

## THE SEMANTIC FEATURES OF MIDWIFERY TERMINOLOGY IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Received:</b> 27/02/2023</p> <p><b>Revised:</b> 31/3/2023</p> <p><b>Published:</b> 31/3/2023</p>	<p>Most documents produced today use specialized language and many of them contain terminology. Undoubtedly, terminology helps us to fully understand specific topics. People in different sectors including midwifery can communicate more effectively if they use terminology that is clearly defined. This paper aims to identify the semantic features of midwifery terminology in English and Vietnamese and then find out the similarities and differences between them. Descriptive, comparative and contrastive methods were used with 200 midwifery terms in English and 200 terms in Vietnamese from books, magazines, novels, short stories, dictionaries, the Internet and films. The findings showed that in 9 characteristics used to identify midwifery terminology, the most common feature in English is characteristics of pre-childbirth terminology and in Vietnamese is characteristics of complications of pregnancy, labor and birth. It also found out that there are a lot of similarities and some differences between them, which help the learners and our colleagues at Namdingh University of Nursing to enrich their knowledge about vocabulary interference as well as midwifery terminology in both languages.</p>
<b>KEYWORDS</b>	
Terminology	
Midwifery terminology	
Semantic feature	
Special terminology	
Concept of terminology	

## CÁC ĐẶC ĐIỂM NGŨ NGHĨA CỦA THUẬT NGŨ HỘ SINH TRONG TIẾNG ANH VÀ TIẾNG VIỆT

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO	TÓM TẮT
<p><b>Ngày nhận bài:</b> 27/02/2023</p> <p><b>Ngày hoàn thiện:</b> 31/3/2023</p> <p><b>Ngày đăng:</b> 31/3/2023</p>	<p>Hầu hết các tài liệu ngày nay sử dụng ngôn ngữ chuyên ngành và nhiều trong số đó có chứa thuật ngữ. Rõ ràng, thuật ngữ giúp chúng ta hiểu đầy đủ về các chủ đề cụ thể. Mọi người trong các lĩnh vực khác nhau bao gồm hộ sinh có thể giao tiếp hiệu quả hơn nếu họ sử dụng thuật ngữ được định nghĩa rõ ràng. Mục đích của bài báo là xác định đặc điểm ngữ nghĩa của các thuật ngữ hộ sinh bằng tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt, từ đó tìm ra những điểm giống và khác nhau giữa chúng. Phương pháp mô tả, so sánh và đối chiếu được sử dụng với 200 thuật ngữ hộ sinh bằng tiếng Anh và 200 thuật ngữ bằng tiếng Việt từ sách báo, tạp chí, tiểu thuyết, truyện ngắn, từ điển, internet và phim ảnh. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy, trong 9 đặc điểm được sử dụng để xác định thuật ngữ hộ sinh, đặc điểm chung nhất trong thuật ngữ hộ sinh bằng tiếng Anh là dùng đặc điểm của thuật ngữ trước khi sinh và trong tiếng Việt là đặc điểm của các biến chứng thai nghén, chuyển dạ và sinh nở. Nghiên cứu cũng tìm ra giữa các thuật ngữ bằng tiếng Anh và tiếng Việt có nhiều điểm giống và một số điểm khác nhau, qua đó giúp người học và đồng nghiệp tại trường Đại học Điều dưỡng Nam Định bổ sung thêm kiến thức về giao thoa từ vựng cũng như thuật ngữ hộ sinh trong cả hai ngôn ngữ.</p>
<b>TỪ KHÓA</b>	
Thuật ngữ	
Thuật ngữ hộ sinh	
Đặc điểm ngữ nghĩa	
Thuật ngữ chuyên ngành	
Khái niệm thuật ngữ	

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## 1. Introduction

According to Molchanova [1], the mastery of special terminology, which constitutes the lexical core of the language of any field of knowledge, is considered by methodologists as the basis for the formation of professional foreign language communicative competence of future specialists and therefore is one of the main tasks of teaching a foreign language in a non-linguistic university. In the world, definitions of terminology differ in three directions: Terminology is considered as an independent field of study; terminology means working on terminology; or terminology is understood as the vocabulary system of an industry, a specific area of expertise. Strehlow and Wright [2] see terminology as the art of analyzing terminology units in context, and systematically studying naming and labeling for concepts with the aim of developing the vocabulary of a certain area. Kageura also defines terminology as "the vocabulary of a specialized field" [3]. This vocabulary is precisely the concepts expressed in words or phrases, and thus the terminology is a set of concepts that belong to a specialized scope. Different from scientists in the world when considering terminology as a science separate from the object, task and specific research methods, linguists in Vietnam regard terminology as a part of language, namely vocabulary, and so terminology is studied as part of the vocabulary system rather than a separate science. However, the same viewpoint, in terminologies of words, can still show some differences between the linguists. Specifically, Nguyen Van Tu [4] and Nguyen Thien Giap [5] regard terminology as a group of words or phrases with special meaning, used in the fields of science, engineering, politics, diplomacy... Do Huu Chau [6] emphasized, although the terminology is in the lexical system of a language, it is different from the "common words" in that terminology is "professional words", is the "scientific and technical terminology" in the sectors of "industrial engineering science, natural or social science and technology". Whatever its concept is, terminology plays an important role in the understanding of not only contexts but also specialized texts. Understanding the complex terminological details of the technical and scientific contexts helps readers be better able to understand what the main message of the document is, and specialists can transmit the content more effectively. Albina Pajo [7] also concluded in her paper that "It can be said that terminological systems in general and the linguistic ones form the basis of the specialized lexicon of the language, through which is realized the specific effective communication." Therefore, terminology with an important part in the scientific development of each country is always an interesting topic for domestic and foreign researchers. Specialist language has also been widely studied within the framework of terminology, in which the main pedagogical focus is on training translators and interpreters as well as trainees from diverse expertise areas [8] - [10]. "Terminology language is more than a technical or particular instance of general language. Today with its emphasis on science and technology, the way specialized knowledge concepts are named, structured, described, and translated has put terminology or the designation of specialized knowledge concepts in the limelight" [11]. In Vietnam, to promote economic, scientific, medical and technical development, it is impossible without the contribution of medicine, including medical terminology. Not just tools of cognitive processes and scientific thinking, the terminology also helps to receive and disseminate detailed knowledge in the field of expertise to serve the country's development, helping to elevate the status of the state in the international arena. In those areas of expertise, the field of medicine is always one of the key sectors. To be able to develop the economy and in order to keep the country in keeping with the trends of humanity, health is one of the services that needs to be concerned first and always holds an important position, so studying the terminology of medicine is of greater value.

Although medicine has a long history of development and midwifery is a deep specialty of medicine, specialized English materials and textbooks for medical students at universities as well as time to study English in medicine in general and midwifery in particular are still limited. Research documents, and manuals for midwifery are not yet available, moreover, bilingual dictionaries for

translation and interpretation of medical terminology including midwifery terminology still have many inconsistencies, which leads to difficulties in using, especially in teaching and learning.

Also, in our country, there is almost no scientific research work specializing in the system of midwifery terminology in English and Vietnamese. Learners and readers need to understand and broaden their minds about midwifery professional terminologies in English and Vietnamese. There are still plenty of issues that need to be discussed and debated.

In addition, midwifery has just been taught as a branch of health system at the higher education level for several years at the universities of health sector. Namdinh University of Nursing is one of them. The learners were found to have faced many problems when using midwifery terminology in English and Vietnamese. They often feel confused to choose the right terminology and make errors in using them. Our colleagues majoring in midwifery find difficulty in describing midwifery terminology, which prevents them from publishing their research into international journals. Bakirova [12] also stated that "In the system of medical terminology, the dependence of the semantics of a term on its word-formation structure is especially clearly traced." Therefore, a study was carried out to find out how to use these terminologies accurately from the analysis of the semantic features of English and Vietnamese midwifery terminology with the hope of serving the needs of teaching, learning, and studying midwifery terminology in English for our learners and colleagues first. Then it will be a useful reference to the extent possible, for teaching and learning English and Vietnamese as foreign languages.

The theoretical framework for the contrastive study of English and Vietnamese midwifery terminology in this paper is established based on a general theory of terminology, terminology concept in distinction with non-terminology units, and identified through four standards concluding: *accuracy, systematism, brevity and internationalism*. The midwifery terminology which is accepted is the word unit that expresses concepts and objects belonging to nature, strategy, process, communication, research.... and midwifery tool. Together with this concept, the problems of language identification, namely the principle and method of language identification or contrast, including the scope and method of contrast and the distinction between words and phrases... are also combined to serve as a basis for further analysis and judgment.

## 2. Methodology

The major methods used in this study include descriptive, comparative and contrastive methods with the aid of statistical instrument. First of all, the descriptive method was used in order to give complete and evident descriptions based on aggregated statistics of semantic features of the midwifery terminologies in English and Vietnamese. Secondly, the comparative and contrastive methods were applied to identify similarities and differences between midwifery terminologies in English and Vietnamese in terms of semantic features. In this study English serves as the target language and Vietnamese as the source language. The data for research were 400 midwifery terminologies including 200 English terminologies and 200 Vietnamese terminologies. The data were collected from different and reliable sources such as textbooks, medical books, websites, well-known English-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-English dictionaries relating to midwifery terminology and confirmed by reliable publishers.

## 3. Results and discussions

### 3.1. The semantic features of midwifery terminology in English and Vietnamese

Considered to have a particularly important role in medical activities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the midwifery has its own terminology system with full of specific characteristics and categories. Within this paper, English and Vietnamese midwifery terms belonging to the studied subjects were grouped into 9 semantic categories from 200 English terms and 200 Vietnamese terms expressed from medical books, dictionaries and English journals respectively as follows:

**Table 1.** *The semantic features of midwifery terminology in English and Vietnamese*

No	Categories	English terminology	Vietnamese terminology
1	Pre-childbirth terminologies	54	42
2	Terminologies related to onset of labor and birth	37	29
3	Post-childbirth terminologies	28	23
4	Terminologies related to complications of pregnancy, labor and birth	28	46
5	Terminologies related to the reproductive organs of the woman and obstetric diseases	12	13
6	Terminologies related to common diseases in postpartum women	6	9
7	Terminologies related to instrument, room/ department in the hospital	10	8
8	Terminologies related to midwifery activities and procedures	16	28
9	Terminologies related to persons trained to assist in the midwifery field.	9	2
	<b>Sum</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>

As can be seen in table 1, there are 9 characteristic groups used to identify midwifery terminologies in English and Vietnamese. Among these 9 characteristic groups, it is important to note that the most commonly used feature in English is the identifying characteristic of pre-childbirth terminologies, with 54 terminologies, accounting for 27% and in Vietnamese are the identifying characteristics of complications of pregnancy, labor and birth, with 46 terminologies, accounting for 23%. Whereas the least used feature in English is the identifying characteristic of common diseases in postpartum women, with 6 terminologies, accounting for 3%, in Vietnamese are the identifying characteristics of persons trained to assist in the midwifery field, with 2 terminologies, accounting for 1%.

### 3.1.1. Pre-childbirth midwifery terminologies

English: Amniotic/ fetal/ prenatal/ + organ/ location/ activity

Vietnamese: organ/ location/ activity + ôi/ thai/ tim thai

There are 54 terminologies in English (equivalent to 27%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Amniotic cavity, amniotic fluid, amniotic sac, fetal blood sampling, fetal heart monitoring, amniotic fluid index, prenatal diagnosis...*

Vietnamese has 42 terminologies (equivalent to 21%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Màng ối, khoang ối, túi ối, vỡ ối, rau thai, phôi thai, mang thai, lấy mẫu máu thai nhi, khám thai, xét nghiệm nước tiểu, theo dõi tim thai, nghe tim thai....*

### 3.1.2. Midwifery terminology related to onset of labor and birth

English: state/ condition + delivery/ labor/ tear/ section

Vietnamese: Chuyển dạ/ sinh/ mổ/ đau + state/ condition

English has 37 terminologies (equivalent to 18.5%) that are identified in this field. For example: *assisted delivery, induced labor, spontaneous labor, first- degree labor, second- degree labor, third- degree labor, false labor, caesarean section, elective caesarean section, emergency caesarean section, first-degree tear, second-degree tear, third-degree tear...*

Vietnamese has 29 terminologies (equivalent to 14.5%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Chuyển dạ giả, chuyển dạ tự nhiên, mổ lấy thai, mổ lấy thai chủ động, mổ lấy thai khẩn cấp, sinh mổ, sinh thường, sinh mổ tự chọn, sinh đủ tháng...*

### 3.1.3. Post-childbirth midwifery terminology

English: state/ condition + -feed/ period/ hormone/ twins/ uterus

Vietnamese: state/ condition + sữa/ từ cung/ kỳ/ chủng

English has 28 terminologies (equivalent to 14%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Breastfeed, lactation period, lactogenic hormone, monozygotic twins, shrinking uterus...*

Vietnamese has 23 terminologies (equivalent to 11.5 %) that are identified in this field. For example: *Lợi sữa, tiết sữa, mất sữa, co tử cung, sản kỳ, tiêm chủng...*

#### 3.1.4. Midwifery terminology related to complications of pregnancy, labor and birth

English: state/ condition + fever/ pregnancy, birth/ diabetes

Vietnamese: Thai/ ngôi thai/ nhịp tim/ sảy thai + state/ condition

English has 28 terminologies (equivalent to 14%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Puerperal fever, childbed fever, ectopic pregnancy, premature birth, posthumous birth, gestational diabetes, gestational diabetes mellitus...*

Vietnamese has 45 terminologies (equivalent to 23%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Thai trứng, thai nghén, ngôi thai ngôi không hoàn chỉnh, ngôi thai bất thường, nhịp tim thai nhanh, nhịp tim thai chậm, sảy thai lưu, sảy thai muộn, sảy thai sớm...*

#### 3.1.5. Midwifery terminology related to the reproductive organs of the woman and obstetric diseases

English: state/ organ + -itis/ cancer/ cyst

Vietnamese: viêm/ u/ hội trứng + state/ organ

English has 12 terminologies (equivalent to 6%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Vaginitis, ovary cyst, ovary cancer ...*

Vietnamese has 13 terminologies (equivalent to 6.5%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Viêm ống dẫn trứng, u buồng trứng cơ năng, u buồng trứng thực thể, hội trứng buồng trứng đa năng...*

#### 3.1.6. Midwifery terminology related to common diseases in postpartum women

English: state/ condition + -ism/ depression/ haemorrhage

Vietnamese: state/ condition + sau sinh/ tử cung/ hậu sản

English has 6 terminologies (equivalent to 3%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Puerperalism, endogenous depression, postnatal depression, postpartum haemorrhage...*

Vietnamese has 9 terminologies (equivalent to 4.5%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Sản giật sau sinh, băng huyết sau sinh, sốt sau sinh, sa tử cung, đau hậu sản, nhiễm khuẩn hậu sản ...*

#### 3.1.7. Midwifery terminology related to instrument, room/ department in the hospital

English: object + faculty/ ward/ room/ clinic

Vietnamese: Khoa/ phòng/ khu + object

English has 10 terminologies (equivalent to 5 %) that are identified in this field. For example: *Midwifery faculty, labor ward, delivery room, antenatal clinic, child health clinic, operating theatre ...*

Vietnamese has 8 terminologies (equivalent to 4%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Khoa nhi, phòng khám thai, khu sản phụ, phòng sinh, phòng trẻ sơ sinh, phòng mổ...*

#### 3.1.8. Midwifery terminology related to midwifery activities and procedures

English: activity/ state + -otomy/ care/ consultant/ control

Vietnamese: Thủ thuật/ chăm sóc + activity/ state

English has 16 terms (equivalent to 8%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Ectopotomy, hysterotomy, intrapartum care, lactation consultant, birth control...*

Vietnamese has 27 terms (equivalent to 14%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Chăm sóc tiền sản, thủ thuật chọc màng ối, thủ thuật mở tử cung, chăm sóc nội sinh, thủ thuật xoay thai...*

#### 3.1.9. Midwifery terminology related to persons trained to assist in the midwifery field

English: function/ speciality + -ist, -cian

Vietnamese: *Bác sĩ/ bà/ nữ* + function/ speciality

English has 9 terms (equivalent to 4.5%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Gaenycologist, pedodontist, neonatologist, obstetrician...*

Vietnamese has 4 terms (equivalent to 1%) that are identified in this field. For example: *Bác sĩ sản khoa, bác sĩ nhi khoa, bà đỡ, nữ hộ sinh...*

### **3.2. Semantic similarities and differences between midwifery terminology in English and Vietnamese**

#### **3.2.1. Similarities**

It can be seen clearly that semantic features of midwifery terminology, both English and Vietnamese are employed for the same 9 semantic fields such as pre-childbirth, onset of labor and birth, post-childbirth, complications of pregnancy, labor and birth, the reproductive organs of the woman and obstetric diseases, common diseases in postpartum women, instrument, room/ department in the hospital, midwifery activities and procedures and persons trained to assist in the midwifery field. The survey results show some of the following notes:

Firstly, the most chosen semantic characteristics to identify the English-Vietnamese midwifery terminology studied included the terms in the categories: Pre-childbirth, onset of labor and birth, post-childbirth, and complications of pregnancy, labor and birth. Fewer selected semantic characteristics have been studied including the terms in the categories: The reproductive organs of the woman and obstetric diseases, common diseases in postpartum women, room/ department in the hospital, midwifery activities and procedures and persons trained to assist in the midwifery field.

Secondly, for each category of semantics, i.e., with each different general concept (the reproductive organs of the woman and obstetric diseases, common diseases in postpartum women, room/ department in the hospital, persons trained to assist in the midwifery field....), the characteristics chosen to distinguish the meaning are also different.

Thirdly, in some cases, identifying characteristics to distinguish meanings for terminologies with two or more meanings is only relatively dependent on classification standards and context as well as the purpose of communication.

From the above-mentioned contents, it can be concluded that English and Vietnamese midwifery terminology shares many similarities in identifying characteristics. Ho Ngoc Trung and Le Xuan Huy also indicated that in their paper [13].

#### **3.2.2. Differences**

Besides the above similarities, the study also points out some differences between midwifery terminologies in English and Vietnamese. It is noticeable that English midwifery terminologies related to pre-childbirth are much higher than Vietnamese midwifery terminologies related to this semantic category, 54 and 42 respectively. On the contrary, terminologies referring to complications of pregnancy, labor and birth in English occupy a considerably smaller number compared with those in Vietnamese, 28 and 46 respectively. Besides, terminologies related to four other categories in Vietnamese are not as many as those in English.

Moreover, a problem that arises is the practice of reception, perception and application. The survey of 400 midwifery terminologies in both English and Vietnamese show that there is a lack of uniformity in the explanation of the Vietnamese midwifery terminology expressed in the phenomenon of synonyms and polysemous. Specifically, many English midwifery terminologies when translated into Vietnamese have many different meanings, which lead to the same concept of English midwifery terminology but there are up to two, even three Vietnamese terminologies expressing. This result is also the same as the result in the study about infantry terms [13].

**Table 2.** *Example of uniformity in the explanation*

English terminology	Vietnamese terminology
Abort	Sảy thai/ phá thai/ bỏ dờ
Embryo	Kế hoạch/ phôi thai/ mầm
Childbirth	Sinh con/ sinh sản/ sự đau đẻ
Spontaneous labour	Lao động tự phát/ chuyển dạ tự nhiên
Labour ward	Phòng lao động/ khu sản phụ

#### 4. Conclusion

From the data collected from 200 midwifery terminologies in English and 200 midwifery terminologies in Vietnamese, the paper has identified the semantic features of midwifery terminologies in both English and Vietnamese. The results show that in terms of identifying characteristics, because midwifery terminologies are mainly translated from English midwifery terminologies, there are many similarities between the two terminology systems. The most chosen semantic characteristics to identify the English-Vietnamese midwifery terminology being studied include the terminologies in the categories: before childbirth, onset of labor and birth, after childbirth, complications of pregnancy and labor. Fewer selected semantic characteristics have been studied including the terminologies in the categories: the reproductive organs of the woman and obstetric diseases, common diseases in postpartum women, department in the hospital, midwifery activities and procedures and persons trained to assist in the midwifery field. Besides, the differences were mentioned between them. The words in Vietnamese terminology are more abundant than those in English terminology. Many English terminologies have many different meanings when they are translated into Vietnamese terminologies. These findings are expected to help learners and colleagues at Namdinh University of Nursing and others in general comprehend the midwifery documents clearly and apply them in their fields better. In the future, further study will be conducted on the structural features of English and Vietnamese midwifery terminology.

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