Comprehension Of The Word "肩" In Chinese And The Word "Vai" (Shoulder) In Vietnamese

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Abstract:
The article investigates the meaning characteristics and meaning development of the word "肩" (shoulder) in Chinese and the word "vai"(shoulder) in Vietnamese. Through the comparison method, the article points out the similarities and differences in the semantic characteristics of this pair of words, as well as the influence of socio-linguistic factors on the development of the meaning of these words in Chinese and Vietnamese.
Key words: *Meaning development, contrast, similarity and difference, Chinese, Vietnamese*

I. Introduction

Due to the development of society, people are in contact with things in social life and in the natural world more and more, understanding with the outside world is also more, thinking more deeply. Therefore, the need to generate new concepts to represent new things and phenomena has also increased. From the perspective of developing people's cognitive towards objective things, it can be seen that the longer a word has a long history and is used more often, the more meanings it has. The development of word meanings is a common phenomenon in any languages, the end result of word development is the production of a large number of polysemous words. Taylor [6, pp.105] argues that the semantic category feature of polysemous words is that they have the same core meaning, causing different meanings to be associated with the same word.

When studying the development of the meaning of words in languages, the vast majority of linguists are interested in the modes of word meaning. From the perspective of traditional linguistics, lexical translation is one of the basic contents, in which metaphor and metonymy are two methods of meaning transfer commonly used in all languages.

Vocabulary for human body parts, in addition to being used to refer to the human body, is also used a lot in daily communication in many languages. Like all languages, Chinese and Vietnamese have words for body parts and belong to the basic vocabulary of the language. These words have one feature in common: the basic meaning (the original meaning) is the same, and they often differ only in the derivative meaning developed on the basis of the original meaning. The study of vocabulary words in the direction of comparison helps to detect similarities and differences, especially those that are different; thereby showing the characteristics of national thinking and culture. For the reasons mentioned above, in this article we explore the development of the meaning of the word "肩" in Chinese and "vai" in Vietnamese, thereby showing the similarities and differences between them. Hopefully, the research results will become a useful reference source for teaching Vietnamese language and Vietnamese culture to foreigners learning Vietnamese.

II. Research content

In this content, in order to make a fair comparison between the two languages, we conduct a survey through the dictionary "Modern Chinese Dictionary" (7th edition)（现代汉语词典 (第七版)） and the book "Vietnamese dictionary" by Hoang Phe (2016). These are popular dictionaries and are considered to have a scientific arrangement method, which has been supplemented with many new materials.

Semantic characteristics of the word "肩" in Chinese

According to the "Modern Chinese Dictionary" （现代汉语词典 (第七版) "肩" has the following meanings:

Table 2.1. Meaning of "肩" in Chinese

Meanings of the word	Translation to English
1.肩膀 （人体部位的胳膊或动物前肢和躯干相连的部分）	1. Shoulder (the arm of the human body or the part where the forelimb of an animal connects to the torso)
2. 担负	2. to bear; to shoulder

[8, tr.632]

The word "肩" in Chinese has two meanings, one of which is the original meaning (meaning 1), which refers to a part of the human or animal body, and a derivative meaning (meaning 2). From the meaning (1), it can be seen that the structure of the symbolic meaning of the word "肩" can be represented by the meaning strokes separated in square brackets as follows: [Human body part] [part connecting between forelegs of animals with body parts]. Thus, the structure of the meaning of "肩" includes 02 basic meanings with 01 meaning meaning things (referring to people) and 01 meaning meaning indicating things (animals). Based on the similarity in function, following the metaphorical translation line, from the original meaning, the word "肩" gives rise to a derivative meaning (meaning 2) signifying "carrying" a certain job or responsibility.

Semantic characteristics of the word "vai" in Vietnamese

According to Hoang Phe's Vietnamese Dictionary (2015), the word "vai" is defined as follows [2, pp.1713]:
1. The part of the body that connects the arms (or the front legs in animals) to the body
2. Human role, considered as an expression of the upper and lower hierarchy in family and kinship relationships.
3. Human shoulder, considered as a symbol of strength
4. Part of the shirt, covering the shoulders
5. Parts of some objects that look like a shoulder or act like a shoulder
6. The character in the script is portrayed by the actor in the play or in the movie.

The word *"vai"* in Vietnamese language has six meanings, one of which is the original meaning (meaning 1) indicating a part of the body, including the following meanings: [body part] [connecting the arms (or front legs in animals) with the body]. From meaning 1, based on the method of metaphorical translation, the word *"vai"* has 5 more derivative meanings. Derived from the position of the shoulder on the body, according to the metaphorical translation line, "vai" has an additional meaning (2) with the meaning of expressing the upper and lower hierarchy in family and kinship relationships, such as: *upper shoulder, lower shoulder*. With the function of "linking the arm to the body", continuing in a metaphorical way, *"vai"* has an additional meaning (3) is considered a symbol of strength. Taking this a step further, with this shifting meaning, derived from the outwardly similar attribute, the metaphorical way *"vai"* gives rise to meanings (4) and (5) denoting parts of a garment or suit. the part of some objects, looks like a shoulder or has the effect of carrying and supporting like a shoulder, such as: *shoulder shirt, shoulder plow,...* Still following this translation but with more abstraction, *"vai"* not only has the meaning of being a part of some object, but also signifies that the character in the script is portrayed by the actor in a play or in a movie (meaning 6).

Compare the meaning and translation of the word "肩" in Chinese and the word "vai" in Vietnamese

Through the above meaning analysis, it is possible to imagine the translation of "肩" in Chinese and "vai" in Vietnamese through the table below:

Table 2.2. The comparison table of the meaning of the word "肩" in Chinese and the word "vai" in Vietnamese

"肩" in Chinese		" Vai" (shoulder) in Vietnamese
1. Shoulder (the arm of the human body or the part where the forelimb of an animal connects to the torso)		1. The part of the body that connects the arms (or the front legs in animals) to the body
2. to bear; to shoulder		2. Human role, considered as an expression of the upper and lower hierarchy in family and kinship relationships.
3. ------------		3. Human shoulder, considered as a symbol of strength
4 ------------		4. Part of the shirt, covering the shoulders
5 ------------		5. Parts of some objects that look like a shoulder or act like a shoulder
6 -----------		6. The character in the script is portrayed by the actor in the play or in the movie.

Through comparison table 2.2, we would like to make some comments as follows:

Similarities

Based on the original meaning of the word *"肩"* and the word *"vai",* it can be seen that among the distinguishing features of the two words, there are meanings indicating things (body parts of humans or animals) and meanings indicating functions. (connects the upper limb to the body).

In terms of word derivative meanings: The derivative meanings of the word *"肩"* and the word *"vai"* are directly or indirectly related to the original meaning and all meanings are related to each other to form a system.

In terms of translation methods, the translation lines of the word *"肩"* in Chinese and *"vai"* in Vietnamese also have similar points. From the meaning (1), derived from the similarity in function, based on the metaphorical translation method, the word *"肩"* gives rise to a derivative meaning (meaning 2) that denotes taking on a certain task similar to the meaning of the word "". Derivative (meaning 3) of the Vietnamese word "vai", symbol of strength.

Transliteration also leads to field shifting. The words *"肩"* and *"vai"* belong to the field denoting human and animal body parts appearing in *"肩负"* (to shoulder, to assume, to shoulder responsibility) and in the phrases "to shoulder the burden" (together to shoulder the burden of solving the work); side by side (always together, working together to strive for a common goal); shoulder to shoulder (stick, close solidarity) - move to the field of meaning indicating function.

On the basis of similarity in shape attributes, the word *"vai"* in Vietnamese changes to the field of meaning indicating the part of the shirt when it is present in the combination: the shoulder. According to our survey, the word *"肩"* in Chinese also has a combination of *"肩衣"* (*shoulder of the shirt)*. Thus, the word "肩" in Chinese and *"vai"* in Vietnamese both have a derivative meaning denoting a part of the shirt and both change to the field of meaning indicating a part of the shirt.

Different points

The number of derivative meanings of the word "vai" in Vietnamese (05 derivative meanings) is richer than the word "肩" in Chinese (01 derivative meaning).

Continuing the line of metaphorical translation, which originates from the similarity of positional attributes, from the original meaning (1) the word "vai" in Vietnamese generates a derivative meaning (2) and transform to the semantic lexical field indicate family hierarchy when present in combination: *upper shoulder, lower shoulder*. From the derivative (2), the word "vai" generate to a derivative meaning (6) and changes to the field of meaning for characters in movies or plays when present in the combination: roleplaying (representing only the actor acting); role play (playing a role in a play, movie); supporting role (a role in an acting that has direct interaction with the main actors but does not exceed five lines); main role (a role that plays a central role, throughout, taking up the majority of the story). The word "肩" in Chinese does not have this derivative meaning.

In addition to changing the meaning field indicating hierarchical, character, and the word "vai" in Vietnames changes to the field meaning indicate a part of some things (meaning 5) when it presents in the combination: shoulder of bed, shoulder of jar, shoulder of plow, however, the word "肩" in Chinese does not have such a combination. According to our survey, the word "肩" has several other combinations such as: *山肩 (mountain side), 硬路肩 (hard shoulder).*

Thus, although the word *"肩"* in Chinese and the word *"vai"* in Vietnamese have a combination that denotes parts of some things, the combined objects in the two languages are not the same.

III. Conclusion

Based on the survey data, our article has pointed out some similarities and differences in the meaning of the word *"肩"* in Chinese and the word *"vai"* in Vietnamese, specifically as follows:

The number of derivative meanings of the word *"vai"* in Vietnamese is richer than the word *"肩"* in Chinese.

Although having the same symbolic meaning, the word *"肩"* in Chinese and *"vai"* in Vietnamese have their own combinations with cultural characteristics of each ethnic group, such as: Vietnamese has: *upper shoulder, lower shoulder, lead role, supporting role refers to the character in the play by actor*, but the word "肩" does not mean this derivative, or the word "肩" can participate in phrases such as *山肩 (mountain side), 硬路肩 (hard shoulder)* but the word "vai" in Vietnamese does not have these combinations. The reason for the difference in the trend of movement of the meaning of the word *"肩"* in Chinese and the word *"vai"* in Vietnamese lies in the habits, ways of thinking and differences in culture of the two language communities which dominate and define this differences.

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