



Vietnamese Animal Names and Their Translation into Modern Chinese (Based on the adventures of a cricket)

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Abstract

This paper addresses the general issues surrounding the nomenclature of animals in Vietnamese, focusing on the taxonomy within Tô Hoài's *The Adventures of a Cricket*. It further contrasts these names with their translations into modern Chinese, examining the corresponding translated work. From the results obtained, we propose interpretations of the translation practices and highlight key considerations from both linguistic and cultural perspectives. These insights may aid in the teaching of Vietnamese to non-native speakers, enhancing their comprehension of the semantic and cultural dimensions associated with animal nomenclature.

Keywords: nomenclature, animal, translation

1. Introduction

Animals (Animalia) are multicellular organisms classified within the kingdom Animalia in the five-kingdom taxonomy system. These organisms exhibit key characteristics, including nucleated cells, reproductive capabilities leading to offspring, and developmental processes that transition from embryonic stages to full maturity. This kingdom is characterized by extensive diversity in morphology, biology, and behavior, with species distributed across a wide range of ecological niches (Smith & Johnson, 2020).

In Vietnamese, the naming of animal species often relies on their physical characteristics, behavior, biological features, etc. This naming convention also reflects the Vietnamese cultural perspective toward nature and surrounding organisms. For instance, the dragon is a symbol of power and majesty, while the dog is often associated with loyalty.

In the sections below, we will present the general issues related to animal names in Vietnamese from both semantic and cultural perspectives. We will conduct a detailed examination using the text from "Diary of a Cricket" and compare it with the methods of translation into modern Chinese based on the corresponding translated version. The results aim to assist readers, especially Vietnamese-Chinese translators, in translating these terms more accurately and appropriately.

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1 General Rules for Naming Animal Species

The names of animal species are referred to as binomial nomenclature, or simply nomenclature, which is governed by international principles to ensure consistency and clarity in biological classification. This system of animal nomenclature, first proposed by Carl Linnaeus, was introduced in 1758. In 1895, the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN) was officially established; several key rules should be noted as follows:

- Each animal species has a scientific name consisting of two parts: the genus name and the species name.
 - The genus name must be capitalized, while the species name is written in lowercase.
 - Each species must have a unique scientific name that does not duplicate the name of another species.
 - The same scientific name cannot be used for two different species.
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To ensure international consistency and recognition, the naming rules must adhere to the provisions of the ICZN. These rules help create a consistent and widely recognized system of scientific nomenclature, facilitating effective communication among scientists worldwide regarding specific animal species.

2.2 Characteristics of Animal Names in Vietnamese

Semantic characteristics

The naming of animal species in Vietnamese typically follows certain principles, reflecting the biological characteristics, habitat, behavior, etc., of the species. For example:

- Naming based on physical appearance: Chim sẻ nâu (brown sparrow), Chim đầu rìu (woodpecker with an ax-shaped head), Cá kiếm (swordfish with a long beak resembling a sword), etc.
- Naming based on habitat: Cá sấu nước ngọt (freshwater crocodile), Chim biển (seabird), Cua núi (mountain crab), etc.
- Naming based on behavior and habits: Chim cút (quail, known for running quickly and hiding), Ong mật (honeybee, a species that produces honey), Gà công nghiệp (industrial chicken, raised using industrial methods), etc.

Cultural characteristics

In Vietnamese, certain animal names hold symbolic significance, often linked to legends, beliefs, or folklore. For example, the Dragon is a mythical creature symbolizing power and majesty; the Phoenix represents the connection between humans and deities and is a symbol of virtue, grace, and elegance.

Some animal species have names that are popular in folklore, reflecting traditional beliefs or cultural practices. For example, Chuột túi is the folk name for a kangaroo; Cọp, ông Cỏ are folk names for a tiger, etc.

These principles illustrate the richness and diversity in naming animal species, which is both scientifically grounded and reflective of the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the Vietnamese people.

2.3 About the Work "Diary of a Cricket" and Its Chinese Translation

Tô Hoài, born Nguyễn Sen (1920–2014), originated from the outskirts of Hanoi. He was a prominent figure in the realist literature movement during the period from 1939 to 1945. Throughout his literary career, Tô Hoài produced a substantial body of work, with "Diary of a Cricket" being his most renowned piece among readers. This work is notable for its vivid anthropomorphism, in which various insects—such as crickets, ants, mantises, and cicadas—are transformed into characters with human-like emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.

In China, "Diary of a Cricket" has been translated into modern Chinese by the translator Lý Doanh, under the title "Tất xuất mạo hiểm ký" [蟋蟀冒险记]. To date, this

represents the sole full-text translation of "Diary of a Cricket" into modern Chinese by Lý Doanh.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs descriptive methods to clarify the characteristics of animal nouns. When describing, we also use auxiliary methods such as characteristic description, statistical, and classification methods. Additionally, comparative translation methods are applied to clarify the translation options used by the translator to adapt the study subjects into modern Chinese.

4. Research Results

4.1 General Characteristics of Animal Species in "Diary of a Cricket"

The work features the names of 68 animal species, which are characterized by their tendency to live in groups or exhibit specific familial and social relationships. For instance, the character Dê Mên has three siblings; ants and bees display distinct organizational and operational structures; and the species inhabit various natural environments such as grasslands, rice fields, and burrows. This ecological diversity fosters a vibrant and complex world, where each species occupies a unique role and position. The principal characteristics of these species are as follows:

- Geographical Space: the setting is the suburbs of Northern Vietnam during the 1940s. Consequently, the animals depicted belong to the local fauna of that region.
- Biological Characteristics: the protagonist, Cricket, is an insect of relatively small size. Thus, larger animals such as elephants, tigers, or marine species are not featured. The majority of the animals in the work belong to the insect class, characterized by their small size.
- Similarity: many animals in the work belong to the same genus or family, which can make them difficult to differentiate, especially for individuals unfamiliar with rural environments. For example, distinguishing between species such as Nhái Bén, Chấu Chàng, Chấu Chuộc, and Éch Côm; Kiến Kim, Kiến Gió, and Kiến Cỏ; Châu Châu, Cào Cào, and Bọ Muồm; and Cò, Cốc, Vạc, and Nông can be challenging.
- Folk Names: some animal species are named using local vernacular terms, such as Bọ Bèo, Cành Cạch, and Kiến Mốc. Given these characteristics, translating animal names into foreign languages, particularly Chinese, should adhere to scientific nomenclature. When names are too specific or challenging to translate, it is advisable to retain the original names, accompanied by explanatory notes or brief descriptions to facilitate better understanding for the readers.

4.2 Analysis of translation strategies for animal nomenclature in "diary of a Cricket" into Chinese

Based on the original text and the Chinese translation by Lý Doanh, the results of the translation of animal names in "Diary of a Cricket" are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Taxonomic Names of Animal Species in the Original and Translated Versions of "The Adventure of a Cricket"

The Animal Names in the Original Text	The Animal Names in the Translation	The Animal Names in the Original Text	The Animal Names in the Translation
Cào Cào	蝗虫	Gọng Vó	水蚊子, 雨蛙
Dế Choắt/Choắt	阿佐	Chim Cắt	小鸟
Cò	黑鹇	Cóc	鸬鹚
Vạc	白鹭	Nông	鸬鹚
Xiên Tóc	天牛	Nhà Trò	飞蛾
Nhện	蜘蛛	Muỗi Mất	最小的蚊子
Chim Chích/Chích	莺鸟	Dế Trũi/Trũi	蝼蛄
Bọ Muồm	蝗虫	Cua Kênh	螃蟹
Săn Sắt	岐尾斗鱼	Thầu Dầu	蝌蚪
Cóc	雨蛙	Ễnh Ương	黑斑蛙
Chẫu Chàng	雨蛙	Nhái Bén	扳树蛙
Ếch Cóm	黑斑蛙	Rắn Mòng/Mòng	蛇, 草蛇
Bọ Bèo	-	Diếc	鲫鱼
Ngao	皖鱼	Cá Chuối	乌鱼
Chạch	泥鳅	Lươn	黄鳝
Cá	鱼	Dế/Mèn/Dế Mèn	蟋蟀
Cua Núi	山龟	Chuồn Chuồn	蜻蜓
Chuồn Chuồn Chứa	蜻蜓	Chuồn Chuồn Ngô	红色蜻蜓
Chuồn Chuồn Tương	基斑蜓	Kim Kim Kim	针状的蜻蜓
Niềng Niềng	龙虱	Bọ Ngựa	蚱蜢
Châu Châu	蚱蜢	Châu Châu Ma	鬼蚱蜢
Cành Cạch	飞蝗	Kiến	蚂蚁
Châu Châu Voi	剑角蝗	Bướm Vàng	黄碟
Bướm Trắng	白蝴蝶	Bướm Rồng	-
Bướm Nhung	-	Ve Sâu	寒蝉
Bướm	蝴蝶	Trà/ Bói Cá	翠鸟
Chuột	野鼠	Sên	蜗牛
Kiến Gió	棕色的小蚂蚁	Kiến Muỗi	-
Kiến Bọ Dọt	牛蚁	Kiến Mun	-
Kiến Càng	蚍蜉	Kiến Cỏ	草蚁
Kiến Kim	金蚁	Kiến Cánh	-
Kiến Móc	-	Kiến Lửa	火蚁
Kiến Đen	黑蚁	Kiến Vàng	黄蚁
Kiến Chúa	蚁后	Bọ Hung	屎壳郎

The results shown in the table above indicate that in some instances, the translator did not adhere to scientific principles, such as:

- The principle that "each species must have a unique scientific name, not to be duplicated with that of another species": Gọng Vó was translated into two different names: 水蚊子 and 雨蛙; Ếch Cóm was translated into three different names: 幼蛙, 扳树蛙, and 黑斑蛙.

- The principle that "the same scientific name should not be used for different species": Cào Cào and Bọ Muồm were both translated as 蝗虫; Ễnh Ương and Nhái Bén were both translated as 扳树蛙; Ễnh Ương and Ếch Cóm were both translated as 黑斑蛙.

- Certain names were translated descriptively rather than using specific terms: Muỗi Mất was translated as "the smallest mosquito" (最小的蚊子); Chim Cắt was translated as "small bird" (小鸟).

These translation issues need to be addressed based on the adherence to scientific nomenclature rules and the cultural characteristics of each nation. We will address these issues in the subsequent sections of this paper.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

The selection of names for animal species should adhere to consistency, utilizing a single term for each species. Consequently, the process of identifying and verifying animal names should encompass steps such as understanding the scientific nomenclature and consulting visual references

for the species. For instance, *Cào Cào* should be translated as 剑角蝗 (Sword-horned Grasshopper), while *Bọ Muồm* should be translated as 螽斯科 (Gryllidae).

Certain species should be translated based on their behavioral traits. For example, *Rắn Mòng* should be rendered as 水蛇 (Water Snake) due to its non-venomous and docile nature, whereas *草蛇* (Grass Snake) is venomous. Similarly, *Chuồn Chuồn Ngô* should be translated as 小斑蜻 (Small Spotted

Dragonfly) reflecting its rapid flight capabilities, rather than 红色蜻蜓 (Red Dragonfly), which emphasizes color. The species *Kiến Gió*, known for its swift movement, should be translated as 酸臭蚁 (Sour-smelling Ant) rather than 棕色的小蚂蚁 (Small Brown Ant). The recommended revised translations are summarized in the following table:

Table 2: Recommended Translations of Animal Names from Vietnamese to Chinese

The Animal Names in the Original Text	Proposed Chinese Name	The Animal Names in the Original Text	Proposed Chinese Name
Cào Cào	剑角蝗	Chim Cắt	红隼
Bọ Muồm	螽斯科	Muỗi Mát	杆蝇属
Cóc	蟾蜍	Ễnh Ương	口蛙
Chẫu Chàng	树蛙	Rắn Mòng/Mòng	水蛇
Ếch Cỏm	青蛙	Chuồn Chuồn Ngô	小斑蜻
Cua Núi	山螃蟹	Kim Kim Kim	丝螳
Chuồn Chuồn Chúa	伟蜓	Bọ Ngựa	螳螂
Chuồn Chuồn Tương	褐蜻	Kiến Gió	酸臭蚁
Cành Cạch	螳蛄	Kiến Lửa	红火蚁
Châu Châu Voi	巨型螽斯	Kiến Vàng	黄猄蚁
Kiến Kim	梭毒隐翅虫	Kiến Đen	黑毛蚁

In general, translating animal names from Vietnamese to modern Chinese requires not only linguistic knowledge but also an understanding of the cultural and environmental contexts of the animals. The choice of appropriate translation methods will help maintain accuracy and convey the full meaning of the original names.

6. Conclusion

This paper has addressed issues related to animal nomenclature in Vietnamese and analyzed Diary of a Cricket by Tô Hoài alongside its translation. By comparing the translation of these proper names into modern Chinese, we have elucidated key considerations for naming animal species in Vietnamese and the methodologies for translating from Vietnamese to Chinese. These findings enhance our understanding of the semantic and cultural dimensions of animal names in Vietnamese and contribute to the instruction of Vietnamese to Chinese learners, aiding them in comprehending the linguistic and cultural subtleties in their studies.

7. References

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