Syntagmatic Properties of English Speech Verbs Speak, Talk, Say, Tell

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Abstract: *This article is devoted to determining the degree of influence of each of these means on the implementation of speech verbs in the context. This article deals with the study of syntagmatic features of English speech verbs speak, talk, say, tell.*

Key words: *speak, talk, say, tell, syntagmatic features, speech verbs.*

The complexity of the semantic structure of any word lies in the fact that lexical and grammatical meanings are closely tangled in the word. The semantic structure of the verb, which expresses an action understood in the broadest sense of the word, is particularly complex. Any action is associated in our consciousness with a wide range of phenomena: *with time, space, an agent of action, various objects, etc. In the language, this is fixed by lexical and grammatical means.* By the method of contextual analysis, 2894 examples were studied, taken by the method of continuous sampling from the works of fiction by English and American writers of the second half of the XX century.

The analysis of the frequency of use of different speech verbs made it possible to identify the most frequent verbs, medium-frequency and singular. Verbs that convey general categorical concepts of speech activity are most often used: *say, tell, talk, speak, ask.*

This indicates that the content of the information itself is more important to the interlocutors, rather than the manner of its presentation and the emotions accompanying it. The classical speech verbs, which simply indicate the message and introduce it without characterizing it in any way, are contrasted with the other speech verbs, combining in their meaning the semes of a simple statement of a speech situation and one or another aspect of this situation.

The middle-frequency verbs include: *answer, reply, murmur, call, announce, comment, shout, declare, whisper, discuss, utter.*

"This hand," resumed Mrs. Morgan, glancing up at Mr. Bamberger and down at her book, as the lines proceeded, "my mother grasped in her own, and so tight that a small, feeble voice uttered an exclamation of pain.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier,102). "Do you suppose the boat will sail promptly?" asked Jessica, "if it keeps up like this?"

"Oh, yes," answered her husband. "This won't make any difference." (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier, 300).

"It don't matter how near you get to the front, so long as you're in the first twenty-five," commented one of the first twenty-five. "You all go in together." (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier,296).

Belong to low-frequency and singular ones: *bicker, sob, brag, chat.*

All other selected speech verbs *chatter, giggle, demand, command, confess, talk, cry, curse, exclaim, growl, grumble, inform, ask, lie, moan, mumble, mumble, pray, pronounce, ask, to*

answer, to shout, to scream, to spew, to stutter, to declare, to swear, to mock, to wail, to whine, to scream.

If he visited a department store it was to lounge familiarly over the counter and ask some leading questions. (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier, 5). He had no definite plans regarding her, but he was determined to make her confess an affection for him. (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier,76). "Elvers," he shouted, "what have you got in your mouth?" (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier, 231). "That's me," he said, putting the card in her hand and touching his name. "It's pronounced Drew-eh. Our family was French, on my father's side." (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier,7). She remembered having received her first one far back in Columbia City. Since then, as a chorus girl, she had received others—gentlemen who prayed for an engagement. (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier,275).

Thus, in modern English, lexical units of various semantic compositions function as verbs that have the meaning of speaking.

Syntagmatic properties of a word are established when considering words as elements of a syntagmatic chain. Essential for the description with this approach are their valence characteristics. The absence or presence of an environment dependent on the word, its structural optional or obligatory, the factors that determine them - all this together forms the syntagmatic range of the word as a unit of the language system. The realization of the meanings of words occurs in context due to a certain combination of syntactic, grammatical and lexical means. This article is devoted to determining the degree of influence of each of these means on the implementation of speech verbs in the context.

Characterizing the types of discourse in which speech verbs are used, it is possible to distinguish the text, the speech of the characters and the speech of the author, which, in turn, can be divided into prepositional, interposition or standing in postposition to the speech of the characters. It was revealed that the most characteristic type of discourse in which speech verbs are used is the author's speech introducing direct speech - 50% of the total volume of verbs included in the sample. For example: "I don't entirely understand it myself," Marvell answered slowly. In a sentence, speech verbs most often perform the function of a simple verb predicate - 83%. The analysis of the syntactic environment of speech verbs showed that in most cases - 57% - the semantic incompleteness of speech verbs requires surrounding them with a prepositional-nominal group. The role of the dependent environment can be defined as the concretization of the idea of speaking.

Speech verbs with a simpler seminal structure tend to expand their semantics in syntagmatics by clarifying: *say, tell, ask, talk, speak, answer. For example:*

It was difficult to speak to Minnie about this, but at last she summoned the courage.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier, 36). "Where is the residence part?" asked Carrie, who did not take the tall five-story walls on either hand to be the abodes of families.(T.Dreisser. Sister Carrier, 176). The old call of the ideal was sounding.

"I don't know," she answered, pleased, nevertheless, beyond all concealment.(T.Dreiser. Sister Carrier, 292).

Verbs whose meaning structure is complicated by differential semes turn out to be more context-independent: *blubber, chatter, chuckle, growl, grumble, inquire, moan, pray, pronounce, scream, shriek, spout, stammer, swear, taunt, wail, whimper, whine, yell.*

For example: It amused him immensely, and at last he stirred and chuckled to himself. He wished that he might enlist his wife's attention and read it to her. (T.Dreiser. Sister Carrier, 130). They looked at it as dumb brutes look, as dogs paw and whine and study the knob. (T.Dreiser. Sister Carrier, 302). "Get that thing off the track," shouted the two policemen.

"Yah, yah, yah!" yelled the crowd. "Get it off yourself." (T.Dreiser. Sister Carrier, 257). Thus was Carrie's name bandied about in the most frivolous and gay of places, and that also when the little toiler was bemoaning her narrow lot, which was almost inseparable from the early stages of this, her unfolding fate. (T.Dreiser. Sister Carrier, 32). "Why," he said, actually stammering, "how do you do?" (T.Dreiser. Sister Carrier, 218).

The study of the syntactic environment also made it possible to identify the following categories of speech verbs that have a mandatory environment:

1. direct-prepositional-transitive one-object verbs: *announce, chat, comment, confess, converse, cry, declare, discuss, murmur, reply, say, shout, utter, whisper.*

    He was on the defensive at a wink and puzzled for a word to reply.(T.Dreiser. Sister Carrie, 131).

2. straight-forward/prepositional-transitive verbs: *answer, ask, call, command, inform, request, tel.*

    He would have fought for this man as determinedly as for himself, and yet only so far as commanded.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier, 247).

3. direct-prepositional-transitive two-object verbs: *speak, talk.*

    He talked of sales of clothing, his travels, Chicago, and the amusements of that city.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier, 6).

4. direct-transitive verbs: *bicker, claim, curse, exclaim, mumble, mutter, state.*

    "Don't wait!" he exclaimed. "Remember we are very busy here."(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 6).

5. prepositional-transitive verbs: *brag, lie, respond.*

    These were the things upon which her mind ran, and it was like meeting with opposition at every turn to find no one here to call forth or respond to her feelings.(T.Dreiser, Sisster Carrie, 32).

6. uncomplicated-transitive verbs: *query, question.*

 "She's well," returned Carrie, answering the last query. (T.Dreiser, Sisster Carrie, 38).

During the analysis of grammatical features of English speech verbs in the context, it turned out that the most characteristic for speech verbs, as for all verbs, is the use in the personal form - 83%, in the indicative mood, in the active voice - 79%.

For example:

"What can I do for you, miss?" he inquired, surveying her curiously(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier, 14). The dinner he had was no stay for such work and the cold was telling on him.(T.Dreiser, Sistter Carrie, 257).

This is due to the fact that the speech verbs are anthropocentric and characterize the action in terms of its activity. The number of uses of speech verbs in the passive voice is insignificant - 1.4%:

The whole company was so weak-kneed that the lines were merely spoken, and nothing more.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 108). Polished brass or nickel signs at the square stone entrances announced the firm and the nature of the business in rather neat and reserved terms.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 12).

It is interesting to note that in the overwhelming number of examples, *speech* verbs are used in Past Indefinite. This is due to the fact that the speech verbs are most characteristic in the narrative, that is, when describing events that took place in the past, as well as in talking about past events. Among the non-personal forms of speech verbs, the infinitive is in the first place in terms of frequency of use - 13%:

"I don't like the actors in our company," she told Lola one day. "They're all so struck on themselves." (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 260). The movement of his lips aroused him. He wondered whether he had really spoken. The next time he noticed anything of the sort he really did talk. (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 278).

This is due to the fact that the infinitive form is the most flexible (among non-personal forms) both in terms of meaning and in terms of functions performed in the sentence.

The verbs that make up the core of the lexico-semantic group of speech verbs: *say, tell, talk, talk, and speak* show great ability to speak in various personal and non-personal forms. It is especially necessary to note the verbs *tell* and *say,* which in this regard can be called universal verbs. This is due to both the overall high frequency and their simple seminal structure. For medium- and low-frequency verbs, the predominant use is in Past Indefinite Active.

Syntactic indicators for speech verbs are additions and circumstances. The study of additions showed that, basically, nouns and pronouns act in this function. However, if in the function of direct complement nouns and pronouns account for approximately the same number of examples - 38% and 37%, respectively, then in the function of non-prepositional indirect complement pronouns are the most characteristic - 78%, and in the function of prepositional indirect complement - nouns.

It is interesting to note that in the direct complement function, nouns directly related to the speaking process are frequent, such as *question, word, story, truth, lie, name,* as well as nouns denoting *a greeting or prayer,* for example:

They will drive the really non-religious mind out of bed to say prayers that are only a custom and not a devotion.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 50). The captain looked in recognition, but there was no especial greeting.(T.Dreiser. Sister Carrier, 283).

The analysis of the compatibility of the speech verbs with the prepositional indirect complement made it possible to determine the verbs *speak and talk* as having a high ability to control.

They can form prepositional indirect additions with six different prepositions. For example: "Certainly, you can talk with me," she replied, laying emphasis on the word.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrier, 118). The next time he noticed anything of the sort he really did talk.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 278). Some days he found that he was all at sea as to what they were talking about— things they had arranged to do or that they had done in his absence (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 87).

In addition, the verbs *speak and talk* can simultaneously have two prepositional indirect additions introduced by different prepositions:

"I want to see the manager," she said. He ran away and spoke to one of a group of three men who were conferring together. One of these came towards her.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 14). He wound up by saying he would think it over, and came away. The man he had been talking to sensed his condition in a vague way. (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 203).

The average ability to control is characteristic of the verbs *tell, say, ask, answer,* combined with 3-5 prepositions. The other verbs are characterized by a low ability to control.

The circumstance is an optional element of the verb environment and, however, it is the circumstance that is able to concretize the meaning of a verb. The main role in this function is played by the circumstance of the mode of action, which makes up 60% of the number of examples in which the verb of speaking is determined by the circumstance.

In the predominant number of examples, the circumstance of the mode of action characterizes not so much the pace of speech or its volume, as its tone, manner and emotional coloring.

For example: *"To Ogden Place," he said sharply. "I'll give you a dollar more if you make good time."(T.Dreiser. Sister Carrie, 160). "I don't want you to," he said tenderly, taking her hand.(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 312). To say truly, this would have been Carrie's attitude in any case. (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 263).*

It should also be noted that the syntactic environment of speech verbs is often represented by nouns correlated with the LSG of speech verbs: *voice, tone, whisper, laugh, breath, question, word, history, language.*

For example: "Cheer up, old man," whispered his companion. "We'll go around, anyhow. She may change her mind."(T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 242). "That," said a voice in her ear, "is one of the prettiest little resorts in Wisconsin."Is it?" she answered nervously. (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 4).

In the predominant number of examples, the circumstance of the mode of action characterizes not so much the pace of speech or its volume, as its tone, manner and emotional coloring.

For example: *"I think the girl is going to take a part in it," he said abruptly, after thinking it over. (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 100). "I think the girl is going to take a part in it," he said abruptly, after thinking it over.*

"You don't say so! How did that happen?" (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 100).

It should also be noted that the syntactic environment of speech verbs is often represented by nouns correlated with the LSG of speech verbs: voice, tone, whisper, laugh, breath, question, word, story, language.

Например: *The speaking acquaintanceship which she formed with some of the girls at the shop discovered to her the fact that they had more of their earnings to use for themselves than she did. (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 35).*

"That," said a voice in her ear, "is one of the prettiest little resorts in Wisconsin."

"Is it?" she answered nervously. (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 4). Without a counsellor at hand to whisper cautious interpretations, what falsehoods may not these things breathe into the unguarded ear! (T.Dreiser, Sister Carrie, 3).

The verb is the organizing center of the syntactic construction of the sentence. Conceptual relatedness in verbal syntactic constructions is set by a variable component - syntactic indicators. The constant component - the verb - is usually characterized by a shift in meaning. When functioning in speech, the verb word meaning can not only weaken or accentuate one of the semes that is significant for the communication situation, implement certain system associative signs, but also acquire speech occasional semantic signs as a consequence of the interaction of meanings in the text.

The conducted research allows us to draw the following conclusions: the syntactic construction in itself is not a meaning-distinguishing factor; the role of the meaning-distinguishing criterion in distinguishing the meanings of speech verbs is played by the syntactic construction in combination with the indicative power of syntactic indicators.

Thus, it can be said that the speech verbs belong to the group of verbs in which the relationship between the functional purpose of verbs, their lexical expression and syntactic constructions is most clearly felt.

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