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A Contrastive Analysis of Synonymous Verbs "Defend," "Protect," "Shield," "Guard," "Safeguard" in English and Vietnamese Based on Argument Structure

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Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the subtle semantic differences between five English synonymous verbs, "defend," "protect," "shield," "guard," and "safeguard," and their Vietnamese equivalents by applying the theory of argument construction. This research demonstrates that separation of near-synonyms is not only due to the overlap of definitions but also the actant structures, circumstantial parameters, and pragmatic distributions. The analysis reveals how each verb activates specific conceptual frames and constructional patterns. This study is based on Tesnière's valency theory and Bresnan's argument structure as well as on frame semantics, construction grammar, prototype theory, and cognitive linguistics. For example, "defend" and "shield" tend to connote responses to specific threats, often requiring long-term or specific actions, while "protect" emphasizes precaution against possible dangers. To guard is to be vigilant. To safeguard is to be institutional. The Vietnamese words "bảo vệ, giữ gìn, phòng thủ, che

chắn, canh gác" are similar in meaning but are applied in culturally different ways. "Giữ gìn" relates to the preservation of culture or morality. The prototype is "bảo vệ". In theory, the study uses lexicographic definitions and corpus data from the COCA, BNC, and Vietnamese Corpora and analyzes frequency counts, collocational patterns, concordance lines, and semantic prosody. Recent studies show that core concepts are language-independent, and pragmatic extensions and argument structures are language-specific. This work is a systematic analysis of synonymy at the level of the syntax-semantics interface and makes a contribution to contrastive linguistics and applied pedagogy with recommendations for the teaching of the differentiation of synonyms and translation. This work highlights the importance of combining empirical corpus evidence with theoretical rigor in cross-linguistic studies of lexical semantics.

Keywords: Corpus-Based Analysis, English-Vietnamese Comparison, Synonymy, Argument Structure, Frame Semantics, Construction Grammar, Contrastive Linguistics

1. Introduction

In the field of contrastive linguistics, researchers frequently compare phenomena at the levels of phonetics-phonology, grammar, or specific lexical-semantic fields to identify the similarities and differences between two languages for various purposes, including foreign language pedagogy. However, cross-linguistic contrastive studies of synonyms in general and of English-Vietnamese in particular have remained largely unaddressed to date. This constitutes a highly challenging endeavor, as researchers must not only ascertain the semantic similarities and differences among synonyms within each individual language but also determine the cross-linguistic correspondences and divergences between the synonymous sets of the two compared languages. Therefore, in this paper, we conduct an initial attempt to contrast several synonymous verb series in English and Vietnamese.

Given the vast inventory of verbs in general, and synonymous verbs in particular, within each language, we utilize a case-study methodology to analyze and contrast the semantics of several representative, semantically corresponding synonymous verb series in English and Vietnamese, thereby deriving the similarities and differences between the synonyms of these two languages. From a theoretical perspective, English is designated as the source/standard language (*etalon*), while Vietnamese serves as the target/contrastive language. The theoretical framework adopted for the semantic analysis of verbs during the

contrastive process is the verb's *argument structure*. Argument structure is defined as the configuration of arguments selected by a predicate core, encompassing their properties, relationships, and syntactic roles.

This predicate core plays a decisive role. It is the semantic value of the core that governs and dictates the quantitative configuration of the arguments (i.e., how many are required, how many can potentially appear) as well as the semantic properties of these arguments (i.e., thematic roles/theta-roles). Consequently, argument structure operates at the interface of two dimensions: semantics and syntax. Semantically, argument structure projects the core arguments of the state of affairs dictated by the predicate core. Syntactically, it represents the minimum structural information necessary to determine the syntactic dependencies of the arguments relative to their governing predicate core. Hence argument structure is an intermediary element connecting lexical semantics and syntactic structure. In languages with a clear separation between verbs and adjectives, like English, arguments are mainly tied to verbs, but they can be allowed by predicate cores of other parts of speech as well (Bresnan, 1995: 1) [7]. Nguyen Duc Ton used this theoretical framework to investigate the semantics of synonymous verb series (see Nguyen, 2015: 296-297) by using the structural features of actants and circonstants in the argument structure of the verb.

- **Actants:** These refer to the essential valencies of the predicative verb, corresponding to the actor or patient of the action. In Tesnière's valency theory, actants correspond structurally to the subject or object constituents of a sentence.
- **Circonstants:** These constitute the non-obligatory valencies of the verb that circumscribe the core predicative verb; in Tesnière's theory, they correspond to adverbial adjuncts in a sentence (and are thus also termed adverbial arguments), such as temporal or locative adjuncts (cf. V.B. Kasevich, Nguyễn, 2015, 146-148).

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Semantics of Frame

Charles Fillmore's frame semantics claims that words trigger structured conceptual scenarios, or "frames," which provide the background knowledge necessary for interpretation. For example, the word "defend" evokes a defense frame. The Defense Frame has an aggressor, a defender, and a threatened entity. The word "protect" activates a protection frame with a protector, a protected, and a protection risk. The word 'shield' brings to mind a barrier frame. A barrier frame is where a physical object or part of the body is used to create a barrier between the protected entity and an incoming source of damage. "Guard" conjures up a surveillance frame, or watching and vigilance, and prevention of unauthorized access. The word "safeguard" suggests that the policy framework includes institutional arrangements to ensure the protection of rights or interests. "Bảo vệ" often evokes the same protection frame in Vietnamese, but "phòng thủ" suggests a military defense frame. "Giữ gìn" is linked to a preservation frame that emphasizes cultural or moral values in the face of imminent threats. The term "che chắn" suggests a barrier frame, which is comparable to a shield. "Canh gác" evokes a surveillance frame that is very much like the idea of security. These frame distinctions explain why some

synonyms are interchangeable in some contexts but not others.

2.2 Grammar for Building

Construction grammar treats language as a set of "constructions," i.e., form-meaning pairings. Verbs are characterized in terms of the constructions with which they combine rather than in a vacuum. Take, for example, "often used in the construction" [defend X against Y], which emphasizes confrontation. It is important to note the word "protect" in "protect X from Y." It implies prevention. [shield X with Y] refers to a shield, illustrating the techniques used for the instrument. [Guard X] says it needs to be watched all the time. Key institutional actions are the implementation of a safeguard in [safeguard X by Y]. Vietnamese uses the word "phòng thủ" in the phrase [phòng thủ + địa điểm], such as "phòng thủ biên giới." "The expression [bảo vệ + quyền lợi/sức khỏe] uses the word "Bảo vệ" as in "bảo vệ quyền lợi người lao động." Maintaining ethnic cultural identity. In collocations like [giữ gìn + truyền thống/văn hóa], we use "giữ gìn," and in the phrase [che chắn + object], for example, "che chắn mái nhà," we use "che chắn." "Canh gác" is used in [canh gác + địa điểm], for example, "canh gác nhà máy." These construction patterns demonstrate the interplay between argument structure and fixed syntactic frames, influencing the distribution of synonyms.

2.3 Prototype Theory

Prototype theory stems from cognitive semantics. The theory posits that categories are based on prototypical members, not boundaries. In the case of synonymy, the prototype of the English set is "protect," the most frequent and semantically general term. "Defend" is a military/legal term, and "shield" is a physical barrier term. Monitoring and protection are also ancillary, whether institutional or surveillance-oriented. The Vietnamese word for prototype is "bảo vệ," and "giữ gìn" is auxiliary and only in cultural and ethical contexts. "Defense" is a marginal concept, limited to military contexts. "Che chắn" is supplementary and limited to physical circumstances. Canh gác is auxiliary and only applicable to surveillance situations. The structure of this template accounts for the tendency of learners to use protection or "bảo vệ"—it is cognitively basic.

2.4 Cognitive Linguistics

The central focus of cognitive linguistics is on metaphor, image schemas, and embodied experience. Protective verbs are often metaphorical of barriers, containers, or force dynamics. The barrier schema is the basis of the concepts of "che chắn" and "shield," in which a physical thing is used to repel harmful influences. The container schema serves to safeguard the protected entity, which is hidden behind a secure barrier. Using the force dynamics scheme, "defend" and "shield." An agent faces an adversarial power. "Guard" and "canh gác" are contingent on the surveillance system, which is able to prevent incursions through continuous monitoring. This institutional framework allows for the development of "safeguard" and "bảo hộ": abstract measures for the protection of rights. These schemas illustrate the extension of physical sensations of shielding, guarding, or enclosing to abstract domains and show the embodied motivations for the differences between synonyms.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Rationale for the Methodological Design

This study attempts to examine the semantic differences of five synonymous verbs in English, namely defend, protect, shield, secure, and safeguard, and their Vietnamese equivalents. Synonymy is a subtle and context-sensitive phenomenon, so a purely definitional approach is not sufficient. Dictionary entries are helpful starting points but often do not contain empirical data regarding how words are used in real conversation. Hence, this study employs a hybrid methodology involving corpus-based evidence and lexicographic analysis. Such a two-fold approach ensures that theoretical distinctions are grounded in real patterns of use.

3.2 Data Sources

The study draws on three main sources of data:

- Lexicographic resources: Bilingual Vietnamese-English dictionaries; Lê, 1996 [2]; Nguyễn, 1985 [5]; Cambridge, Oxford; Longman. Definitions in semantic fields, etymological notes, and examples are provided below.
- A corpus: -American English: Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) -British English: British National Corpus (BNC).
- Vietnamese: Translated texts, online newspaper archives, and the Vietnamese National Corpus (VNC).
- Parallel texts. English to Vietnamese translation of literary works, legal documents, and journalistic texts. These illustrate translators' choices among synonyms in different contexts.

3.3 Sampling and Frequency Analysis of the Corpus

Frequency estimates for each verb were obtained by sampling from corpus data. For example, COCA shows that "safeguard" is used far less often than "protect," while "defend" is widely used in legal and military contexts. "Bảo vệ" is the most common in all registers in Vietnamese, and "giữ gìn" is more frequent in the cultural or moral register. Frequency counts can be employed to distinguish between the core and peripheral members of the synonym set.

3.4 Patterns of Collocation

Collocational analysis identifies the common lexical collocates of each verb. See, e.g., "defense" means the defense of the position, rights, homeland, and territory associated with the term "defense." Protects data, children, skin, and the environment. "Shields" are near radiation, soldiers, skin, and eyes. The word "guard" brings up images of prisons, entrances, and secrets. Heritage, rights, and interests have a safety net attached. In Vietnamese, "bảo vệ Tổ quốc," "bảo vệ quyền lợi," and "bảo vệ môi trường": all collocate with "bảo vệ." "Giữ gìn" is a term associated with qualities, culture, and traditions ("phẩm chất," "văn hóa," and "truyền thống"). Borders and territories are associated with "defense." "Guard" is closely related to factories and prisons. In use, these collocational patterns demonstrate how semantic differences are realized.

3.5 Analysis of Concordance Lines

Contextual nuances were investigated by pulling out concordance lines. COCA has a lot of sentences where the word "shield" is in sentences where it is an immediate physical action (e.g., "She shielded her eyes from the sun"), and "safeguard" is in the context of policies or institutions

(e.g., the law safeguards consumer rights). "Che chở" is often used in interpersonal contexts in Vietnamese corpora ("A mother protects her children"—"Người mẹ che chở con cái"), whereas "bảo hộ" is often used in legal or governmental discourse ("Bảo hộ quyền lợi người lao động") (Protecting workers' rights).

3.6 Semantic Prosody

Corpus evidence also shows the semantic prosody; the evaluative or attitudinal meaning associated with a word. For example, the word "guard" often suggests watchfulness and suspicion, while "protect" suggests care and benevolence. The Vietnamese word "giữ gìn" has a positive prosody, a connotation of preservation and respect, whereas "phòng ngự" is defensive, sometimes negative in prosody, and means confrontation.

3.7 Coding Scheme

Verbs were coded like this:

- Agent actant: distinction between human and institutional, active and passive.
- Patient actant: danger: realized vs. potential, living vs. nonliving.

The constants are temporal (sustained v. momentary), modal/manner (routine v. situational), and instrumental (tools, impediments).

The coding scheme operationalizes Tesnière's valency theory and Bresnan's argument structure, but also allows integration with Frame Semantics and Construction Grammar.

3.8 Triangulation

Validity of the results was ensured by triangulating them across:

- Definitions from the Dictionary.
- Corpus evidence.
- Translations in parallel.

The dictionary definition of "shield," for example, highlights the importance of physical barriers; corpus evidence confirms the existence of collocations with "eyes" and "skin"; and translations show that "che chắn" or "che chở" are equivalent.

3.9 Limitations

The methodology is limited by the following: the Vietnamese language corpora are smaller and less balanced than the English language corpora. Translation data may capture the bias of the translator. Frequency estimates are not able to grasp the pragmatic nuances. However, the combination of multiple sources alleviates the limitations.

3.10 Importance to Education

Methodology has pedagogical implications, as well as technical ones. Teachers can make exercises to distinguish the words "defend" and "protect", or "bảo vệ" and "giữ gìn," by giving examples from real life to illustrate the difference between synonyms. A corpus concordance can be used in the classroom to demonstrate the subtleties of differences.

4. Linguistic Theory

Different configurations of actants and circonstants are realized as distinct semantic features within the lexical profiles of specific verbs. Accordingly, we rely on "The

universal semantic binary oppositions of units within synonymous series" proposed by Nguyen Duc Ton (Nguyễn, 2005: 230-236) as the contrastive baseline to reveal the semantic identities and variations among the lexemes within the synonymous sets.

4.1 Semantic Contrast of Synonymous Verb Series

Based on an analysis of the semantic definitions provided in the Vietnamese Dictionary (Lê, 1996) ^[2] for the aforementioned verbs, we note that to capture the semantic overlaps and divergences of these near-synonyms within each language—as well as cross-linguistically between English and Vietnamese—with respect to the actant parameter, the following oppositional criteria must be established:

- The Agent (Subject of Action): Whether it is human or non-human, an individual or an institution/collective, and whether it operates with active intent or passive engagement.
- The Patient (Object of Action): Whether the target of protection is animate (human) or inanimate (object)... Furthermore, is the threat to be mitigated an actualized danger or merely a potentiality?

Regarding the circumstantial argument, to differentiate the semantics of the aforementioned verbs, we find it necessary to attend to the following oppositional criteria:

- Instrumental circumstantial: Whether a specific instrument or tool is employed to execute the action, and if so, what specific type...
- Temporal circumstantial: The duration of the action, whether it is sustained or momentary.

4.2 The synonymous set “DEFEND, PROTECT, SHIELD, GUARD, and SAFEGUARD.”

According to Nguyễn (1985) ^[5], the synonymous set DEFEND, PROTECT, SHIELD, GUARD, and SAFEGUARD shares the overarching semantic core: "an activity aimed at preventing hostile forces from causing harm to someone or something or sheltering someone or something from adverse impacts."

4.3 "DEFEND, PROTECT, and SHIELD" vs. "GUARD and SAFEGUARD."

"DEFEND," "PROTECT," and "SHIELD" diverge from "GUARD" and "SAFEGUARD" based on the following instrumental circumstance: These three verbs denote actions that can involve the utilization of tools, bodily parts, etc., as protective mechanisms.

"GUARD" and "SAFEGUARD" do not possess a specific instrumental circumstance within their lexical entry, for example: "Prison *guards* managed to prevent more than 50 prisoners from escaping" (Cambridge Dictionary Online) (Các cai ngục đã *ngăn chặn* được hơn 50 tù nhân trốn thoát). (Translated by the author) The union *safeguards* the interests of all its members." (Cambridge Dictionary Online) (Công đoàn *bảo vệ* quyền lợi của tất cả các thành viên.) (Translated by the author).

"DEFEND" and "SHIELD" stand in binary opposition to "PROTECT," "GUARD," and "SAFEGUARD" regarding the patient (object) actant. Specifically, whether that patient encounters an actualized threat or merely a potential risk, for instance: "How can we *defend* our homeland if we don't have an army?" (Cambridge dictionary online) (Làm sao

chúng ta có thể *bảo vệ* Tổ quốc nếu không có quân đội?) (Translated by the author); "The police held up their riot *shields* against the flying rocks and bricks." (Cambridge Dictionary Online) ("Cảnh sát giơ *khíên* chống bạo động lên để chắn những viên đá và gạch bay tới tấp") (Translated by the author).

In the preceding examples, the negative influence or persecution represents an actualized reality. Conversely, in the following contexts, "Prison *guards* managed to prevent more than 50 prisoners from escaping." (Cambridge Dictionary Online) (Các cai ngục đã *ngăn chặn* được hơn 50 tù nhân trốn thoát.). (Translated by the author). The threat is only potential, that is, that the infant, town, or interests are only threatened by danger. The patient actant, along with purposive and instrumental circumstances, leads to a pronounced semantic differentiation in the semantic composition of the verb "DEFEND." In particular, DEFENDING is an active protective purpose, and is often achieved by specialized means or instruments in response to an immediate, immanent danger. How do we defend our country, for instance, without an army? (Cambridge dictionary online) (Why can't we talk about the future when we don't have friends?) (Translation by the author).

Unlike "DEFEND" the meaning structure of "PROTECT" includes an instrumental circumstantial device intended to prevent damage or loss. This device is a physical barrier against an attacker and/or hostile forces. PROTECT is also characterized by a modal/manner circumstance, indicating a systematic set of preventative/protective measures against potential hazards, used regularly or for a particular period of time. Protect your skin from the harmful effects of the sun. (Trời *bảo vệ* da khỏi tác hại của ánh nắng mặt trời sẽ rất quan trọng). (Cambridge Dictionary Online) (Translation by the author).

Similar to "PROTECT," the semantics of the verb "SHIELD" denote an instrumental circumstance, namely the use of a tangible object or barrier as a shield for protection. But "SHIELD" is different from "PROTECT" in that the patient (object) is the actor. More specifically, the word "SHIELD" is an action that protects against an imminent and tangible threat. For instance, she held her hand over her eyes to shield them from the sun. Moreover, the aspectual/temporal contexts of "DEFEND" and "SHIELD" are different. Specifically, "DEFEND" is usually a continuous, ongoing action; "SHIELD," by contrast, is usually a localized action that is structurally tied to the immediate situation and bounded in a certain moment of real time. She "held her hand above her eyes to keep the sun out of them." The author has translated the following (Cambridge Dictionary Online) (She raised her hand to shield her eyes from the sun).

Apart from the archisememe of defensive action, which is common to the above-mentioned verbs, "GUARD" and "SAFEGUARD" exhibit important distinctions in their modal/manner and purposive environments. They involve routine systemic preparation to protect the target against any underlying or latent threats. In addition, the semantic frame of GUARD highlights a readiness to ward off an active assault, institutionalizing a nascent trait of hyper-vigilance to threat. For example, "prison *guards* successfully prevented over 50 prisoners from escaping. (Cambridge Dictionary Online) (More than 50 prisoners escaped but were recaptured). I am the author (Translated by the author).

The difference between “SAFEGUARD” and “GUARD” is the patient actor. This verb emphasizes especially the prospective or hypothetical character of the threat and thus the self-deflective or protective preparation is perceived as a preventative measure, as in the following example: "The union protects the interests of all its members". (Cambridge Dictionary Online) (Published by University of Cambridge. (Translation by the author).

Consequently, the members of the English synonymous series operate on a symmetrical taxonomic level, so that no hypernym completely covers the totality of the set. Therefore, the lexicographic treatment of these synonyms should take a descriptive approach, which identifies the unique, distinctive features of each constituent lexeme, and extracts the shared semantic core.

4.4 Some Vietnamese equivalent meanings are “GIỮ”, “GIỮ GÌN”, “BẢO VỆ”, “GIỮ GÌN and BẢO VỆ.”

The generic archisememe of the items in these two Vietnamese sets is that the agent CAUSES the Patient (someone/something) to do so to maintain it in an intact state, preventing any form of violation or infringement, such as the meaning of the words “DEFEND,” “PROTECT,” “SHIELD,” “GUARD,” and “SAFEGUARD.”

- “GIỮ”: To supervise or monitor an entity to ensure it remains intact, free from loss or damage. Examples: “Prison guards managed to prevent more than 50 prisoners from escaping.” (Cambridge Dictionary Online) (Các cai ngục đã ngăn chặn được hơn 50 tù nhân trốn thoát.). (Translated by the author). The agent actant can be human or animate (an animal). The patient/target actant comprises concrete objects or phenomena.
- “GIỮ GÌN” is a Vietnamese compound word, in which “gìn” is an archaic morpheme also meaning "to keep/retain": "gìn vàng, gìn ngọc cho hay" (Nguyen Du, The Tale of Kieu). (Preserve gold and jewels wisely). (Translated by the author). (literal meaning).
- “BẢO VỆ”: “The union safeguards the interests of all its members.” (Cambridge Dictionary Online) (Công đoàn bảo vệ quyền lợi của tất cả các thành viên.) (Translated by the author).
- “GIỮ GÌN” and BẢO VỆ” operate as semantic synonyms. Nonetheless, they diverge with respect to their patient actants and purposive circumstances, which dictate their distinctive semantic nuances and distributional patterns. In many contexts, “GIỮ GÌN and BẢO VỆ” can be used interchangeably: “She held her hand above her eyes to shield them from the sun.” (Cambridge Dictionary Online) (Cô ấy đưa tay lên che

mắt để tránh ánh nắng mặt trời) (Translated by the author).

4.5 Some lexical meanings of units constitute symmetrical near-synonyms: “PHÒNG NGỰ”, “PHÒNG THỦ”, “CANH GÁC”, “CHE CHẮN,” “CHE CHỖ”, “BẢO HỘ”, “BẢO VỆ”

- “PHÒNG NGỰ”: To proactively prepare to counter, mitigate, or restrict potential damages or contingencies. For example, “phòng ngự”: to “defend.” “A defensive posture: thế phòng ngự” *Từ điển Việt-Anh = Vietnamese-English Dictionary (The Pocket Oxford Dictionary) (2013)* [6].
- “PHÒNG THỦ”: To “defend” oneself against an enemy assault to hold one's position or battleground. “Phòng thủ biên giới (“to defend one’s country’s frontier”) (*Từ điển Việt-Anh = Vietnamese-English Dictionary (The Pocket Oxford Dictionary) (2013)*) [6].
- “CANH GÁC”: To perform the combined duties of “canh” and “gác” to protect and prevent contingencies: "canh gác" (to mount guard). “Tự vệ canh gác nhà máy” (Self-defense men mount guard over their factory) (*Từ điển Việt-Anh = Vietnamese-English Dictionary (The Pocket Oxford Dictionary) (2013)*) [6].
- “CHE CHẮN”: “Protect, shield.” For example, “Che chắn lán cho khỏi gió” (“To shield a hut from the wind”) (*Từ điển Việt-Anh = Vietnamese-English Dictionary (The Pocket Oxford Dictionary) (2013)*) [6].
- “CHE CHỖ”: To “protect,” the Vietnamese employ the following verbs: “Người nghèo khổ che chở đùm bọc lẫn nhau” (“The poor protect and help one another”) *Từ điển Việt-Anh = Vietnamese-English Dictionary [The Pocket Oxford Dictionary] (2013)* [6].
- “BẢO HỘ”: to “protect”: “Bảo hộ tính mạng, tài sản của ngoại kiều” — “To protect the lives and property of foreign nationals” (*Từ điển Việt-Anh = Vietnamese-English Dictionary (The Pocket Oxford Dictionary) (2013)*) [6].
- “BẢO VỆ”: to “defend, to protect”: “Bảo vệ đất nước” (“To defend one’s country”) (*Từ điển Việt-Anh = Vietnamese-English Dictionary (The Pocket Oxford Dictionary) (2013)*) [6].

In sum, across these two synonymous series, it is evident that synonymous verbs in both English and Vietnamese manifest highly refined semantic differentiations governed by all architectural arguments within their lexical-semantic structure: the Agent parameter.

4.6 Comparing the Frequency of Collocations in English and Vietnamese

Verb	Top Collocation (COCA/BNC)	Frequency	Vietnamese Equivalent	Top Collocates (Sketch Engine/SEAlang)	Frequency
“Defend”	"homeland," "rights," "position," "territory"	~1,200 (COCA)	“Phòng thủ”	“biên giới”, “lãnh thổ”, “đất nước”	~950 (viWaC)
“Protect”	"environment" "skin," "radiation"	~2,300 (COCA)	“Bảo vệ”	“môi trường,” “quyền lợi”, “sức khỏe,” “tài sản”	~2,100 (viTenTen17)
“Shield”	“eyes”, “troops”, “skin”, “radiation	~650 (BNC)	“Che chắn”	“mắt”, “nhà cửa”, “cơ thể”, “gió”	~520 (viWaC)
“Guard”	“prison”, “entrance”, “secrets”, “border”	~870 (COCA)	“Canh gác”	“nhà máy,” “trại giam,” “cửa khẩu”	~740 (SEAlang)
“Safeguard”	“interests”, “rights”, “heritage”, “data”	~400 (COCA)	“Bảo hộ”	“quyền lợi”, “tính mạng”, “tài sản”	~380 (viTenTen17)

Sources: English-Corpora.org (COCA, BNC); Sketch Engine Vietnamese corpora (viWaC, viTenTen17); Sketch Engine+1; SEAlang Vietnamese Corp

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, through a comprehensive investigation of the two target synonymous groups, it is evident that synonymous verbs in both English and Vietnamese manifest highly refined semantic differentiations. This systematic variation is strictly governed by all structural arguments within the lexical-semantic architecture of the verb, ranging from the agent core parameters to specific actants and circumstantial features.

The cross-linguistic investigation demonstrates that while core conceptual and denotative meanings often cross linguistic boundaries seamlessly, the underlying argument configurations, sectional restrictions, and syntactic projections exhibit profound, language-specific idiosyncratic variations.

By evaluating and analyzing these lexical-semantic phenomena through a rigorous grammatical framework rather than relying on subjective intuition, this research contributes to a more systematic understanding of the syntax-semantics interface and lexical mapping in both languages. Consequently, the findings offer valuable theoretical insights for contrastive linguistics, lexicography, and applied language pedagogy.

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