

การวิเคราะห์กริยาเบาจากตำราเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจ ด้านวิศวกรรมศาสตร์ วิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยี

INVESTIGATION OF DELEXICAL VERBS IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSE TEXTBOOKS FOR ENGINEERING, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ผู้วิจัย

หฤทัย ปานเปรม¹

Haruethai Panprem

hpanprem@yahoo.com

กรรมการควบคุม

ศาสตราจารย์.ดร. อัจฉรา วงศ์โสธร²ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร. สุวรีย์ ยอดฉิม³ดร. ชลธิชา สุขมุต⁴

Advisor Committee

Prof. Dr. Achara Wongsathorn

Asst. Prof. Dr. Suwaree Yodchim

Dr. Cholthicha Sudmud

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความหลากหลายในโครงสร้างทางไวยากรณ์และโครงสร้างทางความหมายของกริยาเบาจากตำราเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจด้านวิศวกรรมศาสตร์ วิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยี วิเคราะห์ความรู้พื้นฐาน วิเคราะห์ปัญหาและทัศนคติของนักศึกษาในเรื่องกริยาเบา กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือนักศึกษาทางสายวิศวกรรมศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเทคโนโลยีราชมงคลกรุงเทพ จำนวน 30 คนซึ่งได้มาโดยการเลือกแบบเฉพาะเจาะจง ตำราทางการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจที่ใช้ในการวิจัยจำนวน 11 เล่ม เครื่องมือการวิจัยคือแบบทดสอบความรู้เรื่องกริยาเบาแบบสัมภาษณ์ทัศนคติเกี่ยวกับกริยาเบา

“make”, “take”, “give”, “have”, “get”, “do”, “run” ส่วนที่เป็นกรรมของกริยาเบาประกอบด้วยคำนาม 2 ประเภท ได้แก่ ‘deverbal noun’ และ ‘noun not in the form of verb’ คำนามทั้งสองประเภทมีโครงสร้างทางไวยากรณ์รวมกัน 8 โครงสร้าง ที่พบมากคือกลุ่มนามพหูพจน์ โครงสร้างทางความหมายจำนวน 6 กลุ่ม ที่พบมากคือกลุ่มความหมายที่แสดงถึงการทำซ้ำๆ ในอากาศเดียวกัน นักศึกษากลุ่มตัวอย่างไม่มีความรู้เรื่องกริยาเบา และแสดงความคิดเห็นว่ากริยาเบา เป็นเรื่องน่าสนใจและมีประโยชน์ ต้องการศึกษเพิ่มเติม

คำสำคัญ : กริยาเบา, ตำรา, ภาษาอังกฤษเฉพาะกิจ

¹นิสิตระดับดุษฎีบัณฑิต สาขาภาษาศาสตร์ บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏสวนสุนันทา

^{1, 2, 3} อาจารย์ประจำคณะบัณฑิตศึกษาศาสตร์ สาขาภาษาศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏสวนสุนันทา

The purposes of the research were to study the variety of the grammatical structures of delexical verbs in technical English textbooks, to study the Semantic constructions of delexical verbs in technical English textbooks, to investigate the extent of the students' background knowledge in delexical verb structures, to study the university students problems on using delexical verbs, and to investigate the problems and attitudes of the university students in delexical verbs. The sampling group of 30 students at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep was obtained by purposive. The research materials were 11 textbooks, and the instruments were a test and the students' interview. The data was analyzed by arithmetic means and percentages. The results revealed that the high frequency delexical verbs in the textbooks were "make", "take", "give", "have", "get", "do", "run". The objects of delexical verb included 2 groups of nouns : 'deverbal noun' and 'noun not in the form of verb'. The two groups shared 8 grammatical structures. The highest frequency was delexical verbs with plural noun. The delexical meanings were divided into six groups. The most frequency was the group of meaning that indicated the repetition of a single action. The student sample did not have background knowledge in delexical verbs. They thought that delexical verbs were interesting and wanted to study more about them.

Keywords : Delexical Verbs, Textbooks, English for Specific Purpose.

Introduction

One of the reasons that students learn English is to be able to communicate appropriately and effectively with foreigners. Unfortunately, the quality and practices of English teaching in Thailand are considered poor, as students, even those with

Bachelor's degrees or higher qualifications, experience a great deal of difficulty communicating effectively with foreigners. This is a clear indication that there is problem with the teaching English process in Thailand. Lewis (2000, p.14) claimed "the fact that so many students are not making any perceived progress is simply because they have not been trained to notice which words go with". Students may know many individual words, and have adequate grammatical knowledge, but still lack the ability to use these words in range of collocations, which add more meaning to what they say or write.

Lewis (2000, p.75) also stated that "it is empowering for both students and teachers to be able to identify an area of difficulty, address it, and provide a general explanation and a generalization. It is important to make students aware of collocations for this very reason." This implies that it is the teacher's responsibility to bring useful collocations to the attention of the students, and help them to remember such collocations, rather than trying to improve their grammar or giving them more new words which they may not even know how to use.

Learning English involves more than just vocabulary acquisition, which is inadequate by itself for authentic communicative purposes. The study of vocabulary should focus on how each word is formed into chunks of words, in a variety of forms, in order to produce meaningful language (Lewis,1997 p. 5). This indicates the needs to reform and to improve the practice of teaching English as a Foreign Language, such as increasing student knowledge of grammatical rules and vocabulary, as well as a focus on the importance of learning how to form and collocate words, which may lead to improved language communicative competence

As a result, learning to form single words into chunks of language should be taken into consideration. The idea of teaching how to form and collocate words can be introduced by “delexical verbs” as they are based on common, high-frequency verbs, such as “make”, “take”, “have”, “do” and “give” to be used in combination with prefabricated groups of nouns. These most common verbs are known as delexical verbs when used in delexical structures, e.g. “We had a nice swim”, “Can you give me a ride back?”, “I had to make a choice”, “Let’s take a walk”, etc.

Delexical verbs generally appear in English texts, and native speakers, however, they are not explicitly introduced and taught as a learning topic. The absence of information about delexical verbs can be clearly seen in commercial English course books from a range of different publishers in Thailand, including Longman, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, and Cengage Learning. This results in failing to appreciate the significance of delexical verbs among English teachers, and not focusing on raising the awareness of students regarding the use of delexical verbs.

Using delexical verbs the language communication sounds more fluent and native English speakers may be impressed with the natural-sounding English of the students. The focus of this research is to study the structures and the use of delexical verbs in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) textbooks since the majority of students at Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep are vocational students who study in variety fields of careers. They need cope with the collocational nature of these verbs in their engineering, science and technology textbooks.

The students have encountered with delexical verbs but fail to understand exactly how they work

both in structures and specific meaning. The students will realize the significance of delexical forms as long as they are presented in a particular context. The research aims to investigate the students’ background knowledge and their attitudes towards delexical verbs so that they can be improved their language communication appropriately.

Research Questions

As the purposes of this study are to analyze the delexical verbs in the course books, to investigate the background knowledge of the students, the problems they experienced with delexical verbs and their attitude towards them. The following questions are to be answered in accord with the research objectives, which are as follows:

1. Which types of grammatical structures are used with delexical verbs in ESP textbooks for Engineering, and for Science and Technology?
2. What semantic constructions of delexical verbs are used in ESP textbooks in Engineering, and Science and Technology?
3. How much background knowledge do the students have regarding delexical verbs?
4. Which problems do Thai university students experience with delexical verbs and what is their attitude toward them?

The Scope of the Study

This study focused on delexical structures, the lexical meaning constructions in English course books, and to investigate the attitudes of the students towards delexical verbs and the problems that they experienced with their usage. The 11 technical course books were selected from a list of best-selling titles from four publishers.

Definitions

'Delexical verb' refers to particular verbs which assign the entirety of meaning to a noun or a group of nouns that functions as an eventive object, but still takes the major role of a verb in the sentence.

'Students' refers to the thirty students at Rajamangala University of Technology, Krungthep, who served as the samples in the study of delexical verbs.

ESP textbooks' refer to the eleven copies of engineering, science and technology course books selected from four international public publishers based in Thailand.

Research Methodology

Textbook selection

The English technical textbooks were defined as "relevance sampling" of the study, Researcher has mostly taught ESP for students from Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Science and Technology. Variety of ESP commercial textbooks were used as course books. As a result, they were selected as samples of the study aiming that they will be the advantage for ESP teaching development. Informal interviews were conducted with sales representatives from four publishing companies in the first stage of the study. The aim of these informally structured interviews was to elicit information regarding the details of the most popular and best-selling English language textbooks which are practical among ESP teachers. This study could be benefit for the majority of vocational students and teachers interested to study about delexical verbs. The unstructured interviews revealed that there were eleven popular ESP textbooks and consequently they were used as relevant sample of the study.

The collection of delexical verbs

The delexical verbs were studied and collected from the textbooks at this stage by using the criteria provided by the definition in the Collins Co-Build Grammar Dictionary (1990: p. xix): "A delexical verb is a verb which has very little meaning in itself and is used with an object that carries the main meaning of the structure." The aim was to use them as the source of the study. All of the verbs were collected from the eleven copies of the textbooks. The context of each verb was also recorded in order to use it as the context of the study. All of the verbs collected were classified in terms of highest to lowest frequency. There were 304 delexical verbs identified, and the context of each verb was categorized into sub-structures based on frequency of occurrences, with ten structures found. The information obtained from the analysis of both the verbs and structures were used to design the test.

Samples

The samples were 30 students from the Faculty of Engineering , Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep. They were chosen by purposive with the criteria of better learning ability and cooperation in order to lead to effectiveness of the study.

Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study consisted of two parts:

- 1 Test
- 2 Students' Interview

Test

The test was administered to thirty sample students. It consisted of two parts; the first part was the semantic aspect, consisting of thirty items. Each question included one delexical verb and the answers consisted of four multiple choice items working as synonyms of a delexical verb. The students then had to choose the best explanation of the delexical verb. The verbs were chosen using a frequency criteria ranging from 38 to 5. The purpose of this section was to check the background knowledge of the students regarding delexical verbs. The second part was the test on delexical structures. It included thirty four-choice multiple choice items, containing eleven delexical verb structures. There were two items used for each pattern. The aim of this section was to investigate the background knowledge of students regarding delexical structures. The validity of the content of the test was evaluated through IOC (Item-Objective Congruency Index) as developed by Rovinelli and Hambleton (1997), and by three experts in both English teaching and research. The results of the IOC was an index ranging from -1, 0, +1. A level of 0.8 was considered significant. The content experts rated items regarding how well the items meet the established objectives. The 30 items of the first part was the test of meaning understanding in delexical verbs. There were 28 items meeting the criteria at the range +1 and 2 items were at the range 0. The 2 items were improved according to the expert feedback. The 30 items of the second part was the test of delexical structures. All of them met the criteria at the range +1. The test has KR-20 reliability at the acceptable value (0.538 and 0.552), the IOC content validity was high (.89 and .96),

Students' Interview

Thirty students were interviewed after completion of the test. The purpose of this interview was to elicit and to investigate the problems and attitudes of the students towards delexical verbs and their learning needs. The Students' Interview was approved by the 2 experts in English teaching. The interview consisted of four open-ended questions. The data from Students' Interview was used to support Research Question 3,4. They were as follows

1. Have you ever known delexical verbs?
2. What strategies did you use in doing the test?

The purpose of these 2 questions was to elicit the students' background knowledge in delexical verbs aiming to answer Research Question 3.

The other questions were :

3. What's your idea about delexical verbs in terms of promoting language competence in your future careers?
4. Do you want to study more in delexical verb?

The idea from these 2 questions was used to answer Research Question 4.

Research Procedures

1. The informal interviews were used with four sales representatives from each publisher. The information from these interviews was recorded and analyzed in order to choose the textbooks.

2. Delexical verbs were collected from the books using the previously mentioned criteria and all of the delexical verbs were classified by order of frequency.

3. The context of each delexical verb was classified in terms of both structure and lexical meaning.

4. The results of the study of delexical verbs from ESP course books were used to design a pilot test. The validity of the content of the pilot test was evaluated through IOC.

5. A pilot test was administered to thirty students who were not samples of the study, but shared similar characteristics.

6. The Test was administered to thirty students who were chosen purposively after the teacher had briefly explained delexical verbs.

7. The students had an informal- structured interview following the completion of the test.

8. The data from Test and Students' Interview were grouped and analyzed.

Data Collection

1. Delexical verbs were collected manually with highlighter markers, based on the "delexical verb + noun" structure introduced by Live (1973: 31) *which states that " in the development of the English language there has been a trend in the direction of splitting the verb into two parts. The first part is almost devoid of lexical meaning but embodies the associated grammatical information; being the bearer of inflectional endings... The second part carries the lexical load, conveying verb-like meaning."*, then grouped into two categories, meaning structures and grammatical structure,

2. The test was administered to the 30 students. They were introduced briefly to the basics of delexical verbs and then took a test. The test papers were marked and the scores recorded.

3. The interviews were conducted on completion of the test, and then students were asked to describe the problems they experienced with delexical verbs and their attitude towards the delexical verbs test.

Data Analysis

1. The delexical verb analysis was based on the framework of Live (1973:31), Sinclair (1990:148-149), Huddleston and Pullum (2002:292), which established that delexical verbs were a combination of verbs and nouns, or a group of nouns. The result from the study was used to answer Research Question 1,2.

2. For the test, the process used to identify the reliability was the statistical computer program. A level of .05 was considered significant. The knowledge level of the students regarding delexical verbs was determined by calculating the average of their test scores. Finally, the findings were interpreted, and identified the background knowledge of the students regarding delexical verbs, aiming to answer Research Question 3

3. Regarding the interviews with students, the answers to each of the questions were tallied, grouped, and interpreted in three aspects: background knowledge in delexical verbs, their problems and attitudes toward delexical verbs, and the need for further study. The result of the students' interview was used to support Research Question 3, 4

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

This aims to study the variety of grammatical structures of delexical verbs in technical English textbooks. The concept and definition of delexical verbs first established by Live (1973:31) was used as the criteria for the analysis of Research Question 1. The results from the study indicated that the main structure of delexical verbs consisted of two parts : delexical verbs and noun or group of nouns.

Delexical verb

There were sixteen verbs identified as delexical verbs in the textbooks used in this study: “make”, “take”, “give”, “have”, “get”, “do”, “run”, “put”, “keep”, “set”, “stay”, “come”, “fell”, “become”, “come”, and “go”. They occurred in the textbooks with differing levels of frequency and proportion. The high frequency of delexical verbs are : “make” “take” “give” respectively. “Make” was the most frequently used delexical verb, appearing 295 times in the text books. “Take” was the second most frequently used delexical verb, appearing 146 times in the text books. “Give” was the third most frequently used delexical verb, appearing 119 times in the text books.

Noun

This study indicated that delexical verbs were mainly followed by nouns or noun phrases. Nouns functioned as the eventive object of the verb. They occurred after verbs and carried the important meaning of the sentences. Two groups of noun were found in the ESP textbooks:

- 1 Deverbal noun(noun derived from verb)
Ex. “have a deal. make commitment, keep in touch”
- 2 Noun not in the form of verb. “take time, take photograph, run engine,” etc The

highest frequency was deverbal noun. The two groups of nouns shared 8 grammatical structures as follows :

1. Singular nouns : “make a choice, take a look, give a talk”, etc.
2. Uncountable noun: “take action, take control, give advice”, etc.
3. Plural noun : ” make changes, make estimates, take notes”, etc
4. Adjective before noun: “take a safety course, get an electric shock, run a variable speed”, etc.
5. Delexical verb with adjective : “keep secure, make sure, stay cold”, etc.
6. Indirect objects before nouns : “give me a bad scare, give them instruction, do me a favor”, etc.
7. Nouns preceded by more than one delexical verb :give/make instruction, have/get a permit, take/do control.
8. Invariations : “go for a ride” ,”take the part in”, “take it in turn”.

In conclusion, delexical verbs consisted of two components: delexical verb and noun. There were 16 verbs found in the textbooks. Two groups of nouns : ‘deverbal noun’ and ‘noun not in the form of verb’ shared 8 grammatical structures which results in variety of meaning construction.

Research Question 2

This was to study the semantic constructions of delexical verbs in ESP text books for engineering, science, and technology. The meaning of delexical verbs differ from their literal meaning to different degrees, depending on the extent to which the meaning has been impoverished. The meaning of delexical verbs can be interpreted in three different levels:

1. Literal (transparent) meaning 2. Figurative (metaphorical) meaning 3. Idiomatic meaning. The most frequency was literal meaning. The three levels shared 5 groups of meaning.

Groups of meaning

To compare the use of delexical verbs and their relevant single verbs, it was found that delexical verbs carry different functions in 6 aspects as follows :

1. Brief event

Singular countable nouns indicate a brief or a quick event. This gives an impression of an activity that takes place in a short period of time. In the sentence *“Can you have a look at the pump?”*, it was understood that you were asked to look at the pump for a short period of time. However, if the sentence was *“Can you look at the pump?”*, there was no indication as to how long you had to check the pump

2. Repetition

There are other delexical verbs which automatically take the plural form by default, and indicate the repetition of a single action, e.g. take notes, and take turns.

3. Expanded meaning

It was found that using adjectives to modify nouns gives an impression of more concise and academic-sounding speech, whereas using adverbs to modify a relevant full verb sounded clumsy and unnatural. *“Make a short presentation to your class”* sounds more natural and professional than *“present it shortly to your class.”* “Help the customer to make the right choice” sounds more natural than “help the customer to choose rightly.” The delexical structure noticeably avoids the objects in transitive verbs

4. Sense of purpose

With the noun form, there was also often a sense of deliberateness or purpose. As seen in the examples above, delexical verb structures refer to intentions to perform actions are more purposive than the full verb constructions. *“What modification would you make?”* gave more of an impression of interest in the details of the issue, while *“What would you modify?”* was more of a casual remark without any real.

5 Avoiding some information

Delexical structures could be exploited by speakers to remove certain elements from immediate focus, as they emphasize only certain aspects of the situation being presented. It can clearly be seen in the sentence, *“Safety signs give direct commands to the drivers”* that the emphasis is on commands, whereas in the sentence *“Safety signs directly command the drivers”*, more emphasis is placed on the drivers.

6 Passive meaning

In some cases, the combination of a delexical verb and an eventive object had a passive meaning, particularly *“have”*, *“get”* and *“take”*. A.H. Live, (Linguistics Vol. 95, 1973, p.31-50) There were some delexical verbs were relevant to the claim of Live. The examples are presented below

With my expenses I cannot afford taking a cut in salary.

(With my expenses I cannot be cut in salary.)

If you can't take pressure, you won't be successful in this job.

(If you can't be pressured, you won't be successful in this job.)

To conclude, delexical verbs are categorized in 6 groups of meaning. They represent the brief event, expanding meaning with adjectives, sense of purpose, avoiding some information and

passive meaning. Each group gives different tone of and functions of language. Delexical verbs have quite different meaning from their full verbs.

Research Question 3

This was to investigate the extent of the background knowledge of the students regarding delexical verb structures.

The results from the test revealed that the students did not do well on the test. The entire sample group received scores of less than 50%. The majority of the students had slightly better scores in the structure section than the meaning comprehension part, which implied that the students had a low level of background knowledge of delexical structures and could not interpret the meaning of delexical verbs from the head nouns. It could be argued that the students did not know the main meaning of the sentences because they were unfamiliar with the head nouns which contained the meaning. On the other hand, they did not know the meanings of the choices used in the multiple choice items either. The results of the test were provided in Table below.

Students	Meaning (30 scores)		Structures (30 scores)		Total (60Scores)		Percentage	
	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min	Max	Min
30	18	1	15	4	29	10	48.33	16.67
Mean	8.53		9.90		18.43		30.72	

The results of Students' Interview question 1 revealed that 44.82% were not aware of the structure of delexical verbs. They never had background of delexical verbs and had limit knowledge of vocabulary. The results of Students' Interview question 2 showed that 62.06% of the students used their background knowledge to cope with the test and 10.34% accepted that they did not understand delexical verb structures and only completed the test by guessing the correct answers.

Research Question 4

This aims to study the problems experienced by Thai university students, and their attitudes towards using delexical verbs.

Regarding to Interview Question3, 75.86% of the students accepted that delexical structures were interesting and potentially useful in their future careers in terms of increasing their

communicative ability. The students claimed that a knowledge of delexical verbs provided them with greater communicative competence which would be useful in terms of work. However 17.24% of students has no ideas about it, due to their fundamental lack of understanding of delexical verbs. However, 6.89% of them believed that

delexical verbs were unnecessary because they could use single full verbs instead.

The results infer that the students could see the advantage of delexical verbs in terms of increasing communicative competence. Delexical verbs could provide the students with greater communicative ability which would be useful in terms of work. Moreover, they provided more choices or a variety of expressions for talking about something in a particular situation. However some students who lacked of understanding the uses of delexical verbs needs to be educated and improved more about the target language.

With regard to Interview Question 4, 89.65% of students agreed that it was important to study delexical structures. Delexical structures were considered authentic and easy to pronounce. Teachers could include the knowledge about delexical verbs in their teaching topics

Conclusion

The delexical structures included 16 verbs, 2 groups of nouns and 8 grammatical structures. Most frequent verbs were “make”, “take”, and give respectively. Two groups of nouns, **deverbal noun** and **noun not** in the form of verb shared 8 The majority of verb form was deverbal nouns. Delexical verbs included three levels and six separated categories of meanings.

The sample student didn't have background knowledge in delexical verbs however, they thought that delexical verbs were interesting and wanted to study more about them. Many of them did not understand about delexical verbs and revealed that delexical was overuse since they could use regular full verbs in their

communicative and delexical structure was too long. They might not use it in their own situation.

The Implications of the Study

The results of the present study have several important pedagogical implications, which could be applied as a generic framework for teaching and learning delexical verbs. The pedagogical implications are listed below:

1. Teachers should use commercial course books as a teaching manual since they provided students greater authentic language in native situations, however, the teacher needs to personally decide which content is the most relevant and important for their students.

2. This research sought to raise the level of awareness among teachers regarding the significance of the explicit teaching of delexical verbs, and to provide materials and activities to increase the levels of collocational competence among learners

3. The knowledge of delexical verbs is not introduced explicitly and widely in English textbooks, as they are very common among native English speakers. This can be regarded as yet another attempt to raise awareness among researchers and all publishers of English text books to include delexical verbs in their course books for ESL/ESP learners.

4. Some students believed that delexical verbs tended to be more problematic, as regular full verbs could easily be substituted in the same situation. In order to react to these attitudes, The students needed to expand their new knowledge of vocabulary appropriately. It is necessary for learners to demonstrate their knowledge of word combinations from the materials or related activities. If not, they will have an insufficient vocabulary for authentic English language

communication. Another way to consider and assess performance of the students.
language competence is through the collocational

References

- Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2002). *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. "Identification of support verbs for nominalization". In *Proceed-In English Language and Literature Studies: Structures Across Cultures of the 7th Meeting of the European Chapter of the Association for investigation*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lewis, M. (1997). *Implementing the Lexical Approach*, Commercial Colour Press plc, London.
- _____(Ed.) (2000). *Teaching Collocation: Further Developments in the Lexical*, Commercial Colour Press plc, London.
- Live, A. H. (1973). *The take-have phrasal in English*. *Linguistics*, (95), pp. 31-50.
- Rovinelli, R. J., & Hambleton, R. K. (1977). *On the use of content specialists in the assessment of criterion-referenced test item validity*. *Dutch Journal for Educational Research*, 2, 49-60.
- Sincalir, J. (Ed.) (1990). *Collins Cobuild English Grammar*. London: Harper collins.