A Corpus-based Analysis of Light Verb Constructions with Deverbal Nouns *CHAT, TALK, and CONVERSATION* in British English

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**Abstract.** The present research aims at giving a quantitative and qualitative analysis of semantic and syntactic properties of prototypically different light verb constructions with the synonymous deverbal nouns *chat, talk, and conversation* in British English. The constructions under investigation are studied in terms of combinability with different light verbs, complementation patterns, and adjectival modification. Data for the analysis are collected from the British National Corpus (BNC). The study reveals that prototypically different types of light verb constructions behave in a similar way in terms of the researched aspects. However, significant differences can be found when the deverbal nouns under investigation combine with different light verbs.

**Key words:** light verb constructions, deverbal nouns, corpus-based analysis, semantic and syntactic properties, frequency analysis, complementation, modification.

**Introduction**

Light verb constructions, henceforth LVCs, such as *have a talk, take a walk, give a kiss* are described as structures consisting of a verbal and a nominal component. The verbal component is referred to as a light verb, since it has little semantic content of its own. The nominal component, though derived from the verb, is called a deverbal noun.
LVCs differ from other V+NP combinations in a few respects. Semantically, LVCs differ from similar structures in that the meaning of LVCs is not a sum of the separate meanings of its components as is the case in the combinations have a house, take a sweet, give him the book but rather derived from the deverbal noun (Kearns, 2002; Plante, 2014). For example, the meaning of the LVC have a talk is similar to that of the verb talk. There are also a few syntactic differences. Unlike other V+NP constructions, LVCs form some kind of a complex predicate (Butt, 2010). In addition, LVCs cannot be passivized (e.g. *A groan was given by the man on the right.,) do not allow wh-extraction (e.g. *Which groan did John give?), and cannot be pronominalized (e.g. *The deceased gave a groan at around midnight, and gave another one just after two.) (Kearns, 2002, 2–3).

According to some scholars, LVCs do not form a unified group (Wierzbicka, 1982; Kearns, 2002; Bergs, 2005). On the basis of semantic differences, Wierzbicka distinguishes three different types of light verb constructions (Wierzbicka, 1982, 755–756):

1. NP human + have + N (deverbal noun) (e.g., have a quarrel): the pattern refers to continuous purposeful reciprocal actions;  
2. NP human + have + N (action noun) (e.g., have a visit): the action in the constructions of this type is attributed to someone other than the subject;  
3. NP human + have + a V-Inf (e.g., have a swim): these constructions imply a subjective and experiential perspective.

The three types of LVCs differ in their manifestation of the light verb complement. Although the meaning of the light verb construction is derived from the light verb complement, the light verb contributes to the meaning of the construction as well. It adds some aspectuality and puts constraints on which light verbs can occur with which complements (Wierzbicka, 1982). Stevenson et al. (2004) observe that semantically similar complements tend to be used with the same light verb.

Kearns (2002) differentiates between true light verb (TLV) constructions and vague action verb (VAV) structures. TLV constructions are described as syntactically more fixed than those with VAVs. The latter, contrary to light verb constructions, can be passivised and pronominalised as well as may undergo wh-extraction.

Bergs (2005) introduces four different types of LVCs in relation to their prototypicallity. All the four types differ in the structure of the complement selected by the light verb. The characteristic feature of type 1 LVCs is that the deverbal noun is eventive and derived from a verb through total conversion as in have a talk. In LVCs of type 2, the deverbal noun undergoes a derivation, stress shift or a change on the stem as in have an agreement, make a protest, give a thought. The deverbal noun in LVCs of type 3 is compounded as in have a heart-attack or has non-eventive nature as in have a resemblance. The light verb complement in LVCs of type 4 can be a noun or a pronoun functioning as an indirect object and a prepositional phrase carrying the main semantic content, or the noun which can be derived from a verb through different processes, for example, have
somebody in command. LVCs of type 1, 2 and 4 are usually substitutable by a simple verb, while the ones of type 3 do not allow such a substitution (Bergs, 2005). Bergs claims that all the types of LVCs show a different degree of prototypicality. LVCs of type 1 have all or most characteristic morphological, syntactic, and semantic properties, while LVCs of types 2, 3, and 4 gradually become more distant from the prototype and carry fewer of its features at the same time having less clear association with the main pattern (ibid).

The present study is based on Bergs’ classification of LVCs and will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How do LVCs of different prototypical types behave?
2. What are the semantic and syntactic differences of LVCs when synonymous deverbal nouns combine with different light verbs?

Due to the limited size of the article, the investigation will only focus on LVCs of type 1 and 2 with the partially synonymous deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation. The LVCs of type 1 with the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and the constructions of type 2 with the deverbal noun conversation are chosen for analysis since they are frequently used in everyday English.

The research aims at giving a quantitative and qualitative analysis of semantic and syntactic properties of prototypically different LVCs with the synonymous deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation in combination with different light verbs in British English on the basis of corpus data. For this purpose, light verbs that combine with the deverbal nouns chat, talk and conversation are identified and their semantic features are discussed as well as complementation patterns and immediate adjectival modifiers of the LVCs under investigation are described.

**Related Work**

Constructions with different light verbs have been investigated by a number of scholars; however, little research has been carried out on the types of LVCs. One of such analyses is performed by Wierzbicka (1982) who studies the constructions with light verbs have and take from the semantic perspective with a particular focus on the LVCs with the light verb have. She seeks to extract semantic rules and conceptualization patterns on the basis of semantic features of the light verbs. The research demonstrates that light verb constructions of the frame have a V exhibit systematic behaviour; however, despite the similarities in their structural descriptions, they follow different formulae and must be ascribed to different subtypes (Wierzbicka, 1982).

Bergs (2005) explores four prototypical types of LVCs in the collection of Paston letters and papers written in the late Middle English in terms of their frequency, variety of light verbs used to form LVCs, the number of deverbal nouns and syntactic configurations. The study reveals that distinct types differ in frequency and variety of light verbs that
deverbal nouns take to form LVCs: more prototypical types have higher frequencies and combine with a greater variety of light verbs, while less prototypical constructions gradually decrease in these aspects. However, the types do not show distinct patterns in the number of deverbal nouns and syntactic configurations (Bergs, 2005).

LVCs with synonymous deverbal nouns have been little studied as well. One of such investigations is carried out by Stevenson et al. (2004). The authors search for a computational means to quantify the acceptability of LVCs. Using corpus statistics, they investigate the productivity of LVCs and try to determine ‘how well particular light verbs and complements go together’ (Stevenson et al., 2004). It is concluded that different light verbs show distinct patterns with different verb classes each containing semantically similar verbs, and the same light verbs tend to co-occur with semantically similar complements (Stevenson et al., 2004).

Rather extensive studies on the semantics of LVCs with different light verbs have been conducted by Wierzbicka (1982), Dixon (2005), and Plante (2014). The light verb have is used with deverbal nouns expressing volitional non-iterative states or activities which are not necessarily complete and without time or space limitations as in *I had a stroll for an hour or two / I had a walk in the forest*. The light verb have in LVCs often contributes to the meaning aspect of doing something for some time (Wierzbicka, 1982; Dixon, 2005; Plante, 2014).

The deverbal nouns that combine with the light verb give refer to volitional actions being performed by the subject for a certain period of time as in *I gave the child a carry while going up that hill on the way to town*. The core meaning aspect of the light verb give brought to LVCs is that of metaphorical transfer. The subject transfers the activity or action expressed by the deverbal noun to the indirect object that is affected by that activity as in the example with the child who was affected by the activity of carrying, and whose spatial position has changed. The light verb give can also add the meaning aspect of singleness of the action denoted by the deverbal noun: for instance, the construction give a laugh means to release only one ha (Dixon, 2005, 470–472).

Little research is done on LVCs with the light verbs do and make. Plante (2014) analyses the light verb do in terms of telicity and concludes that do combines with deverbal nouns to form LVCs only with telic meanings where the action expressed by the deverbal noun is goal-oriented and usually complete as in *I did a fix in a minute* (Plante, 2014, 84). Dixon (2005) observes that the light verb make tends to select the complements that are related to thinking, deciding, speaking, attention, and comparing. The light verb make mostly combines with the deverbal nouns that undergo derivation as in *make a statement* or *make a decision* (Dixon, 2005, 461).

Investigations on the complementation of light verb constructions are rather diverse. Some of them focus on the contribution of the light verb and the deverbal noun to the selection of complements (Huddleston, Pullum, 2010; Wittenberg, 2014; Bruening, 2015), while others deal with the variety of complements taken by different light verbs (Muk-
herjee, 2010; Hoffman et al., 2011; Bernaisch, 2015), and yet others study complementation patterns of LVCs (Giparaitė, 2016). The latter research describes complementation patterns of LVCs in twenty English varieties and reveals that LVCs with the light verb *have* select the largest number of complement patterns and take complements in more English varieties under investigation than LVCs with the verbs *get* and *give* (ibid).

Studies on the modification of light verb constructions are not numerous despite the fact that modification possibilities are the main motivation for the use of LVCs, since they show a greater potential of these constructions in contrast to the corresponding verbs (Halliday, Matthiessen, 2004; Bergs, 2011). The deverbal noun in LVCs can select a greater number and a wider range of modification patterns when compared to the corresponding simple verb (Leech et al., 2009; Bergs, 2011). Most corpus-based researches on the modification of LVCs are related to the frequency of modified and non-modified deverbal nouns combined with different light verbs and their distribution across registers in different English varieties (Smith, 2009; Höche, Shahrokny-Prehn, 2013). The evidence based on British and Scottish Englishes demonstrates that LVCs with the light verb *get* tend to be more often modified than those with other light verbs, and the analysis of Australian, New Zealand, and British English data shows that more modified LVCs are found in the written register than in the spoken one (Smith, 2009; Höche, Shahrokny-Prehn, 2013).

The present research differs from the previous ones in that it analyses and contrasts two prototypical types of LVCs, i.e. LVCs of type 1 and 2. The novelty of the investigation also lies in the fact that LVCs with synonymous deverbal nouns are examined. So far LVC with synonymous complements have only been analysed in terms of statistical measuring for their degree of acceptability, and this study deals with the semantic and syntactic features of such LVCs.

### Data and Methodology

Data for the analysis were collected from the *British National Corpus* (BNC) (http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/) which is a representative electronic database of spoken and written British English. The data were selected on the basis of certain criteria. The LVCs under analysis included constructions that did not participate in syntactic modification operations such as passivisation or wh-movement. As it is generally accepted in corpus studies, low frequencies (lower than five occurrences) in the BNC do not indicate typical uses, thus only constructions that occurred in the corpus five and more times were included into the study. The study also included cases when the deverbal noun was used not only with the indefinite article, which is one of characteristic features of LVCs, but also when it was found with the definite and zero articles (*e.g.* *having the conversation, the social worker should be observing behavior; Jan still struggles to make conversation*). The sample
for the research consisted of 968 constructions of which 282 were with the deverbal noun chat, 332 with the deverbal noun talk, and 354 with the deverbal noun conversation.

In the data selection, the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation were separately tagged with all verbs ([v*] a chat / talk / conversation) to find out with which light verbs they occur. Combinations where the deverbal nouns under investigation combined with the verbs that have general meaning, i.e. have, get, give, do, and make, were chosen. Next, each deverbal noun was tagged with a lemmatised form of each light verb separately ([have] / [get] / [give] / [do] / [make] chat / talk / conversation) with a span of five words to the left in order to include the cases where the deverbal noun is modified. The concordances in the corpus were studied and the LVCs that met the criteria mentioned above were selected manually.

The data collected were further grouped, described, and compared to reveal similarities and discrepancies in the use of light verb constructions with the synonymous deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation in combination with different light verbs.

Results: the Analysis of Light Verb Constructions with the Deverbal Nouns CHAT, TALK, and CONVERSATION: the Findings

The analysis discusses the semantic and syntactic features of the LVCs under investigation including the combinability of the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation with different light verbs, complementation patterns, and immediate adjectival modification of the constructions in general and when they combine with different light verbs.

Combinability with light verbs

The combinability of the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation with different light verbs is studied from a few perspectives. First, the light verbs with which the deverbal nouns under investigation are used to form LVCs are identified and semantic analysis of the choices of light verbs is provided. Next, the constructions are examined in terms of their productivity.

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1 The productivity of the constructions is analysed by comparing their normalised frequencies. Since the concordances in the corpus also included cases where the searched light verb and a deverbal noun do not form a LVC and are unrelated in the sentence, normalised frequencies of the constructions were calculated manually to get more precise results. They were calculated by dividing the raw frequency of each combination by the number of words in the corpus and multiplying by 1000 000. The calculated frequencies were rounded to the tenths.
Table 1. The use of the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation with different light verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light verbs</th>
<th>Deverbal nouns</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that LVCs with the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation differ in the variety of light verbs they can combine with. The deverbal nouns talk and conversation combine with a greater variety of light verbs than the deverbal noun chat. As seen in Table 1, the deverbal noun chat\(^2\) (1 a) combines only with one light verb have, while talk and conversation can be used with three light verbs each. The deverbal noun talk (1 b) may combine with give, have, and do, whereas conversation (1 c) is found with have, make, and get.

(1) a. I was talking to him briefly this afternoon and we agreed we’d have a chat <...>. She gave me a cup of French coffee and we had a chat.
b. G. Anderson is to give a talk on 27 October on ‘how to give a talk’.
My mother had a talk with Louis. She was worried about my future.
c. We simply wish to have a conversation with you and you have agreed.
To make conversation now, we asked him about Asyut.
Ann’ll get plenty conversation today <...>.

The analysis of the definitions of chat, talk, and conversation in three dictionaries\(^3\) and the investigation of the data from the BNC reveal that the synonymous deverbal nouns have some semantic differences in the meanings in which they are used in the LVCs. Table 2 demonstrates that both chat and conversation have only one meaning in which they are used in LVCs. These deverbal nouns refer to some sequences of informal language exchanged between interlocutors; however, they differ in that chat carries a tone of friendliness, familiarity and usually does not have a particular purpose (only the one to socialise, to have a good time), while conversation usually has one. The deverbal noun talk is used in two meanings in LVCs. In its first meaning, talk differs from chat and conversation in that it is neutral in formality and often carries a tone of seriousness and importance. In its second meaning, talk denotes a one-way speech. The differences in the number and peculiarities of meanings carried by the deverbal nouns in the LVCs may

\(^2\) Untypically, chat may combine with get (1 occurrence) and conversation with do (2 occurrences).

\(^3\) The meanings of the nouns chat, talk, and conversation were selected from the Oxford Advanced Learner’s English Dictionary (2018), Cambridge English Dictionary (2018), and Macmillan English Dictionary (2009).
influence the variety of light verbs with which chat, talk, and conversation can combine to create different meaning aspects.

Table 2. The meanings of the nouns chat, talk, conversation used in LVCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAT</th>
<th>TALK</th>
<th>CONVERSATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A friendly informal, usually aimless conversation e.g. &lt;...&gt; another neighbour always drops in to have a chat with his wife on a Friday evening &lt;...&gt;.</td>
<td>Conversation or discussion, usually serious and important e.g. Let’s have a talk about the primary school budgets &lt;...&gt;.</td>
<td>An informal, usually purposeful talk; e.g. He had a long conversation with a Russian passenger, who talked about magic and ‘hidden powers’ &lt;...&gt;. It’s too hot to make conversation with such stupid ones as you are this afternoon. It’s not a bad idea, it’s, get quite a good conversation in there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech e.g. &lt;...&gt; who’s coming to do a talk about rainforest &lt;...&gt;. &lt;...&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reasons why the deverbal nouns can combine with some light verbs and cannot with others are of semantic nature. The fact that the deverbal noun conversation is related to a particular purpose allows it to combine with the light verbs make and get. The full semantic meaning of make is to force somebody to do something, and to some extent this meaning is inherited by the light verb. The construction make conversation (2 a) denotes to converse with someone not because the speaker is interested but only to appear polite, thus the light verb make contributes to the meaning aspect of some force directed to the subject. Make cannot be used in combination with chat and talk for the reason that chat carries the tone of familiarity and talk refers to the tone of seriousness and importance implying some interest.

Get in its full semantic meaning denotes to receive something, but, when it is used in its light meaning, it becomes a metaphorical extension of receiving something making the subject the Beneficiary of the activity. When get combines with conversation, the construction (2 b) means to converse with someone for the benefit of the subject. In addition, the data from the BNC show that the subject Beneficiary of the conversing is usually the initiator of the activity. Thus the light verb get contributes to the meaning aspect of the Beneficiary and initiator of the activity. The LVC get a conversation might have appeared from the phrase get into conversation with someone which has a similar meaning, i.e. to start conversation with someone, and is more productive in British English. That would explain why get is used only with the deverbal noun conversation.
(2) a. Obliged to make polite conversation all the time oh!
   <…> I had to make conversation then I said erm so how are the old Colts B doing <…>.

b. Just talk to her get some conversation <…>.
   But you got conversation with him and his family <…>.

In addition, only the deverbal noun talk in its second meaning denoting a speech can combine with the light verbs give (3 a) and do (3 b).

(3) a. <…> come and give us a talk on anything unrestricted that you think would be of interest.
   <…> Hilary Robarts had given a short preliminary talk.

b. <…> I’m doing this talk here for erm Stanley’s daughter <…>.
   <…> I do a talk erm I call it a story rather than a talk <…>.

The light verb give in its full semantic meaning denotes a transfer of possession from the subject to the object. When give is used in a LVC, it becomes a metaphorical extension of the transfer of possession where the object is affected by the action or activity denoted by the deverbal noun (Dixon, 2005). Thus, the construction give a talk describes a metaphorical transfer of the Sayer’s speech to the Recipient even though the Recipient is not mentioned in the sentence, but is implied; the Recipient is affected by the Sayer’s activity of speaking. As regards the light verb do, it does not contribute to the meaning aspect of transfer but is related to performing some action / activity. When used with talk, the light verb do means to perform the activity of speaking, thus do is more neutral than give in combination with talk. Both light verbs give and do can combine with the deverbal noun talk in its second meaning (speech) where the activity of speaking is one-way, and only the subject has an active role in it. The activity of speaking denoted by talk in its first meaning and that of the deverbal nouns chat and conversation is two-way, and the subject and object continuously swap the active and passive roles.

Although Plante (2014) states that the light verb take is often interchangeable with have in LVCs, the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation are similar in that all of them can occur with have (4 a-c) but not with take.

(4) a. <…> we’ll have a chat with them and we’ll find them out what they think <…>.
   <…> I’ve had a right good chat to David. (BNC)

b. <…> we had a long talk and we discussed it at length for two weeks <…>.
   <…> We’ll just have a talk about the Bicester side, are you going to be at full strength?

c. <…> I had a fascinating conversation with Professor Max Clues on just this subject.

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4 Although Plante (2014, 84) claims that do takes deverbal nouns with telic meanings in LVCs and brings telic meanings to the whole construction, it is not the case with the construction do a talk as can be seen from the example in (3b) where the construction is used in the present continuous tense.
So can you imagine if you **had a conversation with somebody from another country** <…>.

According to Wierzbicka (1982), the three deverbal nouns when combined with have fall into different semantic groups. *Chat* refers to an aimless, non-serious joint activity which could cause the people involved to feel pleasure, thus the semantic subtype of have + a *chat* implies a subjective and experiential perspective. Since *conversation* and *talk* do not imply aimlessness and enjoyability, Wierzbicka considers have a *conversation* and have a *talk* to belong to the semantic type implying continuous purposeful reciprocal actions (Wierzbicka, 1982).

The data in Table 3 show that LVCs with the deverbal nouns *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* have similar total normalised frequencies. LVCs with the deverbal noun *chat* have the normalised frequency of 2.91 occurrences per million words, while the constructions with the deverbal noun *talk* have the normalised frequency of 3.4, and with the deverbal noun *conversation* 3.69. Similar normalised frequencies of the LVCs of type 1 and type 2 suggest that both types are similarly productive. This opposes Berg’s (2005) claim that different types of LVCs differ in their productivity.

**Table 3.** Normalised frequencies of the deverbal nouns *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* in combination with different light verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light verb</th>
<th>Deverbal nouns</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>CHAT</strong></td>
<td><strong>TALK</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONVERSATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.3 (129)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have</td>
<td>2.9 (281)⁶</td>
<td>1.9 (186)</td>
<td>2.6 (249)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.07 (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2 (17)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (96)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number</strong></td>
<td>2.91 (282)</td>
<td>3.4 (332)</td>
<td>3.69 (354)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 3, LVCs with the deverbal nouns *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* vary in frequency when combined with different light verbs. LVCs with all three deverbal nouns occur most frequently when combined with have. The normalised frequency of have a *chat* is 2.9 words per million, have a *talk* – 1.9, have a *conversation* – 2.6. The normalised frequencies of the constructions are very low when they combine with do and get: for do a *talk* it is 0.2 and for get a *conversation* 0.07. High productivity of LVCs with have is not surprising, since have is the most productive light verb in British English (Leech et al., 2009, 176). Have has a wide range of use, since it can be found in both stative and dynamic meanings and therefore is favoured in LVCs (Huddleston, Pullum, 2010).

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⁶ Table 3 shows only typical cases, i.e. constructions with the raw frequency of 5 and more than 5 cases.

⁶ The number in brackets refers to a raw frequency (tokens).
Summing up, the analysis reveals that *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* differ in the variety of light verbs they can combine with. Although all three deverbal nouns are found with *have*, only *conversation* can occur with *make* and *get*, and *talk* with *give* and *do*. Therefore, Stevenson et al. (2004) are only partly right about the tendency of deverbal nouns with similar meanings to combine with the same light verbs. The differences between the deverbal nouns combined with different light verbs are not construction-type-dependent but might be influenced by a variety and peculiarities of meanings that the deverbal nouns carry in LVCs. The analysis of meaning aspects contributed by different light verbs shows that light verbs differ in the degree of lightness. While *have* has a bleached meaning, *do*, *make*, *get*, and *give* retain the meanings of their ‘heavy’ counterparts to some extent. The examination of the data also demonstrates that LVCs with *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* are similar in productivity, although their productivity differs when they are analysed in combination with different light verbs. The evidence shows that all LVCs under investigation are most productive when the light verb is *have*.

**Complementation patterns**

Complementation patterns\(^7\) of the constructions with the deverbal nouns *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* are analysed in terms of frequency and variety in general, as well as when they combine with different light verbs. The variety of complementation patterns selected by the constructions is described in relation to the semantic roles\(^8\) the complements perform.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deverbal noun</th>
<th>CHAT</th>
<th>TALK</th>
<th>CONVERSATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light verb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63 %</td>
<td>(179)</td>
<td>56 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that LVCs with the deverbal nouns *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* are similarly complemented. The constructions with *chat* taking a complement comprise 63 %, while the constructions with *talk* select complements in 55 % of cases. LVCs with

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\(^7\) In this research, complements are regarded to be obligatory constituents required to have a grammatically correct clause with a completed meaning as opposed to adjuncts that are optional constituents contributing additional information (Downing, Locke, 2006; Wekker, Haegeman, 1993).

\(^8\) The description of the semantic roles was necessary for the reason that the complements selected by different constructions performing the same semantic roles contained some similarities. Halliday’s classification (1994) was used in the description.

\(^9\) The bracketed number refers to a raw frequency.
the deverbal noun *conversation* are slightly less complemented than the constructions with *chat* and *talk*, since the complemented cases with *conversation* make up 40%.

The analysis of the frequencies of complemented constructions in combination with different light verbs demonstrates that LVCs with the deverbal nouns *talk* and *conversation* differ in the extent of complementation. The constructions with *talk* and *conversation* have the highest relative frequencies of complemented cases when combined with the light verb *have*: *have a talk* has 56% of complemented cases and *have a conversation* – 47%. The deverbal noun *talk*, in addition, has a high frequency of complemented cases, i.e. 56%, when combined with *give*. The deverbal noun *conversation* in combination with *make* selects twice less complements – only 25%. Both deverbal nouns in combination with *do* and *get* have low complementation: the complemented cases make up 29% and 14% respectively. The data show that light verbs influence the extent of complementation.

*Table 5. Complementation patterns of LVCs with the deverbal noun *talk* in combination with different light verbs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic role</th>
<th>GIVE A TALK</th>
<th>HAVE A TALK</th>
<th>DO A TALK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complementation patterns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient</td>
<td>to + NP(^{10}) (11(^{11}))</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>for + NP (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>with + NP (67)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Participant(^{12})</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>to + NP (11)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matter</td>
<td>on + NP (38)</td>
<td>about + NP (17)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>about + NP(^{10}) (11)</td>
<td>of + NP (2)</td>
<td>on + NP (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>on + NP(2)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed (R. + M.)(^{13})</td>
<td>to + NP + on + NP (10)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on + NP + to + NP (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed (S.P. + M.)(^{14})</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>to + NP + about + NP (3)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>with + NP + about + NP (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>on + NP + with + NP (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{10}\) The marked patterns also include cases with dative shift, e.g. *Steve started giving me a pep talk; we give them a talk about rainforest, she gave me a long talk on the rewiring of her flat.*

\(^{11}\) The number in brackets indicates a raw frequency of complementation patterns in a particular semantic group.

\(^{12}\) In the sentence *She had a talk with John*, *she* is the Sayer and the Recipient, while *John* is the second Sayer and the second Recipient. During the activity of having a talk, *she* and *John* continuously switch their roles from the Sayer to the Recipient and vice versa. However, for the convenience, the roles of the second Sayer and the second Recipient are named the second Participant.

\(^{13}\) R. + M. stands for Recipient + Matter.

\(^{14}\) S.P. + M. refers to Second Participant + Matter.
Table 5 shows that the LVCs under investigation differ in the variety of complementation patterns when used with different light verbs. The constructions have the greatest variety of complementation patterns (even eight patterns) when talk combines with have. In combination with give, the constructions have a little fewer complementation patterns – five. However, the LVC do a talk has a nearly three times lower number of complementation patterns than have a talk and twice lower than give a talk – only three patterns. The limited variety of complementation of this construction can be explained by its meaning to perform the activity of speaking where the attention is focused on the activity itself; therefore, the complementation is minimally required15.

The constructions give a talk, have a talk, and do a talk are both similar and different in the complements they take. Table 5 reveals that their complements that perform the same semantic roles16 in the sentence tend to be similar. All three constructions have complements in the semantic role of Matter that indicates the topic of the verbal process of speaking. In this semantic role, the complement on + NP is selected by all three constructions (5 a). The constructions give a talk and have a talk take, in addition, the complement about + NP (5 b). The complement of + NP (5 c) is only characteristic of the LVC have a talk.

(5) a. I gave a talk on the British monarchy at an astrological conference in Oslo.
   <...> say you had a talk on it <...>.
   My teacher, Mr Taylor, did tell us to do our talk on something we knew about <...>.
b. Helen gave a talk about her work, but <...>.
   He even gave us a talk about his love of birds at the Tory Party Conference.
   We must have a talk about the computerisation of the archive <...>.
c. <...> we are having all this talk of lawsuits and resignations.
   So let us have no talk of building on the existing legislation.

The constructions give a talk and do a talk both referring to one-way speaking activity have a few complements in the semantic role of the Recipient. The complements in this role refer to somebody at whom the speech is directed. In this semantic role, both constructions select the complement to + NP (6 a-b). The constructions differ in that only do a talk takes the complement for + NP (6 c).

(6) a. He gave a wonderful talk to all the students who were starting at the university.
   <...> was to give a talk to the Bishop’s Stortford club <...>.
   <...> Rob gave them a pep talk and <...>.
b. Taylor asked me if I’d consider doing another talk to another class.
c. <...> she popped in to ask me would I do this talk for you this afternoon.

15 The construction not only has a limited variety of complementation patterns, but it is also very infrequent as indicated in Table 5.
16 All LVCs under investigation express verbal processes; however, due to their meaning differences, some processes of different LVCs require different semantic roles to be performed (see Table 5).
The construction *give a talk* is the only one to select complex complementation patterns composed of the complements in the Recipient and the Matter semantic roles belonging to the Mixed semantic group. The group includes the patterns \( to + \text{NP} + on + \text{NP} \) (7 a) and \( on + \text{NP} + to + \text{NP} \) (7 b).

(7) a. <...> and *give the talk* to the kids on Easter and the religious side of it <...>.
   b. <...> *give us* a talk on anything unrestricted that you think would be of interest.
       <...> they *gave a talk* on physical fitness to an Essex joggers’ club.

When the deverbal noun *talk* combines with *have*, the construction denotes a two-way speaking activity which requires some semantic roles different from *give a talk* and *do a talk*. The construction selects complements in the Second Participant role that include the patterns *with* + NP (8 a) and *to* + NP (8 b). It also takes complementation patterns of the Mixed group composed of the complements in the Second Participant and the Matter roles: *to* + NP + *about* + NP (8 c), *with* + NP + *about* + NP (8 d), and *on* + NP + *with* + NP (8 e).

(8) a. *I had a talk with John Heminges*, and he said <...>.

   *I spent most of Friday morning having a long talk with Paul Seddon* <...>.
   b. *Can I have a talk to you* afterwards?
       *And I know they are hoping to have a talk to you*, too <...>.
   c. *Matron has asked me to have a little talk to you about your temporary position* <...>.
       *I’d like to have a long talk to you about her*.
   d. <...> he went to see Eden to have a talk with him about new appointments <...>.
       *She would have to have a stern talk with Debbie about including extraneous information* <...>.
   e. *I also had a good talk on international topics with Mr. Kozyrev* <...>.

Table 6 demonstrates that, when *conversation* combines with the light verb *have*, the construction takes the greatest variety of complementation patterns, even six. The deverbal noun *conversation* combined with the light verb *make* selects twice fewer complementation patterns and when combined with *get* – only one complementation pattern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic role</th>
<th>HAVE A CONVERSATION</th>
<th>MAKE CONVERSATION</th>
<th>GET A CONVERSATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complementation patterns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Participant</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with + NP (91)</td>
<td>with + NP (19)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>to + NP (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matter</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about + NP (16)</td>
<td>about + NP (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on + NP (3)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The LVCs with *conversation* in combination with different light verbs have both similarities and differences in the complements they take. The constructions *have a conversation* and *make conversation* are similar in that both denote a two-way speaking activity, and, consequently, both select complementation patterns in the Second Participant and the Matter roles. In the Second Participant role, both constructions select the complement with + NP (9 a). *Make conversation*, in addition, takes the complement to + NP (9 b) in this role. In the Matter group, both *have a conversation* and *make conversation* select the complement about + NP (9 c, d); however, only the former, in addition, can take the complement on + NP (9 e).

(9) a. <...> Aitken had a conversation with him <...>.  
I would suggest that we have a conversation with these four people <...>.  
Carolyn was aware that the woman was making conversation with her.  
<...> try to make conversation with hoards of people <...>.  
b. <...> in the way, she made conversation at parties to people she hadn’t met before.  
c. <...> we went to the bar and had a proper conversation about cars.  
<...> the two men had had a particularly difficult conversation about the matter <...>.  
d. <...> we made stilted conversation about our lives.  
<...> afterwards, making intelligent conversation about his home in Canada <...>.  
e. The two brothers had conversation after conversation on the theme of religion <...>.  
<...> she stated, shying away from having the conversation on her.  

The LVC *have a conversation* differs from the constructions *make conversation* and *get a conversation* in that it alone takes complex complementation patterns composed of the complements in the Second Participant and the Matter roles. These include the complementation patterns with + NP + about + NP (10 a), about + NP + with + NP (10 b), and with + NP + on + NP (10 c).

(10) a. I had a long conversation the other day with one of the UK’s major guitar distributors about how explicit <...>.  
<...> I had a conversation with Gillian about reading <...>.
b. I had a very enlightening conversation about the whole subject with a young man.

<...>.

c. I had a fascinating conversation with Professor Max Clues on just this subject.

The LVC get a conversation differs from the constructions have a conversation and make conversation in that it is the only construction which does not share any complements with them. Get a conversation selects only the complement with + NP (11) which, due to the specific meaning of the construction, performs not the role of the Second Participant as the constructions have a conversation and make conversation but that of the Source. The Source indicates someone from whom the subject (Beneficiary and, usually, the initiator of the activity of conversing) seeks the benefit while conversing.

(11) But you got conversation with him and his family <...>.

Table 7. Complementation patterns of LVCs with the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic role</th>
<th>LV + A CHAT</th>
<th>LV + A TALK</th>
<th>LV + A CONVERSATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>to + NP (12)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>for + NP (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Participant</td>
<td>with + NP (124)</td>
<td>with + NP (67)</td>
<td>with + NP (110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to + NP (12)</td>
<td>to + NP (11)</td>
<td>to + NP (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matter</td>
<td>about + NP (31)</td>
<td>on + NP (42)</td>
<td>about + NP (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>about + NP (28)</td>
<td>on + NP (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>of + NP (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed (R. + M.)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>to + NP + on + NP (10)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>on + NP + to + NP (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed (S.P. + M.)</td>
<td>with + NP + about + NP (7)</td>
<td>to + NP + about + NP (3)</td>
<td>with + NP + about + NP (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>about + NP + with + NP (2)</td>
<td>with + NP + about + NP (2)</td>
<td>about + NP + with + NP (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to + NP + about + NP (2)</td>
<td>on + NP + with + NP (1)</td>
<td>with + NP + on + NP (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with + NP + on + NP (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>with + NP (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 More context is needed for the complement with to illustrate its semantic role of the Source. In the example, the subject conversed with him and his family in order to record their speech for linguistic purposes.
Table 7 shows that LVCs with the deverbal noun talk take the greatest variety of complementation patterns, with the number of twelve different patterns the construction has a nearly twice greater variety than the constructions with chat and conversation. The latter two are similar in the variety of complementation patterns they select: the LVCs with chat select seven different patterns and with conversation – eight patterns. Thus, the differences between the LVCs in the variety of complementation patterns are not construction-type-dependent.

The differences in the variety of complementation patterns are influenced by different meanings of the constructions. LVCs with the deverbal noun talk having more meanings than the constructions with chat and conversation require more different semantic roles to be performed (see Table 7). These roles are associated with particular complements, and, therefore, select a greater variety of complementation patterns than the constructions with chat and conversation.

As Table 7 shows, the constructions with all three deverbal nouns have similar complementation patterns in the Second Participant (12 a), Matter (12 b) and Mixed (the Second Participant and the Matter) roles (12 c).

(12) a. Look, why don’t you have a chat with Philip?
   I’ll have another chat to Niall <...>.
   I want to have a talk with Hayley <...>.
   I think I should have a talk to Mary, she’s got so many problems <...>.
   Have you ever tried having a conversation with someone who <...>.
   <...> she made conversation at parties to people she hadn’t met before.
b. Perhaps we could have a chat on the phone about it.
   I’m glad you’ve had such a cosy chat about me!
   We must have a talk about the computerisation of the archive <...>.
   <...> gave a short talk on the changes in the region since the merger.
   <...> they seem to be having a conversation about the university matters <...>.
   <...> she stated, shying away from having the conversation on her.
c. <...> had a long chat with Dad about which service we should attend.
   Just time to have a little chat about greyhounds with our greyhound man <...>.
   <...> have a chat to him about what you could do <...>.
   <...> he went to see Eden to have a talk with him about new appointments <...>.
   <...> we had a right good talk to them about it <...>.
   <...> had a conversation with one of the cooks about Beirut.
   I had a most interesting conversation about Italian opera with a waiter <...>.

However, only the LVCs with talk have complementation patterns in the Recipient (13 a) and the Mixed (the Recipient and the Matter) roles (13 b).

(13) a. <...> she popped in to ask me would I do this er talk for you <...>.
   <...> the next morning, Steve started giving me a pep talk, all this advice <...>.
   <...> a young lady, who went to give er a talk like this to group of adults <...>.
b. They came in today to give us this talk about kind of er money <...>.  
<...> give the talk to the kids on Easter and the religious side of it <...>.
Ms Evans gave us an interesting talk on the company personnel <...>.

Summing up, the complementation analysis reveals that chat, talk, and conversation have similar complementation frequency. However, the complementation frequency differs when different light verbs are taken into account. The constructions with have and give are most complemented and with do and get show the lowest level of complementation. The LVCs under investigation also differ in the variety of complementation patterns: the LVCs with talk having a twice greater variety of complementation patterns than the constructions with chat and conversation. These differences, however, are not construction-type-dependent but are related to the meanings of the constructions. The LVCs with talk having more diverse meanings require more different semantic roles to be fulfilled and thus are associated with particular complements. The LVCs such as give a talk and do a talk; have a conversation, have a talk, have a chat, and make conversation that require the same semantic roles to be performed select similar complements.

**Adjectival modification**

The adjectival modification of the LVCs of type 1 and type 2 with the synonymous deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation is analysed in terms of frequency, semantic types\(^\text{18}\) of immediate adjectival modifiers and the most frequent adjectives immediately combining with the deverbal nouns under investigation. These aspects are studied from two perspectives: the modification of the LVCs in general and when the deverbal nouns are used with different light verbs. The analysis focuses on differences in modification possibilities of the LVCs under investigation.

Table 8 reveals that, despite the fact that LVCs have greater modification possibilities than their verbal equivalents, the data demonstrate that there are more unmodified than modified constructions. LVCs with the synonymous deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation show similarities in the frequency of modification. The analysis shows that there are 32 % of modified cases with the deverbal noun chat, 39 % with talk, and 36 % with conversation. The similarity in frequencies indicates that modification does not depend on the type of LVCs.

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\(^{18}\) The adjectives are grouped according to Biber et al.’s classification (1999) into descriptive and classifying adjectives. Descriptive adjectives are further grouped according to the property they describe into evaluative / emotive, cognitive, duration, speed, frequency, volume, tone (manner), and structure. The further semantic groups are adapted from Biber et al.’s classification mentioned above or created by the authors of this article.
Table 8. Relative frequency data on modified LVCs with the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deverbal noun</th>
<th>CHAT</th>
<th>TALK</th>
<th>CONVERSATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light verb</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>32 %</td>
<td>28 %</td>
<td>49 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 8, there are some differences in the frequencies of modified deverbal nouns when the deverbal nouns talk and conversation are analysed in combination with different light verbs. The constructions have the highest frequency of modified cases when used with the light verb have. The frequency of the modified construction have a talk (49 %) is about two times higher than the frequency of the modified give a talk (28 %), and the modified have a conversation (40 %) is about two times more frequent than the modified make conversation (24 %). High frequency of modified constructions with have can be explained by the fact that have has an ability to occur in a wide range of uses as was mentioned in the discussion on the combinability of the deverbal nouns under investigation with different light verbs. The analysis shows that the constructions do a talk (12 %) and get a conversation (29 %) have rather poor adjectival modification.

Table 9. Frequency data on classifying and descriptive adjectives immediately modifying chat, talk, conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deverbal noun</th>
<th>CHAT</th>
<th>TALK</th>
<th>CONVERSATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light verb</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive adjectives</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifying adjectives</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of adjectives immediately modifying the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation shows that descriptive adjectives (14 a) form the majority as is seen in Table 9. The data in the table reveal that relative frequencies of the descriptive adjectives are similar in constructions with all three deverbal nouns. In LVCs with the deverbal noun chat, descriptive adjectives make up 89 %, with talk 81 %, and with conversation 75 % of all modified cases. Thus the synonymous deverbal nouns chat, talk, conversation tend to combine with descriptive adjectives far more frequently than classifying ones (14 b)

19 These LVCs have only two modified cases each. However, since these constructions are very infrequent, the modified cases resulted in higher relative frequencies of these LVCs.
independently of the type of LVCs. Although forming the minority, classifying adjectives modify talk and conversation twice more frequently than the deverbal noun chat. In the LVCs with talk, they comprise 19 %, with conversation – 25 %, while with chat – 11 %.

(14) a. <...> where it is possible to take a tea-break, have a relaxing chat <...>.
   I also had a useful talk with U Ba Pe, an old politician who was critical <...>.
   <...> she would eat her supper, make pleasant conversation <...>.
   b. <...> I mean I’m just having a general chat with you <...>.
   Alan commented that his branch had only had one political talk <...>.
   When you are having a telephone conversation <...>.

The examination of the frequency data given in Table 9 shows that the higher proportions of classifying adjectives in the LVCs with talk and conversation are influenced by a more frequent use of classifying adjectives in give a talk and have a conversation. Classifying adjectives in the former construction comprise 38 % and in the latter – 31 %, although descriptive adjectives are still prevailing. The proportions are significant enough in comparison with the constructions when talk and conversation combine with other light verbs where classifying adjectives make up about 10 % and less.

Table 10. Semantic types of descriptive adjectives immediately modifying the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Type</th>
<th>CHAT</th>
<th>TALK</th>
<th>CONVERSATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>have</td>
<td>give</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluative / emotive</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 reveals that descriptive adjectives of evaluative / emotive, tone, cognitive, and duration type dominate in the constructions under investigation, since they are widely used and have a great diversity of adjectives in the LVCs with all three deverbal nouns in combination with nearly all light verbs, while descriptive adjectives of speed, frequency, volume, and structure are rarely used and with less diversity.

20 The proportions of descriptive and classifying adjectives in the constructions do a talk and get a conversation are not taken into account because the constructions contain only two adjectives each, thus the distributions of different types of modifying adjectives in these constructions are insignificant.

21 The numbers in the table indicate different adjectives found within each semantic type.
As Table 10 shows, LVCs with the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation are similar in their use of different semantic types of adjectives. The constructions with all three deverbal nouns are found with descriptive adjectives of evaluative / emotive, tone, cognitive, duration, speed, and volume types. However, LVCs with the deverbal nouns chat and talk do not occur with adjectives of frequency, and the former, in addition, is not used with adjectives of structure type, whereas conversation tends to combine with both adjective types. Thus LVCs with the deverbal noun conversation show a slightly greater variety of semantic types of adjectives than the LVCs with chat and talk.

The study of semantic types of descriptive adjectives present in the LVCs with talk and conversation in combination with different light verbs reveals quite a few differences. Talk in combination with give and have is used with descriptive adjectives of a wide range of semantic types, while in combination with do it can combine with adjectives of only one semantic type. Talk in combination with all three light verbs can be found with adjectives of only evaluative / emotive type (15 a). Talk in combination with give and have can additionally be used with adjectives of tone (15 b), cognitive (15 c), duration (15 d) types. The constructions give a talk and have a talk differ in that only give a talk can combine with descriptive adjectives of speed (15 e) and structure (15 f), and only have a talk is found with adjectives of volume (15 g). The data demonstrate that, despite the similar meanings of give a talk and do a talk, the former is more similar to have a talk in terms of adjectival modifiers, since the LVC do a talk allows very limited adjectival modification.

(15) a. <...> listening to Danny cos I think he gives a good talk.
   <...> He gave a wonderful talk to all the students <...>.
   Oh yes, she’s got the house, and had a good talk to me <...>.
   <...> I had a fine talk with these girls. They are great girls.
   <...> Erm but we didn’t do a little talk before.

b. <...> men over in the tanks to give us a pep talk about the war effort <...>.
   As soon as she could she had a serious talk with her mother.
   <...> Sheila back for coffee after the next meeting, to have a friendly talk <...>.

   c. <...> it is increasingly impossible to have a sensible talk <...>.

   d. <...> the Membership Services Committee gave a 15 minute talk <...>.
   Nigel Lockley gave a short talk on the work of his department <...>.
   He’s certainly had a long talk with me since you left the team <...>.

   e. <...> a television reporter and I had a brief talk.

   f. <...> we were given a quick talk on safety procedure <...>.
   somebody from Marketing gave an in-depth talk on selling skills <...>.
   The broadcaster who gave a complicated radio talk on a technical subject <...>.

   g. So I had a quiet talk with young Murchie <...>.

Conversation is the only deverbal noun that can be found with adjectives of all semantic types when combined with have. When combined with make, conversation can be used
with adjectives of twice fewer semantic types, while in combination with *get*, it combines with adjectives of only two semantic types. All three LVCs *have a conversation*, *make conversation*, and *get a conversation* are similar only in that all are found with descriptive adjectives of evaluative / emotive (16 a) and cognitive (16 b) types. *Conversation* in combination with *have* and *make* can additionally be used with descriptive adjectives of tone (16 c) and structure (16 d). When *conversation* occurs with *have*, it can also be found with adjectives of duration (16 e), speed (16 f), frequency (16 g) and volume (16 h). The differences in the semantic types of adjectives modifying the deverbal nouns in combination with different light verbs may be related to the semantic differences between the LVCs discussed above (refer to the section on the combinability with light verbs).

(16) a. <...> she stood to *have the same unsatisfactory conversation* <...>. 

   *He spent a few minutes making polite, nondescript conversation* <...>. 

   <...> It’s not a bad idea, it’s, *get quite a good conversation* in there. 

b. *I had a very enlightening conversation* about the whole subject <...>. 

   *He did not play tennis, or sing, or make intelligent conversation*. 

   <...> it’s the only way I can *get any sensible conversation* round here. 

c. *We had a very friendly conversation* <...>. 

   <...> *I tried to make polite conversation* <...>. 

d. <...> *she had had a strangled conversation* at some social gathering. 

   <...> *racist humour is used to make simple conversation* and reactions <...>. 

   e. *You telephoned me at the hotel and had that long conversation* with me. 

   f. *Jack and Alison were having a hasty conversation* on the landing. 

   g. *I can have the occasional shouted conversation* with Tony <...>. 

   h. <...> *are David and Janet having a muttered conversation* as they examine the bulbs. 

As seen in Table 11, the five most frequently used adjectival modifiers in LVCs with the deverbal nouns *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* in combination with different light verbs are of different semantic types: *good* and *little* are descriptive adjectives of evaluative / emotive type, *long* is a descriptive adjective of duration, *polite* is a descriptive adjective of tone, and *private* is a classifying adjective.

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22 The adjective *little* is ascribed to the semantic group of evaluative / emotive descriptive adjectives when used in LVCs with the deverbal nouns *chat* and *talk* because *little* does not describe the duration of the interaction but the adjective is used to minimise the importance of the interaction. Thus it can refer to a casual chat or talk as seen in the examples *I had a little chat with an old man today about his flowers / then we had a little talk, but it did not end there; Chance acquaintance like this ripened into friendship;* or sometimes it can indicate some negative emotions: *have a little chat or talk* can imply that *chat or talk* will involve some criticism or bad news as seen in the examples <...> and then we’ll have a little talk to Mr Harris. *About my ‘harem’... / time for us to have a little chat, sir,* Hatchard said to me. I was afraid of that too.
Table 11. Most frequently used adjectival modifiers in LVCs with the deverbal nouns chat, talk, and conversation in combination with different light verbs\textsuperscript{23}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modifier</th>
<th>CHAT</th>
<th>TALK</th>
<th>CONVERSATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>have</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>24\textsuperscript{23}</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polite</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 shows that LVCs with the deverbal nouns under investigation have both similarities and differences in terms of the most frequent adjectives. To start with similarities, all three deverbal nouns are similar in that they all frequently combine with the adjective long (17 a). They can also be used with good (17 b), but the adjective is frequent\textsuperscript{24} only in combination with chat and talk. The deverbal nouns chat and talk behave in a similar way when combined with the most frequent adjectives. Only chat and talk frequently combine with little (17 c), while the adjective is not used with conversation at all. In addition, both chat and talk are not found with polite, while this adjective frequently occurs with conversation (17 d). Talk is similar with conversation in that both can be used with private (17 e), but the adjective is frequent only with conversation.

(17) a. <...> she’d had a long chat with Harry that afternoon on the telephone.

Before I left, she gave me a long talk on the re-wiring of her flat <...>.

We had a long talk when we had dinner together.

You telephoned me at the hotel and had that long conversation with me.
b. <...> Joe his partner was there so I had a really good chat to him.

<...> listening to Danny cos I think he gives a good talk.

I want to have a good talk with Mr Makepeace and Mr Farraday...

I like to have a good conversation with a boy.

It’s not a bad idea, it’s, get quite a good conversation in there.
c. I want to have a little chat with you sometime, Bob <...>.

He was turning over in his mind the best way to have a little talk with Pickerage.
d. <...> could she hide her resentment and make polite conversation?

e. <...> I’ll get her on her own and have a private talk.

<...> you’ve put them on hold, you’re going to have a private conversation <...>.

When talk and conversation combined with different light verbs are analysed in terms of the most frequent adjectival modifiers, it appears that the LVCs have some internal differences. The adjectives little, long and good modifying talk are most frequent only

\textsuperscript{23} The number refers to a raw frequency.

\textsuperscript{24} The occurrence of the deverbal noun with an adjective is considered frequent if it is found not less than five times.
when *talk* combines with *have*. When it combines with *give* and *do*, these adjectives are not frequent or cannot be found in the constructions at all (see Table 11). When *talk* is used with *give*, it can be found with the adjectives *long* and *good* but not with *little*. When *talk* combines with *do*, it can occur only with *little*. These differences indicate that *talk* behaves in a similar way as *chat* in terms of the most frequent adjectival modifiers only when it is used with the light verb *have*.

The deverbal noun *conversation* is frequently modified by the adjectives *long* and *private* only when it is used with the light verb *have*. When *conversation* combines with *make* and *get*, the deverbal noun does not occur with these adjectives at all. The adjective *polite* frequently modifies *conversation* only in combination with *make*. When the deverbal noun is used with the light verbs *get* and *have*, it does not combine with *polite* at all. The adjective *good* can modify *conversation* in combination with *have* and *get*, although infrequently. The differences between the LVCs when *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* combine with different light verbs in terms of the most frequent adjectival modifiers are related to the different meaning aspects of the constructions brought by different light verbs.

Summing up, the analysis reveals that the frequency of adjectival modification does not depend on the type of LVCs but rather on the light verb since the modified constructions with all three deverbal nouns have similar frequencies but in combination with *have* they are the highest. The investigation also shows that descriptive adjectives dominate in the constructions independently of the type of LVCs and light verbs. LVCs with the synonymous deverbal nouns *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* are similar in terms of semantic types of descriptive adjectival modifiers but have greater differences when they combine with different light verbs. The examination of the most frequent immediate adjectival modifiers demonstrates that *chat* and *talk* behave in a similar way, but only when they combine with the same light verbs. Thus, the similarities are not construction-type-dependent but are influenced by the light verb.

**Conclusions**

The study reveals that the two prototypical types of constructions behave in a similar way in terms of the researched aspects. The frequency analysis demonstrates that the LVCs of type 1 and type 2 are similar in the productiveness, extent of complementation, and adjectival modification. The syntactic analysis shows that different prototypical types do not show differences in the combinability with light verbs and the variety of complements they take. The semantic analysis demonstrates that the LVCs of type 1 combine with a similar range of semantic types of adjectival modifiers as the constructions of type 2.

The constructions with the synonymous deverbal nouns *chat*, *talk*, and *conversation* have some individual semantic and syntactic differences. The syntactic analysis shows that the constructions differ in the combinability with light verbs and the variety of
complementation patterns they take: the LVCs with talk have twice as great a variety as the constructions with chat and conversation. The semantic analysis demonstrates that the different choices of light verbs and differences in the variety of complementation patterns are determined by semantic differences of the deverbal nouns.

LVCs with the synonymous deverbal nouns under investigation in combination with different light verbs show significant differences. The frequency analysis shows that the constructions differ in productivity, the extent of complementation and adjectival modification. LVCs with the light verb have are the most frequent in all these parameters, while the constructions with get and do are the least frequent ones. The syntactic and semantic analyses demonstrate differences in complementation patterns, semantic types of adjectival modifiers, and combinability with the most frequent modifying adjectives. The differences could be accounted for by the fact that light verbs differ in their lightness. The study reveals that the lighter the verb is, the fewer differences between LVCs with different deverbal nouns can be found, and vice versa. The LVCs with have, which is the lightest verb under investigation, do not differ much in all the parameters mentioned above.

The differences between the LVCs with chat, talk, and conversation in different parameters when combined with different light verbs suggest that the constructions differ in the degree of prototypicality depending not on the morphological nature of the deverbal nouns but on the light verbs they take. The light verb have, being most frequent and widely used, forms the prototype in combination with the deverbal nouns, whereas the constructions with other light verbs gradually decrease from the prototype. Do a talk and get a conversation, while having a very restricted use across the parameters and occurring in low frequencies, are marginal members of the category of LVCs.

The research focuses on only two types of LVCs that are close in prototypicality and with three synonymous deverbal nouns, thus further investigation is needed. The future research could include the constructions of more different types and with more synonymous deverbal nouns. The present study does not analyse LVCs participating in syntactic operations, such as passivisation or wh-movement that could also be the focus of future investigations.

Sources


References


Santrauka

Konstrukcijos su veiksmažodiniais daiktavardžiais (angl. deverbal nouns) daugelio mokslo lininkų jau buvo tyrinėtos įvairiais aspektais, tačiau mažai dėmesio sulaukė šių konstrukcijų tyrinėjimai taikant prototipų teoriją. Šiame straipsnyje tiriama prototipų teorijos požiūriu skirtingos konstrukcijos su sinoniminiais veiksmažodiniais daiktavardžiais chat, talk ir conversation. Šiuo tekstyro medžiaga pagrįstu tyrimu siekiama kiekybiškai ir kokybiškai aprašyti šias konstrukcijas ir išsiaiškinti jų semantines ir sintaksines savybes. Visa tyrimui būtina medžiaga surinkta iš BNC tekstyro.

Straipsnyje analizuojamas konstrukcijų su sinoniminiais veiksmažodiniais daiktavardžiais chat, talk ir conversation junglumas su įvairiais veiksmažodžiais, turinčiais mažą semantinį svorį, produktyvumas, komplementacija ir būdvardinė modifikacija. Tyrimas parodė, kad, nors minėtos konstrukcijos priklauso skirtinoms prototipų grupėms, jos turi daug panašumų vienas tyrinėjamas aspektai. Šių konstrukcijų produktyvumo, komplementacijos ir būdvardinės modifikacijos skirtingu atveju išryškėja tik analizuojant jų junglumą su įvairiais veiksmažodžiais, turinčiais mažą semantinį svorį.

Esminiai žodžiai: konstrukcijos su veiksmažodiniais daiktavardžiais, tekstyro duomenimis pagrįstas tyrimas, semantinės ir sintaksines savybės, kiekybinė analizė, komplementacija, būdvardinė modifikacija.

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