Senti-words in English and Vietnamese*

Hamy Vu · Suwon Yoon*****
(University of Seoul)

Vu, Hamy and Suwon Yoon. 2024. Senti-words in English and Vietnamese. *Linguistic Research* 41(2): 191-229. This research investigates the interaction between sentiment analysis and expressive elements in Vietnamese. We examine how the co-occurrence of various expressive elements, such as racial slurs and honorifics, influences the overall sentiment conveyed. By employing Sentic analysis, we categorize these elements based on their inherent sentiment (positive, negative, or neutral) and examine how their co-occurrence adheres to, or deviates from, the principles of Conditional Autonomy. We address two key questions: first, can expressive elements co-occur freely? While multiple occurrences of identical expressives are possible, the study investigates if different expressives, especially conflicting ones, interact freely or under specific constraints. The Compatibility Condition Model (CCM) and the Compatibility Condition Index (CCI) are introduced to explain these potential limitations. Second, if limitations exist, how precisely do they have an impact on each other? What happens if the restrictions are violated? We show how people sometimes disregard these constraints to achieve a particular communicative effect. This analysis supports the notion of multidimensionality (Potts 2005) onwards and the newfound hybrid nature of Conditional Autonomy. This concept suggests that expressive elements have some level of independence while still influencing each other. **(University of Seoul)**

Keywords Vietnamese, expressives, Compatibility Condition Model, Compatibility Condition Index, E-expressives, H-expressives

1. Introduction

The status of ethnic slurs (ethnophaulisms) has been under debate on whether they

* This work was supported by the Basic Study and Interdisciplinary R&D Foundation Fund of the University of Seoul (2023) for Suwon Yoon.
** First Author
*** Corresponding author

are merely expressive elements or more complex items. Pure expressivism for slurs has been proposed by (Hedger 2012, 2013; cf. Kaplan 1999; Kratzer 1999; Potts 2003, 2005; Potts and Kawahara 2004; Pullum and Rawlins 2007; Richard 2008; Potts 2009). Building on Kaplan's framework for severing descriptive and expressive content, Hedger claims that racial slurs express contempt and lack descriptive content.

The pure expressivism for slurs and moral expressions, however, is recently challenged by mixed or hybrid analyses (Boisvert 2008; Williamson 2009; Croom 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015; McCready 2010; Schroeder 2010; Gutzmann 2011; Hay 2012; Whiting 2013). The hybrid analyses assume that slurs share the extension of their neutral counterpart. Slurs refer to "derogatory terms targeting individuals and groups of individuals based on race, nationality, religion, gender or sexual orientation" (Bianchi 2014), and are "used by speakers primarily to identify members that possess certain descriptive features (e.g., race) and to derogate them on that basis" (Croom 2013; Yoon 2015).

The goal of this paper is to show that slurs, e.g., *bọn Tàu Khựa*, need to be distinguished from a descriptive term (e.g., 'Chinese') that is used just to identify the target race (or appearance of the target race), and from an expressive pejorative term, e.g., 'skank,' 'bastard' that is used only to express a heightened emotional state.[1]

Similar to the research on slurs in Korean (Yoon 2015), racial slurs in Vietnamese also seem to favor a hybrid approach. Besides being derogatory, slurs are quite satisfying, often conveying a complex set of meanings, perhaps even more complex than has been suggested: (i) the racial identity of the target group; (ii) a specific characteristic of a racial group, reflected in the etymology of many colloquial terms; and possibly even (iii) the racial identity of the person making the common slur. The latter meaning is consistent with the characteristics of expressive elements (albeit a hybrid one) since, as Potts notes, expressive conventional implicatures (CI) often retain their conventional meanings.

1 This paper includes a variety of culturally sensitive terms in Vietnamese and English. These terms are used purely for academic research, to investigate the multidimensional nature of attitudinal components. Including these terms, or discussing their potentially offensive meanings, does not reflect the authors' personal or political views in any way.

2. The meaning of slurs

People sometimes use slurs to add emphasis to their speech, but it's not just about making a stronger point. The choice of slur is not random, and it does not simply reflect the surrounding environment or language. Instead, using a slur is a deliberate action taken within a specific context. It reveals the speaker's strong emotions and negative feelings towards a particular group of people. While slurs can be expressive, they don't fully represent pure expressivism. This is because slurs also carry the weight of historical and societal prejudice. Therefore, while slurs function as markers of the speaker's attitude (stance), their expressive nature falls short of the extreme view held by some theorists, like Hedger, who argue that words solely convey emotions (pure expressivism) (Hedger 2012, 2013; cf. Kaplan 1999; Kratzer 1999; Potts 2003, 2005; Potts and Kawahara 2004; Pullum and Rawlins 2007; Richard 2008; Potts 2009).

2.1 Types of slurs

Slurs in Vietnamese have various expressive meanings, like 'bastard' as in Vietnamese translation, the speaker can use several expressions such as *đồ khốn, đồ tồi, đồ khốn nạn* that share the same expressive meaning, or the pejorative term 'skank' in Vietnamese also refers to as *điếm, phò* (they all share the same meaning). Throughout Vietnamese history, marked by over a thousand years of war, particularly the prolonged conflict with China, slurs targeting the Chinese have become prevalent. These slurs, unfortunately, rank among the most common in Vietnam. Additionally, racism directed by the dominant Kinh majority towards ethnic minorities like the Degars (Montagnards), Chams, and Khmer Krom exists in Vietnam. This racism manifests in the use of derogatory terms and stereotypes portraying these groups as "ignorant, illiterate, backward," and attributing their poverty and lack of development to shortcomings in economic and agricultural skills. The fourth type of slur that will be chosen for discussion is slurs for 'Black people' like *Tây da đen* as they offer valuable resources for the gradient nature of slurs more remarkably, variants with varying degrees of color tones or phonological strengths are proportional to a positive or negative attitude toward the ethnic group. All the Vietnamese translations below in each category are listed from the most common use with general meaning to the least common use – most specific terms.

Table 1. Vietnamese general slurs and English equivalents

Category	Vietnamese	English translation
General Slurs	*Đồ khốn*	'bastard'
	Đồ khốn nạn	
	Đồ tồi	

Though they all share the same translation, each word carries a different level of meaning. *Đồ khốn* is used as a general slur to insult someone, typically implying contempt or anger. It is considered offensive and disrespectful. *Đồ khốn nạn,* which also means 'bastard' (with the added connotation of being wicked), intensifies the insult by suggesting not only illegitimacy but also moral wrongdoing or wickedness. Lastly, *Đồ tồi* leans towards the meaning of a 'wretched person,' and is used to describe someone as morally or socially despicable. It conveys a strong negative judgment about the person's character or actions.

Table 2. Vietnamese general slurs targeting women and English equivalents

Category	Vietnamese	English translation
General Slurs	*Đĩ*	'skank/prostitute'
	Điếm	
	Phò	

All the above terms in Vietnamese are derogatory terms associated with prostitution. It's important to note that the terms listed in the table are offensive and may be considered vulgar or inappropriate. They are discouraged from using in many contexts due to their disrespectful nature. One could be mentioned when the speaker has a negative attitude towards the woman they refer to. In a rare context where the speaker jokingly talks to their closest friend – and to only closet friend – perhaps with consent – may mention the word as if the listener takes it lightly.

Table 3. Vietnamese slurs targeting Chinese people and English equivalents

Category	Vietnamese	English translation
Slurs targeting Chinese people	*Người Trung (Quốc)*	'Chinese people'
	Người Hoa/ Hán/ Minh	
	Người Tàu	
	Bọn Trung (Quốc)	'those Chinese people'
	Bọn/ Người Trung Của	
	Bọn Tàu Khựa	'those Chinese bastard'

	Chệt (or chệc)	'poor Chiu Chow people' immigrated to Vietnam for living (folk language) (Khôi, 1932)
	Ba Tàu ('Three Ships')	'Chinese people'

The above terms are listed from most common to least common. The assessment of frequency and commonality in Table 3 is primarily based on one of the authors' as a native Vietnamese speaker and observations of language use in various contexts. Years of exposure to spoken and written Vietnamese, including informal conversations, online discourse, traditional and social media, and even literature, have provided the author with insights into the relative frequency of these slurs. The most common and general term could be named such as *Người Trung Quốc* (sometimes it is spoken in short term *Người Trung* – for *Trung* means 'China' and *Quốc* means the 'country').

Người Hoa, Người Hán, and *Người Minh,* in simple translation, mean 'Chinese people,' but they used to be common terms in the ancient time. *Người Hoa/ Hán* (simplified Chinese: 华人; traditional Chinese: 華人; pinyin: Huárén), with other various names like Ming people, Chinese people, Ming Huong people, Northern people, Qing people, Tang people, etc. (Wikipedia 2024) People of Chinese origin (collectively referred to as Chinese) have been traveling back and forth to do business, live, and integrate with the indigenous Vietnamese (Kinh people) in Vietnam for a long time, depending on the circumstances. The historical periods, circumstances of contact, or causes of migration by which the Chinese have claimed their ethnic names vary. The Chinese often call themselves the people of dynasties that they consider civilized, take pride in or consider it popular and well known by the native people, or have known for a long time. The Chinese also call themselves according to their hometown: người Quảng *Đông* 'Guangdong,' *người Tiều* 'Chaozhou,' *người Hải Nam* 'Hainan,' *người Phúc Kiến* 'Fujian,' etc. The Vietnamese also had a custom of calling Chinese people *Người Ngô* – 'Wu people.' This rule originates from the history of the Spring and Autumn period when there was 'Wu country' and 'Viet country,' these were two non-Chinese countries, but later this region was completely sinicized from the North. A typical example is the *Bình Ngô đại cáo* 'great announcement of Binh Ngo' by Nguyen Trai in the 15th century after Binh Dinh King – Le Loi chased away the Ming invaders, as the Ming dynasty had a predecessor calling itself Ngô (Wikipedia 2023).

To explain the meaning of the name *Ba Tau*, we need to understand the meaning of each word separately. *Ba Tau,* or in English – 'three ships.' *Ba* – 'three' means three lands where Lord Nguyen (1679) allowed the Chinese to do business and live: Cu Lao Pho (Dong Nai), Saigon Cho Lon, and Ha Tien; The word *Tàu* 'ship' originates from the Chinese people's means of transportation when they moved to An Nam (The name of Vietnam at that time was An Nam) (Nguyễn 2017).

Table 4. Vietnamese slurs targeting Vietnamese ethnic minorities and English quivalents

Category	Vietnamese	English translation
Slurs targeting Vietnamese ethnic minorities	*Đồng bào miền cao*	'highlanders/high-land compatriot'
	Đồng bào vùng núi	
	Người miền núi	
	Dân tộc ít người	'minority groups'
	Người thiểu số	
	Mọi	'savages'

Vietnam is home to 54 ethnic groups. Each ethnicity has its own language, traditions, and subculture. The largest ethnic groups are Kinh 85.32%, Tay 1.92%, Thai 1.89%, Muong 1.51%, Hmong 1.45%, Khmer 1.37%, Nung 1.13%, Dao 0.93%, Hoa 0.78%, with all others accounting for the remaining 3.7% (according to Wikipedia 2019 data). The Vietnamese term for minority ethnic groups are *người thiểu số* and *dân tộc ít người* 'minority groups.'

Another term to call ethnic minorities is *mọi.* In the past, Montagnards – many different tribes that are indigenous to the Central Highlands of Vietnam (Wikipedia 2024) – were referred to as *mọi* 'savages,' by the Vietnamese (Elliot 2003). Vietnamese textbooks used to describe Montagnards as people with long tails and excessive body hair (Lung 2006). Nowadays, the non-offensive term *người Thượng* 'highlanders,' is used instead.

Table 5. Vietnamese slurs targeting Black people and English equivalents

Category	Vietnamese Translation	English Translation
Slurs for Black people	*Người da màu*	'people of colors'
	Người gốc Phi	'people from Africa' (African diaspora)
	Người da đen	'Black people'
	Tây da đen	'African Europeans/Americans ' (In Vietnamese, the word "Tây" refers to

		western countries, e.g. "người phương Tây" means people from western countries)

Slurs for 'Black people' varies in many terms such as *người da màu, người gốc Phi, người da đen,* and *Tây da đen.* All the above terms are considered general common terms.

2.2 Properties of expressives

Similar to other languages, Vietnamese slurs contribute to the speaker's heightened emotional state, a characteristic shared with expressive words like 'damn' and 'bastard' (Potts 2004, 2007). Notably, Potts (2007) describes the defining feature of expressives as their "immediate and powerful impact on the context." They often reveal the speaker's emotional state, indicating anger, elation, frustration, ease, power, or subordination (Potts 2007). This feature, termed "perspective dependence" (Potts 2004, 2007), is demonstrably exhibited by slurs in Vietnamese. Analyzing them through the lens of Potts' (2005, 2007) framework reveals several aspects of Vietnamese slurs that align with the properties of expressives.

The first property of expressive to consider is independence. In the following example, the expressive content of the pejorative 'bitch' contributes a dimension of meaning that is separated from the regular descriptive content:

(1) That bitch Georgina is the most popular girl in our high school.

This sentence claims that Georgina is the most popular girl in the high school as a descriptive meaning, and it also conveys that Georgina, even though she is the most popular girl, the speaker holds a negative attitude toward her. But a listener could listen to the sentence and understand that it has two meanings, the first one is the fact that Georgina is famous, and the second one is that she is a bitch. But the listener could also accept the first meaning without the necessity to accept the second meaning that Georgina is a bitch, because this characterization is made from the speaker's feelings towards Georgina.

In the same context, the following sentence with the slur *thằng Trung Của* 'that Chinese bastard' expresses the parallel properties in Vietnamese. As explained above,

this is a Vietnamese slur addressing a Chinese person. *Trung Của* 'China' when it stands alone, is a slang expression coming from the original word *Trung Quốc* 'China,' but as the speaker adds the word *thằng* 'that bastard' could turn the whole meaning of the phrase into a slur.

(2) Thằng Trung Của kia nổi tiếng thật đấy.
bastard Chinese that famous really
'That one Chinese bastard is really famous.'

A listener could accept the fact that 'That one Chinese guy is famous' without accepting the speaker's addressed characterization of that Chinese guy as *thằng* 'bastard.' For example, the listener could answer "Yeah, he is pretty famous, but I think he's a cool guy." (denying the speaker's emotive attitude that guy is a bastard).

In a similar case, (McCready 2010) notes, that slurs do not participate in denial because they are not part of the descriptive meaning. Let us examine examples of Vietnamese slurs:

(3) A: Nhìn thằng nhà quê kìa.
Look guy peasant that
'Look at that peasant guy.' (negative attitude)
B: Đâu phải đâu.
Not – Decl
'That's not true.'
(4) ≠ Anh ta là dân chuyên IT đấy.
he is pro IT
'He is an IT pro.'

(3B) conveys the denial of the mentioned guy as a peasant (as explained above *nhà quê* – 'a peasant' – is a poor person who comes from the remote countryside or physically looks poor), while (4) conveys that the meaning of the mentioned guy is not a guy who comes from the countryside nor looking like one, but rather indicates that he appears as a person who does not know how to use technology, but he is actually an IT pro. Comparing (3) to (4), we see no equivalence, which shows that the denial by a regular negation in (3B) can only be about the identity (through

physical look and profession), not about the use of an offensive term. Therefore, the negative attitudinal flavor in a slur like *nhà quê* is not part of the at-issue meaning.

Furthermore, we examine the multi-dimensionality of the positive/negative Emotive expressives (E-expressives) like 'damn' and the Honorific expressives (H-expressives) like (anti-)honorific markers which have been routinely treated uniformly in the previous literature (Potts and Kawahara 2004). However, it has not been clear how closely (or distantly) these two are related to each other (Yoon 2015). Yoon suggests that the expressive terms can be categorized into two types: those related to the Emotion-dimension (E-expressives) and those linked to the Honorific-dimension (H-expressives). Traditionally, these dimensions are treated similarly due to several shared characteristics. That is, both E-expressives and H-expressives adhere to the CI properties and can be modified through metalinguistic negation or metalinguistic comparatives. However, Yoon points out that in certain situations, these dimensions may operate separately, challenging the notion of a uniform approach. For instance, there can be cases of apparently conflicting multidimensional attitudes. An example of this is when someone needs to fulfill a social duty to be polite by using sir but simultaneously wishes to express a negative emotional tone by using bastard.

(5) "Sir, You Bastard" (book title by G. F. Newman 1970, UK)

Additionally, Yoon shows that instances where these two dimensions diverge are more prevalent in languages that have a rigid honorification system like Korean. In (6), an employee at a large company is required to use honorific forms like *N-kkeyse* 'Nom.hon' and *V-si* 'Subj(ect).hon' when addressing the company president. Despite this, the employee may choose to convey negative emotions towards the content of a proposition by adding the negative expressive verbal suffix *peli.*

(6) Hoycangnim-kkeyse1 cwusik-ul maykakhay-peli2-si3-ess-e.
president-Nom.hon stock-Acc sell-neg.att-subj.hon-Pst-Decl
'The (CIhonorable)1 (CIhonorable)3 president has (CIregreattably)2 sold his stocks.'

Given this, the question that we want to raise is whether the emotive expressives

and the honorific expressives are located in the shared dimension or whether they must be separated into two different dimensions of expressives.

Emotive expressives are words or expressions used to convey emotions or feelings, typically in an intense or emphatic manner. Examples like damn are often used to express frustration, anger, or strong disapproval. Emotive expressives can vary in intensity and can be positive or negative. For instance, amazing is a positive emotive expressive that conveys extreme admiration or positivity.

Honorific expressives, on the other hand, are linguistic elements that are used to convey respect, politeness, or social hierarchy. These include honorific markers like honorific pronouns 'sir,' titles 'Mr.,' and 'Mrs.,' and language choices that elevate or humble the speaker or the listener in a conversation. Anti-honorific markers would include words or expressions that are used to demean or show disrespect. According to Yoon (2015), "The attitudinal components in both E-expressives and H-expressives, however, seem to be correctable by means of metalinguistic negation or metalinguistic comparative forms." First of all, we will show examples of metalinguistic negation and comparative on H-expressives to observe how they convey different shades of meaning or modify the degree of honorific respect in a statement.

(7) Original H-expressive: Bác sĩ ('Doctor')
Metalinguistic Negation
Không phải là ông Vương, mà là tiến sĩ Vương.
not Mr. Vuong, but Dr. Vuong.
'Not Mr. Vuong, but Dr. Vuong.'

(7) is an example of metalinguistic negation in Vietnamese. According to Horn (1989: 363), Metalinguistic negation is defined as "a device for objecting to a previous utterance on any grounds whatsoever including the conventional or conversational implicata it potentially induces, its morphology, its style or register or its phonetic realization."

In this case, the negative word *không* 'not' is used to negate the word *tiến sĩ* 'doctor.' However, the negation is not intended to deny that the person holds a doctorate degree. Rather, it is used to emphasize that the person is not a medical doctor. The second part of the sentence, *mà là một tiến sĩ* 'but is a Ph.D. doctor,' further clarifies this by stating that the person is a doctor in the sense of having

a Ph.D.

This type of metalinguistic negation is common in Vietnamese and can be used in a variety of contexts. For example, it might be used to clarify the meaning of a word or phrase, to emphasize a distinction between two things, or to express a negative opinion in a more polite way.

In this particular example, the metalinguistic negation is used to correct the inappropriate title rather than distinguishing between professions. This highlights the importance of social register and appropriate forms of address in Vietnamese culture, as there is a great deal of respect for and reflect the relationship between speakers.

(8) Metalinguistic Comparative

Ông ấy không chỉ là ông Vương mà là tiến sĩ Vương.
he not just is Mr. Vuong, but Dr. Vuong
'He is not just Mr. Vuong, but (also) Dr. Vuong'

Formally, this sentence has a comparative structure with the conjuction *mà* 'but' to contrast two clauses. However, in terms of context, this sentences does not compare two different subjects but rather emphasizes the distinction between two ways to address a same person. This sentence is a scalar comparison as it not only compares two aspects of Mr. Vuong (being *ông* 'Mr.' and being *tiến sĩ* 'Dr.') but also emphasizes the superiority of one aspect over the other. *ông Vương* (Mr. Vuong) is a common way of addressing one person (particularly male gender) with basic respect. *tiến sĩ Vương* 'Dr. Vuong' is a more formal way of addressing which shows respect for Mr. Vuong's academic degree and qualifications, highlighting the importance in Vietnamese culture of addressing social register using appropriate forms.

In both cases, only the attitudinal component of the expressive dimension is changed from the neutral to honorific nominative case, while the descriptive content 'doctor' remains the same.

Moving on to the next observation on metalinguistic negation and metalinguistic comparatives operating on E-expressive (slurs), the result is similar to those examples experienced on H-expressives. Only the expressive Conventional Implicature (CI, henceforth) meaning changes, from an offensive term to a politically correct one, without affecting the descriptive content:

(9) Metalinguistic Negation

A: Chen là một trong số những người Trung Quốc.
Chen is one of number these people Chinese.
'Chen is one of (positive term for) Chinese people.

B: Cái gì? Người Trungcái nỗi gì! Nó là thằng Tàu Khựa!
what Chinese my ass! he is dude Chinese
'What? '(positive term for) Chinese My ass!' He is '(negative term for) Chinese dude!'

In this dialogue, person B uses metalinguistic negation to express their strong disagreement with person A's use of the positive emotive term *người Trung Quốc* 'Chinese people', and substitutes it with the derogatory slur *thằng Tàu Khựa* 'Chinese dude', demonstrating a shift in expressive meaning without altering the descriptive content (referring to a person of Chinese descendant.

(10) Metalinguistic Negation

Nói về Chen thì nên dùng từ 'người Trung Quốc'
talking about Chen better to use word 'person Chinese'
thay vì 'thằng Tàu Khựa'.
than 'dude Chinese.'
'When talking about Chen, it is better to use the term 'Chinese person' (positive term) than 'Chinese dude' (negative term).'

In this conversation, the speaker intends to demean Chen, using a metalinguistic comparative to highlight that *thằng Tàu Khựa* 'Chinese dude' is a term that sounds much more severe and more offensive E-expressive compared to *người Trung Quốc* 'Chinese person.'

This evidence leads us to conclude that slurs have independence property: as Potts notes, "the expressive and descriptive meanings that a sentence can convey should not be combined in a single unit" (Potts 2007) but also "some expressive meanings act as bridges between the two realms, by mapping descriptive content to expressive content."

Second, slurs exhibit perspective dependence. Have an observation on the context

of the following example:

(11) Metalinguistic Negation
Anh ta là một thằng Trung Của.
he is a bastard Chinese
'He is a Chinese bastard.'
--- But he respects the Chinese people.
--- ≠ But I respect the Chinese people.

This example demonstrates perspective dependence, a key property of expressives as highlighted by (Potts 2007). This property signifies that expressives inherently convey the speaker's perspective (or sometimes a specific character's perspective) within the specific context of the utterance. While the descriptive meaning of the sentence, 'he is a Chinese man,' might be objective, the chosen term *thằng Trung Của* 'Chinese bastard' carries a strong negative connotation and attitude of the speaker. This specific word choice directly reflects the speaker's negative attitude or feelings towards the referent 'he,' regardless of his actual views on Chinese people. Even if he personally respects the Chinese, the sentence itself cannot be used to report on his perspective or past attitudes, as it is solely anchored in the speaker's current perspective expressed through the use of the slur. The sentence *Anh ta là một thằng Trung Của* 'He is a Chinese bastard.' conveys the speaker's negative perspective on the referent, not necessarily his own views or past events. This inability to be separated from the speaker's perspective aligns with the concept of perspective dependence in Potts' theory of expressives (Potts 2007).

3. The CI status of slurs

The impact of using an expressive like a slur in context can be described through Expressive Indices (EIs). These are depicted as actions on the context with multiple parameters, one of which is an expressive setting. Potts (2007: 37) identifies EIs as the key elements that are influenced by expressive meanings.

(12) An expressive index is a triple <a I b>, I ∈[-1, 1].

In his framework, Expressive Indices (EIs) are introduced to defining expressive domains in elements like damn or bastard. These indices are represented by numerical ranges I $\subseteq$ [-1, 1], which capture (i) the intensity of expressivity and (ii) the direction of the expressive emotion. The notation <a I b> signifies that person A exhibits an expressive intensity I towards person B. This system allows for capturing nuanced emotional positions, from neutral to highly positive or negative. Emotional relationships are characterized by the specific intervals within [-1, 1] that I occupies; larger positive values indicate a more positive expressive connection, and the reverse for negative values, as shown in Potts' example below.

(13) a. <[[tom]] [-.5, 0] [[jerry]]>: Tom feels negatively toward Jerry. [English]

b. <[[ali]] [-.8, 1] [[jerry]]>: Ali feels essentially indifferent to Jerry.

c. <[[kevin]] [0, 1] [[jerry]]>: Kevin is wild about Jerry.

Yoon (2015) suggested that the Compatibility Condition Model (CCM) in Figure 1 captures the systematic pattern for the co-occurrences of multiple expressives with varying degrees of attitudes.

	Strong Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Strong Positive
Strong Negative					
Negative				0% Incompatibility	
Neutral	25% Low Compatibility	50% Mid Compatibility	100% High Compatibility	50% Mid Compatibility	25% Low Compatibility
Positive		0% Incompatibility			
Strong Positive					

Figure 1. Compatibility Condition Model (CCM) for multiple expressives

In Figure 1, the attitudes of expressive lexical items range from the strongly negative attitude to the Expressive Index (EI) (Potts 2007)

Strongly Negative Attitude (EI: [-1, -0.5]): This represents the strongest negative attitude, depicted by the darkest shading on the leftmost slot of the four-squared bar. Imagine words like 'disgusting' or 'horrible' falling into this category.

Negative Attitude (EI: [-1, 0]): This represents a negative attitude, but not as strong as the previous one. This might be depicted by a slightly lighter shade in the four-squared bar. Words like 'bad' or 'unpleasant' could fit here.

Neutral Attitude (EI: [1, 1]): This represents a neutral attitude, with no particular emotional slant. This might be depicted by a white space in the four-squared bar. Words like 'neutral' or 'moderate' would be considered neutral.

Positive Attitude (EI: [0, 1]): This represents a positive attitude, but not as strong as the next one. This might be depicted by a lighter shade on the right side of the four-squared bar. Words like 'good' or 'nice' could be examples.

Strongly Positive Attitude (EI: [0.5, 0]): This represents the strongest positive attitude, depicted by the darkest shading on the rightmost slot of the four-squared bar. Words like 'wonderful' or 'amazing' might fall into this category.

To assess how well two expressive words, e.g. *Tàu Khựa* 'Chinese' and *Thằng/Con* 'dude/girl' fit together in the sections below, we utilize the Compatibility Condition Index (CCI) equation to calculate the percentage of compatibility between two (or more) expressive elements. This index assigns values based on how compatible the two words are:

- Black squares: High compatibility (CCI: 100%) – These words work exceptionally well together.
- Dark gray squares: Medium compatibility (CCI: 50%) – These words work somewhat well together.
- Light gray squares: Low compatibility (CCI: 25%) – These words might work together but might sound awkward or unusual in certain contexts.
- White squares: Incompatible (CCI: 0%) – These words should not be used together because they clash significantly.

This system helps gauge the overall fit of expressive words in a combination, similar to how colors have different levels of compatibility when combined.

3.1 Expressive nouns and slurs

We argue that the expressive component in Vietnamese shows that the attitudinal flavor, which is independent of the semantics of its environment, is captured using a refined version of the multidimensionality of conventional implicatures (CI) in the sense of Potts' studies (2005, 2007). Expressive elements in language act like commentators on the main meaning of a sentence. They are similar to other elements in various languages that add an emotional or evaluative layer to the basic information being conveyed. For example, in English, words like 'damn' and 'bastard' (Potts 2005, 2007) express emotions beyond the literal meaning of the words themselves. Or, appositives, like 'the dog, my best friend,' add an additional comment about the subject (Potts 2005). In Japanese, honorifics show respect or formality by adding an expressive layer to the sentence (Potts and Kawahara 2004; Potts 2005). In Greek and Korean, particles like 'more' and 'than' can go beyond their literal meaning and convey additional information about comparisons (Giannakidou and Yoon 2011).

In summary, expressive elements, like spices in a dish, add flavor and depth to the meaning conveyed by a sentence, enriching the communication beyond the basic information. In Vietnamese, like in Korean (Yoon 2015), there is a rich use of expressive elements that convey emotional attitudes or tones within the language. Vietnamese makes use of various linguistic features to express positive, neutral, or negative attitudes, but the specifics can differ.

3.1.1 Emotionally charged expressions

In Vietnamese, emotional attitudes can be conveyed through nouns, verbs, adverbs, particles, and other linguistic elements. Speakers often choose words or expressions that reflect their emotional stance or attitude. Take a look at the particle examples, where *còn* emphasizes dissatisfaction or disappointment.

(14) Sao còn đi học muộn nữa vậy?
why still go to school late again
'Why are you late again?'
mới: expresses surprise, disbelief, or unexpectedness.

(15) Mới hay tin anh chuyển công tác à?
just heard you changed jobs
'I just heard you changed jobs?'

chắc: expresses doubt or uncertainty.

(16) Chắc anh ấy không đến đâu.
maybe he not come
'I doubt he'll come.'

3.1.2 Positive/honorific, neutral, and negative/antihonorific

Vietnamese also has linguistic elements that can be categorized into positive/honorific, neutral, and negative/antihonorific. These elements are used to convey respect, neutrality, or disdain, depending on the context. Vietnamese has a range of synonyms or words with varying emotional connotations. Vietnamese might have different words for the same concept, and the choice of word can reflect the speaker's emotional attitude. For example, many frequently-used nouns such as 'person,' 'meal,' 'appearance,' etc., have a variety of synonyms for marking the positive (POS), neutral (NEU), or negative (NEG) flavor. The words we choose for nouns (like 'lady') can reveal how we feel about something. These feelings can be strengthened or weakened by adding adjectives (like 'positive' or 'negative'). In Vietnamese, adjectives and other modifiers can be attached to nouns or other words to express emotions. Positive adjectives can make the meaning more positive or respectful, while negative adjectives can make it more negative or disrespectful.

Here are some examples of how different words for 'lady' in Vietnamese can convey different emotions:

(17) a. Người con gái ấy trông ✓rất xinh đẹp/#thường thường/#khó coi.
she looks beautiful/normal/unsightly
'The lady'

b. Cô ta trông ✓rất xinh đẹp/✓thường thường/✓khó coi.
she looks beautiful/normal/unsightly
'That girl'

c. Con đó trông #rất xinh đẹp/#thường thường/✓khó coi.
she looks beautiful/normal/unsightly
'That child / That'

The way we talk about someone in Vietnamese can reveal our attitude towards

them. This is particularly evident in the word choices for 'lady.' In example (17a), *Người con gái ấy* 'the lady' is used exclusively with positive adjectives like 'beautiful,' suggesting a respectful and admiring attitude towards the woman. In example (17b), the term *Cô ta* 'she' is considered neutral and can be used with any type of adjective, including positive, negative, or neutral ones. For example, you could say *Cô ta trông rất xinh đẹp* 'she looks very beautiful' or *Cô ta trông khó coi* 'she looks unsightly.' Lastly, in example (17c), the term *Con đó* 'that child/that' is generally used in a disrespectful or derogatory way. While it might be technically possible to say *Con đó trông rất xinh đẹp* 'That child looks very beautiful,' it would likely be interpreted as sarcastic or ironic, suggesting that the speaker does not actually think the person is beautiful. In summary, the specific word chosen for 'lady' in Vietnamese can convey a range of emotions and attitudes depending on its context and the adjectives used with it.

We can now explore how different types of expressive nouns interact with other words to form compound nouns in Vietnamese. Following the discussion of expressive nouns, let's delve into the general terms in Vietnamese. In Table 6 below, slurring terms in each row (e.g. *Khốn nạn* 'bastard,' *Khốn/ tồi* 'bastard') and expressive nouns in each column (*Thằng/Con* 'dude/girl,' *Đồ* 'thing') express varying degrees of respect and formality towards the person being addressed or referred to.

Quý ông/Quý bà (EI [0.5, 1]): Translate to 'Mr. and Mrs.' or 'Gentlemen and Ladies.' It is a formal way to address a group of people, typically in a business or professional setting. It is a polite way to address an individual, especially if the speaker does not know the listener's name.

Người (EI: [0, 0.5]) is a neutral term used to refer to a person or group of people. It does not carry any emotional connotations and can be used in a variety of contexts. For example, *Người đàn ông* 'man' or *Người phụ nữ* 'woman.'

Đồ (EI: [-1, -0.5]) is a derogatory term used to refer to a person or group of people with negative connotations. It can be used to express strong contempt, anger, or disgust.

Bọn (EI: [0, -1]) is a term used to refer to a group of people, often with negative connotations. It can be used to express contempt, anger, or disgust.

Thằng (EI: [-1, -0.5]) is a derogatory term used to refer to a young man or a boy, often with strongly negative connotations. It can be used to express strong contempt, anger, or disgust. This term is highly derogatory and specifically targets

young men or boys, often aiming to belittle or insult them. With the same meaning, there is another term to refer to a young girl, which is *Con*.

Table 6. Compatibility Condition Index (CCI) between slurs and expressive nouns

	General epithets	Slurs			
		[-1,-0.5] Strong Neg	[-1,0] Neg	[-1,1] Neutral	[0,1] Positive
		Khốn nạn 'bastard'	*Khốn/ tồi* 'bastard'	*Người Trung Quốc* 'Chinese person'	*Đồng bào miền cao/ núi* 'high-land compatriot'
		Đĩ 'skank'	*Điếm/ Phò* 'skank'	*Người Tàu/ Hoa* 'Chinese person'	*Người da màu* 'people of colors'
		Tàu Khựa 'Chinese'	*Trung Của* 'Chinese'	*Người miền núi* 'Highlander'	*Người gốc Phi* 'people from Africa'
		Mọi 'savages'		*Dân tộc ít người* 'minority groups'	
				Người da đen 'Black person'	
[-1,-0.5]	*Thằng/ Con* 'dude/girl'	High Compatibility			
[-1,0]	*Đồ* 'thing'	Mid Compatibility			
[1,1]	*Người* 'person'	Low Compatibility			
[0,1]	*Bạn* 'friend'	Incompatibility			
[0.5,1]	*Quý ông/ Quý bà* 'gentleman-/lady'				

3.2 Expressive verbs, modifiers, and slurs

Another linguistic element that expresses emotion is verbs. Different expressions, respect, or disrespect toward the person being referred to or spoken about could be identified by using honorific/anti-honorific verbs. Unlike the well-known case of honorific inflection *-si* on verbs in Korean as expressives with a positive attitude (Yoon 2015), Vietnamese verbs can swift to another higher form of honorific (yet they have the same meaning). The verb choice could elevate the action, and demonstrate politeness in various situations. In a sentence, honorific verbs could be used with additional words or phrases to further emphasize respect. Daily verbs have honorific counterparts used when referring to superiors, elders, and respectful entities with titles like 'Mr.,' 'Mrs.,' *giáo viên* 'teacher,' etc. to heighten the level of formality. In addition, *Dạ* (respectful 'yes') and *ạ* are the two untranslatable polite particles supporting verbs placed at the beginning and the end of the sentence to elevate the honorific attitude towards the listener who is often to be a superior or elder. Here are some examples with neutral slurs to see the elevation:

(18) Neutral Verb nói 'to speak' to Honorific Verb thưa 'to state'
  a. Người Trung Quốc đang nói chuyện.
    the man Chinese is speaking.
    'The Chinese man is speaking.'
  b. Người Trung Quốc đang thưa chuyện ạ.
    the man Chinese is stating an issue
    'The Chinese man is stating an issue.'
  c. Người Trung Quốc đang thưa chuyện với giáo viên ạ.
    the man Chinese is stating an issue to the teacher
    'The Chinese man is stating an issue to the teacher.'

Now, we shall see how it differs in a sentence with a negative slur:

(19) a. Bọn Tàu Khựa đang nói chuyện.
    those people Chinese are speaking.
    'Those Chinese people are speaking.'

b. Bọn Tàu Khựa đang thưa chuyện ạ.
those people Chinese are stating an issue
'Those Chinese people are stating an issue.'
c. Bọn Tàu Khựa đang thưa chuyện với giáo viên ạ
those people Chinese are stating an issue to the teacher
'Those Chinese people are stating an issue to the teacher.'

Example (18) with a neutral slur stays in the neutral index [1, 1], especially example (18c) elevates from neutral index to strong positive index [0.5, 1] by using the honorific verb *thưa* with the additional word (respectful title for *giáo viên* 'teacher'). Now, in example (19), we used the negative slur in all three sentences, but the results show that the speaker could have a negative attitude toward the subject mentioned by using the negative index slur *Bọn Tàu Khựa* 'those Chinese people' yet it does not affect the positive outcome of the sentences (19b) and (19c). It shows the clash between honorific verbs and negative slurs. As a result, slurs with strong negative or even weak negative cannot be used at the same time as honorific verbs and polite particles *Dạ* and *ạ*, as they are only compatible with positive attitudes.

In comparison to Korean, Vietnamese does not have anti-honorific verbs, such as *V-peli* (Yoon 2015), but it rather includes neutral verbs and nouns, pronouns (as discussed above in 3.1), expressive modifiers, even tone and intonation to convey a negative attitude of the speaker. Look at the examples using the negation particle *Đừng có mà* 'do not' indicating the intensive prohibition or command not to do something:

(20) a. Đừng có mà đùa với bọn Tàu Khựa. (EI: [-1, -0.5])
do not joke with those people Chinese
'Do not joke with those Chinese people.'
b. Đừng có mà đùa với người Trung Quốc. (EI: [-1, 1])
do not joke with the man Chinese
'Do not joke with the Chinese man.'

The negative index of *bọn Tàu Khựa* EI: [-1, -0.5] naturally goes with the particle *Đừng có mà*, which emphasizes the seriousness of the warning.

After looking at the examples of expressive verbs, modifiers, and slurs, we can

summarize their companionability in Table 7: here we can see the compatibility patterns between two expressive items (i.e. negative/positive slurs and anti-honorific/honorific markers at a glance. For instance, a strong negative slur like *Đồ khốn nạn* 'bastard' shows high compatibility with an anti-honorific marker like *Đừng có mà* 'Do not,' yet incompatibility with a honorific marker like *Dạ/ạ* '(respectful) yes.' On the other hand, a positive noun like *Đồng bào miền cao/núi* 'high-land compatriot' shows high compatibility with a honorific marker like *Dạ/ạ* '(respectful) yes,' but incompatibility with a anti-honorific marker like *Đừng có mà* 'Do not.'

Table 7. Compatibility Condition Index (CCI) of slurs and (anti-)honorific markers

	(Anti-)Honorific markers	Slurs			
		[-1,-0.5] Strong Neg	[-1,0] Neg	[-1,1] Neutral	[0,1] Positive
		Đồ khốn nạn 'bastard'	Đồ khốn/ Đồ tồi 'bastard'	Người Trung Quốc 'Chinese person'	Đồng bào miền cao/ núi 'high-land compatriot'
		Bọn Tàu Khựa 'Chinese people'	Bọn Trung (Quốc) 'Chinese people'	Người da đen 'black person'	Người da màu 'people of color'
			Người Trung Của 'Chinese man'	Người miền núi 'highlander'	Người gốc Phi 'people from Africa'
				Dân tộc ít người 'minority group'	
[-1,-0.5]	Đừng có mà 'Do not'	High Compatibility	Mid Compatibility	Low Compatibility	Incompatibility
[1,1]	nói 'speak'				
[0,1]	Thưa 'dear'				
[0.5,1]	Dạ/ ạ respectful 'yes'				

3.3 Compatibility Condition Index (CCI) & Compatibility Condition Model (CCM) for expressives

In exploring the landscape of expressive elements in Vietnamese, we have reached our goal of answering two questions: first, do those expressive elements interact with each other? Second, if yes, how precisely do they have an impact on each other?

So far, many models have been proposed to explain the collective harmonization effect of expressives. It is done effectively through the varied use of slurs, (anti-) honorifics of expressive nouns, verbs, and others, all aimed at creating a complex reflection of the speaker's attitudinal stance. By combining these multiple means into a single utterance, the speaker can convey meaning in a flexible and varied manner. This suggests that the use of slurs is a strategy for conveying complex and multidimensional meanings in linguistic and cultural communication.

The answer to the first question is yes: the expressive elements can influence each other within a sentence. The compatibility conditions for them should be extreme (positive or negative), thus the degree of honorific attitude with respect does not necessarily have to match completely.

As for the second question of how precise the impact should be, like Korean, Vietnamese also has expressive words that could interact with each other to create a stronger degree of attitude; and the basic compatibility condition is rather similar: expressives must have the same polarity, either positive or negative. However, the influence of expressive words on each other in Vietnamese is more flexible. (Yoon 2015) suggests that using multiple negative expressive elements at the same time can lead to a cumulative effect (e.g., three negative elements are three times as strong as one element). We tested the following example to see if the anti-honorific and negative attitude elements would contribute to an extreme level of dishonorable attitude:

(21) Thằng Trung Quốc khốn nạn chết tiệt này đã lừa dối tôi!
man Chinese wretched damned this cheated on me
'This damned wretched Chinese man cheated on me!'

Observe how the neutral elements such as 'Chinese man' and weak negative 'cheat

on' contributed to the strongly negative attitude of other elements like 'damned,' and 'wretched.' (Yoon 2015) proposes the following equation to measure the degree of compatibility between two expressive items:

(22) Compatibility Condition Index (CCI)

$$= \frac{length\ of\ overlapped\ range\ of\ narrow\ Expressive\ Index\ (EI)}{length\ of\ broad\ Expressive\ Index} \times 100\%$$

With this equation, we can calculate the compatibility between the weak negative item like 'cheat on' with EI [-1, 0] and the strong negative item like 'damned' with EI [-1, -0.5], for example. In this case, the one with broad EI for the denominator is 'cheat on' with EI [-1, 0] whose length of EI is 1, and the length of overlapped range of narrow EI for the numerator is the overlapping region between these two items (from -1 to -0.5), whose length is 0.5. Thus the CCI between these two items is calculated to be 50%.

By using the equation, we can calculate the compatibility level of emotive lexical items as Table 8 below illustrates the compatibility between expressive nouns and ethnic slurs in Vietnamese:

Table 8. Compatibility between expressive nouns and ethnic slurs

	General epithets	Slurs				
		[-1,-0.5] Strong Neg	[-1,0] Neg	[-1,1] Neutral	[0,1] Pos	[0.5,1] Strong Pos
		Khốn nạn 'bastard'	*Khốn/ tồi* 'bastard'	*Người Trung Quốc* 'Chinese person'	*Đồng bào miền cao/ núi* 'high-land compatriot'	*Đồng bào* 'compatriot'
		Đĩ 'skank'	*Điếm/ Phò* 'skank'	*Người Tàu/ Hoa* 'Chinese person'	*Người da màu* 'people of colors'	*Giáo viên* 'teacher'
		Tàu Khựa 'Chinese'	*Trung Của* 'Chinese'	*Người miền núi* 'Highlander'	*Người gốc Phi* 'people from Africa'	*Ông/Bà* 'Mr./Mrs.'
		Mọi		*Dân tộc ít*		

		'savages'		*người* 'minority groups'		
				Người da đen 'Black person'		
[-1,-0.5]	*Thằng/ Con* 'dude/girl'	100% High Comp.	50%	25%	0%	0%
[-1,0]	*Đồ* 'thing'	50% Mid Comp.	100%	50%	0%	0%
[-1,1]	*Người* 'person'	25% Low Comp.	50%	100%	50%	25%
[0,1]	*Bạn* 'friend'	0% Incomp.	0%	50%	100%	50%
[0.5,1]	*Quý ông/ Quý bà* 'gentlema-n/lady'	0%	0%	25%	50%	100%

As mentioned before, superiors, elders, and respectful entities go with honorific verbs to heighten the formality, therefore *giáo viên* 'teacher' and *đồng bào* 'fellow countrymen' would fit in the category of strong positive. As a result of the CCI calculation, we noticed that a strong correlation exists between a high CCI and a natural-sounding combination of expressive elements. To see if this assumption is correct, we used Keyword Research and Google Trend Tools to examine the co-occurrence frequency, as summarized in Table 9: the numbers here indicate the co-occurrence frequency of two items. For example, we found 100 instances of co-occurrence of strong negative terms *Khốn nạn* 'bastard,' *Đĩ* 'skank,' *Tàu Khựa* 'Chinese,' *Mọi* 'savages'and an anti-honorific marker *Thằng/Con* 'dude/girl.'

Table 9. Co-occurrence of epithets and slurs in Keyword Research and Google Trend

	General epithets	Slurs				
		[-1,-0.5] Strong Neg	[-1,0] Neg	[-1,1] Neutral	[0,1] Pos	[0.5,1] Strong Pos
		Khốn nạn 'bastard'	*Khốn/tồi* 'bastard'	*Người Trung Quốc* 'Chinese person'	*Đồng bào miền cao/núi* 'highland compatriot'	*Đồng bào* 'compatriot'
		Đĩ	*Điếm/Phò*	*Người Tàu/*	*Người da*	*Giáo viên*

		'skank'	'skank'	*Hoa* 'Chinese person'	*màu* 'People of colors'	'teacher'
		Tàu Khựa 'Chinese'	*Trung Của* 'Chinese'	*Người miền núi* 'highlander'	*Người gốc Phi* 'people from Africa'	*Ông/Bà* 'Mr./Mrs.'
				Dân tộc ít người 'minority groups'		
				Người da đen 'Black person'		
[-1,-0.5]	*Thằng/Con* 'dude/girl'	100	90	7	0	0
[-1,0]	*Đồ* 'thing'	67	390	10	0	0
[-1,1]	*Người* 'person'	60	0	320	0	0
[0,1]	*Bạn* 'friend'	0	0	10	320	
[0.5,1]	*Quý ông/ Quý bà* 'gentle-man/lady'	0	0	2	0	1,600

The reason why we chose these tools is due to their real-time data based on Google search results, which was also able to be set at a specific region (Vietnam) in a specific language (Vietnamese). Considering the historical context of certain words (such as Ba Tàu being used in the 1870s), Google Trends offered functionalities like searching within specific timeframes and filtering results by region. Figure 2 and Figure 3 showcase examples of the search data used to construct a more comprehensive and contextualized analysis of the usage of slurs and epithets in Vietnamese in Table 9. While the Keyword Research Tool in Figure 2 indicates *đồ tồi* (EI: [-1, 0]) as the most searched slur in Vietnam until March 2024, Google Trends in Figure 3 reveals a different perspective. Analyzing search trends over the past five years shows that interest in this slur is concentrated in the North and Southeast regions of Vietnam[2].

By using the equation, we can calculate the compatibility level of emotive lexical

items as Table 10 below illustrates the compatibility between expressive nouns and ethnic slurs in Vietnamese:

Table 10. Compatibility between expressive nouns and ethnic slurs

	General epithets	Slurs				
		[-1,-0.5] Strong Neg	[-1,0] Neg	[-1,1] Neutral	[0,1] Pos	[0.5,1] Strong Pos
		Khốn nạn 'bastard'	*Khốn/tồi* 'bastard'	*Người Trung Quốc* 'Chinese person'	*Đồng bào miền cao/núi* 'high-land compatriot'	*Đồng bào* 'compatriot'
		Đĩ 'skank'	*Điếm/Phò* 'skank'	*Người Tàu/ Hoa* 'Chinese person'	*Người da màu* 'people of colors'	*Giáo viên* 'teacher'
		Tàu Khựa 'Chinese'	*Trung Của* 'Chinese'	*Người miền núi* 'Highlander'	*Người gốc Phi* 'people from Africa'	*Ông/Bà* 'Mr./Mrs.'
		Mọi 'savages'		*Dân tộc ít người* 'minority groups'		
				Người da đen 'Black person'		
[-1,-0.5]	*Thằng/Con* 'dude/girl'	100% High Comp.	50%	25%	0%	0%
[-1,0]	*Đồ* 'thing'	50% Mid Comp.	100%	50%	0%	0%
[-1,1]	*Người* 'person'	25% Low Comp.	50%	100%	50%	25%
[0,1]	*Bạn* 'friend'	0% Incomp.	0%	50%	100%	50%
[0.5,1]	*Quý ông/ Quý bà*	0%	0%	25%	50%	100%

2 This result raised a question: what is the reason for interest in this slur to be concentrated in the North and Southeast regions of Vietnam than any other regions? Yet, it is crucial to acknowledge that determining the exact reason for the regional concentration of interest in a specific slur is complex and requires further analysis that goes beyond search trends data. In the current study, we only focus on the result of slur search frequency.

	'gentlema-n/lady'					

As mentioned before, superiors, elders, and respectful entities go with honorific verbs to heighten the formality, therefore *giáo viên* 'teacher' and *đồng bào* 'fellow countrymen' would fit in the category of strong positive. As a result of the CCI calculation, we noticed that a strong correlation exists between a high CCI and a natural-sounding combination of expressive elements. To see if this assumption is correct, we used Keyword Research and Google Trend Tools to examine the co-occurrence frequency, as summarized in Table 11: the numbers here indicate the co-occurrence frequency of two items. For example, we found 100 instances of co-occurrence of strong negative terms *Khốn nạn* 'bastard,' *Đĩ* 'skank,' *Tàu Khựa* 'Chinese,' *Mọi* 'savages'and an anti-honorific marker *Thằng/Con* 'dude/girl.'

Table 11. Co-occurrence of Epithets and Slurs in Keyword Research and Google rend

	General epithets	Slurs				
		[-1,-0.5] Strong Neg	[-1,0] Neg	[-1,1] Neutral	[0,1] Pos	[0.5,1] Strong Pos
		Khốn nạn 'bastard'	*Khốn/tồi* 'bastard'	*Người Trung Quốc* 'Chinese person'	*Đồng bào miền cao/núi* 'highland compatriot'	*Đồng bào* 'compatriot'
		Đĩ 'skank'	*Điếm/Phò* 'skank'	*Người Tàu/ Hoa* 'Chinese person'	*Người da màu* 'People of colors'	*Giáo viên* 'teacher'
		Tàu Khựa 'Chinese'	*Trung Của* 'Chinese'	*Người miền núi* 'highlander'	*Người gốc Phi* 'people from Africa'	*Ông/Bà* 'Mr./Mrs.'
				Dân tộc ít người 'minority groups'		
				Người da đen 'Black person'		
[-1,-0.5]	*Thằng/Con*	100	90	7	0	0

	‘dude/girl’					
[-1,0]	*Đồ* ‘thing’	67	390	10	0	0
[-1,1]	*Người* ‘person’	60	0	320	0	0
[0,1]	*Bạn* ‘friend’	0	0	10	320	
[0.5,1]	*Quý ông/ Quý bà* ‘gentle-man/lady’	0	0	2	0	1,600

The reason why we chose these tools is due to their real-time data based on Google search results, which was also able to be set at a specific region (Vietnam) in a specific language (Vietnamese). Considering the historical context of certain words (such as *Ba Tàu* being used in the 1870s), Google Trends offered functionalities like searching within specific timeframes and filtering results by region. Figure 2 and Figure 3 showcase examples of the search data used to construct a more comprehensive and contextualized analysis of the usage of slurs and epithets in Vietnamese in Table 11. While the Keyword Research Tool in Figure 2 indicates *đồ tồi* (EI: [-1, 0]) as the most searched slur in Vietnam until March 2024, Google Trends in Figure 3 reveals a different perspective. Analyzing search trends over the past five years shows that interest in this slur is concentrated in the North and Southeast regions of Vietnam.[3]

3 This result raised a question: what is the reason for interest in this slur to be concentrated in the North and Southeast regions of Vietnam than any other regions? Yet, it is crucial to acknowledge that determining the exact reason for the regional concentration of interest in a specific slur is complex and requires further analysis that goes beyond search trends data. In the current study, we only focus on the result of slur search frequency.

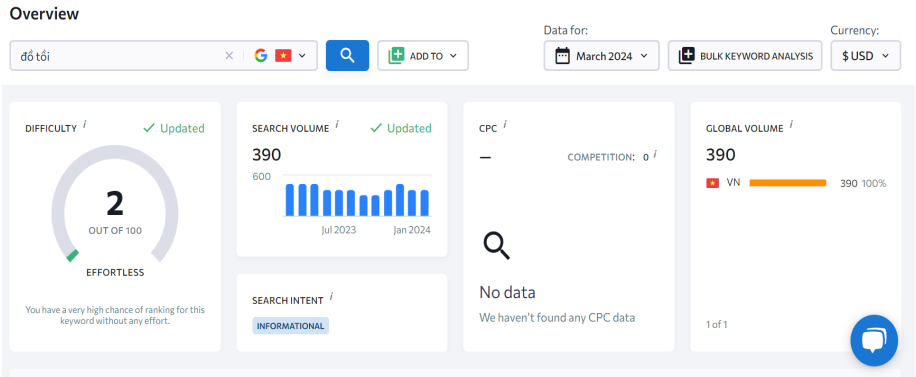

Figure 2. Data from Keyword Research Tool (Seranking 2024) (as of March 1, 2024)

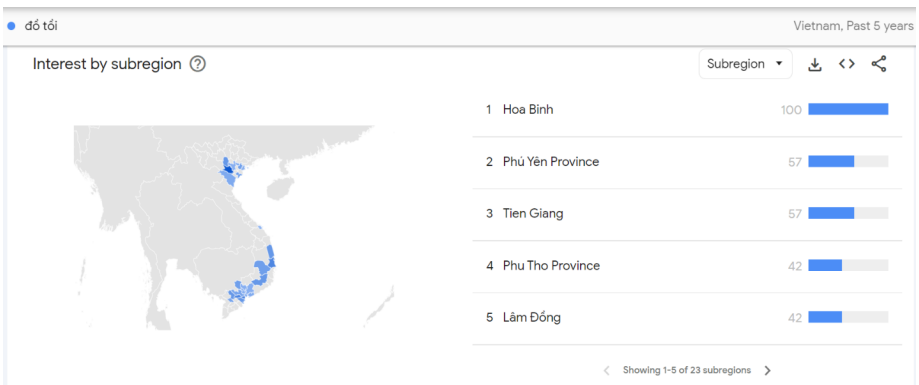

Figure 3. Data from Google Trends (Trends, n.d.) (as of March 1, 2024)

Another program we utilized is the SeaLang Library Vietnamese Corpus (Vietnamese, 2024). Compared to the above tools, the corpus mostly shows the co-occurrence results from neutral racial slurs and expressive nouns (EI: [0.5, 1]) *Người Trung Quốc* to strong positive term (EI: [0.5, 1]) *Giáo viên*, as summarized in Table 12.

Table 12. Co-occurrence of epithets and slurs in SeaLang Library Vietnamese Corpus

	General epithets	Slurs				
		[-1,-0.5] Strong Neg	[-1,0] Neg	[-1,1] Neutral	[0,1] Pos	[0.5,1] Strong Pos
		Khốn nạn 'bastard'	*Khốn/tồi* 'bastard'	*Người Trung Quốc* 'Chinese person'	*Đồng bào miền cao/núi* 'high-land compatriot'	*Đồng bào* 'compatriot'
		Đĩ 'skank'	*Điếm/Phò* 'skank'	*Người Tàu/ Hoa* 'Chinese person'	*Người da màu* 'people of colors'	*Giáo viên* 'teacher'
		Tàu Khựa 'Chinese'	*Trung Của* 'Chinese'	*Người miền núi* 'highlander'	*Người gốc Phi* 'people from Africa'	*Ông/Bà* 'Mr./Mrs.'
		Mọi 'savages'		*Dân tộc ít người* 'minority groups'		
				Người da đen 'Black person'		
[-1,-0.5]	*Thằng/ Con* 'dude/girl'	0	0	0	0	0
[-1,0]	*Đồ* 'thing'	0	0	0	0	0
[-1,1]	*Người* 'person'	0	0	101	3	5
[0,1]	*Bạn* 'friend'	0	0	1	0	0
[0.5,1]	*Quý ông/ Quý bà* 'gentle man/lady'	0	0		0	0

In summary, the above tool analysis of racial slurs co-occurring with expressive nouns yields significant insights. This initial exploration suggests potential connections between the emotional intensity of these slurs and other emotionally charged words.

3.4 An ambiguous accumulation in co-occurrence and nonconformity

3.4.1 Ambiguous 'cumulative' effect in co-occurrence

As we discussed above, the co-occurrence of negative expressive elements exposes a cumulative effect. However, Vietnamese may not have such a clear cumulative level. Though using multiple negative expressive elements at the same time will certainly increase the intensity of the emotion, this increase may not be proportional. This is due to the level of context dependence of Vietnamese. Vietnamese relies more on context to convey nuances of meanings, while Korean may use more morphological elements to express emotions. Observe the example (23), repeated from above:

(23) Thằng Trung Quốc khốn nạn chết tiệt này đã lừa dối tôi!
man Chinese wretched damned this cheated on me!
'This damned wretched Chinese man cheated on me!'

This sentence uses three negative expressives: 'wretched,' 'damned,' 'cheat,' and one racial slur 'Chinese man.' The use of these expressives at the same time shows the speaker's high level of anger and frustration but the degree of the accumulated emotive index in this sentence may still be unclear. Suppose that this sentence is uttered in a scenario of a quarrel between two lovers and the speaker has just discovered that her lover has deceived her. While the sentence clearly conveys the speaker's anger and frustration, it doesn't necessarily indicate a permanent break-up decision. It's important to consider the cultural context in this sentence. The use of racial slurs might hold a different weight in Vietnamese culture compared to some other cultures. As the speaker is Vietnamese, the racial slur "Chinese man" might be more about expressing anger in the heat of the moment than genuine discrimination. Ultimately, the severity of the situation and the seriousness of the deception would influence the speaker's next steps. The outburst could be temporary anger, or it could signal a deeper issue in the relationship. In conclusion, the sentence indicates strong emotions, but the speaker's true intentions and the relationship's future depend on the situation, cultural context, and the severity of the deception.

There are several reasons why the level of 'cumulative' effect in Vietnamese may

not be as clear as in Korean:

1. Grammar System: Korean has more grammatical forms than Vietnamese to express attitudes, such as verbs that express level, status, etc. (refer to Yoon 2015) Vietnamese use more intonation and context to express attitudes, which can make the level of 'accumulation' more ambiguous.

2. Vocabulary: Korean has more expressive words, clearly distinguished in terms of intensity. However, in Vietnamese, general terms are frequently used to express attitudes, which adds to the difficulty.

3. Context: Vietnamese may use more subtle contextual cues, such as intonation, facial expressions, etc.

4. Culture: Like other ethnicities or countries, Vietnamese culture brings forth a diverse range of customs and traditions. It stands out with its unique characteristics, especially in the way the emotions are conveyed. Rather than being straightforward, Vietnamese tend to express themselves with subtlety and indirectness.

The intricacies of language usage in Vietnamese make it challenging to define precisely the level of accumulation, however, this does not imply that Vietnamese lacks the capacity to exhibit an accumulative effect in the usage of expressives. This effect be expressed in various ways and is influenced by many factors, including the context, use of the language, and the reader's perspective.

3.4.2 Nonconformity

Often, informal language and slang are less subject to strict grammatical rules and can exhibit variations in usage. Speech patterns can also influence how language is used, including the emergence of localized terms. Slurs also vary depending on the social context like the setting and intent behind the speaker's utterance. Like the given examples under slurs categories, *Người Hoa/Hán/Minh* and *Người Trung Quốc* all indicate 'Chinese man,' but the specific terms *Người Hoa/Hán/Minh* refers to Chinese man during the Chinese feudalism or *Người Tàu* 'Chinese man' under the French colonial period. As for the intent behind the speaker's utterance, we noticed a case of flip-flops of bipolar emotional index: strengthened emotion or intimacy between offensive terms and terms of endearment. This phenomenon has been observed in studies by (Constant 2009): In English, for instance, strong negative pejorative expressives like 'damn' or 'fucking' can be used for the opposite purpose of marking

a positive attitude. Observe the following examples:

(24) That fucking bastard is so lucky.
(25) You are my bitch. I don't know what I would do without you. (to extremely close friends)

Similar effects are found in appropriated or reclaimed uses of slurs. The appropriation or reclamation of slurs typically starts as uses by a targeted group for non-derogatory purposes (Croom 2011; Galinsky et al. 2013; Bartlett et al. 2014; Bianchi 2014). Interestingly, when used amongst in-group speakers, an otherwise derogatory slur can be deemed not only appropriate but even considered a term of endearment (Brontsema 2004; Croom 2013, 2014, 2015; Kennedy 2022). However, the use of effect may raise confusion, annoyance, and perhaps hatred. The following example showcases such a situation when đĩ 'bitch' is considered a term of endearment by the speaker Tram – who is also a girl and has a close friendship with the listener.

(26) Con đĩ ơi mày đang làm cái gì đấy?
bitch you are doing what
'Bitch, what are you doing?'

In this example, the negative attitude reflected in the slur đĩ 'Bitch' was flipped over to a rather positive one in the term of endearment. As a girl herself, the in-group speaker uses the term to strengthen their in-group solidity rather than being intended as an insult. Therefore, the semantics of these words are not limited to the scope of negativity as suggested. Instead, as the initial sound becomes more negative, the sound in the group becomes more positive or closer. With this, it can be assumed that the reversal of the emotional index maintains the initial level of each obscene word, which means strong negative words with an emotional index from [-1, -5] will become strong positive terms with an emotional index from [0.5, 1]. In this context, other slurs are also used in situations such as self-mocking or self-admonishing fit in this category as well.

Figure 4 summarizes the result:

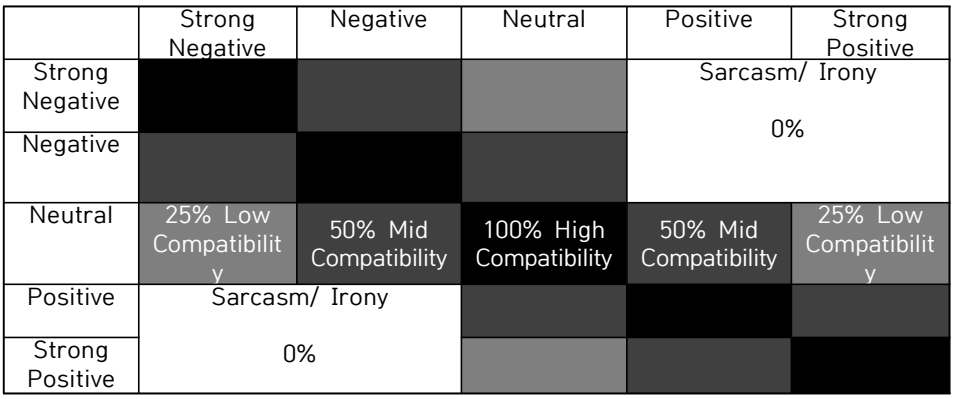

Figure 4. Sarcasm/irony regions in Compatibility Condition Model (CCM) for multiple expressives

The white regions show 0% incompatibility originally between two lexical items with the Compatibility Condition Index (CCI) of 0%. By using a mix of elements with opposite attitudes, strong effects such as sarcasm and irony are achieved.

4. Conclusion

This study explored how various expressive elements in Vietnamese, including slurs, epithet and honorifics, interact with each other and influence overall emotion conveyed. We utilized the framework of Compatibility Condition Model (CCM) and the Compatibility Condition Index (CCI), along with Sentic Network analysis, to understand these interactions. By classifying expressive elements based on their inherent sentiment (positive, negative, or neutral) using Sentic analysis, we examined how their co-occurrence aligns with the principles of CCM and CCI.

This study addresses two key questions: first question concerns the co-occurrence of expressive elements: although the repeated occurences of identical expressive elements are possible, we studied whether different expressive elements, especially those with conlficting sentiment polarities, interacting freely or according to specific constraints. The Compatibility Conditions Model (CCM) and the Compatibility Conditions Index (CCI) were introduced to explain these potential limitations to co-occurrence based on sentic compatibility. Second question is about the impact of

co-occurrence: if there are constraints, how do co-occurring expressive elements affect each other's sentiment? What happens if restrictions are broken? The research acknowledges that sometimes people intentionally ignore these limitations to achieve particular communication effects. This analysis supports the concept of multidimensionality (Potts 2005) and the concept of Conditional Autonomy, which suggests that expressive elements can maintain a degree of independence in their emotional value while still affects each other's overall sentiments.

Our findings align with previous observations (Yoon 2015) that multiple occurrences of expressive elements are possible in Vietnamese. However, we argue that there are significant limitations to their co-occurrence based on emotional compatibility. The proposed CCM framework shows that E-expressives (emotional expressives) and H-expressives (honorific expressives) can operate independently in terms of their sentic value. However, they can also interact to a certain extent, influencing the overall sentiment of the utterance. CCI serves as a tool to measure this degree of compatibility between different expressive elements within a sentence.

While the research establishes that these elements can indeed influence each other, it also reveals an interesting distinction from languages like Korean. Unlike the clear "cumulative" effect of negativity observed in Korean, Vietnamese demonstrates a more ambiguous level of intensity when multiple negative expressives co-occur. This ambiguity is likely due to the language's reliance on context, intonation, and cultural factors for emotional expression, making precise quantification a challenge. Future research could delve deeper into this ambiguity, exploring potential methods to quantify the "cumulative" effect in Vietnamese despite its context-dependent nature. It would be valuable to understand how cultural norms and situational cues interact with the use of expressives to influence the perceived intensity.

Additionally, the study identified an intriguing phenomenon – the "flip-flop" of emotional index. In certain contexts, offensive terms can be used to express a positive sentiment, particularly within close relationships. This finding highlights the importance of considering social context and speaker intent when analyzing the impact of expressives in Vietnamese communication. By acknowledging the nuances of Vietnamese language use and exploring these avenues for further research, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of how expressive elements shape meaning and emotional expression in this unique linguistic landscape.

This study on senti-words in English and Vietnamese highlights the valuable

contribution of Sentic analysis in understanding the interplay between expressive elements and their impact on the overall sentiment conveyed in Vietnamese. Future research could explore the generalizability of this framework to other languages and delve deeper into the pragmatic effects achieved by manipulating emotional compatibility in communication.

References

Bartlett, Jamie, Jeremy Reffin, Noelle Rumball, and Sarah Williamson. 2014. *Anti-social media*. London: Demos. Retrieved from http://apo.org.au/node/37598

Bianchi, Claudia. 2014. Slurs and appropriation: An echoic account. *Journal of Pragmatics* 66: 35-44. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.02.009

Boisvert, Daniel R. 2008. Expressive-assertivism. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 89(2): 169-203.

Brontsema, Robin. 2004. A queer revolution: Reconceptualizing the debate over linguistic reclamation. *Colorado Research in Linguistics* 17: 1-17.

Constant, Noah. 2009. The pragmatics of expressive content: Evidence from large corpora. *Sprache und Datenverarbeitung* 33(1-2): 5-21.

Croom, Adam. 2010. A game theoretical analysis of slurs and appropriative use. *Presented at Fourth North American Summer School in Logic, Language, and Information*. 26 June. Indiana University.

Croom, Adam. 2011. Slurs. *Language Sciences* 33(3): 343-358. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2010.11.005

Croom, Adam. 2013. How to do things with slurs: Studies in the way of derogatory words. *Language and Communication* 33: 177-204. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom

Croom, Adam. 2014. The semantics of slurs: A refutation of pure expressivism. *Language Sciences* 41: 27-42. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2013.07.003

Croom, Adam. 2015. Slurs, stereotypes, and in-equality: A critical review of how epithets and stereotypes are racially unequal. *Language Sciences* 52: 139-154. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2014.03.001

Elliot, David W. 2003. *The Vietnamese war: Revolution and social change in the Mekong Delta, 1930-1975 (Vol. 1)*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.

Galinsky, Adam D., Cynthia S. Wang, Jennifer A. Whitson, Eric M. Anicich, Kurt Hugenberg, and Galen V. Bodenhausen. 2013. The reappropriation of stigmatizing labels: The reciprocal relationship between power and self-labeling. *Psychological Science* 24(10): 2020-2029. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0956797613482943

Giannakidou, Anastasia and Suwon Yoon. 2011. The subjective mode of comparison:

Metalinguistic comparatives in Greek and Korean. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 29: 621-655. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11049-011-9133-5

Gutzmann, Daniel. 2011. Expressive modifiers and mixed expressives. *Empirical Issues in Syntax and Semantics* 8, 123-141. (online publication: http://www.cssp.cnrs.fr/eiss8/index_en.html)

Hay, Ryan. 2012. Hybrid expressivism and the analogy between pejoratives and moral language. *European Journal of Philosophy* 21(3): 1-25. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0378.2011.00455.x.

Hedger, Joseph A. 2012. The semantics of racial slurs: Using Kaplan's framework to provide a theory of the meaning of derogatory epithets. *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations* 11: 74-84. Retrieved from https://scholar.google.com/scholar_lookup?title=The%20semantics%20of%20racial%20slurs%3A%20using%20Kaplan%27s%20framework%20to%20provide%20a%20theory%20of%20the%20meaning%20of%20derogatory%20epithets&author=J.%20Hedger&publication_year=2012&pages=74-84#

Hedger, Joseph A. 2013. Meaning and racial slurs: Derogatory epithets and the semantics/pragmatics interface. *Language & Communication* 33(3): 205-213. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2013.04.004.

Kaplan, David. 1999. *The meaning of ouch and oops: Explorations in the theory of meaning as use.* Ms. University of California at Los Angeles.

Kennedy, Randall. 2022. *Nigger: The strange career of a troublesome word.* New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Khôi, Phan. 1932. Từ đâu người mình kêu người Tàu bằng "Chệt". *Phụ Nữ Tân Văn* 182: 14.

Kratzer, Angelika. 1999. Beyond ouch and oops: How descriptive and expressive meaning interact. *Presented at Cornell Conference on Theories of Context Dependency* 26: 1-6. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.

Lung, Hana. 2006. *Lost fighting arts of Vietnam.* New York, NY: Kensington Publishing Corporation.

McCready, Elin S. 2010. Varieties of conventional implicature. *Semantics and Pragmatics* 3(8): 1-57.

Nguyễn, Ngọc Chính. 2017. Ngôn ngữ Sài Gòn xưa. Saigonnese, June 5. Retrieved from https://saigonnese.wordpress.com/2017/06/05/ngon-ngu-sai-gon-xua-nguyen-ngoc-chinh/.

Potts, Christopher. 2003. Expressive content as conventional implicature. *Proceedings of North East Linguistics Society* 33, 303-322. Amherst, MA: Graduate Linguistics Students Association (GLSA).

Potts, Christopher. 2004. *The logic of conventional implicatures.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Potts, Christopher. 2007. The expressive dimension. *Theoretical Linguistics* 33(2): 165-197.

Potts, Christopher, Ash Asudeh, Yurie Hara, Eric McCready, Martin Walkow, Luis Alonso-Ovalle, Rajesh Bhatt, Christopher Davis, Angelika Kratzer, and Tom Roeper. 2009. Expressives and identity conditions. *Linguistic Inquiry* 40(2): 356-401.

Potts, Christopher and Shigeto Kawahara. 2004. Japanese honorifics as emotive definite descriptions. *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory 14,* 235-254. Ithaca, NY: CLC Publications.

Pullum, Geoffrey and Kyle Rawlins. 2007. Argument or no argument? *Linguistics and Philosophy* 30(2): 277-287. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10988-007-9013-y

Richard, Mark. 2008. *When truth gives out.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schroeder, Mark. 2010. *Being for: Evaluating the semantic program of expressivism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Seranking. 2024. March 1. Seranking. Retrieved from https://seranking.com/: https://seranking.com/

Trends, Google. (n.d.). Retrieved from: https://trends.google.com/trends/

Vietnamese, SEALang. 2024. March 1. SEAlang Library Vietnamese. Retrieved from http://sealang.net/vietnamese/bitext.htm

Whiting, Daniel. 2013. It's not what you said, it's the way you said it: Slurs and conventional implicatures. *Analytic Philosophy* 54(3): 364-377.

Wikipedia. 2023. December 2. Bình Ngô đại cáo. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=B%C3%ACnh_Ng%C3%B4_%C4%91%E1%BA% A1i_c%C3%A1o&oldid=1187936371

Wikipedia. 2024. February 9. Montagnard (Vietnam). Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Montagnard_(Vietnam)&oldid=1205177743

Wikipedia. 2024. January 27. Người Hán. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved from https://vi.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ng%C6%B0%E1%BB%9Di_H%C3%A1n&oldid=71092578

Williamson, Tim. 2009. *The philosophy of David Kaplan.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Yoon, Sang-Seok. 2015. Korean honorifics beyond politeness markers: Change of footing through shifting of speech style. In Marina Terkourafi (ed.), *Interdisciplinary approaches to im/politeness.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company (in press).

Yoon, Suwon. 2015. Semantic constraint and pragmatic nonconformity for expressive: Compatibility condition on slurs, epithets, anti-honorifics, intensifiers, and mitigators. *Language Sciences* 52: 46-69. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langsci.2015.03.009

Hamy Vu

Undergraduate Student
Department of English Language and Literature
University of Seoul
163 Seoulsiripdaero, Dongdaemun-gu,
Seoul, 02504, Korea
E-mail: howabouthamy@gmail.com

Suwon Yoon
Associate Professor
Department of English Language and Literature
University of Seoul
163 Seoulsiripdaero, Dongdaemun-gu,
Seoul, 02504, Korea
E-mail: suwon@uos.ac.kr

Received: 2023. 12. 15.
Revised: 2024. 05. 21.
Accepted: 2024. 05. 30.