

A Study on Buddhistic Press under Lexical Perspective

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Abstract: *Language is a special signal system - a tool of thinking and communication. Through languages, people can exchange feelings, aspiration, and belief with each other. In Buddhism, language itself is the means of mission and the soul of dharma protection. The article is an empirical research on words employed in the Southern Buddhistic Press and the Northern Buddhistic Press in regard to dialect, jargon and their word origin. This article aims to clarify the similarities and differences of 2.737 dialects found in selected newspapers which are represented for geographically religious regions in Vietnam. According to the data, the Buddhism Association uses only 246 dialects whereas the Enlightenment uses 2491 dialects. In regard to jargons, both the Buddhism Association and the Enlightenment have employed a total of 7713 jargons, of which the former has 3921 cases and the latter shows 3792 cases. As regards to word origin, the results have listed a number of 4229 borrowed words originated from India, ancient Chinese, and Indo-Europe languages, accounted for 25, 2331 and 1873 respectively. Briefly, both newspapers contain certain similarities and differences in language use. This manifests the geographical distinction of Buddhism and the integration of Buddhist Press in particular and Vietnamese Buddhism in general.*

Keywords: *Buddhist, jargon, enlightenment, Vietnam Buddhism Association*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a special signal system - a tool of thinking and communication. Through languages, people can exchange feelings, aspiration, and belief with each other. In Buddhism, language itself is the means of mission and the soul of dharma protection. In order to preserve and develop the relationship with other religions and communities, Vietnamese Buddhism has chosen to lead a "good life, good religion", which has been deeply rooted in social activities such as welfare, free medical care and treatment for the poor. One of the principles in Buddhism is "to be able to help an individual is much better than to build a nine-storey tower". The beauty of life, therefore, is not only perceived by the beauty of culture and social morality, but also embraces the faith in good deeds and virtues. Therefore, the transfer of information of Buddhism is a very important task of the Buddhistic press. Language in the press is a part of media such as radio, television, advertising, and marketing, etc. As for informative functions, linguistic features in the press must be standard, informative, and intelligible for perceivers to absorb. However, no one has studied the dialect and jargon in Vietnamese Buddhistic journalism so far; therefore, the pertinence of this topic lies in its demonstration of the applicability of the distinct and unique language of the Vietnamese Buddhistic press in today's integration period.

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Researches on Press and Vietnamese Buddhist press

2.1.1 Researches on Press

Gaillard. P (2003, 41-50), in the book of *Journalists*, presented the role of journalists and news agencies in reporting. According to him, journalists must choose the event according to the following criteria.

- Latest news: the public always wait for the answer of: "Is there anything new?"
- Meaning: applies to the event and its impacted scope. For instance, "Dog biting people are normal", but "people biting dog" is unusual.

- "Concern" clarifies the significance and topicality of the news to the public.

In the book "*Modern Journalist's* (The Missouri Group, 2005), the author presented the nature of news in the 21st century: "in order to meet the readers' demands, information must have the following properties: interaction, diversity, relevance, eye-catching form, dense and profound information...".

In Vietnam, the earliest researches on journalism must consist of several articles published in newspapers and magazines since the first half of the twentieth century. Ham's *Vietnamese history of literary* was one of the typical articles which cited the benefits of the press as "providing information in the country, declaring government's orders, helping to establish the national culture, incorporating into Vietnamese many new terminologies of philosophy and science, working on unifying the utterances of three states". (Ham. D.Q, 1941, 428).

The language editing of books and newspapers (Bau. N. T, 2002) recognized the phonetic level, vocabulary, grammar and gave editorial rules at each linguistic level. Likewise, in *Press Language*, Hao. V.Q (2001) gave the general characteristics of the standard language of the press along with the style of political language, scientific language, and an administrative language. He also simultaneously presented private names, headlines, scientific terminologies.

Additionally, in a wide range of Journalist magazines of HCM Journalist Association there are lots of collums related to professional journalist expertise, which has highlighted the language issues in journalism.

When referring to the nature of press information, authors not only confirm the role of media language but also propose professional skills such as choosing news reports, article structure and stereotypes in journalism.

In regard to language in press, there are a vast number of many books, dissertations and theses such as *Categories* (Dung. D. 1996); *How to write a newspaper?* (Dung. D. 2000); *Discussion on the style of journalism* (Huong. D. 2004); *Journalism language of Saigon-Ho Chi Minh City* (Nguyen. T. T. 2011); *Journalism language* (Nien. N. T. 2003); *Basic rationale of media journalism* (Son. D.X, Huong. D.V, Quang. T, 2004) as well as Dung. H. V. (2013), Duc. H.M. (1996), (2000), and Phuong. D. (2000), (2000) ...

2.1.2. Researches on Vietnamese Buddhist Press

There are some researches on specific language for Buddhist press such as *Báo chí Phật giáo Việt Nam từ điểm nhìn lý luận truyền thông* (Thanh, 2010) (*Vietnamese Buddhist Press under Media viewpoint*); *Tôn giáo và đời sống hiện đại* (*Religion and modern life*) (Viện Thông tin khoa học xã hội, 2004); *Báo chí Phật giáo tại Việt Nam- Thực trạng và vấn đề* (*Buddhistic*

press in Vietnam- situation and issues (Hanh, 2010); *Đạo Phật có quan thiết với sự sống của đời người* (Buddhism is related to the life of human) (Hoe, 1935); *Sự du nhập của Phật Giáo vào nước ta và ảnh hưởng của nó trong thế kỷ 10-14* (The introduction of Buddhism and its influence in the 10th-14th centuries) (Huy, 2010); *Việt Nam Phật giáo sử luận* (History of Vietnamese Buddhism (Lang, 1992), etc...;

2.2 Word Theories

The Vietnamese lexicon is classified by different criteria, which can be divided into distinctive principles by etymology, the scope of use, style and positiveness and negativeness. Specifically, the native word class is the core class in Vietnamese. Eventually, this word class is plays a controlling role affecting the activities of other word classes. Identifying the etymologic word in a native language is not an easy task because Vietnamese belongs to Mon-Khmer languages; the closest language to Vietnamese is Muong (language of an ethnic minority). Therefore, some words still share several similarities which are extremely difficult to figure out the exact roots of other derivative phenomenon.

2.2.1 Dialect

A spoken or written language having grammar, words and pronunciation different from the official language is a dialect. Dialects have no corresponding words in the official language. In other words, this group includes vocabularies for common things, activities and lifestyle which only occur in certain localities. Dialect is attributed to the variable of an official language in terms of the phonetics and phonology. The causes of having the dialect are due to the geographical division, reserved from the ancient or inherent region, or other phonics gradually becoming strange languages (Chau. D.H., 2007:256).

2.2.2 Jargon

Jargon is a lexical unit that expresses phenomena within the scope of activities in society. Jargon has 2 types: The official name of real phenomena in that society (throne, crescent, parasols...), and the name of the Mandarin and hierarchy of the feudal court. It can be an additional name, superimposed on the official name; Jargon is created to distinguish this society from the others. (Chau. D.H., 2007:252).

2.2.3 Borrowed words from foreign languages

Borrowed words are words adopted by the speakers of one language from a different language (the source language). The abstract borrowed words refer to the process of speakers adopting words from a source language into their target language. Moreover, the main sources were from Chinese and Indo-European languages due to the exposure of propagation, war and commerce.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Collection and Analysis

The scope of our research is articles published in 4 months from December 2016 to March 2017. The research investigates 5 issues of two Buddhist newspapers in the North and the South of

Vietnam: Vietnamese Buddhism Association (<https://phatgiao.org.vn/emagazine/>) and Enlightenment (<http://giacngo.vn/>).

Based on the articles, the date of dialect and jargon was collected and statistically investigated. Finally, dialect and jargon with concrete samples were deeply analyzed on the basis of quantity, ratio and linguistic features

3.2 Method of Description

This method is used to describe the linguistic characteristics of the Buddhistic press so that we can identify the specific characteristics of the Buddhistic language in the current media.

3.3 Systematization Method

Systemize different language usages of each newspaper page and among newspapers.

3.4 The tactics of statistics and classification

These tactics helped us to obtain statistical information and classify the quantity and the frequency of occurrence, which are specific to Buddhistic press.

3.5 Comparative tactics

This tactics compares the usage of words between the Southern Buddhistic press and the Northern Buddhistic press.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS, RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Scope of Usage

4.1.1 Data

Table 1. Statistical table of the number of dialect and jargon

No	Newspaper names	Dialect	Rate	Jargon	Rate
1	Vietnamese Buddhism Association	246	9.99	3921	50.8
2	Enlightenment online	2491	90.01	3792	49.2
	Total	2737	100	7713	100

4.1.2 Findings

From the primary data, *the Vietnamese Buddhism Association* uses the Northern dialect with a low quantity of 246 words , accounting for 9.99%, while *the Enlightenment* uses the Southern dialect with 2491 words, making up 90.01%. Ultimately, the two newspapers use a total of 2737 words belonging to the Northern and Southern dialects. Specifically, it can be seen that the Northern Buddhistic press is strongly influenced by the official language, so the *Vietnamese Buddhism Association* uses a limited quantity of Northern dialect. On the contrary, the southern Buddhist press is heavily influenced by the Southern dialect, so the *Enlightenment* has used the majority of the Southern dialects in various articles. This can be understood that the

writers (Buddhism reporters) often come from the South and the articles are normally written for southern readers. Hence, the Southern dialect is very common in the *Enlightenment*.

In contrast to the usage of the dialect of the two newspapers, the quantity and frequency of occurrence for Buddhist jargon used in both the South and the North Buddhist press are equivalent to 7713 words. Specifically, the *Vietnam Buddhism Association* uses 3921 jargons, accounted for 50.8% and the *Enlightenment Newspaper* uses 3792 jargons, accounted for 49.2%. Hence, whether the press is from the North or the South, the use of jargon has no difference. This reflects the genuine utilization of Buddhist jargon in general and the Buddhist media in particular.

4.1.3 Discussion

The language of the Buddhist press is an essential part in Vietnamese language which is adapted appropriately to different types of target audiences. The Buddhist press in the North mainly utilizes the official language while the Buddhist press in the South prefers the Southern dialects, which is attributed to being suitable for social and linguistic disciplines. Hence, there is nothing worthy to be discussed in reference to the use of dialects in the Southern Buddhist press. However, the current use of jargons in Buddhism needs to be examined in a proper way, which means that as regards to the Buddhist press language, it is impossible not to mention the word layer *dialect). Buddhist jargon plays a tremendous role in preserving and promoting the values of Buddhism. It would be inconceivable if the Buddhist language had no jargon. However, there is a paradox of language in Buddhist media in comparison with the developmental orientation of Buddhism. Normally, Buddhist language is used to convey the dogma of Buddhism not only to the monks and Buddhist practitioners but also to the various classes of people in Vietnamese society. As a result, many people will be educated about Buddhist ideology so that they will believe and follow Buddhism. However, Buddhist jargon turns out to be both strength and barrier to this goal. Eventually, not everyone can understand the Buddhist jargon. Thus, the effectiveness of communication is significantly limited. On the other hand, if Buddhism did not use jargon, it would face deterioration in its distinctive identity, especially losing the mysticism that every religion should have. Therefore, Buddhism needs an adjustment in using both jargon and official language harmoniously. This will both preserve its identity and possibly not confuse the readers in which the Buddhist media will achieve its goals.

4.2 Vocabulary characteristics in terms of origin

4.2.1 Data

Table 2. Statistical table of the number of borrowed words

No	Origin borrowed	Quantity	Rate
1	India	25	0.6
2	Ancient China	2331	55.1
3	Indo-European languages	1873	44.3
	Total	4229	100

4.2.2 Findings

A total of 4229 words are borrowed from three different languages. The words adopted from India have a total of 25 words, accounted for 0.6%. Meanwhile, most words are borrowed from the Chinese, which has 2331 words, accounted for 55.1%. Ranked second in terms of number and borrowing rate is the Indo-European with 1873 words, accounted for 44.3%. As can be seen that the Vietnamese borrow most of the words from ancient China and this shows the strong influence of Chinese culture and language on Vietnamese lexicon after a thousand years of domination. On the other hand, in spite of having just interacted and contacted with Western countries (Indo-European languages) for only a few recent decades, Vietnam has borrowed a huge number of words. With this trend, the Indo-European words will penetrate more and more quickly in the upcoming period. Overall, this shows two facts: the ability to integrate into the world relatively strong, gradually catching up with the pace of human development. However, the rapid integration without control will lead to confusion in the use of language in particular and possibly in other issues of social life. In addition to the two sources mentioned above, it is impossible not to refer to the borrowed words from Indian roots, which is the origin of Buddhism.

4.2.3 Discussion

The use of borrowed words, thus has drawn picture of integration in the past and at present of the Vietnamese. Previously, when having religious and commercial relation with the Indian, we borrowed the Indian words through indoctrination (Buddhism). Afterwards, we interacted with the Chinese through a long history, adopted Chinese culture, traded with them, learned from the wars against China. Especially, Vietnam was colonized by China for over a thousand years; therefore, Buddhism occasionally merged into Vietnam. Simultaneously, the borrowed words of Chinese also immersed into Vietnamese lexicon. However, we have comprehensively integrated into the globe in all aspects of social life adding that foreign languages are also adopted into Vietnamese. This is indispensable and completely true to perception and language laws. Unfortunately, we still do not have a specific and consistent orientation to adopt these new languages, which may result in widespread and inconsistent usage, even affecting the development of the Vietnamese language.

V. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the scope of the research consists of Buddhist newspapers which are the *Enlightenment* and the *Vietnam Buddhism Association*. The research's results show that the Northern Buddhist press is strongly influenced by the dialects which are used very little in the Northern dialect. In contrast, the southern Buddhist press is heavily influenced by the Southern dialect which results in the exposure of Southern dialects in such a large number of articles. This is understandable that the writers (Buddhism reporters) often come from the South and their articles are generally written for southern readers. The use of jargon shows no difference between the two geographical areas.

Based on the word origin, Vietnamese people borrow words from Chinese with the largest number of borrowed words compared to the others. This shows that the influence of Chinese culture and language on the Vietnamese language is long-aged. On the other hand, despite

having just opened, interacted and contacted with Western countries (Indo-European languages) for only a few recent decades Vietnam has borrowed a huge number of words. As a result, the Indo-European words will more and more rapidly penetrate into Vietnam in the period to come.. Therefore, the ability of integration into the world takes place relatively strong, gradually catching up with the pace of human development.

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