

Formative Models of Vietnamese Diplomatic Terminology

Nguyen Van Tiep *

Department of Foreign Languages, Political Academy, Hanoi, Vietnam

*Corresponding author: nguyentiep13@gmail.com

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Abstract This study examines the formative models that shape Vietnamese diplomatic terminology at the word and phrase levels. Influenced by both native linguistic patterns and Sino-Vietnamese elements, these terms often exhibit two-element structures. The research identifies key models for compound words and multi-element phrases, which enable precise diplomatic communication. These findings deepen the understanding of the linguistic adaptability of Vietnamese in diplomacy and its role in fostering effective cross-cultural exchanges.

Keywords: Vietnamese diplomatic terms, formative models, Sino-Vietnamese, compound terms, phrases, diplomacy

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1. Introduction

Diplomatic terminology plays a critical role in international relations, where precise language is essential for conveying complex political and cultural concepts. Vietnamese diplomatic terms, in particular, represent a unique blend of native linguistic structures and historical Sino-Vietnamese influences. These terms, often formed through compound word and phrase structures, reflect the linguistic adaptability and cultural depth of the Vietnamese language, enabling it to meet the formal and precise demands of diplomacy.

Many Vietnamese diplomatic terms follow the syntactic patterns of Sino-Vietnamese compounds, with structures that include both head-modifier and modifier-head formations. These models allow for flexibility in term formation, providing the precision needed to convey diplomatic meanings while maintaining a connection to Vietnam's linguistic heritage. The study of these formative models offers valuable insights into how Vietnamese handles the creation of specialized terms, particularly in high-stakes fields like diplomacy. By examining the specific structures used in Vietnamese diplomatic terminology, this research aims to categorize the models that contribute to the language's ability to express nuanced diplomatic concepts. By analyzing both single-word compounds and multi-element phrases, this study sheds light on the linguistic strategies that underpin the development of Vietnamese diplomatic terminology and highlight the intersections between language, culture, and diplomacy.

2. Literature Review

Terminology studies have evolved into two main approaches: the conceptual approach, which views terms as specialized linguistic signs associated with specific concepts in a field, and the functional approach, which sees terms as ordinary words gaining unique significance in specialized contexts. The conceptual view, supported by scholars like [1] and [2], defines terms as tools for organized communication of specialized knowledge. [3] highlight this view by defining terms as representative of organized sets of concepts crucial for scientific communication. In contrast, the functional approach, advocated by Soviet scholars and expanded by [4] and [5], focuses on terms' roles in defining and classifying concepts. Vietnamese scholars like [6] and [7] have similarly defined terms as essential for articulating precise knowledge within specialized fields. These definitions resonate with the conceptual approach, emphasizing the integral role of terminology in expressing and categorizing specialized knowledge.

Diplomatic terminology in Vietnam, although not extensively studied, is seen as specialized vocabulary for conveying international relations activities. According to the [8], diplomacy encompasses actions undertaken to protect a nation's interests and address international issues. [9] notes that these terms span domains such as politics, economics, law, and culture. Additionally, [9] emphasizes diplomacy's reliance on precise and strategic communication, solidifying the importance of accurate terminology in this field.

In Vietnamese, terms are primarily formed through compounding, multi-element phrases and, less commonly, reduplication. Compounding, as outlined by [10], involves combining morphemes to form new words or phrases, creating compounds that convey specific meanings. These compounds can be coordinative, where elements are of equal status, or subordinate, where one

element modifies the other. In the context of diplomatic terminology, subordinate compounds are particularly relevant, as they create terms that specify diplomatic roles, functions, and entities.

While reduplication - where parts of a word are repeated to create a new term - is a common feature of Vietnamese vocabulary, it is rare in specialized fields such as diplomacy. The absence of reduplicative forms within diplomatic terminology likely reflects the field's preference for precision and straightforward representation. Consequently, reduplication is less relevant to this study, as it does not frequently appear in the corpus of Vietnamese diplomatic terms.

Studies on Vietnamese compound terms highlight head-modifier and modifier-head structures, which align with the practical needs and historical adaptations of the language. Multi-element phrases are also common, allowing for a high degree of specificity in expressing complex diplomatic concepts. These structures showcase the adaptability of Vietnamese diplomatic terminology to address both historical and modern challenges.

Overall, the existing body of research on Vietnamese diplomatic terminology provides a foundational understanding of the linguistic mechanisms involved in term formation. It highlights how Vietnamese effectively incorporates both native linguistic traditions and foreign influences, creating a specialized vocabulary that is rich in historical significance and capable of meeting contemporary diplomatic needs. This study builds on prior research by further examining specific models of term formation in Vietnamese diplomatic language, offering insights into how these terms continue to evolve and adapt within the framework of Vietnam's unique cultural and linguistic context.

3. Research Method

This study employs a descriptive and analytical approach to examine the formative models of Vietnamese diplomatic terms, focusing on their structural characteristics and how they reflect historical linguistic influences. The research method involves the systematic collection and analysis of Vietnamese diplomatic terms, which are then categorized into different formative models based on their syntactic structures.

Data Collection

The primary data consists of a corpus of 173 compound Vietnamese diplomatic terms and 896 multi-element phrase terms. These terms were collected from official diplomatic documents, glossaries, and scholarly sources related to international relations and Vietnamese linguistics. The data set was selected based on the frequency and relevance of the terms used in contemporary diplomatic discourse, ensuring that the sample covers a broad range of terms commonly employed in formal settings.

Analytical Framework

The analysis focuses on categorizing the terms into specific formative models, including head-modifier, modifier-head, and symmetrical structures for compounds, and more complex hierarchical models for multi-element phrases. Each term was broken down into its

terminological elements to understand the syntactic relationships between them, and the terms were then grouped based on their structural patterns.

Data Analysis

The collected terms were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative analysis involved a detailed examination of the syntactic structures of the terms to understand the linguistic strategies employed in Vietnamese diplomatic language. Each model was reviewed to identify key features, such as the placement of modifiers, the role of Sino-Vietnamese elements, and the prevalence of symmetrical or hierarchical structures.

The quantitative analysis focused on calculating the frequency of each model within the data set to determine which structures are most commonly used in Vietnamese diplomatic terminology. This allowed for an understanding of the dominance of certain patterns and how they contribute to the overall structure of diplomatic language in Vietnamese.

For clarity and precision, the research uses a system of symbolic notation (e.g., E1, E2, E3) to represent the elements of the terms within the formative models. The study focuses on models that produce at least five terms or more, ensuring that only the most productive models are included in the analysis.

Methodological Rationale

By using a combination of descriptive and analytical methods, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the structural diversity in Vietnamese diplomatic terminology. The categorization of terms into formative models offers a clear framework for understanding how Vietnamese diplomatic language accommodates the need for precision, formality, and clarity in international relations. Furthermore, this method helps to illuminate the historical and linguistic factors that continue to influence the formation of diplomatic terms in Vietnamese.

The findings from this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the linguistic mechanisms behind Vietnamese diplomatic terminology and their practical implications for translation, diplomatic communication, and cross-cultural interactions.

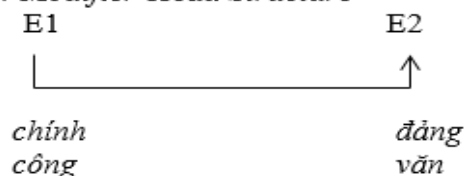
4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Findings

The findings are organized according to each identified model in Vietnamese diplomatic terminology, covering both compounds and phrases. Each model demonstrates unique structural characteristics that contribute to the adaptability and precision of Vietnamese diplomatic language.

a. Compound terms in Vietnamese diplomatic terminology

Model 1: Modifier-Head Structure



Comprising 71.68% of the terms as compounds surveyed, the modifier-head model includes terms where the modifier precedes the main element, a structure influenced by Sino-Vietnamese lexicon. In this model, the main element or head is followed by a modifier, which clarifies or adds detail. Examples include *chính đảng* (political party) and *công văn* (dispatch).

The modifier-head structure reflects an adaptation of Chinese syntactic ordering within Vietnamese. The placement of the modifier first allows for descriptive emphasis, lending a formal tone suited for diplomatic language. This structure illustrates the flexibility of Vietnamese diplomatic terms in accommodating both native and borrowed syntactic orders, highlighting the historical interchange between the languages.

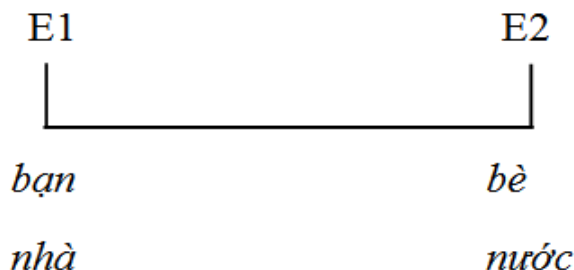
Model 2: Head-Modifier Structure



Comprising 20.23% of the terms surveyed, the head-modifier model includes terms where the main element (head) is followed by a modifier that clarifies or expands its meaning. This structure aligns with the conventional head-modifier order commonly found in Vietnamese. Examples include *giấy khen* (certificate of recognition) and *điện mừng* (congratulatory message), where the main element (*giấy* or *điện*) is specified or elaborated by the modifier (*khen* or *mừng*).

The head-modifier structure reflects the natural syntactic ordering in Vietnamese, where the primary concept is presented first, followed by a descriptive element that provides further details. This model emphasizes clarity and directness, which is essential in diplomatic language where precise communication is required. The dominance of this structure in Vietnamese diplomatic terminology demonstrates the language's ability to create specific and accurate terms, reflecting both cultural preferences and practical linguistic strategies. Additionally, the use of this structure maintains consistency with broader Vietnamese syntactic patterns while also accommodating the formal tone needed in diplomacy.

Model 3: Symmetrical Structure



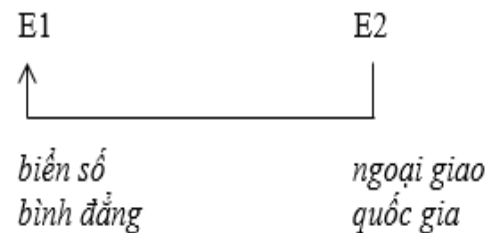
The symmetrical model, which constitutes 8.09% of the terms, consists of compounds where both elements contribute equally to the meaning, without a distinct head or modifier. Examples are *nhà nước* (state) and *bạn bè*

(friends). These terms convey dual aspects of a concept, with both elements holding equivalent semantic weight.

Symmetrical compounds showcase a unique aspect of Vietnamese diplomatic language, where balance is emphasized. The equal semantic contribution of both elements reflects a linguistic strategy for expressing concepts that require both clarity and neutrality. This model is less common but is important for terms that need to convey multifaceted meanings or relationships, which are typical in diplomatic contexts.

b. Phrase terms in Vietnamese diplomatic terminology

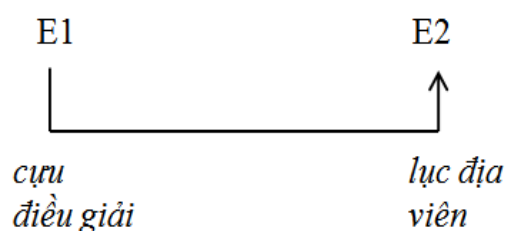
Model 4: Head-Modifier Phrase Structure (Two-Element Phrases)



The head-modifier phrase structure is prevalent in multi-element terms, accounting for around 71% of phrases. Terms like *biển số ngoại giao* (diplomatic license plate) and *bình đẳng quốc gia* (equality of states) follow this pattern, where the central term is modified by an additional element that provides context or specificity.

This model extends the compound head-modifier structure to phrases, indicating a preference for clear and hierarchical ordering in Vietnamese diplomatic terms. The combination of terms in a concise phrase allows for effective communication in diplomacy, where precision is essential. By following familiar syntactic patterns, this model enhances both comprehension and usability in formal discourse.

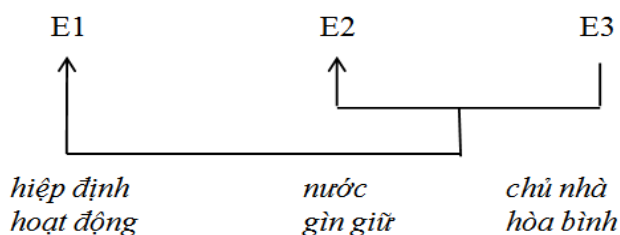
Model 5: Modifier-Head Phrase Structure (Reversed Syntax Two-Element Phrases)



Modifier-head phrase structures, exemplified by terms like *cựu lục địa* (old continent) and *điều giải viên* (facilitator), follow a reversed syntax that is relatively rare in Vietnamese but common in Chinese. This model is seen in approximately 3.17% of the phrases, illustrating how diplomatic terms incorporate non-standard syntax influenced by Sino-Vietnamese lexicon.

The reversed syntax emphasizes the descriptive quality of the modifier, lending an archaic or formal tone to the phrase. This structure, though less frequent, reveals the adaptability of Vietnamese diplomatic language in preserving traditional influences. It also highlights the enduring impact of Sino-Vietnamese syntax, which adds a layer of historical formality to diplomatic terminology.

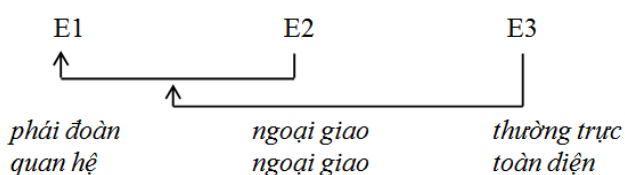
Model 6: Three-Element Hierarchical Phrase Structure No.1



Three-element phrases such as *hoạt động gìn giữ hòa bình* (peacekeeping operation) and *hiệp định nước chủ nhà* (host-country agreement) represent 7.5% of the phrase terms, featuring a two-tier modification where the third element adds specificity to the second, which in turn refines the first. This model allows for nuanced descriptions, essential in diplomatic language.

The hierarchical modification within this model enables detailed specification, which is vital in diplomacy for addressing complex concepts. By building upon two levels of refinement, this structure supports the expression of intricate relationships and contexts, making it ideal for formal and precise communication.

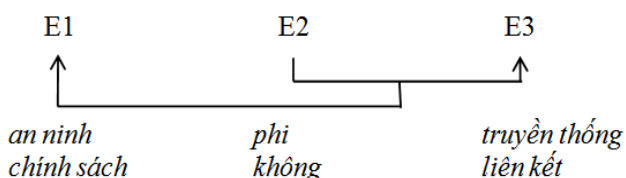
Model 7: Three-Element Hierarchical Phrase Structure No.2



This model, exemplified by terms like *phái đoàn ngoại giao thường trực* (permanent diplomatic mission) and *quan hệ ngoại giao toàn diện* (full diplomatic relation), comprises approximately 5.99% of the phrases. It involves a two-level relationship, where the second element complements the first and the third element further clarifies the entire phrase.

This model supports the creation of diplomatic terms with high specificity, useful for denoting complex organizational structures and roles. The balanced and hierarchical relationships among elements enable layered meanings, catering to the precise nature of diplomatic discourse.

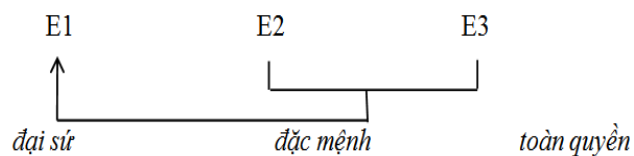
Model 8: Three-Element Hierarchical Phrase Structure No.3



Comprising 7.05% of phrases, model 8 consists of three elements, where the second (E2) and third (E3) elements work together as a unit to modify the core concept (E1). For example, *an ninh phi truyền thống* (non-traditional security) uses *phi truyền thống* (non-traditional) to describe *an ninh* (security); *chính sách không liên kết* (non-alignment policy) uses *không liên kết* (non-alignment) to describe *chính sách* (policy).

This balanced structure allows for detailed and precise descriptions, making it ideal for terms requiring complex modifiers, such as in diplomatic contexts. It efficiently conveys nuanced concepts by treating E2 and E3 as a cohesive unit that refines the meaning of E1, which is crucial for clarity in diplomatic language.

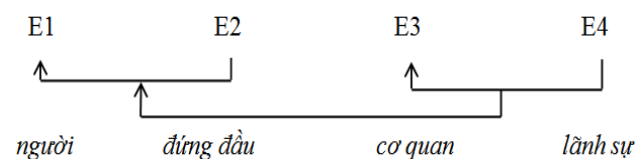
Model 9: Three-Element Hierarchical Phrase Structure No.4



This model comprises 0.62% of phrases and features two independent modifiers that contribute to the meaning of the central term. These modifiers are not hierarchical but rather parallel, each adding distinct characteristics to the core concept. An example is *đại sứ đặc mệnh toàn quyền* (ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary), where *đặc mệnh* (extraordinary) and *toàn quyền* (plenipotentiary) equally modify *công sứ* (ambassador) without one being subordinate to the other.

This model demonstrates the flexibility of Vietnamese diplomatic terminology in conveying roles and responsibilities with complex, multifaceted meanings. By allowing both modifiers to independently elaborate on the core concept, the structure accommodates the need for precision in describing detailed diplomatic titles or functions. The parallel nature of the modifiers ensures that each aspect of the role is highlighted equally, which is important in diplomatic language, where the completeness and scope of a position or authority must be fully understood. This model is less common but highly effective in terms requiring multiple, co-equal descriptors.

Model 10: Four-Element Hierarchical Phrase Structure No.1

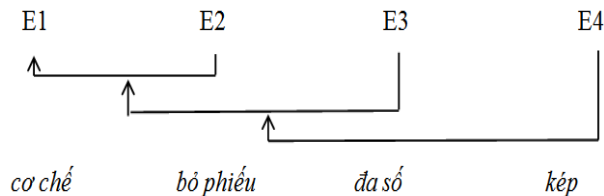


This structure is observed in about 1.23% of terms as phrases, often involving specialized diplomatic contexts. Model 10 involves four elements, structured hierarchically in two levels. The first pair of elements (E1 and E2) and the second pair (E3 and E4) are each bound by a head-modifier relationship. The entire phrase forms a multi-layered hierarchical structure, where the second pair of elements (E3 and E4) elaborates on or clarifies the first pair (E1 and E2). An example is *người đứng đầu cơ quan lãnh sự* (chief of consular office), where *người đứng đầu* (chief) is modified by *cơ quan lãnh sự* (consular office), creating a term that specifies both the role and the organizational context.

This model is designed to articulate detailed and precise hierarchical relationships, which are crucial in diplomatic terms that denote specific roles, functions, or organizational structures. The two-tier system allows for comprehensive descriptions, where the first set of elements introduces the primary concept, and the second

set further refines it. Model 10 exemplifies the Vietnamese language's capacity to manage complex, multi-faceted concepts while maintaining clarity and coherence, making it an ideal structure for nuanced diplomatic discourse.

Model 11: Four-Element Hierarchical Phrase Structure No.2



Model 11 involves four elements structured across multiple levels, where the first two elements (E1 and E2) form a unit that is further refined by the third (E3) and fourth (E4) elements. An example is *cơ chế bỏ phiếu đa số kép* (double majority voting), where *cơ chế bỏ phiếu* (voting) is refined by *đa số kép* (double majority).

This model allows for highly detailed terms, ideal for describing complex diplomatic processes or systems. The multi-level modification ensures precision by gradually refining the core concept through hierarchical elaboration. This structure is particularly useful in diplomatic terminology that requires clarity on intricate systems or procedures, offering depth and specificity while maintaining clarity.

4.2. General Discussion

The findings across the different formative models of Vietnamese diplomatic terms highlight the linguistic adaptability and complexity inherent in Vietnamese, particularly in the diplomatic domain. These models, ranging from compounds to intricate multi-element phrases, reveal how Vietnamese diplomatic terminology has evolved to meet the demands of precision and formality essential for international relations.

One of the most striking aspects of Vietnamese diplomatic terms is the prominence of compound structures that incorporate both native Vietnamese and Sino-Vietnamese influences. This blend allows for a range of syntactic orders, including head-modifier, modifier-head, and symmetrical formations, showcasing a linguistic versatility that caters to both clarity and descriptive depth. The persistence of Sino-Vietnamese syntax, especially in models that place modifiers before the main term, reflects the historical linguistic interchanges between Vietnamese and Chinese. This has led to the retention of certain archaic structures that lend a formal tone to diplomatic terminology, enhancing its suitability for official discourse.

The head-modifier and modifier-head models, particularly prevalent in compounds, serve to condense complex ideas into succinct expressions. The preference for these structures in Vietnamese diplomatic terms underscores an emphasis on directness, with each model contributing uniquely to the lexicon. The symmetrical models, although less common, add another dimension by emphasizing balanced meanings. This ability to convey dual aspects of a concept within a single term is

particularly valuable in diplomatic contexts, where conveying nuance is crucial.

For multi-element phrases, the complexity and hierarchical nature of certain models reveal a sophisticated approach to term formation. These structures, which range from two to four elements, allow Vietnamese diplomatic language to articulate layered meanings, capturing intricate diplomatic roles, policies, and processes. Models with three or four elements, such as those with hierarchical or balanced modifications, illustrate a high level of detail that can address specificities within diplomatic relations. These structures enable Vietnamese to not only describe diplomatic concepts comprehensively but also align with international standards of terminology, facilitating cross-cultural communication.

The interplay of balanced and hierarchical relationships across models indicates that Vietnamese diplomatic terms are designed not just for accuracy but also for adaptability. This structural diversity allows Vietnamese to maintain clarity and specificity, even when conveying complex ideas. Moreover, it highlights the influence of both native linguistic principles and historical borrowing, reflecting how Vietnamese has strategically incorporated foreign elements to expand its terminological scope.

Overall, the diverse formative models underscore the richness of Vietnamese as a language capable of adapting to the formalities of diplomacy. By employing a variety of structural patterns, Vietnamese diplomatic terms can cater to different levels of specificity and complexity. This adaptability is essential for effectively communicating nuanced diplomatic concepts and reflects the broader cultural and linguistic heritage of Vietnam. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how Vietnamese diplomatic terminology operates within its unique linguistic landscape, showcasing its strengths in flexibility, precision, and historical continuity.

5. Implications

The analysis of Vietnamese diplomatic terminology offers several implications for both linguistic research and practical applications in the field of diplomacy. Understanding the formative models of these terms not only enhances linguistic awareness but also supports improved cross-cultural communication, translation accuracy, and diplomatic education.

Linguistic and Cultural Understanding

The findings highlight the significant impact of Sino-Vietnamese influences on the formation of diplomatic terms in Vietnamese, underscoring the importance of historical context in understanding modern Vietnamese. Recognizing the origins and structural nuances of these terms contributes to a deeper appreciation of Vietnamese as a language that preserves cultural heritage while adapting to contemporary demands. For linguists and scholars, these insights offer a rich foundation for further research into the intersection of language contact, cultural exchange, and term formation.

Enhanced Translation and Interpretation Accuracy

The structural diversity within Vietnamese diplomatic terms indicates the need for precision in translation and interpretation. With the prevalence of multi-element

phrases and complex syntactic orders, translators and interpreters must be acutely aware of both semantic roles and syntactic structures. By understanding the specific models these terms follow, professionals in diplomatic translation can provide more accurate and contextually appropriate renderings, thereby reducing the risk of misinterpretation. This is particularly crucial in diplomatic exchanges where precise language can affect bilateral and multilateral relations.

Educational Applications in Diplomatic Training

For individuals pursuing careers in diplomacy, a strong grasp of Vietnamese diplomatic terminology is essential. This study's findings can inform curriculum development in Vietnamese language programs, especially those focused on diplomatic and international studies. By integrating the structural models identified here, educational programs can equip learners with the skills to understand, use, and interpret diplomatic terms effectively. Moreover, emphasizing the historical and cultural dimensions of these terms can foster a greater appreciation for the unique characteristics of Vietnamese diplomatic language, enhancing the learner's ability to engage in cross-cultural diplomacy.

Cross-Cultural Communication and Diplomatic Engagement

Understanding the formative models of Vietnamese diplomatic terms supports more effective cross-cultural communication. As Vietnamese diplomatic terminology often reflects unique syntactic orders influenced by Sino-Vietnamese lexicon, awareness of these structures can facilitate better engagement with Vietnamese counterparts in diplomatic contexts. For international diplomats and foreign policy professionals, this knowledge can contribute to more respectful and accurate communication, thereby fostering stronger bilateral relationships with Vietnam.

Implications for Terminology Development in Specialized Fields

The insights gained from the study of Vietnamese diplomatic terms may also be applicable to other specialized fields, such as legal or medical terminology, where precise language is paramount. By identifying and categorizing structural models, this research provides a framework that can be adapted for developing terminologies in other areas. This could support the creation of new terms in response to emerging diplomatic challenges, ensuring that Vietnamese remains relevant and responsive to global developments.

Preservation of Linguistic Heritage

The continued use of Sino-Vietnamese structures within diplomatic terminology highlights an opportunity to preserve linguistic heritage within a modern context. This study underscores the value of maintaining historical linguistic elements in specialized fields, as they not only contribute to linguistic richness but also serve as cultural markers. Such preservation efforts can aid in keeping traditional language elements alive, providing continuity between past and present, and contributing to Vietnam's cultural identity on the global stage.

In conclusion, the formative models of Vietnamese diplomatic terms hold valuable implications for language studies, cross-cultural diplomacy, translation, and education. By shedding light on the intricate structures and historical influences within these terms, this research

provides a foundation for enhancing communication and understanding in diplomatic contexts, ultimately supporting Vietnam's role in the global diplomatic landscape.

6. Conclusion

The study of Vietnamese diplomatic terms reveals a rich tapestry of linguistic structures shaped by historical influences, particularly from Sino-Vietnamese lexicon, and by native syntactic preferences. Through the analysis of various formative models, this research highlights the versatility and precision of Vietnamese diplomatic terminology, which adapts well to the formal and nuanced requirements of diplomacy. The prevalence of head-modifier, modifier-head, and symmetrical structures in compounds, alongside the complexity of multi-element phrases, illustrates how Vietnamese accommodates both simplicity and depth in conveying diplomatic concepts.

The findings underscore the significant role of historical language contact between Vietnamese and Chinese, especially in specialized domains where formality is essential. By integrating both native and borrowed elements, Vietnamese diplomatic terms achieve a balance between cultural heritage and linguistic adaptability. This blend allows for the creation of terms that are both semantically rich and syntactically diverse, suited to the demands of cross-cultural communication and international relations.

Furthermore, the study's implications extend beyond theoretical insights to practical applications in translation, diplomatic training, and terminology development. By understanding the specific models and structures inherent in Vietnamese diplomatic terms, translators, educators, and diplomats can enhance their ability to communicate effectively, ensuring clarity and accuracy in diplomatic exchanges. The preservation of Sino-Vietnamese structures within modern terminology also contributes to the continuity of linguistic heritage, linking contemporary language use with Vietnam's cultural past.

In conclusion, Vietnamese diplomatic terminology exemplifies the adaptability of the language in specialized fields, showcasing its capacity to convey complex ideas with precision. This adaptability not only supports Vietnam's engagement on the global diplomatic stage but also enriches its linguistic and cultural identity. As Vietnamese continues to evolve, its diplomatic terminology will likely expand, incorporating new concepts while preserving its unique syntactic and semantic features. This study offers a foundation for further research into the evolution of Vietnamese terminology across other specialized fields, contributing to a deeper understanding of Vietnam's linguistic landscape.

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