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AN INVESTIGATION INTO
THE SEMANTICS OF SYNONYMS USED IN SPORTS
COMMENTARIES ON FOOTBALL
(ENGLISH VERSUS VIETNAMESE)

Field Study: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English has a variety of expressive methods, making it possible to express the same meaning by different words. Therefore, the colorful world can be described, the complicated, delicate human thoughts and emotions can be expressed through synonyms. However, they bring English users many difficulties in mastering the expressions.

One common problem is the way in which people choose the correct word from sets of synonyms because of the insufficient knowledge of the distinction of synonyms. Synonym means a word or phrase with the same or nearly the same meaning as another word or phrase in the same language. Some English meanings have a variety of expressions. For example, statistically, there are 18 different words which can be used to express the same meaning of “beautiful”; 21 words for “begin”; 28 words for “pure”; and 42 for “friendly [3, p.96]. In Vietnamese, the “sợ” has many synonyms such as “kinh”, “hãi”, “kiêng dè”, “e ngại”, “kinh hãi”, “kinh khủng”, “kinh hoàng”, “kinh sợ”, “hoảng hốt”, “hoảng sợ”, etc. [25]. The synonyms are large in amount; therefore, a correct choice of them is important just as Brown said, “The craftsman is proud and careful of his tools; the surgeon does not operate with an old razor-blade; the sportsman fusses happily and long over the choice of rod, gun, club or racquet. But the man who is working in words, unless he is a professional writer (and not always then), is singularly neglectful of his instruments.”[27]

In sports commentaries where synonyms are used to convey certain implications, differences in meaning or use among pairs of synonyms are claimed to be context-dependent. The context is the only criterion for selecting appropriate words. There are many occasions when one word is appropriate in a sentence, but its synonyms will be odd. Choosing a wrong word can be imprecise or awkward, let alone convey an unwanted implication. The correct choice must depend on clear

discrimination of synonyms. Furthermore, synonyms embody some semantic features formed by the way or the purpose they have been used for, which have interested many researchers of English language to explore. However, the semantic features of synonyms used in English and Vietnamese sports commentaries have not been studied extensively. For these reasons, we would like to choose the topic “An investigation into the semantics of synonyms used in sports commentaries on football, English versus Vietnamese” for our thesis with the hope of helping English learners in acquiring a better knowledge of English synonyms so that they can tell the subtle distinctions between synonymous words and choose the right one to use them in a given context.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 Aims of the Study

This study aims at investigating the semantics of synonyms that help English learners cultivate the ability to distinguish synonyms and use them properly in specific contexts. The purposes of the study are

- To help Vietnamese learners of English to be alert to the existence of English and Vietnamese synonyms in the lexicon of each language.
- To stimulate Vietnamese learners of English to obtain the insight of the semantic nature of synonyms, in general, and synonyms used in sports commentaries, in particular.
- To help them to be aware of the differences in each group of synonyms.
- To inspire the learners to love their own language, their own culture through the study of the specific group of synonyms.

1.2.2 Objectives of the Study

The thesis is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To observe and describe the synonyms used in sports commentaries in English and Vietnamese in terms of semantic features on football.
- To point out the similarities and differences of synonyms used in sports commentaries in terms of semantic features in English and Vietnamese on football.

- To suggest effective solutions for the comprehending and evaluation of synonyms used in sports commentaries in English and Vietnamese on football.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is confined to the semantic features of synonyms in English and Vietnamese which focus mainly on those used in sports commentaries on football through the analysis of the data collected from newspapers, magazines and other mass media in both English and Vietnamese.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis is schemed to answer the questions, as follows:

1. What are the semantic features of English and Vietnamese synonyms of sports commentaries on football?
2. What are the similarities and differences in each group of English and Vietnamese synonyms used in sports commentaries on football in term of semantics and distribution?

1.5 SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

In this study, the researcher explores a number of English and Vietnamese synonyms from newspapers and magazines and then analyzes them in term of semantic features to find out the similarities and differences between the words in each group of synonyms through highlighting their effective meanings and clarifying their functions. It is hoped that this study will provide an illustration to learners of English that different aspects of contextual study require careful consideration.

This study is hoped to pave the way for those interested in synonymous words and sense relations. It can also provide a better understanding of how to use synonyms effectively in making sports commentaries more interesting and distinctive, attracting more and more readers, audiences and viewers.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical background
- Chapter 3: Method and procedure
- Chapter 4: Findings and discussions

Chapter 5: Conclusion, implications, limitation

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The linguistic phenomenon of synonymy has been a subject of study by British, American and Australian linguists since the 19th century: Bloomfield [2], Ullmann [13], Lyons [9], Wells [15], Palmer [12], Newmark [11], Hurford and Heasley [6], Cruse [4], Jackson [7], Hatch and Brown [5] and Yule [17], etc. They fall into two opposing stands regarding synonymy: those who defend the existence of synonymy together and those who defend the non-existence of synonymy.

The first groups of linguists advocate that any two words which share at least one sense are synonymous and justify its existence with the richness of the bases in the language, the different dialects and historical developments. The other groups claim that any two words which have at least one semantic component in common are best described as attributes rather than synonyms.

In Vietnam, synonyms were collected and explained from the 1950s by Long Dien and Nguyen Van Minh (1951), Do Huu Chau (1962), Nguyen Van Tu (1968), Nguyen Thien Giap (1985), Mai Ngoc Chu; Vu Duc Nghieu & Hoang Trong Phien (1997) etc. Nguyen Van Tu was the first to pay significant contribution to the study of Vietnamese synonyms. Since then a great number of collections of Vietnamese synonyms have been brought out. Such scholars advocate synonymy in Vietnamese because they believe that synonymy would help a person to express a given concept using a variety of words sharing more or less the same meaning. [26]

2.2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1 Synonyms

The definition of the term “synonyms” is the most complicated problem. There are so many controversial definitions of the term. In its strict sense, a synonym is a word with a meaning identical or very similar to that of another word. In fact, it is often said that there is no such thing

as an absolute synonym for any word, that is, a form that is identical in every aspect of meaning so that the two can be applied interchangeably. According to this extreme view, the only true synonyms are terms having precisely the same denotation, connotation, and range of applicability and they are used in identical contexts.

Actually, synonymy is the semantic relationship that exists between two (or more) words that have the same (or nearly the same) meaning and belong to the same part of speech, but are spelled differently. In other words, we can say that synonymy is the semantic equivalence between lexical items. The (pairs of) words that have this kind of semantic relationship are called synonyms, or are said to be synonymous.

2.2.2 Collocation

A collocation is often defined as either “an arbitrary and recurrent word combination” or “the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other”. Newmark [11] who defines collocations as two or more words that go happily or naturally with each other, for example, pay a visit. He describes collocations as ‘the way words occur together in predictable combinations.

By Cruse [4, p.40], collocations are “sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur, but which are nonetheless fully transparent in the sense that each lexical constituent is also semantic constituent.”

According to Leech [8, p.17], collocational meaning “consists of associations a word acquires on account of the meanings of words which tend to occur in its environment.”

English language has many fixed collocation or set phrases and in these collocations, especially common usages and idioms, the synonyms are not changeable. Limited by the collocations, the synonyms have different usages in different contexts. Therefore, we should pay attention to the different collocations of synonyms when we use them.

2.2.3 Sense Relations of Synonyms

2.2.3.1 Paradigmatic Relations

According to Cruse [4, p.55-87] and Palmer [12, p.67], they are those into which a linguistic unit enters through being contrasted or

substitutable, in a particular environment, with other similar units, e.g. *the student* and *the boy* in:

- a. *The boy* came from school.
- b. *The student* came from school.

The student and *the boy* are in the subject position. They can be substitutable since they belong to the same syntactic category or slot. Therefore, a paradigmatic relation which is of vital importance is synonymy.

2.2.3.2 Syntagmatic Relations

Syntagmatic relations have to do with collocability. Certain lexical items have a mutual expectancy of occurrence with each other [4, p.100-110]. The examples below can be used for more illustration:

- a. *Deep* love,
- b. *Profound* love,
- c. *Deep* lake, and
- d. **Profound* lake.

Deep and *profound* can be used with love, but only *deep* is used with *lake*. Since the present study deals with word-strings involving synonyms or collocated synonyms, then the study has to do also with syntagmatic relations.

The distinction between paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations is important for the understanding of the term “collocation”. Palmer demonstrates the distinction on the phrases *red door* and *green door*: the adjectives *red* and *green* are in paradigmatic relations with each other; and both *red* and *green* are in syntagmatic relations with the noun *door*. It is the syntagmatic relations that are known as collocations

2.2.4 Componential Analysis

Componential analysis is a common term in linguistics. It is a way of formalizing, or making absolutely precise, the sense relations that hold between words or lexemes. According to William [16], the most general explanation of this term is that “Componential analysis is the study of meaning by analyzing different parts of words”.

In componential analysis, or lexical decomposition, the meaning of a word is decomposed into semantic primitives. The three main aspects of the theory are that (1) a word's meaning can be decomposed into a set (or structure) of more general components, or semantic features, (2) the components are primitive (i.e., indecomposable) and universal, and (3) though not always stated, the set of components is exhaustive, that is, the components are individually necessary and collectively sufficient to define the word. For example, *bachelor* can be decomposed into the set of (adult, male, not married), and *kill* into the structure (cause (X), die (Y)).

Generally, the linguists proceed from the assumption that the smallest units of meaning are sememes or semes; for instance, in the lexical item "woman", several sememes may be singled out, such as: human, female and mature. The analysis of the word "girl" will show the following sememes: human, female and immature. The last component of the two words differentiates them and makes impossible to mix up the words in the process of communication.

In sum, componential analysis is an effective method in analyzing the meaning of words. Dealing with this componential method will be of practical value to learners of English for distinguishing between synonyms and allow them to come to better choices of words in order to make the speech sensible in the communication process.

2.2.5 Types of Meaning

2.2.5.1 Referential

Referential is the ability to refer to objects or things (often called referent). It is the relationship that holds between a word or expression and the objects it refers to. When someone says: "I saw a car in the corner". The phrase "a car" or "my car" or "his car" will refer to a particular member of the class on a particular occasion. Therefore, reference is variable and utterance-dependent.

2.2.5.2 Denotation

Denotation is widely assumed to be the central factor in linguistic communication. It has a complex and sophisticated organization. E.g. A *table* may be defined as a piece of furniture used for writing at... It is the

ability of a word to identify all those things or objects that are correctly covered by it. For example, the word "hat" is used to help the speaker of a language to see and recognize all the things that may be called hat. Thus, the denotation of a word or expression is the invariant and utterance-independent.

2.2.5.3 Connotation

Connotation is the communicative value an expression has by virtue of what it refers to, over and above its purely conceptual content. This kind of meaning is rather unstable: that is they vary considerably according to culture, historical period, and the experience of the individual. For example, the connotation of the word "rose" is a symbol of passion and love - this is what the rose represents. The connotation of the word "heart" is a symbol of love and affection, not in the way of a rose, but a symbol of true love.

Synonyms are actually words of the same parts of speech which have similar meaning, but not identical meanings. They may share a similar denotational or connotational meaning. They can differ from each another in terms of denotation or connotation. For instance, *father* and *dad* differ in terms of connotation rather than denotation; on the other hand, *misfortune* and *accident*, *catastrophe* will be different in denotation.

2.3 SUMMARY

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Descriptive method:** will be used to describe the semantic features of synonyms used in English and Vietnamese sports commentaries on football thanks to the help of a powerful source of dictionaries and lexicons.

- **Analytical method:** Synonyms have been studied both on statistic and dynamic plan to find out the connotative differences, implications and nuances of meanings between some synonyms used in sports commentaries both in English and Vietnamese.

- **Contrastive method:** will be used to find out the likenesses and differences in the ways English and Vietnamese people use synonyms in

sports commentaries to make them more interesting and distinctive and to attract more readers, audiences and viewers.

All the interpretations, comments, and conclusions in the thesis were based on statistics description, and analysis of the data corpus.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

3.2.1 Sampling

The data for analysis were instances of synonyms found mainly sports commentaries on football in English and Vietnamese taken from newspapers, magazines and other mass media with consultation of some English and Vietnamese dictionaries. The samples were selected randomly in the sport commentaries available in newspapers, magazines.

3.3.2 Instrument

To collect the data from the internet I employed the Google Search Engine to seek the instances of synonyms from the electronic texts of sport commentaries. After the collection of the texts from the sport commentaries online, I made use of Concordance Version 2.0 to sort out instances of synonyms from the initial list of synonyms set up from the first phase. This computer software also helped the counting of instances of synonyms to get the statistical number of synonyms.

3.2.3 Description of Data

Samples for the research are sentences consisting of English and Vietnamese synonyms taken from football commentaries from newspapers on the internet such as: Football on BBC, Soccer News on Yahoo News, Football on baomoi.com, Football on thethao.zing... There are more than 400 samples used in this research and listed in the following table.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The data were mainly analyzed qualitatively, i.e. the analysis aimed to seek the qualitative information about the characteristics of synonyms used in English and Vietnamese sport commentaries. This looked into the semantic categories that the synonyms might fall into, concerning their semantic fields. The study made use of the componential analysis to find out the semantic features of each synonym. Then based on the semantic properties that the synonyms share in common, they were

categorized into the synonymous groups or semantic fields. Based on the overlap of the core or basic semantic features, synonyms were put into sets or groups which differentiate each other in terms of distinctive features or connotation.

For example, in the process of analyzing the data, these expressions were said to be synonyms that belong to the same semantic field for the fact that they shared the same denotation or basic, core meaning but differentiate each other in terms of semantic shades or evaluative meaning. The table 3.2 below will show these more clearly.

Table 3.2 Samples of Some Supposed Synonyms

Supposed Synonyms	Connotation or distinctive sense	Denotation or core sense
Victory	a triumph or a glorious proof of one's powers	the result achieved by one who gains the mastery in a contest
Triumph	suggest the acclaim and personal satisfaction accruing to the winner	
Win	warlike struggle by getting the upper hand	

3.4 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 THE SEMANTIC FIELDS OF SYNONYMS USED IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE SPORTS COMMENTARIES ON FOOTBALL

4.1.1 Synonyms Signifying the Concept of GREAT SUCCESS IN GAMES

This semantic field includes eighteen synonyms. These synonyms are *victory, win, triumph, defeat, drub, beat, conquer, crush, crash, knock out, thrash, rout, hammer, thump, strike, pound, overturn, oust, trounce and topple*. All items mean to gain a great success in a game, a competition or in a contest.

4.1.1.1 *Victory, Triumph, Win*

This semantic field includes three synonyms: *victory, triumph and win*. All items basically mean the result achieved by one who gains the

mastery in a contest.

Victory (chiến thắng, thắng lợi), the more literary term, usually stress the fact of defeating one's opponents; additionally *victory* can connote a triumph or a glorious proof of one's powers. The terms are applicable when the test is one of strength, strategy, skill, or endurance. In their common extended use, victory is likely to suggest a gaining of superiority or success, often in intellectual or spiritual fields.

Triumph (chiến thắng, thắng lợi) may apply either to a brilliant or decisive victory and suggest the acclaim and personal satisfaction accruing to the winner. In its extended use, *triumph* tends to stress decisiveness and brilliance of the result or to express the pleasure of the successful person.

Win (chiến thắng, trận thắng), the regular term, usually presupposes a warlike struggle or an attempt to crush by getting the upper hand. It also denotes the victory in a game or competition.

The differences and similarities between these three words are shown by the semantic features at the top of the table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 Semantic Features of Victory, Triumph, Win

Set	the great success in a game or a contest	the process of defeating an opponent in a contest	the state of getting the upper hand	the gaining of superiority in intellectual or spiritual fields	the acclaim and personal satisfaction
victory	+	+	-	+	-
triumph	+	-	-	-	+
win	+	+	+	-	-

The Vietnamese semantic equivalents to the nouns *victory*, *triumph*, *win* are *chiến thắng*, *thắng lợi*, *trận thắng* and often used in Vietnamese football commentaries. *These meanings are not influenced by the context. However, there is a Vietnamese noun referring to great victory, triumph, or win such as trận đê bẹp. This noun stresses a*

remarkable victory, triumph or win. For example,

(1) Dĩ nhiên, ông Riedl rất không muốn lập kỷ lục lạ đời này, nhất là khi đội tuyển Indonesia đã mở màn giải đấu AFF Suzuki Cup 2010 tung bùng, trong đó có trận đê bẹp Malaysia 5-1 ở vòng bảng.

[53, 1]

In the above examples, the three lexical items *triumph*, *victory* and *win* are almost synonymous. Each of them, in these contexts, conveys the meaning of the great success in a game as well as the winning in a competition. Although they have the same core meaning, they may differ in their collocation. According to Cruse [4, p.267], a collocation of synonymy is sometimes employed as an explanation, or clarification, of the meaning of another word. Therefore, the collocation restrictions of the three synonyms presented in the tables below reveal the slight differences in their connotations.

Table 4.2a Verbal Collocations of Victory, Triumph, Win

Verb collocation	Victory	Triumph	Win	Vietnamese translational equivalents
To win a	+	+	-	giành được chiến thắng/thắng lợi
To give sb's	+	+	+	đem lại chiến thắng/thắng lợi cho ai
To be hailed as a	+	+	-	hoan hô mừng chiến thắng/ thắng lợi
To gain/ to earn a	+	-	+	giành được/đạt được chiến thắng/
To score a	+	+	+	đạt được chiến thắng/thắng lợi
To deserve/ celebrate	+	+	+	ca ngợi/ tán dương chiến thắng/ thắng lợi/
To lead sb to	+	-	+	dẫn dắt ai đến chiến thắng/ thắng lợi
To sweep to/to cruise to	+	-	+	cuốn theo/ chạy theo chiến thắng/ thắng lợi
To claim	+	-	+	xác nhận chiến thắng/ thắng lợi
To constitute/ represent sth as	-	+	-	chỉ định/ cho cái gì là chiến thắng

From table 4.4a, only the four synonymous verbs *defeat, beat, overcome, vanquish* can combine with almost the nouns as objects whereas the verb *conquer, thrash, thump* cannot go with *a rival/an enemy/a foe* and *trounce* cannot collocate with *an enemy/a foe*. However, Vietnamese translational equivalents of this synonymous group can combine with almost these nouns. For example, we can say *chinh phục địch thủ/đổi thủ/kình địch/kẻ thù, thắng đậm địch thủ/đổi thủ/kình địch/kẻ thù* or *đánh bại hoàn toàn địch thủ/đổi thủ/kình địch/kẻ thù*.

4.1.1.3 Crush, Knock out, Pound, Hammer, Drub, Pummel, and Thump

These synonyms basically mean to bring to an end by destroying or defeating in a game or in a contest. The Vietnamese equivalents of these English synonymous words are *đề bẹp, tiêu diệt, hạ gục, đập tan, nghiền nát, nện cho một trận, giáng một trận toi bời, đánh không còn manh giáp*. And they are often used in sports commentaries on football to refer the fact of completely defeating the opponent in a game or in a contest. Although they are the same in meaning, each of them has its own collocation. We can only say *crush the opposition* and *crush/knock out/pound an opponent* in English whereas all items in the Vietnamese translational equivalents can collocate with most Objects mentioned in table 4.6 such as: *đề bẹp/nghiền nát/hạ gục/đánh bại đối phương/địch thủ, nện/giáng cho đối phương/địch thủ một trận, đánh cho đối phương/địch thủ không còn manh giáp*.

4.1.1.4 Overturn, Overthrow, Oust, Topple

These words all basically mean to make somebody lose their position of power. These English synonymous items are understood and translated into Vietnamese as *lật đổ, lật ngược, hất cẳng, trục xuất, hạ bệ*. These verbs are especially used in football commentaries to stress the fact of completely and easily defeating in order to reduce someone into a lower level. Although the synonymous words in this group have the same core meaning, they vary in their collocations. Like this English synonymous group, Vietnamese translational equivalents have the same collocation. We

cannot say: *đập đổ/ hất cẳng/trục xuất/lật đổ tiền lệ* or *hất cẳng/trục xuất ngai vàng* or *đập đổ/phá bỏ người đứng đầu/người có quyền lực...*

4.1.2 Synonyms Representing the Concept ARRIVING AT SOME GOAL

There are some Vietnamese synonyms that have similar meanings such as “*vươn tới, đạt tới, đoạt được, giành/giành được, có được*” and are often used in Vietnamese football commentaries. From table 4.10, we can easily see that only the verb *gain* can combine with *advantage*, the verb *achieve* can go with “*a great success*”. However, most Vietnamese verbs in this group can collocate with these nouns such as: *đạt được/đoạt được/ giành được/chiếm được/có được lợi thế/ thành công mỹ mãn/ danh hiệu vô địch/chiến thắng/thắng lợi...* except the verb *vươn tới*.

4.1.3 Synonyms Representing the Concept SPORTS EVENTS where people or teams compete against each other

In Vietnamese football commentaries, we can see some Vietnamese equivalents such as *trận đấu, trận đấu lại, cuộc thi đấu, trận playoff, cuộc thi đấu, trận đấu quan trọng*. In table 4.11, only the nouns *Tournament, Contest* and *Competition* cannot collocate with the verb *play* whereas all the items in this group can combine with almost verbs in table 4.12a. This is the same in Vietnamese, we cannot say: *chơi một cuộc thi đấu* but we can say *thắng/thua/tham gia vào/tổ chức “một trận đấu/trận đấu lại/ cuộc thi đấu/trận playoff/trận đấu quan trọng”*.

4.1.4 Synonyms Refer to SOMETHING THAT YOU ARE GIVEN FOR WINNING

The synonymous group “*Award, Prize, Reward, Title, Trophy, Honour, and Cup*” is understood and translated into Vietnamese as “*giải thưởng, tặng thưởng, phần thưởng, tiền thưởng, danh hiệu vô địch, vinh dự, huân chương, cúp*” and they also appear in Vietnamese football commentaries. In table 4.14, only the nouns *Tournament, Contest* and *Competition* cannot collocate with the verb *play* whereas all the items in this group can combine with almost verbs in table 4.12a. These are the same in Vietnamese, we cannot say: *chơi một cuộc thi đấu* but we can say

thắng/thua/tham gia vào/tổ chức “một trận đấu/trận đấu lại/ cuộc thi đấu/trận playoff/trận đấu quan trọng”.

4.1.5 Synonyms Signifying to HARM OR PUNISH SOMEBODY IN RETURN FOR SOMETHING THAT THEY HAVE DONE TO YOU

The Vietnamese semantic equivalents to the verbs *Get/Take revenge, Fight back, Retaliate, Get back at sb, Avenge, Hit back, Get even, Strike back, and Settle a score* are *Báo thù, Trả thù, Trả đũa, Phản công, Đánh trả, Ăn miếng trả miếng* and they often used in Vietnamese football commentaries. Although they are synonyms, each item in the group has its own collocations. From table 4.16, we can see that *retaliate, get back at, get revenge and avenge* can go with the prepositions “for”, *fight back, retaliate, strike back, settle a score* can collocate with “against”, *fight back, hit back, strike back* can combine with “at”... However, we can use almost Vietnamese translational equivalents of this group in all contexts. For example, we can say: *báo thù, trả thù, trả đũa, phản công, đánh trả, ăn miếng trả miếng ai/ bằng cách làm gì*.

4.1.6 Synonyms Within the Semantic Field of ENEMY

These all words denote an individual or a body of individual, that is hostile or that manifests hostility to another. The items refer to one who opposes or competes with somebody or something. There are also some Vietnamese equivalents that have the same meanings such as *kẻ thù, địch thủ, đối thủ, kinh địch*. Although they are synonyms, each of them has its own collocation. Among six items in the synonymous group, only *foe* cannot be followed by *overcome*. *Adversary* and *rival* cannot collocate with *fight*. However, almost Vietnamese translational equivalents of this group can collocate with all the verbs mentioned above. They can be used interchangeably, for example: *đương đầu/đánh thắng, vượt qua/chống lại kẻ thù/địch thù/đối thủ/kinh địch*.

4.1.7 Synonyms Representing the NUMBER OF POINTS OR GOALS SCORED BY A PLAYER OR TEAM IN A COMPETITION

The Vietnamese equivalents of the English synonymous group are *tỷ số, điểm số, bàn thắng, kết quả*.

4.1.8 Synonyms Denoting the Concept of PUTTING THE BALL INTO THE NET TO GET POINTS

These verb phrases can be interpreted into Vietnamese as *Ghi bàn, Sút vào lưới, Đá vào lưới, Đánh đầu vào lưới, Lốp bóng vào lưới, Sút tung nóc lưới, Sút nổ tung lưới*.

4.2 ANALYSIS THE SEMANTIC FIELDS OF SOME SYNONYMOUS VERBS IN TERM OF CAUSATIVITY

There are some causative verbs in the synonymous groups mentioned in the chapter 4.2 above such as: *Defeat, Beat, Conquer, Vanquish, Rout, Trounce, Thrash, Crush, Knock out, Pound, Hammer, Drub, Pummel, Thump...*

In general, the examples of some causative verbs mentioned above all have the typical causative constructions that are identical in causative structure. However, as the causative verb is paid more interest, a fundamental distinction among English and Vietnamese causative constructions should be made here. The English causative verbs like *knock out, pound, trounce, thrash* in these examples encode the semantics of these verbs themselves. This semantics can be illustrated in the table 4.22 below.

Table 4.22 English Causative Construction with Causative Verb

	Causer (agent)	Causative (action)	Causee (patient)	Resulting	
				state	event
English	Brazil	<i>trounced</i>	Italy	5-1	∅
	Barcelona	<i>thrashed</i>	Madrid	5-0	∅
	Everton	<i>knocked out</i>	the holders Chelsea	from the FA Cup	∅
	Spain's Real Madrid	<i>pounds</i>	England's Tottenham	4-0	∅
	Subject	Verb (causative)	Object	Complement	Object

In contrast, Vietnamese causative verbs like *đánh cho thua toi bời, đánh cho bại hoàn toàn*) and *đập tan, nghiền nát* encode the two parts: causing verb and resulting verb. The resulting verb may be an action or a state depending on the meanings of the Vietnamese

translational equivalents. This semantics can be mapped on the tables below to yield the following models:

Table 4.3.2a Vietnamese Causative Construction with Causative Verb

Vietnamese	Causer (agent)	Causative (action)	Result (action/state)	Causee (patient)	Resulting state
	Everton	đã <i>đập</i>	<i>tan</i>	đội đang nắm giữ kỷ lục Chelsea	ra khỏi giải tranh Cúp FA
	Real Madrid	đã <i>nghiền</i>	<i>nát</i>	Tottenham của Anh	4-0
	Subject	Verb (causative + result)		Object	Complement

However, there are some Vietnamese causative verbs expressed with the analytic causative construction $X V_{CAUSATIVE} Y V_{RESULT}$. The table below will show the construction:

Table 4.3.2b Vietnamese Causative Construction with Causative Verb

Vietnamese	Causer (agent)	Causative (action)	Causee (patient)	Result (action/state)	Resulting state	
					state	event
	Brazil	đã <i>đánh</i> <i>cho</i>	Italy	<i>thua</i> <i>toi</i> <i>bờ</i>	với tỷ số 5-1	∅
	Barcelona	đã <i>đánh</i> <i>cho</i>	Madrid	<i>bại</i> <i>hoàn</i> <i>toàn</i>	với tỷ số 5-0	∅
Subject	Verb (causative)	Object	Verb (result)	Comple- ment	Object	

4.3 A REMARK ON SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE SYNONYMS USED IN SPORTS COMMENTARIES ON FOOTBALL

4.3.1 Similarities

Firstly, there are widespread sets of synonyms in the two languages that are used to make expressions easier and more interesting in sports commentaries.

Secondly, both English and Vietnamese synonymous groups have

the same core meaning but may differ in their connotation. Frequently, the synonymous constituents are used for emphasis. English and Vietnamese synonyms are abundant for its wide-ranging origin. However, each word in each group of synonyms has changed evidently towards different directions in the semantic distribution in the development of the languages and has different emphasis under its basic meaning. The figures in all tables in 4.2 show the rather great likeness between the two languages.

Thirdly, in some English and Vietnamese synonymous groups, each word carries different “weight” in meaning. It means some English and Vietnamese synonyms have the same denotative sense with differences in degree of intensity. For example, in the group “*Crush, Knock out, Pound, Hammer, Drub, Pummel, Thump*” the word “*crush*” connotes the action of defeating an opponent more violent than others. This is true in the Vietnamese synonymous group “*đè bẹp, hạ gục, nghiền nát, đánh bại hoàn toàn, thắng đậm, đánh bại không còn manh giáp, nện, giáng cho một trận toi bờ*”, the verb “*đè bẹp*” is also more violent in comparison with the verb “*thắng đậm*”.

Lastly, words in a group of both English and Vietnamese synonyms indicate their formality that is a stylistic colour though they refer to the same thing. Some synonymous word is suitable to be used on a common occasion, and some word is a little bit formal while the others are informal. For example, “*topple*” in the English group “*Overturn, Overthrow, Oust, Topple*” as well as “*hất cẳng, trục xuất*” in the Vietnamese group “*lật đổ, lật ngược, phá đổ, hất cẳng, trục xuất*” are rather informal than any others.

4.3.2 Differences

Semantically, there are also some differences between English and Vietnamese synonyms used in football commentaries as follows:

Firstly, in English, words in the some synonymous groups are single words that cover the clear meaning such as the group “*Enemy, Foe, Adversary, Opponent, Rival, Nemesis*” or the group “*Defeat, Beat, Conquer, Vanquish, Rout, Trounce, Thrash*”. In contrast, there is often more than one word in the Vietnamese translational equivalents, for example, “*kẻ thù, địch*”

thù, đối thù”, and “*đánh thắng, đánh bại, chinh phục, chế ngự, đánh toi bời, đánh cho tan tác, thắng đậm*” to make it more clearer.

Secondly, in terms of causativity, the meanings of English causative verbs are coded inside the verbs themselves, for example: “*crush, thump, thrash...*” whereas the Vietnamese causative translational equivalents “*đè bẹp, giáng một trận toi bời, đánh cho thua toi bời*” express the causing event and the resulting event as has been presented above. These two semantic ingredients are fused to make their meanings. The resulting verb may be an action or a state such as: *đè bẹp* (action + state), *đánh cho thua toi bời* (action + action)... Sometimes these two ingredients are encoded separately in Vietnamese as has been shown in the table 4.3.2b.

Thirdly, in most instances of English causative constructions, the lexical type $X V_{CAUSATIVE} Y$ was preferred in English sports commentaries on football. In contrast, the lexical type $X V_{CAUSATIVE} Y$ and the analytic type $X V_{CAUSATIVE} Y V_{RESULT}$ were shown in most translational equivalents of the English utterances with causative constructions as has been presented in 4.3.

Lastly, the distinction in meaning among set of synonymous words in Vietnamese is not as clear as those in English. Each English synonymous group consists of more than one item with different meanings and mostly they can be used in different context, whereas Vietnamese synonymous groups are sometimes interchangeably used. For example, the verb “*fight back*” is rather different from some verbs in the same group such as “*get/take revenge, retaliate, get back at sb, avenge, hit back, get even, strike back, and settle a score*”. However, most of the items in their Vietnamese translational equivalents such as “*trả thù, trả đũa, trả miếng, đánh trả*” can be used in most contexts and interchangeably, and they are often used to express the same meanings in sports commentary aspect.

As a result, Vietnamese learners of English may confuse when using these synonymous words. These seem to be the considerable differences that learners should focus on acquiring the language and the teachers of English should emphasize these differences in their teaching process.

4.4 SUMMARY

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

Firstly, some English words used in sports commentaries on football are divided into 8 synonymous groups basing on the differences in their meanings. Group 1 signifies the concept of *great success in games*; group 2 represents the concept of *arriving at some goals*; group 3 refers to *sports events*; group 4 mentions *something that you are given for winning*; group 5 denotes the fact of *harming or punishing somebody in return for something that they have done to you*; group 6 includes nouns within *the semantic field of enemy*; group 7 stresses *the number of points or goals scored by a player or a team in a competition*; group 8 indicates the concept of *putting the ball into the net to get points*. The items from the same group have both common and distinctive semantic features, so different words can be used in different contexts and sometimes they are interchangeable in some contexts.

Secondly, in semantic aspect, each English and Vietnamese synonymous group has the same core meaning but all the items in each group have slight differences in their connotations and they may differ in their collocations. Although most English and Vietnamese synonymous groups are usually similar in meaning, they cannot be replaced by each other, except for some cases in which Vietnamese translational equivalents of the same group can be interchangeably used in certain contexts.

Thirdly, the causative structure of some English causative verbs is made up of three main elements: causer – process – causee in which the process is realized by only one verb form: causing verb. This can be represented in the lexical structure only. However, in Vietnamese, the process of causative verbs encodes the two semantic parts: causing verb and resulting verb. Sometimes the two ingredients are encoded separately as in analytic structure. This Vietnamese semantic characteristic is quite different from the English one in which causative verbs can be expressed in lexical and analytic structures as has been shown in 4.3.

Lastly, the similarities and differences of synonyms used in sports commentaries on football between the two languages have also been drawn out in 4.1., 4.2. and 4.3.

5.2 IMPLICATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING THE SYNONYMS IN ENGLISH

The final aim of language teaching is to improve learners' communicative competence as well as linguistic competence. Learning a language is not only learning the grammatical rules, but also learning when and where it is appropriate to use and how to use.

When learning synonymous words, Vietnamese learners should be aware of the similarities and differences between the two languages in terms of semantic features and collocations. This is very important for promoting positive transfer, and minimizing negative transfer. It means that knowledge of semantic features and collocations may help learners acquire specific information more easily then effectively apply in language translation and remove the learners' incorrect belief that there are common features, their improper links between the information while encoding it, or their incorrect sights of some value in using information from one setting in another. Especially in translating sentences with the occurrence of causativity, some important factors should be taken into consideration. The knowledge of English and Vietnamese causative constructions such as lexical and analytic constructions as well as the difference in encoding causative verbs such as "causative verb" and "resulting verb" should be emphasized more. Teachers should instruct learners about what is implied and how the elements in the sentences are combined... so that they can understand the whole idea that the author wishes to express before translating.

Teaching vocabulary also means helping learners enlarge the number of words and their meanings in the target language which help them choose what to use with ease and interpret accurately in different contexts. Therefore, not only is it important to provide lexical meaning of a word, but also to provide their sense relations such as its synonyms and collocations. Teachers can help their students learn vocabulary more

efficiently by presenting words in collocations. The more the students already know the most frequent collocates of a certain word, the more they will be less likely to combine words freely and produce odd or erroneous word combinations. Being aware of its importance, the researcher has endeavoured to provide an investigation into semantic features of synonyms used in English and Vietnamese sports commentaries on football.

During learning and teaching processes, both teachers and learners should be aware of the similarities and differences, particularly the differences between the synonymous words in the two languages which will restrict the mother tongue interference at the maximum. This can help to avoid culture shocks or "stupid" mistakes in communication. That is what the thesis aims at.

Also, this thesis has been done with the hope of helping the translators or the sports commentators in deciding the best word choice when working with the synonymous words to avoid poor and monotonous style and to make the commentaries more and more interesting.

5.3 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Although the researcher has made great deal of efforts in the investigation into semantic features of English and Vietnamese synonyms used in sports commentaries on football, this research paper certainly cannot avoid shortcomings and there are some unsolved matters that should be considered for further studies.

5.4 RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of what the study has done, the following ideas need more consideration and investigation:

- The syntactic performance of English and Vietnamese synonyms used in football commentaries.
- The pragmatic performance of English and Vietnamese synonyms used in football commentaries.