

**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**



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FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

GRADUATION PAPER

**A STUDY ON THE ASPECTS OF SYNTAX AND
SEMANTICS OF NEGATION IN ENGLISH AND
THE CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS IN VIETNAMESE**

BY

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CLASS

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SUPERVISOR

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**BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG**

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1. Đánh giá chất lượng đề tài tốt nghiệp về các mặt thu thập và phân tích tài liệu, số liệu ban đầu, giá trị lý luận và thực tiễn đề tài.

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(điểm ghi bằng số và chữ)

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Người chấm phản biện

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INTRODUCTION

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1. Rationale

Grammar is a large and important category in learning language, especially in studying English. In modern concepts, grammar may be defined as a set of morphological and syntactic rule which may be treated together to make it easier for the learners of language to master and apply to real situations. Being an ESL student, one may find many difficulties as well as ambiguity when learning negation, one of important aspect of English grammar, which can be appeared in every form of texts of many fields as well as in daily conversation. It is said to be a natural phenomena in linguistic. However, there is a wide variety of morphological and syntactic rules that linguists have studied on this category with different point of view for decades.

In Vietnamese, negation is also considered as an essential category in grammar. Many studies were pointed out to clear and complete this matter. However, it is difficult for Vietnamese learners to study negation in English because there was little contrast between two languages. That the reason why the topic of negation is chosen for this graduation paper.

It is expected that the syntactic and semantic features of negation in English and their Vietnamese equivalents found in this graduation paper will be helpful for learners in their studying.

2. Aims of the study

With the rationale above, this graduation paper is aimed at:

- Making a brief preview of theory of syntax and semantics and giving an overview of syntactic and semantic features of negation in both English and Vietnamese.

- Studying negation in terms of its structures and semantics and finding out the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese.
- Applying the findings of negation in a typical text, the text of President Barack Obama's inaugural address.

3. Scope of the study

Negation is a large category of English grammar, so it is difficult to cover all of its aspects. Therefore, in the frame of the study, this graduation paper only deals with the aspects of syntax and semantics of negation in English and the contrastive analysis with their Vietnamese equivalents. Then, applying to investigate the negation in the text of President Barack Obama's inaugural address to make clear the similarities and the differences between English and Vietnamese negation.

4. Method of the study

Firstly, basing on the source materials of English grammatical books, the writer gives the description of negative structures and expressions. Then, basing on what have discussed, the writer systematized the syntactic and semantic features of negation. Thirdly, the contrastive analysis was given for the comparison between English negation and Vietnamese equivalents. Finally, this graduation paper takes the statistic the time of using negation in the text of President Barack Obama's inaugural address to illustrate the theory mentioned.

5. Design of the study

With the aims and the method mentioned above, this graduation paper is designed in 3 parts:

Part A is the Introduction giving the reasons for choosing the topic, the aims of the study, the scope of the study, the methods and the design of the study.

Part B is ***the Development*** including three chapters:

Chapter 1 gives an overview of syntax and semantics as well as the syntactic and semantic features of negation in both English and Vietnamese. It also attaches the preview of theory of contrastive analysis.

Chapter 2 is the major part in this graduation paper based on the theory mentioned in chapter 1. It gives the forms of negative structures in English and their equivalents in Vietnamese in terms of their syntax and semantics.

Chapter 3 is the study of negation in the text of President Barack Obama's inaugural address.

Part C is ***The Conclusion*** giving all the brief results of the thesis paper.

The references put an end to the study.

DEVELOPMENT

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Chapter I. Literature Review

In order to study the negation in English and Vietnamese equivalents, this graduation paper will firstly get an overview of syntactic and semantic features of negation in both languages English and Vietnamese. Because the theory of negation must include the role of syntax and semantics, it is necessary to take the general viewpoint of these categories and the relation between them.

1. An overview of syntax and semantics

1.1. An overview of syntax

Talmy Givon, 2001:25 “Syntax. Volume 1” points out that *the contextual adaptation to other words and other words to ones in question is a matter of grammar and syntax, of how words go together to form a sentence.*

The writer, basing on this theory, would like to discuss the concept of syntax as follows:

Syntax is a description of the ways that words are put together to make larger unit such as phrase, clause and sentence. To understand their meaning, it is necessary to see how they function in context with other words. Traditionally, it refers to a branch of grammar in which words are put in arrangement. In English and other languages, the arrangement of words is a vital factor in determining the meaning of an utterance, as illustrated:

Susan loves David. (1)

David loves Susan. (2)

It shows that syntax describes the order of words. *Susan loves David* does not mean that *David loves Susan*. Syntax describes the order of subject and verb,

the position of modal auxiliary, object, complement and the relationship of modifiers to the words they modify.

1.2. An overview of semantics

The word semantics derived from the Greek semaino, meaning, to signify or mean. Semantics is a part of a larger study of signs, semiotics. It is the part that deals with words as signs (symbol) and language as a system of sign (words as symbols). (Robert Dixon,2005:40 “A new approach to English grammar on semantic principles”)

Knowing a language is how to produce and understanding sentences with particular meanings. The study of linguistic meaning, called semantics, is concerned with the meaning of words, morphemes, phrases and sentences. The term *meaning* is, of course, much more familiar to us all although there are numerous different definitions of dictionaries.

Palmer (Frank Robert,Palmer,1981:15 “*Semantics*.Cambridge University Press”) suggested that *semantics is a part of linguistics, a scientific study of language*. Therefore, learners should attempt to see what *meaning* is, or should be, within the framework of an *academic* or *scientific* discipline rather than take the simple looking at the common or even scholarly uses of the relevant terms.

Semantics is a branch of language study dealing with word meaning. Word meaning consists of grammatical meaning and lexical meaning. Grammatical meaning unites all grammatical characteristics of a word and lexical meaning is a realization of a concept or notion. Lexical meaning includes denotative meaning and connotative meaning.

Semantics studies also other spheres of word meaning such as polysemy, homonymy, synonymy, antonym, as well as development of meaning including some figures of speech, namely metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole and irony. These units also relate to the formation of semantic structure of words in English.

1.3. Relation between syntax and semantics

Emmon Bach (Emmon, Bach, 2001: 85 “*Syntactic theory*. University of Massachusetts”) studied the relationship between Syntax and Semantics as *Generative and interpretive semantic-syntactic theories are strongly equivalent.*

There exists a relationship between the meaning of words and their syntactic properties. We can notice this relationship in most of the languages. Words which systematically differ in terms of meaning also differ in terms of the syntactic environment in which they occur. If we take the example of English we find that there is a strong correlation between a verb’s semantic properties and its syntactic properties. And this correlation is also found in most other languages.

As it is clear that syntax and semantics are strongly correlated in a language, now the question is that what is the way of this mapping. In fact this connection between syntax and semantics go both ways i.e. from syntax to semantics as well as from semantics to syntax. Richmond H. Thomason ,1996: 125 “*English Grammar*”) said *the meaning of a sentence depends not only on the words it contains, but on its syntactic makeup.*

It is obvious that syntax means *word order* and semantics means *meaning*. Word order affects meaning. The rules of English can be divided into several groups, two of which are grammar and semantics. Grammar comprises morphology and syntax. *Morphology* describes how words are formed from smaller particles: *-ing* for present continuous, *'s* for possessive, and so on. For instance, if (1) and (2) are changed as follows, the meaning may also be changed.

Susan loved David.

vs *David loved Susan.*

As you can see, both morphology and syntax can affect meaning: *Susan loves David* means something different from *Susan loved David*. Because the

meaning of a sentence depends so closely on its syntactic structure, linguists have given a lot of research to the relations between syntactic structure and meaning. People often use syntax (word order) to create clearly differences in meaning and to avoid ambiguity.

2. An overview of classification of negation in English and Vietnamese

2.1 Classification of negation

Rodney Huddleston and George K. Pullum, 2002:34 “*The Cambridge grammar of the English language Cambridge University Press* “ distinguish three types of negation as following:

The first type is *Clause Negation*, through which the whole clause is syntactically treated as negative;

Secondly, *Local Negation*, in which one constituent is negated;

The last type is *Predication Negation*, a minor type applying only after certain auxiliaries, in which the predication is negated.

According O. Jespersen's, 1917:98 (“*Negation in English and Other Languages*”) : *Negation is to negate and make an opposition, or, when a word is negated, it normally becomes a word with opposite meaning, or, negative words are tended to put right before the word which is to negate (normally verbs)*”. His contribution was to list ways of expressing negation, such as strong negation, weak negation, direct and indirect negation, complete and incomplete negation. However, some of his findings are affected by logic and psychology. American Grammarians like Randolph Quirk, 1979:130 “*University grammar of English*”, Downing and Locke, 1992:100 “*University course in English Grammar*”) tend to describe structural characteristics by analyzing the scope of negation (semantically and syntactically); the role of quantifiers, intensifiers, expression of negation with different statements such as affirmative, interrogative and imperative statement.

In Vietnamese, grammar is so complicated, Diệp Quang Ban,1992:206 “Ngu phap Tieng Viet” distinguishes negation in Vietnamese as two main types following:

First, *Descriptive negation* is used in describe process to negate the characteristic of thing or person.

Trời hôm nay không mưa, mà cũng không có nắng. [5: 206]

Second, *Denial negation* used to refuse something positive.

Anh biết việc này chứ?

Nào tôi có biết đâu/ Tôi đâu có biết. [5: 206]

Hữu Đạt,2000:117 “Tieng Viet thuc hanh” has written that there are many ways to express negation in Vietnamese. The two common are direct and indirect statement. [4: 117]

The first is *direct negation* with the negative words: *không, chẳng, chưa, mà, gì, đâu* .And the second, indirect negation is made by question negation. For instance:

Việc đó giám đốc đâu giải quyết được.

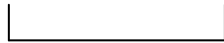
Làm sao mà giám đốc giải quyết được? [4: 116]

And Cao Xuân Hạo,1991:233 “Tieng Viet,so thao ngu phap chuc nang” distinguishes: firstly, comprehensive negation is an appraisalment, which negates the existence of things or events of theme. Negative words for this kind are *không, chẳng, chưa*, which is put together with the existential word *có* and one of the indefinite interrogative pronouns such as: *gì(chi), nào, đâu, bao, sao, mấy*. Secondly, denial of comprehensive of an appraisalment is a speech act considered super linguistic which is realized by: *không, chẳng phải (là)* before a comprehensive appraisalment or before the part needed to negate directly with the possible word *đâu* at the end (statement); or, with the modality group *có phải là* before the comprehensive appraisalment with the partical *đâu* at the end.

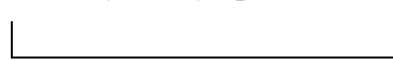
2.2. What is scope of negation?

Negation item may be said to govern a nonassertive only if the latter is within the Scope of negation. *The scope of negation normally extends from the negative item itself to the end of the clause but it need not include an end-placed adverbial* [12: 786]. Let's see the sentences below:

She definitely didn't speak to him. (1)



She didn't definitely speak to him. (2)



(The scope is marked by the horizontal brackets)

There is a contrast between the two sentences above. It shows that in a clause with the clause negator *not* or a negative word such as *never*, *hardly* in the same position after the operator, adverbials occurring before the negative normally lie outside the scope. It is necessary to identify not only the scope but also the focus of negation which is the emphatic stress on certain word of sentence, conveying different shades of meaning. A special or contrastive nuclear stress falling on a particular part of the clause indicates that the contrast of meaning implicit in the negation is located at that spot, and also that the rest of the clause can be understood in a positive sense [12: 789].

Scope and focus are interrelated such that the scope must include the focus

3. Contrastive analysis in learning a foreign language

According to Carl James, 1980:10 "Contrastive analysis" : CA is a form of inter-language study and a central concern of applied linguistics. As a matter of fact, CA has had much to offer not only to practical language but also to translation theory, the description of particular language, language typology and the study of language universals. In relation to bilingualism, CA is concerned with how a monolingual becomes bilingual. In other words, it is

concerned with the effect exerted by the first language on the foreign language being learnt.

Linguistic descriptions suggest four fundamental categories: *unit*, *structures*, *class*, and *system*. They are explained with some points as:

Unit The units of grammar which enter into the description of English and any related language are: *sentence – clause – phrase – word – morpheme*. In traditional CA, one does not analyze, nor, in the case of CA, units larger than sentences.

Structure This category is the one of most familiar to language researchers. A structure is thus a arrangement of elements ordered in places.

Class There are restrictions on which units can operate at given places in structures.

System System operates over the domains of units: there are systems of sentences, of clauses, of groups, of words, and of morphemes.

Basing on the source language, students are taught to distinguish the similarities and the differences between many cultures in such fields as syntax, semantics and pragmatics. These will be helpful to avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding when contacting with foreigners or when translating a text.

The role of contrastive analysis in making comparison of negation in English and Vietnamese in terms of semantic and syntactic features is clearly presented in the next chapters.

4. Summary

This chapter examines an opinion of negative interface by giving the overview of negation in English and Vietnamese and the preview of syntax and semantics theory. The overview of classification of negation mentioned above are expected to bring a general view for this graduation paper and help learners to know the system of negation in studying English. Moreover, with

the basic theory of contrastive analysis attached, the writer hopes to make the further study in next chapter successful.

Chapter II. Syntactic and semantic features of negation in English and their equivalents in Vietnamese

Basing on the overview of some theories mentioned in chapter 1, this graduation paper studies on the syntactic and the semantic features of negation in English and suggested equivalents in Vietnamese. And with the role of contrastive analysis between the two languages mentioned above, the writer would like to point out the different negative structures and semantic characteristics and how it works in English and Vietnamese. Chapter 2 will focus on two parts: *comparison between English and Vietnamese negatives in terms of syntactic features* and *in terms of semantic features*. According to Lilian Haegeman, 1995:15 “The syntax of negation” : the syntactic point of view is an abstract one. It characterizes connective according to the internal role they have inside logic, regardless of meaning they are intended to have (if any). The semantic point of view, in contrast, is based on the intuitive meaning of a given connective.

1. Comparison between English and Vietnamese negatives in terms of syntactic features

In the aspect of grammar, before studying a kind of sentence, it must do the research of its syntactic make up. Chapter 2 will firstly focus on the syntactic features of negation of English and the equivalents in Vietnamese because the meaning of a sentence depends so closely on its syntactic structures. It is hoped to bring a general viewpoint of negation in English through the forms and the numerous examples attached. After examining all documents and sources, the following points are found:

1.1. Negative word not and its contracted form n't

In English, in order to claim that something is not true, you form a negative sentence by adding the word *not* after the first auxiliary verb in the positive sentence or its contracted form *n't*.

1.1.1. Auxiliary negation

The verbs *to have, to be, to do, will, shall, would, should, can, may, might, and could* are the common auxiliary verbs (helping verb) in English. An auxiliary verb plays an important role in negatives, interrogative and combines with another verb to help form the tense, mood, voice, or condition of the verb it combines with. Auxiliaries always occur with a main verb. In English, auxiliary negation is commonly expressed by *not*, but in Vietnamese, the negative words *không, chưa, chẳng* are the most common use. In Vietnamese, there is no auxiliary having the function of helping main verb to form the grammatical rule. It depends on situation or adverb of progress and time of the sentence. That is also the main difference in linguistics in forming auxiliary negation between English and Vietnamese. Two common kinds of auxiliary negation are performed in the following.

Negation of an action or a process is used in order to deny an action or negate a process, English often use the word *not* right before the verb. Let's see the following examples.

I don't see anybody here tonight whom one could possibly call a serious purpose. [10: 24]

(Tôi nhìn xung quanh đây **chẳng** thấy một ai đáng gọi là có mục đích nghiêm chỉnh cả.)

They would not have to live by crime any more. [9: 53]

(Họ sẽ **không phải** sống bằng cách phạm tội nữa.)

It is shown that the position of the word *not* is after the auxiliaries *do, would* and before verbs *see, live* to negate the action of subject. This leads to the rule here:

English	Vietnamese
S(N.P) + aux + not + V	CN + chưa/không/chẳng + đt

Negation of relationship is another kind of denial made by auxiliary. In this case, it must contain a possessive pronoun which shows a relation appeared in sentence. For instance:

*It was **not** my fault.* [9: 12]

(Đó **không phải** lỗi của anh.)

*This glove **isn't** mine.* [9: 16]

(Chiếc găng tay này **không phải** của tôi.)

The word *not* is placed before the possessive pronouns *my*, *mine*. In Vietnamese, it means *của ai đó*. In English, it is available to use the weak possessive pronouns *my*, *his*, *her*, *their*, *its*, *your*, *our*, or the strong possessive pronouns. Let see the rule in the table below:

English	Vietnamese
S + V(be) + not + c(n./prn./num.)	CN + không(đâu)/chẳng/chưa + phải là/là + Vt(chỉ quan hệ)

1.1.2. Subject negation

While auxiliary negation focuses on predicate of sentence, there is a way of expressing negative statement concentrating on the subject. Subject negation has *not* before main subject. It is similar to Vietnamese with *không*, *không phải*, *chẳng phải*. For instance:

***Not** a year in England without somebody disappearing.* [10: 72]

(Ở nước Anh này **không** có năm nào là không có người biến mất.)

Do you drink, comrade? – asked the sergeant.

Not a drop in twenty yeas.

[9: 12]

(Đồng chí có hay uống rượu không? – trung sĩ hỏi.)

Không một giọt suốt hai mươi năm nay.)

The word *not* is placed before the subject (noun/noun phrase). This negative form is used for emphatic expression. It can be seen in the table below:

English	Vietnamese
Not + S (np./indefinite pro.) + V	Không/Chẳng phải/Nào phải + CN + đt

1.1.3. Object negation

In English grammar, an object is a sentence element and it is often part of the sentence predicate. It denotes somebody or something involved in the subject's performance of the verb. The negation of an object in English may be divided into two kinds *noun-object negation* and *verb-object negation*.

Noun-object negation is used to negate the noun whose function is the object in sentence. Let see the following example:

*It is **not** the perfection, **but** the imperfection, who have need of love.*

[10: 162]

(**Không phải** những người hoàn hảo, mà chính những người không hoàn hảo mới cần tình yêu.)

*No, he **is not** the enemy, **but** the best friend I ever had.* [9: 12]

(Không, đó **không phải** kẻ thù, **mà là** người bạn tốt nhất mà tôi từng có.)

This structure is used to emphasize the noun or noun phrase that follows the word *but*. The speaker denied that *the perfection* is not the one who need love but the *imperfection*. In this case, English can transfer this syntactic structure but remain the meaning. The sentence above may be rewritten as:

*It is the imperfection, who have need of love, **not the perfection**.*

It is obvious that the meaning of negative is not different to the origin. Therefore, it makes the rule as:

English	Vietnamese
S + V + O, not + O	CN + đt + tn + chứ không phải là + tn
S + V + not + O, but O	CN + không + đt + tn + mà (là) + tn

Verb-object negation: is used to negate the verb whose function is the object in sentence. Let see the following example:

*In my time, of course, we were taught **not** to understand anything.*

[10:146]

(Thời chúng tôi, tất nhiên chúng tôi được giáo dục để **đừng** có hiểu cái gì hết.)

In the above sentence, *not to understand anything* is non-finite clause used as an object which was negated by the word *not*. In Vietnamese equivalents, *không*, *chẳng* are placed between main verb and its object. Let see the rule in the table below:

English	Vietnamese
S + V + not + O(V-ing/to V)	CN + vt + không/chẳng + tn(vt, đt)

1.1.4. Adverbial negation

Adverbial negation is used to negate the adverb mentioned in sentence. The adverb may show the time or place. The sentence may have two adverbs and one of them may contain the negative to another. Let see the following examples:

*She is working for you, **not** for your organization.* [6: 27]

(Nàng làm việc cho anh, **chứ không** cho tổ chức của anh.)

*There is a meeting today, **not** tomorrow.* [6: 69]

(Có một cuộc họp ngày hôm nay, **chứ không** phải ngày mai.)

These examples show that the negative adverb is always put after the adverb it negates: *today, not tomorrow; for you, not for your organization*. In Vietnamese, it can be translated with the words *chứ không phải là*, *chứ chẳng*

phải là which are placed between the two adverbs. It can be finalized in the table below:

English	Vietnamese
S + V + (O/C) + A + not + A (adv./Prep/to V/V-ing/np.)	CN + vt + Trn + chứ không phải là, (mà) không/chẳng + Trn

1.1.5. Clausal ellipsis negation

In communication, the answerer sometimes doesn't want to repeat the clause mentioned by the asker. They use the ellipsis way to answer but remain the meaning. In the aspect of negative, both English and Vietnamese use clausal ellipsis negation. For instance:

Lord Caversham: *I supposed you have read The Times this morning?*

Lord Goring: *The Times? **Certainly not.*** [10: 224]

(Tôi chắc sáng nay anh đọc tờ Thời báo rồi chứ?

*Thời báo à? **Chắc chắn chưa.**)*

After being asked about *The Times*, Lord Goring gives a short answer *Certainly not* to deny that he hasn't read it. In Vietnamese, it is said as *chắc chắn là không, chắc chắn chưa*, so in both two languages, there is ellipsis negation created by an adverb and a negative word.

English	Vietnamese
Certainly/surely/absolutely + not	Chắc chắn/hoàn toàn + (là) không rồi

1.2. No negation

The second common negative word in English *No* is used before the noun it negates. There are several forms of *No negation* following.

1.2.1. Subject negation

The first kind of negation by *no* is *subject negation*. In English, the word *No* can go with noun or noun phrase to make a negative subject. In case of using *not negation*, the word *not* is put at the beginning of the sentence to negate the subject. It is similar to the rule of subject negation with *No*. In other situations, this form is transferred by using the false subject *there*. For instance:

But no man should have a secret from his own wife. [10: 98]

(*Nhưng chẳng gã nào có thể nắm được bí mật của chính vợ mình.*)

And no inn would take him in. [9: 29]

(*Và chẳng có quán trọ nào cho anh ta đặt chân vào.*)

The examples above show the rule that negative *no* is placed before the noun it negates. The second example may be rewritten as *There was no inn would take him in*. The rule is shown in the table:

English	Vietnamese
No + S (n/n.p.) + aux + V	Không/Chẳng/Không có + CN(dt) + nào + đt

1.2.2. Subject negation with indefinite pronoun

The second negative form with *no* is the *subject negation* with indefinite pronoun. Indefinite pronouns refer to people or things without saying exactly who or what they are. The verb after indefinite pronoun must be a singular verb. If we use an indefinite pronoun beginning with *no-*, we must not use another negative word in the same clause. Therefore in English negative, people **do not** say *There wasn't nothing*. It is illustrated in:

Nothing ages like happiness. [10: 50]

(*Hạnh phúc già đi nhanh hơn bất cứ cái gì.*)

For a time, nothing could be heard. [9: 20]

(*Trong một lúc, chẳng có tiếng gì vọng lại.*)

The indefinite pronoun *nothing* in the two sentences above is put before the aux and main verb. In Vietnamese, we find no pronoun having negative

meaning, so *không, chẳng, nào, đâu* must be used to express the negation. The rule is performed in this table:

English	Vietnamese
Nobody/Nothing/No one + aux + V	Không/Chẳng/Nào/Đâu(phải) + ai/cái gì + cũng/đều + đt

1.2.3. Object negation with indefinite pronoun

The negative form above includes indefinite pronoun as the subject of sentence. But in this kind, the indefinite pronoun is placed after the main verb as the object of sentence. For instance:

*Martin woke up and rubbed his eyes, but he found **no one**.* [9: 77]

*(Martin tỉnh dậy và dụi mắt, nhưng **chẳng** thấy ai cả.)*

*I looked for any feeling in myself, even resentment at a policeman's suspicion, but I could find **none**.* [10:18]

*(Tôi tự xét xem mình có chút hiềm thù nào đối với chàng cảnh sát đã nghi này không, nhưng tôi **không** thấy chút gì cả.)*

The examples show that verb is put right before the indefinite pronoun. In Vietnamese, *không, chẳng* are the equivalents and the added words *gì, nào, cả* are put at the end of the sentence to emphasize the negative meaning.

English	Vietnamese
S + aux + V + indefinite pronoun + O(n/n.p.)	CN + không/chẳng + đt + dt/đại từ + gì/nào/cả

1.3. Never negation

1.3.1. Adverb negation with never

Never is placed after auxiliary, be or before the ordinary verb to negate the action, a thing, or the existence. It is equivalent to *không/chưa/chẳng bao giờ* in Vietnamese. Let see the following examples:

*And yet, I **never** had a better friend.* [9: 12]

(*Ấy thế nhưng, tôi chưa bao giờ có người bạn nào tốt hơn thế.*)

Never could stand Lady Caversham's bonnets. [10: 26]

(*Tôi chưa bao giờ chịu được những kiểu mũ phụ nữ của của Caversham phu nhân.*)

In order to emphasize something, the word *never* is often put at the beginning of the sentence in stead of the position after main subject. It is necessary for the auxiliary to place before the main subject. For instance:

Never had the Army failed to provide the Christmas tree and gifts for the children. [9:14]

(*Đội cứu tế chưa bao giờ quên tặng cây thông Nôen và quà cho các em.*)

Let's see the rule in the table below:

English	Vietnamese
S + (aux) + never + V	CN + không/chẳng bao giờ/chẳng hề + đt
Never + ... + aux + S + V	Chưa bao giờ + CN + đt

1.3.2. Prepositional negation

In English, there are some prepositions having the negative meaning. Such as *without, but, except (for), against*, etc. They appear in sentence and form a structure called *Prepositional negation*. Let's see the following examples:

*And she truly gave **without** expecting anything in return. [9:53]*

(*Và bà đã thực sự cho đi mà không đòi hỏi được đền đáp.*)

*Bulger rose and shuffled out of room **without** ceremony, as was his custom. [9:19]*

(*Bulger đứng dậy, lê bước ra khỏi phòng, không chào hỏi ai như thói quen hàng ngày của ông.*)

Two sentences above show that the prepositional negation stands after *S-V* and negates the state of subject. Some of these prepositions have their

own form of usage. For instance: *without + n/V-ing against + n, but + n, except for + n/np*. The usage is shown in the table:

English	Vietnamese
(Prep + np./V-ing), S + V + without/but/except/against	(Trn) + CN + đt + Trn (không/mà không/ngoại trừ...)

1.4. Transferred negation

Transferred negation is a type of indirect negation which indicates a reduced *strength scale* of negation. As its indirectness and reduced degree, it often co-occurs with verbs of opinion and perception. Let see the sentence below:

Mrs Cheveley: My prizes came a little later on in life. I don't think any of them were for good conduct. [10: 36]

(Bà Cheveley: Các giải thưởng thì cũng lâu lâu sau này tôi mới được lĩnh. Hình như tôi **không có** giải nào về lối hành xử cả.)

In the example above, Mrs Cheveley shows pride by denying that her prizes were not for good conduct. However, in her saying, listener can partly realize her politeness strategy. It is translated quite softly into Vietnamese as *Hình như tôi không có*. In transferred negation, we must make the negative form with verbs of opinion (think, believe, imagine...), not the clause. Let see the rule:

English	Vietnamese
S + aux + not + think/believe/suppose + clause	CN + không + nghĩ/tin/cho rằng + mệnh đề

1.5. Negative form with *too + adj/adv + to V-inf*

All the negative structures above include at least one negator but this does not contain any negative in form but in meaning. It is used to negate the ability of someone mentioned in the sentence. Let's follow the illustration as:

*That night, Georgia's little trail body grew suddenly **too tired to struggle** anymore, and she made her exit from this world. [10:56]*

*Đêm đó, thân thể mảnh mai của Georgia đột nhiên trở nên kiệt quệ tới mức **không** gượng được nữa và cô bé từ giã cõi đời này.*

It's more obvious to take the negative meaning in Vietnamese equivalents. In English, this structure is considered as one of the implicit negation. In Vietnamese, it can be translated as *quá ... đến nỗi mà ai đó không thể (làm gì)* or *quá ... nên không thể (làm gì)*. Sometimes, it is added the phrase *for somebody to do* to make the sentence clearer. Let's see the illustration:

*She went to a restaurant and ordered **too much food for two people** (to eat). [23:884]*

(Cô ấy đi tới một nhà hàng và gọi quá nhiều thức ăn cho hai người.)

The example shows that it is not necessary for the two components *for somebody* and *to V* to appear in the same clause. See the rule below:

English	Vietnamese
S + be/verb+ too + adj/adv (for somebody) + to V-inf	CN + quá + tt/trt + (đến nỗi mà ai đó) + không thể + đt

1.6. Negative form with affixation

A negative affix is an affix that opposes or negates a word. Sometimes the same word can be negated by more than one prefix. Such pairs of words become synonymy, or it is not clear if any difference in meaning. For instance: **politic**– *impolitic, apolitical, anti-political, non-political* have the same meaning.

But sometimes it is necessary to distinguish the subtle differences in meaning of two or more negative prefix used in the same word stem. For instance: **arm** *Disarm* (v: remove weapon from); *Disarmed* (having had one's weapon taken away) vs. *Unarmed* (not carrying weapon)

There are the negative affixations following: dis-, un-, il-, im-, in-, ir-, non-, mis-, -less.

*He disliked visitors and kept away curious people with his **unwelcome** look.* [9: 8]

(Ngày càng có nhiều người vô gia cư như thế, không nhà, không hy vọng.)

*Then he opened the back door of the house softly and **disappeared** in to the darkness.* [9: 30]

(Sau đó hắn nhẹ nhàng mở cửa sau và mất hút vào bóng đêm.)

*Robert is as **incapable** of doing a foolish thing.* [10: 76]

(Anh Robert không thể làm một việc ngu ngốc.)

*There grew a vast number of these **homeless** people - **homeless** and **hopeless**.* [9: 58]

And he dreamed impossible dream for himself and for the world.

[9: 72]

(Và ông từng mơ những giấc mơ tưởng chừng như không thể thực hiện được với bản thân mình và với cả thế giới.)

The examples above indicates that affixation negation is a process of word-formation by adding affixes to roots, either at the beginning (prefix) or at the end of stem (suffix). In Vietnamese, people often use some borrowed words called Chinese-Vietnamese words, such as: **bất**, **phi**, **vô** to show negation. It also shows that negative affixation is used to avoid the direct disagreement which may hurt the listeners.

2. Comparison between English and Vietnamese negatives in terms of their semantic features.

After considering and collecting the syntactic features of negation in English and the equivalents in Vietnamese, this graduation paper will consider the semantic features of negation. It is aimed at pointing out the complex and difference in meaning of negation from English to Vietnamese based on its syntax. However, the following features will also strongly go with the close relation between syntax and semantics.

2.1. Word negative in meaning but not in form

2.1.1. Implicit negation

English and Vietnamese have many words which we can define and analyze to find out a negative meaning. Sentences, including an adjective or a verb containing negative meaning are called implicit negation. It is impossible to see any negative form in, but basing on semantic features and component analysis, there's always negation of the whole sentence. Some are given as follow:

*But I **hate** to think of you giving lessons. [9: 38]*

*(Nhưng anh **ghét** cái ý nghĩ là em sẽ phải đi dạy.)*

*The bishop knew that the people of the town **avoided** him. [10: 29]*

*(Vị giám mục biết rằng người dân thị trấn **lảng tránh** anh ta.)*

*Our hearts **refuse** to soften with forgiveness. [9: 46]*

*(Trái tim chúng ta **không muốn** mềm đi vì sự tha thứ.)*

It shows that, the bold words above don't contain a negative form but negative meaning. It is more obvious in Vietnamese equivalents *hate=không thích*, *avoid=lảng tránh*, *refuse=từ chối*. In English, there are many words include negative meaning.

Die	(chết = not alive)
Lose	(mất, đánh mất = have no longer)
Prevent	(ngăn chặn = something can't be happened)
Stop	(ngừng, ngăn chặn)

Doubt	(ngghi ngờ = not believe)
Refuse	(từ chối; bác bỏ = not agree; not except)
Deny	(từ chối)
Hate	(ghét = not like; not want to)
Fail	(thất bại; hỏng; thi trượt = not succeed in doing something)
Forget	(quên = not remember)

2.1.2. Adverbs of frequency

The negative adverbs of frequency: *seldom, rarely, hardly, barely, etc.* show how often somebody does something or how often an action takes place. The basic rule is that adverbs of frequency come before the main verb but after present and past forms of be (*am, are, is, was, were*), for example:

*I **hardly** think there will be much in common between you and my husband, Mrs Cheveley.* [10: 30]

(Tôi **khó lòng** mà tưởng tượng ra giữa chồng tôi và bà lại có nhiều điểm giống nhau, thưa bà Cheveley.)

*He **rarely** spoke to anyone except when, while coming and going, he gruffly saluted his comrades.* [9: 10]

(Ông ấy **chẳng mấy** khi nói chuyện với ai, chỉ cộc lốc chào đồng đội lúc đến và lúc về.)

The negative adverbs above are used to negate the frequency of action. In Vietnamese, it is translated as *hầu như không, khó mà, chẳng mấy, etc.* It puts the adverb between the auxiliary and the main verb. In other cases, adverbs of frequency are used to give emphasis or to be rhetorical in more formal situations, in political speeches, on the news, and also in literature. It is called inversion in English. It is necessary to invert the position of aux and the subject. The following table shows the rule of this negative form:

English	Vietnamese
S + (aux) + seldom, hardly, scarcely, barely...(ever) + V	CN + hiếm khi/ít khi/hầu như không + đt

2.1.3. Negation with few/little

In English, *few* and *little* are used for negative meaning. It indicates a very small quantity of a thing. *Few* is used with plural countable noun while *little* used with singular uncountable noun. It is necessary to distinguish *few* and *a few*, *little* and *a little* because of their different meaning and usage. Let's see these examples:

*Mr. Commissioner, if you let the "land sharks" take the roof from over my children and **the little** they have to live on... [10: 61]*

(Thưa Ủy viên, nếu ông để "những tay cá mập đất" đó tước đi mái nhà trên đầu của các con tôi và số tài sản ít ỏi của chúng ...)

***Few** people survived. [7: 88]*

*(**Không còn nhiều** người sống sót.)*

It shows that *little/few* can be used as subject or object of the sentence. It may be put after main verb or before the noun it negates. In Vietnamese, the equivalents are *rất ít*, *hầu như không*, *một ít*, *chỉ một vài*, etc. It makes the rule as:

English	Vietnamese
S (few/little) + V	Không nhiều/Chỉ một vài/Một ít ...+ CN + đt
S + V + little/few	CN + đt + không nhiều/ít/một chút ...+ dt + ...

2.2. Double negation

Double negative contains 2 forms of negation in the same clause. It is not appeared in formal text. In traditional English, double negative was used as the way of emphatic. But to day, it is considered as grammatical mistakes but the meaning of these expressions will always be positive. For instance:

*She **scarcely missed** the mother's love that had been taken away from her.* [9: 54]

(*Cô bé mất mẹ nhưng gần như không bị thiếu thốn tình yêu của người mẹ.*)

*But through all his joy, Salam **never forgot** his fellowmen.* [9: 70]

(*Dù có nhiều niềm vui trong đời, nhưng Salam **không bao giờ quên** đồng bào của mình.*)

*The winter of 1892 was one which **no one could forget**.* [9: 14]

(*Mùa đông năm 1892 là mùa đông **không ai có thể quên** được.*)

In all the examples above, there are two negatives in the same sentence. Each negates another leaving a positive meaning. It is said that two negatives in a single clause make the meaning changed. This is a special kind of negation because the sentence contains negative form but not presents negative meaning.

2.3. Question negation

It is possible to rank *question negation* in terms of syntactic features. But because of its changeable and flexible meaning basing on the context and communicative function, this graduation paper considers it as one of semantic features of negation in English.

A question (interrogative sentence) asks about some missing information the speaker would like to have. There are some kinds of question in English with different purpose and formation rule. The following kinds of question containing negatives are *tag-question* and *wh- question*:

2.3.1. Tag – questions

It is difficult to master tag-question which includes a statement and a tag. The person asking the question expects a response of *yes* to some question or *no* to others. Look at the examples below:

*You will take care of them, **won't you?*** [9: 56]

(Bố chăm sóc các bạn ấy, bố nhé?)

*You're **not** angry, are you, Joe?* [9: 44]

(Anh không giận em đâu chứ, anh Joe?)

It indicates that tag-question is used to confirm the asker's opinion rather than find something true or not. The structure contains negatives but doesn't present the negation. The meaning of tag-question strongly depends on the formation rule used by asker. The syntactic form of the question varies accordingly, but must follow the rule:

Positive statement, negative tag (if the answer expected is *yes*)

Negative statement, positive tag (if the answer expected is *no*)

2.3.2. Wh- questions

A speaker asking a *wh*-question is seeking some specific information, such as identification of a person (who), a location (where), the time (when), duration (how long), or frequency of an activity (how often), a reason (why), a recounting of events (what happen), or even a full set of direction (how to do). But in terms of semantic features of negation in English, *wh*-question is used to negate something even it doesn't contain a negative form. For instance:

Do you pray, comrade?(Đồng chí có cầu nguyện không?) [9: 12]

*No, I don't. **What's the use?**(Không, Ích gì?)*

The question *What's the use?* means *No use to pray*. It is not the question but negative statement. Let see another examples:

How do you think I'll feel about it? [9: 38]

(Em nghĩ anh sẽ cảm thấy thế nào về chuyện này?)

The question above shows the asker's emotion. The questioner doesn't expect the response. It may be rewritten as *I can't stand it*. Both two examples are used for another communicative function. They don't contain any form of negative but indicate the negation.

3. Summary

Chapter 2 states the comparison between English and Vietnamese in terms of syntactic features. Many structures are given under the illustrated examples and the contrastive analysis between the two languages. There are 13 negative structures and 8 features of negation in terms of its semantics. Furthermore, an analysis in terms of semantic features of negation is given. All the examples in the two parts are picked up from the works of famous authors like W. Shakespeare, O. Henry, Victor Hugo, Leo Tolstoy, and so on, in which English words and expression are considered as orthodox English. With the contrastive analysis attached, this chapter is hoped to bring a systematic review of negation. The rule of negative form given may be useful in the next study in chapter 3.

Chapter III. Syntactic and semantic features of negation of the text of President Barack Obama’s inaugural address

After having a careful analysis on syntactic and semantic features of negation in English and its equivalents in Vietnamese, this graduation paper would like to give some findings on how practically it works in a typical text, the text of President Barack Obama’s inaugural address.

It is a standard speech with over 2,400 words. It has about 110 times of using negation form. The table below shows the details:

Negation devices	Total times of using		
“ <i>Not</i> ” negation	20	18.2 %	110 (100%)
“ <i>No</i> ” negation	8	7.3 %	
“ <i>Never</i> ” negation	27	24.5 %	
Affixation negation	11	10 %	
Negation with <i>few, little</i>	1	0.9 %	
Negation with adverbial of frequency	1	0.9 %	
Implicit negation	39	35.4 %	
Negation with structure “ <i>too adj/adv to-inf</i> ”	3	2.7 %	

The table shows how many times negative devices are used in the President Barack Obama’s inaugural address. It proves that the three first kinds of negation accounting for the largest number of using are *Implicit* negation, *Never* negation and *Not* negation. *Affixation* negation and *No* negation ranks the second. The others account for a very small number.

Basing on the theory mentioned in chapter 1 and chapter 2, the writer will study the text of President Barack Obama’s inaugural address in two aspects: syntactic and semantic features of negation.

1. In terms of its syntax

1.1 Never negation

Adverbial negation

*Our journey **has never been** one of short cuts or settling for less.* (Cuộc hành trình của chúng ta không phải là những lối đi tắt hay sự chấp nhận những điều bất cập.)

Negation with adverbial of frequency

*Our Founding Fathers, faced with perils we **can scarcely imagine**, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations.* (Những người sáng lập nước Mỹ, từng đương đầu với những mối hiểm nguy mà chúng ta khó lòng tưởng tượng, đã soạn thảo một hiến chương để bảo đảm cho pháp trị và quyền của con người, một hiến chương được nói rộng bằng máu của nhiều thế hệ.)

Prepositional negation

*Rather, it has been the risk-takers, the doers, the makers of things - some celebrated **but** more often men and women obscure in their labor...* (Thay vào đó, ấy là con đường của sự chấp nhận rủi ro, những người hành động, những người tạo ra thời thế – một số những người đó là những người nổi tiếng nhưng thường hơn đó những người, nam cũng như nữ, mà việc làm không được ai biết đến, ...)

*Our nation is at war, **against** a far-reaching network of violence and hatred.* (Quốc gia chúng ta đang có chiến tranh, chống lại một mạng lưới rộng lớn của bạo lực và lòng thù hận.)

*...nor can we consume the world's resources **without** regard to effect.*
(...và chúng ta cũng không thể tiêu dùng các nguồn lực của thế giới mà không nghĩ đến hậu quả.)

1.2 Not negation

*They **will not** be met easily or in a short span of time.* (Những thách thức không thể được giải quyết một cách dễ dàng và nhanh chóng.)

*It **has not** been the path for the faint-hearted,...* (Đó không phải là một con đường cho những người thiếu can đảm,...)

1.3 Affixation negation

Some words were added prefixes and suffixes to create negative meaning. Such as: irresponsible, inevitable, unpleasant, undiminished, unmatched, non-believers, timeless, etc.

*We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus - and **non- believers**.* (Chúng ta là một quốc gia của người Cơ đốc giáo và Hồi giáo, của Do thái giáo và Ấn độ giáo và của cả những người không theo đạo tin nào.)

*In the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these **timeless** words.* (Đối mặt với những hiểm họa chung, trong mùa đông gian khổ này của chúng ta, chúng ta hãy nhớ lại những lời lẽ vượt thời gian đó.)

1.4 No negation

*Our workers are **no** less productive than when this crisis began. Our minds are **no** less inventive, our goods and services **no** less needed than they were last week or last month or last year.* (Sức sản xuất của công nhân của chúng ta không hề sút giảm so với thời kỳ trước khi vụ

khủng hoảng này bắt đầu. Sự sáng tạo của trí óc của chúng ta không hề sút giảm, và hàng hóa và dịch vụ của chúng ta vẫn tiếp tục được cần tới hết như tuần trước, tháng trước, hoặc năm trước.)

*...that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long **no longer** apply. (...là những sự tranh cãi chính trị vô bổ đã phí phạm năng lực của chúng ta quá lâu giờ đây không còn áp dụng nữa.)*

1.5 Negation with structure too adj/adv + to V-inf

*Our health care **is too costly**. (Công tác chăm sóc sức khỏe quá tốn kém.)*

*Now, there are some who question the scale of our ambitions - who suggest that our system cannot tolerate **too many big plans**. (Giờ đây, có một số người đặt nghi vấn về tầm vóc của những tham vọng của chúng ta – những người cho rằng hệ thống của chúng ta không có khả năng để thực hiện nhiều kế hoạch to lớn như vậy.)*

Briefly, after investigating the negation in terms of syntactic features in the text of President Barack Obama's inaugural address, the writer finds that there are 69 times of using negative types like *No, Not, Never, Affixation* and the structure *too + adj/adv + to V*. It shows that negative structures are common in use to emphasize something.

2. In terms of its semantics

2.1 Implicit negation

Implicit negation appears over 39 times in the text. Some of the verbs containing negative meaning: humble, lost, shed, shutter, fail (several times), decline, die, destroy, lie, refuse, doubt, etc. Some of adjectives

contain negative: hard (several times), old, serious, obscure, less, false, etc.

*On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the **petty** grievances and **false** promises, the recriminations and worn out dogmas, that for far too long have strangled our politics.* (Ngày hôm nay, chúng ta đến đây để tuyên bố sự chấm dứt của những lời than phiền nhỏ nhặt và những lời hứa hão huyền, những lời trách cứ và những giáo điều đã lỗi thời, đã bóp nghẹt nền chính trị của chúng ta quá lâu.)

*Homes have been **lost**; jobs **shed**; businesses **shuttered**.* (Nhà cửa đã bị mất mát; công việc bị cắt giảm; cơ sở kinh doanh bị đóng cửa.)

For they have **forgotten** what this country has already done. (Vì họ đã quên mất những gì mà đất nước này đã làm.)

2.2. Negation with few, little

*For us, they packed up their **few** worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life.* (Đối với chúng ta, họ là những người đã gói ghém số của cải ít ỏi và vượt qua những đại dương để đi tìm một cuộc sống mới.)

2.2 Negation with adverbial of frequency

*Our Founding Fathers, faced with perils we **can scarcely imagine**, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man, a charter expanded by the blood of generations.* (Những người sáng lập nước Mỹ, từng đương đầu với những mối hiểm nguy mà chúng ta khó lòng tưởng tượng, đã soạn thảo một hiến chương để bảo đảm cho pháp trị và quyền của con người, một hiến chương được nói rộng bằng máu của nhiều thế hệ.)

It shows that numerous implicit words are used. It expresses the negation indirectly. It is account for 35.4 % of total times of using negation in the text of President Barack Obama's inaugural address. This way helps speaker to avoid direct impolite statements. That the reason why it is appeared so many time in spoken and written English.

3. Summary

This chapter examine the negation appeared in the text of President Barack Obama's inaugural address. There are about 110 times of using negation including negative structures, words and expressions. In which, 7 types of negative forms are used. The implicit negation is the most common use. Because it helps speakers to express negative meaning more effectively. With the bilingual sentences, this chapter makes the negative forms clearer and easier to understand. Then, the writer presents some suggestions to overcome problems that Vietnamese learners may get when studying English negation. All are expected to be useful for further study.

CONCLUSION

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Negation is a large grammatical category in English, which has been studied by many linguists. However, this doesn't make it an old topic because of flexibility of language. This graduation paper, *Syntactic and Semantic features of negation in English and its equivalents in Vietnamese*, is not out of the purpose of finding how negation works in both English and Vietnamese.

Three chapters in this graduation paper are aimed at giving out the main points when studying negation. Chapter 1 examines an opinion of negative interface by giving the overview of negation in English and Vietnamese. It is considered as the basic theory for the next findings. Chapter 2 presents the comparison between English and Vietnamese in terms of semantic and syntactic features. The writer analyzed the example sentences of English works and then systematized numerous structures. There are 21 negative forms. In which, 21 are syntactic structures, 8 are semantic features. Chapter 3 studies the negation in the text of President Barack Obama's inaugural address. Basing on the time of using negation and how it works, this chapter brings the full view of negation. It proves that implicit negation is the most common use. This way shows effective expression of negation by using the words containing negative meaning but not in form.

The comparison between English and Vietnamese negation plays an important role in linguistic studies in general and in English teaching method in particular. It enriches the knowledge of contrastive analysis in language as well as the experiences for Vietnamese learners in learning negative forms. However, this graduation paper remains some limitations. Firstly, it only viewed into the syntactic and semantic features of negation. Pragmatics, a large category of English grammar has not been mentioned. It shows that, this thesis paper has not focused on the communicative function of negation. Secondly, the contrastive analysis given out is considered as one-way study

which examines the features in English and then compares it with Vietnamese equivalents. The writer doesn't focus on negative points in Vietnamese but English.

Negation can be considered a universal feature of natural languages in the sense that all languages possess a system to negate utterances in one way or another. However, there is a wide variety of morphological and syntactic rules that linguists have studied on this category with different points of view. That the reason why the writer hopes to receive comments and suggestions for the further studies as well as for completing the findings mentioned in this graduation paper.

ABBREVIATIONS

A

Adverbial

Adj	Adjective
Adv	Adverb
Aux	Auxiliary
C	Complement
N	Noun
Np	Noun phrase
O	Object
Prep	Preposition
Prn	Pronoun
S	Subject
V	Verb
Etc	Etcetera
ESL	English as a second language
CA	Contrastive analysis
CN	Chủ ngữ
Dt	Danh từ
đt	Động từ
tn	Tân ngữ
Trn	Trạng ngữ
vt	Vị từ

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