

A Contrastive Cognitive Semantic Analysis of The Verb “Consider” In English and Vietnamese

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the polysemous nature of the English verb “consider” and its Vietnamese equivalents through the lens of Cognitive Linguistics, specifically drawing upon conceptual metaphor theory and the image schema framework. While English utilizes “consider” as a versatile “container” verb for various mental processes, Vietnamese requires a more granular lexical system that reflects specific cognitive and physical source domains. By analyzing authentic data from English – Vietnamese corpora and dictionaries, the research identifies several key metaphorical extensions: thinking is seeing (e.g., *xem xét*), evaluation is weighing (e.g., *cân nhắc*), and social orientation (e.g., *đoái hoài*). The findings reveal a significant cognitive divergence: whereas English emphasizes a “Rational-Linear” model of mental labor, Vietnamese prioritizes an “Embodied-Relational” model. In Vietnamese, the act of “considering” is consistently anchored in physical experience and social harmony, moving from the pragmatic balancing of resources (*liệu cơm gắp mắm*) to the validation of personal worth through visual recognition (*đoái hoài*). The study concludes that these linguistic differences are not mere lexical curiosities but are deeply rooted in distinct cultural worldviews. These insights have practical implications for contrastive semantics, translation studies, and second language acquisition (SLA), particularly for Vietnamese learners of English who struggle with the lack of one-to-one equivalence in mental state verbs.

KEYWORDS: consider, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, English-Vietnamese contrastive analysis, embodied cognition, polysemy.

1. INTRODUCTION

In everyday discourse, speakers often use verbs of thinking to show how we feel about or judge a situation. The English verb *consider* is a perfect example. While it is a very common word, it is not as simple as it seems. Sometimes *consider* means to think deeply about something, other times, it means to see someone in a certain way (like *considering someone a friend*). This flexibility shows that *consider* is not just one simple action, but a mix of different ways our minds work.

Cognitive linguistics offers a robust framework for addressing this complexity. Rather than treating polysemy as a list of arbitrary senses, cognitive semantics posits that the multiple meanings of a lexical item are structured around a prototype and motivated by general cognitive mechanisms such as metaphor, metonymy, and image schemas (Lakoff, 1987; Tyler & Evans, 2003). From this perspective, the various senses of *consider* can be understood as different conceptual construals of an abstract cognitive process involving attention and judgment. Investigating this organization contributes not only to our understanding of the verb itself but also to broader questions of how languages categorize mental labor. While *consider* has been explored within the context of English mental verbs, existing research often remains confined to monolingual descriptions or purely syntactic behaviors. There is a notable lacuna in cross-linguistic perspectives, particularly involving typologically distinct languages such as Vietnamese. This gap is significant because contrastive analysis can reveal which aspects of meaning are universal and which are language-specific.

Vietnamese presents a revealing point of comparison. Unlike English, Vietnamese does not rely on a single polysemous verb to cover the semantic range of *consider*. Instead, speakers select specific verbs depending on the conceptual emphasis: *xem xét* (examination), *cân nhắc* (deliberation/weighing), *coi là* (regarding as), or *xét thấy* (judicial judgment). These verbs are not merely translation equivalents, they foreground different facets of the evaluative act. This raises a pivotal question: how does the broad polysemous structure of *consider* map onto the more granular Vietnamese lexical system, and what does this reveal about underlying conceptualizations of evaluation.

Adopting a cognitive linguistic approach allows this study to address the above question in a principled way. Instead of treating Vietnamese equivalents as mere translations, the analysis focuses on how speakers of the two languages conceptualize similar



cognitive experiences using different linguistic resources. In particular, the study examines the extent to which the meanings of *consider* are motivated by conceptual metaphors such as “thinking is seeing” or “evaluation is weighing”, and how these metaphors are reflected or distributed across Vietnamese expressions. Such an approach moves beyond surface-level equivalence and highlights the conceptual motivations underlying lexical choices.

The present study aims to make three main contributions. First, it provides a detailed cognitive semantic analysis of the polysemy of the verb *consider* in English, identifying its core meaning and major extensions. Second, it offers a systematic comparison between English and Vietnamese by examining how the meanings associated with *consider* are expressed through different verbs and constructions in Vietnamese. Third, by mapping these meanings across languages, the study contributes to ongoing discussions in cognitive linguistics regarding the relationship between polysemy, conceptual metaphor, and cross-linguistic variation.

Methodologically, the study draws on authentic language data from English corpora and Vietnamese texts, combined with qualitative semantic analysis. Rather than aiming for exhaustive frequency counts, the analysis prioritizes representative examples that illustrate distinct conceptual patterns. This qualitative focus is appropriate given the study’s goal of uncovering conceptual motivations rather than statistical tendencies.

By focusing on *consider* as a case study, this paper seeks to demonstrate how a cognitive linguistic approach can shed light on the organization of verb meaning and its cross-linguistic realization. More broadly, the findings have implications for contrastive semantics, translation studies, and second language learning, where understanding the conceptual basis of meaning can help explain persistent difficulties in lexical choice. Ultimately, the study argues that the polysemy of *consider* is not merely a lexical curiosity but a window into how languages encode the fundamental human activity of mental evaluation. To better understand this phenomenon, two central questions must be addressed:

1. What are the metaphorical extensions of “consider” in English and its Vietnamese equivalents?
2. How do these extensions reveal cultural and cognitive differences between the two languages?

The purpose of this study is to explore the polysemous verb “consider” in English and its equivalent expressions in Vietnamese from a cognitive linguistic perspective. By doing so, it aims to elucidate how this verb is conceptualized and utilized in both languages, which is crucial for Vietnamese learners of English. Language learners can better grasp the deeper semantic and pragmatic meanings of “consider” and its Vietnamese by understanding the complex nuances and cognitive foundations behind them. The study will contribute to second language acquisition (SLA) research by identifying the conceptual challenges that learners encounter when dealing with mental state verbs, which often lack one-to-one equivalence across languages.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Background and Previous Studies

In the field of cognitive linguistics, scholars maintain that language is not merely a tool for communication but a profound reflection of human cognition. A central pillar of this view is Conceptual Metaphor Theory, introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), which argues that our understanding of abstract ideas is rooted in concrete, physical experiences. This perspective has shifted the focus of linguistic research from simple dictionary definitions to how specific verbs, such as *consider*, express complex mental actions through physical schemas. Traditionally, studies on “consider” were confined to its grammatical roles; however, cognitive research reveals deeper roots. In English, Sweetser (1990) linked mental understanding to physical vision through the “Mind-as-Body” metaphor, while Grady (1997) and Viberg (2001) explored how primary experiences, like weighing or seeing, evolve into verbs of cognition across various languages.

A similar pattern is observed in the Vietnamese language, where researchers like Tran Van Co (2007) and Nguyen Duc Ton (2008) have shown that abstract thoughts are conceptualized through daily physical activities. For instance, the verb *xem xét* originates from “looking closely” (*xem*), and *cân nhắc* mirrors the act of “weighing” (*cân*). Furthermore, Hoang Van Van (2006) emphasized that these metaphors are deeply embedded within the Vietnamese social and cultural system. Despite these insights, most existing research remains monolingual. As noted by Evans (2007) and Kövecses (2010), while certain metaphors might be universal, their cultural realizations vary significantly. There is a clear lack of contrastive analysis between English and Vietnamese to explain why both languages use “looking” and “weighing” schemas yet arrive at different linguistic outcomes. This study aims to bridge that gap by comparing how each culture “sees” and “weighs” ideas differently.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is constructed upon three interconnected levels: embodiment, metaphorical extension, and cultural filtering. At the primary level, the study adopts the theory of embodiment (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), identifying two core image schemas for the verb *consider*. The first is the Vision Schema, providing a structural basis for mental examination through the act of “looking”. The second is the Balance Schema (Johnson, 1987), where the experience of weighing objects on a scale is metaphorically mapped onto the process of evaluation. These schemas ensure that the analysis is grounded in the physical reality of how humans interact with their environment.

Building upon these foundations, the framework examines the process of metaphorical extension. Following Sweetser (1990), the analysis traces how sensory perception evolves into complex intellectual and social judgments. This approach allows the study to categorize the various senses of *consider* as a motivated network of meanings – ranging from logical scrutiny and pragmatic decision-making to social recognition – rather than a collection of arbitrary definitions. By identifying these extensions, we can map the semantic reach of the verb from its physical roots to its most abstract applications in social interaction.

Finally, the framework incorporates the role of Cultural Models (Kövecses, 2015) to explain the divergence between English and Vietnamese. While the basic metaphors of “seeing” and “weighing” may be universal, the specific lexical choices are filtered through unique cultural values. English favors a highly flexible, polysemous model that prioritizes lexical economy, allowing “consider” to cover a broad range of contexts. In contrast, the Vietnamese system is more granular. As suggested by Hoang Van Van (2006), Vietnamese requires speakers to specify the exact nature of the mental effort and the social relationship involved. By combining these three levels, the framework provides a comprehensive lens to analyze how “considering” is uniquely conceptualized and expressed in both linguistic systems.

The systematic interaction between these levels of embodiment, metaphorical mapping, and cultural filtering is synthesized and visually represented in the conceptual framework illustrated below.

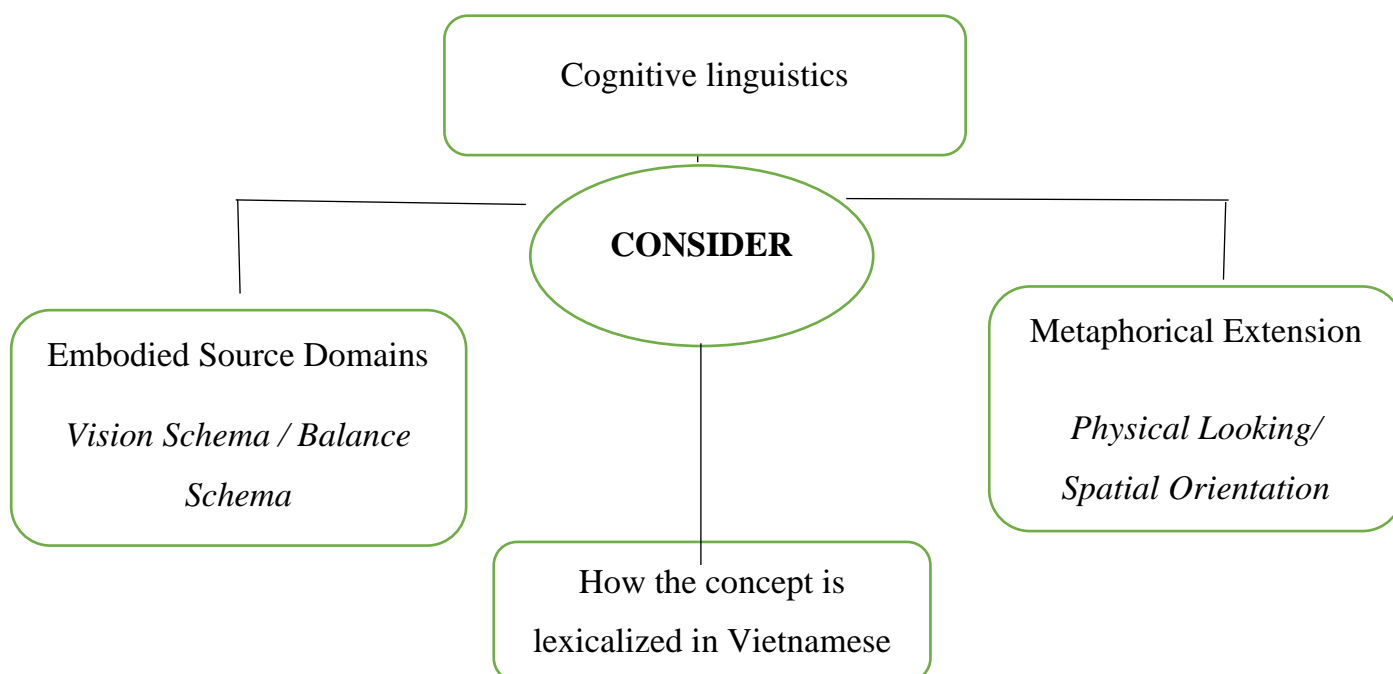


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework for the Contrastive Analysis of “Consider”

This diagram shows how our study connects physical actions to language. Even though English and Vietnamese speakers share the same basic experiences – like using their eyes to see or a scale to weigh things – their languages express these ideas differently. The “Cultural Filter” in the middle explains why English often uses one flexible word like *consider*, while Vietnamese chooses more

specific words depending on the situation. By using this framework, we can see that the differences between the two languages are not just about vocabulary, but about how each culture views the act of thinking.

3. METHODS

This study is conducted using two fundamental approaches: the descriptive method and the comparative method. I first use the descriptive method to clarify the semantic nuances, grammatical structures, and real-world usage of the verb *consider* and its Vietnamese counterparts. This provides a solid foundation before we move to the comparative method. The comparative framework then allows for a cross-linguistic analysis, helping to see exactly where English and Vietnamese speakers overlap or differ in how they “visualize” and “process” the act of thinking. By combining these two, the research offers a more holistic view of the cognitive patterns hidden within both languages. To ensure the findings are both accurate and reliable, the research adopts a corpus-based methodology. This means we are not just looking at definitions in a vacuum but are using authentic linguistic data from several authoritative sources. For the English side, the study draws upon the Cambridge Dictionary and the Collins Database, both of which are highly regarded for their precise definitions and rich sample sentences. I also use the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English to help identify complex structures and common phrasing patterns.

On the Vietnamese side, the Hoàng Phê Dictionary serves as our primary authority, as it offers deep explanations of cultural nuances for verbs like *xem xét* and *cân nhắc*. To get a better look at how these words are actually translated in context, we also incorporate data from the LaBan Dictionary, Vdict, and the Glosbe multilingual database. These tools provide a wealth of parallel examples that are essential for seeing how a “thought” in one language becomes an “action” in another.

The data collection process focuses on how the English verb *consider* behaves in its various forms – such as *considers*, *considered*, and *considering* – alongside their corresponding Vietnamese translations. Our analysis aims to achieve three things. First, we investigate how the different forms of “consider” function in English. Second, we explore how Vietnamese conveys these same cognitive concepts, often focusing on lexical choice and situational context rather than changing the form of the verb itself. Finally, by putting these observations together, the study highlights how different cultural backgrounds shape the use of these verbs. This ultimately reveals the *human* side of grammar: the universal cognitive traits we all share and the unique cultural identities that set us apart.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Answer Research Question 1

What are the metaphorical extensions of “consider” in English and its Vietnamese equivalents?

Table 1. Expressions of “consider” and Vietnamese Equivalent

No.	English Meaning	Vietnamese Equivalent	Example (English)	Sentence	Example (Vietnamese)	Sentence	Source
1	Examine	<i>Suy xét, xem xét, xét</i>	Is that the only factor to consider? Consider three factors that can help us to acquire approaches		Có phải đây là yếu tố duy nhất để suy xét không? Hãy xem xét ba yếu tố có thể giúp chúng ta có được những cách tiếp cận.		Glosbe
2	Contemplate	<i>Nghĩ, suy nghĩ, suy nghĩ</i>	Have you considered studying abroad?		Bạn đã nghĩ tới việc du học chưa?		Glosbe
3	Take into account	<i>Tính đến</i>	We must consider the impact of climate change.		Chúng ta phải tính đến tác động của biến đổi khí hậu.		Glosbe
4	Think about before making a decision	<i>Cân nhắc (trước khi quyết định)</i>	Please consider all options before choosing.		Hãy cân nhắc tất cả các lựa chọn trước khi quyết định.		Glosbe

5	Regard or see as	<i>Coi là, xem như</i>	She is considered an expert in her field. I consider him a close friend.	Cô ấy được coi là chuyên gia trong lĩnh vực của mình. Tôi xem anh ấy như một người bạn thân.	Glosbe
6	Judge in a particular way	<i>Đánh giá, nhận định</i>	The proposal was considered impractical.	Đề xuất đó bị đánh giá là không khả thi.	Glosbe
7	Show care or concern for	<i>Quan tâm, để ý đến</i>	He never considers other people's feelings.	Anh ta không bao giờ quan tâm đến cảm xúc của người khác.	Glosbe
8	Respect	<i>Tôn trọng, nể trọng</i>	Please be quiet and consider the people around you	Làm ơn giữ im lặng và tôn trọng những người xung quanh.	Glosbe
9	Look at (from a specific perspective)	<i>Nhìn nhận (dưới góc độ)</i>	Consider the issue from an economic perspective.	Hãy nhìn nhận vấn đề dưới góc độ kinh tế	Glosbe
10	Pay attention to	<i>Chú ý, lưu ý</i>	Safety must be considered at all times.	Sự an toàn phải luôn được lưu ý hàng đầu.	Glosbe
11	Prioritize	<i>Ưu tiên</i>	We consider education a priority.	Chúng tôi ưu tiên giáo dục lên hàng đầu.	Glosbe
12	Learn (from experience)	<i>Nghiệm</i>	I considered a lot from that appointment.	Tôi nghiệm ra được nhiều điều sau buổi gặp đó.	Glosbe
13	Realize	<i>Nhận ra</i>	I came to realize that money isn't everything	Tôi dần nhận ra rằng tiền không phải là tất cả.	Glosbe
14	Notice, care about	<i>Để ý đến, chú ý đến</i>	We must consider the feeling of other people.	Chúng ta phải để ý đến tình cảm của người khác.	Laban
15	Reckon	<i>Tính đến</i>	In your new relationship, would you consider seeking out your son?	Với cuộc hôn nhân mới này, cô có tính đến việc tìm một đứa con trai không?	Laban
16	Assume	<i>Giả định, cho rằng</i>	But ultimately, I don't consider that a worthy goal.	Nhưng cuối cùng, tôi không cho rằng đó là mục tiêu xứng đáng.	Laban
17	Look intently	<i>Quan sát kỹ</i>	She considered his face for a moment.	Cô ấy nhìn chăm chú vào khuôn mặt anh ta một lúc.	Laban
18	Sympathize	<i>Thông cảm</i>	You should consider her situation before judging her.	Bạn nên thông cảm cho hoàn cảnh của cô ấy trước khi phán xét.	Laban
19	Classify	<i>Xếp loại</i>	This species is considered endangered	Loài này được xếp vào nhóm có nguy cơ tuyệt chủng.	Laban
20	Believe	<i>Ngỡ rằng, tưởng là</i>	I considered the shop to be closed, so I didn't go in.	Tôi ngỡ rằng cửa hàng đã đóng nên không vào.	Laban

Common dictionaries show that the word *consider* has many different translations in Vietnamese. This variety proves that it is a complex word with many meanings in English. Below, these meanings are grouped and organized into clear categories.



4.1.1 Mental Deliberation - Vietnamese Equivalent: suy xét, cân nhắc, suy tính, xem xét, nghiên cứu

In English, the verb *consider* in the context of mental deliberation is often used as a general term to describe the internal process of thinking about something before reaching a conclusion or making a choice. It can be applied across various scenarios – ranging from casual thoughts to professional evaluations – without necessarily altering its form to reflect the social hierarchy (e.g., I am considering your idea, The CEO is considering the strategy). However, in Vietnamese, the choice of equivalent verbs for *consider* is highly dependent on the nature of the object, the depth of the thought process, and the professional or social context, further reflecting the embodied cognitive schema of carefulness and precision.

For instance, the verb “xem xét” serves as a central and versatile term, frequently used in both administrative and everyday contexts to denote an act of looking over information. It suggests a level of scrutiny that is objective and methodical. On the other hand, “cân nhắc” (literally meaning “to weigh and lift”) vividly reflects an embodied schema where options are treated as physical weights on a scale. This verb is specifically used when the speaker must choose between multiple alternatives or evaluate the pros and cons of a difficult decision (e.g., *Tôi đang cân nhắc giữa hai lựa chọn* – I am considering between two options).

Furthermore, “suy xét” and “suy tính” lean more toward deep internal reflection. While “suy xét” implies a logical and moral judgment to find the truth or a right path, “suy tính” often involves calculating future outcomes or personal benefits, reflecting a more strategic mindset. In professional or academic settings, “nghiên cứu” (to research/study) is often used as a Vietnamese equivalent for *consider* when the mental process requires time and data-driven evidence (e.g., *Chúng tôi đang nghiên cứu đề nghị của bạn* – We are considering your proposal). Thus, while the English “consider” remains relatively stable, the Vietnamese equivalents shift to specify the “weight” of the thought and the specific cognitive effort being exerted by the subject.

4.1.2 Regarding/Judgment - Vietnamese Equivalent: coi là, xem như là, cho rằng, nhìn nhận, đánh giá

In English, the verb *consider* is frequently used to assign a particular quality or status to an object or person (e.g., I consider him a brother or They consider this a success). In these contexts, *consider* functions as a mental bridge that links an object to a subjective category. While the English structure remains consistent regardless of the emotional weight or social relationship, the Vietnamese language employs a variety of expressions that reflect the speaker's attitude, the level of certainty, and the social standing of the parties involved. This diversity illustrates an embodied schema where “judging” is not just a neutral mental act but an act of “positioning” someone or something within a social or moral framework.

The expression “coi là” or “xem là” is the most common equivalent, often used to establish a subjective relationship or a perceived role. It is widely used in informal and general contexts (e.g., *Tôi luôn coi anh ấy như người nhà* – I always consider him as family). However, when the judgment involves a more formal or intellectual assessment, Vietnamese speakers often shift to “cho rằng” or “nhận định”. These terms suggest a level of conviction and authority, “cho rằng” is frequently used to express a personal opinion or a hypothesis, whereas “nhận định” carries a more professional tone, implying that the “considering” is based on evidence or expertise.

Furthermore, the term “nhìn nhận” reflects a unique embodied perspective, literally translating to “looking and recognizing”. It is often used when the speaker acknowledges a fact or a quality that might have been previously overlooked or contested (e.g., *Cộng đồng nhìn nhận ông ấy là một nhà từ thiện* – The community considers him a philanthropist). In cases where the judgment involves a vertical social dimension or high respect, “đánh giá” is used to emphasize the act of “appraising” or “valuing” the object. Unlike the English “consider” which can feel somewhat detached, the Vietnamese “đánh giá” or “tôn vinh” (in specific honorary contexts) embeds a sense of merit and social validation. Thus, the transition from “consider” to its Vietnamese counterparts reveals how the act of judgment is filtered through the lenses of social recognition and interpersonal respect.

4.1.3 Taking into Account - Vietnamese Equivalent: chiếu cố, tính đến, để tâm, quan tâm đến, lưu ý, chăm chú

In English, “consider” in the sense of “taking something into account” implies the inclusion of specific factors, circumstances, or feelings within the decision-making process to ensure a comprehensive or fair outcome (e.g., We must consider the weather before planning the trip). While the English verb remains neutral, the Vietnamese equivalents for this category vary significantly based on the emotional direction and the power dynamic between the speaker and the object. This reflects an embodied cognitive schema where “considering” is experienced as “allowing” a certain factor to enter one’s mental space or social consideration.

The phrases “tính đến” or “kể đến” are commonly used when the factor being considered is a practical or objective variable (e.g., *Cần tính đến yếu tố thời gian* – We need to consider the time factor). However, when the object of consideration is a person’s feelings or circumstances, Vietnamese speakers often use “quan tâm đến” or “để tâm”. These terms suggest a movement of the



“heart” or “mind” toward the object, emphasizing empathy and emotional connection. For instance, in the sentence “*Bạn nên quan tâm đến cảm xúc của anh ấy*” (You should consider his feelings), the verb “quan tâm” implies a continuous state of caring rather than a one-time mental calculation.

A particularly distinct aspect of this category in Vietnamese is the use of “chiếu cố” and “châm chước”. These terms are deeply rooted in social hierarchy and the cultural value of “tình” (sentimental bond) over “lý” (strict logic). “Chiếu cố” (to look down upon with favor) is often used when a person in a higher position considers the situation of someone in a lower position to provide help or an advantage. Similarly, “châm chước” is used when a rule is slightly relaxed after “considering” the specific hardships of an individual. For example, “*Xin thầy chiếu cố cho hoàn cảnh của em*” (Please consider my situation, teacher) reflects a plea for mercy that the English “consider” cannot fully encapsulate without further explanation. Thus, “taking into account” in Vietnamese is not merely a cognitive addition of data, but often a social gesture of kindness, empathy, or professional leniency.

4.1.4 Observation/Perception - Vietnamese Equivalent: ngắm nghía, nhìn kỹ, quan sát, xem xét (qua thị giác)

In English, “consider” can occasionally function as a verb of perception, describing the act of looking at something steadily and thoughtfully (e.g., He stood considering the painting). In this sense, the cognitive process is triggered directly by visual stimuli, where “thinking” and “seeing” merge into a single action of aesthetic or critical evaluation. While the English “consider” suggests a quiet, internal deliberation while looking, the Vietnamese equivalents are more descriptive of the physical manner in which the observation is conducted, reflecting an embodied schema that links visual focus with mental depth.

The verb “ngắm nghía” is a prime example of this, often used in Vietnamese to describe a long, appreciative, and detailed look. It implies not just seeing, but a rhythmic and careful examination of beauty or form (e.g., *Anh ấy đứng ngắm nghía bức tranh*). This term carries an emotional or aesthetic undertone that the neutral English “consider” lacks. On the other hand, “nhìn kỹ” or “quan sát” are used when the “considering” is more analytical or suspicious. “Quan sát” (to observe) suggests a scientific or investigative intent, where the speaker gathers visual data to form a judgment (e.g., *Cảnh sát quan sát kỹ hiện trường* – The police considered/observed the scene carefully).

Furthermore, in literary Vietnamese contexts, the act of “considering” through sight can be expressed as “xem xét” when the visual observation is meant to find flaws or verify quality. This reflects a cognitive schema where the eyes are the primary tools for mental “weighing”. Unlike the English “consider”, which remains abstract, Vietnamese perception-based verbs provide a vivid picture of the observer’s intent – whether it is for pleasure (*ngắm nghía*), for detail (*nhìn kỹ*), or for systematic analysis (*quan sát*). This distinction highlights how Vietnamese speakers linguistically separate the physical act of looking from the specific mental purpose behind that look.

4.1.5 Formal Decision/Administrative Action - Vietnamese Equivalent: thẩm định, xét duyệt, hội chẩn, thông qua.

In formal, legal, or professional English, the verb “consider” is often employed to describe the official process of reviewing a case, a proposal, or a candidate before a final decision is reached (e.g., The committee is considering the case). While “consider” in this context remains a broad term for the entire deliberative process, the Vietnamese language utilizes highly specific terminology that identifies the field of expertise and the stage of the decision-making process. This reflects an embodied cognitive schema where “considering” is viewed as a structured, collective, and authoritative procedure rather than an individual’s private thought.

The term “thẩm định” is specifically used in legal, financial, or technical contexts to denote a deep, expert evaluation of quality or value (e.g., *Ủy ban đang thẩm định hồ sơ*). This suggests a schema of “validation” by experts. In contrast, “xét duyệt” implies a hierarchical process where a person or body of authority “considers” an application to either grant or deny permission. This term highlights the power dynamic inherent in administrative actions. For more specialized fields like medicine, the act of “considering” a patient’s condition by a group of doctors is rendered as “hội chẩn”, a term that emphasizes collective consultation and specialized diagnostic deliberation.

Furthermore, the term “thông qua” represents the final stage of “considering”, where the deliberation results in the official adoption or approval of a document or law. While the English “consider” might cover the period from the initial reading to the final vote, Vietnamese linguistic choices clearly distinguish between the act of “reviewing” (*xem xét*) and the act of “approving” (*thông qua*). This precision in Vietnamese reflects a bureaucratic and social schema that values clarity in responsibility and procedural integrity. Thus, “considering” in a formal sense is not merely a mental act in Vietnamese culture; it is an institutional ritual marked by specific, field-dependent vocabulary.



4.1.6 Speculative Thinking - Vietnamese Equivalent: *ngỡ rằng, tưởng là, giả định, cho là, cứ tưởng*

In English, “consider” is often used to describe a state of belief or a mental assumption that may not necessarily align with objective reality (e.g., I considered it a settled matter). In this sense, the verb functions within a speculative framework where the mind creates a “temporary truth” based on available, yet potentially incomplete, information. While the English “consider” remains relatively neutral regarding the accuracy of the thought, Vietnamese equivalents specifically highlight the gap between the speaker’s internal assumption and the external reality, reflecting a cognitive schema of “mental displacement” or “misconception”.

The terms “*ngỡ rằng*” or “*cứ tưởng*” are particularly expressive in Vietnamese, as they often carry a retrospective nuance, implying that the speaker’s previous “consideration” was actually mistaken. For example, “*Tôi cứ ngỡ mọi chuyện đã an bài*” (I considered/thought it a settled matter) suggests a sudden realization that the reality is different. This reflects an embodied schema of “surprise” or “correction”. In contrast, “*giả định*” is used when the speculative thinking is intentional and structural, such as in scientific or logical reasoning, where one “considers” a premise to be true for the sake of argument.

Furthermore, the word “*cho là*” reflects a more assertive form of speculative thinking. It suggests that the speaker has made a choice to believe a certain way, even if proof is lacking (e.g., *Họ cho là anh ấy đã ra đi* – They consider/assume he is gone). Unlike the English “consider”, which can feel like a static state of mind, Vietnamese speculative verbs often signal the speaker’s emotional or intellectual stance toward the uncertainty. Whether it is a poetic sense of mistaken belief (*ngỡ*) or a pragmatic assumption (*cho là*), the Vietnamese language forces the speaker to categorize the “truth value” of their thought, revealing a cognitive system that is highly sensitive to the boundaries between fact and belief.

4.1.7 Professional Consulting - Vietnamese Equivalent: *thinh thị, hội ý, tham khảo ý kiến, bàn bạc, trình (cấp trên) xem xét*

In a professional or organizational context, the English verb “consider” often transcends individual cognition to describe a collective, collaborative process of deliberation (e.g., The board is considering the merger). In this setting, “considering” involves the exchange of expertise, the weighing of institutional risks, and the alignment of different perspectives. While the English term “consider” remains a broad umbrella for this entire group activity, the Vietnamese language utilizes specific terms that indicate the direction of the communication and the professional relationship between the parties involved. This reflects an embodied cognitive schema where “thinking” is a distributed social process rather than a solitary mental act.

The term “*bàn bạc*” or “*trao đổi*” is commonly used to describe a lateral or peer-level consultation, where participants have equal standing in the decision-making process. However, when the “consideration” moves across hierarchical lines, Vietnamese speakers use more specialized verbs. For instance, “*thinh thị*” or “*trình*” are used when a subordinate body presents a matter for a higher authority to “consider” and give instructions on. This highlights a schema of “upward seeking”, which is absent in the neutral English “consider”. On the other hand, “*hội ý*” describes a quick, focused consultation among professionals (such as a brief meeting of managers or doctors) to reach a consensus on a specific issue.

Furthermore, the phrase “*tham khảo ý kiến*” suggests a form of consideration that seeks external expertise without necessarily relinquishing the final decision-making power. This indicates a cognitive schema of “gathering and filtering” information. While the English “consider” might imply that the board is simply “thinking” about a merger, the Vietnamese equivalents like “*đang hội ý về việc sáp nhập*” or “*đang bàn bạc về việc sáp nhập*” provide a much clearer picture of the interactive and communicative nature of the professional deliberation. This linguistic precision underscores how Vietnamese culture views collective intelligence and formal consultation as distinct, structured activities within the workplace.

4.1.8 Intention and Planning - Vietnamese Equivalent: *dự tính, tính chuyện, có ý định, đang tính, ấp ủ*

In English, “consider” is frequently used to describe a stage of mental preparation where an individual evaluates a potential future action (e.g., She is considering a career change). In this context, the verb represents more than a passing thought; it signifies a transition from mere ideation to the verge of commitment. While the English “consider” suggests a relatively static state of weighing options, the Vietnamese equivalents are deeply dynamic, reflecting an embodied cognitive schema where “thinking” is synonymous with “preparing a path” or “calculating a move”.

The phrase “*đang tính*” or “*tính chuyện*” is a vivid example of this dynamic schema. The word “*tính*” (to calculate) implies that the subject is already mentally organizing the logistics, risks, and steps required for the future event. For instance, “*Cô ấy đang tính chuyện chuyển nghề*” suggests that she is not just dreaming about a new job, but is actively weighing the consequences and perhaps looking for opportunities. This reflects a “forward-moving” cognitive process. In more formal or long-term scenarios, the term “*dự tính*” is used to indicate a structured plan, blending “consideration” with “projection”.



Furthermore, the Vietnamese language offers more nuanced terms like “ấp ủ” (literally: to brood or incubate) when the “considering” involves a deeply personal or long-held ambition. Unlike the neutral English “consider”, “ấp ủ” conveys an emotional warmth and a protective nurturing of an idea. Conversely, “có ý định” is used to signal a clearer, more settled intention. While the English “consider” remains an internal mental state, its Vietnamese counterparts often reveal the *intensity* and *stage* of the planning process. This linguistic variety illustrates that for Vietnamese speakers, the act of “considering a future action” is inherently tied to the practical and emotional steps of bringing that action into reality.

4.1.9 Moral and Ethical Regard - Vietnamese Equivalent: nể trọng, coi trọng, nể mặt, kiêng nể, để ý tới

In English, the passive construction “to be highly considered” or “to be well-considered” is used to describe an individual who is held in high esteem or respected within a community (e.g., He is highly considered by his peers). While the English “consider” in this context refers to a positive collective judgment, the Vietnamese equivalents delve deeper into the ethical and social obligations of interpersonal relationships. This reflects an embodied cognitive schema where “considering” someone is not just a mental assessment of their worth, but an act of “giving face” and acknowledging their moral or social standing within a communal hierarchy. The term “nể trọng” or “coi trọng” is the most direct equivalent when describing deep respect based on merit or character. However, the Vietnamese language further distinguishes this through the concept of “nể mặt” (to spare someone’s face). This term is used when one “considers” another person’s status or feelings as a reason to modify their own behavior, often to avoid conflict or to show courtesy (e.g., *Tôi nể mặt anh nên mới bỏ qua* – I considered your “face”, so I let it go). This vividly illustrates an embodied schema where the “face” is the physical and metaphorical representation of a person's social dignity that must be “considered” by others. Furthermore, “kiêng nể” adds a layer of cautious respect, often used when “considering” someone who possesses significant power, seniority, or influence. It implies a mental “stepping back” to avoid overstepping boundaries. Unlike the English “consider”, which can be a detached academic or professional evaluation, the Vietnamese equivalents are heavily laden with the “give-and-take” of social harmony. Whether it is through “coi trọng” (valuing highly) or “để ý tới vị thế” (being mindful of status), the Vietnamese language reveals a cognitive framework where the individual is always “considered” in relation to the collective, highlighting the profound influence of Eastern ethics on linguistic choice.

The following table summarizes the systematic relationship between the identified cognitive schemas and their linguistic manifestations in Vietnamese.

Table 2. Cognitive Schema and Linguistic Realizations of “Consider”

Considering Weighing	is	Considering Looking	is	Considering Mapping/Planning	is	Considering Positioning	is	Considering Validating	is
<i>We need to consider all the options before making a final decision.</i>		<i>He stood for a long time considering the old photograph.</i>		<i>She is seriously considering a career change.</i>		<i>He is highly considered in the medical community.</i>		<i>The committee is considering the validity of the claims.</i>	
<i>You must carefully consider the pros and cons of this investment.</i>		<i>The architect is considering the site for the new building.</i>		<i>The company is considering expanding into the Asian market.</i>		<i>You should consider his feelings before you speak.</i>		<i>Your application is currently being considered by the admissions office.</i>	
<i>The judge considered the gravity of the offense.</i>		<i>When you consider the matter from my perspective, it looks different.</i>		<i>I’m considering going back to university next year.</i>		<i>They consider him a member of the family.</i>		<i>The panel of experts is considering the environmental impact report.</i>	
<i>The evidence was considered against the testimony of the witnesses</i>		<i>I consider this a major breakthrough in our research.</i>		<i>We are considering every possible route to solve this problem.</i>		<i>Please consider my situation and give me one more chance.</i>		<i>The symptoms were carefully considered by the medical team.</i>	



The comparison between the English word “consider” and its Vietnamese translations gives us clear proof that our thoughts are connected to our physical world. In English, people use the same word, “consider”, for many different types of thinking. However, in Vietnamese, people choose specific words that describe real, physical actions. As shown in Table 2, Vietnamese does not treat “thinking” as just something happening in the brain. Instead, it describes thinking as weighing an object (*cân nhắc*), looking at something carefully (*ngắm nghía/xem xét*), planning a trip (*tính chuyện/dự tính*), placing someone in a high position (*nể trọng/nể mặt*), or cleaning/sorting through papers (*thăm định/xét duyệt*).

This difference shows us a very interesting point - the way we speak reflects our real-life experiences. The Vietnamese language “turns” abstract thoughts into physical actions that we can almost feel or see. This proves that our thinking – especially for Vietnamese speakers – comes from our daily life, our bodies, and how we interact with others. While English uses one general word, Vietnamese gives us a clear and “real” picture of how we deal with ideas and people. In the end, the change from the simple English word “consider” to the many active words in Vietnamese shows that language is a mirror of our physical and social life.

4.2 Answer Research Question 2

How do these extensions reveal cultural and cognitive differences between the two languages?

When we look closely at how “consider” is translated into Vietnamese, it becomes clear that we are not just swapping one word for another. Instead, we are uncovering the different ways that English and Vietnamese speakers “see” and “process” the world around them. While English often relies on a single, broad term like “consider” to cover various mental states, Vietnamese speakers prefer to use specific words that describe physical actions or social duties. This is not just a matter of vocabulary, it reveals a deep connection between our language, our bodies, and our culture.

This idea is supported by researchers like Lakoff and Johnson (1980), who argued that our conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical. We use what we know about the physical world – like weighing objects or walking a path – to understand abstract things like making a decision. In the following analysis, we will see how these linguistic differences highlight the “embodied” nature of Vietnamese thinking compared to the more generalized approach of English. By looking at the specific image schemas used in both languages, we can better understand the unique cultural values that shape the way we think and speak.

Table 3. Cultural and Cognitive Determinants in English - Vietnamese “Consider”

Cognitive Dimension	Western/English (Rational-Linear)	Model	Vietnamese Model (Relational-Holistic)	Cultural & Cognitive Insight
Object of Thought	Abstract Process: “Consider” is viewed as a mental operation where ideas are handled as abstract data		Embodied Action: Thought is “seen” or “weighed” like a physical object (<i>cân nhắc, ngắm nghía</i>).	Highlights Embodied Cognition in Vietnamese vs. Abstract Logic in English.
Decision-Making Style	Individual & Objective: Focuses on logic and “pros/cons” (<i>Weight schema</i>) to reach a personal conclusion.		Contextual & Collective: Focuses on “face”, “gratitude”, and social harmony (<i>Positioning schema</i>).	Reflects Individualism (West) vs. Collectivism/Social Harmony (Vietnam).
Power & Hierarchy	Direct/Formal: Used as a professional right or neutral administrative duty.		Hierarchical/Indirect: Used to maintain rank or show mercy (<i>chiếu cố, nể mặt, xem xét</i>)	Highlights High-Power Distance and the “Face-saving” culture in Vietnam.
Time & Process	Goal-Oriented: Planning is seen as a straight path from A to B (<i>Journey schema</i>).		Process-Oriented: Planning is seen as “nurturing” or waiting for the right moment (<i>tính chuyện, áp ủ</i>).	English focuses on the Result, Vietnamese focuses on the Condition/Situation.

4.3 Discussion on the Cognitive and Cultural Synthesis

4.3.1 The Universality and Diversity of Image Schemas

While the human brain is wired to understand the world through basic physical experiences, how we translate those experiences into language is where the “magic” of culture happens. In both English and Vietnamese, we see that “considering” is not just a



vague mental activity. It is built on universal image schemas – the mental building blocks that help us understand abstract ideas through physical ones.

For instance, both languages share the Balance/Scale schema. Whether you are an English speaker or a Vietnamese speaker, you naturally feel that a “heavy” problem requires more thought than a “light” one. This is a universal human trait. However, the diversity lies in which “tools” each language prefers to use. English tends to stick with a few reliable, abstract tools like the Journey schema (considering a way forward) or the Scale schema (weighing pros and cons) in a very direct, logical way.

In contrast, Vietnamese is much more “colorful” in its choice of schemas. While it uses the same balance scale, it adds layers of social and sensory experience. When a Vietnamese speaker “considers”, they might use the Looking schema (*ngắm nghĩa, xem xét*) to show care, or the Positioning schema (*né mắt, chiếu cố*) to navigate social hierarchies. This shows that while we all share the same “cognitive hardware” (the schemas), our “cultural software” dictates which ones we use to express the complexity of our thoughts. In short, English uses schemas to reach a conclusion, whereas Vietnamese uses them to maintain a relationship.

4.3.2 Context-Dependency and the Art of “Considering” in Vietnamese Literature

In Vietnamese, “considering” is rarely a cold, neutral act of the mind. Because Vietnam is a high-context culture, every thought is tied to a specific situation, a social rank, or a deep emotion. This is why we do not just have one word for “consider”, we have a palette of words that paint a picture of *how* we are thinking.

In Vietnamese poetry and folk verses, “considering” is often expressed through physical metaphors like weighing or measuring the heart. Instead of saying “I am **considering** our love”, a folk poem might say:

“*Thân em như chên lúa đồng
Phất phơ dưới ngọn nắng hồng ban mai*”

(My body is like a young rice ear
Swaying under the pink morning sun)

The “consideration” here is implied through the image of the rice ear swaying – it is the act of contemplating one’s fate and position in the world. When a girl in old stories “considers” a marriage proposal, she does not just think, she *ngẫm* (deeply ponders) or *trần trở* (tosses and turns). These words capture a level of emotional “weight” that the English “consider” often misses.

In *The Tale of Kieu* (Truyện Kiều), Nguyen Du uses “*đắn đo*” to describe a man evaluating a woman’s talent and specific words to show how characters “consider” each other based on status and debt (*on nghĩa*)

“*Đắn đo cân sắc cân tài
Ép cung cầm nguyệt, thử bài quạt thơ*”.

The word literally mimics the physical act of adjusting a sliding weight on a traditional scale to find a balance. This is a perfect example of the Scale Schema, where mental evaluation is treated as physical weighing. When Thuy Kieu “considers” sacrificing herself for her father, it is described as a process of “*quyết*” (deciding with resolve) after much *đắn đo* (hesitating on a scale). The word “*đắn đo*” literally mimics the movement of a balance scale moving up and down, showing that her “consideration” is a painful struggle between love and duty.

In daily life, the way we “consider” someone reveals our social upbringing (*gia phong*). If a person says, “*Tôi sẽ châm chước cho anh*”, they are considering a mistake, but with a heart of forgiveness. If they say, “*Tôi phải ngó qua kế hoạch này*”, they are “looking” at the plan with the careful eye of a craftsman. Even the word “*để tâm*” (placing the heart into something) is a beautiful way to say “consider”. It shows that for Vietnamese people, to consider a problem is to give it a place inside one’s heart, not just one’s brain.

Similarly, the verb “*ngắm nghĩa*” in “*Anh ngồi ngắm nghĩa lại tình ta...*” (to gaze/look at something carefully and repeatedly) transforms “love” – an abstract and intangible concept – into a tangible, three-dimensional object. By using this visual-sensory verb, the speaker implies that they can “rotate” the relationship in their mind, looking at it from various perspectives and angles to appreciate its beauty or spot its flaws. In English, this would technically be the act of “considering all aspects of a relationship”, but the English phrasing remains purely mental and abstract. In contrast, the Vietnamese expression utilizes the Visual Image Schema. It suggests that “considering” is not just a cold cognitive calculation, but a deliberate act of “seeing” with the heart and eyes. This is a prime example of how Vietnamese speakers use physical observation to describe deep internal reflection.

Next, the Vietnamese proverb “*Liệu cơm gắp mắm*” and its English equivalent “*Considering the amount of salted fish based on the rice available*” provides a perfect window into the Vietnamese adjustment schema. In English, to “consider one’s resources” is



an abstract economic or logical calculation. However, for the Vietnamese mind, this is an act of proportionality. The verb “liệu” (to estimate/calculate) is not just a mental exercise, it is an active, ongoing adjustment between what one has (the rice) and what one does (picking up the fish). This reveals a cultural preference for contextual pragmatism. Vietnamese “consideration” is rarely about following a fixed rule, it is about “looking” at the current situation to find a harmonious balance. It proves that the Vietnamese sense of “considering” is deeply rooted in the necessity of surviving and thriving within limited means.

While English uses “consider” or “pay attention to” as neutral mental states, the Vietnamese folk verse:

“Lấy chồng cho đáng sức chồng

Bỏ công trang điểm, **đoái hoài** bản thân”

introduces the orientation schema. The term “đoái hoài” or “ngó ngang” literally means to turn one's head or to cast a glance toward something. Here, “considering” oneself or a partner is not a silent thought; it is a visual and physical gesture of validation. If someone does not “consider” you, they “turn their back” on you. By using a verb of “looking back” (*đoái*), the Vietnamese language highlights that to “consider” someone is to grant them value and presence. This reflects a relational culture where being “considered” means being “seen” and “recognized” within a social or romantic bond. It transforms the English abstract “concern” into a tangible, directional act of the eyes and body.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted to explore the cross-linguistic and cognitive analysis of the verb *consider* and its Vietnamese equivalents reveals profound insights into the relationship between language, thought, and culture. While English tends to use *consider* as a versatile, abstract “container” for various mental processes, Vietnamese systematically deconstructs this concept into a rich array of descriptive and embodied verbs.

The research has demonstrated that the metaphorical extensions of *consider* are not arbitrary. In English, the extensions focus on logical evaluation and linear planning, reflecting a cultural emphasis on individualism and objective results. In contrast, Vietnamese extensions are deeply rooted in Embodied Cognition and Social Harmony. Whether it is the physical “weighing” in “*đán đo*”, the pragmatic balancing in “*liệu cơm gắp mắm*”, or the emotional recognition in “*đoái hoài*”, the Vietnamese language consistently anchors mental activity in physical and relational reality. As explored in the discussion, the shift from a single verb to a diverse set of expressions in Vietnamese – ranging from classical poetry like *Truyện Kiều* to everyday proverbs – proves that language is a cultural filter. It transforms the cold logic of the mind into a warm, multifaceted performance of human connection.

By moving beyond simple translation and adopting a cognitive linguistic framework, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of intercultural communication. For translators and language learners, recognizing these subtle differences is crucial. It is not just about choosing the right word, it is about understanding a different way of being in the world –where a “thought” is never just a thought, but a balance of the heart, the eyes, and the community.

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