



A COMPARATIVE SEMANTIC STUDY OF THE MODERN CHINESE WORD “关” (GUĀN) AND ITS VIETNAMESE EQUIVALENTS

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Abstract:

Vietnam and China share a long history of cultural interaction and linguistic exchange. Throughout history, Chinese has exerted a significant influence on Vietnamese, especially through Sino-Vietnamese vocabulary. Although the two languages share many similarities, they have also developed different linguistic characteristics due to their unique historical and cultural backgrounds. This study focuses on the modern Chinese word “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents, aiming to explore their semantic meanings, grammatical functions, and usage features. By employing semantic analysis, statistical analysis, and contrastive analysis methods, this paper examines the semantic extensions of “关” and compares its corresponding expressions in Vietnamese. The study identifies the similarities and differences between Chinese and Vietnamese in lexical meaning and language use, and provides a reference for Chinese vocabulary teaching and learning among Vietnamese learners.

Keywords: Chinese word “关” (guān), Vietnamese equivalents, semantic analysis, semantic extension, contrastive linguistics

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Objectives

Vietnam and China have a long history of cultural and linguistic interaction. Due to historical contact, Chinese has had a significant influence on Vietnamese, especially through Sino-Vietnamese vocabulary. However, under different linguistic and cultural conditions, Chinese and Vietnamese have developed both similarities and differences in lexical meaning, grammatical functions, and usage patterns.

The Chinese word “关” (guān) is a typical example of this phenomenon. Although it has corresponding expressions in Vietnamese, the semantic meanings and usage of these expressions are not completely identical. Therefore, this study aims to conduct a

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semantic and contrastive analysis of the modern Chinese word “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents, focusing on their semantic extensions, grammatical functions, and language use.

1.2 Research Subjects and Methods

The research subject of this paper is the modern Chinese word “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents. The study mainly adopts literature review, semantic analysis, descriptive analysis, and contrastive analysis methods to identify the similarities and differences between Chinese and Vietnamese expressions.

1.3. Semantic Definition

Vietnamese scholars Cam Tu Tai and Nguyen Huu Cau proposed the definition of semantics in their book *Chinese Semantics* (Hanoi Nationality University Press, 2013): "A sentence may be meant to tell someone something, or to explain a principle, or to pose a question to the other person, or to express a certain emotion." The thoughts and feelings expressed through language in communication are called semantics. Semantics are expressed through various levels of the language—morphemes, words, phrases, sentences, and phrases—and their combinations.

Based on the above theoretical framework, this study conducts a contrastive analysis of the Chinese word “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents, examining their semantic features, grammatical functions, and usage characteristics.

1.4 Previous Studies and Research Gap

Cui, X. L. (崔希亮, 2009) investigated the semantic evolution of “开” and “关” from a cognitive perspective, focusing on the asymmetry between “开心” and “关心”. By examining the historical development and lexicalization processes of these two words, the study explored the cognitive motivations and grammatical mechanisms underlying their semantic changes. However, this research mainly focused on the cognitive explanation of semantic evolution and did not provide a comprehensive analysis of the semantic features and usage patterns of the word “关” (guān).

Dai, X. X. (戴晓霞, 2011) studied the modern Chinese synonyms “关”, “闭”, and “合”, which share the meaning of “closing an open object”. Based on cognitive linguistics theory, the study analyzed their original meanings, lexical combinations, and semantic development patterns, revealing the differences and relationships among these words.

Ran, X. (冉晓, 2022), in the study “A Comparative Study of the Verbs ‘とじる’ and ‘关’ from a Semantic Extension Perspective”, compared the transitive uses of Japanese “とじる” and Chinese “关” (guān) by combining corpus data and dictionary-based semantic analysis. The study summarized the semantic relationships and similarities and differences between the two verbs. However, the comparison was mainly limited to

semantic meanings, without further discussion of grammatical structures and usage characteristics.

In summary, previous studies have mainly focused on the semantic development and internal analysis of the Chinese word “关” (guān) or its comparison with other languages. Research comparing “关” (guān) with its Vietnamese equivalents remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by conducting a contrastive analysis of the semantic features and usage patterns of “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents.

2. Semantic Study of Modern Chinese “关” (guān) and Its Vietnamese Equivalents

China and Vietnam share geographical proximity and have developed cultures that contain both similarities and distinctive characteristics. Language, as a carrier of culture, reflects the cultural features of a nation and its people, and cultural differences can be manifested through linguistic expressions. The lexical item “关” (guān) exists in both Chinese and Vietnamese, showing similarities and differences in terms of meaning and usage. This section systematically examines the basic semantic features, structural patterns, and colloquial expressions of the modern Chinese word “关” (guān), and compares them with its Vietnamese equivalents to identify the similarities and differences between the two languages.

2.1 Comparison of the Meanings of “关” (guān) in Modern Chinese and Its Vietnamese Equivalents

2.1.1. Definitions of “关” (guān) in Chinese Dictionaries

Regarding the semantic definition of the Chinese word “关” (guān), this study selects three authoritative Chinese dictionaries as the main reference sources.

The first source is the Xinhua Dictionary 《新华字典》, one of the most influential modern Chinese dictionaries in China. This study refers to the 10th edition published by the Commercial Press, Beijing, in 2004. The dictionary provides concise definitions, clear examples, and standardized explanations of Chinese characters, making it an important reference for analyzing the basic meanings and usage of “关” (guān).

The second source is the Modern Chinese Dictionary 《现代汉语词典》, a standardized dictionary of modern Chinese compiled by the Dictionary Editorial Office of the Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. It provides systematic explanations of word meanings, grammatical functions, and usage examples, and is widely recognized as an authoritative reference for modern Chinese vocabulary research.

The third source is the Practical Dictionary of Modern Chinese 《现代汉语实用词典》, published by Chongwen Book Company in 2008. This dictionary contains a large

number of commonly used Chinese characters, lexical entries, and idiomatic expressions, providing additional materials for analyzing the usage patterns of “关” (guān).

These three dictionaries are selected because of their authority, standardized compilation principles, and extensive use, providing reliable linguistic data for the semantic analysis of the Chinese word “关” (guān).

A section dedicated to the significant literature resources, consulted or employed, that contributed to the study. It surveys scholarly articles, books and other sources (e.g. dissertations, conference proceedings) relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, providing a description, summary, and critical evaluation of each work. The purpose is to offer an overview of significant literature published on a specific topic.

Table 1: Comparison of the Definitions of “关”(guān) in Different Dictionaries

1	Xinhua Dictionary	1. Close: close the door or close a box: 拘禁 (to imprison). 2. In ancient times, guard posts were established in strategic locations or national borders: 征收出口(checkpoints), 海关 (customs)、关税 (Tariff). 3. An important turning point, a difficult period to get through: 渡过难关 (getting through difficulties) , 紧要关头(critical moments). 4. Parts that play a pivotal and connecting role: 关节(joints), 关键 (keys). 5. Implicated, connected: 毫不相关 (completely unrelated), 无关紧要 (irrelevant). [Relationship] 1. Connections between things: 这个电门和那盏灯没 有关系 (This electric switch has nothing to do with that lamp) . 2. Personnel connections: 同志关系 (comrade relationships), 亲戚关系 (kinship relationships). 3. Impact: 这件事关系太大 (This matter is too significant). [About] preposition, indicating connections between things: 关于这个问题 (about this question) , 关于养蜂的书 (books about beekeeping) . 4. In the past, it referred to giving or receivin : 薪饷(salary).
2	Modern Chinese Dictionary	1. (Verb) to close an open object: 关窗户 (close the window), 把抽屉关上 (close the drawer). 2. (Verb) to stop machines or similar equipment; stop the electrical device from working mode: 关机 (turn off the machine), 关灯 (turn off the lights), 关电视 (turn off the TV). 3. (Verb) Placed inside and not allowed to come out: 鸟儿关在笼子里 (birds are locked in cages); 监狱是关犯人的 (prisons hold prisoners). 4. (Verb: enterprise, etc.) bankruptcy; closed: 有一年, 镇上关了好几家店铺 (One year, several shops in town were closed). 5. (Noun) Ancient guard posts set up at strategic transportation points or border exits: 关口(checkpoints), 关防 (border defenses), 山海关 (Shanghai Pass). 6. The area near the city gate: 城关 (urban district), 北关 (North Gate), 关厢 (area outside a city gate). 7. Door latch: 门插关儿、斩关落锁 (door bolts inserted or locked) 8. (Noun) Locations where goods export and import inspection and tax collection are collected: 海关(customs), 关税 (tariffs).

		9. (Noun) Metaphor for an important turning point or a period that is not easy to get through: 难关 (a difficult hurdle). 10. Parts that play a pivotal and related role: 机关 (mechanisms), 关节 (joints), 关键 (keys). 11. (Verb) to implicate; Relationship: 至关重要 (extremely important). 12. (Verb) Issue or receive (wages): 关饷 13. (Guān) A given name.
3	Modern Chinese Practical Dictionary	1. Closed; Closing (opposite of on): 关闭 (closing), 关门 (closing the door), 关机 (shutting down the machine). 2. Detention; Put in but not let out: 关押 (to imprison), 关犯人 (to imprison a criminal). 3. Guard locations set up at strategic transportation points or national borders: 关口 (checkpoints), 关防 (customs defense), 山海关 (Shanghai Pass). 4. Refers to customs: 关税 (tariff). 5. Important timing: 难关、紧要关头 (difficult or critical moments) . 6. Turning and related parts: 机关 (mechanisms), 关节 (joints), 关键 (keys). Implication: 关联 (related), 有关 (relevant), 毫不相关 (completely unrelated).

The analysis indicates that the Modern Chinese Dictionary offers the most systematic description of the semantic categories of “关” (guān) among the three dictionaries. The meanings of “关” can be classified into several semantic domains, including closure, involvement, key-related meanings, transition, suspension, physical objects, and restriction.

2.1.2. Vietnamese Equivalents of the Chinese Word “关” (guān)

According to the Han-Vietnamese Dictionary (Từ điển Hán – Việt), published by the Commercial Press in 1997, “关” has the following corresponding words in Vietnamese:

- 1) Close: 关窗户 (close the window) ; 关灯 (turn off the light) ; 把门关上 (close the door).
- 2) Imprisonment: 把这个流氓分子关起来 (Imprison this thug).
- 3) Border Gate/ Gate: 过社会主义这一关 (Cross this socialist gate).
- 4) Related: 责任由我负, 不关你们的事 (I am responsible, not related to you). (Surname) Quan.

According to the Chinese-Vietnamese Dictionary edited by Vietnamese scholar (Phan, V.C.) (chief editor), published by Social Science Publishing House in 2006, the word “关” in Vietnamese has the following meanings:

- 1) Close: 关窗户 (close window) ; 把抽屉关上 (close the drawer).
- 2) Confinement: 鸟儿关在笼子里 (caged birds).
- 3) (Shops, factories) closure, closure of shops: 解放的有一年, 镇上关了好几家店铺 (One year before the liberation, there were several shops in the town that were closed).

- 4) Gate: 山海关 (customs Mountain)
- 5) Officials
- 6) Tax collection points at border gates: 海关 (customs)/ 关税 (taxes) (import and export taxes)
- 7) Door (for example, an important turning point or a difficult period to overcome): 难关 (difficult to pass)
- 8) Machine Moving Parts: 机关 (machine starting parts).
- 9) Related; relation: 这些简介很关重要 (These insights are very important); 人民来信交给有关部门去处理 (Letters from the people sent to the relevant departments for handling).
- 10) Receiving salary: 关饷 (receiving salary).
- 11) Quan (surname).

From the above two Chinese-Vietnamese dictionaries, the definitions of the words corresponding to “关” (guān) in Vietnamese are not as comprehensive and detailed as those in the Chinese dictionary “关” (guān), but they share many similarities.

2.1.3. Comparison of the Semantic Domains of Modern Chinese “关” (guān) and Its Vietnamese Equivalents

2.1.3.1. Shared Semantic Domains

The semantic domains of the modern Chinese word “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents share several corresponding meanings, which can be categorized as follows:

Table 2: Semantic Domains of Modern Chinese “关” (guān) and Its Vietnamese Equivalents

Semantic domain	Related words (phrases)	Semantic Analysis and Examples
1. "Close" semantic domain (đóng lại, khép lại)	关门、关窗户、关抽屉等	The meaning is to bring open things together, and after "关" (guān), the object is in a stable closed state, emphasizing the contrast between two different states before and after "关" (guān), highlighting the action-oriented nature of "关" (guān). 1. 在抽屉的滑轨上安装了一种隐藏式缓冲装置，当人们在<u>关抽屉</u>时，使最大的力，抽屉也不会夹到手指。（<i>Urban Express Newspaper Name, October 4, 2003. A Popular Release on Building Materials. Urban Express Publication.</i>） 2. Đóng cửa sổ, đóng cửa, đóng ngăn kéo, khép cửa lại...
2. "Implicated, related" semantic domain (liên quan đến, dính líu đến)	关联、关涉、关系、有关、无关、相关、至关重要、关于、关心、关怀、关注、关切、关照等	This connection can be a visible, concrete medium or an intangible, abstract medium. The people, things, or events connected by the connection must also have interconnected relationships, and these connected things will interact and influence each other. The

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		fluctuations of one side will trigger fluctuations in others. 1. 在<u>有关</u>分阶段实现裁军和裁减常规军备限额的问题上，在实行某种监督和视察的办法的问题上，以及在限期中止氢弹试验等问题上，双方的意见已有了不少接近之处。（<i>People's Daily</i>, June 15, 1957） 2.这不是习近平首次同时<u>关照</u>“一带一路”和“十三五”话题。（<i>People's Daily Overseas Edition</i>, April 8, 2016） 3.UBND tỉnh yêu cầu khẩn trương rà soát các công trình, dự án <u>liên quan đến</u> TẬP ĐOÀN THUẬN AN（<i>Government portal</i>, November, 2024）
3."Pivot, Transition" semantic domain (bước ngoặt, then chốt)	关键、关节、机关、关子、关说、难关、关头等	Among all cognitive domains, the pivot domain is the basic domain for the importance of “关” (guān); other domains use “关” (guān) to express importance, all derived metaphorically from the pivot domain. 1. 王岐山指出，落实中央纪委扶贫会议工作要求，市县党委纪委是<u>关键</u>。（Wang, Q.S, 2017. <i>Carry forward the spirit of driving nails and welcome the 19th National Congress with solid results</i>, Xinhua Net.） 2. 我们背着六万法郎的债。有了这三十万法郎，我们也许能度过<u>难关</u>。（<i>Balzac/The Rise and Fall of a Socialite</i>） 3.Bên cạnh sự gắn kết và thi đấu ăn ý của một tập thể, chiến thuật tuyệt vời của HLV Lionel Scaloni còn là yếu tố <u>then chốt</u> giúp Argentina chạm đến chức vô địch World Cup lần thứ ba.（<i>What is the key to success in Argentina's tactics?</i>, 2022. <i>Tuoi Tre Newspaper online</i>）
4."Stopping business, stopping" semantic domain (đóng cửa, dừng hoạt động...)	关门（比喻停业）、关张、关市、关厂、关机、关灯等	In this context, the word “关” (guān) can indicate the cessation of an activity or the cessation of machine operation. 1. 事实上，美国政府<u>关门</u>并不是稀罕事，联邦政府从1977 年到 1996 年间已经<u>关门</u> 17 次。（<i>People's Daily</i>, October 2, 2013） 2. Nhật Bản <u>đóng cửa</u> hơn 8.500 trường học vì dân số già（<i>Tuoi Tre Newspaper online</i>, VNA, 2023） 3. Ấn Độ <u>đóng cửa</u> trường học, sơ tán hàng nghìn người trước bão Michaung（<i>People's Newspaper</i>, April 25, 2024.） In Vietnamese, when expressing "to stop a machine from running," it is expressed as "Turn Off" instead of "Close," such as "turn off the lights," "turn off the computer," and "turn off the phone."
5. Places for goods export and import inspection and tax collection)	海关、关税	1. 目前，全国共设立<u>海关</u> 219 个，遍布除青海以外的全国各省、自治区、直辖市（不包括港、澳、台地区）。（<i>People's Daily</i>, December 5, 1992） 2. 截至 2005 年 6 月底，从港澳输往内地的零关税货物总值约 18.6 亿港元，免征<u>关税</u> 1.3 亿元人民币。（<i>People's Daily Overseas Edition</i>, July 26, 2005） <u>3.Thuế quan</u> đóng vai trò hết sức quan trọng trong việc điều tiết nền kinh tế đất nước, bảo hộ và khuyến khích

		sản xuất trong nước phát triển, đóng góp số thu cho ngân sách. (<i>The role and impact of tariffs when our country joined the WTO, 2007. Communist Party</i>)
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2.1.3.2. Distinct Semantic Domains

The semantic domains of modern Chinese “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents show several differences, which can be summarized as follows:

Table 3: Distinct Semantic Domains of Modern
 Chinese “关” (guān) and Its Vietnamese Equivalents

Semantic domain	Related Chinese Words/Phrases and Analysis	Analysis of Vietnamese Equivalent Expressions
1. "Door lock" semantic domain	门插关儿、斩关落锁、关键 Here, the meaning of '关' is its original meaning of 'door lock,' which serves to connect a door leaf or similar object, such as short crossbars or locks. Its function is to connect two objects together. Therefore, this paper extracts this semantic feature as the "linker." This meaning is preserved in its original sense, but is now rarely used. 例子： 1.他把右手里的盒子紧紧地端在腰间，用左手把门插关儿一拉，身体往门后一撤。 2.《老子》：“善闭，无关键而不可打开”	The Vietnamese equivalent words are: then, chốt cửa. Besides using the original meaning of “关” (guān) as "door lock", Vietnamese also uses "then cửa, chốt cửa" in poetry or treats "then cửa, chốt cửa" as an abstract object: 1. Mỗi năm cháu lớn lên Bà lung còng cầm cúi Cháu cài được then trên Bà chỉ cài then dưới. (<i>Cánh cửa nhớ bà, Grade 2 Vietnamese Books</i>) 2. Mặt trời xuống biển như hòn lửa Sóng đã cài then đêm sập cửa Đoàn thuyền đánh cá lại ra khơi Câu hát căng buồm cùng gió khơi (<i>Đoàn thuyền đánh cá, Huy Cận</i>)
2. "Actions are restricted" semantic domain	关押、关起来、关住、关进去 Here, the closing of the door is used to mean that the activity of things inside the door is restricted. Therefore, the meaning of this type of "关" is to bind the bodies of humans or animals, limiting their activities within a certain spatial range. 1. 报告还指出，1990 年美国监狱中共关押 110 万犯人，比 1989 年关押的人数增长 6.8%。(<i>People's Daily</i>) 2. 我们初步算了一笔账，如果把高田里水关住不流下来，加上这几天的蒸发量，如果沟、港能再蓄一点的话，基本	Vietnamese also has corresponding expressions like "bắt, nhốt", but the nuance of these words is not as strong as in Chinese. Additionally, Chinese expressions like "to shut down" have strong structural and tendency forms, which Vietnamese generally do not have.

	上就不会再有严重的内涝。(People's Daily, December 14, 1962)	
3. It carries the significance of being an "ancient strategic transportation hub."	关口、关隘、关塞、关内、关外、关里、关中、关东、出关、入关、进关、守关、把关、关防、关津等。 Here, '关' means the only passage for entry and exit, so it serves as a connection. This meaning comes from the original meaning of 'locking the door.' Once the door is locked by the latch, the passage is sealed, and the connection between inside and outside is severed. The latch is a crucial component controlling the door's opening and closing, so the function of the door's sole passage is fulfilled by the '关' (close) symbolizing the latch—this is a metaphor. Example: 1. 三国时候，有一次魏蜀战争中，诸葛亮正屯兵在阳平关，派魏延等人带大军东下，他自己只留万余人<u>守关</u>。(People's Daily Overseas Edition, July 3, 2003) 2. 山西平定县娘子关是长城著名<u>关隘</u>、出入山西的咽喉。(People's Daily Overseas Edition, June 19, 2002)	Most of these Chinese expressions of "关" (connection) come from ancient Chinese, so some still remain in Vietnamese vocabulary today, such as: quan ải, quan ngoại, cửa khẩu biên phòng..., but some words have disappeared today. In Vietnamese, newer, more pure Vietnamese words are used: 关口 (quan khẩu): Border gates 关塞 (quan tái): The bottom line at the border gate 出关 (xuất quan): Exit 入关 (nhập quan): Immigration 把关 (bả quan): grasping; mastering; controls 关防 (quan phòng): dangerous places, border guard gates 关津 (quan tân): border gates and river wharves
4. The area near the city gate: Chengguan, Beiguan, Guanxiang.	1. 这些联合诊所分设在市辖的<u>关厢</u>区、工矿区和近郊农村等医疗力量薄弱的地区，成为北京市公立医疗机构的有力的助手。(People's Daily) 2. 早在去年 11 月，兰州市政府就向所属<u>城关</u>、七里河、安宁、西固四个区政府发文，决定于今年农历正月十三至十九日举办兰州市第 4 届迎春灯会。(People's Daily, January 28, 1988) 3. 北关 (中越词典：南宋首都临安城的北门)	Vietnamese does not have this expression related to "gate" but instead uses "suburbs, city gate"
5. Payment or receipt of (salary): customs salary	(Military) Paying salaries, generally refers to the distribution of salaries. Example: 当时伪金元券贬值，物价一日数变，又不按期<u>关饷</u>，挣的钱却不活一个母亲。(People's Daily, April 20, 1957)	Vietnamese does not have such expressions.

Through long-term historical and cultural contact, Vietnamese has been significantly influenced by Chinese, particularly in vocabulary and semantic development. As a result, the modern Chinese word “关” (guān) shares several semantic similarities with its Vietnamese equivalents, which can be observed in their semantic meanings and semantic domains.

However, due to differences in historical development, social conditions, and cultural contexts, Vietnamese has gradually developed its own linguistic characteristics. These changes have led to differences in the usage patterns and semantic extensions of Vietnamese equivalents of “关” (guān). The comparison of these similarities and differences reflects not only the relationship between the two languages but also the process of lexical development under different cultural backgrounds.

2.2 Comparison of the Grammatical Structures of Modern Chinese “关” (guān) and Its Vietnamese Equivalents

2.2.1. The Collocation of “关” (guān) with Adverbs

Table 4: The Collocation of “关” (guān) with Adverbs

Structure	Chinese	Vietnamese	Comparative analysis
1. 就 X 关	Example : 1. 你不用电脑 <u>就把它关</u> <u>了</u> 吧, 让它也休息一下。 2. 有一回, 我夜里醒了好几次, 每次都看见那盏蒙着报纸的灯亮着, 我怕他累坏了, 就硬 <u>把灯关了</u> , 命令他躺下。	Example : đóng cửa, tắt đèn... 1. Khi niềm <u>hi vọng</u> bị <u>dập tắt</u> . (<i>Tuoi Tre Newspaper Online</i> , 2008) 2. Quy định 'xuống xe, <u>tắt máy</u> , dẫn bộ' gây bất tiện (<i>VnExpress Newspaper</i> , 2023)	In this structure, if Chinese wants to use the "就 X 关" structure, it must use the phrase 把'ba', whereas in Vietnamese, simply adding a nominal object after the corresponding verb of '关' can express it. The object of "关" can be both concrete and abstract.
2. 都 X 关	Example : 1. 会议结束后, 你记得 <u>把</u> 空调和灯 <u>都关</u> 了。 2. 县城里冷冷清清的, 许多商店 <u>都紧紧地关</u> 着大门, 街上的行人也无精打采。 (1) 那里的动物都 <u>关在</u> 笼子里。	Example : đều đóng lại, đều khép lại... 1. Có phải những <u>cánh cửa đều khép</u> ? (<i>Tuoi Tre Newspaper Online</i> , 2008)	Compared to the structure of "就 X 关" the Chinese "都 X 关" is more free; it not only uses phrases and phrases but can also add other types (such as adverbs, noun phrases, etc.), making it richer than Vietnamese.
3. 不关	Example : 1. 现在, 我们有些人在家里 <u>不关</u> 灯, <u>不关</u> 风扇、空调, 老婆会骂, 但在单位好像就无所谓, 反正不是自己家的。	Example : Quên <u>tắt điều hoà, tắt điện</u> là sơ suất phổ biến của nhiều người trước khi về quê nghỉ Tết hay đi du lịch dài ngày bên ngoài. (<i>Women's and Law Newspaper</i> , 2023)	Chinese and Vietnamese share the same structure here, and after “不关” (unrelated) it can directly serve as a knot-nominal part-of-speech object.

2.2.2. The Collocation of “关” (guān) with Prepositions and Verbs

Table 5: The Collocation of “关” (guān) with Verbs

Structure	Chinese	Vietnamese	Comparative analysis
1. 把 X 关了	Example : 可是, 过了一会儿, 我的手机果然每 5 分钟就响一次, 我觉得实在不耐烦, 想想可能是真的, 就 把手机关了 。	Tắt máy, tắt đèn, tắt điện	It is clear that among these four structures, the usage of Chinese is much more complex than that of Vietnamese. When using Chinese phrases like "把 X 关在/上" (to close X), we need to follow the rules for placing the word and sentence, whereas in Vietnamese, you just need to add the object directly. Additionally, the Chinese structure "被 X 关进" is similar to the Vietnamese "Bị nhốt vào, bị giam vào, bị bắt vào..." (Locked in, imprisoned, caught in...). Both carry negative connotations, which is the commonality between the two. In Chinese, "把 X 关在" carries an active meaning, but in Vietnamese, "(Bị) chặn lại ở, giữ lại ở..." Usually has a passive tendency to express it.
2. 把 X 关在	Example : 要是这种人不请自来呢, 您会 把他关在门外 吗?	(Bị) chặn lại ở, giữ lại ở... Example : Hàng nghìn xe tải Ukraine bị chặn lại ở biên giới Ba Lan (<i>Newspaper News, VNA, 2023</i>)	
3. 被 X 关进	Example : 1.法官判汤姆无期徒刑, 把他被关进了监狱 。 2.后宫的宫女都是从民间选来的, 他们一进了皇宫, 就像鸟儿 被关进笼子 , 都希望有一天能把她们放出宫去。	Bị nhốt vào, bị giam vào, bị bắt vào... 例子 : Thêm một phó chủ tịch UBND TP Long Xuyên bị bắt tam giam . (<i>Tuoi Tre Newspaper online, April 25, 2024</i>)	
4. 把 X 关上	Example : 有时候, 保罗忘了关门, 邻居们会为他 把门关上 。	Đóng lại, khép lại... Example : Khi một cánh cửa này đóng lại , một cánh cửa khác mở ra. (<i>Dan Tri Newspaper, 2023</i>)	

2.2.3. Common Grammatical Patterns of “关” (guān)

Table 6: Common Grammatical Patterns of “关” (guān)

Structure	Chinese	Translated into Vietnamese	Comparative analysis
1. 关上	Example : 1.飞机上禁止使用手机, 飞行过程中手机也要 关上 。 2.这两天我到楼上看您, 您怎么总 把门关上 ?	1. Việc sử dụng điện thoại di động bị cấm trên máy bay và phải tắt trong suốt chuyến bay. 2. Hai ngày nay tôi lên lầu gặp em. Tại sao em luôn đóng cửa ?	When using the Chinese “关” (guān) structure, complements such as 上, 在, 起, 进, 好, etc., are often added after the Chinese word to indicate the result, but the process of translating into Vietnamese does not require this.
2. 关在	Example :	1. Chúng không thể tiếp tục bị giam trong vườn thú.	

	1.不能继续 <u>把它们关在</u> 动物园里。 2.但在南非，动物从 <u>不关在</u> 笼子里，都是野生放养的，它们自由自在地生活在大自然中。	2. Nhưng ở Nam Phi, động vật không bao giờ bi nhốt trong chuồng. Chúng đều sống hoang dã và sống tự do trong tự nhiên.	
3. 关起	Example : 她一夜之间成了一个失业者，就像从天上掉到了地上，心情格外沉重，禁不住 <u>关起</u> 门来哭了一场。	Ví dụ: Cô ấy thất nghiệp chỉ sau một đêm, như thể từ trên trời rơi xuống đất, tâm trạng vô cùng nặng nề, cô ấy không khỏi khóc sau cánh cửa đóng kín .	
4. 关进	Example : 1.我没有吭声，又 <u>把自己关进</u> 了房间里。 2.孟实先生 <u>被关进</u> 了牛棚。	1. Tôi không nói gì và lại nhốt mình trong phòng. 2. Ông Mạnh Thực bi nhốt trong chuồng bò.	
5. 关好	Example : 1.以后出门一定要 <u>关好</u> 窗户。 2.母亲将小喜鹊放进笼子里， <u>关好</u> 笼子的门，又将笼子挂在屋檐下。	1. Sau này hãy nhớ đóng cửa sổ khi ra ngoài. 2. Mẹ nhốt chú chim ác là nhỏ vào lồng, đóng cửa lồng lại và treo lồng dưới mái hiên.	

Based on the three tables above, it can be observed that the usage patterns and grammatical structures of modern Chinese “关” (guān) demonstrate greater diversity than those of its Vietnamese equivalents. In Chinese, “关” (guān) can frequently appear in the “把” construction (bǎ-construction) or be followed by complements to express different meanings, whereas Vietnamese equivalents can often directly combine with noun objects. Despite these differences, both Chinese “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents share a common feature: their objects can refer to either concrete entities or abstract concepts.

2.3. Comparison of Idiomatic Expressions Related to Modern Chinese “关” (guān) and Its Vietnamese Equivalents

Language serves as a carrier of culture, and differences in language reflect differences in cultural cognition and social practices. Idiomatic expressions, including idioms and proverbs, provide important evidence for understanding the relationship between language and culture.

This study selects Chinese idiomatic expressions containing “关” (guān) from the Dictionary of Chinese Proverbs (2011) and Vietnamese equivalent expressions from the

Dictionary of Vietnamese Idioms and Proverbs (Từ điển thành ngữ & tục ngữ Việt Nam, 2000). The collected data mainly include commonly used expressions appearing in daily communication and literary works. Through comparison, this section analyzes the similarities and differences between Chinese and Vietnamese idiomatic expressions related to the meaning of “关” (guān).

2.3.1 Chinese Idiomatic Expressions Containing “关” (guān) with Corresponding Vietnamese Equivalents

Chinese idiomatic expressions containing “关” (guān) and their Vietnamese equivalents may share similarities in structural patterns and semantic meanings. Although the lexical forms used in the two languages may differ, the overall meanings expressed by these idiomatic expressions can be equivalent. This study first examines idiomatic expressions in Chinese and Vietnamese that show similar semantic characteristics related to “关” (guān).

Table 7: Chinese Idiomatic Expressions Containing “关” (guān) and Their Vietnamese Equivalents

Ordinal number	Chinese proverbs	Meaning	Vietnamese proverbs
1	英雄难过美人关	Refers to heroes who often lose their fighting spirit and disgrace due to their infatuation with women.	Anh hùng khó qua ái mỹ nhân
2	鬼门关	The superstitious legend at the junction between yin and yang. A metaphor for dangerous places.	Quỷ môn quan
3	闭关锁国	Refers to the non-trade with foreign countries.	Bế quan tỏa cảng 用词不同: “国”和“港”
4	关公面前耍大刀	Showing off his broadsword in front of Guan Yu refers to showing off his broadsword in front of the Martial Saint Guan Yu (Guan Yu), a metaphor for overestimating oneself and showing off in front of someone with greater abilities.	Múa rìu qua mắt thợ

2.3.2. Different Idiomatic Expressions Related to Modern Chinese “关” (guān) and Its Vietnamese Equivalents

The Chinese idiomatic expressions containing “关” (guān) and their Vietnamese equivalents show differences in structural patterns and semantic meanings. Although some differences may appear minor, they can result in variations in the overall meaning, usage, and expression patterns of the idiomatic expressions in the two languages. This section analyzes the differences between Chinese idiomatic expressions containing “关” (guān) and Vietnamese expressions with corresponding meanings.

Table 8 : Chinese idiomatic expressions containing “关” (guān) and Vietnamese expressions

Ordinal number	Chinese proverbs	Meaning	Vietnamese proverbs	Comparative analysis
1	关怀备至	The care was very attentive.	None	
2	关门大吉	Refers to the closure of a store or bankruptcy or closure of a business.	None	
3	关心民瘼	Caring about the hardships of the people.	None	
4	关门养虎，虎大伤人	A metaphor for condoning and encouraging bad people and bad deeds, only to end up suffering themselves.	Nuôi ong tay áo	The meanings are related, but the usage of the words differs
5	关门打狗	A metaphor for controlling the opponent within your sphere of influence and then launching effective strikes.	None	
6	关门捉贼	A metaphor for controlling the opponent within your sphere of influence and then launching effective strikes.	None	
7	关山阻隔	The passes and mountains block and isolate them. Describes a difficult journey and difficulty in coming and going.	None	
8	关山迢递	The passes and passes stretch far and wide. Pointing to the long road ahead	None	
9	关门闭户	All the doors were shut. Describes a cold and desolate atmosphere.	None	
10	关情脉脉	A sentiment of concern and concern. Tender and tender feelings run deep and long. Describes the deep, lingering feelings revealed in the eyes. Also written as 'Tender Affection'.	None	
11	关门落闩	A metaphor for having no room for maneuver. It also describes it to the extreme.	Cửa đóng then cài	Similar in meaning
12	生死攸关	It concerns life and death. Refers to the critical moment of life and death.	Một mất một còn	Words with similar meanings have different usages
13	蒙混过关	Evading the checkpoint through deception.	Múa rìu qua mắt thợ	The meanings are related, but the usage of the words differs
14	休戚相关	The joys and sorrows, fortunes and misfortunes between them are interconnected. Describes close relationships with aligned interests.	Đồng cam cộng khổ	Words with similar meanings have different usages
15	息息相关	Breathing is closely connected, symbolizing a very close relationship.	None	

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16	一语双关	One sentence contains two meanings	Nói lắp lửng; nói nước đôi	Similar in meaning
17	性命交关	Relevant to the relevant authorities. Describes a relationship that is significant and extremely important.	None	
18	咬紧牙关	Do your best to endure pain or overcome difficulties.	Cắn răng chịu đựng	Similar in meaning
19	漠不关心	The attitude was cold and indifferent, completely unconcerned.	Sống chết mặc bay	Meaning-related
20	百二关山	One hundred and twenty fight two against a hundred. Refers to countries with stable border defenses.	None	
21	过五关斩六将	A metaphor for overcoming numerous difficulties. This is the story depicting Guan Yu in the Romance of the Three Kingdoms.	None	
22	事不关己，高高挂起	Thinking things have nothing to do with them, they set them aside.	None	
23	至关重要	Refers to having particularly significant impact or consequences.	None	
24	人命关天	Guan Tian is a metaphor for a major relationship. Refers to matters of great importance and concern for human life.	None	
25	闭关自守	Close the checkpoint and avoid contact with outsiders. A metaphor for being conservative and unwilling to engage with external things.	None	
26	无关大体	Metaphors are not very related.	None	
27	无关紧要	Urgent and important. It doesn't matter, it won't affect the bigger picture.	râu ria; không quan trọng	The meanings are related, but the usage of words is completely different
28	贼走关门	After the thief stole and left, he said he closed the door. A metaphor for taking preventive measures only after an accident has occurred.	mất bò mới lo làm chuồng	Words with the same meaning, usage, and class imagery differ
29	卖关子	Originally, it referred to a storyteller suddenly stopping at a key moment in the story to attract the audience. Later, it became a metaphor for speaking or acting at a critical moment, pretending to be mysterious to make the other person anxious, so they agreed to one's request.	thừa nước đục thả câu	Words with the same meaning, usage, and class imagery differ
30	全神关注	Refers to single-minded attention.	None	

This study also examines several Chinese idiomatic expressions containing the character “关” (guān), such as “秦关百二”, “施关发机”, “关西出将, 关东出相”, “见钱关子”, “裙带关系”, and “阳关三迭”. However, most of these expressions originate from ancient Chinese historical allusions and cultural contexts. Due to historical changes, social development, and the decline of certain cultural and linguistic connections, these expressions no longer have direct equivalents in Vietnamese idiomatic expressions.

In addition, this study analyzes several Chinese idiomatic expressions and xiehouyu (歇后语) containing “关” (guān), such as “关门过日子——自家知底细” (Closing the door to live a life — only one’s own family knows the details), “贼走关门——晚了一步” (Closing the door after the thief has left — a step too late), and others. These xiehouyu reflect unique characteristics of Chinese folk language and cultural expression, and similar forms are rarely found in Vietnamese.

Furthermore, this study examines Vietnamese idiomatic expressions related to the semantic meanings of “关” (guān), including expressions involving words such as “đóng” (close), “tắt” (turn off), and “cửa” (door). The analysis shows that Vietnamese expressions preserve distinctive cultural values, poetic imagery, and features of Vietnamese folk language. Since direct Vietnamese equivalents of Chinese idiomatic expressions containing “关” (guān) are limited, this study mainly compares expressions based on their semantic correspondence rather than direct lexical equivalence.

Table 9: Vietnamese Idiomatic Expressions Semantically
 Corresponding to Chinese Expressions Containing “关” (guān)

Ordinal number	Vietnamese proverbs	Meaning	Translated into Chinese
1	Nhiều sãi không ai đóng cửa chùa	There are many people without a clear assignment organization, the work does not run, the work is spent by two or three people, and the work is not looked at	人多瞎捣乱, 鸡多不下蛋 Meaning: More people actually lead to lower efficiency
2	Đóng cửa đi ăn mày	Stingy and dull, I also have mine, but I hide it to ask for someone else's piercing	铁公鸡、一毛不拔 Meaning: A metaphor for someone who is extremely stingy and stingy
3	Yêu nhau đóng cửa bảo nhau	Everything in the family and internally should be solved together, don't let others know.	家丑不可外扬 Meaning: Problems within the family need to be resolved by oneself or internally; telling others about them can lead to being manipulated or ridiculed.
4	Tắt đèn nhà ngói cũng như nhà tranh	In the dark, it is impossible to distinguish between good and evil	None
5	Tắt lửa tối đèn	In times of difficulty, tribulation	三长两短

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			Meaning: Refers to unexpected disasters, accidents, and specifically the death of a person
6	Bưng tai bịt mắt	Living in isolation, indifferent to the world around you	闭目塞聪 Meaning: Han Dynasty, Wang Qi, Lunheng · Self-Record: "Close your eyes and block your hearing, cherish essence to protect yourself" describes a complete lack of understanding of external things
7	Quan san nghìn dặm	Far Away	万里关山 Meaning: Refers to distant and steep border mountains and rivers. In a broad sense, it refers to the country's borders; in a narrow sense, it refers to specific passes and mountain passes—these are common images in ancient poetry and prose.
8	Ném tiền qua cửa sổ	Spending extravagantly and extravagantly	穷奢极侈 Meaning: Extreme luxury, to enjoy as much as possible, also called extreme luxury and desire
9	Nhà cao cửa rộng	Wind and wealth	深宅大院、高门大户
10	Nhà tan cửa nát	Family discord, husband and wife are divided	家破人亡 Meaning: Family decline and decline, family members passing away and scattering. Describes a family suffering calamity or sudden calamity
11	Cửa Khổng, sân Trình	(hoặc 'Sân Trình, cửa Khổng') - Schools (Confucianism), where morality and education are taught. - Implications: schools, families, places with high academic and academic content	庠序之地 Significance: The place of school was not only an ancient educational institution but also a symbol of ethical and moral education, with a long history and far-reaching influence.
12	Đánh trống qua cửa nhà sấm	múa rìu qua mắt thợ	班门弄斧 Meaning: Showing off skills in front of experts, implying a lack of self-esteem
13	Đón người cửa trước, rước người cửa sau	the briber, the flatterer	None
14	Tiền ở trong nhà tiền chữa, tiền ra ngoài cửa tiền đẻ	The currency in circulation will be lucrative	None

15	Khôn ngoan đến cửa quan mới biết	Under certain circumstances, the essence of the problem or the person's personality is revealed	None
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3. Reasons for Similarities and Differences between Modern Chinese “关” (guān) and Its Vietnamese Equivalents

3.1. Reasons for Similarities

China and Vietnam have maintained long-term historical and cultural interactions, which have created close relationships between the two languages. As both languages have developed within the East Asian cultural context, they share certain similarities in vocabulary, semantic concepts, and cultural expressions.

From the perspective of language and culture, vocabulary reflects human cognition and cultural experience. The Chinese word “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents demonstrate the influence of historical contact between the two countries. Many similarities in their semantic meanings and usage patterns result from the long-term influence of Chinese on Vietnamese vocabulary, especially through Sino-Vietnamese words.

Therefore, the similarities between Chinese “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents can be explained by shared historical background, cultural interaction, and the process of lexical borrowing and adaptation between the two languages.

3.2. Reasons for Differences

3.2.1. Cultural Differences

Although Chinese and Vietnamese share many cultural similarities, each language has developed within its own social and cultural environment. Different lifestyles, historical experiences, and cultural traditions influence the way speakers conceptualize and express meanings.

As a result, the semantic extensions and usage patterns of “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents have undergone different developments. Vietnamese equivalents of “关” (guān), such as “đóng”, “tắt”, “khép”, “nhốt”, “cửa”, and “ải”, do not always correspond directly to the Chinese word in meaning and grammatical function. This reflects the influence of Vietnamese linguistic structure and cultural cognition.

3.2.2. Differences in Semantic Associations

The same object or concept may generate different associations in different linguistic communities. These differences are influenced by geographical environment, social experience, and cultural background.

For example, the Chinese expression “贼走关门” (closing the door after the thief has left) emphasizes taking action only after a problem has occurred. In Vietnamese, the

equivalent expression “mất bò mới lo làm chuồng” uses an image related to agricultural life. Although the images differ, both expressions convey a similar meaning. This shows that different cultures may choose different conceptual images to express the same idea.

3.2.3. Linguistic Differences

Although Vietnamese has been historically influenced by Chinese, it has developed its own independent linguistic system. During the process of language development, Chinese-derived vocabulary in Vietnamese has undergone adaptation in pronunciation, meaning, and grammatical usage.

The Chinese pronunciation of “关” (guān) corresponds to the Sino-Vietnamese reading “quan”; however, in modern Vietnamese, different expressions such as “đóng”, “tắt”, “khép”, “nhốt”, “cửa”, and “ài” are used depending on context. This demonstrates that Vietnamese has reorganized and expanded the semantic network of Chinese-derived vocabulary according to its own linguistic rules.

In addition, differences in language structure and expression habits between Chinese and Vietnamese also contribute to differences in semantic extension, grammatical patterns, and idiomatic expressions.

4. Conclusion

This study has analyzed the semantic features, grammatical structures, and idiomatic expressions of modern Chinese “关” (guān) and its Vietnamese equivalents. The findings show that similarities mainly result from historical and cultural contact, while differences are influenced by linguistic structures, cultural cognition, and different patterns of semantic development. The research contributes to Chinese-Vietnamese contrastive linguistics and provides references for Chinese vocabulary teaching among Vietnamese learners.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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