

The Semantic Field of Water in Vietnamese

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Received: 24 May 2020; Accepted: 8 June 2020; Published: 16 June 2020

Abstract:

According to Eastern philosophy, water is one of the most essential elements in life. It has been proved to be the most vital in all aspects of life: living source, sanitation, agricultural irrigation, and food supply (aquaculture products), which results in civilizations all over the world usually reside along massive rivers. Hence, it can be admitted that the phenomenon of water deeply rooted in the subconsciousness of each ethnic group and it can be vividly manifested in their own language. This article aims to clarify “water” semantic field which consists of various subfields such as the subfield indicating existing form of water: "ice, water, steam, vapor, sleet...", the subfield indicating the movement of water "flow, drift, pour, surge, drain ...", the subfield indicating status of water "opaque, clear, cool, clean ...", the subfield indicating container of water: "pond, lake, sea, river...", the subfield indicating artificial container of water "class, bowl, cup, jar ...", the subfield indicating human interactions with water "block (chặn/ngăn), irrigate, bath...". The water semantic field is dramatically diverse with numerous words, which shapes a hierarchical system within its subfields. These subfields have been respectively demonstrated so as to clearly explain the frequency of occurrences among words through practical statistic and semantic field theory. Furthermore, this article suggests logical steps to classify the water semantic field in terms of linguistic criteria. The results reflect the connections between humans and water as well as the water condition, which have a significant impact on human life according to the cognition of the Vietnamese.

Keywords:

Semantic Field, Semantic Field of Water, Water, Rain, Wave

1. Introduction

According to Eastern philosophy, water is one of the most essential elements in life. It has been proved to be the most vital in all aspects of life: living source, sanitation, agricultural irrigation, and food supply (aquaculture products). As a result, civilizations all around the world usually reside along massive rivers. Hence, it can be admitted that the phenomenon of water deeply rooted in the subconsciousness of each ethnic group and it can be manifested in their language. The “water” semantic field consists of various subfields such as the subfield indicating existing form of water: "ice, water, steam, vapor, sleet...", the subfield indicating the movement of water "flow, drift, pour, surge, drain ...", the subfield indicating status of water "opaque,

clear, cool, clean ...", the subfield indicating container of water: "pond, lake, sea, river...", the subfield indicating artificial container of water "class, bowl, cup, jar ...", the subfield indicating human interactions with water "block (ngăn), block (chặn), water (verb), bath ..." as well as living creatures in water environment "algae, moss, corals, fish, shrimp, shrimp ..." and facilities "bridge, sluice, dam, boat, ship, plaque ...". In Vietnam, the studies on lexicology in relation to the semantic field have acquired certain achievements; however, no other researches on the "water" under the semantic field perspectives have been conducted. This article concludes that the water semantic field can be isolated into subfields, second-grade subfields, and word groups. Additionally, the frequency of occurrence of these subfields will be compared and interpreted in order to indicate the systematic, hierarchical, and diverse features of the water semantic field in Vietnamese.

2. Literature review

2.1. Researches on Semantic Field Indicating Water

In a research on the semantic field of water in Vietnamese folk songs, Thuy. L.T.B (2011) had divided the water semantic field into five subfields. These subfields continued to be subdivided into the lower ones. Moreover, the author also introduced four types of semantic field changes and six typical types of words belonging to semantic field of "water" in the Vietnamese folk-songs. In contrast, Din. L.V [4], whose research was about the semantic field of elements relating to water in Vietnamese folk verses and proverbs, classified this into five subfields with hierarchical relationship. The author, however, only took the subfield subdivision into account and offered some concrete examples without any profound and precise evaluations. Some researchers from other countries also studied the same subject such as "The Linguistic Structure of Modern English" (Lexical meanings, exercise 6.4, (c) water). These authors subclassified the water semantic field such as water-existed forms: ice, water, steam, vapor, sleet, rain, snow, hail; bodies of water: ditch, slough, swamp, narrows, strait, inlet, bight, bayou, deep, firth (Scotland), loch (Scotland), tarn, well, reservoir, pool, sea, ocean, lake, pond, bay, estuary, fjord, sound, gulf, lagoon, cove), harbor; water in motion: creek, river, waves, billows, stream, rain, brook, rivulet, tributary, spring; frozen water: ice, snow, crystal, sleet, hail, icicle, iceberg, rime, hoarfrost, glacier; gas: vapor, steam...[9].

Apart from the semantic field of water in general, a great number of researchers decided to approach "water" from different perspectives: Sam. T [13] analyzed cognitive metaphors of water under the Southern people's consciousness. However, Xuan. N.T.T [20] investigated the "water archetype" in Vietnamese literature which had both invisible form (flood, rain, dew, etc.) and visible form (sea, river, stream, canal, lake, lagoon, well, rivulet, etc.), additionally, the author also researched on another "archetype" such as flood, rain, dew, sea, river, lagoon, well and the like. Chien. N.V [3] investigated "the cultural symbol of water and the word indicating water in Vietnamese".

However, researches on water semantic field have remained inherent gaps to be bridged. There has been, up to now, research profoundly penetrating to neither the semantic field of water in Vietnamese nor a general model of separated fields. As a result, we decided to choose this semantic field as our research topic since water is not only one of the five basic elements but also significantly special to Vietnamese community.

2.2. Theory of Semantic Field

2.2.1. The Concept of the Semantic Field

Semantic field is a set of lexicon semantically grouped in reference to a specific subject that denotes a segment of the reality symbolized by a set of related words. Lexical relations can be defined by those in semantic fields and those within each semantic field.

Hence, the semantic relation between words has to be considered in the semantic field system. The words in the same semantic field have common sememes and of course they also have their own sememes. This strongly confirms the systematic features of languages.

2.2.2. The Characteristics of Semantic Field

A semantic field is characterized by systematic, hierarchical, synonymous, antonymous and central and boundary features. However, only the central and boundary in the semantic field are examined because the article mainly focuses on investigating this phenomenon. A word can have a wide range of meanings that may belong to different semantic fields. This phenomenon occurred in the boundary region which known as the interfered phenomenon in the semantic field. In a semantic field, the numbers of words belonging to the central region account for a small rate. In contrast, the majority of words belonging to the boundary area can be units in different semantic fields. Thanks to the interfered phenomenon in semantic fields, words allocated in the central region of the water semantic field and the hyponymy will be listed to analyze the water semantic field.

Hyponymy:

The semantic field system contains a typical type of relationship including fields with opposite relations, fields with mutually equal relationships, and fields with interwoven relationships. In contrast, some fields have a hierarchical relationship with each other in which an extensive field may consist of several smaller fields, and the higher dominates the lower. In other words, the fields can be either completely independent or intersected with each other depending on the boundary between them. For instance, the semantic field of “water” can be subdivided into level 1, level 2, level 3...until the smallest one. Thanks to the hierarchical characteristics, we have determined the low-level fields from the higher as well as fields sharing the same level. Such fields create tiers in parallel, interwoven, and interlocked levels.

Central and boundary of the semantic field:

The central and boundary in the semantic field are examined because the article mainly focuses on investigating this phenomenon. A word can have a wide range of meanings which may belong to different semantic fields. This phenomenon occurred in the boundary region which known as the interference phenomenon in semantic field. In a semantic field, the numbers of words belong to the central region accounting for a small rate. In contrast, the majority of words belonging to the boundary area can be units in different semantic fields. Thanks to the interfered phenomenon in semantic fields, words allocated in the central region of water semantic field will be mentioned to analyze in the semantic field.

2.2.3. Criteria in Forming a Semantic Field

Words subdivision into fields aims to discover the systematic features and lexical structures in terms of semantics as well as to expound both the word formation mechanisms and its practical application during the communicative process. Semantic fields are linguistic narratives which should be judged by vernacular criteria, regardless of things and phenomena beyond language or personal concepts. Overall, it is the meaning of the words in a language that forms its semantic fields.

The boundaries between semantic fields are related to each other, so a word may be found in some fields. Fields are semantic patterns and models to attract, create, and revise the meaning of specific words. Consequently, we must first find the typical words before establishing a field. In other words, only when the lexical and semantic characteristics are found can we consider it the basis for field formations. The typical words for the field hold the center position of the field, and words that can interfere with other fields form the periphery of the fields. Besides, based on the denotat and significate meaning, it is possible to establish the denotat meaning field and significate meaning field.

The basis of creating a denotat semantic field must originate from the denotatum of the words. Any denotatum which shares the common denotat meaning category can be put in the same denotat semantic field. The criteria used to establish a denotat semantic field is the homogeneity in one denotat meaning category. Other bigger categories will be used to separate large fields into units in regard to different class levels. Nouns are selected as the root, which ought to be highly generated such as people, animals, plants, meteorology... These nouns have a great influence on the denotatum of words, which results in specific or narrow meanings.

The basis of forming significate semantic fields is as similar as the principles applied to the denotat semantic field. However, it can be established according to the homogeneity of all significate meaning structure. To establish a significate semantic field, a significate meaning structure is initially chosen as the root, then words which have that same significate meaning structure are collected.

The basis of establishing a horizontal semantic field (linearity) is the syntagmatic axis's relationship among units of language. To create a linear semantic field, we firstly choose a word as the root, then find all words that are related to it and able to combine with it to form linear series (phrases, sentences) that are acceptable in a language. Words in a horizontal semantic field (linearity) often occur simultaneously along with central words in all text-categories.

Once a word is mentioned, different people might associate it with a wider range of vocabulary, which is called association. In other words, a set of words which is evoked from an association with its central word is called the associative semantic field. And every word has its own associations. Associative semantic fields depend on living environment, era and life-experiences of each individual, therefore, the association is generally subjective and personal.

As mentioned above, it is possible to condense some basic criteria in establishing the semantic field.

Firstly, the semantic field must rely on the meaning of language or the meaning of the word. Thus, it is the meaning of the word that we can based on to gather words into semantic fields.

Secondly, it is essential to find a typical word (center) which covers only lexical - semantic characteristics of its semantic field.

Thirdly, both the denotat and significate semantic fields are shaped by denotatum and signification of words. With the central word's meaning and words associated with the horizontal (linearity) axis, we can determine the horizontal semantic field. Furthermore, the associative semantic field is established on the basis of characteristics of association.

2.2.4. Semantic Field Categories

According to Chau, D. H [1], the semantic field was divided into two categories: horizontal and vertical semantic field. The vertical semantic field can be based on the meaning of words to distinguish the denotat and significate semantic fields. Furthermore, the associatively semantic field is established on the basis of characteristics of association.

a. Vertical Semantic Field

Denotat Semantic Field:

A denotat semantic field is a set of words that are related to each other in terms of denotatum. The denotat semantic fields differ in the number of words, the arrangement of units and distribution domain in each language. When a word has many denotatum, it may belong to different semantic fields. The semantic fields can penetrate and interfere with one another when some words can be figured out in these semantic fields. The relation of words to each denotat semantic field is not the same. Some words are close-knit to the semantic field while some have very blur features to this semantic field. Based on the nature and relationship between the word and the semantic field, there are core characteristics that define the semantic field, including prototypes. As a result, the farther the gap between characteristics of words and the core characteristics is, the less the involvement in this semantic field is.

Significate Semantic Field:

A Significate semantic field is a set of words that have the same significate structure. Moreover, a broad significate semantic field can also be divided into smaller significate semantic fields with different densities. Because a word has many significate meanings, they can belong to different significate semantic fields. The significate semantic fields interfere with and penetrate on each other, but the core characteristics are also preserved, especially in prototypes. To determine a significate semantic field, we base on a certain significate semantic structure as the root.

b. Horizontal Semantic Field

The horizontal semantic field first comes from the linearity of the linguistic signal; the signals take turn successively into a sequence that cannot occur simultaneously. Therefore this relationship is called horizontal relation or syntagmatic relation. To have a syntagmatic relationship with each other, the elements must perform the same function in terms of language or communication content. Thanks to the syntagmatic relationship, words expose their grammatical and lexical meanings. To create a linear semantic field, we choose a given word and then examine all words that have a similar relationship to the meaning of the root word and then combine them into acceptable linear sequences in a language.

c. Associative Semantic Field

An associative semantic field is a set of words representing things, phenomena, activities, and properties, etc. which have an associative relation with the root word. To form an associative semantic field, the words first and foremost must belong to the horizontal and vertical semantic fields. Besides, words in an associative semantic field depend on the possible associative meanings of the given word. The associative semantic field also has many associative words which simultaneously appear with the root of word in relatively homogeneous and repetitive themes. Therefore, the associative semantic field has features of nationalism, age, and individuality. They may have words with similar denotatum but also have different connotative meanings. As can be seen that each associative semantic field is established thanks to the similarities which are not related to the position in the speech sequence and to the substitution for each other.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

The corpus was collected from various sources such as novels, short stories, idioms, proverbs, poems. Besides, Vietnamese Dictionary [12] is also employed as a source of linguistic data for this article. From these sources, we list words as well as the number of times that each word appears in every context with its original meaning. Accordingly, the data is classified into subfields, second-grade fields and word groups to compare and explain the frequency, because between the denotative and significate semantic fields (vertical semantic field) and the horizontal semantic field contain close relation and intersection. For example, when establishing a denotat semantic field, a significate field must be used. In the denotat semantic fields, some phenomena can combine according to the horizontal semantic field. This paper isolates the semantic field of water mainly on the basis of the denotat semantic field.

The subfields will be subsequently presented in accordance with the principles of semantic fields which are general definitions, typical first, less general, less typical subfield.

3.2. Linguistic Methods and Tactics

Analysis Method:

This method is the basis for classifying words into subfields and groups.

Description Method:

This method is used to describe the results of the research.

Tactics of Statistics and Classification:

These tactics determine the number of words in different subfields and groups

4. Data, Findings and Discussion

Before presenting the results, it is necessary to interpret the meaning of the "water" which is used to establish subfields as well as the variants.

The word “water” in the Vietnamese dictionary [12] is defined as follows:

Water 1:

Meaning 1. Colorless, odorless liquid and naturally occurring in lakes, rivers, etc. (Example: well water, rainwater ...);

Meaning 2. The liquid in general (e.g. tears, succulent lemon ...);

Meaning 3. Times of using water, giving a certain effect (for example freshly brewed first tea, a decoction of three times through water ...);

Meaning 4. A layer that is durable and beautiful to cover (for example two coats of lime water ...);

Meaning 5. The natural light and shadow of some objects, as if there is a thin layer of some light-reflecting material on the outside (for example, wood on glossy water ...).

The homonymy with water 1:

Water 2: territory: land that is under the control of a particular country or political leader, for example, Indochina countries, separated and formed one new country...

Water 3:

Meaning 1. Fast and slow steps [of the horse] (the running ‘water’ of the horse);

Meaning 2. The movement of a certain chess-man on the chess board.

Meaning 3. To affect the situation or to evade from an unfavorable situation (for example: to hang one’s head in shame/ to feel so ashamed that one wishes to bury his head to the ground because he lost face (There is no better way to get rid of the shame than transforming into water and flowing down the underground.)

Meaning 4. In disadvantageous situations (for example: to condescend or to stoop so low so as to do something...)

Meaning 5. The unendurable level (for example: “*sao lại độc ác đến nước ấy*” – an unbelievable cruelty)

These words were out of research aims, so they were not taken into consideration. Fortunately, we can collect the linguistic data and focus on the *meaning 1* of the word “water 1”. The semantic field of “water” in Vietnamese has a total number of 264 words, which were divided into seven subfields:

4.1. Subfield 1: The Constant and Variables of “Water”

Water is the root and its variants are “thuy”, “nac”, with the frequency of occurrence (FO) based on the primary data.

The subfield 1 possesses 3 cases and 283 occurrences. The word “water” is observed 259 times accounting for 91.52 % whilst the other two variants make up only 8.48%. It is evident that “nước”-water (etymologic word) is the core element with the highest FO.

4.2. Subfield 2: Modes of Water

This field consists of 14 words with 279 occurrences which are demonstrated in the Table 1 below:

Table 1. List of word quantities of subfield 2.

Subfield 2	Words	Total	Examples
Modes of water	<i>mưa (rain), giọt (drop), sóng (wave), dòng (flow), làn (watercourse), xoáy (whirlpool), tia (spray), bong bóng (bubble), khối (cube), cột (pillar), luồng (stream), tảng (iceberge), hạt (drop), hột (drop)</i>	14	1. “Những <i>giọt</i> nước nhỏ tong tong vào gót chân khiến Huệ càng bán trí” [18]. 2. “Anh xin làm <i>sóng</i> biếc/Hôn mãi cát vàng em” [17]. 3. “Những tấm vai trần đùa rờn dưới <i>dòng</i> nước đỏ sẫm phù sa lấp lánh ánh trăng” [18].
Total		14	

As can be seen, the central word “mưa” - rain accounted for 59.86%, followed by “giọt” 8.24% respectively. It is noticeable that the proportions of “làn” – watercourse, “xoáy” – whirlpool and “tia” – spray are nearly similar. Others allocated in the boundary region. “giọt” – drop, “sóng” – wave, and “dòng” - stream with a rate of 13.26%, 10.04%. (Figure 1)

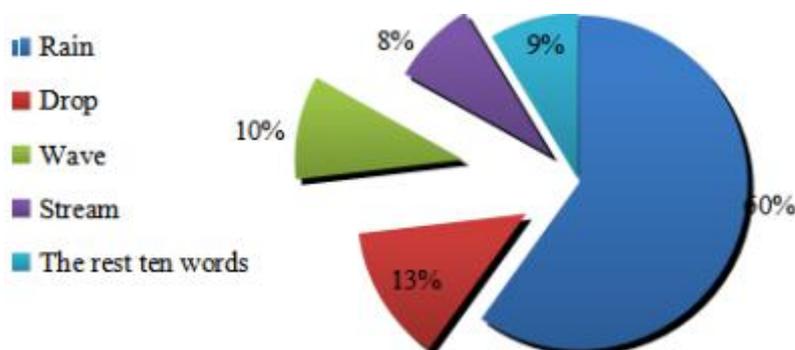


Figure 1. Frequency of word utilization in Subfield 2.

4.3. Subfield 3: Transformation of water

Table 2. List of word quantities of subfield 3.

Subfield 3	Words	Total	Examples
Transformation of water	<i>mưa (rain), chảy (flow), tràn (drain), trào (overflow), sôi (boil), trôi (drift), lên (up), tuôn (pour), ngập (flood), đổ (pour), lụt (flood), nhỏ (drop), rỉ (leak), rỏ (drip), thấm (absorb), trút (pour into), ròng (ebb), vỗ (clap), cuộn (curl up), sủi (effervesce), cõn (pillar), cuốn (sweep), dậy (rise up), dòn, động, loang (spread), lượn, sa, xa (drop), xô (surf wave) dâng (rise up), đánh (collision), gợn (wavy), lặng (silence), rò rỉ (leak), tản (scatterd), vây bủa (encircled), xao.</i>	39	1. “ <i>Mưa</i> nhẹ hạt một chút thì vô số muỗi rừng từ gốc cây, kẽ lá và như từ từng giọt mưa sinh ra, vây bủa ba người” [18]. 2. “Sắp đến chỗ lội -chả là chỗ này người ta xé đường cho nước <i>chảy</i> từ ruộng cao sang ruộng thấp - thì gần bắt kịp bà thím” [18]. 3. “Trời thì mưa kinh khủng là mưa. Nước <i>tràn</i> từ núi xuống réo ò ò” [18]
Total		39	

The statistic data revealed 39 words with 250 occurrences in this semantic subfield. Noticeably, water transformation through rain phenomena makes up 28.4%, which reflects the actual occurring frequency of water in the Vietnamese’s cognition. On the basis of the Vietnamese’s cognition, water can be visualized through “chảy” – flow

(16.8%), “tràn” – overflow (4%), “trào” – brim over (4%), “sôi” - boil (3.6%), “trôi” – float (3.6%).

4.4. Subfield 4: Features and conditions of water

This field consists of 97 words with 544 occurrences, which is classified into eight second subfields as follows Table 3:

Table 3. List of word quantities of subfield 4.

Subfield 4	Second subfield	Words	Total	Examples
The features and condition of water	2a. Water colors	<i>trắng</i> (white), <i>xanh</i> (blue/green), <i>bạc</i> (silver), <i>đỏ</i> (red), <i>đen</i> (black), <i>biếc</i> (deep blue/very green) <i>nâu</i> (brown).	7	1. “Một luồng thác <i>trắng</i> rợn người ào qua Kiên lùa vào cửa toa” [10]. 2. “Gần khu nhà của chúng tôi là một cái hồ lớn, nước <i>xanh</i> quanh năm” [18].
	2b. Water’s clearness	<i>trong</i> (pure), <i>đục</i> (muddy), <i>lờ lờ</i> (opaque), <i>trong sạch</i> (crystal clear), <i>trong trắng</i> (clear).	5	1. “Kiên thần thò đứng nhìn rất lâu mặt nước <i>trong</i> lẫn lẫn sóng” [10]. 2. “Những cánh bèo xoay tít trong rồ, phai ra màu nước <i>đục</i> lờ rờ trở nên xanh mơn” [18].
	2c. The sounds created from water movements	<i>róc rách</i> (murmur), <i>tí tách</i> (dripping), <i>rì rầm</i> (murmur), <i>ầm ầm</i> (rumbling), <i>tong tong</i> (trickling), <i>rì rào</i> (sough), <i>rầm rầm</i> (rumbling), <i>ào ào</i> (impetuously), <i>ì oạp/ọp</i> (slow), <i>tong tông</i> (trickling), <i>lào rào</i> (rustle), <i>ì ầm</i> (rumbling), <i>ràn rạt</i> (whisper), <i>rì rả</i> (sporadic).	14	1. “Cũng có lúc chơi nơi dặm khách/Tiếng suối nghe <i>róc rách</i> lưng đèo” [8]. 2. “Mưa rơi <i>tí tách</i> ” [12]. 3. “Sóng biển <i>rì rào/rì rầm</i> ” [12].
	2d. The taste of water	<i>mặn</i> (brine), <i>chua</i> (sour), <i>chát</i> (acrid), <i>lợ</i> (brackish), <i>ngọt</i> (freshwater)	5	1. “Có một số loài cá sống được ở cả nước <i>mặn</i> và nước <i>ngọt</i> ” [kn]. 2. “Đồng <i>chua</i> nước <i>mặn</i> ” [5].
	2e. Water quality	<i>sạch</i> (clean), <i>độc</i> (poison), <i>tốt</i> (good), <i>ô nhiễm</i> (contaminated), <i>lành</i> (good), <i>tươi</i> (fresh), <i>xấu</i> (unused/undrinkable)	7	1. “Trăm đờ lấy nước làm <i>sạch</i> ” [5]. 2. “Rừng thiêng nước <i>độc</i> ” [5]. 3. “ <i>Tốt</i> nước béo cá” [kn].
	2f. Water reserves	<i>cạn</i> (dry), <i>đầy</i> (full), <i>sâu</i> (deep), <i>đắm</i> (bathed with), <i>ròng ròng</i> (pour off), <i>rộng</i> (wide/large), <i>đầm đĩa</i> (dripping wet), <i>lớn</i> (enormous), <i>vơi</i> (not to be full) <i>dài</i> (long), <i>hết</i> (empty), <i>lênh láng</i> (spread all over), <i>ráo</i> (once wet then become dry), <i>cả</i> (large) <i>thẳm</i> (very deep), <i>ấm ắp</i> (brimful), <i>chan chứa</i> (full), <i>dầm dề</i> (soaked),	21	1. “Vào mùa nước <i>cạn</i> , nước giếng vẫn trong vắt, <i>ấm</i> nước” [18]. 2. “Một lần tôi đổ <i>đầy</i> <i>ấm</i> nước để cạnh bếp định đun nhưng cuộc chơi đang vui, cuốn đi, nên quên mất” [18]. 3. “Phía bên này của khu vườn tiếp giáp với một cái <i>đầm</i> lớn. Chắc là <i>sâu</i> vì nước rất trong” [10].

		<i>lai láng (spilled profusely), nông (shallow), to (big).</i>		
	2p. Emotions when interacting with water	<i>lạnh (cozy), mát (cool), buốt giá (frozen), nóng (hot), ấm ấm (warm), buốt, lạnh giá/giá lạnh, băng giá (frozen)</i>	8	1. “Nó thật sự thất vọng khi hai chiếc kem đã bị chảy gần hết, nhưng nước vẫn còn <i>lạnh</i> ” [18]. 2. “Thơm như hoa, <i>mát</i> như nước” [5]
	2q. The states of water and the objects in water	- Group 1. <i>water physical condition</i>		
		<i>ướt (soaked), ẩm (moisture), ẩm ướt (wet), đọng (stagnant), đặc (densed), lơ lửng, (drift) lơ đờ (sluggish), lăn tăn (rippling), lặng lẽ (silence) lặng lẽ (quiet) lững lờ (drift), tù (stagnant), ẩm ẩm (dampish), êm (soft), lặng tờ (calm), lỏng (watery), ú, ú đọng (stagnant).</i>	19	1. “Chòm xóm chạy đến, trên tay mỗi người lọ dầu, củ gừng, trái chanh, viên thuốc, cắt, lể, đắp khăn <i>ướt</i> , chà chanh, xoa dầu nhiều lượt nhưng thẳng Nghĩa vẫn nằm mê man, lâu lâu lại co giật” [18]. 2. “Không có người chẻ củi, nhóm hộ tôi cái bếp mùn cưa bị <i>ẩm</i> ...” [18].
		- Group 2. <i>The physical condition of objects in water</i>		
		<i>lênh đênh, lập lờ, lênh bênh, lúp lụp, lều bều, lênh phênh, lều phều, lơ lững, lững lơ =>floating</i>	9	1. “ <i>Lênh đênh</i> như bè muống trôi sông” [5] 2. “Gỗ trôi <i>lập lờ</i> ” [12].
		- Group 3. <i>consequences caused by water</i>		
		<i>Lũ (deluge), lụt (flood)</i>	2	1. “Cái xác lơ loét, ốm o như xác nhái bị dòng <i>lũ</i> xô tấp lên một bãi lau lầy lưa” [10]. 2. “Đắp đê phòng <i>lụt</i> ” [12]
Total	8		97	

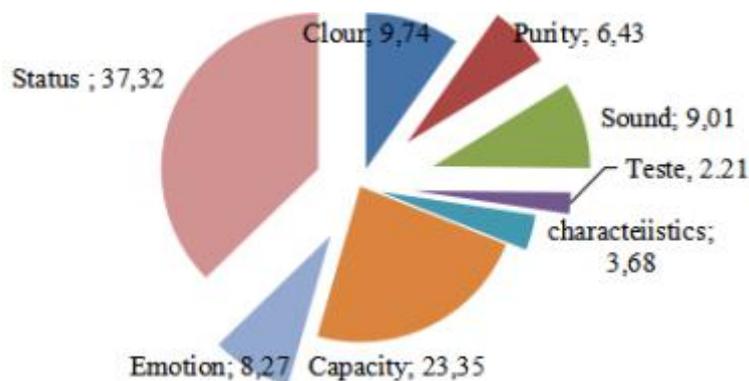


Figure 2. The frequency of occurrences of words in subfield 2.

Water is colorless and odorless liquid; however, further distinctions such as colors, odors, and cleanliness can be pointed out through different substances existing in nature. It is apparently seen that the highest proportion belongs to the second subfield “2q” with 97 words, accounting for 36.74%. It is an interesting fact that this rate is also the highest in the semantic field of water. The reason could be the significance of water in daily life and Vietnamese cognition of this crucial element. With the great

assistance of senses, humans are able to perceive and consequently coin a great variety of words.

Generally, the proportion of second subfield 2b (37.32%) is the highest compared to the other seven ones. This rate is followed by that of color with 23.35%. Noticeably, the water taste only accounts for 2.21% which is the lowest.

4.5. Subfield 5: Natural Forms of Water

Natural existence of water in physical form is nominated with numerous words in Vietnamese, particularly:

Table 4. List and word quantity in subfield 5.

Subfield 5	Words	Total	Examples
Natural space of water	<i>sông/giang (river), suối (stream), giếng (well), ao/bể (pond), biển (sea) hồ (lake), chuôm/đầm/đìa (small pond -mostly in fields), hố (hole), thác (fall), vũng (pool), khe (slot), lạch (inlet), vực (abysm), kênh (canal), rãnh (ditch), cống (sewer), ghènh/gành (fall), mương (ditch), ngòi (arroyo), hốc (hallow), mòi (bubble of water), phá (lagoon) rạch (small irrigation canal), vịnh (gulf).</i>	24	1. “Bà rửa chân tay, dọn cơm trong khi ông nhảy ùm xuống <i>sông</i> tắm tấp, ngụp lặn như một cậu bém” [18]. 2. “Tiếng <i>suối</i> chảy, tiếng gió núi hú lên chính là tiếng nói của những hồn hoang binh lính” [10]. 3. “Ai ai trong làng cũng kể câu chuyện người đàn bà mang thai tự tử dưới <i>giếng</i> cách đây mấy năm” [18].
Total		24	

In Vietnamese, the number of words belonging to water semantic field is certainly numerous. As a matter of fact that Vietnam is a tropical country receiving massive precipitation year-round, along with its unique terrain. Three-quarters of Vietnam’s territory is made up of mountainous and hilly regions, with massive forests in the north and west, alluvial plain in the east and south, coastlands along the Pacific Ocean. Such unique terrain creates a system of diverse rivers and thick canals. As a result, an arrangement of water’s natural space nomination is indispensable in Vietnamese.

To the Vietnamese community, through our language reflection, the water natural space related to life or pure accounted for the highest rate, including river (*sông/giang*), stream (*suối*), well (*giếng*), pond (*ao*) and *biển/bể* (sea), lake (*hồ*), at 27.63%, 12,5%, 11.84%, 10.53% and 10.31% respectively. Because the water sea is salty, so fresh water from other sources namely rivers, streams, lakes and ponds are used for drinking and cleanliness. This could be the reason why sea (*biển*) has the largest water capacity and owns a variety of diverse aquatic creatures. The Vietnamese during their history, however, were ecountered many difficulties in approaching and relying on the seas due to limited exploitation ability. That is the reason why “*biển*”-sea has such a small number of words. Nonetheless, other water natural space is more assorted and appears more regularly.

4.6. Subfield 6: Artificial containers of water

A list of various nominations for man-made containers of water is demonstrated as follows:

The highest proportion belongs to “cup” (*chén/tách*) with 13.48% followed by that of “pot” (*chậu/thau*) and “bowl” (*bát/đọi/tô*). Overall, the rate of objects used for nourish and puration purposes is considerably higher than the rest.

Table 5. List and word quantity in subfield 6.

Subfield 6	Word	Total	Example
Artificial containers of water	<i>chén/tách (cup), chậu/ thau (pot), gáo (water dipper), bát/đôi /tô (bowl), ấm/chuyên(kettle), gàu/gầu (bailing bucket), phích (vacuum flask), chai (bottle), xô (bucket), bình (pitcher), cốc (cup), thùng (keg), vại (beaker), bể (tank), lọ (vessel), máng (trough), vò (urn), ca (cup), chum (big jar), hũ (jar), khạp (large glazed earthenware jar), téc (cistern), thung (bottle), tích (pot).</i>	24	1. “Thí một chén nước, phước chất bằng non” [5]. 2. “Thương thay cái chậu nước trong, để cho bèo tằm, bèo ong giạt vào” [5]. 3. “Cửa buồng tắm không phải là đang mở mà bị giạt tung khỏi bản lề, nằm vật úp dưới đất. Bên trong ở góc có hai xô nhựa còn lung nước, cái gáo dừa để trong thau nhôm” [10].
Total		24	

4.7. Subfield 7: Human activities with water

This subfield consists of 63 words with 364 occurrences which are subdivided into three secondary subfields, particularly:

Table 6. List and word quantity in subfield 7.

Subfield 7	Secondary subfields	Words	Total	Example
The connection of Human activities with water	2a. Human activities with water	- Group 1. Purification		
		<i>tắm (bath), rửa (wash), dầm (soak), gội (wash), tắm rửa (clean the body), rửa ráy (scrub), giặt (wash), tắm tấp (take a shower), tắm gội (bath), giặt giũ (wash), tắm giặt (bath and wash), nhúng (to dip something into the water), tráng (rinse), gột (cleanse), gột rửa (clean).</i>	15	1. “Nhưng đôi mắt của nó thì như hai hạt ngọc đen, ẩm ướt và vẩy gội. Lúc đó Thủy đang tắm” [18] 2. “Dọn dẹp xong nó ra giếng rửa chân tay đã thấy người đàn ông chờ nó ở đó” [18]. 3. “Nàng lẳng lẽ, vô cảm com nước, chiều chuộng, giặt mớ quần áo cứng cộp bụi đường trường” [18]
		- Group 2. Nourishment		
		<i>uống (drink), chan (souse), húp (slurp), nốc (gulp), tu (drink off), hút (suck), tợp (sip).</i>	7	1. “Khi tôi lên bảy, mẹ giao cho tôi một việc: đun một ấm nước mưa để nguội cho cả nhà uống” [18]. 2. “Nhờ ông vãi, húp nước xuýt” [5]
	- Group 3. Water used in family			
		<i>đun (heat), nấu (boil), lọc (filter).</i>	3	1. “Sắp đến giờ mẹ về tôi mới bắc bếp đun nước” [18]. 2. “Chiều cứ thế đổ gạo, đổ nước vào nấu chẳng cần vo vì sợ mất chất” [18].
	2b. Water used in agricultural	- Group 1. Irrigation		
		<i>tưới (irrigate), dẫn (deliver), tát (vào) (bail water), cấp (supply),</i>	12	1. “Hoan tưới rau một chốc đã thấy lưng mỏi

	activities	<i>xả (vào) (pour), chống hạn (combat drought), nhập (join), doa, bơm (pump), gánh (carry), đưa (bring), xối (pour).</i>		<p>như” [18].</p> <p>2. “<i>Dẫn thủy nhập điền</i>” [5].</p> <p>3. “<i>Cô bỗng nhớ tới anh chàng đã trêu cô ban chiều khi cô đang tát nước</i>” [18].</p>
	- Group 2. Block water from harmful affects			
		<i>tháo (drain), tiêu nước (drain), tiêu úng (drain), thoát (drain), chắn/chặn (block), chống úng (combat waterlogged), tát (ra) (bail), chống ú (combat block), chống lụt (combat stagnant), chống ngập (combat flooding), be bờ (dam up), đắp bờ (build banks), đắp đập (dam up), đắp đê (build dikes), ngăn (block), xả (ra, đi) (release)</i>	16	<p>1. “<i>Họ gấp rút đắp đê chắn nhằm chặn đứng dòng lũ đang cuồn cuộn đổ về</i>” [kn].</p> <p>2. “<i>Nay tát đầm, mai tát đìa, ngày kia giỗ hậu</i>” [5].</p> <p>3 “<i>Ngăn sông cấm chợ</i>” [5].</p>
2c. Human activities in the water environment	- Group 1. Direction of movement			
		<i>qua (cross), sang (cross), vượt (pass), ra (flow out), vào (flow into).</i>	5	<p>1. “<i>Qua sông, phải lụy đờ</i>” [5].</p> <p>2. “<i>Tay mang khăn gói sang sông, mẹ kêu lạy mẹ, thương chồng phải theo</i>” [5]</p>
	- Group 2. Movement in water			
		<i>lội (wade), bơi (swim), lặn (dive), ngụp (plunge), lặn lội (wade)</i>	5	<p>1. “<i>Uyên và bé Hạnh vén ống quần lội qua những con rãnh lênh láng nước</i>” [18].</p> <p>2. “<i>Ta bơi nhé, bơi thật xa tới thủy cung</i>” [10].</p>
Total	3		63	

In the semantic subfield 7, the highest rate belonged to the word drink (uống) which accounted for 15.38%. This proportion was followed respectively by that of irrigate (tưới) 7.42%, bath (tắm) 7.14%, wash (rửa) 5.77%, wade (lội) 5.77%, cross (qua) 4.12%, drain (tháo) 3.85%, drain (thoát) 3.02% and bail (tát) 2.75% , deliver (dẫn) 2.75%... This statistic shows that the most important human activities with water are using water for nourishing life, purification and agriculture.

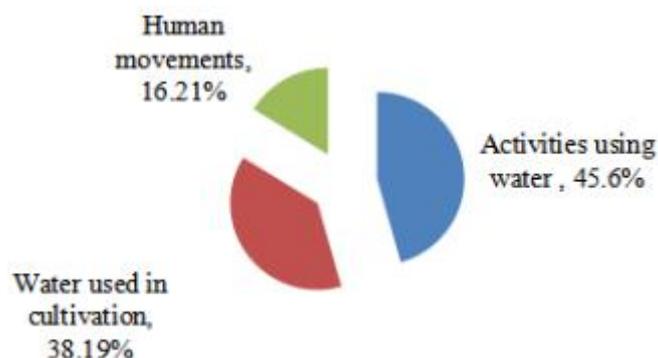


Figure 3. Frequency between subfield 2.

Overall, it can be apparently seen that the highest proportion belong to groups of daily activities, among which are drinking (15.38%), washing and agricultural irrigation.

The secondary subfield (2a) has clarified the importance of water to life activities with the rate of occurrences, accounting for 45.6%. This proportion is followed by that of subfield 2b by 38.19%. It is worth pointing out that secondary subfield 2c holds the lowest rate, only 16.21%.

Below are Figure 4, Figure 5 illustrating the statistical comparison among seven subfields of the water semantic field in Vietnamese.

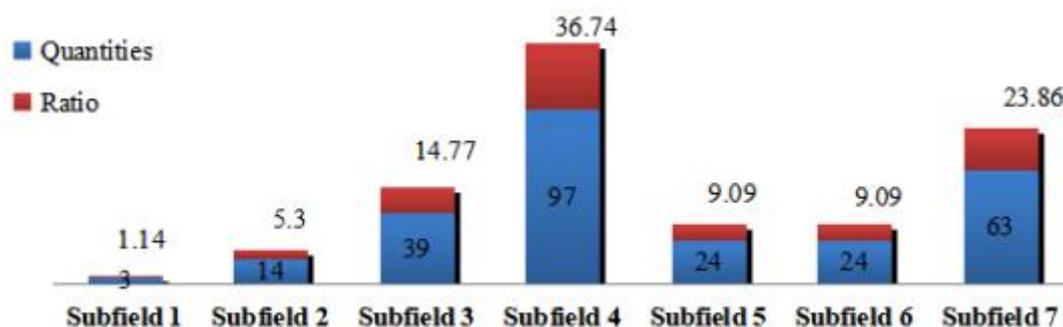


Figure 4. The quantity of words between 7 subfields of water.

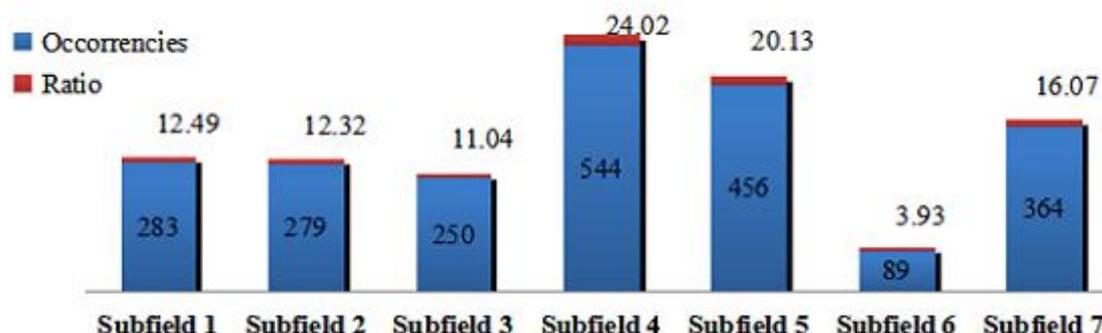


Figure 5. The frequency of occurrence between 7 subfields of water.

As can be seen from all statistical analysis above, what holds the truth is Vietnamese has recorded a total of 264 words with 2265 occurrences.

Regarding the number of words, among the 7 semantic subfields belonging to the water semantic field, the subfield 4 (Features and conditions of water) had the highest number of words with 36.74%, followed by the subfield 7 (human activities with water) accounting for 23.86%, the subfield 3 (the transformation of water) with 14.77%. It is noticeable that both the natural forms of water and the artificial containers of water semantic subfields have almost the same rate as 9.09%. In contrast, these are subfields 1 and 2 (constants and variants of water and the modes of water) respectively 1.14% and 5.3% (Figure 4).

Also, the proportion of frequency of occurrences (see Figure 5), the semantic subfield 4 (the features and conditions of water) has the highest frequency with 24.02%. Following by the subfield 5 (the natural forms of water) 20.13%. The semantic field 7 (human activities with water) is the third highest with 16.07%. The subfield 1 (constant and variant of water) making up 12.49%. The lowest rates were the semantic subfield 2 (the modes of water) accounting for 12.32%, the semantic subfield 3 (the transformation of water) with 11.04%, and the semantic subfield 6 (the artificial containers of water) accounted for only 3.93%.

Comparing the Figure 4 and Figure 5 demonstrates that the two dimensions (number of words and frequency of using words) are not identical: the semantic subfield 1 has only 3 words (nước, nác, thùy) but they are (especially from water) has used at high frequencies, and words from other semantic subfields have a narrow range of specific meaning, so it is rarely used in appropriate contexts, so the frequency of occurrence is lower.

To summarize, the semantic subfield 4 (the features and conditions of water) has the highest number of words and occurrence rate in the water semantic field, followed by semantic subfield 7 (human activities with water). The amount of words and the number of occurrences is high after the semantic subfield 4 (except the number of occurrences of the semantic subfield 5). This also shows that water is very important in human life manifested in the daily activities of humans.

5. Conclusion

The semantic field of water has a total of 264 words with 2265 occurrences. Regarding the number of words, among the 7 semantic subfields belonging to the water semantic field, the subfield 4 (the features and conditions of water) had the highest number of words with 36.74%, followed by the subfield 7 (human activities with water) accounting for 23.86%, the subfield 3 (the transformation of water) with 14.77%. It is noticeable that the subfields indicating the natural forms of water and the artificial containers of water have almost the same rate as 9.09%. In contrast, these subfields 1 and 2 (constants and variants of water and the modes of water) respectively are 1.14% and 5.3%. Also, the proportion of frequency of occurrences (see chart 5), the semantic subfield 4 (the features and conditions of water) has the highest frequency with 24.02%, followed by the subfield 5 (the natural forms of water) 20.13%. The semantic field 7 (human activities with water) is the third highest with 16.07%. The semantic subfield 1 (constant and variant of water) makes up 12.49%. The lowest rate is the semantic subfield 2 (the modes of water) accounting for 12.32%, the semantic subfield 3 (the transformation of water) is 11.04%, and the semantic subfield 6 (the artificial containers of water) accounts for only 3.93%.

In conclusion, the water semantic field is dramatically diverse with numerous words, which shapes a hierarchical system within its subfields. These subfields have been respectively demonstrated so as to clearly explain the frequency of occurrences among words through practical statistic and semantic field theory. Furthermore, this article suggests logical steps to classify the water semantic field in terms of linguistic criteria. The results reflect the connections between humans and water as well as the water condition, which have a significant impact on human life according to the cognition of the Vietnamese.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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