LINGUISTIC FEATURES
OF FRENCH POLICE TERMINOLOGY

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Abstract: In light of the growing need for enhanced international legal cooperation, mastering the system of French police terminology has become essential in administrative, judicial, and specialized translation activities. This study focuses on identifying the prominent linguistic features of this terminology class, grounded in modern terminological theories. The data was collected from legal texts, administrative documents, and specialized databases, and analyzed using qualitative methods combined with descriptive linguistic models. The findings reveal that French police terminology is characterized by monosemy, specificity, structural stability, a high degree of conceptual systematization, and strong influence from legal and cultural factors. The study affirms both the linguistic significance and practical application of this terminology within Francophone legal contexts. The results can be applied in teaching French for specific purposes, developing professional materials, and supporting bilingual translation in the fields of police and judiciary.

Keywords: police terminology, French for specific purposes, legal language, terminology structure, legal translation

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ĐẶC ĐIỂM THUẬT NGỮ NGÀNH CÔNG AN
TRONG TIẾNG PHÁP

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Tóm tắt: Trước nhu cầu tăng cường hợp tác pháp lý quốc tế, việc nắm vững hệ thống thuật ngữ ngành công an tiếng Pháp trở nên thiết yếu trong các hoạt động hành chính, tư pháp và dịch thuật chuyên ngành. Nghiên cứu này tập trung xác định các đặc điểm ngôn ngữ học nổi bật của lớp thuật ngữ này, dựa trên nền tảng lý thuyết thuật ngữ học hiện đại. Ngữ liệu được thu thập từ văn bản pháp luật, tài liệu hành chính và cơ sở dữ liệu chuyên ngành, sau đó phân tích theo phương pháp định tính kết hợp mô hình ngôn ngữ học mô tả. Kết quả cho thấy các thuật ngữ công an tiếng Pháp mang tính đơn nghĩa, chuyên biệt, có cấu trúc ổn định, tính hệ thống khái niệm cao và chịu ảnh hưởng sâu sắc từ yếu tố pháp lý - văn hóa. Nghiên cứu khẳng định vai trò ngôn ngữ học và ứng dụng thực tiễn của lớp thuật ngữ này trong môi trường pháp luật Pháp. Kết quả có thể ứng dụng trong giảng dạy tiếng Pháp chuyên ngành, xây dựng tài liệu nghiệp vụ và hỗ trợ dịch thuật song ngữ trong lĩnh vực công an - tư pháp.

Từ khóa: thuật ngữ ngành công an, tiếng Pháp chuyên ngành, ngôn ngữ pháp lý, cấu trúc thuật ngữ, dịch thuật pháp lý

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization, international cooperation in the fields of law, security, and the fight against transnational crime is increasingly expanding. A precise understanding and use of specialized terminology-particularly police terminology in French has become essential for law enforcement agencies, legal professionals, and specialized interpreters. French is currently an official language of many important international organizations such as the United Nations, INTERPOL, and the International Criminal Court, as well as the administrative language of numerous countries with developed legal systems. Within this context, police terminology is not merely a set of specialized vocabulary but also reflects the organizational structure, operational principles, and legal culture of the countries that use the language.

French police terminology is characterized by its systematic nature and a high degree of legal-administrative specificity. It is often closely linked to the organization of police forces, criminal procedure, and legal actions. This specificity requires that both researchers and users possess not only linguistic knowledge but also an understanding of French law and administrative culture. Misinterpretation or inaccurate translation of these terms can lead to serious consequences in legal and administrative documents, posing obstacles to international cooperation and the implementation of legal procedures.

In recent decades, there have been several studies related to French specialized terminology in general and legal language in particular.

A notable example is the study by Brunet (1981), *Le langage des «gendarmes» et des «voleurs»*, which adopts a sociolinguistic analytical approach based on authentic communicative data between police officers and offenders. The author elucidates differences in vocabulary, stylistic choices, and professional discourse between these two social groups

within the legal system. However, the study does not explore the semantic structure or the terminological system specific to the police domain, remaining instead at the level of general sociolinguistic variation.

Farisi (2018) conducted a needs-analysis study on the teaching of French for specific purposes to police officers in Jakarta, emphasizing the role of terminology and communicative scenarios in professional training contexts. However, this work remains confined to a pedagogical perspective and does not examine the structural or semantic properties of French police terminology.

The French Commission on Legal Terminology and Neology (2007), in its *Rapport de la commission de terminologie et de néologie en matière juridique*, proposed principles for the standardization, precision, and regular updating of legal terminology in administrative and judicial documents, based on extensive surveys and practical terminological compilation. Nevertheless, the report focuses on the legal domain at a general level, without engaging deeply with police-specific terminology or providing semantic or functional analysis of term usage.

Another line of inquiry is represented by Jégou (2010), who adopts a legal-discourse analytical perspective to examine how legal language constructs authority, normativity, and social structure. However, this line of research does not address police-specific terminology, nor does it classify terms according to functional categories or degrees of linguistic stability. FranceTerme, the terminology database managed by the French Ministry of Culture, serves primarily as a repository and classification tool for standardized terms, offering a reliable reference source. Yet it remains documentary in nature and does not provide in-depth analytical research on the semantic, grammatical, or cultural dimensions of terminology.

Tran (2021) examines medical terminology translation through comparative semantic and pragmatic analysis, proposing a text-based meaning-transfer model that enhances translation effectiveness. However, this study remains confined to the medical domain.

Overall, the studies reviewed above provide an important foundation for the identification of French specialized terminology; however, none has undertaken a comprehensive examination of the French police terminological system from a linguistic -legal perspective, nor have they clarified the influence of cultural and legal factors on the formation and use of these terms.

This gap has inspired the direction of the present study. Rather than merely listing or introducing French police terminology, this article delves into a linguistic analysis of the prominent features of this terminological system, such as monosemy, systematic organization, stable grammatical structures, and particularly the influence of legal and cultural factors in the formation and use of terminology.

The study is carried out to respond to the research question: "What linguistic features help identify and distinguish French police terminology from other types of vocabulary within the legal-administrative language system?".

This study sets out four specific objectives: (1) to identify and analyze the prominent linguistic characteristics of French police terminology, including semantic features, grammatical structures, and functional uses in administrative and legal contexts; (2) to distinguish police terminology from general French vocabulary, thereby clarifying the specialized nature of this lexical field; (3) to evaluate the influence of cultural and legal-system factors on the formation, use, and standardization of police terms; and (4) to contribute to the systematization of specialized knowledge on French police terminology in support of teaching,

learning, translation, and interdisciplinary research.

This study is conducted in the context of Vietnam's increasing involvement in international cooperation in the areas of security, justice, and the prevention of crimes with foreign elements. The training of personnel with a solid command of specialized French has become a practical necessity. At the same time, existing limitations in the consultation, standardization, and use of police terminology in practice reveal the need for further in-depth research to support education, translation, and professional application. Following the introduction, the article proceeds with sections on the theoretical foundations of terminology studies; research methods and data collection; presentation of analytical results; discussion of findings from a broader perspective; and finally, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

Terminology is a branch of specialized linguistics that focuses on identifying, describing, and systematizing lexical units with a denotative function in fields such as science, technology, administration, law, and other professional domains. Each specialized field develops its own system of terminology, which reflects its internal conceptual framework and plays a crucial role in conveying precise and effective information within that professional context.

Historically, the foundations of modern terminology studies were laid by Wüster (1931), who is widely regarded as the "father" of classical terminology. According to Wüster, an ideal terminological unit should exhibit monosemy, stability, emotional neutrality, and exist in a systematic relationship with other terms within the same field. His approach was influenced by principles of logic and technical standardization, characteristic of the exact sciences. This model is particularly suited to fields such as mechanics, electronics, medicine, and law, where precision and lexical consistency are paramount.

However, since the late 20th century, perspectives on terminology have undergone significant shifts, particularly through the contributions of Cabré (1998, 1999), who introduced the model of *integrated terminology* (*terminologie intégrée*). According to Cabré, terminology should not be viewed merely as a system of labels for predefined concepts; rather, it constitutes a linguistic and communicative product shaped by a specialized community. She highlights the role of pragmatic and sociolinguistic factors in determining how terms are used and understood, noting that their meaning may fluctuate depending on the user, professional function, communicative situation, and cultural-legal environment.

In addition, Rey (1977, 2005) - a renowned French expert in semantics and lexicography - contributed to the theoretical foundations of terminology studies through his research on specialized discourse. Rey argued that terminology cannot be understood as an isolated structure; rather, it must be situated within the socio-communicative context in which there exists a context where specialized language continually evolves. Particularly in fields such as law, policing, and the military, many terms bear historical and cultural imprints, closely linked to the organizational traditions of the state and the legal community.

Another approach comes from Sager (1990), who proposed treating terminology from a practical perspective, aimed at supporting specialized translation and natural language processing. He introduced linguistic criteria for identifying terms based on morphology, syntax, and their potential for standardization within language databases. Sager particularly emphasized that terminological analysis should go beyond conceptual meaning to include the operability of terms within technological environments and specialized communicative contexts.

To systematize the differences in these approaches, the following table summarizes the key perspectives of prominent modern terminology scholars:

Table 1

Comparison of Key Perspectives on Terminology Studies

Authors	View on Terminology	Key Features
Wüster (1931)	Terminology is a unit of scientific and technical language that is monosemous, precise, emotionally neutral, stable, and embedded within a specialized conceptual system.	Logicality, standardization, and objectivity.
Sager (1990)	Terminology should be identified through its operability in technology, translation, and specialized communication.	Applicability and clear grammatical form.
Cabré (1998)	Terminology is a socio-linguistic product within a specialized context, and its meaning may vary depending on the communicative context.	Pragmatic and cultural dimensions.
Rey (2005)	Terminology is closely linked to specialized discourse and the socio-historical environment in which it operates.	Discursive and historical dimensions.

From the synthesis of the above-mentioned theories, the following core linguistic characteristics of specialized terminology can be identified:

- Monosemy: each term denotes a specific, clearly defined concept without ambiguity.

- Specialization: a term holds its full meaning and function only within a specific professional context.

- Precision and emotional neutrality: terms are devoid of rhetorical or emotive connotations, making them suitable for professional communication settings.

- Systematicity: each term is part of an interconnected network of concepts within the field.

- Formal stability: terms tend to be structured as noun phrases, as this form allows for clear, precise, and easily standardized expression of concepts. However, it is important to note that not all terms conform strictly to this pattern. Some may appear as adjectives to express attributes or characteristics-for example, *pénal* in *droit pénal* (*criminal law - luật hình sự*), or *administratif* in *droit administratif* (*administrative law - luật hành chính*). Others may take the form of verbs to describe actions or processes in specialized contexts - for instance, *légiférer* (*to legislate - lập pháp: mô tả hành vi ban hành luật, là một hành động pháp lý mang tính chuyên biệt*), which refers to the legal act of enacting laws, or *sanctionner* (*to sanction - xử phạt: mô tả hành vi áp dụng chế tài, trong bối cảnh pháp lý),* which describes the imposition of penalties in a legal setting. Within the scope of this paper, the focus is limited to the analysis of noun - based terms - the most common, stable, and central form in the standardization of specialized terminology.

- Socio - functional aspect: terminology reflects the professional environment, social roles, and communicative traditions within the field.

On this basis, it is essential to clearly define the concept of "police terminology" as a distinct branch of specialized vocabulary. Within the scope of this study, "police terminology" is understood as lexical units (single words, phrases, or fixed expressions) that serve to designate specific concepts, institutions, actions, and procedures unique to the police sector. This category of vocabulary reflects the organizational system, professional operations, functions, legal regulations, and administrative-legal activities involved in ensuring national security, public order, and social safety.

Unlike general vocabulary, police terminology typically exhibits a tightly structured form, a high degree of specialization, and derives its full meaning only within the context of a nation's administrative and legal systems. In French, terms such as *commissaire de police* (*chief of police - cảnh sát trưởng*), *garde à vue* (*police custody - tạm giữ*), *perquisition* (*search- khám xét*)), *gendarmerie nationale* (*national gendarmerie - hiến binh quốc gia*), and *police judiciaire* (*judicial police - cảnh sát tư pháp*) … are illustrative examples. These terms are stable, convey specific legal concepts, and cannot be accurately interpreted outside the framework of the French legal system.

In summary, French police terminology can be defined as a set of specialized lexical units used to designate concepts, institutions, actions, and procedures related to the maintenance of security and public order. These terms are employed in documents, communication, and professional practices within the law enforcement and legal systems of the French Republic.

This is a semantically closed linguistic system with clearly defined terms, existing within legal texts, professional documents, and the administrative-legal environment of France. Studying the characteristics of this class of terminology constitutes an important first step toward a deeper understanding of legal-administrative language in general, and police language in particular.

3. Research Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is a descriptive approach combined with specialized document analysis. The research follows several steps, including the collection of data from specialized dictionaries, legal texts, and training materials; classification and processing of the linguistic data; and the application of both qualitative analysis and basic quantitative methods to identify the formal, semantic, and pragmatic characteristics of police terminology in French. The findings are then compared and interpreted within the framework of modern terminology theory. Specifically, the study is carried out through the following steps:

First, the corpus was collected from authoritative and highly reliable sources, including legal documents such as the *Criminal Procedure Code*, the *Internal Security Code*, as well as relevant decrees and administrative decisions governing the organization and operations of French police forces. Official websites of the Ministry of the Interior, the National Police, and the National Gendarmerie were also consulted, along with terminology databases such as FranceTerme, the *Grand Dictionary of Terminology*, and IATE. In addition, reputable press sources, including *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, and *France Info* were used to cross-check the practical contexts in which these terms are employed.

The corpus was systematically distributed and extracted from four principal source categories: (1) legal texts (approximately 45%), which provide standardized definitions and conceptual foundations for the terms, primarily from the Criminal Procedure Code and the Internal Security Code; (2) administrative documents and decrees (around 20%), which clarify how terminology is used in the organization and governance of police forces; (3) terminology databases (approximately 20%), including FranceTerme, IATE, and the Grand Dictionary of Terminology, used to cross - check definitions, written forms, and usage frequency; and (4) reputable press sources (around 15%) such as Le Monde, Le Figaro, and *France Info*, which illustrate practical contexts and the degree of public usage of the terms. This distribution ensures a balance between legal - standardizing dimensions and pragmatic-contextual usage, allowing French police terminology to be examined comprehensively across both administrative environments and social communication contexts.

To guarantee transparency and replicability, the corpus was selected according to the

following criteria: (1) high frequency of occurrence in legal or administrative documents; (2) domain representativeness, clearly reflecting the main categories of ranks and positions, organizational structures, operational activities, or legal procedures; (3) conceptual stability, characterized by clear meaning, limited variation, and consistent use across legal contexts; and (4) exclusion criteria, eliminating general vocabulary with broad meanings, non-specialized lexical items, as well as idioms or jargon not attested in official documents or lacking sufficient evidence of stability and legal status.

Second, the processing of linguistic data was carried out based on the linguistic analysis criteria outlined in the theoretical framework, including: semantics (identifying the conceptual content and scope of meaning of each term), grammatical structure (recognizing lexical patterns, noun phrases, and fixed expressions), pragmatic function (determining the communicative role and usage context of the terminology), and the legal-administrative context (cross-referencing each term with the legal system, procedural operations, and organizational structures of the French police forces).

Third, to clarify the specialized nature of police terminology, the study also carried out a comparative analysis of selected French terms and their corresponding expressions in Vietnamese, in order to determine the degree of equivalence, translatability, and issues related to cross-linguistic transfer between two distinct legal-linguistic systems. The analysis also included a classification and systematization of the terms into functional groups, such as: terms denoting official titles (e.g., *commissaire - police chief - cảnh sát trưởng*, *brigadier - chef - senior sergeant- thượng sỹ…*), organizational terms (e.g., *police judiciaire - judicial police - cảnh sát tư pháp, gendarmerie - gendarmerie - hiến binh…*), procedural or operational terms (e.g., *interpellation - police questioning - gọi hỏi, garde à vue - police custody - tạm giữ…*), and related legal terms (e.g., *perquisition - search - khám xét, mandat d'arrêt - arrest warrant - lệnh bắt...*).

Finally, all linguistic data were processed and stored using specialized word-processing software (Microsoft Word, Excel), and cross-verified through online terminology databases to ensure semantic accuracy and frequency reliability. This research methodology enables the study to approach the characteristics of French police terminology in a systematic and comprehensive manner, thereby providing objective, scholarly analyses with practical value for the teaching, learning, and translation of legal-specialized language.

4. Research Findings

The analysis of linguistic data collected from legal texts, administrative documents, and specialized databases reveals that the system of French police terminology constitutes a specialized lexical set characterized by systematic organization, structural stability, distinctive linguistic patterns, and a profound influence from the French legal system and administrative culture. The following prominent features serve as the basis for affirming the status of this vocabulary as a domain-specific terminology.

4.1. Monosemy

One of the most prominent features of French police terminology is its monosemy. The analysis of 100 selected terms shows that 77 of them (77%) are strictly monosemous according to classical terminological criteria, meaning that each term denotes one and only one concept within the legal and operational framework of French law enforcement, without risk of semantic deviation outside its institutional context. In contrast, 23 terms (23%) exhibit potential

polysemy or require a specific legal or procedural context to be interpreted accurately, often because their forms overlap with general vocabulary or appear in both legal discourse and media usage. Typical examples of strictly monosemous terms include *garde à vue*, which refers exclusively to the legally defined state of police custody; *perquisition*, which denotes a search conducted by a competent authority in the context of a criminal case; *réquisition judiciaire*, which designates a formal judicial request issued by a magistrate; and *mandat d'arrêt*, referring solely to a judge-signed arrest warrant. These terms exhibit high semantic fixity and do not appear with extended meanings outside legal contexts.

The remaining 23 terms, although still specialized within the policing domain, may also occur in broader contexts (e.g., *intervention*, *surveillance*, *évacuation*). Consequently, they cannot be classified as strictly monosemous. This distribution confirms that monosemy constitutes a prominent and widespread characteristic of French police terminology.

4.2. Specialization

French police terminology derives its full meaning only within specialized contexts, particularly in administrative, judicial, and law enforcement communication. Terms such as commissaire (police commissioner - *cảnh sát trưởng*), gendarme (gendarme - *hiến binh*), and police judiciaire (judicial police - *cảnh sát tư pháp*) cannot be accurately interpreted outside the institutional structure of the French law - enforcement system. This high degree of specialization limits accessibility for non - experts and underscores the essential role of such terminology in ensuring precise internal communication and effective implementation of legal and administrative procedures.

Analysis of the 100 terms in the corpus shows that 68 of them (68%) exhibit absolute specialization, meaning they refer exclusively to police or judicial functions such as ranks, organizational units, operational procedures, or procedural acts and do not appear in general everyday usage. Terms such as *garde à vue*, *mandat de perquisition*, *réquisition judiciaire*, *brigade criminelle*, *mise en examen*, *main courante*, and *office anti-stupéfiants* are representative examples, each tightly anchored in the French legal framework and in the institutional mechanisms governing law-enforcement activities.

Conversely, the remaining 32 terms (32%) demonstrate only partial specialization, as they are used in police-related contexts but also coexist with more general or cross-disciplinary meanings, such as *surveillance*, *évacuation*, *intervention*, *expertise*, and *opération*. These units require contextual specification to be correctly interpreted, and when used outside a specialized environment, they may generate semantic ambiguity.

This distribution confirms that the majority of French police terminology exhibits a high degree of specialization, clearly reflecting the organizational structure, functional hierarchy, and operational specificities of the French security and judicial system. At the same time, the presence of a subset of cross-disciplinary terms illustrates the flexibility of legal language while still preserving a core of specialized meaning in professional use.

4.3. Systematicity

Analysis of the 100 selected terms demonstrates that French police terminology does not function as isolated lexical units but instead forms tightly interrelated conceptual networks that mirror the institutional structure and operational procedures of French law enforcement. The findings show that 92 out of 100 terms (92%) display clear systemic relationships and can be organized into four principal functional axes: (1) ranks and professional titles, (2) organizational entities and force structures, (3) operational activities, and (4) procedural and legal actions.

Terms such as *commissaire*, *brigadier-chef*, and *capitaine* constitute a hierarchical chain of ranks; *police judiciaire*, *gendarmerie nationale*, and *brigade criminelle* reflect the organizational architecture of the force; while *interpellation*, *filature*, and *garde à vue* form a sequence of actions within the criminal procedure framework. On the procedural axis, units such as *mandat d'arrêt*, *commission rogatoire*, and *information judiciaire* correspond to a coherent system of judicial decisions, each tied to clearly defined institutional authority.

The fact that most terms align naturally into hierarchical structures, procedural sequences, or organizational groupings confirms the highly systematized nature of French police terminology. This systemic coherence is consistent with the rigor of legal–administrative language and reflects the operational logic of the French judicial framework.

4.4. Formal Stability

Analysis of the 100 terms shows that formal stability is a salient characteristic of French police terminology. The results indicate that 81 out of 100 terms (81%) appear as fixed nouns or stable noun phrases with durable grammatical structures and minimal morphological variation. Units such as *brigade anti-criminalité*, *préfet de police*, and *unité d'intervention rapide* clearly reflect the canonical structural pattern of specialized noun phrases - namely a nominal head followed by a restrictive or explanatory modifier - yielding a highly standardized and tightly organized form in legal and administrative texts.

Most terms follow formulaic configurations such as **N + Adj**, **N + de + N**, or **N + Prep + N**, which maintain structural fixity across all contexts of use. Only 19 terms (19%) exhibit limited formal variation (e.g., nominal–verbal alternations such as *enquête / enquêter*), yet these changes do not alter the core conceptual meaning nor affect their classification within the specialized legal - police lexicon.

This high degree of formal stability not only ensures precision in information transmission but also provides a robust foundation for the standardization, documentation, and retrieval of terminology within the French legal and administrative system. It is a defining feature that distinguishes police terminology from general vocabulary, which tends to be more flexible and susceptible to morphological or syntactic variation.

4.5. Legal and Cultural Specificity

A notable feature of French police terminology is its strong anchoring in the legal system, administrative structures, and public service culture of the French Republic. Analysis of the corpus shows that 64 out of 100 terms (64%) exhibit clear legal–institutional grounding and can only be interpreted accurately within the regulatory framework of the *Criminal Procedure Code*, the *Internal Security Code*, or relevant governmental decrees and administrative circulars. Terms such as *préfet de police*, *commission rogatoire*, *mise en examen*, *garde à vue*, and *parquet* are all inherently tied to specific authority structures, investigative and prosecutorial functions, and the distinctive administrative organization of the French state.

In addition to their legal dimension, more than forty terms reflect the cultural and institutional imprint of the French policing system. Examples include *gendarmerie nationale*, with its historical military origins; *préfet de police*, a uniquely Parisian administrative authority; and elite intervention units such as *RAID* and *BRI*, which hold a symbolic status in French security culture. These culturally embedded features mean that many terms lack direct equivalents in Vietnamese or English, resulting in significant cultural-legal non-equivalence.

This legal-cultural dimension demonstrates that French police terminology is not merely

a linguistic construct, but also a product of the country's administrative tradition, legislative history, and security model. It underscores the necessity of understanding the underlying legal and cultural context when using or translating vocabulary within this specialized domain.

4.6. Classifiability and Systematization

The findings indicate that French police terminology exhibits a high degree of categorizability, with 97 out of 100 terms (97%) fitting into clear and stable functional groups. Based on conceptual relationships, the 100 terms can be organized into four principal categories: (1) terms denoting ranks and official titles, such as *commissaire* (*police commissioner - cảnh sát trưởng*), *capitaine* (*captain- đại úy*), and *gardien de la paix* (*peace officer - cảnh sát trật tự*); (2) terms referring to institutions or force units, such as *police judiciaire* (*judicial police - cảnh sát tư pháp*), *gendarmerie* (*gendarmerie - hiến binh*), and *direction centrale de la sécurité publique* (*Central Directorate of Public Security - Cục an ninh trật tự*); (3) terms related to operational actions, such as *interpellation* (*questioning - gọi hỏi*), *filature* (*surveillance - trinh sát*), and *perquisition* (*search khám xét*)…; and (4) terms related to legal procedures and authority, such as *garde à vue* (*custody- tạm giam*), *mandat de perquisition* (*search warrant - lệnh khám*), and *audition libre* (*voluntary questioning- lấy lời khai tự nguyện*)…Each category displays a relatively high degree of homogeneity and accurately reflects the functional structure of the French policing system.

The categorical structure highlights the operation of the terminology system along hierarchical, sequential, and functional axes. For instance, the rank group (*commissaire*, *capitaine*, *brigadier-chef*) reflects the axis of personnel hierarchy; the organizational group (*police judiciaire*, *gendarmerie nationale*, *BAC*) represents the institutional-structural axis; the operational group (*interpellation*, *filature*, *garde à vue*) reconstructs the procedural sequence of investigative actions; and the legal group (*commission rogatoire*, *mandat d'arrêt*, *instruction*) corresponds to the axis of judicial authority and procedural decision-making.

The fact that these terms can be assigned to stable functional categories demonstrates that French police vocabulary is organized according to intrinsic classificatory principles rather than constituting an arbitrary collection of items. This internal structure enhances the potential for standardization and facilitates effective teaching, material development, and terminological consultation.

4.7. Non-equivalence in Translation

Finally, the analysis of the 100 terms reveals that non-equivalence is a prominent characteristic of French police terminology when translated into Vietnamese. A total of 32 out of 100 terms (32%) have no direct counterparts in the Vietnamese legal–administrative system and can only be rendered through paraphrase, annotation, or by retaining the original French form. This phenomenon stems from fundamental differences in police organization, judicial authority, administrative structure, and legal traditions between the two countries.

Notable examples include: *préfet* (*provincial governor - representative of the central government at the local level - tỉnh trưởng - đại diện nhà nước trung ương tại địa phương*), *OPJ* (*officier de police judiciaire- judicial police officer with procedural authority- sĩ quan tư pháp - có thẩm quyền tố tụng*), *saisine* (*the formal transfer of a case file or investigation request from a competent authority- việc chuyển giao hồ sơ vụ án hoặc yêu cầu điều tra từ cơ quan có thẩm quyền*), *gendarmerie* (*a militarized police force with special security functions - hiến binh - lực lượng vũ trang có chức năng an ninh đặc biệt*), *commission rogatoire* (*a judicial request for investigation or procedural delegation- ủy thác điều tra*), *mise en examen* (*preliminary*

indictment- truy tố), and *garde statique (static guard duty - canh gác cố định)*…

Even terms that appear deceptively simple, such as *main courante*, *filature*, *saisine*, or *information judiciaire*, require clarification in translation to avoid misinterpretation of legal authority or procedural implications. This non-equivalence necessitates that translators possess a solid understanding of both legal systems and employ appropriate translation strategies, such as retention with explanation, semantic expansion, functional equivalence, or the use of legal annotations.

These findings confirm that French police terminology is not only linguistically distinctive but also deeply embedded in institutional structures and legal culture, making the translation process a demanding task that requires high levels of precision and interdisciplinary competence.

5. Discussion

The research findings clearly demonstrate that the system of French police terminology fully embodies the core features of specialized vocabulary, including monosemy, specialization, systematicity, structural stability, and legal-cultural specificity. These characteristics not only establish a clear distinction between terminology and general vocabulary but also reflect the organizational structure and legal reasoning inherent in the French public administrative system. This has significant implications for both the theoretical understanding of specialized linguistics and the practical use of language in legal, judicial, and international cooperation contexts.

First, from a linguistic perspective, the identification of monosemy, stable grammatical structures, and the classifiability of terms confirms the role of French police terminology as a highly organized linguistic system serving the goals of professional and precise communication within the law enforcement sector. These findings not only validate the principles of classical terminology theory as proposed by Wüster, but also demonstrate the practical applicability of modern approaches, such as Cabré's socioterminological model and Rey's analysis of specialized discourse. The discovery and classification of four functional term groups (titles, institutions, operational activities, and legal procedures) contribute to establishing a practical foundation for the standardization and teaching of legal - administrative language.

Compared to previous studies, this research significantly expands both the scope and depth of analysis. While Brunet (1981) primarily focused on lexical differences between police and criminals in social communication, and Farisi (2018) approached the topic from the perspective of teaching French for specific purposes in Indonesia, the present study goes further by analyzing the semantic structure, form, and social function of police terminology as a distinct linguistic system. Although the 2007 report by the French Commission on Legal Terminology and Neologism Creation proposed several standardization recommendations, it did not offer a detailed classification of terminology by functional group as presented in this study. Similarly, resources such as FranceTerme mainly serve as reference tools or offer macro-level discussions, rather than analyzing individual terminological units within specific legal-administrative contexts.

Another noteworthy contribution of this study lies in its identification and analysis of aspects previously overlooked or only briefly mentioned in earlier research. In particular, the study clearly establishes the relationship between formal structure, pragmatic function, and legal specificity in French police terminology. For instance, *commission rogatoire (judicial commission of inquiry - ủy thác điều tra)* is a fixed legal noun phrase used in procedural contexts to denote the transfer of investigative authority from a judge to a judicial police officer; *garde à vue (custody - tạm giữ)* is a simple noun phrase that defines the legal status of an individual in police detention and is directly linked to the authority of judicial officers. In contrast,

interpellation (*apprehension - bắt giữ*) has a simpler form but a more flexible pragmatic range, as it can be used in both administrative and criminal contexts, illustrating the overlap between performative language and legal procedures.

Similarly, the phenomenon of non-equivalence in translation between French and Vietnamese is clarified through examples such as *mise en examen (indictment - truy tố)* - a distinct judicial status with no direct equivalent in the Vietnamese legal system; *saisine (case referral or file transfer - tiếp nhận hồ sơ/xử lý vụ việc)* - a polysemous term whose meaning varies depending on the context and the institution involved; and *OPJ (officier de police judiciaire - sĩ quan tư pháp)* - typically left untranslated with an explanatory note as "judicial police officer," since the corresponding role and legal authority do not exist in Vietnam's system. These examples illustrate that legal terminology translation is not merely a linguistic task but a process of semantic negotiation within divergent institutional, cultural, and legal frameworks.

This is a critical aspect in the context of increasing international legal cooperation, where the accurate translation of specialized terminology plays a vital role in the effective enforcement of cross-border law. Accordingly, this study not only clarifies the distinctive features of French police terminology but also offers practical implications for training, translation and interpretation, as well as bilateral and multilateral legal cooperation.

A comparative perspective shows that the French police terminological system exhibits several distinctive features when contrasted with other languages. In English, corresponding terms such as *police officer*, *custody*, or *warrant of arrest* generally have broader meanings and tend to emphasize administrative or procedural aspects rather than precise legal classifications. By contrast, French terms such as *garde à vue* or *officier de police judiciaire* are tightly bound to specific provisions of the *Criminal Procedure Code*, reflecting a high degree of standardization and legal constraint. When compared with Vietnamese, French police terminology displays greater structural stability, reduced polysemy, and a clearer reflection of the relationship between language and the administrative–judicial institutions that underpin it.

From an academic perspective, this study distinguishes itself through an approach that goes beyond the mere description or pedagogical presentation of specialized vocabulary. It provides an in-depth analysis of the semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic dimensions of French police terminology as a specialized linguistic system. The establishment of four functional categories (ranks and titles, organizational structures, operational activities, and legal procedures), together with the identification of non-equivalence phenomena in translation, constitutes a novel contribution with both theoretical and practical value. Accordingly, the study not only clarifies the linguistic characteristics of French police terminology but also broadens the comparative and translational perspectives between French, English, and Vietnamese within this specialized domain.

In summary, the discussion demonstrates that the research findings not only provide a descriptive account of linguistic phenomena but also contribute to affirming the academic significance of specialized terminology studies within the field of modern linguistics. The distinctions and contributions of this study compared to previous works are clearly established, thereby laying a solid foundation for practical applications in teaching, standardization, and translation within the domains of law enforcement and legal communication.

6. Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of identifying and analyzing the distinctive linguistic features of French police terminology, thereby clarifying the specialized nature of

this lexical field within the French legal-administrative context. Through the examination of linguistic data drawn from legal texts, administrative documents, and terminological databases, the study identified and systematized a set of key characteristics, including monosemy, specialization, stable grammatical structure, conceptual systematicity, legal and cultural specificity, functional classifiability, and the phenomenon of non-equivalence in translation. These findings not only provide a comprehensive and structured understanding of police terminology, but also contribute to a deeper insight into how specialized language reflects the organizational structure and legal reasoning of a nation.

Building on the findings obtained, this study affirms the importance of analyzing police terminology not only within the scope of linguistics but also across interdisciplinary fields such as law, public administration, and specialized translation and interpretation. In the context of increasing international legal cooperation and the growing demand for the translation of legal documents, a precise and systematic understanding of French police terminology holds practical significance for personnel training, the development of specialized language curricula, and the support of judicial, security, and communication efforts.

The research findings have potential applications across various fields. In education, the results can serve as a foundation for developing instructional materials in French for police-specific purposes, supporting training programs at academies, professional institutions, and international legal cooperation initiatives. In the field of translation, the study offers guidance for effective strategies in cross-linguistic transfer, particularly in cases of non-equivalence between the French and Vietnamese administrative-legal systems. Furthermore, institutions involved in building terminological databases, specialized dictionaries, or terminology reference software may also draw on this research as a valuable linguistic resource.

However, this study also has certain limitations. First, the scope of the linguistic data is primarily limited to official documents, and does not fully encompass other language forms found in media discourse, real-world communication within the police sector, or unofficial administrative texts. Second, the research does not examine the diachronic semantic evolution of terminology or regional variations in usage across different Francophone contexts. Additionally, the comparison with Vietnamese remains at a general level, without in-depth analysis of specific term-to-term equivalences.

Based on the aforementioned limitations, the study proposes several directions for future research. In the future, the analysis could be expanded to include media discourse, unofficial professional documents, or spoken data from police personnel, in order to investigate the variability and pragmatic flexibility of terminology in actual use. Furthermore, examining police terminology in Francophone contexts outside of France such as Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, or African countries could open up promising avenues for cross-cultural research. Finally, an in-depth study focusing on translation phenomena and semantic equivalence between French and Vietnamese police terminology, with detailed term-by-term analysis, would represent a valuable contribution to the field of specialized legal translation.

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