.9%	514	41.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1421</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1235</b>	<b>100%</b>

##### a. Reference in EHBs and VHBs

###### a.1. The use of Personal reference in EHBs and VHBs

a.2. *The use of Demonstrative in EHBs and VHBs*

**b. Conjunction in EHBs and VHBs**

Table 4.18. Conjunction in EHBs and VHBs

Types of conjunction	EHBs		VHBs	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
<b>Additive</b> (and, also, too, furthermore, additionally, và, còn, cũng, thêm vào, ngoài ra)	246	17.3%	240	19.4%
<b>Adversative</b> (but, though, yet, however, nhưng, thế mà, tuy vậy, mặc dù)	60	4.2%	54	4.4%
<b>Causal</b> (so, because, for this reason, as a result, vì vậy, bởi vì, kết quả là)	82	5.8%	46	3.7%
<b>Temporal</b> (then, after that, until then, by the time, sau đó, từ đó, cuối cùng)	151	10.6%	174	14.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>37.9%</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>41.6%</b>

**4.3.2. Lexical cohesion**

Table 4.19. Lexical cohesion in EHBs and VHBs

Type of lexical cohesion	EHBs		VHBs	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
<b>Repetition</b>	985	69.3%	783	63.4%
<b>Synonym</b>	436	30.7%	452	36.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1421</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1235</b>	<b>100%</b>

**4.3.3. A summary of cohesive devices in EHBs and VHBs**

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

#### **5.1. CONCLUSIONS**

The study entitled “A discourse analysis on historical biographies in English and Vietnamese” has been conducted as a contribution to the identification and description of discourse features of historical biographies in English and Vietnamese on the basis of discourse analysis. A set of findings of the study will be summarized as follows.

##### **5.1.1. Discourse structure of EHBs and VHBs**

Firstly, as regards discourse structure, a historical biography can be divided into three sections: the Introduction, the Storyline and the Conclusion. The Introduction consists of a title, a synopsis or some quick facts about the main character. The Storyline includes background information, main life events, and decease (or present day) of the person whose life is being described in the historical biography. Evaluations and comments about the contribution of the main character are included in the Conclusion of a historical biography.

Beside some similarities in the overall discourse structure of the two languages, there exist differences. Regarding the Introduction, in EHBs, there are a title, a synopsis and some quick facts about the main character; however, in VHBs, no quick facts can be found. As far as the Storyline is concerned, the research results have indicated that there is no rule about the order in which the main life events of the Storyline appear in historical biography. However, the Storyline of historical biography in both languages always begins with some

background information such as birth, family, childhood, early youth of the main character. In the Conclusion of EHBs, evaluative comments from the writer or other people are given, but there is no comment of other people in EHBs' Conclusion.

### **5.1.2. Linguistic features of EHBs and VHBs**

The next part of the study is devoted to finding out linguistic features of historical biographies on the basis of different types of clauses in the Transitivity system. In the first place, the investigation into material process has revealed the following features of English and Vietnamese historical biographies in terms of lexical choice:

1. The use of the main character's name and personal pronoun as Actor in English and Vietnamese material clauses: This lexical choice has proved a distinctive feature of historical biographies in both languages, that is *The centrality of main character*. However, in Vietnamese, the number of personal pronoun is more diversified than in English. Besides the common pronouns “ông, bà”, the pronouns “cô, anh, cậu” are also used in EHBs to describe the main character in their childhood or early days. Meanwhile, in English, the pronouns “he, she” are used in all cases.

2. The use of expressions denoting time and place as Circumstances: It is also reported from the study results that in historical biographies, there exists a big number of expressions used to denote the time and place. These expressions include adverbials of time (denoting the time when different events in the main character's life occur) and adverbials of place (describing the place where these events happen). Adverbials of time used in the sentences help place the events in a chronological order from the past to the present time.

3. The use of verbs describing the main character's activities in their personal life as Process of doing: The presence of verbs describing activities in the personal life of the main character is one of the linguistic features of historical biographies in English and Vietnamese. The difference in the choice of verbs between the two languages lies in the use of euphemism representing death in Vietnamese, whereas it is not the case in English.

4. The use of verbs describing the main character's achievements in their career as Process of doing: These verbs are used to describe what the main character did in their job or what they contributed to the world in their specialized area. The presence of these verbs can be recorded in both languages but with different frequencies due to the dissimilarity in the number of famous figures from various occupation sectors in the English and Vietnamese corpora.

5. The use of verbs marking the recognition of the main character's contributions as Process of doing: The purpose of these verbs is to emphasize the main character's contributions as well as the recognition they receive from other people. In English and Vietnamese, they are always written in the passive form. While English passive clauses are realized by the use of verb in passive form (*be + past participle*), Vietnamese passive formation is mainly based on the addition of the word “được” before the verb of the clause (*được + Verb*).

The investigation into relational clauses, the second most popular type of clause in the Transitivity system has given the researcher some findings as follows.

6. The use of adjectives describing the main character's personalities as Attribute of quality: In relational clauses in English

and Vietnamese historical biographies, adjectives describing personalities are frequently used in order to give readers a thorough picture of the main character. The presence of these adjectives in historical biographies is also one of the distinctive features of the biographical genre in both languages.

7. The use of nominal phrases identifying the main character's position and contribution as Identifier: These nominal phrases can easily be found in the Introduction and Conclusion of a historical biography in English and Vietnamese. With the use of these phrases, the writer wants to identify and emphasize the main character's important role in their specialized area.

With respect to verbal and mental clauses in English and Vietnamese historical biographies, the researcher has come up with the following results. As regards verbal clauses, it is found out that verbs in direct speech are widely used as Process of saying with the aim to report what the main character once said or what other people commented about their contributions to the world. Through the use of direct speech in these clauses, the readers can be able to base their judgements on these direct sayings so that they can create their own portrait of the main character, making their evaluations later on more concise and objective.

In terms of mental clauses, the analysis results have showed that the use of verbs describing emotions and thinking as Process of sensing is a distinctive feature of this type of clause. The purpose of these verbs is to help the readers better understand the main character from a different angle, that is, the angle of mental thoughts and inner feelings.

### **5.1.3. Cohesive devices of EHBs and VHBs**

As for grammatical cohesion, there are two common cohesive devices: reference and conjunction. The two types of cohesive reference include Personal and Demonstrative in which Personal reference is used with the highest frequency in both languages. Among the four types of conjunction (Additive, Adversative, Causal and Temporal), additive conjunction takes up the biggest proportion in both English and Vietnamese, then comes temporal, adversative and causal conjunction. As regards lexical cohesion in English and Vietnamese historical biographies, repetition and synonym are the most popular cohesive devices in which repetition is more frequently used. It is also found out that the main character's name or the personal pronoun is often repeated in sentences and synonyms denoting the main character's personalities and roles in their career are preferred as a lexical cohesive device in historical biographies.

## **5.2. IMPLICATIONS**

Pedagogically, teachers in writing classes may use the results of this study in their classes in the following suggested ways. With the comprehension of discourse structure of historical biographies, teachers can teach students how to write a biography of a famous person according to the layout of discourse structure presented in section 4.1 of this study. Teachers can also refer to the research findings about linguistic features of historical biographies (section 4.2) to teach students how to use certain types of verbs, time and place adverbials, nominal phrases, or adjectives to describe the portrait of the main character in the biography. The distinctive cohesive devices found in this study may give teachers a clue so that they can remind

students of remaining the cohesion within their biographical writing with the use of appropriate cohesive devices.

Similarly, the results of this study are of great benefits to students in practicing their writing skills, particularly the skills of writing historical biographies. The understanding of discourse features of this genre will help students set up writing steps to produce an effective historical biography. For example, whenever they begin to write a historical biography, they should remember to follow the assigned discourse structure with the Introduction in the initial position, followed by the Storyline then the Conclusion in the final position. Another instance may be students' awareness in choosing the right words to describe different aspects of the main character's life, from personal life to career achievements. This will not be a hard task for students if they fully understand linguistic features of historical biographies thanks to their reference to this study's findings.

### **5.3. LIMITATIONS**

Due to the shortage of time, reference materials as well as the limited knowledge of the researcher, the study has got certain restrictions. Firstly, the collection of 60 historical biographies to be used as the corpus for this study, to some extent, cannot generalize the characteristics of biographical genre. Secondly, the study just investigates discourse features of historical biographies in three aspects (discourse structure, linguistic features and cohesive devices), so it cannot cover other aspects such as sociolinguistics or intertextuality. Last but not least, in this study, historical biography is the only one sub-type of biographies chosen for the data collection. Other sub-types of biographies such as literary, fictional, popular and collective biographies are not included in the study.

#### **5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

- An investigation into discourse features of historical biographies in the aspects of sociolinguistics and intertextuality.

- A discourse analysis on literary biographies in English and Vietnamese.

- A discourse analysis on fictional biographies in English and Vietnamese.