VIET NAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HA NOI
UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

PHAM THI QUYEN

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECHES OF VIETNAMESE LEADERS AT THE GENERAL DEBATES OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FROM 2011 TO 2020

(Phân tích diễn ngôn phản biện các bài phát biểu của lãnh đạo Việt Nam
tại các phiên thảo luận chung của Đại hội đồng Liên hợp quốc
từ năm 2011 đến 2020)

DOCTORAL THESIS: ENGLISH LINGUISTICS

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Major: English Linguistics
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HA NOI - 2025

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I, the undersigned, certify that the thesis titled “A critical discourse analysis of the speeches of Vietnamese leaders at the General debates of the United Nations General Assembly from 2011 to 2020” is the result of my independent work. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis does not include any work previously published or written by another individual, except where due reference is made.

Ha Noi, 03/07/2025

Signature

Pham Thi Quyen

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ABSTRACT

Political speeches often serve as powerful instruments for expressing the ideologies, values and strategic visions of national leaders on the global stage. This study conducts a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of speeches delivered by key Vietnamese leaders at the United Nations General Assembly General Debates from 2011 to 2020. The primary objectives are to identify the ideologies conveyed in these speeches and to examine significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy during this period. Employing an embedded mixed-methods approach, the study classifies and analyzes the linguistic devices used to express these ideologies and policy shifts. Grounded in Fairclough's CDA framework, the analysis explores how Vietnamese leaders strategically use language including thematic vocabulary (e.g.: vocabulary emphasizing promotion of peace, security, commitment to global governance, human rights, social progress, cooperation, integration,…), personification, metaphors, nominalization, repetition, pronouns, voice, mode or textual structures (problem-solution patterns) to articulate national interests, assert political ideologies and navigate the complexities of international diplomacy. The findings highlight the evolution of Vietnam's foreign policy in response to global dynamics such as economic globalization, rising regional tensions and changes in global governance. Domestically, the policy changes reflect Vietnam's ongoing socio-economic transformation, its commitment to sovereignty and its efforts to balance independence with global integration. A key aspect of this evolution is Vietnam's growing emphasis on multilateralism, peaceful conflict resolution and proactive international integration. The study shows how Vietnamese leaders use discourse to strengthen the country's international presence while addressing regional and global challenges, thus positioning Viet Nam as an active and responsible member in the international community. The findings offer valuable insights for linguists, political scientists and international relations scholars, shedding light on the interplay between language, power and ideology in global governance. Through this analysis, the study also underscores Vietnam's adaptive foreign policy as a reflection of both external pressures and internal developmental goals.

ABBREVIATIONS

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
SFG	Systemic Functional Grammar
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
MR	Members' Resources
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Agreement
ASEM	Asia-Europe Cooperation Meeting
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
WTO	World Trade Organization
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
EVFTA	Europe-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
PM	Prime Minister
DPM	Deputy Prime Minister
DM	Deputy Minister

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rationale of the study

Policies, especially foreign policy, are vital to a country's development. Even the most advanced nations must continuously develop and sustain diplomatic, political, economic and educational relationships with other countries and international organizations. Foreign policy enables nations to interact effectively on the global stage, exert influence and advance their national interests while reflecting their traditional values and overarching strategies.

In today's era of globalization and integration, foreign policy is a key element in promoting a nation's interests and enhancing its global position. The United Nations (UN), the largest international organization with 193 member states, aims to maintain international peace and security, foster friendly relations and promote cooperation among nations.

The UN General Assembly, which includes all member states, is the principal deliberative body of the UN. It serves as a forum for significant declarations and debates on pressing global issues such as poverty, development, peace and security. The Assembly holds annual general debates and occasional special sessions at its New York headquarters, where representatives deliver speeches to present their national policies and convey important messages.

Vietnam joined the UN on September 20, 1977, and has since actively engaged in strengthening its role within the organization. Over the past 45 years, Vietnam has participated in various areas including peace and security, development, human rights, law, and energy.

Since joining the UN, Vietnamese leaders have consistently participated in and delivered speeches at the General Assembly debates. A major turning point came in 1986 with the introduction of the Doi Moi (reform) policy, which transitioned Viet Nam from a centralized economy to a "socialist-oriented market economy". This period marked a significant transformation in Vietnam's foreign policy, enhancing

its ability to safeguard sovereignty and improve its global standing. Notably, the years from 2011 to 2020 witnessed further significant shifts in Vietnam's foreign policy, as reflected in the speeches delivered at the UN General Assembly.

This study focuses on the speeches of Vietnamese leaders from 2011 to 2020 at the UN General Assembly debates. By applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the research aims to uncover how these speeches reflect changes in Vietnam's foreign policy. The study will explore the effectiveness of language in conveying ideas and ideologies and examine the relationship between language and power.

Thus, this research, titled ***"A critical discourse analysis of the speeches of Vietnamese leaders at the General debates of the United Nations General Assembly from 2011 to 2020"***, seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of Vietnam's evolving foreign policy through the lens of CDA.

1.2. Aims, objectives and research questions

1. 2.1. Aims of the study

The study aims to critically examine how the key ideologies and significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy are conveyed in the speeches of Vietnamese leaders at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) from 2011-2020. Specifically, it seeks to uncover the linguistic strategies used to articulate these ideological and policy shifts and to analyze how they were constructed within the broader discursive and socio-political context.

The study is hopefully expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of how language functions as a tool for shaping foreign policy narratives, constructing national identity, projecting diplomatic roles on the global stage and the role of CDA in understanding political discourse.

1.2.2. Objectives of the study

For the overarching aim of the study to be fulfilled, the following objectives need to be accomplished:

1) Identifying and interpreting the key ideologies and major shifts in Vietnam's foreign policy as expressed in the UNGA speeches from 2011-2020 and analyzing linguistic features used to represent these ideologies and foreign policy changes.

2) Investigating how the identified ideologies and foreign policy changes are socially constructed through discourse, situating them within Vietnam's evolving domestic and international context.

By addressing these objectives, the study highlights the intersection of language, ideology and international diplomacy, offering insights into the role of discourse in shaping Vietnam's foreign policy and its strategic identity in global affairs.

1.2.3. Research Questions

To address these objectives, the study investigates the following questions:

1) What ideologies and significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy are conveyed in the speeches by Vietnamese leaders at the General Debates of the UN General Assembly from 2011 to 2020 and how are they linguistically represented?
2) How are these ideologies and foreign policy changes socially constructed in the speeches?

This research explores the ideological underpinnings and evolving directions of Vietnam's foreign policy as articulated in the speeches delivered at the UNGA General Debates. In light of major global and regional developments during the 2011-2020 period, Vietnam's diplomatic discourse reveals both continuity and transformation in its foreign policy priorities. The study analyzes how these ideologies and policy shifts are conveyed through specific linguistic choices (such as vocabulary, grammatical features and textual structures).

Furthermore, the research situates these linguistic representations within broader discursive and socio-political contexts to uncover how foreign policy is not only expressed but also socially constructed. By doing so, the study reveals how

Vietnam positions itself ideologically and strategically in international relations through language.

1.3. Scope of the study

This study focuses on the speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders at the General Debates of the UN General Assembly from 2011 to 2020. This period is selected for its significance in Vietnam's diplomatic trajectory, marked by increased global integration, active participation in multilateral institutions, and strategic foreign policy adjustments amid a shifting geopolitical landscape.

While acknowledging Vietnam's earlier transformations, particularly the post-Doi Moi (Renovation) reforms beginning in 1986, this study emphasizes the 2011-2020 period due to its intensified rhetorical engagement with themes such as peace, sovereignty, sustainable development, multilateralism and rule-based international order.

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the study examines how linguistic devices (including experiential, relational and expressive values of vocabulary; grammar features such as pronouns, voice, mood and modality; as well as broader textual structures) are used to represent and construct ideological meanings. By doing so, it sheds light on how Vietnam discursively positions itself as a responsible, proactive and principled actor in international diplomacy.

1.4. Methodology

The speeches analyzed in the study are sourced from the United Nations library. The speeches delivered by the leaders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were originally in English. Those presented by our key state leaders were originally in Vietnamese, with approved English translations provided by the Vietnamese delegation to the United Nations. The analysis in this study is based on the English versions of the speeches.

The analysis of the speeches adopts an embedded mixed-methods approach under critical pragmatic worldview introduced by Creswell & Creswell (2018). Under this

view, the speeches by the key leaders of Viet Nam at the UN General Assembly in the period from 2011 to 2020 are examined to identify the core ideologies of the speakers and the significant changes in Vietnamese foreign policy during this period as well as how these ideologies and policy changes are linguistically represented. Beyond textual analysis, the study also contextualizes these linguistic features within broader discursive and socio-political frameworks, aiming to reveal how ideologies and foreign policy changes are not only articulated but also socially constructed through discourse.

The analysis combines qualitative and quantitative analysis to answer the research questions. The qualitative approach is applied to identify the key ideologies and foreign policy shifts and how they are socially constructed, while the quantitative approach is applied to analyse the linguistics devices' frequency.

Analytical tools include Fairclough's CDA framework integrated with Halliday's SFG and AntConc, a multi-platform corpus analysis tool, for word frequency analysis, providing insights into the language that reflects Vietnam's evolving global stance.

1.5. Significance of the study

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an emerging field of linguistic research in Viet Nam. Over recent years, it has garnered increasing interest from linguists who are keen to explore how power and ideology are embedded in language and to examine the broader relationship between language and society. Despite this growing interest, there is still a need for further research to solidify CDA as a prominent approach for studying the interplay between language and society.

This study aims to advocate for the application and advancement of CDA in linguistic research. It is expected to benefit English language learners, who often struggle with authentic discourses due to challenges in interpreting underlying assumptions. By enhancing their awareness of ideological meanings within texts, learners can gain a more comprehensive understanding of authentic, particularly political, discourses.

Foreign policy is crucial for a country's development as it articulates the nation's strategy for influencing others and advancing its interests while maintaining international relations. Foreign policy can be conveyed through official documents or interpreted from political speeches by national leaders.

CDA has proven to be an effective tool for analyzing speeches by influential figures, especially in political contexts. This study focuses on the speeches of Vietnamese leaders at the United Nations General Assembly from 2011 to 2020, aiming to uncover significant shifts.

The research is intended to benefit not only English language learners and linguists but also students of international relations, future Vietnamese diplomats, policymakers and international relations researchers.

1.6. Structure of the study

This study is organized into five chapters, each serving a distinct purpose in exploring the critical discourse analysis of Vietnamese leaders' speeches at the United Nations General Assembly from 2011 to 2020.

Chapter 1 (Introduction) sets the foundation for the study, beginning with the Rationale of the study, which explains the motivation and significance behind the research. The chapter then outlines the Aims, Objectives and Research Questions, clearly defining what the study seeks to achieve and the specific questions it aims to answer. The Scope of the study is detailed next, establishing the boundaries within which the research is conducted. Following this, the Methodology provides a brief overview of the research methods employed. The Significance of the study highlights the potential contributions of the research to the field. Finally, the Structure of the study is presented, offering a roadmap of the chapters and content that follow.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature relevant to the study. It begins with The Role of CDA in Analyzing Political Discourse, focusing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with its components, key concepts and principles. This section also examines Political Communication, covering

topics such as political discourse, Vietnam's political discourse and bamboo diplomacy and the role of CDA in uncovering ideological constructs in political discourse. The discussion continues with an overview of CDA as a conceptual framework and methodology. Additionally, the chapter also provides a Synopsis of Vietnamese Foreign Policy since Doi Moi (1986) and an examination of Vietnamese Foreign Policy from 2011 to 2020. Finally, it concludes with a review of Related Studies in the field, situating the research within the broader academic discourse.

Chapter 3 (Methodology) outlines the overall design of the research methodology including Research paradigm, Research approach, Research design, Research methods (database of the study, data analysis procedure, conceptual and analytical framework).

This study employs an embedded mixed-methods approach grounded in the critical pragmatic worldview of Creswell & Creswell (2018). It analyzes speeches by Vietnamese leaders at the UN General Assembly (2011-2020), first qualitatively to identify ideologies and policy shifts, and then quantitatively to assess linguistic frequencies. By leveraging Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis and the AntConc tool, the study emphasizes both the ideological stances of the speakers and the evolution of Vietnam's foreign policy as conveyed in these speeches.

Chapter 4 (Findings and Discussion) presents the key findings of the study alongside a critical discussion of their implications. The first section examines the core ideologies conveyed in the speeches and the significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy from 2011 to 2020, highlighting how these elements are linguistically represented. The second section explores how these ideologies and policy shifts are socially constructed within broader discursive and socio-political contexts, revealing the role of language in shaping Vietnam's diplomatic identity and strategic positioning on the global stage.

Chapter 5 (Recapitulations, Implications, Limitations and Recommendations) provides a summary of the study's findings in Recapitulations, followed by a discussion of the Implications of the research for future studies and practical

applications. The chapter also addresses the Limitations of the study, acknowledging areas where further research is needed, and concludes with Recommendations for future research and practice in the field.

The study concludes with ***References*** and ***Appendixes***, which provide additional resources and supplementary material supporting the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides the theoretical and contextual foundation for the study. It begins by outlining the role of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in examining political discourse, with a focus on its concepts, principles and application to Vietnam's political language and "bamboo diplomacy". It then briefly introduces key CDA frameworks by prominent practitioners and why Fairclough's framework is chosen for the study as both an analytical tool and methodological approach. The chapter also reviews the evolution of Vietnam's foreign policy, particularly from 2011 to 2020, to contextualize the discourse examined. Finally, it surveys related studies to support the study's approach.

2.1. The role of CDA in analyzing political discourse

2.1.1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a theoretically grounded approach that views language as a form of social practice, intrinsically connected to broader social, political, and institutional processes. CDA is particularly well-suited for examining how political actors use language strategically to construct meaning, shape ideologies, and legitimize actions in international forums (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Within this tradition, discourse is not seen as a neutral vehicle for transmitting information but as a dynamic tool through which states articulate policy positions, negotiate identity, and assert agency.

In the context of foreign policy discourse, CDA provides a powerful lens for exploring how nations like Vietnam represent themselves in global settings. This study applies CDA to the UNGA speeches of Vietnamese leaders (2011–2020) to uncover how linguistic and rhetorical patterns reflect core ideologies - such as peace, sovereignty, multilateralism, and development - and to trace how these ideologies evolve alongside significant shifts in foreign policy. By doing so, CDA supports the study's broader aim: to understand how language constructs Vietnam's diplomatic identity and its approach to global engagement over time.

2.1.1.1. Components of CDA

Critical

The "critical" dimension of CDA involves more than close textual reading. It requires a reflective stance toward how discourse functions within power-laden institutional and historical contexts (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak, 2001). Wodak (2001) asserts that being "critical" involves maintaining a distance from the data, situating language within its broader social context, explicitly adopting a political stance, and engaging in self-reflection about one's own biases and positionality as a researcher. This reflective stance is key to the critical tradition, as it enables scholars to examine their own role in the interpretive process and to acknowledge how their social, political and cultural locations influence their analysis (Connolly, 1993).

By adopting a critical stance, CDA scholars question taken-for-granted assumptions about social reality and aim to expose hidden power relations that operate through discourse (Block, 2019). Being critical in this sense does not imply opposition or bias, but rather an attentiveness to how discourse shapes, sustains and transforms ideologies within concrete political settings.

In this study, the critical stance focuses on how Vietnamese leaders, through carefully constructed speeches, use discourse to position the country in relation to regional and global developments. This perspective recognizes that foreign policy is not merely a set of decisions or actions, but also a discursive practice that operates through representation, evaluation and justification. By analyzing how certain values such as sovereignty, cooperation or global responsibility are prioritized or backgrounded, the study reveals the implicit assumptions and ideological orientations embedded in Vietnam's official rhetoric. The "critical" orientation thus allows the research to investigate how discourse serves not just to describe foreign policy, but to construct and legitimize it.

Discourse

The concept of “discourse” has been widely debated across disciplines, leading to extensive analytical discussions on its definition and scope. Wodak (2006) describes discourse as “one of the most complex, vague and challenging notions for research in discourse studies” (p. 597), emphasizing its multifaceted nature. Traditionally, discourse is understood as the use of language in speech and writing to produce meaning. However, this definition is often considered too narrow, as discourse encompasses not only linguistic structures but also social, cultural and cognitive elements that shape communication (van Dijk, 2009).

Within CDA, “discourse” is understood as language-in-use that operates across social contexts to create meaning, define roles and regulate interaction (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2009). Discourse is not limited to the linguistic surface of texts but includes the broader social and institutional contexts in which texts are produced and interpreted. In the case of UNGA speeches, discourse functions as a performative act where states present themselves, affirm alliances, articulate principles and shape their international image.

A crucial distinction in discourse studies is between “text” and “discourse.” Van Dijk (1990) defines discourse as “text in context” (p. 164), underscoring the necessity of analyzing linguistic elements within their broader social, political and cultural settings. Text refers to the linguistic content itself, while discourse encompasses both text and the conditions in which it is produced and interpreted. Schiffrin (1994) similarly asserts that discourse consists of “units of linguistic production (whether spoken or written) that are inherently contextualized” (p. 41), highlighting the integral role of context in discourse analysis. Without considering context, a comprehensive understanding of discourse is impossible (Wodak & Krzyżanowski, 2009).

Discourse is also inherently intertextual, meaning that texts are shaped by and draw upon other texts. Wodak and Meyer (2009) emphasize that discourse exists in conversation with prior and concurrent discourses, forming a web of meanings that evolve over time. This intertextuality allows discourse to legitimize or challenge

power structures by reinforcing dominant ideologies or amplifying marginalized voices (Boatright et al., 2019). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) argue that discourse operates within broader "discursive orders" that selectively highlight certain meanings while suppressing others. For example, political speeches, media representations and educational curricula are all shaped by institutional discourse practices that contribute to maintaining or contesting dominant ideologies (Constantinou, 2013).

Another essential aspect of discourse is its relationship with social practice. Discourse is not merely a medium for communication; it is an instrument through which speakers and writers influence and construct social realities. In turn, social practices define, constrain and shape discourse, determining how language is used in specific contexts (van Dijk, 2009). Fairclough (1989) argues that "any individual instance of discourse always implies social conventions and any discourse or practice implies conventional types of discourse or practice" (p. 28). This reciprocal relationship means that discourse both reflects and shapes social norms, reinforcing or challenging power structures.

In this study, discourse refers both to the actual speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders and to the larger communicative environment in which those speeches are situated, namely the discursive field of international diplomacy. As Fairclough (2003) explains, political discourse draws upon and contributes to wider "orders of discourse" or structured configurations of language practices that are characteristic of institutions like the United Nations. The intertextual nature of such discourse (its references to UN norms, international law, development agendas and regional cooperation frameworks) allows Vietnam to align its foreign policy with globally accepted narratives while asserting national priorities.

Discourse in this sense is inherently ideological: it reflects particular worldviews and strategic orientations, and it contributes to the construction of collective identities (van Dijk, 2006; Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). By examining how key ideological

concepts are framed and reiterated over time, this study uses discourse as an entry point to analyze shifts in Vietnam's self-representation, especially in relation to increasing assertiveness, global integration and normative alignment.

Analysis

The "analysis" component of CDA entails a multi-layered examination of texts to understand how meaning is constructed through language. Fairclough (1992, 1995) proposes a three-level analytical framework: (1) textual analysis (the linguistic features of texts), (2) analysis of discursive practice (how texts are produced and interpreted), and (3) analysis of social practice (how texts relate to broader societal structures and institutions).

At the textual level, this study focuses on lexico-grammatical features such as thematic vocabulary (e.g., cooperation, peace, sovereignty), modal verbs (e.g., must, should, need to,…), voice (active, passive), modes (declarative, imperative,…); the use of rhetorical devices such as nominalization, repetition, personification and metaphor; and textual structures. These elements are analyzed to determine how ideologies are linguistically realized and how Vietnam's foreign policy discourse evolves over the decade.

At the level of discursive practice, the study investigates how the speeches are shaped by institutional conventions (e.g., the norms of UNGA address), and how intertextual references to global frameworks (e.g., the UN Charter, Sustainable Development Goals) serve to legitimize Vietnam's positions. This analysis reveals how Vietnam draws on shared diplomatic language while also contributing to its transformation, particularly as it moves from a reserved international role to a more assertive, norm-shaping posture.

At the social practice level, the study situates the speeches within the shifting context of Vietnam's foreign policy and regional, global developments. CDA allows for an understanding of how discourse interacts with political strategy - for instance, how Vietnam's rhetorical emphasis on peace and international law aligns with its practical

responses to maritime disputes, or how repeated calls for multilateral cooperation reflect its strategy of balancing relations with major powers while maintaining strategic autonomy (often described as “bamboo diplomacy”).

What is CDA?

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a theoretically grounded approach to studying language as a form of social action, particularly focused on the relationship between discourse, ideology, and institutional practices. It emphasizes that discourse does not merely reflect the world but actively shapes it by framing knowledge, constructing identities, and legitimizing policy directions (Fairclough, 1995, 2010; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). As such, CDA is particularly well suited for analyzing political texts, where language plays a central role in articulating national interests, projecting values, and positioning states within the international system.

Van Dijk (2008) defines CDA as the study of how discourse enacts, reproduces and transforms power relations in social and political contexts. However, rather than viewing power in terms of domination, CDA, as applied in this study, focuses on how discourse is used strategically by political leaders to represent their countries, articulate principles and frame diplomatic agendas. Fairclough (1993) further stresses that CDA aims to uncover the often opaque connections between linguistic practices and broader institutional or ideological structures, revealing how texts contribute to the maintenance or reshaping of political norms.

In diplomatic discourse, such as speeches delivered at the United Nations General Assembly, language serves not only communicative functions but also symbolic and performative ones (Chilton & Schäffner, 2002). Leaders use discourse to articulate national values, claim legitimacy and reinforce shared global commitments. CDA allows scholars to identify how these rhetorical strategies work linguistically and ideologically over time. In this study, CDA is employed to examine how Vietnam’s foreign policy discourse, across a decade of UNGA speeches, constructs ideological commitments to peace, sovereignty,

multilateralism and development, and how these commitments shift or solidify in response to changing global and regional dynamics.

2.1.1.2. Key concepts in CDA: Ideology and Power

Ideology

The concept of "ideology" has been widely debated across disciplines, from political science and philosophy to linguistics, discourse studies and diplomacy. Scholars such as Marx and Engels (1845/1970) viewed ideology as a form of "false consciousness", a mechanism through which ruling classes maintain control by shaping dominant beliefs and perceptions. Gramsci (1971) expanded this perspective with his concept of cultural hegemony, arguing that ideology is disseminated through institutions such as education, media and politics to secure public consent. Althusser (1971) further developed this idea, introducing the notion of "Ideological state apparatuses" that embed ideology within social structures, shaping individual identities and behaviors.

In the field of linguistics, Eagleton (1991) described ideology as the process through which meaning sustains relations of domination, emphasizing language's role in reinforcing power structures. Similarly, van Dijk (2006) conceptualized ideology as a cognitive and discursive framework that shapes social representations and influences how political events are interpreted. CDA scholars build on these perspectives by examining how ideology operates within discourse to reproduce or challenge social power, often focusing on how dominant ideologies are naturalized in everyday communication (van Dijk, 1998).

Within CDA, ideology refers to the underlying systems of meaning and belief that circulate within society, shaping how individuals perceive reality, make decisions and interact with the world. It encompasses symbolic forms such as language, images and cultural narratives, which construct and sustain social practices and institutions. Thompson (1990) defines ideology as the social forms and processes through which symbolic meanings circulate, highlighting its role in establishing and maintaining unequal power relations. Media discourse, for example, often reflects dominant

ideologies by framing events in ways that support existing power structures while marginalizing alternative viewpoints (Richardson, 2007). Fairclough (1992) further argues that certain ideologies become “common sense” through repeated use, masking their role in maintaining social hierarchies. Thus, CDA seeks to uncover how discourse both reflects and shapes ideological frameworks, influencing the production and interpretation of meaning in various social contexts (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

In the context of international relations and diplomacy, ideology refers to the set of beliefs, values and ideas that shape a nation’s foreign policy and interactions with other international actors. It influences a country’s goals, strategic alignments and diplomatic engagements, determining how it perceives and responds to global challenges (Gries & Yam, 2020). As a system of beliefs and values, ideology plays a central role in shaping political discourse and diplomatic strategies, influencing how nations communicate their policies, identities and strategic interests on the global stage (Eagleton, 1991). This ideological underpinning is deeply embedded in political speeches, affecting how leaders frame national interests, address global issues and establish diplomatic priorities.

Contemporary applications of CDA extend the study of ideology to the global circulation of dominant ideologies, such as neoliberalism, which promotes individualism, market logic and competition as universal values (Harvey, 2005). Through discourse, these ideologies are diffused across multiple domains - including education, politics and economics - where they influence policymaking and public opinion, often in ways that obscure the unequal distribution of power and resources (Bourdieu, 1991). In diplomacy, ideological frameworks inform how nations justify policies, construct alliances and engage in global governance. By analyzing the language of political speeches and international negotiations, CDA reveals how ideological narratives shape foreign policy, reflecting deeper struggles over power, identity and global influence.

For the present study, ideology is central to understanding how Vietnam's foreign policy discourse is formulated at the UNGA. Key ideological themes (including the peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for international law, multilateralism and sustainable development) are not simply mentioned but systematically reinforced through linguistic devices like repetition, metaphor and nominalization. For instance, repeated references to cooperation, integration, stability and commitment serve to naturalize Vietnam's diplomatic priorities and align them with global governance norms. These ideological formations are also context-sensitive; as Vietnam's international role expands, the rhetorical emphasis in the speeches shifts from developmental narratives to themes of leadership, norm advocacy and global responsibility.

Power

Power in CDA is understood not as direct coercion but as the capacity to influence meaning-making processes through discourse (Fairclough, 1989, 2010). In diplomatic contexts, this means the ability of a state to frame issues, assert values, and shape international perceptions through carefully crafted language. CDA views power as realized through communicative practices that define what is sayable, acceptable and legitimate within institutional settings (Chilton, 2004).

In Vietnam's UNGA speeches, power is exercised discursively through declarative mood, authoritative modality (e.g., must, need to, should), and alignment with widely accepted international frameworks such as the UN Charter and the Sustainable Development Goals. These choices position Vietnam not as a passive participant but as a normative actor capable of contributing to global governance. This reflects what has been described as Vietnam's "bamboo diplomacy", a foreign policy that is flexible yet principled, and increasingly assertive in multilateral spaces (Nguyen, 2022).

Linguistic strategies such as nominalization (e.g., "commitment", "implementation", "engagement") and passivation are also tools of power, often used to depersonalize

agency and present policies as universal or consensus-driven. These strategies contribute to Vietnam's portrayal as a stable, cooperative state that prioritizes international norms and avoids direct confrontation, especially relevant in sensitive issues like the South China Sea. Power, in this framework, is thus exercised by shaping the diplomatic narrative, establishing legitimacy and navigating geopolitical tensions through discourse.

Language, ideology and power in discourse

The relationship between language, ideology, and power is at the core of CDA and is particularly relevant to the study of political speeches. Through discourse, ideologies are made to appear natural, and power is exercised subtly by privileging certain narratives while marginalizing others (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2001). Political actors, such as heads of state or government officials, use this interplay to establish credibility, assert national values and build diplomatic legitimacy.

In Vietnam's UNGA speeches, the consistent use of ideologically charged terms including sovereignty, peace, cooperation and multilateralism reflects a conscious attempt to embed national interests within internationally resonant values. This serves both to articulate foreign policy goals and to manage Vietnam's image as a responsible and constructive global actor. The evolution of discourse over the decade, from modest affirmations of development to more assertive expressions of regional leadership, shows how language is used to track and support Vietnam's shifting position in global affairs.

Thus, CDA offers a conceptual and analytical toolkit for examining how Vietnam's foreign policy is linguistically constructed, ideologically framed, and discursively legitimized. By analyzing these texts through the lens of CDA, this study contributes to a richer understanding of the strategic use of language in international diplomacy and the subtle but powerful ways in which discourse shapes foreign policy orientation.

2.1.1.3. Principles of critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides a theoretical and methodological foundation for understanding how language functions as a form of social action, not merely describing the world but shaping political realities, constructing identities and organizing knowledge (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The principles of CDA offer a coherent framework for interpreting the discursive practices through which national ideologies and foreign policy orientations are constructed, legitimized and communicated. In the context of this study, these principles support the analysis of how Vietnamese leaders strategically use language in their UN General Assembly (UNGA) speeches to frame Vietnam's diplomatic priorities and evolving global role.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) outline eight foundational principles of CDA that guide the interpretation and analysis of political discourse. These principles are especially relevant for analyzing high-stakes institutional communication, such as UNGA speeches, where language not only reflects but helps shape foreign policy narratives and national identity.

1. CDA addresses socially situated discourse

CDA is grounded in the idea that discourse is shaped by and helps shape, broader social, institutional and political realities. While originally applied to social justice issues, this principle in the context of foreign policy analysis enables researchers to examine how language is used to address global challenges, articulate diplomatic strategies, and frame political commitments (Fairclough, 2010). For this study, it means analyzing how Vietnamese leaders use discourse to respond to issues such as regional security, sustainable development and global governance reform - framing these not only as challenges but as opportunities for principled leadership.

2. Power relations are discursive

CDA asserts that power is exercised and reproduced through discourse (Wodak, 2001). In diplomatic contexts, this is evident in how nations like Vietnam project influence, claim legitimacy, and establish authority through formal speech acts.

Rather than power being enforced through coercion, it is conveyed through language - such as in Vietnam's repeated references to international law, sovereignty, and multilateral cooperation. These linguistic choices position Vietnam as a normative actor that leverages discourse to assert presence and shape diplomatic space.

3. Discourse constructs social and political reality

Discourse does not merely reflect existing political structures but actively contributes to their formation (Fairclough, 1992). UNGA speeches are performative events in which political identity is enacted. Through the careful selection of vocabulary (e.g., *commitment*, *integration*, *responsibility*) and grammar (e.g., use of declaratives, modality), Vietnamese leaders articulate an evolving self-image: from a post-conflict state to a proactive, globally integrated partner. This principle supports the study's aim to trace discursive constructions of Vietnam's international identity across time.

4. Discourse serves ideological functions

Discourse encodes and reproduces ideology - sets of values and beliefs that guide political action (van Dijk, 2006; Fairclough, 2003). In Vietnam's speeches, recurring ideological commitments - such as respect for sovereignty, peaceful development, and multilateral engagement - are linguistically reinforced through rhetorical strategies like repetition, nominalization, and strategic intertextuality (e.g., references to the UN Charter and Sustainable Development Goals). CDA enables us to analyze how these ideologies are naturalized and legitimized within the texts.

5. Discourse is historically and contextually situated

CDA emphasizes the historical dimension of discourse, recognizing that language is shaped by past events and institutional memory (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Vietnam's foreign policy discourse reflects its historical trajectory - from post-war recovery to global integration - and responds to regional dynamics such as the South China Sea tensions and shifts in global power configurations. Analyzing these speeches through a historical lens reveals how discourse evolves alongside geopolitical context and policy strategy.

6. The link between text and society is mediated

CDA acknowledges that the relationship between texts and the societies that produce them is complex and mediated by institutional structures and discursive traditions. Vietnam's UNGA speeches are embedded within the formal constraints of international diplomacy, shaped by multilateral norms and national foreign policy doctrine (Fairclough, 2001). This principle encourages analysts to consider how institutional setting, audience, and communicative purpose influence the construction of discourse.

7. Discourse analysis is both interpretative and explanatory

CDA involves interpreting the meanings embedded in discourse and explaining their connection to broader social and institutional processes (Fairclough, 2010). In this study, interpretation focuses on identifying the rhetorical and linguistic devices used by Vietnamese leaders to frame policy narratives, while explanation seeks to understand how these discursive patterns reflect or advance strategic foreign policy goals - such as enhancing soft power, asserting agency and maintaining neutrality through balanced diplomacy.

8. Discourse is a form of social action

Finally, CDA views discourse as a performative act with real-world consequences. Speeches by state leaders at the UNGA are not merely ceremonial; they are used to build international reputation, signal alignment, and stake diplomatic claims (Chilton, 2004). Through discourse, Vietnam reaffirms its commitment to multilateralism, articulates its foreign policy principles and strategically positions itself within shifting global structures - a practice central to what is often described as its "bamboo diplomacy" (Nguyen, 2022; Vuving, 2017).

Beyond these core principles, scholars have expanded the conceptual scope of CDA to enhance its applicability. Wodak and Meyer (2009) advocate for interdisciplinary analysis, combining insights from political science, linguistics, and international relations to better account for the complexity of institutional discourse. Heller (2011)

highlights the importance of understanding how discourse shapes national identity - especially relevant to this study's exploration of how Vietnam presents itself as a peace-loving, responsible actor on the world stage.

Thompson (1990) emphasizes the role of audience interpretation in discourse, reminding us that speeches are not only constructed but received-and that understanding how Vietnam's messages are framed for a global audience is critical. Kress (2010) also introduces the concept of multimodality, suggesting that diplomatic communication often combines verbal, visual, and symbolic modes. While this study focuses primarily on linguistic discourse, the underlying principles support a broader view of meaning-making in diplomacy.

In conclusion, the principles of CDA provide a robust theoretical framework for analyzing how language in political discourse is shaped by and helps shape ideologies, institutions and identities. In this study, these principles guide the investigation of how Vietnamese leaders use language in UNGA speeches to articulate evolving foreign policy goals and national priorities. Through careful discourse construction, Vietnam projects its identity as a cooperative, principled and globally engaged actor, responding to regional challenges while reinforcing its commitment to multilateralism, development and peace. CDA enables this study to reveal how such strategic discursive choices are contextually grounded, ideologically driven and powerfully performative within the field of international diplomacy.

2.1.2. Political communication

2.1.2.1. Political discourse

Political discourse is at the heart of civic engagement, involving the exchange of ideas, opinions and arguments that shape political understanding and influence policy decisions. It plays a vital role in the public's engagement with political issues, creating a space where leaders communicate their ideologies, policies and positions on pressing matters. However, political discourse is not a single genre, but rather a category of genres that emerge within the social domain of politics. As van Dijk

(1997) explains, political discourse encompasses a variety of genres, including political speeches, party manifestos, parliamentary debates and government deliberations. Political discourse, therefore, is not just about what politicians say, but the institutional settings and objectives behind their words.

Political discourse is deeply tied to power and persuasion, as it is strategically crafted to justify policies, mobilize public support and shape collective identities. It reflects ideological standpoints and contributes to the construction of political narratives that influence both domestic and international audiences. Wodak and Chilton (2005) argue that political discourse often employs rhetorical strategies, persuasive language and framing techniques to reinforce authority, legitimize decisions or challenge opposition. Additionally, it operates within institutional and media contexts that influence its production, circulation and reception, making it a key instrument in governance and public diplomacy.

Political discourse and context

Van Dijk (1997) emphasizes the importance of distinguishing political discourse from other types of discourse that may influence political decision-making but are rooted in different social domains. For instance, a student protest, an anti-immigrant campaign message, a corporate discussion on tax policies or even a casual conversation about politics, while politically motivated, do not fall under the domain of political discourse. By contrast, legislative debates on environmental policies, although concerning the environment, are considered political discourse because they are part of institutional processes where political actors are directly involved in decision-making. As Chilton (2004, p.12) notes, political discourse also involves “language and communication aimed at solving collective problems and distributing resources”, reinforcing its role in shaping policy decisions through formal political channels.

The context in which discourse occurs is also crucial in determining whether it is political. Political discourse is typically associated with politicians, but not all speech by politicians qualifies as political discourse. As van Dijk (1997) points out, for

discourse to be political, it must occur in institutional settings where politicians, acting in their professional roles, aim to achieve specific political objectives. For instance, a casual, informal conversation initiated by a politician would not constitute political discourse, whereas a formal speech delivered in a legislative session would. This observation aligns with Fairclough's (2013) argument that political discourse is inseparable from its institutional and situational context, as it involves power, ideology and the interplay of public and private discourse. The distinction is also emphasized by Connolly (1993), who highlights that political discourse arises from institutional roles that invoke power, authority and the pursuit of political objectives, making context a defining feature.

Political discourse and ideology

Political discourse is a primary medium through which politicians express their ideological identities. It is characterized by the interplay of belief systems and rhetorical strategies that not only reflect political positions but also actively shape public perceptions and legitimize power (Fairclough, 2013). Politicians often invoke a variety of ideologies - sometimes simultaneously advocating for neoliberal policies, progressive social issues and strong nationalist sentiments (van Dijk, 1997). As Chilton (2004) notes, political discourse is a space of "ideological contestation" where diverse beliefs interact, compete and occasionally converge within a single communicative event. This multidimensionality enables political actors to construct nuanced visions of societal progress, legitimize authority and influence both domestic and international relations.

2.1.2.2. Vietnam's political discourse and Bamboo diplomacy

Vietnamese leaders' speeches at international forums, particularly at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), function as powerful discursive performances that both reflect and reproduce Vietnam's evolving ideological positioning. These speeches are not merely diplomatic rituals or foreign policy announcements; they are ideologically saturated texts that embody a strategic synthesis of Marxist-Leninist

foundations, national sovereignty, postcolonial resilience, and pragmatic multilateralism. Since its accession to the UN in 1977, Vietnam has consistently used international platforms to construct a global image of itself as a peaceful, cooperative, yet self-reliant actor, deeply invested in global governance but firmly anchored in its revolutionary roots.

This ideational framework has undergone a critical evolution, shaped by changing global dynamics and domestic transformations. Drawing from Ho Chi Minh's foundational foreign policy philosophy, which emphasized independence, self-reliance, solidarity and peace, Vietnam's contemporary discourse retains its ideological core while embracing flexibility and adaptability as strategic tools. The most salient conceptual embodiment of this evolving ideology is the notion of "*bamboo diplomacy*", first introduced by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong at the 29th Diplomatic Conference in August 2016. As he elaborated, Vietnam's diplomacy should resemble bamboo: "*strong roots, stout trunk, and flexible branches*" (Nguyen, 2023). This metaphor fuses ideological steadfastness with strategic agility, asserting that Vietnam can remain firm in principles while adapting in tactics, especially in navigating relations with larger powers.

Bamboo diplomacy, however, is not an entirely novel departure. Scholars such as Huu and Ho (2024) and Nguyen (2024) argue that it is a theoretical consolidation and symbolic articulation of longstanding Vietnamese diplomatic norms, codified in Ho Chi Minh's early internationalism, the "Four No's" defense policy, and successive foreign policy doctrines adopted at Party Congresses (notably the 11th and 13th). It reflects a shift from reactive diplomacy in the postwar era to proactive norm entrepreneurship in the 21st century. This model also underscores Vietnam's commitment to balancing between competing major powers, particularly the United States and China, without compromising its sovereignty or ideological coherence.

The principles underpinning *bamboo diplomacy* are consistently enacted in Vietnam's UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020. Leaders often express unwavering support for peace, sustainable development, international law and global cooperation, while at

the same time reaffirming national sovereignty and independence. For instance, repeated references to “peaceful settlement of disputes based on international law”, particularly in the context of the South China Sea, reflect bamboo diplomacy’s dual logic: resisting hegemony while maintaining diplomatic restraint. Similarly, the emphasis on multilateralism and “reform of the UN system” (2016, 2018, 2020) positions Vietnam as a small but principled actor seeking to reshape global governance from within, rather than from a confrontational stance.

Crucially, Vietnam’s ideological discourse aligns closely with its domestic policy and political identity. The speeches convey the collective over the individual, state responsibility over unilateral assertion and diplomacy as a vehicle for social justice and shared prosperity. As seen in multiple references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, Vietnam does not only participate in global frameworks, it adopts and promotes them as ideological extensions of its national commitment to equity, inclusion and progress. This convergence of foreign and domestic narratives is not incidental; it reflects the Communist Party of Vietnam’s consistent effort to integrate foreign policy with socialist values, national development goals and institutional legitimacy.

In sum, the UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 reflect a sophisticated ideological narrative in which bamboo diplomacy functions as both metaphor and method. It captures the moral authority of a nation forged through resistance, the strategic pragmatism of a rising regional actor, and the discursive maturity of a state increasingly comfortable shaping, rather than merely absorbing, the norms of international diplomacy. Through these speeches, Vietnam not only presents its policies but performs its identity: resilient, principled and globally engaged.

2.1.2.3. Uncovering ideological constructs in political discourse from a CDA perspective

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a methodological approach for revealing how ideology is embedded in political and diplomatic speeches. CDA examines how language functions as a tool for maintaining or challenging power structures,

exposing hidden ideologies and their role in shaping international discourse (Fairclough, 2013). This study applies CDA to Vietnamese leaders' UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 to explore how ideology is constructed and conveyed in political diplomatic discourse. The analysis seeks to identify key ideological themes, examine the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used to shape diplomatic positions and analyze shifts in ideological emphasis over time. Through this approach, the research offers deeper insights into how Vietnamese leaders strategically use language to navigate power dynamics, advance national interests and position Vietnam within the broader ideological currents of global diplomacy.

By integrating these theoretical insights and methodological approaches, the study illuminates the critical role of language in international diplomacy. Vietnamese leaders' UNGA speeches, steeped in the tradition of bamboo diplomacy, serve as a powerful testament to how ideology is leveraged to negotiate the intricate terrain of global politics - underscoring Vietnam's commitment to sovereignty, cooperation and progressive engagement on the world stage.

2.2. CDA as an analytical framework and methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary field of study that examines the intricate relationship between language, power and society. Rooted in linguistic analysis but CDA offers a profound exploration of how language both reflects and shapes our social world. Over the years, a large number of scholars have contributed significantly to the development of CDA, each offering their unique insights, methodologies and perspectives on the analysis of discourse. In this research, the researcher aims to assess and compare the three most influential approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by Ruth Wodak, Teun A. van Dijk and Norman Fairclough. These approaches have been selected due to their profound influence and widespread recognition within the field of discourse analysis. However, given the scope of this study, only a brief overview of Wodak's and van Dijk's approaches is provided, while Fairclough's critical approach is examined in greater

depth. Fairclough's model is chosen as the analytical framework for this research, as it offers a comprehensive method for investigating the ideological and discursive strategies in the selected speeches.

2.2.1. Wodak's discourse-historical approach

Wodak's discourse-historical approach (DHA) builds on Fairclough's critical perspective, conceptualizing discourse as both socially constitutive and constituted. It emphasizes the interplay between discourse and social contexts, highlighting how language is embedded within institutional, historical, and socio-political structures. Through an interdisciplinary triangulation approach, DHA integrates linguistic, historical and sociological perspectives to examine the dynamic relationships between discourse and power.

A key feature of DHA is its attention to intertextuality (how texts relate to one another) and interdiscursivity (how different discourses intersect). It explores how discourses, genres and texts change over time in response to socio-political transformations. When analyzing political discourse, DHA applies specific analytical strategies, including referential strategies (how people or groups are named), predicational strategies (what attributes are assigned to them), argumentation strategies (how political actors justify or contest ideas), perspectivation strategies (how viewpoints are framed) and mitigation or intensification strategies (how discourse is amplified or downplayed).

Wodak et al. (2009) exemplified this approach in their study of Austrian national identity, identifying macro-strategies such as constructive (building national identity), perpetuating (maintaining existing identity narratives), transformational (modifying identity discourse) and destructive (challenging or deconstructing identity constructs). The study demonstrated how national identities are discursively constructed through political speeches, media discourse and public debates, reinforcing the role of discourse in shaping collective identity.

Despite its comprehensive framework, DHA is not entirely suitable for this research. Its primary focus on historical context, identity construction and interdisciplinary triangulation extends beyond the objectives of this study. Given the research's emphasis on analyzing ideological and discursive strategies in Vietnamese political speeches, Fairclough's critical approach is more appropriate.

2.2.2. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach bridges the micro-structure of language and the macro-structure of society, emphasizing social cognition as the intermediary between text and social structures (Van Dijk, 1993a, 2001b). Social cognition includes shared societal representations, mental processes and ideological constructs shaping discourse. Van Dijk (2000a) argues that discourse plays a key role in the reproduction of power and inequality, particularly in media discourse on race and ethnic relations. His "ideological square" framework outlines how dominant groups strategically emphasize or downplay certain perspectives to reinforce ideology (Van Dijk, 2000a).

While Van Dijk's approach provides valuable insights into media discourse and ideological reproduction, it is not fully suitable for this research. His focus on cognition and mental models does not align with the study's objective of analyzing political speeches as discursive practices shaping ideology and foreign policy.

2.2.3. Fairclough's critical approach

Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) offers a structured three-dimensional framework - textual analysis, discursive practice and social practice - allowing for a comprehensive examination of how Vietnamese leaders use language to construct ideologies and present foreign policy at the UN General Assembly.

Fairclough's (2001a, 2013) theoretical goals have been influenced by linguistics and sociolinguistics, which examine the relationship between language and its social context, as well as language and power. However, linguistics primarily focuses on language as a potential system or abstract competence, rather than describing actual language use. It places more emphasis on langue (language) rather than parole

(speaking). Linguistics assumes that the language of a community remains largely unchanged over time, treating langue as a static system at a particular point in time, rather than considering its dynamic historical development. Fairclough criticizes this viewpoint for failing to recognize that language is socially shaped.

In contrast, sociolinguistics acknowledges that “language use is shaped socially and not individually” (Fairclough, 1993, p.63). It explores the systematic relationships between variations in linguistic form (phonological, morphological, syntactic) and social variables (such as social relationships between participants, differences in social settings or topics). While sociolinguistics is effective at describing variation, Fairclough argues that it falls short in explaining how these variations are produced by power relations and struggles. “Sociolinguistics is strong on “what” questions (what are the facts of variations?) but weak on “why?” and “how?” questions (why are the facts as they are?; how - in terms of the development of social relationships of power - was the existing sociolinguistics order brought into being?; how is it sustained?; and how might it be changed to the advantage of those who are dominated by it?)” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 6).

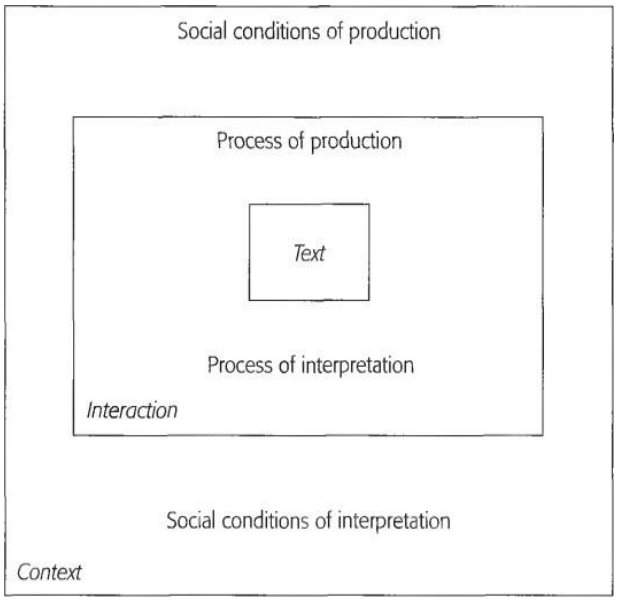
Fairclough’s approach views discourse as “a form of social practice”, highlighting that it is a mode of action (Fairclough, 2013, p. 16). In this perspective, spoken or written utterances are seen as performing speech acts such as promising, asking, asserting or warning. Furthermore, Fairclough considers language as an integral part of society, emphasizing the dialectical relationship between language and society; therefore, discourse involves the production and interpretation of texts. Furthermore, he sees language as socially conditioned, with discourse being influenced by various levels of social organization: “the level of the social situation, or the immediate social environment in which the discourse occurs; the level of the social institution which constitutes a wider matrix for the discourse and the level of the society as a whole” (Fairclough, 2013, pp.20-21).

Fairclough also highlights the importance of intertextual analysis as a complement to linguistic analysis. Intertextual analysis focuses on the intersection between “text and

discourse practice" (Fairclough, 1995a, p. 61), serving as a bridge between language and social contexts or between texts and discourse contexts within Fairclough's three-dimensional analytical framework (Description, Interpretation and Explanation) (Fairclough, 2013, pp.21-22).

Figure 2.1

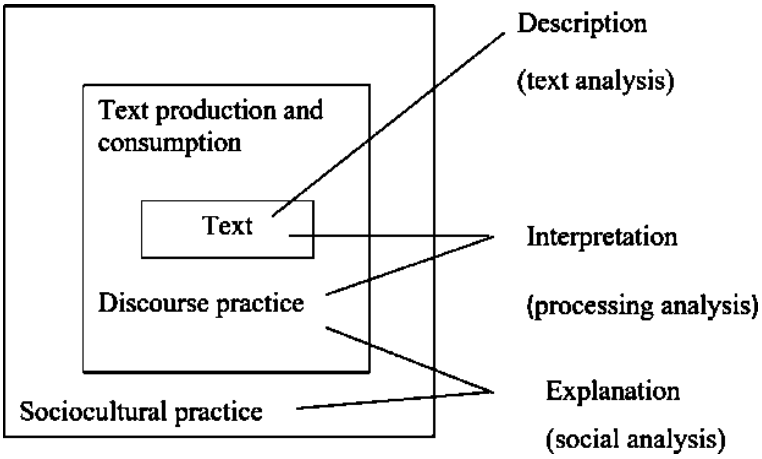
Fairclough's three dimensions of discourse (Fairclough, 2013, p. 21)



In accordance with these three dimensions of discourse is a three-step method of CDA:

Figure 2.2

Fairclough's three-dimensional framework (Fairclough, 1995, p. 97).



Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework corresponding to the three dimensions of discourse (Fairclough, 2013, pp.92-93) include: *Description* (Textual analysis), *Interpretation* (Discursive practice) and *Explanation* (Social practice).

The **description** stage focuses on the formal properties of the text and is essential for uncovering how language constructs, maintains or challenges ideologies. This level is divided into three components: *vocabulary*, *grammar* and *textual structures*, each examined through specific linguistic features. Within ***vocabulary***, analysts explore *experiential values* - how words represent social reality and ideological positions, often through classification schemes or thematic vocabulary or rewording. *Relational values* are explored to understand how language establishes power dynamics, formality or solidarity between speakers and audiences, while *expressive values* reveal the speaker's attitudes or value judgments. Devices such as *personification* (giving human qualities to abstract entities, e.g., "peace must be cherished") and *metaphor* (e.g., referring to multilateralism as a "pillar" or the UN as an "incubator") are particularly important expressive tools that encode ideology in symbolic terms. In the ***grammar*** section, analysts examine agency - how actors and actions are expressed or concealed - through *nominalization* (e.g., replacing actions like "cooperate" with abstract nouns like "cooperation"), *repetition* (the deliberate use of key terms or structures to reinforce ideological consistency and signal long-term commitments, sentence *mode* (declarative, imperative, interrogative), *voice* (active or passive) and *modality* (modal verbs: will, must, should,…). These choices help frame authority, certainty or obligation in strategic ways. The ***textual structure*** dimension investigates how sentences are connected (through conjunctions or referencing) and how the overall speech is organized (e.g., problem-solution structures, narrative sequencing). Together, these linguistic features - thematic vocabulary, relational expressions, metaphor, personification, nominalization, repetition,… - offer insight into how texts reproduce or challenge social norms and political ideologies, making them central to critical discourse analysis of political language.

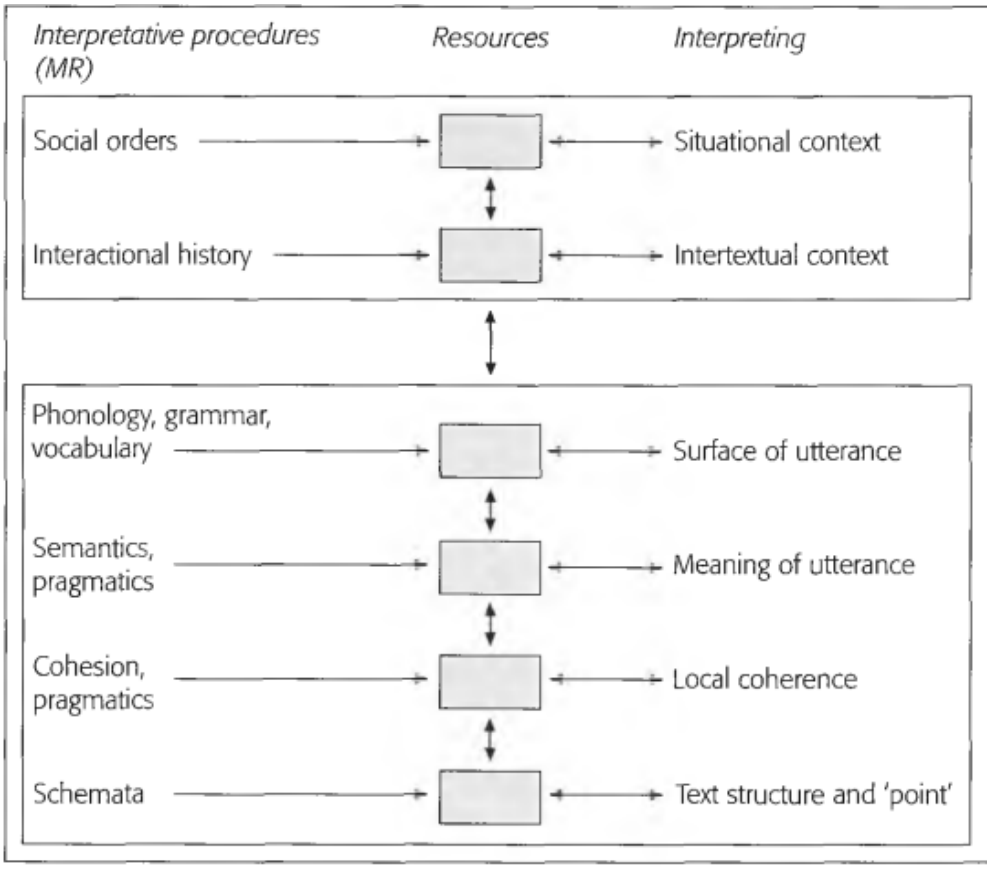
2) Interpretation: is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation.

According to Fairclough (2013, p.118), "interpretations are generated through a combination of what is in the text and what is "in" the interpreter in the sense of the members' resources (MR) which the latter brings to interpretation. "From the point of view of the interpreter of a text, formal features of the text (what is in the text) are cues which activate elements of interpreters' MR, and that interpretations are generated through the dialectical interplay of cues and MR. In the role of helping to generate interpretations, we may refer to MR as interpretative procedures."

The process of interpretation is summed up in the following figure:

Figure 2.3

Interpretation (Fairclough, 2013, p.119)

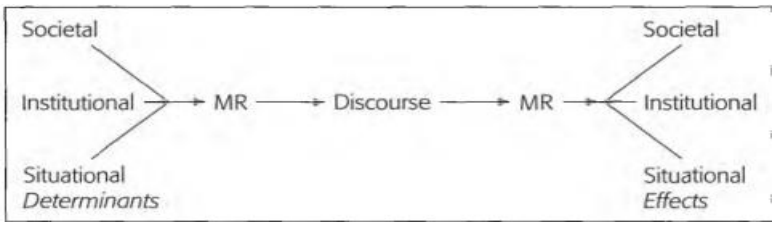


3) Explanation: is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context - with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects.

According to Fairclough, the objective of this stage is to portray a discourse as part of a social process, as a social practice. It tries to show how discourses are determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them. These social determinations and effect are mediated by MR: that is social structures shape MR while MR in turn shape discourses, and discourses sustain or change MR, which in turn sustain or change structures. These processes can be summarized in the following figure:

Figure 2.4

Explanation (Fairclough, 2013, p.136)



By examining these three dimensions in tandem, the CDA framework seeks to uncover how language is used to uphold or challenge power structures, reinforce dominant ideologies, and influence social practices and norms. It provides a comprehensive approach to understanding the complex relationship between language and society and enables researchers to critically analyze the role of discourse in shaping social reality.

The relationship between discourse, power and ideology is also emphasized by Fairclough (1993), in which he combines the notions of discursive practice inspired by Bakhtin and Kristeva's concept of intertextuality (1986) and Gramsci's theory of hegemony (1971). Fairclough perceives hegemony as a way to theorize change in relation to the evolution of power relations and as contributing to and being shaped by broader processes of change (Fairclough, 1993). Hegemony is seen as domination

across different societal domains, including economic, political, and ideological realms, exerted by one economically-defined class in alliance with other social forces. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, p. 24) define hegemony as “relations of domination based upon consent rather than coercion, involving the naturalization of practices and their social relations as well as relations between practices, as matters of common sense - hence the concept of hegemony emphasizes the importance of ideology in achieving and maintaining relations of domination”.

The analysis of dominance and hegemony is utilized to examine orders of discourse, as discussed by Fairclough (2001b). According to him, a social order is constituted by a network of interconnected social practices, particularly in its linguistic aspect. In the context of orders of discourse, the elements involved are not linguistic structures like nouns and sentences, but rather discourses, genres, and styles. These elements select certain linguistic possibilities while excluding others, thereby regulating linguistic variability in specific areas of social life. Over time, orders of discourse can undergo changes that are influenced by shifts in power relations during social interactions.

Fairclough also explores the relationships between orders of discourse, which he terms “interdiscursivity”. He also notes that the interdiscursivity of a text is a part of its intertextuality, involving considerations of the genres, discourses and styles it draws upon and how it incorporates them into specific articulations.

In summary, critical discourse analysis (CDA) encompasses multiple theoretical and methodological approaches. Fairclough’s socio-critical approach, Wodak’s discourse-historical approach, and Van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach are prominent within the field.

Nevertheless, taking into account the merits and shortcomings of each approach, the researcher opts for the utilization of Fairclough’s framework in her study for the following reasons:

Firstly, Fairclough’s CDA is rooted in critical theory, which means it goes beyond surface-level analysis and aims to uncover power structures, ideologies and hidden

meanings in discourses. It allows researchers to explore how language is used to reinforce or challenge dominant political ideologies and social structures. By utilizing Fairclough's 3-dimension framework, the researcher can uncover the key Vietnamese leaders' ideologies and the foreign policies of Viet Nam via their speeches at the General Assembly of the UN.

Secondly, the framework of Fairclough incorporates multiple dimensions of analysis, including textual analysis, discursive practice and social practice. This comprehensive approach helps the researcher examine not only the linguistic devices of the speeches but also the broader socio-political contexts in which they are produced and interpreted. Therefore, the analysis of the speeches would be more comprehensive and reliable.

Thirdly, Fairclough's CDA emphasizes the importance of context in understanding discourses. Political discourses are deeply influenced by the specific political, historical and social contexts in which they emerge. The framework allows the researcher to analyze these contextual factors and their impact on the discursive content and strategies.

Additionally, political discourses often involve struggles for power, and Fairclough's approach provides tools to identify and examine power relations embedded in language use. It helps the researcher recognize how language can be used to legitimize or challenge authority, marginalize certain groups or establish hegemonic ideologies.

More importantly, Fairclough's CDA framework views language as a social practice rather than merely a neutral tool for communication, acknowledging the reciprocal influence between language and society. This perspective is especially pertinent when scrutinizing political discourses as they play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and policy-making. Through the analysis of our leaders' speeches, the researcher unveils the foreign policies and national aspirations intended for the international community, thereby advocating for peace, security and cooperation.

2.3. Vietnamese foreign policy

2.3.1. Foreign policy

2.3.1.1. Definitions of "foreign policy"

Foreign policy remains a foundational concept in international relations, serving as the strategic framework through which states pursue national interests, navigate global power structures, and engage with the international community. Despite variation in definitions across disciplines and time periods, a common thread among scholars is the recognition that foreign policy is both a product of national objectives and a mechanism of international influence.

According to the Diplomatic Terminology Dictionary Vietnamese-English-French by Duong & Vu (2002), foreign policy is defined as "a nation's principles, strategies, plans and specific measures to manage its international relations with other countries and entities, aimed at enhancing and protecting its national interests." This definition highlights not only the goals but also the operational dimensions of foreign policy. Similarly, Noel (1959) characterizes foreign policy as "the art of managing a nation's relations with other countries," underscoring the strategic and often diplomatic nature of this field.

Zorbibe (1988) views foreign policy more functionally, describing it as "a national society's efforts to control the external environment by maintaining favorable situations and changing unfavorable ones." This perspective links foreign policy to both state agency and systemic adaptation, reflecting a more realist orientation. Dao & Le (2013) offer a more comprehensive and modern definition, arguing that foreign policy "comprises the various strategies and policies a country employs in its interactions with other nations and international organizations across political, defense, economic, cultural and social domains to achieve objectives aligned with national interests."

The terminology used in foreign policy literature also varies. While "foreign policy" (singular) generally refers to a country's overarching and coherent strategy toward

external relations, the plural form “foreign policies” may denote discrete policy decisions in specific issue areas or toward particular regions. In this study, “Vietnamese foreign policy” (singular) is used to emphasize the coherent, long-term strategic orientation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in its external engagements.

2.3.1.2. Factors influencing the formulation of Vietnam’s foreign policy

Foreign policy formulation is a complex and inherently multidimensional process shaped by the interplay between domestic imperatives, geopolitical dynamics, historical legacies and ideological continuity. In Vietnam’s case, especially in the post-Doi Moi (Renovation) era, this process has evolved into a more sophisticated balancing act, anchored in both long-standing socialist principles and the imperatives of global integration. The Communist Party of Viet Nam (CPV) continues to serve as the central policymaking authority, and its resolutions and political reports offer both ideological direction and pragmatic frameworks for foreign engagement. Key documents such as the 2011 Political Report, the 2013 Resolution No. 22-NQ/TW on international integration, and the 2019 Defense White Paper collectively underscore the emphasis on independence, self-reliance, peace, cooperation and proactive engagement in multilateral affairs.

The multidimensionality of Vietnam’s foreign policy is reflected in how it integrates both normative and strategic considerations. Internally, Vietnam’s formulation process is influenced by factors such as comprehensive national strength - including population size, economic development, military capacity, political unity, and cultural cohesion (Duong & Nguyen, 2010). Externally, national interests are calibrated against global and regional contexts, including shifting great-power relations and transnational challenges. As Phan (2019) outlines, three strategic determinants consistently shape Vietnam’s foreign policy decisions: the protection and advancement of national interests, the country’s international standing and the

prevailing global order. For Viet Nam, located at the geopolitical intersection of continental and maritime Asia, these factors are especially consequential.

Historically shaped by colonial occupation, Cold War alliances, and armed conflict, Vietnam's external relations have been characterized by caution and strategic autonomy. Its proximity to China and the legacy of bilateral tensions have reinforced a non-aligned posture, crystallized in the "Four No's" policy: no partaking in military alliances, no siding with one country to act against another, no foreign military bases in the Vietnamese territory or using Viet Nam as leverage to counteract other countries, and no using force or threatening to use force in international relations.. This policy, reaffirmed in the 2019 Defense White Paper, is a foundational component of Vietnam's national security and foreign relations doctrine. Simultaneously, however, Viet Nam has expanded its diplomatic bandwidth - joining ASEAN (1995), the WTO (2007), the CPTPP (2018) and the EU-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA, 2020) - illustrating a growing capacity to navigate diverse institutional settings while preserving strategic autonomy.

The shift from a reactive foreign policy to one defined by "proactive and active international integration" reflects both necessity and opportunity. Viet Nam must navigate intensifying Sino-American competition, escalating tensions in the South China Sea, and global disruptions such as climate change, pandemics, and economic volatility. In doing so, it increasingly adopts a discourse of "constructive internationalism", advocating for rule-based order, sovereignty, sustainable development, and UN reform. This orientation enables Viet Nam not only to protect its core national interests but also to participate meaningfully in reshaping global governance structures. Importantly, these objectives are pursued through discursive strategies that emphasize moral authority, legality and collective responsibility, features consistent with its rhetorical commitments at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

This strategic posture is most eloquently captured in the discourse of “bamboo diplomacy”, first articulated by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong at the 29th Diplomatic Conference in 2016 and later reiterated at the 2021 National Foreign Affairs Conference. Bamboo diplomacy metaphorically illustrates Vietnam’s approach: deeply rooted in principle and national identity, but flexible and responsive to the winds of change. This framework is not merely symbolic; it serves as a pragmatic guide for maneuvering in a volatile international system. It legitimizes Vietnam’s multi-vector diplomacy, enhancing ties with multiple major powers while maintaining equidistance and resisting dependence.

In sum, Vietnam’s foreign policy formulation is the result of a calculated synthesis of internal resilience and external responsiveness. It reflects a foreign policy logic that is ideologically grounded but tactically flexible, regionally embedded but globally aspirational. This dual character allows Viet Nam to project itself as a peace-oriented, sovereign and reformist actor - a small state with a clear voice in a multipolar world. Through bamboo diplomacy, Viet Nam strategically crafts a foreign policy that is simultaneously a protective mechanism, a growth strategy and a normative expression of its evolving national identity.

2.3.2. Synopsis of Vietnamese foreign policy since Doi Moi 1986

Vietnam’s foreign policy since 1986 has undergone significant transformation, reflecting both domestic developments and shifts in the global geopolitical landscape. The year 1986 marked the onset of the Doi Moi (Renovation) period, a time of substantial economic reforms and a strategic pivot towards opening up to the international community. This turning point in Vietnam’s modern history introduced a series of sweeping changes that realigned the country’s foreign policy orientation, guided by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) through successive National Party Congresses. These policy changes have unfolded in distinct phases, each characterized by evolving priorities that have helped Viet Nam navigate complex global dynamics.

The first period (1986-1995) is called the period of "breaking the embargo siege and bringing the country out of serious economic crisis". (Pham, 2021)

The initial phase of Vietnam's foreign policy transformation coincided with the 6th National Party Congress in 1986, which formally endorsed the Đổi Mới reforms. This period, often described as the era of "breaking the embargo siege and bringing the country out of a serious economic crisis" (Pham, 2021), was a response to both internal and external challenges. Domestically, Vietnam was grappling with a profound economic downturn characterized by hyperinflation, food shortages and widespread poverty. Externally, the country faced international isolation due to its involvement in Cambodia and the geopolitical fallout of the Cold War.

Against this backdrop, the Party adopted Politburo Resolution No. 13 in 1988, which laid the groundwork for a strategic shift towards "struggle and cooperation in peaceful coexistence". This doctrine emphasized the need for a robust economy, strong national defense, and expanded international cooperation as key elements to safeguard national independence and socialist development. The Party recognized that Vietnam's isolation needed to be overcome through pragmatic diplomacy, particularly by normalizing relations with neighboring countries and engaging with the broader international community (Pham, 2021).

One of the key foreign policy achievements during this phase was the normalization of diplomatic relations with China in 1991 and the United States in 1995, which symbolized Vietnam's reentry into the international fold. Vietnam's diplomatic policies were consolidated at the seventh Party Congress in 1991 during which the Party affirmed that "Viet Nam wants to be a friend and a partner with other countries around the world, and expand and multilateralize its external economic relations."

The decision to normalize relations with these major global players was strategic, as it provided Viet Nam with critical opportunities for economic recovery and integration. Viet Nam also formally joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995, marking a significant milestone in its regional integration.

The second period (1996-2010): Expanding international relations and economic integration (Pham, 2021)

By the mid-1990s, Viet Nam successfully emerged from the socio-economic crisis, laying the groundwork for a new phase of national development. During this period, global trends emphasizing peace, globalization and democratization gained momentum. Countries of varying sizes and socio-political systems increasingly engaged in collaborative and competitive processes, fostering regional and international connections.

Positioned in the Asian-Pacific region, Viet Nam experienced rapid and dynamic development within a conducive environment. These characteristics and evolving trends contributed to the heightened diversification and multilateralization of international relations and foreign policies among different nations.

In response to these shifts in global and regional dynamics, the 8th National Party Congress in 1996 affirmed the soundness of Vietnam's foreign policies, emphasizing principles of "independence, self-reliance, diversification and multilateralization of international relations".

Subsequent to this affirmation, the 8th plenum of the Central Committee during the 9th National Party Congress in 2003 introduced fresh perspectives on collaboration and contention, marking a basis for Viet Nam to reconcile differences and enhance mutual benefits in international relations. A significant breakthrough during this period was the introduction of the policy of international economic integration, outlined in the 8th, 9th, and 10th National Party Congresses.

Viet Nam adeptly managed the balance between independence, sovereignty, and international integration. Notable steps included joining the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and signing a bilateral trade agreement with the United States in 2001.

From 1996 to 2010, Viet Nam joined the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) and signed a bilateral trade agreement with the US.

Viet Nam also actively participated in key multilateral mechanisms, including the Asia-Europe Cooperation Meeting (ASEM) in 1996, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum in 1998, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007. The country hosted high-level conferences of the Community of French-speaking countries (1997), ASEAN (1998), ASEM (2005), and APEC (2006). Additionally, Viet Nam attained non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council for the 2008-2009 term.

The period from 2011 up to now: Deepening foreign relations and comprehensive international integration (Pham, 2021)

The second decade of the 21st century witnessed a prevailing trend of cooperation and development, although challenges arose from intense competition among major powers. The global economy experienced a crisis and a subsequent unsustainable recovery. The rapid progress in science, technology and the Fourth Industrial Revolution provided impetus for innovative growth and digital transformation. Simultaneously, it posed a risk of falling behind for those not embracing the "ship" of digital transformation. Over two decades of "Doi Moi", Viet Nam considerably strengthened its status and capabilities, with its strategic geographical position playing an increasingly crucial role in the policies of major powers in the region.

Against this backdrop, the 11th National Party Congress in 2011 elevated the economic integration policy to responsive and active comprehensive international integration. The 2013 resolution by the Political Bureau outlined a unified perspective from the entire Party and population on international integration in the new context.

The 12th Party Congress in 2016 introduced a significant political policy for further expanding the scope, domain and extent of integration. These initiatives were detailed and planned in the overarching strategy for international integration up to 2020, with a vision extending to 2030. The approach to multilateral relationships saw a noteworthy development, with Party Secretariat's Directive 25 underscoring a robust

shift from “participation” to “proactive participation”, emphasizing Viet Nam’s core and leading role.

Foreign-policy activities were executed more comprehensively across various sectors, aligning with the operational and coordination guidelines outlined in Politburo Directive No. 04 of 2011 on people-to-people diplomacy and Directive No. 32 of 2019 on Party diplomacy.

Consequently, by the time of the 12th National Party Congress in 2016, Vietnam had established a strong network of diplomatic relationships, including strategic partnerships with all G20 members and comprehensive partnerships with key regional and global powers. This period also witnessed Vietnam’s proactive engagement in next-generation trade agreements, such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Europe-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA), as well as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). These agreements solidified Vietnam’s position as a dynamic and open economy fully integrated into the global trading system.

Vietnam’s foreign policy during this period has been characterized by what is commonly referred to as “bamboo diplomacy” - a strategy that embodies the qualities of resilience, flexibility and adaptability. Like the bamboo that bends but does not break in the face of strong winds, Vietnam has sought to maintain a balanced foreign policy that accommodates the interests of major global powers while preserving its independence and sovereignty. This is reflected in Vietnam’s careful navigation of relations with both China and the United States, as well as its active participation in multilateral frameworks like ASEAN and the United Nations.

The significance of “bamboo diplomacy” was particularly evident during Vietnam’s tenure as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2020-2021 term and its role as ASEAN chair in 2020. Vietnam’s diplomatic achievements during this period highlight its proactive stance in addressing global challenges, such as climate change, peacekeeping and conflict resolution, while asserting its influence on the international stage.

Party Secretary-General and President Nguyen Phu Trong asserted, “Our country has never experienced the current level of fortune, potential, position and prestige”. This achievement can be credited to several factors:

Firstly, the foreign affairs service has adeptly managed relations with neighboring countries, major powers, strategic partners, comprehensive partners and other collaborators.

Secondly, driven by national confidence and a sincere desire for development, Vietnam’s foreign affairs activities have been conducted with creativity and flexibility. This approach has created favorable international conditions to attract resources for national development, placing the people and enterprises at the forefront.

Thirdly, foreign affairs activities have played a crucial role in safeguarding national territorial sovereignty, seas and islands, serving as a proactive defense mechanism for the country even before imminent threats arise.

Fourthly, the impact of foreign affairs activities, particularly in multilateral diplomatic engagements, has significantly elevated Vietnam’s status, prestige and role in both the region and the global arena.

These accomplishments are a direct result of the Party’s diplomatic policy and guidelines across various periods, grounded in a correct assessment of the prevailing circumstances and drawing insights from the experiences of Vietnamese diplomacy.

The accomplishments mentioned can be attributed to the Party’s effective foreign policy and guidelines in recent years, shaped by a careful assessment of the situation and lessons learned. Key lessons include prioritizing and leveraging the nation’s interests based on fundamental principles of international law, equality and mutual benefits.

Another lesson involves relying on the internal strength of the Party, state diplomacy, people-to-people diplomacy, and the combined power of foreign affairs, defense, and security. External objectives consistently align with the country’s development goals,

considering external relations as an extension of internal affairs and a powerful tool for realizing developmental aspirations.

Amidst an evolving regional and global landscape characterized by uncertainty, peace, cooperation, development, globalization and integration remain significant trends. However, they face challenges from major strategic competition and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Asia-Pacific region holds a crucial position globally and serves as a vital driver of the world economy. Despite this, the region is susceptible to potential destabilizing factors, including developments in the East Sea and the Mekong.

In the face of this complex international context, Viet Nam is determined to set ambitious long-term development goals for 2030 and 2045. Consequently, the future mission of foreign affairs is anticipated to be challenging, with a primary focus on the task of constructing a happy and prosperous country.

In conclusion, Vietnam's foreign policy since Doi Moi has been a story of adaptation and strategic engagement with the global community. Through successive phases of diplomatic evolution, Viet Nam has emerged as a key player in regional and international affairs, balancing its national interests with the demands of a rapidly changing world. The guiding principles of independence, multilateralism and proactive engagement have enabled Vietnam to not only safeguard its sovereignty but also contribute meaningfully to global peace and development.

2.3.3. Vietnam's foreign policy from 2011 to 2020

The decade from 2011 to 2020 constitutes a pivotal period in Vietnam's foreign policy evolution - marked by a deepening of international engagement, consolidation of ideological commitments, and increasing diplomatic sophistication. This phase, framed by the directives of the 11th and 12th National Party Congresses, witnessed a profound recalibration of Vietnam's global posture, reflecting its transition from a norm-follower to a norm-shaper in international affairs. Against the backdrop of intensifying global power competition, climate instability, rising protectionism and

regional volatility, especially in the South China Sea (the East Sea), Viet Nam advanced a foreign policy grounded in ideological continuity but operationalized through strategic flexibility. This ideological-discursive configuration aligns with what has come to be known as “bamboo diplomacy” - a resilient, principled and adaptable diplomatic philosophy.

2.3.3.1. The 11th National Party Congress (2011-2015)

The 11th National Party Congress, convened in January 2011, marked a critical juncture in Vietnam’s post-Doi Moi diplomatic evolution. It reflected the country’s increasing economic strength, its expanding global partnerships, and its desire to play a more visible and principled role in international affairs. The Congress approved three foundational policy documents: the amended Platform for National Construction during the transitional period towards socialism (2011), the Socio-Economic Development Strategy for 2011-2020 and the Political Report of the 10th Central Committee. Collectively, these texts signaled a more assertive and ideologically grounded direction for Vietnam’s foreign policy, emphasizing “national interests and the people” as the overarching goal of diplomatic engagement (Pham, 2011). This shift marked a subtle but significant ideological recalibration: rather than subordinating foreign affairs strictly to socialist solidarity or class struggle, the 11th Congress integrated national interest as a primary criterion for evaluating foreign policy effectiveness.

This period witnessed the consolidation of longstanding foreign policy principles - sovereignty, independence, peace, cooperation and non-alignment - while introducing a new emphasis on diplomacy as a strategic instrument for modernization. The Congress elevated foreign policy to a key pillar of national development, linking diplomatic outreach with the goals of industrialization, national defense and international legitimacy. In discourse, Vietnam’s identity as a “responsible member of the international community” began to take shape, an important rhetorical shift from the more passive, reactive roles of previous decades.

This transformation is clearly visible in Vietnam's UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2015, where leaders consistently framed their country's role not simply as a participant but as a contributor to global peace, security, and development. The 2013 speech, for instance, evoked the "aspirations of humankind" in its call for a peaceful, just and sustainable international order, aligning foreign policy discourse with a universalist moral register rooted in socialist humanism.

International integration was a core theme of the 11th Congress. While previous Party congresses had promoted cautious economic opening and bilateral diplomacy, the 11th Congress explicitly called for comprehensive integration - extending beyond trade and investment into defense, security, culture, education and multilateral diplomacy. This multidimensional integration marked a strategic shift from reactive adaptation to proactive engagement. The rhetorical evolution in Party documents - from "want to be friends" (7th Congress), to "ready to be friends" (8th), and then to "friends and reliable partners" (9th) - culminated in the 11th Congress with the more assertive formulation of Viet Nam as a "responsible member of the international community". This semantically and ideologically significant redefinition reflects a broader ambition: to assert agency, shape global norms and reposition Vietnam as a middle power with both regional credibility and normative influence.

The South China Sea (the East Sea) disputes, which escalated in this period, also played a crucial role in shaping Vietnam's diplomatic discourse. Vietnam's UNGA addresses during these years employed legalistic terminology to call for peaceful dispute resolution based on the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Such language not only asserted Vietnam's maritime sovereignty but also strategically positioned the country as a rule-abiding, rational actor committed to multilateral norms. This legal-normative discourse is an extension of the 11th Congress's principle of using international law as both shield and platform, a way to preserve national sovereignty while building coalitions and avoiding direct confrontation with more powerful actors.

Finally, the Congress emphasized the need for coordinated foreign policy across Party, State, military and people-to-people diplomacy. This comprehensive orientation reflected Vietnam's evolving understanding of diplomacy as a whole-of-nation endeavor. The integration of defense and diplomacy was especially notable, as Viet Nam began to strengthen security partnerships and engage more deeply in regional security dialogues. This shift laid the institutional and ideological foundation for Vietnam's enhanced participation in ASEAN, its growing contributions to UN peacekeeping and its expanding diplomatic presence globally.

In short, the 11th National Party Congress formalized Vietnam's transition from a diplomatically cautious, postwar state into a confident, globally integrated actor. It fused socialist values with pragmatic multilateralism, grounded diplomacy in national interest and advanced a discourse of responsibility, cooperation and rule-based engagement, which are discursive themes that would become increasingly visible in Vietnam's UNGA speeches and broader foreign policy conduct over the ensuing decade.

2.3.3.2. The 12th National Party Congress (2016-2020)

The 12th National Party Congress, held in 2016, marked a significant progression in the evolution of Vietnam's foreign policy - both in scope and in discursive ambition. Building on the foundations laid by the 11th Congress, this period witnessed a transition from institutional consolidation to strategic deepening, with a strong emphasis on "proactive and active international integration" across all sectors. The Congress reaffirmed foreign policy not merely as an instrument of statecraft but as a central pillar of Vietnam's long-term national development strategy, particularly within the context of a volatile global order marked by rising protectionism, great-power rivalry and emerging non-traditional security threats (Luu & Dang, 2019).

The Congress highlighted that foreign affairs must be "comprehensive and modern", capable of adapting to a rapidly shifting international environment. A core tenet was the call for Vietnam to become not only a participant in, but a shaper of, the international system, a shift articulated in the principle of "responsible global

engagement". This language reflected the Party's understanding that Vietnam's foreign policy must anticipate rather than merely respond to global change. The Congress called for a nuanced approach to diplomacy, aligning foreign policies with both national and international realities: "Correctly perceiving the trends of the era and the global and regional context, the Party and the State have direction and policies that are appropriate and timely based on the national and people's interests."[1]

The Congress emphasized deeper multilateral integration, particularly in security and defense diplomacy. Vietnam's increasing engagement in UN peacekeeping operations, its assumption of the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2020, and its election to the UN Security Council (non-permanent member for 2020-2021) all marked concrete steps toward multilateral leadership. These roles were not framed as symbolic but as expressions of Vietnam's readiness to assume greater responsibility in shaping global norms, especially around sustainable development, conflict resolution and climate governance. The 12th Congress explicitly linked these ambitions to discursive acts in multilateral forums, calling for Vietnam to "raise its voice" on key issues while remaining anchored in principles of peaceful coexistence, non-alignment, and strategic autonomy.

Vietnam's UNGA speeches from 2016 to 2020 reflected this ideological and strategic shift. The use of terms like "shared responsibility", "rules-based order" and "inclusive growth" began to dominate the discursive landscape, signaling Vietnam's evolving self-representation as a bridge-builder between developing nations and established powers. Moreover, the language of peace and sovereignty, long-standing in Vietnamese diplomatic rhetoric, was increasingly coupled with developmental and environmental lexicons, including references to the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and human-centered development. Such semantic layering suggests a foreign policy identity that is no longer confined to defensive posturing, but one that actively contributes to the ideational architecture of global governance.

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[1] Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam: Văn kiện Đại hội đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ XII, Văn phòng Trung ương Đảng, 2016, tr.152.)

The Congress also emphasized diplomatic coordination across Party, State, military and people-to-people channels. This emphasis on “whole-of-system” diplomacy institutionalized the discursive coherence observed in Vietnam’s multilateral engagements. For example, the alignment between Party directives and public diplomatic statements, especially in speeches at global platforms, reveals a deliberate effort to synchronize Vietnam’s strategic narratives across all levels of governance. It also marked the operationalization of “bamboo diplomacy” as more than a metaphor: it became a rhetorical and institutional strategy balancing principle with flexibility, resilience with engagement.

Importantly, the Congress reaffirmed Vietnam’s commitment to protecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity through peaceful, legalistic means. This was particularly relevant in the context of continued tensions in the South China Sea. Vietnam’s discourse during this period deployed legal references to UNCLOS and emphasized multilateral dialogue frameworks, thereby reiterating its identity as a rule-abiding state. Rather than escalating conflict, Viet Nam used diplomatic discourse, particularly through the UNGA and ASEAN, to assert sovereignty while legitimizing its stance through the invocation of international law.

The 12th Congress also accelerated Vietnam’s economic and political diversification through new-generation trade agreements and diplomatic outreach to strategic and comprehensive partners. Its accession to the CPTPP, EVFTA and RCEP further institutionalized its role in shaping trade and governance rules beyond the region. The discursive framing of these agreements - as tools for mutual benefit, sustainable development and economic resilience - reinforced Vietnam’s foreign policy image as one that is cooperative yet self-determined.

In sum, the 12th National Party Congress institutionalized a foreign policy model that wove together ideological fidelity, strategic ambition and discursive sophistication. It not only reaffirmed key principles - sovereignty, multilateralism, independence - but also rearticulated them within a changing global narrative. The foreign policy

discourse from 2016-2020, particularly as expressed in Vietnam's UNGA speeches, illustrates this synthesis. By constructing Viet Nam as a reform-oriented, norm-upholding and development-driven actor, the 12th Congress charted a path for Vietnamese diplomacy that is globally engaged, discursively consistent and deeply rooted in both national interest and international responsibility.

In conclusion, the foreign policy strategies outlined at the 11th and 12th National Party Congresses represented a crucial turning point in Vietnam's international engagement, guiding the country through a decade of dynamic global changes. These congresses set the foundation for Vietnam's proactive, multilateral and security-conscious diplomacy, reflecting a significant evolution in the nation's foreign policy priorities. By analyzing the speeches of Vietnamese leaders during this period, this study aims to uncover how these ideological and strategic shifts were articulated in diplomatic discourse, further demonstrating Vietnam's growing influence and responsible participation in global affairs.

2.4. Related studies

Political speeches play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, influencing policy decisions and reflecting the broader sociopolitical landscape. The critical analysis of political speeches is an essential endeavor that examine the nuanced language, rhetorical strategies and underlying ideologies employed by political figures to communicate their messages. This exploration goes beyond mere interpretation, aiming to scrutinize the subtle nuances, persuasive techniques and potential manipulations embedded within these speeches.

Over the years, the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to political speeches and foreign policy communication has garnered growing scholarly interest. However, while methodologically insightful, many studies do not systematically focus on foreign policy discourse through political speeches or conversely, studies that do address foreign policy often rely on institutional documents or media coverage rather than direct analysis of leaders' diplomatic language. *This gap highlights the*

need to examine political speeches as primary texts for understanding how national ideologies and foreign policy positions are discursively constructed and conveyed to the international community.

Globally, a range of studies have applied CDA to analyze political speeches. Wang (2010) applied both CDA and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to Barack Obama's speeches, revealing how transitivity and modality conveyed power relations and constructed ideological legitimacy. Unvar and Rahimi (2013) explored Obama's 2008 victory speech, identifying euphemization and derogation as rhetorical tools that framed unity while reinforcing a discursive "Us vs. Them" dichotomy. Similarly, Houda (2016) examined Hillary Clinton's campaign speeches through Fairclough's framework, revealing how gendered rhetoric, framing, and intertextuality reflected ideological positioning. *While these studies offer valuable insights into political identity formation, they predominantly engage with domestic political contexts rather than international diplomacy.*

Other works move closer to foreign policy discourse. Faiz, Chojimah, and Khasanah (2020) analyzed Donald Trump's Jerusalem speech using Fairclough's three-dimensional model, uncovering how illocutionary acts projected authority and shaped ideological justifications for peace. Sharififar and Rahimi (2015) compared Obama's and Rouhani's UNGA speeches, using transitivity and modality to explore how ideology and power were embedded in their diplomatic rhetoric. *Yet their scope remains confined to micro-level linguistic features without fully accounting for broader geopolitical or institutional dynamics.*

Recent studies offer further exploration into foreign policy CDA. For instance, Mandene (2022) analyzed Nelson Mandela's State of the Nation addresses to reveal rhetorical strategies and ideological cues, while Orungbeja (2022) emphasized the power-ideology-language interplay in political speech. More structurally, Carta and Morin (2014) and authors contributing to the European Journal of International Relations have examined EU foreign policy through CDA, stressing how discourse

shapes diplomatic action (Carta & Morin, 2014; Roselle et al., 2014). Lu and Zhou (2024) conducted a CDA of Chinese diplomatic speeches on U.S.-China relations, revealing how metaphor and evaluative language were used to assert legitimacy and manage international image. Similarly, Shahbazi and Ahmadzadeh (2021) applied macrostructural CDA to American presidential speeches, identifying how ideological themes align with party affiliation and international posturing. *Nevertheless, these studies remain focused on Western or Chinese diplomatic rhetoric, leaving regional perspectives, especially Vietnam's, relatively underexplored.*

In the Southeast Asian context, CDA applications are even more limited. While Pham and Ngo (2022) used Fairclough's CDA to analyze Kamala Harris's 2021 visit to Vietnam, their focus was on U.S. diplomatic framing rather than Vietnam's own foreign policy discourse. Salsabila (2022) analyzed a UN speech by Kim Nam Jun (RM of BTS), offering insights into cultural discourse rather than state policy. A Konrad Adenauer Foundation seminar in Vietnam introduced CDA for ASEAN speech analysis, but this remains pedagogical and not focused on empirical political speech analysis. Even the study by Trinh and Vu (2024), which explores nationalism in Vietnamese "bamboo diplomacy" discourse in digital journalism, examines media narratives, not the actual diplomatic language used by Vietnamese leaders.

It is evident that *very few English-language CDA studies directly examine Vietnamese foreign policy as articulated by its political elites, particularly through their UNGA speeches.* Most Vietnamese CDA literature focuses on translation, media discourse or foreign politicians, rather than unpacking how Vietnam itself discursively negotiates power, ideology and global positioning.

This thesis fills a significant gap in both CDA and foreign policy research by applying Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework to examine a decade's worth of Vietnamese leaders' UNGA speeches (2011-2020). Unlike existing studies that narrowly examine textual features or single political events, this research analyzes linguistic strategies (such as thematic vocabulary, metaphor, personification,

repetition, nominalization, textual structure) in relation to discursive practices and social contexts. It reveals how Vietnam articulates and adapts its core ideological commitments - peace and security, multilateral cooperation, sustainable development, respect for international law, and active global participation - through evolving diplomatic language rooted in the philosophy of "bamboo diplomacy".

This metaphor, first introduced by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong in 2016 and elaborated in subsequent official discourse, captures Vietnam's unique balancing act: firm in principle, yet flexible in strategy. It encapsulates a soft power approach suited to Vietnam's geopolitical context - managing tensions in the South China Sea, responding to major power rivalry and navigating global crises like COVID-19 - without abandoning the foundational principles of sovereignty, socialism, and multilateralism.

This study offers both theoretical and empirical contributions. Methodologically, it demonstrates how Fairclough's CDA model can systematically trace ideological evolution in political speeches over time. Empirically, it provides the first longitudinal analysis of Vietnamese UNGA speeches . Theoretically, this study deepens the conceptualization of bamboo diplomacy as a strategic discourse that enables small states to assert agency and shape international norms. In doing so, it contributes meaningfully to CDA while providing fresh insight into Vietnam's rhetorical construction of sovereignty, multilateral cooperation and reform-oriented global engagement.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the overall design of the research methodology including research paradigm, research approach, research design and research methods (data of the study, data analysis procedure, conceptual and analytical framework).

3.1. Research paradigm

This study adopts a pragmatic paradigm as its overarching philosophical framework, drawing on Creswell's (2018) classification. Pragmatism emphasizes the primacy of research questions over rigid methodological allegiance, allowing the researcher to flexibly combine tools and strategies best suited to achieving specific aims. In the context of this thesis, which critically investigates the ideological construction of Vietnamese foreign policy through political speeches at the UNGA, pragmatism supports an open, integrative approach - bridging textual analysis, discursive interpretation and socio-political contextualization.

However, the study's core methodology - Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) - is inherently rooted in the critical paradigm, particularly in its concern with the interconnections between language, power, ideology, and social change (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). CDA views discourse not merely as a reflection of reality, but as a constitutive social practice capable of reproducing or transforming structures of power and domination. Thus, while the pragmatic paradigm provides methodological flexibility, the study's theoretical orientation is deeply aligned with critical social theory, particularly in its aim to expose how political language serves not only to describe but also to legitimize ideologies and shape international norms.

This dual paradigm orientation - pragmatic in design, critical in purpose - enables a nuanced exploration of Vietnamese leaders' UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020. The research does not merely catalogue linguistic features but interrogates how these features work ideologically to represent Vietnam's evolving global identity, project foreign policy priorities, and perform diplomatic agency under the framework of "bamboo diplomacy". Pragmatism facilitates the integration of interpretive CDA

with supporting quantitative measures such as keyword frequency or discourse trend mapping, while the critical lens ensures that the focus remains on how language operates within broader power relations and socio-political contexts.

In sum, the paradigm underpinning this research allows for both empirical flexibility and ideological critique. It accommodates a layered analytical model - textual, discursive and social - and situates the study within a broader scholarly commitment to uncovering how discourse shapes not only representation but also participation and influence within the international order.

3.2. Research approach

In conducting the research, mixed methods approach with the combination of both qualitative and quantitative data in the design - embedded mixed methods - is adopted under critical and pragmatic worldview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Under this view, the speeches by the key leaders of Viet Nam at the UN General Assembly in the period from 2011 to 2020 are examined to identify the ideologies underpinning Vietnam's foreign policy and the significant policy changes during this period. It further investigates how these ideologies and policy shifts are linguistically represented through specific lexical, grammatical and rhetorical choices. In addition, the study analyzes how these elements are socially constructed within broader discursive and socio-political contexts. The research is guided by the following questions:

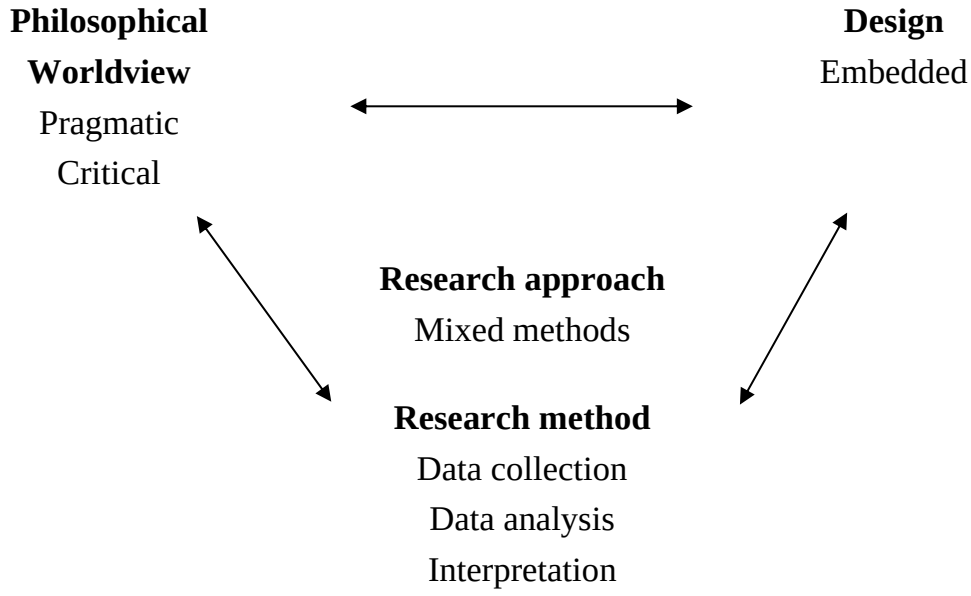
1) What ideologies and significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy are conveyed in the speeches by Vietnamese leaders at the General Debates of the UN General Assembly from 2011 to 2020 and how are they linguistically represented?
2) How are these ideologies and foreign policy changes socially constructed in the speeches?

The pragmatic worldview is realized through an embedded mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative analysis. To address the first research question, a qualitative analysis is conducted to identify the core ideologies conveyed

in the ten speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders at the UN General Assembly from 2011 to 2020. These ideologies are then examined in relation to significant shifts in Vietnam's foreign policy over the period. To complement this, a quantitative analysis is employed to explore the linguistic devices used to represent these ideologies and policy changes, focusing on the frequency and distribution of key lexical choices, grammatical features, and rhetorical strategies. The qualitative approach is applied again to answer the second question. This combination of methods allows for a comprehensive understanding of how language is used to both express and construct Vietnam's foreign policy discourse. Below is the framework for this research - the interconnection of worldviews (paradigm), design and research method adopted from Creswell & Creswell (2018):

Figure 3.1

The framework of the interconnection of worldview, design and research method adopted from Creswell, W. & Creswell, D. (2018)

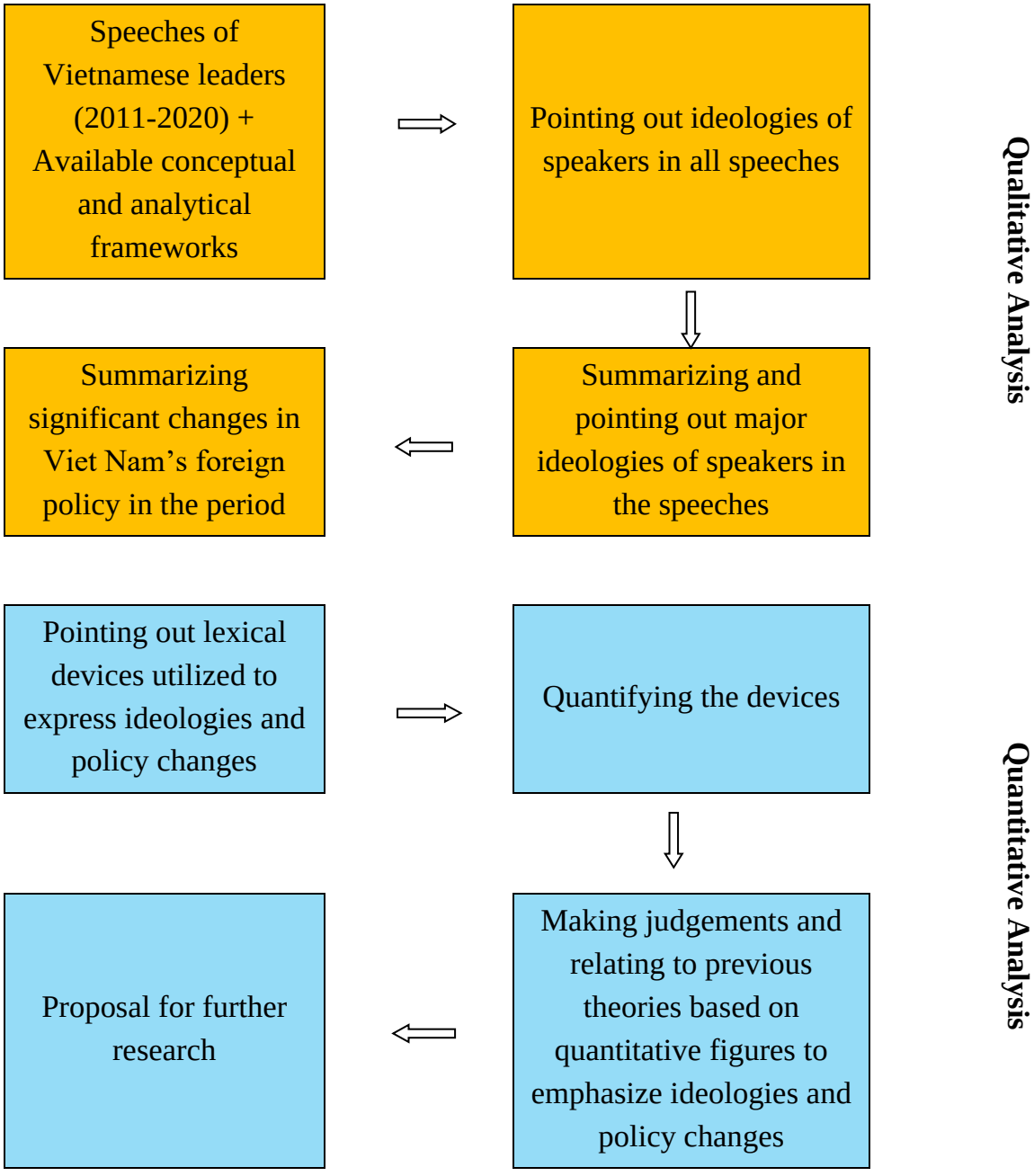


3.3. Research design

The research adopts an embedded mixed methods approach, as outlined by Creswell & Creswell (2018), which integrates both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Figure 3.2 illustrates this process clearly.

Figure 3.2

Research design for the research



In the qualitative phase, the study begins by collecting a corpus of speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders between 2011 and 2020, along with available conceptual and analytical frameworks relevant to the study. During this phase, the researcher conducts an in-depth analysis of the speeches to identify and point out the ideologies expressed by the speakers. This involves closely reading the texts to uncover how various ideologies are embedded in the discourse, as well as summarizing significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy over the period. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis also focuses on pinpointing the major ideologies that underpin these speeches and identifying the lexical devices that speakers utilize to express these ideologies and corresponding policy changes.

Following the qualitative phase, the study transitions into a quantitative phase. Here, the lexical devices identified earlier are systematically quantified. This quantitative analysis serves to measure the frequency and distribution of these linguistic markers, thereby providing numerical evidence of how often and in what manner ideologies and policy changes are conveyed through language in the speeches. This enables the researcher to validate and extend the insights gained during the qualitative analysis.

Finally, the integrated findings from both the qualitative and quantitative phases inform the proposal for further research. At this stage, the study makes judgments and draws connections between the quantified linguistic features and established theoretical frameworks, emphasizing how the ideologies expressed in the speeches relate to broader changes in Vietnam's foreign policy. This integration not only reinforces the qualitative observations but also provides a robust basis for proposing future research directions.

Consequently, Figure 3.2 thus serves as a roadmap for the study, outlining the step-by-step progression from the collection and analysis of qualitative data, through quantitative validation and ultimately to the synthesis of findings that both enhance theoretical understanding and guide further research.

3.4. Research methods

According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), specific research methods involve data collection, data analysis and interpretation that researchers propose for their studies. This section specifies the data of the study and data analysis procedure with the conceptual and analytical frameworks applied.

3.4.1. Data of the study

The data for this study consists of ten speeches delivered by key State leaders and leaders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam at the UN General Assembly from 2011 to 2020. Each year, a representative from Viet Nam delivers a speech articulating the country's stance on pressing global issues and signalling its evolving foreign policy orientation. Here is the list of the speeches from 2011 to 2020:

Year	**Session of the General Assembly**	**Speaker**
2011	66	Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh
2012	67	Deputy Foreign Minister Pham Quang Vinh
2013	68	Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung
2014	69	Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh
2015	70	Deputy Foreign Minister Nguyen Phuong Nga
2016	71	Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh
2017	72	Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh
2018	73	Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc
2019	74	Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh
2020	75	General Secretary, President Nguyen Phu Trong

The speeches are retrieved from the United Nations' official repository. The speeches delivered by the leaders of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are originally in English. Those ones presented by our key State leaders are originally in Vietnamese but the approved English translations are formally submitted to the United Nations by the Vietnamese delegation as the official versions of the speeches. The translations are prepared by experienced diplomats and language specialists at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ensuring not only linguistic accuracy but also the faithful representation of ideological, cultural and diplomatic nuances. The final versions undergo review and approval by the Ministry's leadership, making them authoritative representations of Vietnam's official diplomatic voice on the international stage. Despite differing academic opinions on the use of translated texts in linguistic analysis, it is both necessary and legitimate to treat these official translations as valid and rich subjects of inquiry. In international diplomacy, especially at forums such as the UN where English often serves as the default working language, countries that do not use English as an official language routinely provide high-quality translations of their national speeches. These are recognized and accepted globally as the primary reference materials for international audience. It is neither practical or feasible to expect foreign governments to refer back to the original language versions to interpret meaning or intent. Hence, this study acknowledges the legitimacy of analyzing official English translations for discourse and language analysis, particularly when the translations are crafted and authorized at the highest levels of state diplomacy. By relying on these official texts, the study ensures both accessibility and authenticity, enabling meaningful insights into Vietnam's diplomatic discourse as it is received and interpreted in the international arena.

Since Vietnam's accession to the United Nations in 1977, Vietnamese leaders have always attended and delivered speeches in the debates at the General Assembly to convey the foreign policy and national messages to the international community. However, the pivotal moment came in 1986 during the 6th Congress of the Communist Party when the Doi Moi (reform) policy was introduced, marking a

crucial shift from a centralized to a “socialist-oriented market economy”. From 1986 onwards, Vietnam’s foreign policy underwent a revolutionary transformation, successfully safeguarding sovereignty, national independence, territorial integrity and elevating its global standing over the past 36 years.

The period from 2011 to 2020 marked significant shifts in Vietnam’s foreign policy, reflecting a more assertive and proactive stance on the global stage. This study examines key speeches delivered by Vietnam’s leaders during this time, highlighting the country’s evolving role in international relations. By analyzing these speeches, the study aims to showcase Vietnam’s diplomatic strategies and contribute to a broader understanding of its policies, with the hope of fostering greater awareness of Vietnam’s position and objectives in global affairs.

3.4.2. Data analysis procedure

The data analysis procedure consists of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, designed to address the objectives and research questions outlined in Chapter 1 (Introduction).

From a qualitative perspective, the analysis follows Fairclough’s three dimensional CDA framework, integrated with Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) approach. This involves a detailed examination of linguistic devices, functional aspects of language and the interconnected dimensions of Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework are meticulously analyzed.

On the quantitative side, the speeches are analyzed using AntConc, a multiple-platform corpus analysis tool used for corpus and text analysis. In this research, the software (with such functions as Word, N-Gram, Cluster) helps identify the frequency of words and expressions utilized to convey the speakers’ ideologies and policy changes.

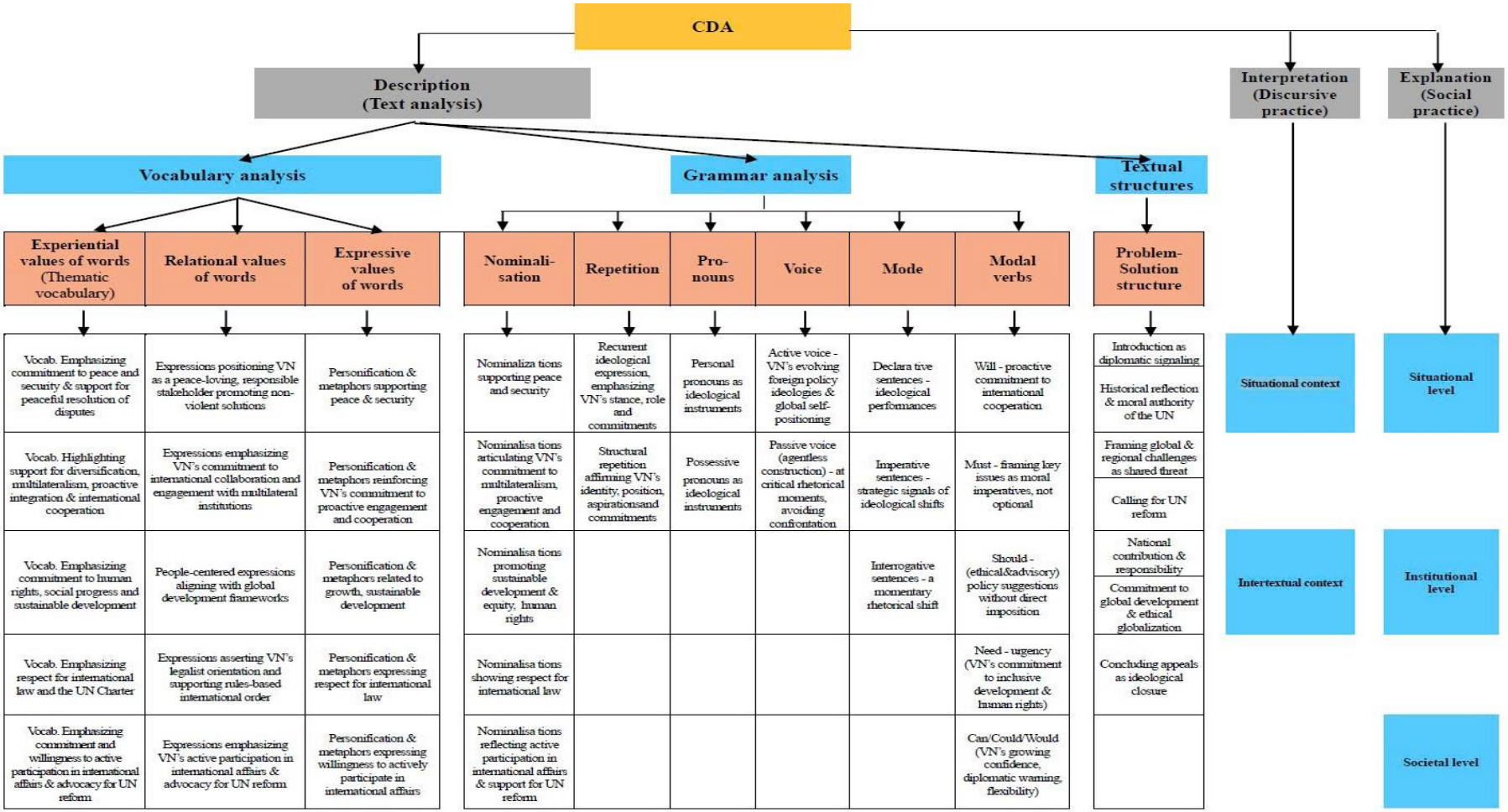
By combining these approaches, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how leaders use lexical devices to construct ideologies and signal policy changes.

3.4.3. Analytical framework

The analytical framework applied in the research is illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 3.3

CDA as an analytical framework



3.5. Trustworthiness, reliability and validity

To ensure methodological rigor and analytical credibility, this research adheres to established qualitative standards while incorporating elements of corpus-based validation. Particular attention is given to the concepts of trustworthiness, reliability and validity in both the qualitative and quantitative components of the study.

The study adopts Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework - comprising textual description, discursive interpretation, and social explanation - as its primary analytical lens. Through this model, the research interrogates not only the linguistic construction of meaning but also the ways in which language reflects and reshapes broader social structures and ideological configurations. By systematically applying this framework to a corpus of ten speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) from 2011 to 2020, the study aims to uncover how key ideological commitments - such as peace and security, multilateralism, sustainable development, respect for international law and proactive integration - are discursively realized and strategically adapted in response to both domestic and global developments.

In order to guarantee the trustworthiness of the qualitative analysis, the study follows Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria, including credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility is strengthened through the use of both qualitative CDA and AntConc - a corpus tool to verify recurring patterns and ensure interpretive robustness. For instance, frequency analyses of key ideological terms - such as "sovereignty", "cooperation", "peace" and "sustainable development" - serve to validate thematic consistency across the speeches. This triangulated approach reduces the likelihood of researcher bias by grounding critical interpretations in observable linguistic patterns and discourse structures.. Transferability is supported through thick description of the context and discourse data, allowing readers to determine the applicability of findings to other settings. Dependability is ensured

through systematic documentation of the analytical process. Confirmability is further supported by clearly linking every claim or discursive inference to specific textual evidence. Whether analyzing the repeated invocation of “international law” in relation to South China Sea disputes or the consistent framing of Vietnam as a “responsible member of the international community”, every interpretation is substantiated through direct citation and discursive context. The analysis not only accounts for lexical items but also considers grammatical features (e.g., nominalization, repetition, modality), rhetorical patterns (e.g., personification and metaphor), and broader textual structures such as problem-solution frameworks and intertextual references.

For the quantitative component, reliability is ensured through systematic procedures for data extraction and frequency analysis, using AntConc to provide replicable results. While validity in discourse analysis does not align with traditional statistical validation, the study maintains analytical validity, by adhering closely to Fairclough’s theoretical principles and by grounding claims in a coherent interpretative framework. Overall, the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods, grounded in both pragmatic and critical paradigms, strengthens the rigor and validity of the research findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

In summary, this chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research methodology employed in this study, including the mixed methods approach, research design and the data analysis process. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, the study effectively addresses the research questions related to the ideologies and policy changes reflected in the speeches of Vietnamese leaders at the UN General Assembly from 2011 to 2020. The use of AntConc for frequency analysis of selected words and expressions, alongside Fairclough’s CDA framework, allows for a detailed examination of how linguistic devices express these ideologies and foreign policy changes. It enhances the credibility and reliability of findings concerning how Vietnam's foreign policy has evolved over a decade marked by geopolitical uncertainty and increasing international engagement.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Between 2011 and 2020, the speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders at the UN General Assembly's General Debates reflect a nuanced expression of Vietnam's evolving foreign policy and diplomatic ideologies. These speeches serve as a platform for Viet Nam to assert its core commitments to multilateralism, international cooperation and global peace. Throughout this period, the leaders articulated ideologies that prioritize peaceful conflict resolution, sustainable development, respect for sovereignty and adherence to international law.

This section will analyze the key ideologies presented in these speeches, focusing on how they align with Vietnam's national interests and global responsibilities. It will also highlight the significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy during this transformative decade, illustrating the country's proactive engagement in international affairs and its adaptive strategies in response to global challenges.

The ideologies of the leaders in the speeches are intertwined and interwoven with the key thematic schemes of the speeches; therefore, during the analysis process, the ideologies and major themes of the speeches are also analyzed in an interconnected and integrated manner.

4.1. Ideologies and significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy conveyed in the speeches of Vietnamese leaders at the UNGA from 2011-2020 and how they are linguistically represented (Textual analysis)

This analysis examines the core ideologies and significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy as conveyed in the speeches of Vietnamese leaders at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) from 2011 to 2020. These speeches reflect how Vietnam's foreign policy was guided by five core ideologies that align with major global trends promoting peace, cooperation and development. The *key ideologies* include: (1) Commitment to peace, security and peaceful resolution of disputes; (2)

Support for diversification, multilateralism, proactive integration and international cooperation; (3) Commitment and dedication to human rights, social progress and sustainable development; (4) Respect for international law and the UN Charter; and (5) Commitment and willingness to participate actively in international affairs and Advocacy for United Nations reform.

In parallel with these guiding principles, Vietnam's *foreign policy* witnessed notable *transformations* during the 2011-2020 period. The country shifted from reactive to proactive multilateralism, playing an increasingly assertive role in shaping global discussions within forums such as the UN, ASEAN and APEC. Viet Nam also moved from a non-alignment policy to diversification, expanding its partnerships beyond traditional allies. Economic diplomacy evolved into comprehensive diplomacy that integrates defense, environmental and legal dimensions. Moreover, Viet Nam transitioned from a low-profile approach to a strategy of global visibility and leadership, hosting major summits and assuming prominent international roles. These changes were shaped by both *domestic and international factors* and are grounded in *major policy documents* such as the 11th and 12th CPV National Congress Resolutions (2011, 2016), Resolution No. 22-NQ/TW on international integration (2013) and UNGA speeches over the decade (2011-2020) emphasizing sovereignty, multilateralism and international cooperation. The following sections analyze how these ideologies and shifts are expressed and reinforced through language in Vietnamese leaders' UNGA speeches in this period.

This analysis draws on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework - comprising Description, Interpretation and Explanation - integrated with Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). It focuses on critically examining the linguistic devices used in the speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders at the UNGA from 2011 to 2020, in order to reveal how ideologies and changes in foreign policy are constructed and conveyed through language. The analysis of vocabulary will

explore experiential, relational and expressive values of words to support the identification and interpretation of each ideological stance. Grammatical and textual structures analysis will be presented in combination, as grammatical features lend themselves to a more quantitative approach (e.g., through frequency and percentage), while the speeches share common patterns in textual organization. Throughout the analysis, particular attention will be given to how these linguistic features reflect and reinforce the guiding ideologies and significant shifts in Vietnam's foreign policy over the decade.

4.1.1. Vocabulary analysis

The vocabulary analysis will examine the experiential, relational and expressive values of words (represented by *thematic vocabulary, relational expressions, personification* and *metaphors*) to support the identification and interpretation of each core ideology. Only notable examples are included to substantiate the analysis. Comprehensive details on thematic vocabulary, relational expressions, personification and metaphors found in all speeches are provided in the *Appendixes 2-5*.

1. Commitment to peace, security and peaceful resolution of disputes

From 2011 to 2020, Vietnamese leaders' UNGA speeches construct a sustained ideological narrative in which *peace and security* function as the discursive bedrock of Vietnam's foreign policy identity. Yet this narrative is not static. Rather, it evolves in strategic alignment with shifting regional and global dynamics, signaling a recalibration of Vietnam's diplomatic posture *from cautious advocacy to assertive norm entrepreneurship*. At its core, this ideological commitment to peace is undergirded by the foundational logic of *bamboo diplomacy* - flexible, principled and strategically balanced - through which Vietnam both defends its sovereignty and projects itself as a peace-seeking, rules-oriented actor in an increasingly volatile world.

The ***experiential values*** of lexical choices in the ten speeches (repeatedly referring to *"peaceful settlement of disputes", "security and stability" and "dialogue and international law")*, are not mere declarative affirmations. They serve as ideological signals of a foreign policy that prioritizes de-escalation, legal resolution and multilateral engagement over confrontation or bloc alignment. In the 2011 address, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh's repeated references to "peaceful processes" and "the East Sea" mark an early attempt to both *assert sovereignty and universalize Vietnam's regional concerns.* By discursively embedding the South China Sea tensions into the framework of international peace and security, Vietnam reframes a localized dispute as a test of global legal norms, thus seeking broader support through principled appeals rather than direct accusations.

The 2012 speech builds upon this by shifting from national to global framing: phrases such as "world peace and security" and "instability and conflicts" demonstrate Vietnam's strategy of linking regional tensions to systemic international risks, a move that reinforces its credibility as a rational, peace-oriented actor. Moreover, the invocation of "dialogue and international law" reflects a commitment not only to non-violence but to legal multilateralism, a rhetorical positioning that strengthens Vietnam's moral authority in diplomatic forums while implicitly criticizing great-power assertiveness.

By 2013, under Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, Vietnam's discourse adopts greater emotional intensity and moral persuasion, reflecting a transition in its rhetorical strategy. The call for a "safe, peaceful, prosperous and happy life" illustrates a shift from state-centric to human-centric discourse, emphasizing peace not as geopolitical equilibrium but as the basis for individual dignity and development. This speech also confronts global conflicts head-on, condemning the "use of chemical weapons" and "violence in the Middle East and North Africa", a clear rhetorical alignment with international humanitarian norms. Crucially, the

reference to “freedom of navigation” in both the East and South China Seas reflects a deliberate effort to internationalize maritime disputes and mobilize global legal consciousness against regional coercion.

From 2016 onward, Vietnam’s discourse reflects a discursive broadening in line with its growing international role. In the 2016 speech, the mention of “Asia-Pacific”, “Korean Peninsula”, and “South China Sea” situates Vietnam’s peace agenda within a broader geopolitical landscape. The repeated use of “peaceful resolution”, “adherence to international law” and “maritime security” demonstrates an increasingly sophisticated coupling of regional concerns with universal legal principles. These choices underscore Vietnam’s strategic ambition to project itself as a stabilizing force in a fractured regional order, consistent with the ideology of multilateral cooperation.

By 2017, Vietnam’s peace discourse aligns more explicitly with global security frameworks, signaling an ideological convergence with UN priorities. Phrases such as “sustaining peace”, “conflict prevention” and “nuclear disarmament” are not only thematic shifts but also symbolic gestures of Vietnam’s ideational alignment with global disarmament and preventive diplomacy frameworks. The endorsement of the Security Council’s role in “regional stability” further affirms Vietnam’s belief in legitimate institutional authority, a core tenet of its rules-based foreign policy model.

The 2018 address by Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc reflects a matured humanitarian dimension within Vietnam’s peace rhetoric. Emphasizing “peaceful societies”, “global peace”, and “disarmament efforts”, the speech places Vietnam squarely within the normative core of UN-driven development and security discourses. Notably, the repetition of “conflict prevention” and “promotion of human rights” reflects Vietnam’s attempt to navigate global expectations while maintaining its strategic autonomy, a careful balancing act at the heart of *bamboo diplomacy*. In affirming its role as a small but principled state, Vietnam leverages its own war-

scarred history and development achievements to reinforce its legitimacy as a credible peace advocate on the global stage.

In addition to thematic vocabulary, the ***relational values of words*** in the speeches reveal how Vietnam discursively constructs its international identity, as a cooperative, peace-seeking state with moral legitimacy and diplomatic maturity. These relational values are especially significant in shaping how Vietnam positions itself in relation to other actors, institutions and global norms. The language used does not merely describe peace; it constructs Vietnam as aligned with peace, dedicated to cooperation, and opposed to aggression in relational contrast to those who violate international order.

Across multiple speeches, relational expressions elevate Vietnam's identity as a responsible actor. For example, in the 2013 address, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's call to "give peace every possible chance" is more than expressive. It appeals to a shared responsibility among states while implicitly distancing Vietnam from actors that resort to coercion or force. The phrase positions Vietnam as morally upright and civically engaged in the collective maintenance of peace.

This self-characterization is further emphasized in the 2016 speech, where Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh states: "Viet Nam treasures peace and will spare no effort to maintain or achieve peace". The use of "treasures" assigns emotional and moral value to peace, implying that peace is not only desirable but sacred in Vietnamese foreign policy. The expression "spare no effort" underscores Vietnam's commitment to active, non-passive participation in peacebuilding. These formulations construct Vietnam relationally as both principled and proactive, especially meaningful for a country with historical experiences of war and colonial struggle.

The relational value of restraint is also discursively foregrounded. Phrases such as "exercise self-restraint and settle disputes by peaceful means" (reiterated in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019) project Vietnam as a state that controls its behavior in the

interest of regional stability. This is particularly significant in the context of growing tensions in the South China Sea (the East Sea). Rather than naming aggressors, Vietnam employs relational language that implicitly contrasts its lawful and restrained posture with that of more assertive powers. This approach aligns with the core tenets of *bamboo diplomacy*: maintaining strategic firmness while avoiding provocation.

Furthermore, Vietnam's relational positioning often references its alignment with global institutions and norms. In 2018, PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc referred to the UN as "a symbol of global solidarity" and affirmed that "Viet Nam supports the UN's central role in maintaining peace and stability". This not only affirms commitment to multilateral peace architecture but discursively aligns Vietnam with institutional legitimacy, while avoiding isolationism or bilateral dependence. The relational construction here is twofold: Vietnam is both a follower of international norms and a contributor to their realization.

Crucially, these relational choices reflect Vietnam's strategic balancing act, projecting an image of moral consistency and institutional loyalty without antagonizing larger powers. This reflects the discursive realization of Vietnam's *bamboo diplomacy* in the peace-security domain: *firm in principle* (upholding sovereignty and legal resolution) and *flexible in positioning* (avoiding confrontation). The careful use of relational language allows Vietnam to assert its values without directly confronting adversaries, thus reinforcing its identity as a norm-advocate rather than a challenger.

In the political speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders at the UN General Assembly (2011–2020), expressive linguistic devices, particularly ***personification and metaphor***, serve not merely to beautify discourse but to structure meaning, convey values, and frame Vietnam's foreign policy orientations. These devices are central to the strategic construction of national identity, allowing speakers to humanize abstract institutions, dramatize global risks and emotionally anchor their

ideological commitments. Through them, Viet Nam is not only seen as an advocate of peace and cooperation but also as a principled and pragmatic actor navigating a shifting geopolitical environment.

This linguistic strategy aligns with the philosophy of *bamboo diplomacy*, a term coined to characterize Vietnam's foreign policy as flexible yet deeply rooted in national principles. Personification and metaphor make this diplomacy legible and resonant: they render peace as something to nurture, international law as a guiding compass and multilateralism as a living, breathing institution. Together, these devices frame Vietnam's identity as a responsible, resilient actor committed to the five core ideologies.

Personification is a powerful rhetorical strategy through which Vietnam discursively elevates peace from a policy goal to a moral imperative, while casting violence and war as animate, predatory threats. In doing so, Vietnamese leaders construct a discursive contrast between the forces they champion - cooperation, diplomacy, non-violence - and those they resist - domination, aggression, militarism. These humanizing metaphors position Vietnam not just as a passive supporter of peace, but as an ethical agent acting in defense of shared humanity.

In his 2013 speech, PM Nguyen Tan Dung warns that *"the deadly hand of war, conflict, terrorism and violence lies in wait to take the lives of hundreds, thousands or even millions of innocent people."* Here, war is no longer an abstract phenomenon. It becomes a lurking, sentient predator. This metaphor dramatizes the threat and invites moral judgment, positioning Vietnam on the side of those who resist violence not only strategically but ethically. This theme continues in the 2018 speech of PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc, who insists that *"even the smallest opportunity for peace must be cherished and nurtured"*. By attributing peace with the vulnerability and value of a living being, the speaker constructs peace as something fragile, precious and worth protecting.

Other speeches reinforce this rhetorical pattern. In 2011, DPM Pham Binh Minh speaks of the need to *"cultivate a culture of peace and dialogue,"* personifying peace as something that can grow under care, like a plant dependent on diplomatic nourishment. Similarly, in 2016, he notes that *"a policy of humanity, peace and friendship will enable us to eliminate hatred, narrow gaps, manage differences and open up opportunities."* Here, policy itself is personified as a benevolent actor capable of initiating harmony, an alignment with Vietnam's ideology of preventive engagement and constructive dialogue.

Through such language, Vietnam's foreign policy discourse constructs a *moralized narrative space* in which peace is not just a goal, but a vulnerable companion, an ideal to be protected and sustained through ethical action. In this moral framing, Vietnam presents itself as a peace-seeking nation with lived experience of war, historical authority on conflict resolution, and a principled voice in multilateral forums.

Crucially, this personified discourse reflects Vietnam's evolving *bamboo diplomacy*. As a diplomatic style, bamboo diplomacy emphasizes strategic flexibility, resilience, and balance between competing global forces. In the realm of peace and security, this means avoiding hard alignments or military escalation while advocating for rule-based order and regional stability. The consistent personification of peace as fragile but worth protecting reinforces this identity. Vietnam's rejection of power politics is not just stated, it is dramatized through language that gives emotional and moral urgency to restraint, compromise and legal resolution.

Metaphors are among the most ideologically charged tools in Vietnam's peace and security discourse at the United Nations General Assembly, allowing leaders to frame conflict and peace not simply as political realities, but as moral and emotional experiences. Through metaphors drawn from bodily experience, nature, warcraft, and architecture, Vietnam constructs a discursive battlefield where peace is framed as a living force to be protected, nurtured and advanced, while war is cast as an

encroaching shadow or predatory hand. These metaphoric structures do not merely embellish speeches; they shape how audiences conceptualize global security and Vietnam's role within it, reinforcing its identity as a moral actor and stabilizing force in a turbulent region.

In the 2011 speech, peace is metaphorically described as *"the key to success"*, evoking an image of peace as an essential tool, something that must be acquired and actively used to unlock progress. This positioning suggests that peace is not an abstract ideal, but an operative precondition for development and cooperation. Similarly, the statement that *"we must cultivate a culture of peace and dialogue"* draws on agricultural metaphor, portraying peace as a living crop that must be nurtured and tended. The implication is clear: peace is neither automatic nor passive, it is a product of ethical labor and sustained diplomatic effort.

The 2013 speech by PM Nguyen Tan Dung deploys especially vivid and emotive metaphors to dramatize the moral stakes of conflict. He warns of *"the deadly hand of war, conflict, terrorism and violence"* lying in wait to *"take the lives"* of innocents. Here, war is metaphorically rendered as a malevolent being with agency and physical force. This metaphorical personification fuses the imagery of violence with that of bodily harm, turning war into an existential threat that must be confronted morally as well as strategically. In the same speech, he urges listeners to *"not offer war a hand"*, a metaphor that casts diplomatic neutrality or silence as a dangerous gesture of complicity. This construction reflects a proactive foreign policy ethos, suggesting that Vietnam's peace stance is not passive nonalignment, but deliberate ethical engagement.

In the same address, the speaker references a Vietnamese proverb: *"benevolence triumphs over brutality, and virtue drives out tyranny."* These metaphors are deeply moralistic, casting abstract virtues as military forces capable of *"triumphing"* and *"driving out"* their opposites. The militarization of morality within these metaphors does ideological work, it constructs peace as not just the absence of war, but a

spiritual force that actively combats evil. This resonates powerfully with Vietnam's historical memory as a nation that resisted foreign invasion and internal strife, and now reclaims its moral authority through global peace advocacy.

Vietnam's rhetorical framing of international institutions further reinforces this ideology. In 2015, the United Nations is described as a *"beacon of hope"*, suggesting it is a lighthouse offering guidance through global instability. This metaphor constructs multilateralism as an ethical and navigational force, something that illuminates the path forward during periods of darkness or confusion. The metaphor also positions Vietnam as a navigator, choosing to follow the light rather than drift toward power politics or unilateralism. The metaphor of the UN as *"our guide in building a world of peace"* (also in 2015) continues this architectural framing: peace is something constructed with intention, and the global community requires direction and coordination to build it.

In 2017, DPM Pham Binh Minh warns that *"The danger of nuclear weapons will loom over humankind as long as they continue to exist."* The phrase *"loom over"* conjures a threatening shadow, a metaphor that transforms nuclear weapons into an atmospheric force that alters the emotional landscape of international relations. This metaphor dramatizes the enduring vulnerability of the global community and underscores Vietnam's support for disarmament and nonproliferation treaties. The danger is not just physical; it is existential and ubiquitous.

Finally, metaphors that liken peace to a fragile opportunity recur in later speeches, especially in PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc's 2018 address: *"Even the smallest opportunity for peace must be cherished and nurtured."* Here, peace is metaphorically portrayed as a delicate, living thing requiring care, protection and moral attention. This again echoes the agricultural metaphor of cultivation, reinforcing the idea that peace is not a status, but a process, dependent on shared responsibility and ethical diplomacy.

Together, these metaphors construct a powerful ideological framework: peace is not simply the absence of war, but a *moral horizon*, a *shared construction*, and a *living*

force that must be defended and cultivated. In contrast, war is a predatory shadow that threatens not just nations, but humanity. By consistently framing global security in these moralized and embodied terms, Vietnam affirms its diplomatic identity as a peace-builder grounded in legalism, moral authority and collective responsibility, hallmarks of its *bamboo diplomacy*. This flexible, principled foreign policy is not only stated but enacted linguistically, through a discourse that resists polarization and advocates for strategic calm rooted in ethical clarity.

2. Support for diversification, multilateralism, proactive integration and international cooperation

Between 2011 and 2020, the UNGA speeches of Vietnamese leaders demonstrate a *systematic and ideologically grounded evolution in Vietnam's foreign policy* discourse, one that moved decisively from the language of cautious engagement to an assertive affirmation of *multilateralism, diversification, and proactive integration*. These rhetorical shifts align closely with Vietnam's broader diplomatic repositioning, especially under the symbolic framework of *bamboo diplomacy*, a term that encapsulates Vietnam's ability to remain rooted in its national interests while bending flexibly in response to shifting global dynamics. At the heart of this discursive transformation is a growing commitment to shaping the international order through institutional engagement, regional leadership and normative alignment, rather than merely navigating it.

The ***thematic vocabulary*** employed across the decade is not incidental, but rather *ideologically driven*. As early as 2011, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh invoked terms such as "international cooperation", "multilateral diplomacy" and "global governance", signaling Vietnam's alignment with the international multilateralist consensus, while also implicitly distancing itself from historical narratives of isolation and non-alignment. These early speeches lay the discursive foundation for Vietnam's rebranding as a small but principled state committed to rules-based diplomacy.

By 2013, this orientation deepened. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's reference to "global collaboration" and his appeal for "major powers to lead by example" in strengthening the United Nations and the Security Council reflect a more confident voice which not only seeks inclusion but dares to challenge asymmetrical power dynamics. These calls subtly assert Vietnam's support for a more democratic and accountable international system, a position further strengthened in 2014 with references to "multilateral institutions and forums", "joint efforts" and the UN's "central role in promoting international law". These terms reflect Vietnam's pursuit of legitimacy, strategic balancing and institutionalized cooperation, hallmarks of its ideological shift from reactive diplomacy to norm-driven agency.

The mid-decade speeches show a more deliberate discursive consolidation of these themes. In 2016 and 2017, Vietnam's language becomes more operational and value-oriented: calling for "effective international institutions", endorsing "multilateralism" and promoting "diplomacy" not only as a means of engagement, but as a principled strategic choice amid a fragmented global order. This linguistic assertiveness aligns with key domestic developments, such as the 2016 reassertion of the foreign policy orientation of "proactive international integration" and "independence, self-reliance, diversification and multilateralization of foreign relations" enshrined in Party resolutions. These expressions are emblematic of *bamboo diplomacy's dual logic:* while grounded in national sovereignty and policy independence, Vietnam increasingly embraces strategic fluidity and institutional embeddedness in global diplomacy.

In 2018 and 2019, the rhetorical register shifts toward global leadership and solidarity. Phrases like "global solidarity", "international leadership" and "collective security" reveal a strategic ambition to contribute to, not merely comply with, global public goods. These formulations reflect an emerging discursive identity of Vietnam as a responsible stakeholder and a norm entrepreneur. The 2020 speech, delivered by General Secretary and President Nguyen Phu Trong, cements this vision with calls

for “global cooperation”, “inclusivity” and “collective action” toward implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The speech does not only reaffirm *Vietnam’s normative alignment with multilateral goals*; it marks a turning point in *asserting Vietnam’s voice within global governance debates*, consistent with the *metaphorical strength and resilience of the bamboo*.

At the regional level, Vietnam’s diplomatic discourse reflects a parallel ideological investment in ASEAN-centered frameworks. The 2011 and 2012 speeches emphasized “regional stability”, “confidence-building mechanisms” and the role of ASEAN-led platforms like the “ASEAN Regional Forum” and the “East Asia Summit.” These references are more than procedural acknowledgments. They signal Vietnam’s commitment to regional order-building from within, seeking to legitimize ASEAN centrality as a buffer against great-power rivalry. The 2014 emphasis on the “ASEAN Community in 2015” and “regional architecture with ASEAN at the centre” demonstrates an *emerging leadership role* for Vietnam within Southeast Asia, again consistent with *bamboo diplomacy’s balancing ethos.*

This commitment was sustained and adapted through 2015–2020. Recurring themes such as the “South China Sea issue”, “economic integration” and “peace and stability in Southeast Asia” signal a move beyond regionalism as a diplomatic necessity to regionalism as strategic agency. Vietnam’s discourse not only stresses cooperation but subtly critiques hegemonic behavior by invoking a shared normative order grounded in regional institutional frameworks and legal norms.

Altogether, the linguistic choices across the decade, both in lexical content and rhetorical construction, reflect an ideologically coherent narrative: Viet Nam is not a peripheral player seeking accommodation, but a diplomatically agile and norm-conscious state seeking to *shape the rules of engagement* in a world increasingly defined by complexity and volatility. Within this evolving identity, *bamboo diplomacy* emerges as a symbolic and strategic grammar which allows Vietnam to

grow, adapt and reposition itself in multilateral spaces without sacrificing sovereignty or principle.

In addition to thematic vocabulary, the ***relational values of words*** in Vietnam's UNGA speeches between 2011 and 2020 serve a crucial function in constructing its self-image as a reliable, proactive and cooperative actor in global affairs. These relational meanings do not merely describe Vietnam's actions. They position Vietnam discursively in relation to other international actors and institutions, especially the United Nations, ASEAN and the broader international community. Through these expressions, Vietnam constructs itself as both *aligned with and contributive to the normative frameworks of global governance*.

Repeated relational phrases such as "Together we must act" (2011), "collective efforts" (2013, 2016), and "reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism" (2020) are not only formulaic appeals for cooperation. They serve to establish Vietnam's position as part of a *collective*, rather than a peripheral or passive actor. These phrases operate relationally by placing Vietnam within the community of states striving toward shared global goals, particularly peace, development and international law. This rhetorical alignment helps *legitimize Vietnam's foreign policy objectives and affirms its credibility* in the eyes of the international community.

Vietnam's relational self-positioning becomes increasingly assertive over time. In 2016, Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh described Vietnam as "a reliable partner and an active, responsible member of the international community". This phrase, repeated in 2018 and 2020, elevates Vietnam's profile from participant to stakeholder, using relational markers like "reliable", "active" and "responsible" to construct an *identity of normative trustworthiness and political maturity*. These expressions are critical to Vietnam's foreign policy rebranding during this period, signaling its *shift from a reactive to a proactive international presence*, consistent with the core philosophy of *bamboo diplomacy*, which calls for resilience through flexibility and principled engagement.

Relational language also reflects Vietnam's emphasis on solidarity and shared destiny. For example, in 2014, Vietnam referred to "collaboration and joint efforts" and emphasized building "a regional architecture with ASEAN at the centre". These expressions frame Vietnam not just as a regional participant, but as an architect of cooperation, strategically locating its identity at the intersection of regional leadership and global integration. This dual positioning, both regional and global, is reiterated in 2019, when Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc spoke of the need to "expand our cooperation with nations of the world", a relational move that signals *outward engagement beyond traditional allies.*

Furthermore, expressions like "Vietnam supports the United Nations' central role" (2015, 2016, 2018) and "we reaffirm our shared commitment to international law and multilateralism" (2020) work to construct relational alignment with global norms, institutions and legal frameworks. Such formulations reinforce Vietnam's image as a *rule-abiding and consensus-building actor*, which helps to legitimize its foreign policy and support its pursuit of strategic autonomy. In this sense, relational values are not neutral descriptors but part of a broader discursive strategy of *alignment without dependence*, a central tenet of *bamboo diplomacy*, especially in the context of balancing relations between major powers.

Finally, relational terms also communicate Vietnam's desire to influence, not merely comply. The 2013 speech urged "major powers to lead by example" and emphasized the need for shared responsibility, a subtle discursive move that both affirms multilateral norms and challenges hegemonic dominance. By using relational expressions that imply both partnership and expectation, Vietnam positions itself as *a moral interlocutor* in international relations that upholds global principles but also calls for reform and balance in power dynamics.

In sum, the relational values embedded in Vietnam's diplomatic language construct a foreign policy identity that is cooperative, strategic and norm-conforming but also self-assertive. Through careful lexical choices, Vietnam crafts a role for itself that

transcends size or geopolitical weight, reinforcing its image as a *flexible yet principled actor, deeply integrated, regionally central, and globally credible*. These relational strategies are not just rhetorical; they form part of Vietnam's broader diplomatic practice of *navigating complexity through resilience* - symbolized by the *bamboo.*

Through the ***personification*** of institutions and collective norms, Vietnam's UNGA speeches consistently elevate multilateralism from a procedural necessity to a dynamic, living system, one that nurtures peace, enables cooperation and offers moral direction. This linguistic strategy reflects not only Vietnam's endorsement of global cooperation but also its nuanced approach to *bamboo diplomacy,* wherein strength is derived not from confrontation but from the ability to *flexibly engage across ideological and geopolitical divides while maintaining rooted national interests*.

Speakers frequently animate international institutions, most notably the United Nations, transforming it from an abstract organization into a conscious, purposeful actor. In the 2015 speech, DM Nguyen Phuong Nga describes the UN as *"born from the ashes of the Second World War"* and having *"grown, during the past seven decades, to embrace 193 States."* The metaphor of the UN's birth and growth positions it as a nurturing and inclusive force, evolving in parallel with humanity's collective will for peace and cooperation. Similarly, in the 2020 address, President Nguyen Phu Trong calls on the UN to *"serve as the incubator for multilateral cooperation initiatives"*, suggesting that the organization not only hosts but actively nurtures global partnerships. These personifications are ideologically potent: they render multilateralism as morally imbued and emotionally resonant, while placing Vietnam within a framework of shared human progress.

This humanization of multilateralism is extended to the idea of global solidarity itself. In 2018, PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc describes the UN as *"the embodiment of humankind and progress and the place where our aspirations for peace, prosperity and equality are realized"*. By depicting the UN not merely as a venue but as an embodiment,

Vietnam portrays the multilateral order as a living reflection of global consensus. It is through this construction that Vietnam inserts itself as both *a beneficiary and contributor*, particularly important for a mid-sized, post-colonial state seeking *legitimacy and influence through soft power and institutional cooperation rather than through strategic coercion.*

Linguistically, this strategy enables Vietnam to maintain what *bamboo diplomacy* demands: *discursive alignment with universal values* without locking into rigid alliances. By personifying global institutions as benevolent actors, Vietnam not only legitimizes its multilateral commitments but also claims a moral partnership with institutions that symbolize peace and collective governance. Importantly, these institutions are portrayed not as fixed structures but as evolving, responsive bodies, a subtle parallel to Vietnam's own *transformation from aid recipient to active participant in peacekeeping, climate policy and sustainable development.*

Furthermore, by attributing action and emotion to multilateral actors, Vietnam constructs a *mutual moral obligation* between itself and the international community. In 2011, DPM Pham Binh Minh asserts that the UN *"should be at the forefront of global governance and multilateral cooperation,"* positioning the organization as a leader with duties and agency. This relational framing allows Vietnam to subtly critique global inaction or bias while affirming its support for *reform and inclusivity in multilateral frameworks*, a key part of its *evolving foreign policy in a multipolar world.*

In sum, the personification of multilateralism in Vietnam's UNGA speeches serves both expressive and strategic purposes. It frames global institutions as moral and dynamic agents, aligns *Vietnam's foreign policy* with normative internationalism, and reinforces a discursive image of Vietnam as *a committed, constructive, and increasingly confident player on the world stage.* This ideological framing mirrors the resilience and agility of *bamboo diplomacy*: *outwardly modest, inwardly strategic, growing with the forest, but always rooted in its own soil.*

Metaphors in the domain of multilateralism and global integration are used not merely to describe Vietnam's foreign policy orientation but to *structure* and *legitimize* it. Through consistent use of metaphorical imagery, Vietnamese leaders portray global institutions, partnerships and shared goals as living ecosystems, architectural frameworks and guiding forces. These metaphors reflect Vietnam's strategic self-positioning as a cooperative, flexible and principled actor, one that both adapts to and shapes the international environment in line with the ethos of *bamboo diplomacy*: *resilient, rooted and responsive.*

A recurring metaphor throughout the speeches is that of vision and guidance. In the 2016 and 2017 addresses, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related international frameworks are described as *"presenting a vision for greater partnership for people, the planet, peace and prosperity"*. The term *"vision"* here evokes a sense of future-oriented leadership, suggesting that these agendas offer not only direction but purpose. This metaphor transforms multilateral frameworks from static documents into perceptive entities - capable of seeing, guiding and aligning disparate actors toward common goals. By embracing these visions, Vietnam implicitly aligns itself with *ethical leadership and progressive change*, reinforcing its *soft power approach within a contested international order.*

Institutional mechanisms are frequently metaphorized as paths, tools and platforms, particularly in ASEAN contexts. In the 2011 speech, Vietnam affirms that *"ASEAN-led mechanisms and instruments"* will be used to *"build peace and development in Southeast Asia."* These metaphors conceptualize diplomatic strategy as the deliberate use of crafted tools and structured platforms, implying both agency and engineering. Importantly, this framing positions Vietnam as an *architect of cooperation*, someone who builds rather than imposes, consistent with its narrative of *peaceful development and regional stability.*

The metaphor of cultivation is also central to Vietnam's multilateral discourse. In 2012, the delegation calls for efforts to *"promote a culture of peace and dialogue."*

The term *"culture"* is itself metaphorical, evoking an organic process of growth, repetition and embedded values. Promoting such a culture suggests that peace is not a one-off achievement but a shared social habitus, something that must be nurtured across time and institutions. Viet Nam, by speaking this way, casts itself as *a gardener of diplomacy: careful, consistent and future-focused.*

Similarly, the United Nations is often framed as a beacon or guide, signaling clarity and direction amid geopolitical turbulence. In 2015, the UN is described as *"a beacon of hope,"* a metaphor that illuminates its symbolic function. This image projects the UN not as a bureaucratic body, but as a lighthouse, offering moral and political orientation to states navigating global crises. Vietnam's willingness to follow that light and to help strengthen it, reinforces its normative alignment with multilateralism as a peace-enhancing force.

But these metaphors are not limited to affirming existing structures. They also support calls for reform and adaptation. In 2019, the global system is said to be *"on the verge of a new Cold War"* and the multilateral order *"at a threshold"*. These metaphors evoke transitional states (doorways, turning points, precipices), signaling both risk and opportunity. Vietnam uses such imagery to legitimize its role in reshaping international governance while avoiding confrontation. Rather than toppling existing institutions, Vietnam speaks the language of renovation and rebalancing, calling for multilateralism to be *revitalized*, *reinvigorated* and *repaired*.

Metaphors of fragility and resilience are also used to articulate the conditional stability of global cooperation. In 2019, DPM Phạm Bình Minh warns that *"the global arms control and non-proliferation regime is becoming more fragile"*. Describing regimes as *fragile* personifies them with vulnerability, making them sympathetic and worth protecting. This rhetorical move allows Vietnam to position itself as *a caretaker of the international system*, calling for support not out of self-interest alone, but on behalf of shared global security.

Finally, in the 2020 speech, the UN is metaphorically described as *"an incubator"* for peace initiatives. The image of an incubator - warm, protective, generative - suggests that multilateralism is both organic and nurtured, not mechanical. It must be sustained through care, cooperation, and continued commitment. This metaphor closely aligns with Vietnam's discursive identity as *a state that fosters consensus and solidarity*, reflecting the *bamboo diplomacy principle* of building alliances without dependency, and adapting without compromise of core principles.

In sum, Vietnam's metaphorical constructions of multilateralism are *ideologically rich and diplomatically strategic*. They portray global institutions as moral and organic systems, in need of care, vision and coordination. These metaphors not only reinforce Vietnam's commitment to a peaceful, cooperative global order, but also support its subtle assertion of agency, casting itself as *a principled, reform-minded actor capable of guiding, cultivating and sustaining global cooperation from within*. Through this discourse, Vietnam embodies its role not just as a rule follower, but increasingly, as a norm entrepreneur, redefining what responsible global engagement looks like for small and medium powers in the 21st century.

3. Commitment and dedication to human rights, social progress and sustainable development

Between 2011 and 2020, Vietnam's UNGA speeches reveal not a static adherence to global development rhetoric but a *strategic and ideologically driven transformation*, from modest alignment with international frameworks to an assertive discursive construction of Vietnam as a responsible, rights-committed, and sustainability-oriented global actor. This transformation reflects not only compliance with multilateral expectations but also an internalized recalibration of Vietnam's foreign policy identity, one increasingly rooted in ethical governance, inclusive development, and a people-centred approach. Such shifts are emblematic of the broader diplomatic philosophy articulated through *bamboo diplomacy*, an approach that values adaptability, resilience and moral responsibility while pursuing national development and international legitimacy.

In the early years of the decade, Vietnam's language was marked by a cautious but visible commitment to global development norms, often framed through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the 2011 speech, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh invoked key ***thematic expressions*** such as "sustainable development", "equitable and sustainable development" and "socio-economic development strategy", positioning Vietnam as a developing country with global sensibilities, intent on balancing domestic needs with international obligations. These phrases not only projected Vietnam as a contributor to global development dialogues but also foregrounded its aspiration to be seen as ethically and economically progressive, especially in contrast to its post-war history.

However, by 2012 and 2013, the discourse began to deepen both conceptually and linguistically. Vietnam began integrating more intersectional and environmentalist frames, with thematic references to "social justice", "inclusive, sustainable and green development", "pollution", "deforestation" and "resource exploitation". These terms do more than reference problems; they function ideologically as signals of Vietnam's *growing commitment to eco-consciousness and systemic equity* - issues previously peripheral to its diplomatic lexicon. In 2013, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung spoke of "the post-2015 development agenda" and called for a world "free from war and hunger" devoted to "sustainable development and prosperity for humankind, and for our evergreen planet" - a metaphorical and ideological framing that aligns Vietnam's future with planetary stewardship and global justice.

From 2014 onward, the vocabulary became increasingly technical and institutionally embedded. Terms like "balanced, inclusive and sustained growth", "economic restructuring", and "green economy" point to a discursive reconfiguration of development, not merely as a national task but as a shared, rules-based agenda. These shifts reflect an important turn in Vietnamese foreign policy: moving from rhetorical support to *active engagement in global development governance*, where Vietnam positions itself as *both a beneficiary and a contributor to transnational solutions*.

This transition is wholly consistent with *bamboo diplomacy's dual imperative - flexibility in responding to global shifts, and firmness in asserting national values and priorities.*

By the late 2010s, particularly in the 2019 and 2020 speeches, this lexicon had evolved into a normative language of global leadership, incorporating references to "climate action", "2030 Agenda", "quality education", "maternal and child health", and "inclusive, people-centred development". These serve as ideological anchors, demonstrating Vietnam's internalization of the SDGs as central to its foreign policy architecture. In his 2020 speech, General Secretary and President Nguyen Phu Trong declared that "no one, and no country, will be left behind" echoing the UN's own *equity agenda* while simultaneously projecting Vietnam as *a moral voice for global inclusion.* This statement aligns with the core tenets of bamboo diplomacy, which emphasize national solidarity as the foundation for engaging and mobilizing international solidarity.

Critically, this evolution is not just reactive to international expectations. It reflects a strategic discursive construction of Vietnam as a small but principled actor that advances a morally grounded and structurally sustainable model of international engagement. By foregrounding equity, justice, and ecological responsibility, Vietnam uses its development discourse to assert agency, build credibility, and navigate global asymmetries without confrontation, a *defining feature of its bamboo strategy*.

While thematic vocabulary delineates Vietnam's development priorities, it is the ***relational values of words*** that embed these priorities within a moral and diplomatic framework. Through relational expressions, Vietnam constructs its identity not simply as a state pursuing national interests, but as an empathetic, people-oriented actor committed to global equity. These relational choices foreground solidarity, shared responsibility, and inclusive governance, discursively aligning Vietnam with broader humanist and multilateral agendas.

For example, in 2015, Deputy Minister Nguyen Phuong Nga declared: “We must place people at the centre of all development policies.” This phrase, which reappears in 2016 and 2019, reflects a consistent relational framing of Vietnam not as a distant policymaker, but as a nation that prioritizes human dignity and shared wellbeing. The phrase “put people at the centre” is not merely aspirational. It functions relationally to position Vietnam in *alignment with the UN’s human rights discourse*, reinforcing its moral legitimacy as *a responsible development actor*.

In 2013, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung added further depth to this positioning, stating: “Viet Nam stands side by side with developing countries in the pursuit of inclusive and sustainable development.” The phrase “stands side by side” is a powerful relational metaphor that distances Vietnam from traditional donor-recipient hierarchies and situates it as *an equal partner in global development*. This solidarity-driven stance also reflects Vietnam’s historical experience as a postcolonial, war-affected state, underscoring a *deeper moral authority* when advocating for marginalized nations.

Relational values also shape Vietnam’s discursive response to environmental justice and sustainability. In 2012, expressions such as “we must work together to prevent deforestation and address pollution” and “shared responsibility in managing natural resources” construct a *collaborative ethos.* These phrases relationally align Vietnam with the global South while calling for joint stewardship of planetary resources, a move that blends environmental discourse with Vietnam’s *strategic emphasis on multilateral cooperation.*

By 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the relational vocabulary had intensified to reflect a *global humanitarian orientation*. General Secretary and President Nguyen Phu Trong stated: “No one, and no country, will be left behind.” This inclusive statement explicitly mirrors the language of the UN’s 2030 Agenda, while also allowing Vietnam to present itself as *an advocate of equitable recovery and justice* in times of crisis. Here, the relational value lies in how Vietnam constructs its own

identity through the collective plight of others, a move that reinforces the image of Vietnam as *a small state with a large moral voice.*

Another key example is the 2016 speech's affirmation of "our shared responsibility to eradicate poverty and promote inclusive growth". The possessive pronoun "our" shifts the development discourse from national to global, reinforcing Vietnam's self-identification as a cooperative and integrative actor. This is further strengthened in 2018, when Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc described the UN as "the embodiment of humankind's shared aspirations for peace and development." By invoking shared aspirations, Vietnam again establishes itself in relational terms, as part of a collective moral project rather than a solitary national endeavor.

Crucially, these relational constructions mirror the guiding tenets of *bamboo diplomacy*, wherein Vietnam maintains flexibility in foreign relations but adheres firmly to principles like multilateral solidarity and human-centric development. Phrases such as "a responsible member of the international community" (used repeatedly from 2016 to 2020) anchor Vietnam's development commitments within a discourse of trust and partnership. This carefully calibrated relational stance allows Vietnam to project *credibility, moral leadership, and policy consistency* - all vital attributes for a middle power navigating a complex geopolitical environment.

In sum, Vietnam's relational expressions across the decade do more than reflect a commitment to sustainable development and human rights. They construct a diplomatic persona: compassionate, cooperative and globally engaged. These linguistic choices signal not only Vietnam's policy orientation but also its evolving international identity as a principled actor that builds solidarity across national, regional and global divides.

Personification of development-related themes in the ten speeches functions not only as stylistic ornamentation but as a *strategic mechanism for constructing an ethical narrative of inclusive progress*. Through expressive language, Vietnamese leaders animate development frameworks, policies and social values, transforming them into

dynamic, purposive agents. This personification imbues sustainability and human rights with emotional gravity, casting development not as technical management but as a collective, moral endeavor. In doing so, Vietnam aligns its global voice with multilateral goals while emphasizing its domestic transformation from a war-torn nation to a responsible development partner.

Throughout the speeches, major policy instruments such as the *2030 Agenda*, the *Paris Agreement*, and the *Sendai Framework* are not treated as inert documents but as actors with visionary capacity. In the 2016 speech, DPM Pham Binh Minh states that these frameworks *"present a vision for greater partnership for people, the planet, peace and prosperity"*. Here, the use of personification positions global development strategies as conscious entities with the ability to foresee and guide, thereby elevating them beyond bureaucratic programs into moral compasses for shared humanity. This rhetorical move underscores Vietnam's commitment to global norms while portraying its engagement as principled rather than transactional.

Moreover, national-level reform processes are given human-like agency. In the same 2016 speech, DPM Pham Binh Minh asserts: *"Reform, innovation, creativity and economic restructuring are setting countries on a path to prosperity."* These abstract processes are endowed with intentionality and forward movement, conveying the message that change is not incidental but driven by vision and effort. This metaphor also allows Vietnam to situate its own domestic trajectory, marked by Doi Moi and post-war recovery, as an exemplar of purposeful transformation, thus reinforcing its credibility in international development discourse.

Vietnam also personifies *peace and development* as *relational companions*. In 2014, DPM Minh states: *"Peace and development are inseparable companions. They complement each other on the path toward a prosperous world."* This metaphor constructs these concepts as moral partners walking hand-in-hand, an image that emphasizes interdependence, cooperation and mutual reinforcement. This ideological framing is key to Vietnam's narrative of sustainable development, in which security, prosperity and justice are pursued together rather than in isolation.

The moral personification of values is particularly vivid in the 2020 speech by President Nguyen Phu Trong, delivered in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. He notes that the crisis *"serves as a stern warning to us all"*, suggesting the pandemic is a teacher or sentinel that demands reflection. By casting global health crises as communicative moral agents, Vietnam frames its development responses not as charity or obligation but as informed ethical action. The pandemic, in this framing, is not a disruption of policy, it is a moment of reckoning that requires renewed commitment to human-centered development.

This perspective is further developed when President Nguyen Phu Trong refers to the 2030 Agenda as *"the framework for our cooperation to overcome this pandemic for sustainable recovery"*. Again, the Agenda is presented as a living scaffold, a moral structure to guide humanity through shared crisis. This metaphorical construct allows Vietnam to emphasize the relational and inclusive dimensions of recovery, positioning itself as a *builder of bridges*, not merely a recipient of aid or technical support.

Importantly, this personified discourse of development reinforces *bamboo diplomacy's strategic logic*. By animating reform, partnership and sustainability, Vietnam constructs *a flexible yet firm rhetorical identity* which bends toward global goals but remains anchored in its postcolonial history, developmental needs, and sovereign priorities. This discursive posture is neither subordinate nor confrontational; it is *collaborative, resilient and values-driven*, offering a model of soft power engagement that relies on narrative credibility rather than structural dominance.

In essence, personification in this ideological domain does not merely humanize development. It moralizes it, politicizes it, and ties it to Vietnam's evolving role as a South-South contributor, a climate actor and a voice for equitable globalization. As such, expressive language in this context serves as both a *symbolic register of legitimacy* and a *strategic instrument of identity-building* within the broader terrain of global diplomacy.

Vietnam's discourse on sustainable development and human rights in the UNGA speeches relies heavily on ***metaphor*** to translate complex, long-term global goals into vivid, morally resonant narratives. By metaphorically framing development as a journey, a structure to be built, a vision to be pursued, or even a treasure to be protected, Vietnamese leaders foreground sustainability and rights as *shared ethical destinations*, not technocratic agendas. These metaphors deepen the ideological weight of Vietnam's development rhetoric while reinforcing its narrative of transformation from a postwar, aid-dependent country to an active agent of equitable progress. This narrative is foundational to its soft power strategy and closely aligns with the flexible yet principled orientation of *bamboo diplomacy*.

In multiple speeches, sustainable development frameworks are cast as guides or maps. In 2015, the 2030 Agenda is described as *"our guide in building a world of peace, security and prosperity"*. This guiding metaphor positions the Agenda as a compass for collective navigation, suggesting that sustainable development is not just a list of goals but a *directional ethic*, a way of aligning national and global trajectories. Vietnam, by publicly committing to this guide, stakes its identity on being a cooperative traveler in global development, while also inviting others to walk alongside.

The language of construction is also central to Vietnam's development metaphors. In 2014, leaders speak of the need to *"build a world of peace, security, and sustainable development."* This framing likens international development to architecture implying structure, design and collaboration. The repeated use of the verb *"build"* places Vietnam in the role of co-architect: a state contributing labor and ideas to a shared project, rather than merely receiving benefits from the global system. This is a key marker of post-Doi Moi diplomacy, reflecting the shift from recipient to partner, and from survival to strategic global integration.

In several speeches, growth metaphors further animate development. The UN, according to the 2015 speech, *"was born from the ashes of World War II" and has*

since "grown to embrace 193 States." These metaphors humanize institutions and processes implying evolution, maturity and moral expansion. By associating itself with this growth narrative, Vietnam inserts itself into a global storyline of renewal and inclusion, where even historically marginalized states can help nurture global transformation.

The 2016 speech goes further, describing technological and financial mechanisms such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement as *"paving the way"* for development. This journey metaphor is especially powerful, transforming policy coordination into the creation of a shared road. Vietnam's participation in these agendas is thereby framed not as compliance, but as forward motion, evidence of movement along a mutually agreed path. The ideological implication is clear: development is not unilateral modernization imposed from above, but a cooperative voyage toward mutual goals. This vision of development diplomacy dovetails with *bamboo diplomacy's* emphasis on balance and agency, maintaining national interests while aligning with global norms.

Vietnam also draws on value metaphors to highlight the moral dimensions of development. In 2016, it is said that *"Viet Nam treasures peace"*, and in 2018, that *"even the smallest opportunity for peace must be cherished and nurtured."* Although framed in the context of peace, these metaphors extend ideologically to development: peace and sustainability are described as *precious*, *fragile*, and *worth protecting*. The act of cherishing and nurturing transforms abstract global ideals into tangible moral obligations. It also conveys Vietnam's post-war experience, development is not taken for granted but seen as hard-earned and sacred. These metaphors implicitly call for shared ethical stewardship over human rights, sustainability and equality.

In the 2020 speech, COVID-19 becomes a metaphorical "stern warning" and a "test" of development resilience. It serves not just as a disruption, but as a metaphorical turning point in human progress. In this framing, Vietnam's development stance is not reactive but diagnostic and reflective. Sustainable development is metaphorically

positioned as *medicine, recovery,* or *resilience* in the face of global crisis. The UN is again called *"an incubator"*, not just of peace but of *inclusive, human-centered development*. These metaphors underline the urgency of Vietnam's call for systemic change and equitable recovery.

Moreover, Vietnam emphasizes that multilateral efforts *"open up opportunities"* for development, opportunities which must be *"seized"* and *"nurtured"*. These metaphors suggest a moral economy of effort: development does not come passively but must be actively pursued, protected, and shared. Again, this echoes Vietnam's shift toward proactive integration, replacing dependency with initiative and reinforcing its message of reciprocal cooperation, one of the defining principles of its foreign policy in the 2011-2020 decade.

In sum, Vietnam's metaphorical framing of sustainable development and human rights transforms these abstract goals into *collective moral journeys*, *structures to build*, and *treasures to protect*. These metaphors affirm Vietnam's identity as a global partner invested in inclusive progress, while strategically framing its transformation as both exemplary and ongoing. In doing so, they elevate development from mere economic policy to a shared ethical project, reinforcing Vietnam's diplomatic positioning as *a modest yet principled actor - flexible in method, firm in value, and deeply committed to cultivating long-term partnerships for global good.*

4. Respect for international law and the UN Charter

Across the 2011-2020 UNGA speeches, Vietnamese leaders' references to international law were not peripheral or ceremonial, but central to a discursive and strategic project aimed at constructing Vietnam's international identity as a principled, sovereign and rules-based actor. These references operated not merely as diplomatic decorum but as carefully chosen ideological instruments, reflecting both Vietnam's national anxieties and its aspirations to shape a fairer global order through legality, legitimacy and restraint - a posture embedded in its evolving doctrine of bamboo diplomacy.

The recurrent ***thematic vocabulary*** including terms like “international law”, “United Nations Charter”, “UNCLOS”, “sovereign equality” and “peaceful dispute settlement” serves not just as linguistic affirmation of the rules-based order but as part of a *strategic linguistic framework*. In the 2011 and 2012 speeches, early mentions of “upholding international law” and “respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity” were tightly linked to regional tensions in the South China Sea. These phrases positioned *law not only as a global norm but as Vietnam’s first line of defense* in an asymmetric geopolitical environment. In the 2012 address, “international law” was framed as an ethical obligation, marking a deliberate move to morally internationalize Vietnam’s regional concerns.

As regional threats intensified, especially in maritime disputes, Vietnam’s discourse sharpened. By 2016, leaders explicitly connected the *respect for international law with institutional reform*, calling for “effective international institutions” and urging that the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, be restructured to respond to the complex realities of an increasingly multipolar world. Such formulations were not simply technocratic; they expressed a broader concern about the erosion of global consensus and the resurgence of power politics, particularly in Southeast Asia. The invocation of legal frameworks, therefore, became a discursive counterweight to unilateralism, reflecting a deeply *bamboo-like diplomatic logic: flexible in engagement, firm in principle.*

In the 2019 and 2020 speeches, this legal discourse became even more assertive. Phrases such as “sovereign rights”, “freedom of navigation”, “unilateral sanctions”, and “conflict resolution through peaceful means” took on a *more defensive and activist tone*, coinciding with Vietnam’s elevation to a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council. This period saw Vietnam not merely aligning with legal norms, but *actively leveraging international law as a diplomatic strategy* - a way to resist coercion, enhance normative legitimacy and signal *leadership* among small and middle powers. In these later speeches, law was not portrayed as static doctrine but

as *a living, protective framework* through which Vietnam could articulate both its vulnerabilities and its values.

This *strategic legalism* is a distinguished trait of Vietnam's *bamboo diplomacy*, which balances resilience and pliancy. The bamboo metaphor - *"strong roots, sturdy trunks, flexible branches"* - aptly describes how Vietnam discursively uses *international law*: rooted in core principles of sovereignty and non-interference, solid in its commitment to global norms, and adaptive in engaging shifting power dynamics without direct confrontation. Legal discourse thus becomes *a tactical medium of soft resistance*, allowing Vietnam to assert its agency within the international system while avoiding provocation.

Moreover, Vietnam's consistent calls for legal adherence are paired with ***relational expressions*** that frame the rule of law as a shared global responsibility. Repeated phrases such as "respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity" (2014, 2017), "renounce the use of force" (2014), and "peaceful resolution of disputes" (2015, 2020) cast Vietnam as *a moral interlocutor*, appealing to collective values while subtly critiquing hegemonic behavior. The 2020 assertion that Vietnam is "duty-bound to strengthen and reinvigorate the world's largest multilateral organization" reflects not only a *commitment to legalism* but also a *belief in the revitalization of multilateral governance* - a belief deeply embedded in Vietnam's *bamboo diplomacy*, where diplomatic strength derives not from domination but from *rootedness in principle and adaptability in execution.*

While thematic vocabulary such as "international law," "UN Charter," and "UNCLOS" anchors Vietnam's diplomatic discourse within global legal frameworks, it is the relational values of words that give *rhetorical depth to Vietnam's identity as a principled, law-abiding state*. These relational expressions not only assert Vietnam's own compliance with international norms but also subtly construct the obligations of others, framing international law as *a shared moral and political commitment* rather than a neutral set of rules. Through this discourse,

Vietnam frames itself as both guardian and beneficiary of the legal order, particularly vital for a smaller state seeking protection through multilateral institutions rather than coercive power.

Vietnamese leaders frequently use relational phrases to *align themselves with the international legal community while calling for accountability from more powerful actors*. For instance, in 2014, Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh stated: "Vietnam calls upon all countries to respect the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of other states, and to renounce the use of force." These expressions do more than cite UN principles; they assign moral agency and relational obligation - *Vietnam aligns itself with these norms and expects others to do the same*. The juxtaposition of respect and renunciation frames law-abiding behavior as not only desirable but necessary for legitimate international engagement.

Similarly, in 2016, the speech underscored that "International law remains the linchpin of a stable international security architecture." The metaphorical use of "linchpin," combined with the relational construction of stability as a shared objective, emphasizes that the weakening of legal norms affects all. This construction places Vietnam within a broader coalition of states seeking legal predictability and mutual respect, thereby reinforcing its image as *a stabilizing actor* in a region often marked by strategic competition.

The 2020 speech by General Secretary and President Nguyen Phu Trong further amplifies this positioning: "We must champion multilateralism and the respect for international law and the UN Charter." The inclusive modal "we must" and the action verb "champion" together *elevate Vietnam's rhetorical role - from participant to advocate.* Rather than framing compliance with law as passive or obligatory, Vietnam discursively claims leadership in defending legal principles, positioning itself as *a moral and political spokesperson for multilateral legitimacy.*

Even more pointed are Vietnam's relational critiques embedded in references to "unilateral sanctions" (2019) or "violations of sovereign rights" (2016, 2020). These

do not name aggressors outright but clearly mark deviant behavior in contrast to Vietnam's own rule-abiding stance. In this sense, relational expressions double as indirect rebukes - artfully constructed to *defend national sovereignty while preserving diplomatic tact*, in line with the *core flexibility of bamboo diplomacy.*

Notably, Vietnam also invokes shared responsibility through phrases such as "we reaffirm our collective commitment to international law" (2020) and "we must work together to ensure full compliance with the UNCLOS" (2019). The use of "we" as a relational marker reinforces multilateral identity, while terms like "full compliance" demand meaningful adherence, not just rhetorical alignment. These phrases link Vietnam's own security with the integrity of legal systems, emphasizing *reciprocal legalism as both a protection and a principle.*

This consistent legal framing, especially in discussions on maritime disputes such as the South China Sea (the East Sea), serves as both *strategic and ideological maneuvering*. Strategically, the invocation of UNCLOS and peaceful resolution legitimizes Vietnam's maritime claims without direct confrontation. Ideologically, it reinforces a worldview in which law, not force, determines legitimacy. In 2015, Vietnam's call for the "peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with international law" again signals a relational expectation - *law as a shared foundation*, not a unilateral interpretation.

In sum, the relational values of words used in Vietnam's UNGA speeches construct an international identity rooted in normative consistency, legal advocacy and principled diplomacy. These expressions reflect more than compliance; they project Vietnam's diplomatic self as *both protector and promoter of international law.* Within the broader framework of its *evolving foreign policy, particularly its adoption of bamboo diplomacy*, such relational strategies balance firmness on principles with rhetorical flexibility. They allow Vietnam to articulate sovereignty and security concerns not through confrontation but through a relationally grounded call for global legal solidarity, reinforcing its strategic autonomy while strengthening its voice in the multilateral system.

Additionally, Vietnam's respect to internal law is not expressed only through abstract principles in the speeches. It is also animated by ***personification***, which lends moral agency to legal concepts and historical processes. Vietnam's consistent personification of international law and sovereignty in its UNGA speeches functions as a discursive affirmation of its *deep-rooted commitment to a rule-based international order*, an *ideological cornerstone* that intersects directly with its historical memory, security strategy and diplomatic posture. Through expressive language, law and sovereignty are animated as moral actors: entities with intellectual legitimacy, civilizational origin and ethical claims. This rhetorical move reinforces Vietnam's identity as a state that privileges legal dialogue over coercion, particularly in regional disputes such as the South China Sea, and underlines a *central tenet of bamboo diplomacy - strength through restraint, anchored in principle.*

In the 2012 speech, DM Pham Quang Vinh describes international law as *"an intellectual creation of the civilized world, which all States must respect and abide by in good faith."* By attributing international law with the capacity to be "created" intellectually and to command respect, it is personified as a product of shared human achievement and reason. This not only elevates law as a moral foundation for global relations but also subtly positions any deviation from legal norms, such as unilateral aggression, as a betrayal of civilization itself. Vietnam, in this framing, aligns itself with moral and legal rectitude rather than brute power.

This discursive strategy is repeated in 2014, when DPM Pham Binh Minh declares: *"History has taught us that the paths that lead to war and conflict lie in obsolete doctrines of power politics."* Here, history is personified as a didactic figure capable of teaching. Law and peace are thus cast as lessons learned from bloodshed, and Vietnam presents itself as a student who has not only learned but internalized those lessons. In doing so, it constructs a narrative in which its foreign policy is grounded in ethical maturity and postcolonial experience rather than geopolitical ambition.

This personification strategy is crucial in reinforcing Vietnam's stance on *territorial integrity and maritime sovereignty*, particularly in relation to the South China Sea (the East Sea). Rather than framing disputes in accusatory or confrontational terms, Vietnam draws on legal personification to assert its claims with authority but without escalation. In 2016, Minh emphasizes the role of international law by stating that the UN and multilateral frameworks *"must work to strengthen the peaceful settlement of disputes, utilizing all tools as provided in Article 33 of the Charter."* The Charter is thus not only a legal document but a dynamic toolset imbued with agency and legitimacy. This framing supports Vietnam's discursive balancing act: asserting rights while maintaining an image of constructiveness and de-escalation.

In 2020, amid increasing geopolitical tensions and a global health crisis, President Nguyen Phu Trong reinforces the same ideological theme. The UN is again personified, this time as an "incubator" of cooperation, and international institutions are depicted as requiring *"reinvigoration"* - a metaphor that aligns legalism with renewal, adaptability, and global responsiveness. Law is no longer a rigid constraint; it is a living system that must be defended and revived, especially under strain. This reflects the *adaptive flexibility of bamboo diplomacy*: a willingness to bend and adjust in form, but never to break in principle.

The moral weight of sovereignty is also emphasized through metaphorical and personified expressions. In 2015, the Charter is framed as the guiding source of values, and in 2013, PM Nguyen Tan Dung refers to the historical burden of war - *"15 million tons of bombs… each Vietnamese bore nearly 10 times his or her weight in bombs"* - to underline the inviolability of national sovereignty born from sacrifice. Sovereignty, in this context, is not merely territorial; it is existential and moral - defended not only through borders, but through memory and discourse.

These expressive patterns serve a dual purpose. On one hand, they humanize abstract legal norms, making them emotionally resonant for international audiences. On the

other, they strategically elevate Vietnam's legal and ethical standing, framing the country not only as a subject of international law but as a *guardian of its principles*. This rhetorical posture is essential to Vietnam's diplomacy in an era of intensifying power competition: it allows Vietnam to navigate contested waters (literally and figuratively) with dignity and coherence.

In sum, personification in this ideological domain allows Vietnam to *assert sovereignty and defend legal norms without antagonism*, employing discourse to *balance firmness with flexibility*. The result is a persuasive narrative of a state that is legally grounded, morally driven and diplomatically calibrated, a hallmark of *bamboo diplomacy* in practice and in language.

Vietnam's UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 are marked by a persistent discursive commitment to sovereignty and international law, with **metaphor** functioning as a central rhetorical device in shaping how these abstract legal-political constructs are imagined, valorized and defended. Through metaphor, sovereignty becomes a boundary to protect, law a foundation to build upon, and both are rendered as stabilizing forces amid disorder. These metaphorical framings support Vietnam's strategic stance as a defender of rules-based order while carefully navigating geopolitical constraints - an expression of its *bamboo diplomacy*, which balances resilience and principled flexibility in a contested global environment.

A recurrent metaphor in this domain is the foundation or structure metaphor. In the 2012 speech, international law is described as *"the indispensable bedrock for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world."* The word *bedrock* evokes the image of law as the deepest, most stable layer of the global order - immovable, fundamental and necessary for all further construction. This positions law not as a procedural norm, but as the very ground upon which peace and prosperity must stand. By embracing this metaphor, Vietnam aligns itself with legal universalism and positions itself as a stakeholder in maintaining the world's legal and moral architecture.

In the 2016 address, international law is called the *"linchpin of a stable international security architecture"*. This powerful metaphor positions legal norms as the crucial

element holding the entire structure together, without which collapse or fragmentation is imminent. It also implies that threats to legal consensus (such as unilateralism or great-power exceptionalism) are not abstract violations, but existential risks. Through such metaphorical framings, Vietnam expresses its concern over the erosion of legal norms, especially in contested spaces like the South China Sea (the East Sea), while maintaining a diplomatic tone rooted in shared institutional responsibilities.

Vietnam also employs *journey and navigation metaphors* to conceptualize sovereignty and the rule of law as active, ongoing processes. In the 2015 speech, the UN Charter is said to *"be our source of inspiration"* in *"building a world of peace and prosperity."* Here, the Charter is transformed into a guide or beacon, suggesting that legal principles are not simply constraints but directional tools capable of steering global governance toward common goals. Similarly, the 2030 Agenda is metaphorically rendered as *"our guide"* for cooperation. These metaphors frame law not only as a structure but as a compass, essential in navigating the increasingly volatile terrain of global politics.

Vietnam's invocation of *war metaphors* further elevates its legal messaging into a moral and existential register. In 2013, PM Nguyen Tan Dung asserts that Viet Nam *"rebuilt from the ashes of war"*, echoing the phoenix metaphor of rebirth through struggle. This image frames Vietnam's national sovereignty as hard-won, resilient and legitimate, something forged through suffering and thus morally inviolable. While metaphorically recalling past trauma, it also legitimizes contemporary calls for international law to prevent similar tragedies. By reminding the global audience of its history through such imagery, Vietnam claims authority in discussions on sovereignty and peacebuilding.

Another striking metaphor comes from the 2020 address, where the COVID-19 pandemic is said to *"serve as a stern warning,"* compelling the international community to strengthen multilateral cooperation and legal mechanisms. The phrase

stern warning personifies the pandemic as a teacher or sentient force delivering judgment - a metaphor that repurposes global crisis into a moral opportunity for legal and structural reform. In this framing, adherence to law is not merely compliance, but an ethical awakening, a pathway to resilience. Sovereignty, accordingly, is no longer isolated nationalism, but a balanced assertion of autonomy within shared vulnerability.

In these metaphorical frameworks, Vietnam also performs a discursive balancing act, asserting sovereignty not as rigid nationalism but as a legitimate concern within multilateralism. In 2018, the General Assembly is described as *"the heart of cooperation among countries and peoples",* a metaphor that suggests centrality, vitality and mutual reliance. Placing sovereignty alongside this metaphor of global interdependence signals Vietnam's diplomatic finesse: it defends national interest while framing itself as an active proponent of dialogue and balance, a characteristic trait of *bamboo diplomacy*.

Moreover, sovereignty is cast not just as defensive, but constructive and moral. In 2013, Vietnam's principles of *"benevolence triumphing over brutality"* and *"virtue driving out tyranny"* embed sovereignty in ethical, not just legal terms. This metaphorical language constructs sovereignty not as dominance but as moral leadership, reinforcing Vietnam's *ideological emphasis on lawful behavior, peaceful negotiation, and collective accountability.*

Ultimately, through *metaphors of foundation, architecture, navigation, and moral combat,* Vietnam constructs a discursive world where international law is not just functional, but sacred and where sovereignty is not isolationist, but collaborative and rooted in historical legitimacy. These expressions reinforce Vietnam's strategic self-image as *a principled yet pragmatic actor:* a state that defends its sovereignty through law and cooperation rather than coercion. In this way, Vietnam discursively asserts its *bamboo diplomacy* not just as a *metaphor of flexibility*, but as *a deeply rooted,*

ideologically coherent approach to global order anchored in *resilience, legality, and mutual respect.*

5. Commitment and willingness to active participation in international affairs and Advocacy for UN Reform

Vietnam's UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 showcase a carefully constructed discursive trajectory: from seeking international recognition to positioning itself as *a proactive, principled and reform-oriented actor in global governance*. Central to this evolution are two interrelated *ideological commitments*: first, an expanding role in international affairs, grounded in multilateralism, sovereignty and peaceful development; second, a consistent advocacy for UN reform based on equity, inclusivity and effectiveness. These ideological commitments are expressed not only through lexical repetition and rhetorical emphasis, but also through deeper relational and moral frameworks. In particular, Vietnam's rhetorical strategy reflects the philosophy of *bamboo diplomacy*: *resilient yet adaptable, firm in objectives yet flexible in approach* - an image that captures the *balancing act between national interests and multilateral responsibility.*

Vietnam's active engagement in international institutions is signaled by frequent use of strategic ***thematic terms***, repeated and refined over time. The phrase "responsible member of the international community" appears in multiple speeches (2011, 2013, 2016), reflecting Vietnam's enduring desire to shape its identity as *a constructive global actor*. In 2011, Foreign Minister Phạm Bình Minh described Vietnam as a "reliable friend and partner", aligning with post-Doi Moi foreign policy of building diverse partnerships and avoiding entanglements - a core tenet of *bamboo diplomacy*.

In the 2013 speech, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung elevated this positioning by articulating Vietnam's readiness to contribute to "peacebuilding, poverty reduction, and environmental protection", not just at home but internationally - a step toward *aligning Vietnam's domestic development success with its international role*. By 2015 and 2016, Vietnam shifted from aspirational language to more operational terms such

as “participation in UN peacekeeping operations”, “hosting ASEAN and APEC summits” and “cooperating with regional mechanisms”. These expressions not only illustrate Vietnam’s increased capacity but also its desire to shape institutional agendas or practice *proactive integration.*

Vietnam’s commitment to institutional reform also became more assertive. As early as 2012, the call for “reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council” was framed not merely as procedural necessity but as a response to growing global inequalities and inefficiencies. In later speeches (2014, 2015, 2018, 2020), this vocabulary sharpened: terms like “inclusivity”, “accountability”, “balanced representation” and “organizational effectiveness” gained prominence, reflecting Vietnam’s *alignment with Global South demands for fairer global governance* and reinforcing the *bamboo diplomacy stance of promoting equitable multilateralism without confrontation.*

Most strikingly, in 2020, as Vietnam held a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council, President Nguyen Phu Trong declared the nation’s duty to “reinvigorate the world’s largest multilateral organization”. The metaphor of “reinvigoration” evokes the image of nurturing and sustaining, *akin to tending bamboo*, reinforcing Vietnam’s role as a caretaker of multilateralism and shared global responsibility.

The ideological resonance of these thematic choices is amplified by a wide array of ***relational expressions*** that position Vietnam as an ethical and engaged participant in the global system. Repeated phrases like “together we must act” (2011), “we reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism” (2016, 2020), and “we are duty-bound to strengthen the United Nations” (2020) not only project solidarity, but also suggest shared global stewardship, echoing *bamboo diplomacy’s emphasis on cooperative balance.*

Vietnam’s reformist stance is frequently accompanied by relational phrases that both frame Vietnam’s voice as principled and subtly critique institutional shortcomings. For instance, in 2014, the *demand for Security Council reform* in a “balanced,

transparent and equal manner" reflects dissatisfaction with status quo hierarchies while simultaneously asserting Vietnam's vision of fairness. This strategic rhetorical calibration, critical yet constructive, embodies the *bamboo diplomacy ethos*: non-confrontational yet uncompromising on principles.

Moreover, Vietnam increasingly deploys expressions that connect its domestic achievements to global contributions, projecting itself as a developmental success story ready to "share its experience", "contribute to peacekeeping" and "promote South-South cooperation". This narrative not only legitimizes Vietnam's expanding diplomatic role but also strengthens its *ideological identity as a bridge between the Global North and South - another dimension of bamboo diplomacy's flexible outreach.*

Crucially, Vietnam does not position itself as an isolated actor but consistently uses collective pronouns and cooperative formulations, such as "we must uphold the UN Charter", "we reaffirm our collective commitment" and "together, let us build a more just and effective multilateral system". These choices project humility and inclusion, while inviting shared responsibility - linguistic markers of *a diplomacy rooted in harmony and moral agency.*

Throughout the ten UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020, Vietnam employs ***personification*** not simply as a stylistic device, but as a discursive strategy to moralize institutions and elevate its foreign policy rhetoric. Abstract bodies, especially the United Nations, are repeatedly animated as sentient, ethical actors, allowing Vietnam to align itself with a rules-based international order while subtly advancing calls for reform. In this way, personification functions as a form of soft norm entrepreneurship, reinforcing Vietnam's self-representation as a principled yet pragmatic actor on the global stage.

In the 2018 speech, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc characterizes the UN as "the embodiment of humankind and progress, and the place where our aspirations for a world of peace, prosperity and equality are realized." This statement elevates

the UN to the role of moral protagonist, a living entity that embodies collective virtue and operationalizes human dreams. Crucially, this personification allows Vietnam to reaffirm its allegiance to *multilateralism* without surrendering agency: by casting the UN as a moral actor, Vietnam implicitly validates its own ethical stance within that moral order.

A similar rhetorical maneuver occurs in the 2016 speech, where Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh proclaims: "The United Nations has an indispensable role to play by coordinating international responses to global challenges." The UN here is not described in bureaucratic terms, but as *a responsible and authoritative actor*, entrusted with managing crises and guiding states. This personification subtly foregrounds Vietnam's *expectations for leadership, transparency, and responsiveness in global institutions,* while embedding these demands within *a cooperative rather than confrontational tone.*

The personification extends beyond institutions to intangible concepts, such as "voices" and "aspirations". In 2018, the Prime Minister declares: "The voices of small nations and the aspirations of the disadvantaged must be respected, heard and shared." This framing transforms otherwise abstract ideas into human-like entities with intrinsic dignity and the right to recognition. In doing so, Vietnam positions itself as both *a defender of the underrepresented* and *a participant in a collective moral dialogue* about equity in international governance. It also resonates with *bamboo diplomacy's core ethos: projecting principled strength and solidarity, particularly with fellow developing countries, without provoking hegemonic powers.*

Notably, Vietnam also personifies institutional narratives themselves. In 2017, the annual UNGA theme is described as "timely" and able to "focus on people", subtly suggesting that even the discursive framings of international fora possess agency and ethical orientation. This move supports Vietnam's broader strategy of aligning its discourse with human-centric and peace-oriented values, while maintaining a proactive posture in shaping global agendas.

In sum, these instances of personification are far from rhetorical ornamentation. They function as *ideological scaffolding*, through which Vietnam articulates its identity as *a responsible, reform-minded, and ethically grounded actor*. By humanizing institutions and ideals, Vietnam not only legitimizes its place in global governance, but also constructs a discursive bridge between moral authority and diplomatic agency - an embodiment of its *bamboo diplomacy: principled, supple and increasingly confident in the shifting architecture of world politics.*

In Vietnam's UNGA discourse from 2011 to 2020, **metaphors** function not as rhetorical embellishments but as strategic instruments for reframing global power relations and advancing Vietnam's vision of reformist multilateralism. These metaphoric constructions - drawn from organic, performative and relational domains - offer an ideational grammar of resilience, care and adaptability, which collectively reflect the logic of *bamboo diplomacy: principled flexibility grounded in national interests and ethical diplomacy.*

Perhaps the most potent example appears in President Nguyen Phu Trong's 2020 speech, where he asserts that "the UN must serve as the incubator for multilateral cooperation initiatives." This metaphor is deeply generative: the incubator invokes not rupture, but organic nurturing, signaling that international reform should be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. The image aligns with Vietnam's diplomatic identity as *a patient yet persistent reform advocate*, encouraging global transformation through care, inclusivity and constructive engagement. It also reflects the *bamboo ethos: growing with strength, rootedness and resilience while remaining responsive to change.*

In the 2019 speech, Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh warns that "multilateralism is facing acute challenges" and that "the global arms control and non-proliferation regime is becoming more fragile". These metaphors draw from the semantic field of bodily vulnerability and material delicacy, positioning institutions not as immutable edifices but as living structures susceptible to neglect or harm. "Fragility" here does more than describe weakness. It functions ideologically,

implying that the survival of global norms depends on *collective stewardship*, particularly from *small and responsible states like Vietnam*. In this framing, Vietnam casts itself not as a challenger to the system, but as a guardian of its moral and institutional integrity.

Earlier speeches also contribute to this metaphorical scaffolding. In 2011, Vietnam described itself as a "reliable partner and responsible member" of the international community - a metaphor drawn from relational and contractual domains, connoting trust, durability and principled agency. Such framing underscores Vietnam's *commitment to long-term partnership* rather than opportunistic alignment, reinforcing its identity as a balanced actor seeking equilibrium amid great power contestation. This is a direct discursive enactment of *bamboo diplomacy's twin goals: strategic independence and cooperative pragmatism.*

Vietnam also deploys performance-based metaphors to articulate the role of global institutions. In 2016, DPM Minh affirms that "the United Nations has an indispensable role to play". The metaphor of "playing a role" - drawn from theater and sports - implies that institutions are visible, accountable performers with agency, duties and consequences. It subtly critiques institutional inertia while reaffirming their relevance, signaling Vietnam's position as both supporter and reformer within multilateral frameworks. The implication is clear: Vietnam's diplomacy seeks to rewrite the script without tearing down the stage.

Taken together, these metaphors construct a discursive ecology of care, fragility, stewardship and principled engagement. Rather than dramatizing crisis or projecting power, Vietnam's metaphoric language normalizes reform as a shared moral imperative, rooted in collective survival and inclusive governance. In so doing, Vietnam asserts *a subtle but powerful ideological posture*: that of a small, sovereign nation leveraging language to influence global norms - not through force, but through values, adaptability and discourse. This is the essence of *bamboo diplomacy in action - strategic softness that conceals strength, and a commitment to global change without abandoning multilateral legitimacy.*

In sum, the analysis of experiential, relational and expressive values of words in Vietnam's UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 reveals a consistent and ideologically charged vocabulary that reflects both *continuity and evolution in foreign policy*. Lexical choices construct Vietnam as a peace-oriented, multilateralist, development-focused and law-abiding actor, while expressive strategies such as personification and metaphor project moral authority and emotional resonance. These discursive patterns support the *five core ideologies* underpinning Vietnam's diplomacy: peace and security, multilateralism and integration, sustainable development and human rights, respect for international law, and active participation in global governance. Over the decade, the increasingly confident, nuanced and values-driven language also signals a shift from reactive diplomacy to strategic, proactive engagement-capturing the *essence of bamboo diplomacy: firm in principle, flexible in approach and resilient in navigating a complex international order.*

4.1.2. Grammar analysis

This section explores the grammatical features employed in Vietnamese leaders' speeches at the United Nations General Assembly from 2011 to 2020, with a focus on *nominalizations, repetition, pronouns, voice, modes and modal verbs*. These elements are not only structural components of language but also powerful tools through which speakers project identity, assert agency and shape diplomatic tone. Analyzing grammar in political discourse reveals how Viet Nam constructs its national voice, frames its international commitments and calls for global solidarity. The key ideologies and significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy will also be critically highlighted during the analysis of grammatical devices.

1. Nominalizations

Throughout the decade, Vietnam's speeches repeatedly foreground the ***ideology of peace and security*** using nominalizations such as *peaceful settlement, stability, security, disarmament and prevention.* For instance, in the 2011 and 2013 speeches, phrases like "peaceful settlement of disputes" and "maintenance of regional stability"

demonstrate how Vietnam frames peace not as an active struggle but as a structured, institutional objective. This linguistic choice abstracts agency and presents *peace as a shared international goal, aligning Vietnam with global peacekeeping norms.*

The use of peaceful settlement and stability in maritime contexts, particularly in references to the South China Sea (the East Sea), subtly signals Vietnam's strategic preference for legal and diplomatic solutions over confrontation. This rhetorical pattern illustrates a foundational aspect of *bamboo diplomacy*: Vietnam's *emphasis on resilience and adaptability, asserting sovereignty without provocation*. By *nominalizing conflict resolution* (e.g., settlement rather than settle), the state projects itself as *a peace-seeking actor embedded in multilateral norms.*

Nominalizations such as *integration, cooperation, contribution and engagement* are central to how Vietnam articulates its ***commitment to multilateralism, proactive integration and international cooperation***. In the 2013 and 2015 speeches, for example, Viet Nam speaks of its "active integration into the international community" and "constructive contributions to global efforts". These forms distance the actor and highlight process and policy over politics, enabling Vietnam to frame itself as *a responsible partner without signaling dependence or ideological alignment with any major power bloc.*

This approach reflects a shift in Vietnam's foreign policy: *from cautious participation to proactive multilateralism.* By focusing on abstract nouns like integration and engagement, the discourse positions Vietnam not as a marginal voice but as an *emerging norm entrepreneur* - assertive yet non-confrontational, growing global influence while maintaining its autonomy. The language embodies *bamboo diplomacy's strategic balance: flexibility in approach, firmness in identity.*

Nominalized forms such as *development, sustainability, implementation, resilience, inclusion, and equity* populate speeches especially from 2015 onward, following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promoting the ***ideology of sustainable development and human rights***. In the 2015 and 2020 speeches,

Vietnam emphasizes its “commitment to the implementation of the SDGs” and calls for greater international “cooperation in pandemic response and post-pandemic recovery”. These terms elevate abstract goals over political specifics, making them diplomatically agreeable and morally charged.

Nominalization here serves to depersonalize responsibility while projecting Vietnam’s alignment with *global development goals*. It discursively elevates the country’s identity *from a former aid recipient to a partner in development*, contributing to international public goods. This supports an *ideological shift toward shared responsibility and global citizenship,* while reinforcing Vietnam’s image as *a modernizing, reform-oriented state* - an evolution central to its diplomatic identity over the decade.

Another cornerstone of Vietnam’s ideological discourse is its ***respect for international law,*** consistently reinforced through nominalizations such as *compliance, adherence, enforcement, commitment and rule of law*. For instance, in the 2018 and 2020 speeches, Vietnam highlights the need for “strict compliance with international law” and “enhanced enforcement of the UN Charter”.

These forms present international law not as a set of actor-driven choices but as institutionalized norms, further legitimizing Vietnam’s calls for peaceful conduct in the South China Sea and other disputes. The nominalization of legal principles projects *a depersonalized, rules-based order* where power is checked by *collective agreement.* It simultaneously underscores Vietnam’s *principled stance* and *shields it from the risks of directly confronting more powerful actors* - a rhetorical strategy aligned with the *flexible-resilient metaphor of the bamboo*.

Vietnam’s discourse increasingly reflects a ***desire to shape***, rather than merely follow, ***global governance structures***. Nominalizations such as *participation, representation, reform, leadership,* and *voice* underscore this shift. In the 2020 speech, references to “Vietnam’s participation in peacekeeping missions” and “support for UN reform” mark a rhetorical transition from observer to contributor.

These terms symbolically elevate Vietnam's position, emphasizing a role not just within ASEAN but within the broader global governance architecture. The use of *representation and reform in discussing the UN Security Council* suggests a normative challenge to global power imbalances. Through nominalization, Vietnam stakes a claim in *shaping the agenda without directly confronting dominant powers - another strategic element of bamboo diplomacy,* allowing assertiveness to be cloaked in calls for fairness and inclusivity.

In conclusion, *nominalization across Vietnam's UNGA speeches from 2011-2020* is not a mere stylistic feature; it is *a powerful discursive tool that supports key ideological narratives while reflecting broader foreign policy transformations.* It enables Vietnam to express *firm principles* - such as peace, multilateralism and sovereignty - through diplomatically neutral language, *aligning with the ethos of bamboo diplomacy:* being flexible in method, firm in principle. The strategic abstraction of agency, common in nominalizations, allows Vietnam to navigate complex geopolitical terrain while subtly asserting itself as a proactive, rule-based, and globally engaged actor.

2. Repetition

Repetition serves as a strategic linguistic device in Vietnam's UNGA speeches, reinforcing core ideological commitments and shaping a coherent diplomatic identity over time. Rather than being mere rhetorical habit, ***repeated ideological expressions*** function to consolidate national values, signal continuity in foreign policy and frame Vietnam's international role as consistent, principled and adaptable. In the context of bamboo diplomacy, such repetition reflects not rigidity, but resilience, anchoring Vietnam's global discourse in enduring principles while allowing space for strategic recalibration.

Repetition in Vietnam's UNGA discourse primarily involves the recurrent use of key terms and phrases that reflect deeply held principles. Words like *"peace", "cooperation", "sovereignty", "respect for international law" and "multilateralism"* appear consistently across all ten speeches. This persistent lexical

pattern reflects a deliberate attempt to frame Vietnam's foreign policy as stable, principled, and morally grounded.

For instance, in the 2011 speech, Deputy PM Pham Binh Minh emphasizes that "peace, stability, and cooperation remain the intense desire of all nations", a phrase that prefigures similar constructions in subsequent years. In 2013, PM Nguyen Tan Dung reiterates that "humankind yearns for peace," echoing the earlier sentiment but intensifying its emotional resonance. This repetition of "peace" not only reinforces Vietnam's pacifist posture but also positions the country as a *consistent voice for conflict prevention* - a foundational theme of its *bamboo diplomacy*, which favors *flexibility and peaceful balancing over confrontation.*

Repetition also functions to underscore Vietnam's *commitment to multilateralism and international law*. Terms like *"UN Charter", "sovereignty", "non-interference" and "international law"* are echoed annually, particularly in reference to maritime disputes. In the 2014 speech, Pham Binh Minh affirms that "history has taught us" the dangers of "power politics" - a phrase echoed in 2019, where he warns that "the world is on the verge of a new Cold War". Such continuity reflects Vietnam's long-standing concern over great power competition and its impact on smaller states.

The repeated invocation of the *UN Charter* (in *nearly every speech*) is particularly telling. It is referred to as a *"guiding principle", "foundation" and "indispensable framework"*. In 2015, Ambassador Nguyen Phuong Nga describes it as a "beacon of hope" and urges that it "be our source of inspiration". This deliberate reiteration highlights Vietnam's strategic use of institutional language to assert its legitimacy, align itself with global norms, and signal that respect for sovereignty must be mutual and institutionalized.

While some repetition underscores continuity, other instances reflect discursive shifts that mark new phases in Vietnam's *global engagement*. Over time, repetition of terms like *"sustainable development", "2030 Agenda", "inclusive*

growth" and "partnership" intensifies. This mirrors Vietnam's *increasing investment in global development frameworks* and its *transformation from aid recipient to contributor.*

In the 2016 speech, *"sustainable development"* is repeated as a core value linked to peace and economic reform. By 2020, this theme is foregrounded with greater urgency. President Nguyen Phu Trong calls for "*human-centered development*" and frames the pandemic as a test of global solidarity. The term *"sustainable development"* is reiterated multiple times in conjunction with calls for equitable recovery, signaling a shift from abstract endorsement to concrete *policy leadership,* consistent with Vietnam's *deepening role in multilateral institutions*.

Vietnam also uses ***structural repetition*** - parallel sentence constructions, and repeated modal verbs - to create rhythm and moral clarity. In 2013, PM Nguyen Tan Dung declares: "Let us not offer war a hand. Let us not look away."

This parallelism builds moral force through repetition, portraying Vietnam as a voice of ethical consistency in a fractured world.

Similarly, in 2017, the call to action is framed through modal repetition: "We must reject hatred. We must uphold international law. We must act in solidarity." Each clause repeats the modal "must," establishing a sense of duty and urgency. This rhetorical form affirms Vietnam's discursive identity as a normative actor who may not wield hard power but aspires to shape soft norms.

Overall, *repetition* in Vietnam's UNGA speeches functions as *both a rhetorical stabilizer and a strategic signaling tool.* It ensures *ideological coherence* over time, especially in the articulation of peace, sovereignty, law and multilateralism, while also enabling discursive shifts that reflect *changing foreign policy priorities.* Repetition thus plays a *central role in enacting Vietnam's bamboo diplomacy:* resilient in its core values, yet adaptive in expression, using discourse to shape perception, assert legitimacy and gradually expand normative influence in global governance.

3. Pronouns

Table 4.1

Rate of occurrence and frequency of pronouns in the speeches

Pronouns (Personal& Possessive)		Speech									
		2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**
First-person	**I**	3 (4.92%)	3 (7.89%)	7 (11.48%)	2 (4.76%)	2 (3.33%)	5 (9.26%)	6 (10.34%)	13 (18.30%)	6 (10.71%)	4 (9.52%)
	My	2 (3.28%)	1 (2.63%)	2 (3.28%)	2 (4.76%)	1 (1.67%)	1 1.85 %)	3 (5.17%)	6 (8.45%)	1 (1.78%)	2 (4.76%)
	We	24 (39.34%)	14 (36.84%)	15 (24.59%)	12 (28.57%)	14 (23.33%)	15 (27.78%)	24 (41.38%)	18 (25.35%)	18 (32.14%)	13 (30.95%)
	Our	7 (11.48%)	2 (5.26%)	16 (26.23%)	4 (9.52%)	17 (28.33%)	16 (29.63%)	10 (17.24%)	9 (12.68%)	8 (14.29%)	12 (28.57%)
Second-person	**You**	3 (4.92 %)	1 (2.63%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.38%)
	Your	2 (3.28%)	2 (5.26%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (16.67%)
Third-person	**They**	1 (1.64%)	0 (0%)	3 (4.92%)	2 (4.76%)	1 (1.67%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.45%)	1 (1.41%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Their	5 (8.20%)	4 (10.53%)	1 (1.64%)	3 (7.14%)	4 (6.67%)	3 (5.56%)	4 (6.90%)	3 (4.23%)	3 (5.36%)	0 (0%)
	He	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.67%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.72%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.79%)	0 (0%)
	His	3 (4.92%)	0 (0%)	4 (6.56%)	2 (4.76%)	2 (3.33%)	6 (11.11%)	5 (8.62%)	2 (2.82%)	3 (5.36%)	1 (2.38%)
	She	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.82%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Her	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.64%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.57%)	0 (0%)
	It	4 (6.56%)	4 (10.53%)	9 (14.75%)	7 (16.67%)	6 (10%)	2 (3.70%)	4 (6.90%)	5 (7.04%)	4 (7.14%)	1 (2.38%)
	Its	7 (11.48%)	7 (18.42%)	3 (4.92%)	10 (23.81%)	12 (20%)	6 (11.11%)	9 (15.52%)	12 (12.90%)	10 (17.86%)	1 (2.38%)
Total		61 (100%)	38 (100%)	61 (100%)	42 (100%)	60 (100%)	54 (100%)	58 (100%)	71 (100%)	56 (100%)	42 (100%)

The use of grammatical features such as pronouns in its UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 reflects not merely rhetorical style but a discursively constructed identity that aligns with evolving foreign policy ideologies. Chief among these devices is the frequent deployment of the first-person plural pronoun “we” and its possessive form “our.” These pronouns do more than signal collectivity. They serve as *ideological instruments* through which Vietnam asserts its role as a *responsible global actor*, calls for *multilateral cooperation* and rearticulates its foreign policy shift from *passive observer to proactive participant.*

Across the speeches, “we” is used not just inclusively to refer to Viet Nam and the international community but also strategically to *claim shared values and common responsibilities*. For instance, in 2011, Viet Nam welcomed the Republic of South Sudan as “the 193rd Member of the Organization”, positioning itself within the inclusive “we” of the UN family and signaling solidarity with emerging nations. This usage reinforces the *ideology of peace and international integration* - a consistent theme throughout the decade.

In the 2013 speech, “we” is used to express dissatisfaction with global negotiations: “Multilateral negotiations on issues of common interest, such as disarmament and climate change, have not yielded results that meet our expectations”. This construction not only affirms Vietnam’s *support for multilateralism* but also implicitly critiques existing power structures, suggesting *a shift from compliant engagement to normative assertion* - a key development in its foreign policy discourse.

The frequent co-occurrence of “we” with modal verbs like “must” and “can” further underscores Vietnam’s *evolving foreign policy orientation toward action and global leadership*. For instance, in 2015, the assertion “We must cultivate a culture of peace and dialogue and promote the peaceful settlement of disputes” exemplifies Vietnam’s *growing confidence in advocating for global norms* such as *peaceful conflict*

resolution. By aligning its national voice with universally accepted values, Vietnam strengthens its identity as a norm-supporting actor. Similarly, the 2018 speech declares: “We are gathered here as the world is undergoing profound and fast transformations”, indicating Vietnam’s awareness of its positioning within a shifting geopolitical landscape and reinforcing its *proactive engagement* with global trends.

Notably, these pronouns are also used to *articulate Vietnam’s own policy positions and international responsibilities.* In 2016, the leader stated: “We also contribute constructively in multilateral forums in endeavors designed to respond to global challenges including nuclear security; disarmament… climate change…”. Here, “we” is no longer simply inclusive but referentially national. It denotes Vietnam’s self-ascribed agency within multilateralism. This lexical strategy reflects a deepening of the *ideology of integration and responsibility*, aligning with the country’s *“**bamboo diplomacy**”* of adaptability and resilience - an emblem of its foreign policy transition toward flexibility, balance and self-determination.

Furthermore, the possessive “our” is used to embed Vietnam’s foreign policy within broader global aspirations. Such phrases as “Let the Charter of the United Nations be our source of inspiration” (2015) and “Our policies and actions should have the interest of our people at the heart” (2020) highlight Vietnam’s emphasis on *sustainable development, human-centered policy and respect for international law.* This rhetorical alignment with shared global goals further legitimizes Vietnam’s image as *a trustworthy and reform-minded actor*. The ideological underpinnings here are clear: *sustainable development and human rights* are framed not only as national priorities but as collective imperatives, reinforcing the discourse of *solidarity and shared responsibility.*

In sum, the grammatical construction of identity through pronoun usage in Vietnamese leaders’ UNGA speeches (2011-2020) reveals a gradual but deliberate evolution in foreign policy discourse. Over the decade, the use of “we” and “our” in

the speeches shifted from conventional diplomatic modesty to more assertive expressions of leadership and agency. These lexical choices convey the ideologies of multilateralism, peace, sustainable development and adherence to international law, which are the core tenets of Vietnam's contemporary foreign policy narrative. This evolution mirrors Vietnam's broader trajectory from a reactive participant to a confident, constructive and principled actor in global affairs.

4. Voice

Table 4.2

Percentage of active and passive sentences in the speeches

Speech	Active	Passive
2011	68/72 (94.44 %)	4/72 (5.56 %)
2012	43/45 (95.56 %)	2/ 45 (4.44 %)
2013	61/73 (83.56 %)	12/73 (16.44 %)
2014	50/52 (96.15 %)	2/52 (3.85 %)
2015	58/62 (93.55 %)	4/62 (6.45 %)
2016	61/63 (96.83 %)	2/63 (3.17 %)
2017	61/67 (91.04 %)	6/67 (8.96 %)
2018	65/69 (94.20 %)	4/69 (5.80 %)
2019	65/76 (85.53 %)	11/76 (14.47 %)
2020	38/41 (92.68 %)	3/41 (7.32 %)

A quantitative overview of sentence structure across Vietnam's UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 reveals a striking and consistent preference for the active voice, with percentages ranging from 83.56% (2013) to 96.83% (2016) (*for details, see Appendix 3*). This strong dominance suggests not only a rhetorical choice for clarity and assertiveness but also a deeper discursive strategy tied to Vietnam's evolving foreign policy ideologies and global self-positioning.

Firstly, the *heavy use of active constructions* is an overt linguistic manifestation of *Vietnam's growing confidence and assertion of national agency on the global stage*. For example, the statement in the 2019 speech "Viet Nam pursues a foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, multilateralization and diversification of relations" uses the active voice to foreground Vietnam's *independent and multidirectional foreign policy orientation*, a hallmark of its post-Doi Moi diplomacy. This signals a clear departure *from a previously more cautious, passive role in international forums to one of proactive participation and self-determined positioning*. This assertion is reinforced in 2020: "Viet Nam promotes dialogue, de-escalation of tension and confrontation, and fair and reasonable solutions to regional and global peace and security issues". Here, the repeated active verbs ("promotes", "de-escalation", "solutions") indicate that Vietnam does *not merely react to world affairs, but actively shape their outcomes,* especially in peace and security - *one of its central foreign policy ideologies.*

Additionally, the *active voice* also supports the country's *ideology of peace and conflict prevention*, often expressed through calls for dialogue and non-violence. The 2015 speech asserts: "We must cultivate a culture of peace and dialogue and promote the peaceful settlement of disputes". This not only exemplifies the ideology of peace and diplomacy, but by using "we must" constructions in the active voice, Vietnam aligns itself with UN multilateral norms, positioning itself as *a norm entrepreneur rather than a passive rule-follower.* In a similar vein, the 2017 speech emphasizes action and integration: "We strongly support the

settlement of disputes by peaceful means and in accordance with international law". The verb "support" used in active voice both affirms Vietnam's alignment with the principles of the UN Charter and UNCLOS and implicitly calls on others to adopt the same peaceful methods, showcasing *a shift toward normative leadership.*

Moreover, the preference for the active voice of Vietnamese leaders in the speeches also underscores the country's *evolving role as a global development partner*, reinforcing the *ideologies of sustainable development and international cooperation*. In the 2016 address, the statement "We also contribute constructively in multilateral forums in endeavours designed to respond to global challenges including nuclear security, disarmament, and climate change" emphasizes Vietnam's agency in shaping global development agendas, *shifting from being a recipient of aid and guidance to a co-creator of solutions*. In 2020, as COVID-19 disrupted the world, Secretary General and President Nguyen Phu Trong stated that "We will spare no effort to contain the pandemic, protect people's health and revitalize the economy". This is a clear example of *agency-driven, action-oriented discourse tied to human security and sustainable development,* demonstrating that Vietnam is not simply responding to global events but mobilizing national will in response to shared global challenges.

Although infrequent, the *passive voice* appears *at critical rhetorical moments* in the speeches over this decade. In 2013, the speaker notes "Progress has yet to be made in disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament…". The *agentless construction* here allows Vietnam to *criticize global inaction without directly naming powerful states, avoiding confrontation* while still making a pointed statement, which is typical of *strategic ambiguity in diplomacy*. Likewise, in the 2020 speech, the leader stated that "The voices of small nations and the aspirations of the disadvantaged must be respected, heard and shared". The passive construction serves to *universalize the responsibility to act*, calling on all states to

respect these voices without explicitly blaming any actor, reaffirming Vietnam's *ideology of equity and inclusive global governance.*

Altogether, the trend toward active constructions, especially when linked with modal auxiliaries like "must", "will", "can", and "should" reflects a discursive evolution in Vietnam's foreign policy. While *early speeches (2011 - 2012) reflect a more neutral, modest tone* focused on aligning with existing norms, *later speeches (2016 - 2020) show increasing confidence, norm-promotion and leadership aspirations.* This aligns closely with the *ideologies of peace and security* (emphasized through action-oriented support for peaceful dispute resolution), *multilateralism and integration* (voiced through active participation in global dialogues and institutions), *sustainable development and human rights* (projected through active contributions to climate action, social justice, and equality), *respect for international law* (promoted through references to UNCLOS and the UN Charter) and *active global participation and UN reform* (asserted via Vietnam's UNSC membership (2020 - 2021) and calls for a more democratic UN system).

In conclusion, the deliberate and consistent use of the active voice across the leaders' UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 marks a critical linguistic indicator of foreign policy transformation. From a reserved post-conflict actor to a confident contributor to peace, development and multilateralism, Vietnam's syntax mirrors its discursive repositioning in global politics. While the selective use of passive voice helps mitigate political risk and maintain diplomatic tact, it is the predominance of assertive, active constructions that best capture Vietnam's evolving ideological commitments and proactive global identity.

5. Modes

Table 4.3

Percentage of declarative, imperative and interrogative sentences in the speeches

Speech	Declarative	Imperative	Interrogative
2011	71/72 (98.61%)	1/72 (1.39%)	0/72 (0%)
2012	44/45 (97.78%)	1/45 (2.22%)	0/ 45 (0%)
2013	66/73 (90.41%)	4/73 (5.48%)	3/73 (4.11%)
2014	51/52 (98.08%)	1/52 (1.92%)	0/52 (0%)
2015	59/62 (95.16%)	3/62 (4.84%)	0/62 (0%)
2016	61/63 (96.83%)	2/63 (3.17%)	0/63 (0%)
2017	63/67 (94.03%)	4/67 (5.97%)	0/67 (0%)
2018	67/69 (97.10%)	2/69 (2.90%)	0/69 (0%)
2019	74/76 (97.37%)	2/76 (2.63%)	0/76 (0%)
2020	36/41 (87.80%)	5/41 (12.20%)	0/41 (0%)

As can be seen from the table, the majority of sentences in each speech are declarative, ranging from 87.8% to 98.1%. The *overwhelming use of declarative sentences* underscores the primary function of these speeches: to inform, persuade and declare Vietnam's national stance with confidence and precision. These

statements serve as *ideological performances, communicating Vietnam's position on issues such as peace, sovereignty, sustainable development and multilateralism.*

For instance, in 2014, the declarative sentence "Vietnam is determined to work with the international community for peace, stability, and sustainable development in the region and the world" clearly articulates Vietnam's commitment to multilateralism and peace, which are core ideological pillars of its foreign policy. The formality and assertiveness of the declarative sentences help construct Vietnam as *a responsible global actor.*

In 2019, a key declarative sentence states "Vietnam consistently upholds the UN Charter and international law as the foundation of peace and cooperation". This reflects continuity in the *ideology of respect for international law,* especially amid growing geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea (the East Sea).

Although *imperative sentences* represent a small percentage (ranging from 1.39% to 12.20%), their strategic placement signals *important ideological shifts*, especially Vietnam's transition *from a passive observer to an active norm advocate and action initiator*. For instance, the 2013 speech shows an increase in imperatives (5.48%), aligning with a more assertive diplomatic tone: "Let us join hands in preventing conflict and promoting sustainable development". This construction positions Vietnam not just as a participant, but as *a moral and diplomatic leader*, encouraging collective global action, *aligning with sustainable development and peace ideologies*.

By 2020, imperative use reaches a peak (12.20%), coinciding with Vietnam's tenure on the UN Security Council and the global crisis of COVID-19. In one key example: "We must act now to ensure an inclusive and resilient recovery" (2020), the imperative reflects Vietnam's *growing confidence* in advocating social justice, inclusive development and global solidarity in crisis response. Similarly, "Respect international law. Settle disputes through peaceful means." (2020), these sharp, direct imperatives reinforce *long-standing position on territorial integrity*, UNCLOS and peace, showing discursive continuity alongside increased urgency.

Another observation is that the *virtual absence of interrogative sentences* (except 4.11% in 2013) further characterizes the speeches as *one-directional and authoritative* rather than dialogic. In diplomacy, rhetorical questions might imply challenge or critique, which are rare moves for a country still balancing assertiveness with caution. However, the few interrogatives in 2013, during heightened tensions in the East Sea (South China Sea), suggest *a momentary rhetorical shift.* For example: "Can we afford to ignore the threats posed by unilateral actions in disputed waters?" Such rhetorical questions, even when rare, *underscore anxiety about global inaction and seek to morally position Vietnam's call for lawful conduct as a shared international concern.*

Overall, the changing distribution of sentence types illustrates Vietnam's rhetorical shift from a reliance on declaratives that reinforce the status quo to a growing use of imperative, signaling its ambition to play a more active and influential role on the global stage. Early speeches (2011-2014) are almost exclusively declarative, signaling a cautious, conventional diplomacy, primarily focused on aligning with global norms and asserting peaceful intentions. Mid-decade speeches (2015-2017) incorporate more imperatives, indicating Vietnam's move toward advocacy and leadership, particularly in sustainable development, disaster resilience and peacekeeping. By 2020, Vietnam's higher use of imperatives and declarative calls for action shows its full discursive transformation into a global stakeholder, especially evident during its UNSC membership and in response to the pandemic.

In conclusion, the patterns in sentence type usage across Vietnam's UNGA speeches provide valuable linguistic insight into the transformation of its foreign policy discourse. The heavy reliance on declaratives asserts ideological positions on peace, sovereignty, international law and development with clarity and authority. The gradual but deliberate use of imperatives, peaking in 2020, marks a shift toward global leadership and norm entrepreneurship, especially during crises and multilateral decision-making. The near absence of interrogatives reflects Vietnam's formal, declarative approach to diplomacy, focusing more on asserting vision than inviting

debate. This grammatical data, then, is not merely stylistic; it is ideological, strategic and reflective of Vietnam's journey from norm-follower to norm-shaper in the international arena.

6. Modal verbs

Table 4.4

Frequency of modal verbs used in the speeches

	Can	could	would	will	should	need	must
Speech							
2011	1	1	1	4	7	2	5
2012	0	0	1	5	2	0	7
2013	4	1	2	5	2	1	9
2014	1	0	0	5	3	0	5
2015	4	1	2	4	0	1	6
2016	6	0	0	6	2	0	8
2017	5	1	0	9	3	1	5
2018	4	0	5	4	6	1	4
2019	7	1	1	7	2	2	3
2020	2	0	2	3	4	2	5

The consistent and frequent use of "will" and "must" across the speeches, as observed from the above table, is a powerful rhetorical strategy that constructs Vietnam's foreign policy as forward-looking, principled and norm-driven.

The high frequency of "will" (ranging from 3 to 9 times) underlines Vietnam's proactive commitment to international cooperation. In the 2017 speech, the phrase "Vietnam will continue to be a proactive and responsible member of the international community" reflects not only commitment but Vietnam's desire to

shape its global identity as a reliable partner, particularly in peacekeeping, development and climate action.

Similarly, the modal “must”, used prominently in 2013 (9 times) and 2016 (8 times), serves to frame key issues as moral imperatives, not optional courses of action. For instance, in 2013, the speaker declared “We must respect international law and the Charter of the United Nations in resolving disputes”. This forceful modality aligns with the ideology of respecting international law and underscores Vietnam’s commitment to sovereignty and peaceful dispute resolution, particularly relevant to the tensions in the South China Sea (the East Sea). In 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, Viet Nam reiterated “We must strengthen multilateralism and global solidarity to overcome current crises”. This usage reflects Vietnam’s growing discursive leadership role, especially during its ASEAN chairmanship and UNSC membership, reinforcing the ideology of multilateralism and shared responsibility.

Furthermore, the modal “should”, though less forceful than “must”, carries ethical and advisory connotations, often used to frame policy suggestions without direct imposition. It is most frequently used in 2011 (7 times) and 2018 (6 times), both years in which Vietnam was emphasizing sustainable development and global cooperation. In 2011, the speaker noted “Countries should promote economic development alongside environmental protection”. This balances assertiveness with cooperation, reflecting the ideology of sustainable development while avoiding hegemonic tone, which is consistent with its diplomatic style of non-confrontational advocacy.

The use of “need”, while less frequent (0-2 times per speech), still serves to emphasize urgency. In the 2020 speech, the Secretary General and President stressed “We need to ensure that no one is left behind in recovery efforts”. This aligns with Vietnam’s commitment to inclusive development and human rights, particularly under the SDG framework, showing that “need” is employed in moments of humanitarian urgency.

Additionally, the modal “can”, appearing more frequently from 2015 onward, often signals collective potential or Vietnam’s growing confidence in its international role. For instance, in 2019, the speaker claimed “We can build a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Asia-Pacific”. This is not merely an optimistic claim; more than that, it is an ideologically loaded statement that envisions Vietnam as an agent in regional peace-building, aligned with its “bamboo diplomacy” ethos of flexibility and resilience.

“Could”, though rarer, softens propositions and introduces conditional or hypothetical nuances, useful in navigating complex or contested issues. In 2013, for example, “Unilateral actions could further escalate tensions in maritime disputes”. Here, “could” functions as a diplomatic warning, critical yet indirect, allowing Vietnam to critique behaviors without alienating specific actors, especially China.

Last but not least, the use of “would” (notably in 2018, used 5 times) reflects conditional commitments and polite diplomatic language. In contexts involving multilateral negotiations or offers of cooperation, “would” projects flexibility. For example, in 2018:

“Viet Nam would welcome enhanced cooperation in sustainable fisheries management”. This usage signals openness without binding obligation, maintaining diplomatic courtesy while extending conditional partnerships. It reflects Vietnam’s pragmatic approach to internationalism - pursuing cooperation grounded in principles and mutual respect.

In conclusion, the modal verbs used in the leaders’ UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 are not random grammatical features but strategic linguistic choices that reflect evolving ideologies and foreign policy objectives. The dominance of “will” and “must” underscores Vietnam’s proactive and principled stance, while “can” and “should” project possibility and advisory tone. The use of “could” and “would” allows for diplomatic nuance, critical in a multilateral forum. Ultimately, the speeches’ modality choices reflect the country’s transition from norm follower to

norm promoter, from defensive rhetoric to constructive global engagement and from regional actor to an emerging middle power with discursive influence.

4.1.3. Textual structures

A critical discourse analysis of the macro-structural organization of Vietnam's UNGA speeches (2011-2020) reveals a highly deliberate and ideologically charged rhetorical design. These speeches are not simply ceremonial performances or ritual affirmations of multilateralism; rather, they operate as *carefully structured diplomatic artifacts* that project Vietnam's *evolving identity in global politics*. Over the decade, their macro-organization reflects a movement *from cautious observer to active norm entrepreneur*, foregrounding the *five core ideologies of Vietnam's foreign policy*: peace and security, multilateralism and proactive integration, sustainable development and human rights, respect for international law, and active participation in global governance.

This strategic architecture is shaped by the principles of *bamboo diplomacy - firm in values but flexible in articulation, responsive to shifting geopolitical winds while rooted in enduring ideological commitments.* The following analysis outlines how this macro-structure functions as a discursive blueprint for asserting Vietnam's role in a turbulent international system.

1. Introduction as diplomatic signaling

Each speech opens with formulaic yet *ideologically meaningful greetings* to the President of the General Assembly and recognition of the Secretary-General. These routine acknowledgments are not mere decorum. Rather, they function as *discursive acts of institutional alignment* - Vietnam's reaffirmation of its *respect for international norms* and its *deep commitment to multilateral diplomacy*. The consistent use of honorifics and gratitude subtly reinforces Vietnam's identity as a cooperative, respectful actor, which is a typically rhetorical stance in international diplomacy.

This introductory structure supports the ideology of peace and stability through cooperation. By affirming procedural multilateralism, Vietnam situates itself within the rules-based international order and signals its rejection of unilateralism or exceptionalism.

2. Historical reflection and the moral authority of the UN

Following the formal opening, Vietnamese leaders invoke *historical narratives to reinforce the UN's normative authority and Vietnam's alignment* with it. References to the UN's founding purpose, its achievements in maintaining peace, and the lessons from past wars construct a historical continuum in which Vietnam presents itself as both *a beneficiary and a steward of multilateral institutions*.

In the 2020 speech, for instance, the statement "The United Nations must remain the centerpiece of a multilateral system based on equality, cooperation and mutual respect" not only honors the institution but subtly affirms *Vietnam's foreign policy of non-alignment, sovereignty and inclusivity*. These reflections anchor the ideologies of multilateralism and rule of law, which are within Vietnam's *discursive vision of a fair and just global order*, while echoing the *philosophical roots of bamboo diplomacy, which blends historical memory with contemporary adaptability.*

3. Framing global and regional challenges as shared threats

A central rhetorical function of the speeches is to articulate *contemporary global and regional challenges* - armed conflicts, climate change, pandemics, maritime disputes - not as isolated crises but as *transnational, shared threats*. Vietnam's leaders employ a consistent pattern: they *identify a problem, link it to systemic causes, and then offer multilateralism as the solution.*

The 2015 statement that "No country, no matter how powerful, can single-handedly solve global challenges" is ideologically rich: it rejects hegemony, advances interdependence, and affirms multilateral governance. Such language projects Vietnam as a principled critic of unilateralism and a champion of collective problem-

solving, reinforcing the *ideological commitments to international cooperation and sustainable development*.

This structural placement of problems and solutions also reveals a sophisticated positioning strategy: Vietnam critiques the system while proposing reform from within, mirroring *bamboo diplomacy's ethic of principled flexibility*.

4. Calling for UN reform

A significant shift occurs in the treatment of the UN itself. Earlier speeches focus on reaffirming the institution's centrality. By the mid-2010s, however, Vietnam's tone shifts from reverent endorsement to constructive critique. The 2016 speech's call for Security Council reform "to make it more democratic, transparent and representative" reflects an assertive discourse which frames Vietnam not just as a participant in global governance but as *a normative voice for equity and institutional renewal.*

This shift represents a *discursive maturation*: Vietnam moves *from passive norm follower to active reform advocate.* These calls are grounded in the *ideology of active engagement in global institutions and advocacy for reform* and are discursively consistent with Vietnam's *broader bamboo strategy: working within the system to promote inclusive change, rather than upending it.*

5. National contribution and responsibility

A recurring structural feature across all speeches is the strategic insertion of Vietnam's *national achievements*. These include *economic growth, poverty reduction, progress toward the SDGs, leadership in ASEAN, and peacekeeping participation.* This self-representation reinforces Vietnam's status as *a responsible stakeholder in global affairs.*

Notably, the 2019 speech affirms that "Vietnam will continue to be a reliable partner in promoting peace, development and human rights." The term "reliable partner" is *ideologically* constructs Vietnam as *trustworthy, proactive and value-aligned,* especially in relation to the Global South. This narrative supports ideologies one,

three, and five and performs dual work: *domestically legitimizing the regime and globally enhancing Vietnam's soft power.*

This rhetorical choice parallels *bamboo diplomacy's strategic posture - building partnerships based on trust and balance, while enhancing national prestige through consistency and contribution.*

6. Commitment to global development and ethical globalization

From MDGs to the 2030 Agenda, development is a structural constant. However, the framing of development evolves. Earlier speeches depict Vietnam as a recipient of assistance. Later ones, particularly from 2016 onward, reposition the country as a *contributor to South-South cooperation and sustainable innovation.*

In 2018 and 2019, references to "inclusive growth", "green economy" and "climate action" signal alignment with sustainability discourse and a desire to shape rather than merely follow global development norms. This evolution reflects the *ideological transition from dependency to partnership* and affirms *ideology of commitment to equity and social progress.*

Vietnam's self-framing here mirrors the *bamboo metaphor's layered symbolism*: *rooted in national resilience, yet dynamically outward-looking in shared responsibility.*

7. Concluding appeals as ideological closure

The speeches consistently end with *calls to solidarity, collective action and moral responsibility*. These are not superficial gestures; they serve as *ideological closures, synthesizing the themes of peace, cooperation and sustainable development into an inclusive moral vision.*

In 2020, amidst the global pandemic, the speech closes with: "Let us work together to build a world of peace, security and sustainable development for all." The phrase "for all" emphasizes Vietnam's *dedication to global equity and shared futures - core values of its multilateral identity and bamboo diplomacy ethos*.

In conclusion, the *macro-structure of Vietnam's UNGA speeches* is not merely a formal scaffold; it is a *discursive performance of foreign policy*. Each component, from diplomatic introductions to reform appeals, enacts Vietnam's *strategic orientation toward cooperative yet principled engagement* with the international system. By maintaining structural consistency and layering its speeches with increasingly assertive ideological content, Vietnam communicates *continuity in its diplomatic values* alongside *meaningful shifts in tone, ambition and agency.*

This rhetorical design reflects and reinforces the *logic of bamboo diplomacy*: Vietnam appears *flexible in discourse, adapting to global developments and institutional language, yet remains rooted in firm commitments to sovereignty, peace, equity, and multilateral order.* Through its UNGA speeches, Vietnam not only presents its foreign policy but performs its evolving identity as a resilient middle power seeking to influence global norms through persuasion, trust and ethical example.

In sum, the structural organization of the speeches is inseparable from Vietnam's foreign policy rearticulation over the decade. It represents not just a diplomatic script, but a dynamic ideological apparatus through which Vietnam negotiates its position in the world - *firm in principle, supple in strategy and increasingly influential in voice*.

4.2. Social construction of the ideologies and significant changes in Vietnam's foreign policy in the speeches of Vietnamese leaders at the UNGA from 2011-2020

This section critically examines how Vietnamese foreign policy ideologies and strategic shifts from 2011 to 2020 were not merely stated but actively constructed, legitimized and negotiated through political discourse at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Drawing on Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (1992, 2003), this analysis explores the dialectical relationship between language and social reality, emphasizing how discourse both reflects and shapes the ideational and material conditions of foreign policy formulation. In doing so, it moves beyond the textual level to unpack how foreign policy rhetoric operates as a

discursive practice embedded within *broader social structures, historical experiences and geopolitical constraints.*

Vietnam's UNGA speeches during this decade represent more than a chronological record of policy statements; they function as *performative texts that participate in the social construction of the country's global identity, values and diplomatic strategies.* These discourses are carefully crafted to balance *ideological consistency* with *pragmatic adaptability*, reflecting Vietnam's unique position as a postcolonial socialist state navigating an increasingly multipolar world. Through discourse, Vietnam positions itself as *a peace-oriented, development-driven and multilateral-engaged actor,* while simultaneously negotiating strategic space amidst intensifying U.S.-China competition, maritime disputes in the South China Sea (the East Sea) and the pressures of globalization.

Within Fairclough's CDA model, this section integrates *two key dimensions - discursive practice (Interpretation) and social practice (Explanation)* - to illuminate how discourse mediates between text and context. The discursive practice level examines how the speeches are produced, circulated and consumed within the institutional setting of the UNGA and how intertextuality, thematic consistency, and rhetorical devices (such as metaphor, personification and repetition) construct foreign policy narratives that are *ideologically coherent* and *diplomatically persuasive*. The social practice dimension then situates these narratives within Vietnam's evolving socio-political conditions, party doctrines, global governance structures and regional security challenges.

This dual-level approach enables a deeper interrogation of how Vietnam's *five core foreign policy ideologies* - peace and security; multilateralism and diversification; sustainable development and human rights; respect for international law; and active global engagement including UN reform - are discursively realized. The study reveals that these ideologies are not static or abstract, but dynamically articulated through strategic language use, embedded metaphors and repeated thematic patterns. The

metaphor of *"bamboo diplomacy"*, for instance, not only encapsulates *Vietnam's self-image as principled yet flexible*, but also reflects the *social construction of a foreign policy identity rooted in cultural symbolism, historical resilience, and strategic foresight.*

By analyzing the decade-long evolution of Vietnam's foreign policy discourse at the UNGA, this section provides a nuanced understanding of how state ideologies are linguistically enacted and legitimized. It demonstrates how Vietnamese leaders use discourse to project national interests, manage external perceptions and assert normative agency within a contested international order. In doing so, it shows that Vietnam's international positioning is not merely reactive but *actively constructed through language that draws upon both domestic political traditions and global diplomatic norms.*

4.2.1. Discursive practice

Situational context

Between 2011 and 2020, Vietnam's speeches at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) served not merely as official diplomatic statements but as powerful discursive instruments through which the Vietnamese leadership constructed, negotiated and disseminated evolving ideologies and strategic recalibrations in foreign policy. Within the framework of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this period can be seen as one of increasing discursive assertiveness and ideological coherence, marking Vietnam's transition from reactive diplomacy to a more proactive and norm-shaping international actor. These speeches do not simply describe foreign policy positions; they enact Vietnam's ideological orientation and embed the nation's diplomatic identity within broader global conversations.

Global and domestic drivers of change

The *global context of the 2010s was turbulent and highly consequential* for Vietnam's foreign policy formulation. Rising nationalism, the erosion of multilateral institutions, US-China geopolitical rivalries, the weaponization of trade, and the COVID-19 pandemic all challenged the stability of the global order. *Regionally*, the intensification of disputes in the South China Sea (the East Sea), especially after the 2014 Haiyang Shiyou 981 oil rig crisis, forced Vietnam to become more deliberate and sophisticated in projecting its sovereignty claims. *Domestically*, Viet Nam experienced robust GDP growth, expanding middle-class consumption, increasing foreign investment and institutional reforms that were increasingly aligned with global governance standards. These shifts were codified in *policy directives* such as Resolution No. 22-NQ/TW (2013) and embedded in the Foreign Policy Reports of the 11th and 12th National Party Congresses, which *emphasized proactive integration, multilateralism and the safeguarding of national sovereignty*.

It is within this *socio-political context* that *Vietnam's UNGA speeches* must be interpreted - not as isolated rhetorical performances but as *ideologically situated acts that reflect Vietnam's strategic recalibration*. This recalibration finds one of its most distinctive expressions in the concept of *"bamboo diplomacy"*, first formalized by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong in 2016 but evident in the discursive strategies employed as early as 2011. The *bamboo metaphor - firm in its roots, resilient in its trunk and flexible in its branches* - becomes a unifying narrative frame through which Vietnam articulates its diplomacy: *principled yet adaptive, rooted in sovereignty yet outward-looking.*

Throughout the decade, Vietnamese leaders consistently emphasized themes of peace, stability, multilateral cooperation and respect for international law - discursively enacting the *ideological "roots" of bamboo diplomacy*. These core values were not merely asserted; they were *repeatedly constructed through deliberate lexical choices and rhetorical techniques*. For instance, in the 2011 address, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh stressed that "peace, security and stability remain the

intense desire of all nations" and urged the international community to "cultivate a culture of peace and dialogue". The agricultural metaphor of "cultivation" not only humanizes the abstract idea of peace but also constructs diplomacy as an active, patient and moral endeavor, framing Vietnam as *a responsible cultivator of global harmony*.

By 2013, PM Nguyen Tan Dung advanced this discursive framework, stating that "the deadly hand of war, conflict, terrorism and violence lies in wait to take the lives of millions" and warning the international community not to "offer war a hand or look away". These metaphors frame peace and war as moral actors , which is central to *bamboo diplomacy's narrative*, which seeks to elevate Vietnam's image as a peace advocate grounded in historical struggle and moral clarity.

Repetition and metaphor further reinforce Vietnam's *long-standing emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference.* In the 2014 speech, the speaker asserted that "history has taught us that the paths that lead to wars and conflicts lie in obsolete doctrines of power politics". This invocation of history is both ideological and strategic, which places Vietnam's foreign policy within a narrative of learning, caution, and principled opposition to coercive behavior, particularly relevant in light of maritime tensions in the East Sea (the South China Sea).

The speeches also highlight Vietnam's *evolving global role and increased normative engagement.* From 2016 onward, there is a sharp increase in references to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with phrases such as "paving the way for partnership for people, the planet, peace and prosperity." Here, development and diplomacy are linked through forward-looking metaphors that echo *bamboo's symbolic "branches" - flexible, outward-reaching and cooperative.*

By 2018, PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc explicitly personifies the UN as "a symbol of global solidarity, the embodiment of humankind and progress", while calling for opportunities for peace to be "cherished and nurtured". These emotional appeals and

expressive constructions reinforce Vietnam's *commitment to ethical multilateralism and its desire to play a greater role in shaping the global agenda*.

The 2020 speech by President Nguyen Phu Trong, delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic, fully encapsulates the *maturity of Vietnam's diplomatic identity*. The UN is described as an "incubator for multilateral cooperation", and the pandemic as a "stern warning to us all". Vietnam's message is clear: *cooperation, resilience, and shared responsibility are not just ideals* - they are *strategic imperatives rooted in both principle and adaptability.*

In sum, across the decade, Vietnam's UNGA discourse enacts *bamboo diplomacy* not only through *policy content* but through *rhetorical and linguistic form*. Through repetition, metaphor and personification, the speeches construct a diplomatic identity that is *firm in core values* - peace, sovereignty, cooperation - but *flexible in adapting* to changing geopolitical currents. The *metaphor of the bamboo* becomes more than symbolic; it becomes *a discursive strategy* that allows Vietnam to project resilience, cultural coherence and strategic relevance on the global stage. Thus, the *foreign policy discourse of Vietnam at the UNGA during this decade is a product of - and a response to - a global system in flux and a domestic environment in transition.* The strategic deployment of discourse during this time reveals a Vietnam that is not only adapting to global change but actively seeking to shape it through a discourse grounded in national interest, moral authority and a culturally resonant metaphor of diplomacy. It is precisely this convergence of *global disruption and domestic transformation* that *enables Vietnam's bamboo diplomacy to emerge* not as rhetorical ornamentation, but *as a viable and ideologically coherent framework for navigating the complexities of 21st-century international relations.*

Recurrent ideological themes

A close analysis of the speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) from 2011 to 2020 reveals a *consistent yet dynamically evolving set of ideological commitments* that form the backbone of

Vietnam's foreign policy discourse. These commitments - though adapted in tone and emphasis across different contexts - center around *five core, interrelated ideological pillars:* (1) Commitment to peace, security and the peaceful settlement of disputes; (2) Support for diversification, multilateralism, proactive integration and international cooperation; (3) Support and dedication to human rights, social progress, and sustainable development; (4) Respect for international law and the UN Charter; and (5) Willingness to actively participate in global governance and advocacy for UN reform.

These five ideological pillars are not merely *declarative themes*; they are discursively constructed and reinforced through a range of rhetorical and lexical strategies that reflect *Vietnam's evolving self-presentation in the international arena*. The *consistent invocation of peace and cooperation*, for example, often takes the form of emotionally resonant metaphors, historical references and modal constructions ("must", "should", "need") that frame Vietnam's positions not just as diplomatic preferences, but as *moral imperatives*. The 2013 UNGA speech's call not to "offer war a hand" and to cherish "opportunities for peace" exemplifies this normative framing, which positions Vietnam as *a peace-oriented actor* rooted in a historical experience of conflict and resilience.

The theme of *multilateralism* is especially salient across the decade and serves as a *discursive anchor for Vietnam's broader diplomatic identity*. Initially framed in cautious and cooperative terms, this theme becomes increasingly assertive, with Vietnam transitioning from norm-following to norm-shaping rhetoric. By the latter half of the decade, particularly during its tenure as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (2020-2021), Vietnam's discourse emphasizes not only *adherence to multilateral frameworks* but also *the need to reform them*. The call for a more "democratic, transparent and representative" United Nations - repeated across multiple speeches - signals *Vietnam's desire to shift from a peripheral to a participatory and even leadership role in global governance structures*.

The theme of *sustainable development*, framed through references to the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Climate Accord and inclusive growth, is also integral to Vietnam's foreign policy discourse. Importantly, this theme is never articulated in isolation but is woven into a broader ideological fabric that links environmental stewardship with equity, social justice and international solidarity. The speeches regularly emphasize Vietnam's status as a developing country that has benefited from international support, thereby positioning itself as *both a beneficiary and advocate for global development justice.* This dual positioning serves to reinforce Vietnam's moral standing while expanding its *discursive role as a voice for the Global South.*

Equally prominent is the theme of *international law*, particularly in the context of maritime disputes in the East Sea (South China Sea). Throughout the decade, Vietnamese leaders consistently invoke *legalistic vocabulary* - "UNCLOS 1982", "peaceful resolution", "non-use of force" and "mutual respect" - to assert sovereignty while *maintaining a non-confrontational tone*. This rhetorical strategy functions as both *a shield and a bridge*: it defends Vietnam's territorial integrity while linking its claims to widely accepted international norms. Such a discursive posture reflects the *ideological logic of bamboo diplomacy*, where *firmness in principle* (sovereignty, legality) is balanced with *strategic flexibility and rhetorical restraint*.

Finally, Vietnam's *growing advocacy for global institutional reform* and its discursive positioning as *a "responsible member of the international community"* underscore the increasing sophistication of its diplomatic messaging. The UNGA speeches reflect *a steady expansion of Vietnam's ambition* - from asserting its place within existing structures to *subtly challenging the inequities of those structures*. The repeated calls for reforming the UN Security Council, increasing the voice of developing nations and ensuring inclusive global governance highlight *Vietnam's*

attempt to reframe itself not only as a subject of global order but as an agent in shaping its future.

Collectively, these ideological pillars are advanced not simply through policy content, but through *coherent discursive strategies:* repetition of key thematic vocabulary (e.g., “peace”, “sovereignty”, “cooperation”), intertextual alignment with international treaties and frameworks, lexical echoing of UN and ASEAN normative language and strategic rhetorical devices such as personification, metaphor and modal expressions. This *multidimensional construction of meaning* is what enables Vietnam to project a diplomatic identity that is simultaneously rooted in socialist values and responsive to a rapidly changing international environment.

In this way, *Vietnam’s foreign policy ideologies* are not static principles but *socially constructed positions shaped through discourse*. The progression observed in the UNGA speeches illustrates how discourse functions as a site where ideologies are performed, negotiated and legitimized on the world stage. The *metaphor of the bamboo* - articulated formally by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong in 2016 but *foreshadowed throughout the decade* - encapsulates this approach: *ideologically grounded, culturally coherent and diplomatically adaptive*. Through this discursive embodiment of bamboo diplomacy, Vietnam constructs a resilient and reformist international identity that speaks both to its historical experiences and to its strategic aspirations in a multipolar, uncertain global order.

Ideological continuity and strategic reframing

In the 2011 speech - delivered in the shadow of the *global financial crisis*, *Arab Spring*, and *heightening South China Sea tensions*, Vietnam positions itself as a *peace-seeking, cooperative actor committed to addressing transnational threats through multilateral channels.* Phrases such as “Tensions and conflicts persist…” and “Vietnam is committed to working with other Member States to revitalize the

General Assembly…" not only foreground Vietnam's *commitment to peace and cooperation* but also *implicitly critique the ineffectiveness of unilateral or hegemonic approaches.*

Importantly, these rhetorical choices reflect more than diplomatic routine. They signal Vietnam's desire for greater legitimacy and agency in global affairs following its WTO accession (2007) and growing leadership within ASEAN. Through *ideological expressions* such as "collective action" and "dialogue", Viet Nam subtly inserts itself into the global narrative of *cooperative problem-solving*, even as it *avoids explicit confrontation with dominant powers*.

Building on the 2011 speech's *emphasis on peace and multilateralism*, Vietnam's later addresses - particularly those in 2015 and 2020 - reveal a more assertive and sophisticated discursive posture, reflecting both *ideological continuity and strategic recalibration*. By 2015, Vietnam had not only *further integrated into the global economy* through its participation in high-level trade agreements (e.g., TPP negotiations) but was also navigating a *volatile regional security environment*, particularly in the South China Sea (the East Sea). This *dual context* is reflected in the 2015 UNGA speech, where references to "the observance of international law, especially the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)" signal *Vietnam's legalistic strategy of asserting sovereignty without direct provocation.* The consistent invocation of UNCLOS throughout the mid-2010s functions both as a normative anchor and as a discursive tool to position Vietnam as *a rational, law-abiding actor* within an increasingly polarized regional order.

In addition to legal rhetoric, the 2015 speech elevates Vietnam's engagement with global development goals, expressing commitment to the newly adopted 2030 Agenda. Phrases such as "inclusive growth", "equitable development" and "no one left behind" suggest an *expanded ideological scope - linking foreign policy not only with national security but also with global justice and sustainable development*. This indicates a strategic broadening of Vietnam's diplomatic identity, increasingly

framed around global governance norms rather than merely regional stability or bilateral relations.

By 2020, Vietnam's discursive strategy reaches a *new level of maturity*, shaped by its *dual role as ASEAN Chair and non-permanent member of the UN Security Council*. In a world destabilized by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 UNGA speech by Party General Secretary and President Nguyen Phu Trong frames the crisis as a "stern warning to us all" and calls for "human-centered development", "inclusive multilateralism" and "global solidarity". The tone here is both *urgent and aspirational* - Viet Nam speaks not only as a sovereign state but as a contributor to global norm-setting. The speech makes *extensive use of metaphor and personification* (e.g., referring to the UN as "an incubator of multilateral cooperation"), reinforcing Vietnam's image as *a reform-minded but principled actor*.

Crucially, this later discourse embodies the *full operationalization of bamboo diplomacy*: it maintains core ideological values such as peace, sovereignty and cooperation, while demonstrating tactical flexibility through broader rhetorical appeals to global equity, law and institutional reform. In this way, the 2011-2020 UNGA speeches form a coherent arc of *ideological consistency and strategic evolution - from moral observer to engaged middle power*. Through *calibrated language*, Vietnam constructs not only a foreign policy narrative but also a diplomatic identity that is at once historically rooted, morally persuasive and geopolitically adaptive.

Crises as catalysts for reaffirmation and normative agency

Global crises throughout the 2011-2020 decade function not only as *challenges to international stability* but also as *critical junctures through which Vietnam discursively reasserts and reshapes its ideological commitments*. These crises provide rhetorical openings that allow Vietnam to project its diplomatic identity, articulate normative values and affirm its alignment with global governance frameworks. Rather than retreating into defensive nationalism or reactive diplomacy,

Vietnam uses these moments to position itself as *a principled yet pragmatic actor* - particularly through the language of sovereignty, multilateral cooperation and development.

A key example is the COVID-19 pandemic, which in 2020 served as a discursive inflection point. In his UNGA address, General Secretary and President Nguyen Phu Trong declared:

"The COVID-19 pandemic serves as *a stern warning to us all*, requiring our *stronger commitments* and *stronger actions* to *promote sustainable, inclusive and human-centered development*." (2020)

This statement does more than express solidarity or call for crisis management. It is a rhetorical reframing of Vietnam's ideological stance, casting the country not merely as a stakeholder, but as *a voice of ethical and developmental leadership* within the international system. By emphasizing "human-centered" development, the speech foregrounds Vietnam's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while implicitly critiquing governance models that prioritize power politics over human security. The phrase also serves to bridge Vietnam's socialist developmentalist tradition with global multilateral discourse, highlighting a confluence between national ideology and international norms.

Earlier global disruptions - such as the Syrian civil war, rising nuclear tensions on the Korean Peninsula and the erosion of multilateralism under the Trump administration - are similarly recontextualized in Vietnam's UNGA speeches as opportunities to restate core diplomatic principles. For example, repeated references to "sovereignty", "non-interference" and "peaceful resolution" in speeches from 2013 to 2017 echo Vietnam's long-standing commitment to the sacredness of national borders and the rule of international law. These commitments are not merely rhetorical flourishes; they function as *ideological markers and discursive strategies* that assert Vietnam's identity as a state that values principled dialogue over coercion.

Furthermore, Vietnam's critique of unilateralism and power-based international relations is often couched in *multilateral language that seeks consensus rather than confrontation.* The 2014 speech, for instance, references "obsolete doctrines of power politics" as the root causes of contemporary conflicts. This lexical framing simultaneously denounces aggressive behavior while reinforcing Vietnam's normative alignment with the UN Charter and other international legal frameworks. Such language constructs Vietnam as both a victim of historical aggression and a forward-looking proponent of peaceful coexistence, allowing it to leverage its historical narrative for moral authority in the present.

Across these discursive moments, *Vietnam consistently draws on the lexicon of crisis* not as a departure from ideological coherence but *as a mechanism for reaffirmation.* The crises do not disrupt Vietnam's foreign policy discourse; they amplify it. In doing so, Vietnam discursively transitions from a country historically defined by struggle and post-colonial recovery to a "norm entrepreneur" capable of contributing to global ethical standards. This discursive shift reflects not only the *growing maturity of Vietnamese foreign policy* but also the *increasing importance of soft power and moral positioning in an international environment fraught with instability.*

From norm-taker to norm-shaper

Over the course of the 2011-2020 period, Vietnam's UNGA discourse reflects a *significant and deliberate rhetorical transformation - from that of a cautious norm follower to a proactive norm shaper*. This evolution signals not only Vietnam's changing material position in global politics but also *a shift in its discursive identity from a peripheral participant in international affairs to a confident, rules-based contributor to global governance.* Vietnam's speeches during this period are marked by increasingly assertive language, growing engagement with multilateral institutions and a strategic use of rhetorical devices to articulate its normative vision.

In the early part of the decade, Vietnam's foreign policy rhetoric remains aligned with universalist principles, yet it is carefully couched in moral appeals and cautious

criticism of the international system. In the 2013 speech, for instance, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung poses the rhetorical question:

"Humankind yearns for peace, so why is it that many regions remain under the constant threat of conflicts…?" (2013)

This question serves *multiple discursive functions*. On the surface, it is *a call to conscience*; but implicitly, it *critiques the failures of global institutions to prevent conflict, without directly assigning blame or confronting specific powers*. This rhetorical choice, simultaneously moral and measured, epitomizes Vietnam's early strategic posture: *principled but restrained, echoing the ethos of bamboo diplomacy*. The use of generalization and impersonal critique allows Vietnam to position itself as an ethical observer, maintaining non-alignment while subtly questioning the status quo.

However, by the latter half of the decade, particularly in the speeches delivered *between 2018 and 2020*, Vietnam's tone and positioning shift markedly. No longer content with simply aligning itself with existing global norms, *Viet Nam begins to foreground its own contributions to international order*. References to the country's leadership roles in major multilateral forums become more prominent. Statements such as "*Vietnam takes pride in being an active member of the United Nations*" and explicit mentions of Vietnam's successful chairing of APEC (2017), ASEAN (2020), and its non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council (2020-2021) are discursively significant. These remarks are not mere diplomatic acknowledgments; they function as performative acts of legitimacy, signaling that Vietnam sees itself as a co-author of the international rulebook.

This *shift in tone*, from deferential alignment to confident self-assertion, also involves *a discursive redefinition of Vietnam's identity*. Where earlier speeches presented Vietnam as a peace-loving, sovereign nation aligned with global norms, later speeches construct a more active identity: *a responsible stakeholder, a reform advocate and a voice for developing nations*. Vietnam's repeated calls for UN reform,

greater inclusivity and equitable development echo this transformation. These discursive moves - employing modal verbs like “must”, “should” and “need to” - suggest obligation and urgency, elevating Vietnam’s voice beyond passive support into the realm of norm entrepreneurship.

Moreover, this *rhetorical evolution* is *achieved without abandoning the diplomatic restraint characteristic of Vietnam’s foreign policy tradition*. Even as it asserts greater agency, Vietnam continues to avoid adversarial language or direct confrontation, especially in reference to sensitive issues like the South China Sea (the East Sea) or major power competition. Instead, it emphasizes legal frameworks, multilateral dialogue and mutual respect, discursively positioning itself as a mediator and builder rather than a disruptor. In this way, Vietnam uses language to construct a form of principled middle-power diplomacy: one that is assertive in ideas but calibrated in delivery.

In sum, Vietnam’s UNGA speeches over the decade reflect a clear progression from a norm-taker status, echoing existing global values and institutions, to that of a norm-shaper, actively proposing alternatives and advocating for structural reform. Through the strategic use of rhetorical questioning, narrative framing, modal constructions and selective self-presentation, Vietnam builds a discursive identity that is not only globally responsible but also increasingly influential. This discursive trajectory reinforces the central claim of *bamboo diplomacy:* that flexibility in form and firmness in principle can serve as a viable foundation for international legitimacy and soft power projection in a multipolar world.

Institutional embeddedness and strategic coherence

Vietnam’s discursive evolution at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) between 2011 and 2020 cannot be fully understood without considering its *tight embedding within domestic ideological, strategic and institutional frameworks*. The speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders on the global stage are carefully calibrated reflections of a *well-defined national strategy articulated through key policy*

documents. These include the *2011 Political Report* of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), the *2013 Resolution No. 22-NQ/TW* on international integration, and the *2019 Defence White Paper*. Together, these foundational texts construct the policy architecture from which Vietnam's foreign policy discourse emerges, ensuring consistency between national objectives and international messaging.

One of the most explicit examples of this alignment is the articulation of the "Four No's" defense policy in the 2019 *Defence White Paper*: (1) no military alliances, (2) no siding with one country against another, (3) no foreign military bases on Vietnamese territory, and (4) no use or threat of force. These principles are repeatedly mirrored in Vietnam's UNGA addresses through *rhetorical emphasis on "strategic trust", "respect for sovereignty", "non-interference" and the "peaceful settlement of disputes".* For instance, Vietnam's consistent invocation of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in reference to maritime tensions underscores a principled but non-confrontational approach to conflict resolution. This linguistic choice performs strategic restraint and positions Vietnam as a rules-based actor committed to order, not power projection.

This *convergence between domestic doctrine and international discourse* is a *strategic coherence that is central to the ethos of bamboo diplomacy* - firm in principle, flexible in expression. Vietnam's diplomatic posture is meticulously constructed to balance ideological commitment with geopolitical pragmatism. The integration of party directives into global rhetoric demonstrates that the country's engagement with international institutions is not simply reactive to external events, but proactively designed to advance long-term national interests while maintaining internal political legitimacy.

Moreover, Vietnam's institutional discourse increasingly exhibits *an advanced lexical repertoire drawn from the multilateral system*. Phrases such as "rules-based international order", "shared responsibility", "global partnership" and "inclusive development" appear frequently in the UNGA speeches. These expressions are not

merely rhetorical flourishes; they serve to align Vietnam's voice with the dominant idiom of international cooperation while subtly foregrounding its own policy priorities. The semantic convergence with UN discourse, especially around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate action and peacekeeping, allows Viet Nam to amplify its role without transgressing diplomatic boundaries.

Importantly, Vietnam's institutional embeddedness is also reflected in how it synchronizes domestic bureaucratic and party apparatuses with its foreign policy messaging. The implementation of *Resolution No. 22-NQ/TW* represents a *clear institutional commitment to comprehensive and proactive international integration not only in the economic domain but also in political, defense and socio-cultural fields*. This resolution called for the mobilization of all levels of government to pursue international engagement, leading to greater policy coherence across ministries and clearer alignment with the UNGA rhetoric. When Vietnamese leaders speak of "shared responsibility" or "common challenges" at the UN, they are giving voice to policy frameworks already debated, formulated and institutionalized domestically.

The notion of Vietnam as a norm-shaping actor is further supported by its use of *multilateral platforms* to push for structural reform. Calls for reform of the United Nations Security Council, for instance, are framed within discourses of justice, equality and institutional effectiveness - ideological principles that also appear in the *Political Reports* of the CPV. Thus, Vietnam's engagement with multilateral reform debates is grounded in *a consistent, long-term discourse shaped by domestic strategic consensus.*

In sum, the institutional and rhetorical alignment between Vietnam's domestic policy architecture and its global discursive performance reveals a highly coordinated foreign policy strategy. Through disciplined use of legalistic, multilateral and peace-oriented vocabulary, anchored in the doctrines of the CPV and formal state documents, Viet Nam crafts a foreign policy identity that is

coherent, credible and normatively resonant. This strategic coherence not only lends weight to Vietnam's diplomatic voice but also enhances its soft power by projecting a stable, principled and constructive image in an increasingly fragmented world.

Discursive influence as soft power

Over the decade from 2011 to 2020, Vietnam's speeches at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) reveal a *distinctive and increasingly sophisticated deployment of discourse* as a form of *soft power or "discursive diplomacy"*. This strategy involves the deliberate use of language not merely as a tool of expression but as *a subtle instrument of influence, identity projection and norm advocacy*. As Viet Nam consolidates its regional leadership and expands its global profile, these speeches illustrate how rhetorical performance becomes a means of foreign policy enactment, where carefully crafted words serve both symbolic and strategic functions.

Rather than resorting to adversarial or provocative language, Vietnam's UNGA rhetoric emphasizes cooperation, common challenges and shared aspirations. This deliberate toning-down of confrontation, particularly when addressing contentious issues like maritime disputes in the South China Sea (the East Sea), reflects Vietnam's *commitment to a soft power posture grounded in legitimacy, legalism and diplomatic prudence.* For instance, when asserting its maritime claims, the speeches avoid direct accusations and instead invoke widely accepted legal principles such as sovereign equality, non-interference, and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This legalistic framing enables Vietnam to articulate its position clearly while maintaining its credibility as a rule-abiding and peaceful actor. In doing so, Viet Nam avoids alienating regional powers and instead seeks to *construct a discursive coalition around the language of international law*, a strategic move that increases moral authority and diplomatic resonance without escalating tensions.

Furthermore, Vietnam's repeated use of relational expressions such as "a reliable partner", "a responsible member of the international community" and "sharing common values" contributes to its *soft power accumulation*. These phrases do not merely describe Vietnam's behavior; they actively construct an international identity rooted in trustworthiness, cooperation and ethical engagement. By framing itself as a state that values consensus, equity and partnership, Viet Nam not only builds its reputation within multilateral institutions like ASEAN and the UN but also cultivates symbolic capital among other Global South nations that similarly seek recognition within an often unequal international system. This relational rhetoric allows Viet Nam to brand itself as *a bridge-builder - between North and South, East and West, and between tradition and modernity.*

This form of *discursive soft power* is particularly powerful because it enables Vietnam to *transcend the limitations of hard power*. As a small- to middle-power state situated between larger geopolitical rivals, Viet Nam leverages discourse to punch above its weight. By positioning itself as a normative actor who speaks the language of peace, development, cooperation and multilateralism, *Viet Nam gains influence not through coercion or economic might, but through credibility and communicative agency*. It is this communicative strategy that enables Vietnam to simultaneously protect its sovereignty and project global responsibility, a balancing act that is central to the logic of *bamboo diplomacy.*

Crucially, these discursive practices are anchored in *an ideologically coherent foreign policy framework.* The speeches consistently echo Vietnam's *five foreign policy pillars:* peace and security; multilateral cooperation and diversification; human rights and sustainable development; respect for international law; and active participation in global governance. These pillars are not stated in isolation but are *discursively layered across years of UNGA speeches* through repeated rhetorical moves such as metaphor ("peace as a shared home"), personification ("the UN as the embodiment of humankind") and repetition of key values ("sovereignty," "dialogue," "inclusivity").

Such rhetorical strategies are emblematic of a broader narrative transformation: Vietnam is no longer merely adapting to the international order but seeking to contribute to it, reshape parts of it and reframe its own image within it. The gradual evolution from norm-follower to norm-promoter is enabled by Vietnam's ability to speak in the language of global ethics while advancing national interests. Through this soft discursive projection, Viet Nam has moved from the margins of international diplomacy to a more central position where its voice carries increasing moral and strategic weight.

To sum up, the UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 illustrate how Viet Nam has weaponized *language as a medium of persuasion, alignment and global engagement.* Discursive diplomacy - flexible yet principled, humble yet assertive - has become a core feature of Vietnam's foreign policy strategy. It exemplifies the *essence of bamboo diplomacy: bending with the winds of global change, yet rooted in deeply held values of independence, cooperation and international law*. In an era of geopolitical volatility and contested norms, Vietnam's rhetorical performance is a testament to how smaller states can still exert agency - not by dominating the system, but by shaping its narrative.

Intertextual context

Vietnam's UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 weave together a diverse range of *intertextual references* drawing from *historical memory, international legal frameworks, UN development agendas and domestic policy documents*. This intertextual layering serves not merely as rhetorical embellishment but as a *deliberate ideological strategy*: it positions Vietnam as a principled actor, anchored in sovereign legitimacy and committed to a multilateral order grounded in equity, legalism and sustainable development. These speeches function simultaneously as *diplomatic performance and ideological reaffirmation*, weaving together past, present and aspirational futures to narrate Vietnam's transformation from a war-torn nation to a normative stakeholder in global governance.

Establishing legitimacy through history

Throughout the decade, Vietnamese leaders strategically referred the country's *revolutionary legacy and post-war reconstruction as a moral foundation for its contemporary international engagement.* These references to history serve not merely as commemorative gestures, but as *powerful tools of discursive legitimation*, providing ethical authority and ideological coherence to Vietnam's foreign policy narratives. In critical discourse terms, such references function intertextually to bridge past sacrifices with present responsibilities, crafting a national identity that is both *historically conscious and diplomatically forward-looking*.

The consistent invocation of Vietnam's anti-colonial struggle, wartime endurance and national reunification constructs a *moral vocabulary through which contemporary foreign policy choices are justified*. The speeches suggest that Vietnam's position on peace, sovereignty and multilateral cooperation is a natural outgrowth of its historical experience. This is most evident in the 2011 UNGA speech, where the speaker connects Vietnam's war-to-peace trajectory with global stability: *"Vietnam's historical journey from war to peace serves as a testament to our commitment to global stability and development"*. This statement symbolically aligns Vietnam's painful past with its present role as a peace-seeking nation, invoking a collective ethos rooted in the ethical imperative to prevent conflict.

This historical framing directly mirrors ideological themes from the Communist Party of Vietnam's 11th National Congress Political Report (2011), which stressed the centrality of *peace, national independence and people-centered development as cornerstones of both domestic and foreign policy*. Importantly, the speeches do not simply reproduce historical tropes but recontextualize them in contemporary diplomatic language, making them relevant to the evolving geopolitical environment. Through this rhetorical linkage, Viet Nam presents its past as a source of normative credibility in multilateral settings like the UNGA, reinforcing

its calls for dialogue, development and non-intervention with a sense of moral urgency and experiential authority.

In the 2013 speech, this strategy is intensified through *emotive language*: “Having survived devastating wars of aggression and extreme poverty, our aspirations to peace and prosperity burn ever more brightly”. Here, the past is not a burden but a springboard that motivates Viet Nam to champion global peace and inclusive development. The metaphor of “aspirations burning brightly” suggests vitality, hope and transformation in favor of proactive, morally grounded engagement. This rhetorical choice positions Vietnam not as a passive recipient of international sympathy, but as an ethical actor offering lived insights into resilience, peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery.

By 2020, the interweaving of history and ideology culminates in a reference to President Ho Chi Minh’s early engagement with the international community: “President Ho Chi Minh, on multiple occasions, sent letters to the founding members of the UN, expressing *Vietnam’s desire to become a member of the Organization*.” This line serves as a discursive anchor, connecting Vietnam’s revolutionary leader, widely revered as a symbol of anti-colonial struggle, with the principles of *multilateralism and collective security*. The speech thus casts Vietnam’s entry into and engagement with the United Nations not as a recent development, but as a fulfillment of a longstanding national aspiration. This historical alignment constructs Vietnam’s multilateral diplomacy as ideologically consistent with its founding values, while simultaneously claiming a moral lineage that predates its formal membership in global institutions.

Moreover, this strategic invocation of national history resonates with broader trends in postcolonial diplomacy, where formerly colonized nations use historical narratives to articulate normative claims in international forums. For Viet Nam, this move bolsters its legitimacy not only among developing nations in the Global South but also within broader multilateral circles seeking to address legacies of

injustice and inequality in international relations. Through such discursive maneuvers, *Vietnam's history is transformed into soft power*, mobilized not to elicit pity or nostalgia, but to establish *a moral platform* from which to engage in global norm-setting.

In essence, *the historical references in Vietnam's UNGA speeches are carefully calibrated ideological resources*. They validate Vietnam's foreign policy positions, reinforce national identity and enable the country to speak with moral authority on issues of peace, development, sovereignty and international cooperation. This narrative continuity, linking revolutionary struggle to contemporary diplomacy, reinforces the image of Vietnam as a principled actor whose voice in global affairs is earned through experience, sacrifice and enduring commitment to a just world order.

Strategic alignment with global development agendas

Vietnamese leaders' UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 consistently demonstrate a sophisticated *rhetorical alignment with major international development frameworks* such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and broader UN-led multilateral initiatives. This alignment constitutes a *strategic discursive move* that situates Vietnam as a reform-oriented, globally responsible actor. Through the intertextual invocation of these development agendas, Viet Nam bridges domestic policy with international discourse, transforming its developmental narrative from one of aid-dependent recovery to one of principled participation in global norm construction.

In the 2011 UNGA speech, Vietnam's reference to the MDGs - "*Viet Nam is committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals as a part of our national development strategy*" - directly links international development frameworks with the domestic goals outlined in the Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2011-2020. This early expression of alignment performs *two simultaneous functions:* first, it reinforces Vietnam's legitimacy as a participant in the global governance of

development, and second, it positions the country as an example of how socialist-oriented market economies can contribute to global social progress. Notably, the themes of poverty alleviation, environmental sustainability and equitable growth that underpin the MDGs are echoed in Vietnam's own ideological narratives, especially those emphasized in Party Congress documents.

By 2014, Vietnam articulates *a more proactive role* in shaping global developmental discourse: *"Viet Nam is doubling its efforts to achieve all MDGs and is actively participating in the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda"*. This transition from implementation to participation reflects a discursive shift from norm-receiving to norm-contributing. Viet Nam is now seeking to influence the next generation of global development priorities. The reference to active participation in agenda-setting marks an *ideological repositioning within the global South*, allowing Viet Nam to speak not only on behalf of itself but also as a representative of other developing nations undergoing similar transitions.

As the global agenda shifted from the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, Vietnam's discourse similarly evolved. In the 2019 speech, the statement *"Vietnam is strongly committed to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change"* reveals an *enhanced discursive confidence*. The vocabulary of "strong commitment" and "full implementation" underscores Vietnam's determination not just to comply with global development norms but to internalize them into its own governance architecture. Indeed, this speech coincides with Vietnam's increased engagement in international climate diplomacy and its national implementation of the National Action Plan for the 2030 Agenda, which includes localized targets and indicators for the SDGs.

The 2020 speech, delivered amid the COVID-19 pandemic, exemplifies Vietnam's discursive agility and its effort to integrate crisis management with long-term development vision. In declaring, *"The 2030 Agenda should continue to be the*

framework for our cooperation to overcome this pandemic for sustainable recovery", Viet Nam not only underscores its adherence to UN goals but uses intertextuality as *a call to action*. The choice of "cooperation" and "sustainable recovery" elevates the SDGs from a development framework to a post-crisis roadmap, implying that Viet Nam sees itself as a normative stakeholder capable of guiding collective responses to shared global shocks. In this sense, the SDGs become a platform for Vietnam's discursive projection of leadership, particularly within ASEAN and among developing economies.

Furthermore, Vietnam's alignment with the Paris Agreement represents a notable discursive convergence between environmental diplomacy and national identity construction. The country frames climate responsibility as an integral part of its international credibility, often drawing on its vulnerability to climate change to advocate for global equity in environmental policy. This strategic self-positioning as both a victim and a responsible actor enhances Vietnam's soft power and builds discursive coalitions with other Global South countries advocating for climate justice.

Taken together, these rhetorical patterns reveal that Vietnam's intertextual use of international development agendas functions as more than performative diplomacy. It is a *carefully constructed discourse strategy* that enables the country to assert moral authority, advance national development goals and participate meaningfully in shaping global policy frameworks. In line with the tenets of *bamboo diplomacy*, Vietnam's references to the MDGs, SDGs and the Paris Agreement exemplify a balance of principled engagement and strategic adaptability, rooted in national interests but expressed through globally resonant language.

Legal discourse and the geopolitics of international law

Vietnam's *reliance on international legal discourse*, particularly the invocation of the United Nations Charter and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), emerges as *a core intertextual and ideological strategy* across

its UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020. This legal framing serves *multiple functions* beyond mere performative alignment with multilateral norms. At one level, it reinforces Vietnam's diplomatic identity as a responsible, law-abiding member of the international community. At another, it acts as a strategic counterbalance to asymmetrical regional power dynamics, especially in the context of ongoing tensions in the South China Sea (the East Sea). Vietnam's legal rhetoric thus blends principle with pragmatism, allowing it to protect its national sovereignty while simultaneously projecting normative legitimacy on the global stage.

By foregrounding international law, Viet Nam *tactically avoids direct confrontation with regional powers*, while still *making clear its positions on sovereignty and territorial integrity*. For example, Vietnam's speeches consistently refer to the importance of resolving disputes "in accordance with international law, particularly the 1982 UNCLOS", a phrase that recurs across multiple years (2013, 2015, 2016, 2019 and 2020). This repetition is *a calculated discursive maneuver* that frames Vietnam's maritime claims not in nationalist or militaristic terms but within a universally accepted legal framework. This strategy *aligns with what Fairclough (1992) refers to as the "naturalization of ideological positions" - the embedding of normative values within seemingly neutral legal language.*

In the 2015 speech, Viet Nam draws a direct connection between legality and development, stating: *"Our experience with the MDGs has shown that peace and stability are prerequisites for sustainable development"*. This formulation serves a dual rhetorical purpose. On the surface, it links Vietnam's development trajectory with the global MDG framework. At a deeper level, however, it invokes legal stability as the foundation for economic progress, subtly implying that breaches of international law (such as maritime coercion or territorial violations) threaten not just sovereignty but broader developmental aspirations. Here, legal discourse becomes an ethical and practical tool: a basis for peace and a precondition for sustainable progress.

The 2016 and 2018 speeches mark a *further evolution in Vietnam's legal intertextuality*, reflecting a shift from normative affirmation to critical engagement. In the 2016 speech, PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc declares that: *"The theme 'The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world' is very opportune as we embark upon turning our commitments into results"*. While this appears to be a conventional endorsement of the 2030 Agenda, the phrase "turning commitments into results" carries an implicit critique of the implementation gap in global governance. Viet Nam positions itself as a country not just committed to norms but actively working to realize them, implicitly contrasting its performance with that of more powerful but less cooperative actors.

This normative assertiveness becomes even more explicit in the 2018 speech: *"It is vital that the UN engage in strong and comprehensive reforms to improve effectiveness, democracy and transparency."* This is a notable moment in Vietnam's discursive evolution. The speech no longer merely cites the UN Charter or supports existing structures; it calls for reform. The key terms - "democracy", "transparency", "effectiveness" - signal a critique of entrenched power imbalances, particularly within the UN Security Council. At the same time, Viet Nam *avoids overt confrontation* by nesting its critique within a call for collective improvement, thus *maintaining diplomatic decorum while pushing for structural change*. This reflects a move from the discursive posture of a norm-follower to that of a norm-shaper - a country not only committed to rules but invested in redefining them.

Vietnam's repeated references to *"sovereignty", "non-interference", "strategic trust" and "peaceful settlement of disputes"* also echo *key tenets of its domestic security strategy*, particularly the 2019 Defence White Paper. That document codifies the "Four No's" principle: no military alliances, no siding with one country against another, no foreign bases on Vietnamese territory, and no use or threat of force. These commitments are discursively mirrored in Vietnam's UNGA speeches, reinforcing the consistency between domestic strategic doctrine and international rhetoric. Such

policy-discourse alignment is critical in bolstering Vietnam's credibility, signaling to both allies and adversaries that *its foreign policy is coherent, transparent and grounded in internationally accepted legal principles.*

Furthermore, Vietnam's legal discourse often contains intertextual appeals to shared values within the Global South, reinforcing *solidarity with other developing countries.* By referencing international law rather than bilateral grievances, Viet Nam embeds its national interests within a broader multilateralist logic *seeking justice through collective frameworks rather than unilateral power*. This discursive strategy not only legitimizes Vietnam's foreign policy but enhances its diplomatic capital, particularly in UN forums where normative authority often trumps material capability.

In summary, the use of *international legal discourse* in the leaders' UNGA speeches operates as a *layered and multifunctional strategy*. It legitimizes its positions, asserts sovereignty, critiques global power imbalances and strengthens alliances, while still maintaining the image of a peaceful, cooperative actor. This approach reflects the deeper logic of *bamboo diplomacy*: *resilient under pressure, principled in substance and flexible in form.* Through *legal intertextuality,* Vietnam engages in what might be called *"discursive deterrence",* using the language of law and norms to resist coercion, advocate reform and project soft power in a volatile geopolitical environment.

Institutional memory and multilateral participation

Vietnam's United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) speeches from 2011 to 2020 consistently deploy *institutional memory as a discursive resource* to reinforce its legitimacy as a longstanding and credible multilateral actor. Rather than referencing history for commemorative purposes alone, Vietnamese leaders construct a narrative of *sustained commitment to multilateralism as both a principle and a practice*. This narrative supports Vietnam's broader foreign policy aim of positioning itself not

merely as a participant in the global system, but as a constructive contributor to its reform and evolution.

The 2017 UNGA speech exemplifies this strategy by invoking Vietnam's admission to the United Nations in 1977: *"On 20 September 1977, Vietnam was admitted to the UN as its 149th Member… One day later, our Deputy Prime Minister addressed this Assembly."* This retrospective moment functions as more than a historical footnote. It discursively anchors Vietnam's present-day multilateral engagement within a long arc of principled diplomacy, thereby reinforcing the country's narrative of *ideological consistency and international trustworthiness*. The framing of this memory suggests not only a continuity of presence but also a continuity of purpose - Vietnam's integration into the international system is presented as part of a deliberate, value-driven trajectory, rather than as an opportunistic alignment with shifting power centers.

This sense of continuity is critically important in a global context where the legitimacy of actors, especially from the Global South, is often contingent on demonstrated commitment to international norms and institutions. By highlighting its 40-year engagement with the UN, Vietnam affirms its identity as a nation that has transitioned from war and isolation to active participation in the collective management of global affairs. In doing so, it discursively counterbalances the lingering perception of Viet Nam as a post-conflict or aid-dependent country, instead presenting itself as a competent and responsible stakeholder in global governance.

Vietnam's references to its non-permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2020-2021 term further reinforce this transformation. In the 2019 and 2020 speeches, Viet Nam emphasizes its intention to not only participate in, but also contribute to, institutional improvement and reform. Statements such as *"Vietnam will work with Member States to actively contribute to reforming the working methods of the Security Council"* (2019) and *"Further reforms*

should be undertaken to transform the UN into a stronger and more effective organization" (2020) signal a discursive shift from passive norm adherence to proactive norm advocacy. These serve as rhetorical acts that *reposition Viet Nam as an emerging middle power with reformist ambitions.*

This rhetorical posture aligns with broader trends in Vietnam's foreign policy, particularly the 2011 and 2016 Political Reports of the Communist Party and Resolution No. 22-NQ/TW on international integration (2013), all of which stress the need for *"active and proactive" participation in multilateral institutions*. The alignment between policy documents and speech discourse underscores that Vietnam's calls for institutional reform are part of a coordinated ideological and diplomatic strategy, not a reactive or symbolic gesture.

Furthermore, Vietnam's institutional rhetoric often emphasizes not confrontation but *"constructive cooperation"*. The frequent use of terms such as "working together", "reform", "transparency" and "effectiveness" in its UNGA addresses positions Vietnam within a discourse of collaborative governance, rather than oppositional dissent. This aligns with its strategic branding as a country that advances its interests through consensus-building and legalism, rather than coercion.

In sum, the use of institutional memory and multilateral engagement in the Vietnamese leaders' UNGA speeches performs several interrelated ideological functions: it legitimizes its presence on the global stage, aligns its national narrative with global governance norms and signals a discursive transition from participant to partner in shaping institutional futures. These strategies reinforce the central logic of Vietnam's *"bamboo diplomacy"* - an approach that blends principled consistency with adaptive flexibility, enabling Vietnam to navigate the complexities of international politics while maintaining its sovereignty and normative commitments. Through these discursive moves, Viet Nam continues to recalibrate its identity from a postcolonial actor in recovery to a confident contributor to multilateral reform and global peacebuilding.

South-South solidarity and discursive alliance-building

The use of *repeated expressions of solidarity with the Global South* in the speeches over the decade constitutes a vital discursive strategy that underpins its multilateral identity and foreign policy ethos. These references function as ideological commitments that position Vietnam as *an empathetic, morally engaged actor whose voice resonates with the aspirations of developing nations*. This positioning reflects both historical continuity and strategic necessity, given Vietnam's own postcolonial trajectory and its *desire to enhance international legitimacy through coalition-building.*

Throughout the 2011-2020 UNGA speeches, Viet Nam consistently frames itself as part of a broader community of nations striving for *equitable development, inclusive growth and fair access to global resources.* Phrases such as *"Vietnam stands in solidarity with other developing nations in advocating for equitable economic opportunities and resources"* (2011, 2015, 2019) and *"Developing countries should receive financial assistance, technological and commercial facilitation to realize the SDGs"* (2020) articulate a recurring ideological motif: justice through redistribution and inclusivity. These formulations not only reinforce Vietnam's alignment with the Global South but also mirror the long-standing principles of the Group of 77 (G77) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), with which Vietnam has historically associated itself.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, this solidarity rhetoric intensified. In 2020, Vietnamese leaders used the crisis as a platform to reiterate the developmental divide and call for greater international support for poorer nations. The speech emphasized that global recovery must be "human-centered" and "inclusive", echoing the equity-driven logic of *South-South cooperation*. Rather than casting blame or advocating zero-sum competition, Vietnam's discourse positioned the pandemic as a collective challenge demanding cooperative, multilateral solutions rooted in mutual support and developmental fairness. This rhetorical framing not only resonated with the core

values of the UN's 2030 Agenda but also reaffirmed Vietnam's commitment to being a responsible and empathetic actor within global governance.

Critically, Vietnam's solidarity discourse performs *proactive ideological work* by asserting Vietnam's relevance and authority in development debates, despite its middle-power status. By articulating shared grievances and aspirations of the Global South in diplomatic venues such as the UNGA, Viet Nam discursively expands its influence beyond its material capacity. It becomes a *symbolic representative of collective interests*, especially among Southeast Asian and postcolonial states navigating the constraints of an asymmetric international system.

This discursive strategy also reinforces *Vietnam's bamboo diplomacy*, which combines principled commitments with strategic flexibility. Rather than pursuing great-power alliances or adversarial posturing, Vietnam seeks to *mediate tensions, promote dialogue, and act as a "bridge" between global North and South*. This ethos is particularly visible in Vietnam's language of partnership: "reliable partner", "trusted member" and "shared development". These relational expressions reinforce its soft power appeal, presenting Viet Nam as a consensus-seeker and ethical leader, rather than a disruptive force.

In summary, Vietnam's intertextual invocations of South-South solidarity are deeply embedded in both its historical experience and contemporary diplomatic strategy. They serve as discursive scaffolding for broader ideological aims - peace, justice, sovereignty and development - and allow Vietnam to project a principled yet pragmatic image on the global stage. More than simple nods to shared identity, these references operate as tools of soft power, coalition-building and norm advocacy. They reflect Vietnam's transformation from a passive beneficiary of international discourse to an active contributor to the shaping of a more inclusive, equitable and law-governed international order. This evolution is emblematic of Vietnam's broader foreign policy trajectory - rooted in the resilience of postcolonial identity but oriented toward cooperative, forward-looking diplomacy.

4.2.2. Social practice

The final dimension of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) - social practice - situates the Vietnamese leaders' UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 within the broader socio-political, institutional and historical conditions that shape and are in turn shaped by discourse. This dimension moves beyond the immediate textual and discursive levels to interrogate how larger structures of power, ideology and social change inform and are reproduced through the language of diplomacy. Within this framework, the UNGA speeches are not merely ceremonial or performative utterances; they are *strategic and ideologically situated interventions that reflect Vietnam's evolving foreign policy identity amidst a rapidly transforming global order.*

These speeches emerge at the intersection of domestic reform, regional security dynamics, and global governance challenges. They reflect how Vietnam responds to the simultaneous pressures of globalization, strategic competition and internal modernization. Rather than being reactive, these discourses function as active sites for the articulation and legitimization of Vietnam's long-term foreign policy objectives, as well as its normative worldview. They demonstrate how Vietnam discursively navigates the complexities of 21st-century international politics, asserting sovereignty while engaging with multilateral institutions, preserving ideological continuity while adapting to new global norms and maintaining independence while fostering international partnerships.

At the heart of this discursive evolution are *five interwoven ideological commitments* that structure Vietnam's diplomatic discourse: (1) peace and security, (2) multilateral cooperation and diversification, (3) sustainable development and human rights, (4) the rule of international law, and (5) active participation in global governance, including advocacy for United Nations reform. These ideological threads are not rigid or abstract doctrines but are continuously negotiated and contextualized through evolving speech acts, reflecting both long-standing values and shifting strategic imperatives.

Situational level:

The period from 2011 to 2020 unfolded against an *increasingly volatile and fragmented international backdrop*, which posed *profound challenges* to the principles of multilateralism and international cooperation that Vietnam had long upheld in its foreign policy discourse. *Globally*, the decade was marked by the erosion of the liberal international order, brought about by the aftershocks of the 2008 global financial crisis, the disillusionment with globalization in advanced economies, and the rise of nationalist, populist and unilateralist currents in foreign policy, particularly visible in the U.S. under the Trump administration and in the UK's Brexit referendum. These developments signaled not only growing skepticism toward multilateral institutions like the UN and WTO but also a retreat from consensus-based rule-making processes that had underpinned post-Cold War global governance. Against this backdrop, *Vietnam's UNGA speeches took on heightened strategic and symbolic significance* - as sites for *reaffirming multilateral norms, defending international law and projecting Vietnam's diplomatic resilience*.

Regionally, the Asia-Pacific witnessed intensifying strategic competition between the United States and China, which had profound implications for Vietnam's geopolitical posture. Viet Nam, situated along vital maritime routes and a key claimant in the South China Sea (referred to domestically as the East Sea), found itself increasingly exposed to escalating tensions, especially following the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff between China and the Philippines and China's controversial placement of the Haiyang Shiyou 981 oil rig in Vietnamese-claimed waters in 2014. These flashpoints amplified Vietnam's security anxieties and underscored the need to assert its sovereignty and territorial integrity while avoiding military escalation. The speeches delivered during this period, particularly in 2015 and 2016, reflected this complex balancing act. Vietnam's rhetorical strategy centered not on confrontation but on reaffirming its principled stance within the framework of international law, notably the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS): "We

call for the settlement of disputes in the East Sea through peaceful means on the basis of international law, especially the 1982 UNCLOS". This carefully crafted language reflects the essence of Vietnam's *"bamboo diplomacy"* - firm in principle, yet flexible in expression - allowing the country to assert sovereignty while reinforcing its identity as a responsible and peace-seeking international actor.

Domestically, this decade was transformative for Vietnam's economic and diplomatic profile. Following its accession to the WTO in 2007, Viet Nam entered a period of accelerated global integration marked by ambitious trade agreements such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA), and later the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). These developments bolstered Vietnam's economic resilience and signaled its commitment to a liberal trading order even as other states wavered. The country's middle-income rise, expanding global investments, and increased participation in international institutions demanded a diplomatic posture that was not only defensive but forward-looking. This necessity shaped Vietnam's UNGA discourse in ways that emphasized shared global challenges - climate change, development gaps, non-traditional security threats - thus repositioning Vietnam from a rule-follower to a constructive rule-shaper.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 became a defining moment for this rhetorical shift. *Vietnam's 2020 UNGA speech, delivered at the height of the global health crisis, signaled not merely a response to an emergency, but a reassertion of Vietnam's ethical and diplomatic leadership on the world stage*. President Nguyen Phu Trong called on the international community to pursue "human-centered, inclusive and sustainable development" and advocated for the 2030 Agenda as the guiding framework for global cooperation in overcoming the pandemic. This appeal framed Viet Nam as not just a participant in recovery, but a moral voice advocating for solidarity, equity and shared responsibility - ideals that resonate strongly with Vietnam's historical identity and socialist orientation. The use of terms such as

"human-centered" and "inclusive" reflects a strategic alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while also reinforcing Vietnam's developmental legitimacy and South-South solidarity.

In this turbulent situational context, the *UNGA speeches* from 2011-2020 become more than diplomatic declarations; they are *strategic performances that articulate Vietnam's ideological positioning and project its evolving international identity*. The consistent invocation of "peace", "dialogue", "cooperation" and "international law" reflects not only deeply rooted national values but also deliberate discursive choices aimed at safeguarding Vietnam's interests without alienating key partners or provoking geopolitical antagonism. This linguistic restraint, expressed through balanced modal constructions, legal citations and collectivist pronouns, reveals how Viet Nam uses discourse to navigate structural vulnerabilities while elevating its normative voice in global governance.

In sum, *the situational context of 2011-2020 - marked by global disorder, regional uncertainty and domestic transformation - shaped the contours of Vietnam's foreign policy discourse at the UNGA.* These speeches served not only as expressions of national policy but as interventions in the broader international debate over sovereignty, multilateralism and equitable development. Through these performances, Viet Nam demonstrated its capacity to adapt to external pressures while reaffirming a consistent ideological core, positioning itself as a stable, principled and diplomatically agile middle power within a contested international system.

Institutional level:

At the institutional level, Vietnam's engagement with the United Nations is not merely a matter of protocol or symbolic diplomacy. It is a *calculated and ideologically informed exercise in multilateral positioning.* Within the ten UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020, Vietnam consistently frames the UN as both a necessary cooperative platform and an arena of normative contestation. These dual roles - affirming established multilateral norms while simultaneously challenging the

structural inequities embedded in the international order - are discursively articulated through carefully calibrated lexical and rhetorical strategies. This reflects the underlying principle of *"bamboo diplomacy":* an approach that privileges principled adaptability, allowing Viet Nam to assert its national interest while maintaining a posture of constructive engagement.

Throughout the decade, Vietnam's leaders have *leveraged the UNGA stage to call for reform of international institutions,* particularly the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). These reform demands are not expressed in radical or disruptive language; rather, they are framed within the UN's own discursive vocabulary, emphasizing values such as "representativeness", "transparency", "efficiency", "democracy" and "accountability" (2014, 2020), underscoring not just procedural critique but a principled *call for inclusive global governance*. For instance, in 2014, Viet Nam stated unequivocally: *"The Security Council must be reformed in both membership and working methods",* echoing a long-standing concern among Global South states about the imbalance of power in global governance. By 2020, this appeal had evolved into a more confident yet diplomatically cautious assertion: *"Further reforms should be undertaken to transform the UN into a stronger and more effective organization"*. These lexical choices perform *multiple ideological functions*. First, they position Viet Nam within a community of reformist states advocating for a more equitable international system. Second, they reaffirm Vietnam's alignment with procedural legitimacy, distancing it from both revisionist and status-quo extremities.

Crucially, these calls for reform are not isolated discursive moves but are *grounded in Vietnam's broader foreign policy orientation* as articulated in *official documents* such as the 2011 Foreign Policy Review and the Resolutions of the 11th and 12th National Party Congresses. These texts emphasize the *strategic value of multilateralism, independence and proactive international integration.* By echoing these priorities in its UNGA speeches, Viet Nam embeds institutional critique within its national ideological framework. The alignment between domestic policy platforms

and international discourse is deliberate, and it serves to legitimize Vietnam's reform agenda both at home and abroad. It demonstrates that Vietnam's foreign policy is not simply reactionary or defensive, but programmatic - shaped by an evolving vision of multilateral diplomacy.

The institutional discourse of Vietnam's UNGA speeches is particularly noteworthy in light of its roles as ASEAN Chair in 2020 and as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the 2020-2021 term. These positions are discursively constructed as proof of Vietnam's growing credibility as a responsible stakeholder in global governance. For example, the 2019 UNGA speech includes the line: *"Viet Nam will work with Member States to actively contribute to reforming the working methods of the Security Council"*. This declaration performs *an ideological role,* establishing Viet Nam as a contributor to international norm-setting. Importantly, Vietnam's rhetorical restraint - avoiding inflammatory language or overt anti-hegemonic postures - reinforces its identity as a cooperative reformer rather than a disruptor.

Such positioning marks a *notable discursive shift*. During the Cold War and immediate post-Doi Moi years, Vietnam's diplomatic voice was largely reactive, centered on regaining legitimacy and securing developmental assistance. By the 2010s, however, Viet Nam had developed the institutional confidence to transition from norm-follower to norm-promoter. This transformation is linguistically reflected in the increased use of first-person plural pronouns ("we", "our responsibilities"), modal verbs expressing obligation ("must", "should"), and declarative mood structures that present Vietnam's reform proposals as reasoned and necessary rather than aspirational or deferential. The result is a coherent discursive strategy that projects Viet Nam as a stable middle power, capable of bridging divides and fostering dialogue between the Global North and South.

In this regard, *Vietnam's institutional discourse diverges meaningfully from much of the political speech literature within Critical Discourse Analysis.* While prominent

CDA studies - such as those by Wang (2010), Unvar & Rahimi (2013), and Houda (2016) - tend to focus on electoral rhetoric, domestic policy justification, or symbolic performances of identity (gender, nationalism, etc.), few engage with the strategic use of discourse in the context of institutional reform or middle-power diplomacy. Vietnam's UNGA discourse thus *fills a critical gap:* it offers an example of discursive multilateralism from a developing state that neither rejects nor blindly conforms to global institutional structures. Rather, it seeks to incrementally re-shape them through principled, diplomatic engagement.

Comparative insights further reinforce the distinctiveness of Vietnam's institutional discourse. While Lu & Zhou (2024) examine China's use of discursive power to reframe U.S.-China relations and elevate China's international status, Vietnam's rhetorical strategy is notably more modest. Instead of asserting great power leadership, *Viet Nam carefully aligns its reform proposals with widely accepted global principles* - such as sovereignty, equality, peaceful coexistence and respect for international law. This "institutional modesty", combined with strategic assertiveness, allows Vietnam to maintain legitimacy across a range of international partners, including both established powers and fellow members of the Global South.

Thus, Vietnam's UNGA discourse at the institutional level operates on *three overlapping dimensions.* First, it reaffirms Vietnam's principled commitment to multilateralism and rule-based governance. Second, it identifies and critiques systemic asymmetries in global institutions, particularly in decision-making structures like the UN Security Council. Third, it performs the practical application of bamboo diplomacy: adapting tactically to changing global dynamics while maintaining fidelity to core values such as equity, sovereignty, and cooperation. Through this discursive positioning, Viet Nam emerges not as a passive participant in the international system but as a reform-minded co-architect - a role that speaks both to its national aspirations and to the broader need for more inclusive global governance.

In sum, the institutional dimension of Vietnam's UNGA discourse from 2011 to 2020 is a revealing site of ideological articulation and strategic diplomacy. It illustrates how a middle-power actor can mobilize discursive tools - careful lexical framing, modal expressions of obligation, institutional references and intertextual policy alignment - to assert agency within an unequal international order. Vietnam's approach exemplifies a distinctive form of soft norm entrepreneurship - subtle yet persistent, grounded in legalistic and ethical appeals and calibrated to advance both national and collective interests in a volatile global environment.

Societal level:

At the societal level, Vietnam's UNGA speeches from 2011 to 2020 serve as more than outward-facing diplomatic articulations. They are deeply inward-looking acts of *ideological reaffirmation, historical continuity and national identity construction*. From the perspective of Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 2003) Critical Discourse Analysis, this level situates discourse within the *wider socio-cultural and ideological context*, revealing how language both reflects and reproduces the power relations, values and historical narratives of the society it emerges from. In this context, Vietnamese leaders' speeches at the UN General Assembly must be understood not as isolated or ceremonial statements, but as performative discursive practices that reproduce collective memory, legitimize political authority and project Vietnam's postcolonial identity as a morally grounded and globally responsible state.

Vietnam's revolutionary legacy, rooted in decades of anti-colonial resistance, socialist nation-building and postwar reconstruction, is central to the ideological scaffolding of these speeches. References to national heroes like President Ho Chi Minh, to the wartime struggle, and to the transition from conflict to peace are deployed not as nostalgic commemorations, but as strategic acts of discursive legitimation. In the 2020 speech, for instance, the reminder that *"President Ho Chi Minh, on multiple occasions, sent letters to the founding members of the UN…"* is more than historical recollection - it performs a discursive linkage between Vietnam's

revolutionary origins and its contemporary role in global multilateralism. It affirms a *long-standing ideological continuity between domestic legitimacy and international activism*, framing Vietnam's foreign policy as the natural extension of its historic mission for justice, sovereignty and peace.

Such invocations of history function at *multiple discursive levels*. Internally, they reinforce regime legitimacy by framing Vietnam's diplomatic behavior as a principled continuation of its revolutionary ethos - resistant to hegemony yet open to multilateral cooperation. Externally, they construct Vietnam's identity as a legitimate and credible voice in international affairs, especially among Global South nations that share a similar trajectory of colonial subjugation and developmental struggle. As early as the 2011 UNGA speech, leaders emphasized Vietnam's transformation "from war to peace" as evidence of its moral authority in peacebuilding efforts. This rhetorical pattern continued into 2020, where the discourse reaffirms that Vietnam's voice on global governance is not rooted in material power but in historical struggle, ethical resilience and developmental success.

This discourse is also *ideologically aligned with the foundational values* of the Vietnamese state: socialism, independence and collective progress. Vietnam's unwavering emphasis on sovereignty, territorial integrity, peace and sustainable development throughout the decade is inseparable from its socialist worldview, which privileges national dignity, egalitarianism and international solidarity. The 2019 speech, for instance, asserted that *"Viet Nam remains strongly committed to sustainable development, social progress and environmental protection"* - a triad of values that blends socialist ethics with globalist ambitions. These values are also institutionalized in Vietnam's key strategic documents, including the Political Reports of the 11th and 12th Party Congresses and the Socio-Economic Development Strategies (2011-2020; 2021-2030), ensuring coherence between domestic and international discourse.

A particularly salient aspect of this societal-level discourse is Vietnam's alignment with Global South solidarity narratives. The consistent calls for "financial assistance, technological and commercial facilitation" for developing countries - reiterated most clearly in the 2020 speech - function not merely as policy demands, but as expressions of ideological kinship and shared postcolonial experience. These appeals reflect Vietnam's position as both a former recipient and an emerging provider of international cooperation. By positioning itself within the moral geography of the Global South, Viet Nam performs a dual discursive role: it affirms its own developmental success story while also advocating for a more inclusive and equitable international order.

As CDA scholarship such as Mandene (2022) and Orungbeja (2022) has shown, political speeches are not just vehicles for information transmission. They are performative sites where national identity is enacted, negotiated and contested. In Vietnam's case, this identity performance is tightly bound to ideological values of socialism, multilateral solidarity and sovereign integrity. Through the strategic use of repetition, metaphor, historical framing and institutional alignment, Vietnam's UNGA speeches become not only diplomatic expressions but discursive reassertions of national purpose. These texts reaffirm Vietnam's identity as a postcolonial state that seeks not domination, but fairness and representation - both within and beyond the United Nations system.

Crucially, these speeches also embody what Trinh & Vu (2024) describe as the extension of "bamboo diplomacy" from internal political culture to external communication platforms. Bamboo diplomacy, rooted in Vietnamese cultural metaphors of flexibility and resilience, is an ideologically embedded worldview. At the societal level, it is enacted through discourses that are principled in tone, rooted in history, inclusive in vision and reformist in aspiration. These attributes enable Viet Nam to navigate structural inequalities in global politics without abandoning its core ideological commitments. The societal discourse thereby functions as the "roots" of

bamboo diplomacy, grounding the country's foreign policy in deeply internalized notions of justice, memory and national pride.

In sum, the societal level of Vietnam's UNGA discourse from 2011 to 2020 reveals a layered, coherent and highly strategic discursive project. By invoking revolutionary history, aligning with socialist and developmental values, and positioning itself as a Global South advocate, Viet Nam constructs a diplomatic identity that is both domestically legitimized and internationally persuasive. This identity evolves through the decade, responding to global crises, regional shifts and domestic reforms, but it remains rooted in a consistent ideological framework. As such, Vietnam's societal-level discourse reflects the *dual ambition of its foreign policy:* to act as a bridge between historical justice and future-oriented diplomacy, and to project a voice that is humble in power but confident in purpose.

Integrating scholarly contexts

Although Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been widely employed to investigate political rhetoric, much of the existing scholarship has focused predominantly on major powers, particularly the United States and Europe, and often emphasizes domestic or symbolic political communication over sustained foreign policy discourse. For instance, Wang (2010) and Unvar & Rahimi (2013) analyzed Barack Obama's speeches through the lenses of transitivity and rhetorical structures to uncover ideological appeals, but their focus remains on campaign discourse and identity construction within a national context. Faiz et al. (2020) applied Fairclough's CDA model to President Trump's Jerusalem speech, exploring foreign policy rhetoric; yet, their study remains anchored in ideological stance rather than broader institutional critique or multilateral strategy. Similarly, while Sharififar and Rahimi (2015) contrast Obama's and Rouhani's UN speeches using CDA to explore ideological difference, their analysis primarily centers on micro-level linguistic features without contextualizing these within long-term geopolitical realignments or the foreign policy evolution of middle powers.

In the Southeast Asian context, the scope of CDA research remains uneven. Pham and Ngo (2022), for instance, analyze Vice President Kamala Harris' 2021 remarks in Ha Noi, but the study reflects the U.S. framing of diplomacy rather than Vietnamese self-articulation. Trinh and Vu's (2024) investigation of "bamboo diplomacy" in digital journalism offers a compelling account of how national identity and foreign policy are mediatized in domestic discourse. However, it operates largely within the realm of media representation and does not engage with the primary diplomatic texts of Vietnamese leaders themselves. Meanwhile, broader efforts to link CDA with foreign policy analysis - such as Carta & Morin (2014) on EU external action or Lu & Zhou (2024) on Chinese diplomatic discourse - suggest the utility of CDA in mapping the ideological functions of diplomatic language, but such applications to Vietnam's discourse remain rare.

This thesis fills a critical scholarly void by systematically applying Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework to a decade of Vietnamese UN General Assembly speeches (2011-2020), a unique dataset that spans diverse geopolitical moments - from post-global financial crisis recovery to rising U.S.-China competition and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike most existing research, this study does not isolate individual speeches for snapshot analysis. Instead, it traces the ideological evolution of a middle power over time, revealing patterns of continuity and recalibration embedded within Vietnam's foreign policy discourse. By focusing on five interwoven ideological domains -peace and security; multilateral cooperation and diversification; sustainable development and human rights; respect for international law; and active global engagement with a push for UN reform - the study uncovers the rhetorical architecture through which Vietnam negotiates its international identity and agency.

Through detailed analysis of discursive features such as thematic vocabulary, relational expressions, personification, metaphor, repetition, nominalization, and textual structures, the thesis demonstrates that Vietnam's foreign policy rhetoric is

not only a vehicle for normative expression but a tool of strategic positioning. It reveals how Vietnam discursively constructs “bamboo diplomacy” not as an abstract slogan but as a performative strategy of resilience and flexibility. The bamboo metaphor, as invoked in both official policy speeches and academic interpretations, encapsulates a diplomacy rooted in firmness of principle and adaptability in action - qualities reflected in Vietnam’s careful balance between asserting sovereignty and promoting multilateralism, between contesting power asymmetries and preserving diplomatic legitimacy.

In conclusion, by situating Vietnamese UNGA discourse within the three levels of Fairclough’s Explanation dimension - situational, institutional and societal - this study shows that these speeches are far more than ceremonial formalities or reactive articulations. They are performative acts of national identity and ideological assertion, rooted in history yet responsive to contemporary challenges. At the situational level, the speeches respond to shifting global dynamics - the South China Sea (the East Sea) tensions, economic transformation and global health crises - by articulating a discourse of legalistic firmness and cooperative restraint. At the institutional level, Vietnam emerges not merely as a rule-follower but as a reformist voice, strategically leveraging multilateral platforms like the UN to call for a more equitable and representative global order. At the societal level, the speeches anchor their legitimacy in revolutionary history, socialist values and a moral commitment to peace, justice and inclusive development.

In doing so, Vietnam’s leaders use discourse not just to reflect foreign policy but to actively shape it, transforming their role from postcolonial recipients of global norms into co-constructors of the international system. Through bamboo diplomacy, Viet Nam performs a balancing act that enables it to maintain ideological coherence while exercising strategic flexibility. This research thus contributes to both CDA and foreign policy scholarship by demonstrating how language functions as a core instrument of small-state agency, soft power and normative influence in a contested

world. The case of Viet Nam, in mainstream discourse studies, offers a powerful example of how carefully constructed political speech can serve not only as reflection but as intervention - projecting sovereignty, solidarity and reform-minded internationalism in the global arena.

Summary of the analysis

The critical discourse analysis of ten speeches delivered by Vietnamese leaders at the United Nations General Assembly (2011-2020) reveals how language is strategically employed to represent, legitimize and construct ideological positions and evolving foreign policy directions. Through Fairclough's three-dimensional model, encompassing textual description, discursive interpretation and social explanation, the study uncovers how linguistic choices function not only as rhetorical devices, but also as mechanism for ideological reproduction and diplomatic identity construction.

Description:

This study employs Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to examine how Vietnamese leaders strategically construct and communicate foreign policy ideologies through ten United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) speeches delivered from 2011 to 2020. The analysis reveals a coherent and adaptive discursive trajectory that reflects both continuity in national ideological commitments and significant shifts in diplomatic identity, particularly under the evolving strategy of "bamboo diplomacy".

Textual analysis

At the *vocabulary level*, the speeches are characterized by a consistent deployment of *thematic vocabulary* reflecting Vietnam's *five core foreign policy ideologies*: "peace", "sovereignty", "cooperation", "multilateralism" and "international law". These terms signal Vietnam's identity as a rule-abiding, peace-oriented actor. *Relational expressions* such as "put people at the centre", "reliable partner" and "no one left behind" frame Vietnam as a responsible and empathetic global participant.

Expressive values are conveyed through *personification* (e.g., “multilateralism is facing acute challenges”) and *metaphor* (e.g., the UN as an “incubator for cooperation”), which serve to humanize institutions and dramatize global stakes, in line with Vietnam’s ethical and reformist posture.

Grammatically, nominalizations such as “peaceful resolution”, “reform” and “sustainable development” abstract processes into ideological entities, reinforcing their normative value. *Repetition* of modal verbs like “must”, “need” and “should” reinforces commitment and urgency, while *pronouns* such as “we” and “our” promote collective identity and solidarity with both the international community and the Global South. The *dominant use of the active voice* and *declarative mode* constructs Viet Nam as a confident, proactive actor asserting its agency.

The speeches also feature structured textual elements *(problem-solution textual structure*), which help enhance cohesion, amplify moral clarity and reinforce key ideological messages. References to the UN Charter, UNCLOS and the 2030 Agenda anchor Vietnam’s discourse within an institutional and legalistic framework, projecting both legitimacy and global alignment.

Discursive practice (Interpretation)

The discourse reflects Vietnam’s transition from a reactive, postcolonial diplomatic posture to one of strategic engagement and norm entrepreneurship. Through intertextual references to development agendas, legal frameworks and historical narratives, the speeches construct an identity that balances traditional socialist values with pragmatic internationalism. Vietnam frames itself as a small state with moral credibility, capable of contributing to peace, sustainability and institutional reform. This is not just a rhetorical shift but a rearticulation of national identity that aligns with domestic policies and international aspirations.

Social Practice (Explanation)

At the *situational level*, the speeches respond to global and regional disruptions, including U.S.-China rivalry, maritime disputes and the COVID-19 pandemic. Vietnam's language avoids confrontation while affirming sovereignty, employing legalistic and cooperative framing to assert agency without escalation - an expression of bamboo diplomacy's principle of flexibility rooted in consistency.

At the *institutional level*, Vietnam's discursive engagement with the UN positions it as both a beneficiary and reformer of the international order. Through repeated calls for Security Council reform and equity in global governance, Viet Nam articulates a critical yet constructive voice aligned with other Global South actors. These performances of institutional critique - grounded in normative language - project Viet Nam as a middle-power reformer, not merely a rule-follower.

At the *societal level*, the speeches embed national values such as independence, resilience and solidarity. Historical references to Ho Chi Minh and the anti-colonial struggle link Vietnam's moral authority to its past sacrifices, legitimizing its present diplomatic stance. Discursive solidarity with developing nations and emphasis on the SDGs reflect the integration of socialist ideology with global responsibilities. This alignment constructs a coherent foreign policy narrative that draws from national history while shaping a forward-looking, globally integrated identity.

Conclusion

To sum up, the analysis reveals that language in Vietnam's UNGA speeches operates as a critical tool for representing, negotiating and constructing ideologies and foreign policy changes. Through precise lexical choices, modal constructions and rhetorical strategies, the speeches articulate a vision of Vietnam that is ideologically consistent yet globally adaptive: a sovereign, peaceful, socialist-oriented state that actively engages in shaping international norms and institutions.

The evolving discourse reflects a dialectic between continuity and change, where longstanding principles (e.g., sovereignty, non-intervention) are recontextualized

within a new global role. Thus, Vietnam's foreign policy is not only communicated through language but socially constructed and legitimized through discourse, as leaders strategically mobilize linguistic resources to navigate the complex terrain of international politics and project a coherent, evolving national identity on the world stage.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. Recapitulations

The critical discourse analysis of ten UNGA speeches by Vietnamese leaders (2011-2020) demonstrates how language operates as a strategic instrument for articulating core foreign policy ideologies and constructing a coherent diplomatic identity. These speeches are not simply ceremonial performances; they are ideologically loaded and discursively structured reflections of Vietnam's transition from a postcolonial state into a norm-shaping, middle-power actor. Throughout the decade, Viet Nam consistently reinforces its commitment to peace, sovereignty, multilateralism, sustainable development, adherence to international law and active global engagement, all of which are distinguished features of "bamboo diplomacy": a foreign policy doctrine that emphasizes principled flexibility and strategic adaptability.

From a linguistic standpoint, thematic vocabulary such as "peace", "cooperation", "sustainable development", "sovereignty" and "international law" consistently signal the country's ideological alignment with rule-based multilateralism and collective problem-solving. In addition, the speeches employ a wide range of rhetorical and grammatical strategies that project Vietnam's foreign policy posture with precision and nuance. The dominance of declarative sentences constructs an authoritative and confident tone, portraying Viet Nam not as a reactive actor, but as a reliable and proactive contributor to global governance.

Equally significant is the use of modal verbs like "will", "must" "should" and "need" which express obligation and urgency, framing Vietnam's foreign policy proposals as both principled imperatives and globally relevant contributions. Repetition of key ideological expressions and structures across years, particularly in relation to the UN Charter, the Sustainable Development Goals and peaceful dispute resolution reinforces continuity and moral consistency. Furthermore, the personification of

institutions (e.g., the UN as a nurturing “incubator”) and metaphorical framings (e.g., Vietnam as a “reliable partner” or a “bridge for cooperation”) enhance the ethical and relational resonance of Vietnam’s discourse.

Grammatical features such as nominalization (e.g., “resolution,” “reform,” “development”) abstract political processes into ideological commitments, giving permanence and normative weight to Vietnam’s proposals. Pronoun usage, especially collective forms like “we” and “our” constructs a national voice embedded within a global collective, echoing both solidarity with the Global South and Vietnam’s vision of inclusive governance.

The speeches also demonstrate a problem-solution textual structure. They typically begin by reaffirming Vietnam’s core principles and highlighting its domestic achievements, thereby establishing the nations credibility and moral authority. This is followed by the identification of pressing global issues such as climate change, armed conflicts and economic inequality, which serve to contextualize Vietnam’s concerns within broader international challenges. The final stage offers solutions, with the leaders consistently advocating for international solidarity, adherence to the UN Charter and multilateral cooperation. This structured approach not only enhances the logical flow of the discourse but also reinforces Vietnam’s image as a principled actor offering constructive contributions to global governance.

Ideologically, the speeches consistently reflect Vietnam’s commitment to national sovereignty, peaceful and sustainable development, respect for international law and multilateral cooperation. The leaders consistently emphasize the peaceful resolution of disputes, especially in maritime contexts, which reflects Vietnam’s strategic emphasis on legal mechanisms and diplomacy rather than force. Additionally, the persistent invocation of the UN Charter and international law signals Vietnam’s intent to align its voice with broader international norms while safeguarding its sovereignty and national interests.

Significantly, the decade covered by the speeches marks an important transitional phrase in Vietnam's foreign policy. Viet Nam shifted from a more reserved international posture to one characterized by proactive integration, strategic balancing and enhanced participation in global institutions. Earlier speeches from 2011-2013 tended to focus more on national development and post-war recovery narratives. However, later speeches reflect a more assertive tone, with increased references to global leadership roles, international law enforcement and regional stability, especially in relation to the South China Sea (the East Sea). This evolution mirrors broader policy shifts in the foreign policy of the country that seeks to diversify partnerships and strengthen Vietnam's global voice.

Additionally, it can be easily seen that Vietnam's policy of "bamboo diplomacy" is evident throughout the speeches. This approach, characterized by flexibility and resilience, is reflected in the way Viet Nam navigates complex international issues. The leaders' speeches show a balance between upholding Vietnam's national interests and contributing to global peace and stability. This diplomatic strategy allows Viet Nam to adapt to changing global dynamics while maintaining its core principles of independence and sovereignty.

In summary, the discourse analysis of the ten speeches presented by Vietnamese leaders at the UN General Assembly from 2011-2020 demonstrates the consistent use of assertive, principled and diplomatically calibrated language to project Vietnam's ideological stances and foreign policy priorities. The speeches not only reaffirm Vietnam's strong commitment to peace, multilateralism and sustainable development but also highlight a significant transformation in the country's international role - an evolution shaped by both global trends and Vietnam's unique diplomatic philosophy.

5.2. Implications

Drawing from the analysis of Vietnamese leaders' speeches at the UN General Assembly from 2011 to 2020, several implications could inform future studies:

Initially, future research could further explore how specific language choices reflect broader diplomatic strategies. Analyzing the evolution of rhetorical strategies in Vietnamese speeches could reveal shifts in Vietnam's foreign policy priorities and its adaptation to global diplomatic norms.

Furthermore, investigating the ideological shifts over time in these speeches could provide insights into Vietnam's changing domestic and international priorities. This would be valuable for understanding how Vietnam's political landscape influences its international posture and diplomatic behavior.

Since the study's focus includes Vietnam's "bamboo diplomacy", future studies might examine how this concept evolves and interacts with other diplomatic strategies. Examining its effectiveness in different geopolitical contexts could shed light on the broader implications of Vietnam's diplomatic approaches and its strategic navigation between major global powers.

Additionally, comparing Vietnamese speeches with those of other nations could highlight distinctive features of Vietnam's diplomatic style and offer a broader perspective on its place in the global arena. Such comparative studies might also reveal how different countries construct narratives around similar global challenges and advocate for their interests.

Moreover, assessing the impact of these speeches on international relations and Vietnam's global image could provide concrete evidence of how rhetorical strategies translate into diplomatic outcomes. This would involve evaluating the responses and actions of other countries and international organizations following Vietnam's engagement at the UN.

Beyond linguistic and political implications, this study can serve as a valuable reference point for future interdisciplinary research, spanning fields such as international law, political science, international relations, communication studies,… Understanding how political discourse is structured and deployed in international

arenas can enrich legal and political analyses, inform communication strategies and guide diplomatic practice.

Further studies could also contextualize these speeches within the broader historical and geopolitical developments of the decade. Understanding the historical backdrop can help clarify the motivations and objectives behind the rhetorical choices. Additionally, investigating how these speeches are perceived domestically within Vietnam could offer insights into the relationship between international messaging, national identity construction and public opinion.

Overall, these implications can guide future research by identifying key areas of focus and methodologies for a more comprehensive understanding of Vietnam's diplomatic rhetoric, ideological positioning and international engagement.

5.3. Limitations

While the analysis Vietnamese leaders' speeches offer valuable insights into the country's diplomatic language and ideological positioning, several limitations of the study should be acknowledged for a more balanced and comprehensive understanding:

Firstly, although the study highlights key rhetorical patterns and ideological themes, it does not fully integrate a detailed analysis of the historical and geopolitical contexts surrounding each speech. Without a deeper contextual understanding, it might be challenging to fully grasp the motivations, pressures or opportunities that shaped the leaders' rhetorical choices. Significant domestic developments or global events influencing Vietnam's discourse during the decade may not be fully captured.

Secondly, the exclusive focus on the speeches delivered at the UN General Assembly might provide a limited view of Vietnam's overall diplomatic strategy. While the UNGA is a crucial platform for international engagement, other diplomatic arenas such as ASEAN summits, bilateral visits or regional forums also play significant roles in shaping and expressing Vietnam's foreign policy.

Broadening the scope to include multiple platforms could offer a more nuanced and comprehensive picture.

Thirdly, the study may not account for how evolving international relations and domestic political dynamics influenced shifts in language use and rhetorical strategies over time. A more dynamic analysis incorporating policy documents, media discourse or diplomatic communications could enrich the findings.

Furthermore, while every effort has been made to maintain analytical rigor, the interpretation of rhetorical strategies and ideological shifts can be subjective and may vary based on the analyst's perspective.

Recognizing these limitations opens pathways for future research to adopt a broader, more interdisciplinary approaches, integrate deeper contextual analysis and apply comparative frameworks for a more holistic understanding of Vietnam's diplomatic discourse.

5.4. Recommendations

To build on the current analysis of Vietnamese leaders' speeches at the United Nations General Assembly, further studies can explore additional dimensions to provide a more nuanced understanding of Vietnam's diplomatic rhetoric. Key areas for deeper investigation include historical and geopolitical context, language nuances and a broader analysis of Vietnam's diplomatic activities across multiple international platforms. By incorporating these factors, future research can offer richer insights into Vietnam's foreign policy strategies and their long-term impact on global diplomacy. The following recommendations aim to address existing gaps and expand the scope of analysis.

Firstly, future research could incorporate a detailed analysis of the historical and geopolitical context of each speech to better understand the motivations and implications of the rhetoric. This could involve examining major global and regional events that influenced Vietnam's foreign policy.

Secondly, researchers could expand the study to include Vietnam's diplomatic activities on other international platforms and forums, such as ASEAN, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) or bilateral meetings, to provide a more comprehensive view of its diplomatic strategies.

Furthermore, researchers could also conduct longitudinal studies to track changes in rhetoric over a more extended period, including pre-2011 and post-2020, to understand long-term trends and shifts in Vietnam's diplomatic approach.

Further studies could also consider incorporating quantitative methods, such as frequency analysis of key terms and themes to identify patterns and trends in the rhetoric more systematically.

Studies could also explore how these speeches were received by the Vietnamese public and international media. This could provide insights into the impact of the rhetoric on both domestic and international perceptions.

Comparative studies with speeches from leaders of other countries could also be employed to identify similarities and differences in diplomatic rhetoric and strategies. This could help situate Vietnam's approach within a broader global context.

In summary, by addressing these limitations and incorporating these recommendations, future studies could offer a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of Vietnam's diplomatic rhetoric and its implications.

5.5. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the researcher, acting as both a lecturer and a diplomat, plays a pivotal role in linking academic analysis with practical diplomatic engagement. The in-depth examination of Vietnamese leaders' speeches at the UN reveals key insights into the strategic use of language and ideology in diplomacy, providing both theoretical contributions and real-world applications. Moving forward, it is crucial for the researcher to continue building on these findings, applying them in diplomatic settings to influence policy and international relations. By integrating

the academic precision of discourse analysis with the flexibility required in diplomacy, the researcher can help shape more informed, strategic decisions in global forums. This follow-up stage not only enhances scholarly understanding but also strengthens the practical implementation of Vietnam's foreign policy and its global positioning.

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31. Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam: Văn kiện Đại hội đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ IX, Văn phòng Trung ương Đảng.
32. Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam: Văn kiện Đại hội đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ X, Văn phòng Trung ương Đảng.
33. Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam: Văn kiện Đại hội đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ XI, Văn phòng Trung ương Đảng.
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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

SPEECHES OF VIETNAMESE LEADERS AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY FROM 2011-2020

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APPENDIX 2

THEMATIC VOCABULARY SUPPORTING THE KEY IDEOLOGIES

Key ideologies conveyed in the speeches by Vietnamese leaders at the General debates of the UN General Assembly from 2011-2020:

(1) Commitment to peace, security and peaceful resolution of disputes

(2) Support for diversification, multilateralism, proactive integration and international cooperation

(3) Commitment and dedication to human rights, social progress and sustainable development

(4) Respect for international law and the UN Charter

(5) Commitment and willingness to participate actively in international affairs and Advocacy for United Nations reform

Thematic vocabulary supporting the key ideologies:

(1) List of words and phrases emphasizing commitment to peace, security and peaceful resolution of disputes:

2011 speech: "peaceful settlement of disputes" "peace processes" "peace, security and stability" "peace and security in the Eastern Sea" "civil wars and local conflicts"	**2012 speech:** "world peace and security" "instability and conflicts" "dialogue and international law"
2013 speech: "safe, peaceful, prosperous, and happy life" "prevention of disputes, conflicts, and wars"	**2014 speech:** "contributions to the work of our organization"

“condemnation of the use of chemical weapons” “violence in the Middle East and North Africa” “maritime security and freedom of navigation” “East China Sea and South China Sea” “respect for independence, sovereignty, and cultural traditions” “strategic trust among nations”	“central role in the promotion of the system of rules and norms of international law” “solutions to global challenges” “collaboration and joint efforts” “multilateral institutions and forums” “cooperation and linkages” “global community”
2016 speech: “Asia-Pacific region” “Korean peninsula” “South China Sea” “peaceful resolution” “international law” “security threats”	**2017 speech:** “sustaining peace” “conflict prevention” “nuclear disarmament” “regional stability” “security Council” “disarmament”
2018 speech: “peaceful societies” “conflict prevention” “human rights promotion” “security and stability” “disarmament efforts” “global peace”	

(2) List of words and phrases emphasizing support for diversification, multilateralism, proactive integration and international cooperation:

2011 speech: "international cooperation" "multilateral cooperation" "universal membership" "global governance" "multilateral negotiations" "Member States" "multilateral diplomacy" "regional stability" "ASEAN" "Treaty of Amity and Cooperation" "ASEAN Regional Forum" "East Asia Summit" "confidence-building mechanisms"	**2013 speech:** "role of the United Nations and the Security Council" "peacebuilding and preventing conflicts" "international law" "United Nations Charter" "major powers to lead by example" "global collaboration" "address poverty, disease, environmental protection, and natural disasters" "regional organizations" "Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)" "maritime security in the South China Sea" "peace, stability, and security in East Asia"
2014 speech: "contributions to the work of our Organization" "central role in the promotion of the system of rules and norms of international law" "solutions to global challenges" "collaboration and joint efforts" "multilateral institutions and forums" "cooperation and linkages" "global community"	**2015 speech:** "ASEAN cooperation" "South China Sea issues" "global partnerships" "economic development" **2016 speech:** "multilateral cooperation" "international law" "United Nations reform" "peace and stability" "effective international institutions"

“Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)” “ASEAN Community in 2015” “political-security cooperation” “economic cooperation” “social-cultural cooperation” “regional architecture with ASEAN at the centre” “common rules and norms for the region”	
2017 speech: “multilateralism” “United Nations” “cooperation” “global challenges” “diplomacy” “international institutions”	**2018 speech:** “United Nations” “multilateral cooperation” “global solidarity” “international leadership” “cooperative efforts” “global challenges”
2019 speech: “United Nations” “multilateral institutions” “global governance” “international law” “collective security” “cooperation” “dialogue”	**2020 speech:** “multilateralism” “United Nations” “global cooperation” “inclusivity” “collective action” “ASEAN” “regional organizations” “peace and stability” “economic integration” “Southeast Asia”

(3) List of words and phrases emphasizing commitment and dedication to human rights, social progress and sustainable development

2011 speech:	**2012 speech:**
“sustainable development” “Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)” “equitable and sustainable development” “socio-economic development strategy” “global development platform” “Human Rights Council” “human rights mechanisms” “dialogue and experience-sharing” “social progress”	“sustainable development” “poverty” “social justice” “Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)” “inclusive, sustainable, and green development” “human rights” “Human Rights Council” “rule of law” “state of the people” “social progress” “environmental protection”
2013 speech:	**2014 speech:**
“deforestation” “resource exploitation” “pollution” “global warming” “post-2015 development agenda” “environmental protection” “sustainable development goals”	“post-2015 development agenda” “realize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)” “sustainable development” “economic restructuring” “job creation” “balanced, inclusive, and sustained growth” “green economy” “international economic linkages” “reform global economic” “trade governance”

	“economic cooperation” “promote and respect fundamental rights and freedoms” “active and constructive role as a member of the Human Rights Council” “dispatched military officers to the United Nations peacekeeping mission” “Economic and Social Council” “Security Council” “human rights” “ending economic sanctions” “targeting of civilians” “support to regional and subregional programmes”
2015 speech: “Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)” “post-2015 development agenda” “sustainable development” “poverty reduction” “environmental protection” “human rights” “social justice” “inclusive development”	**2016 speech:** “SDGs” “economic restructuring” “social justice” “environmental protection” “development strategies”
2017 speech: “2030 Agenda” “sustainable development goals (SDGs)” “economic development” “poverty alleviation”	**2018 speech:** “sustainable development goals (SDGs)” “economic growth” “poverty reduction” “international integration”

“reform” “technology transfer”	“environmental sustainability” “sustainable future” “peaceful societies” “conflict prevention” “human rights promotion” “security and stability” “disarmament efforts” “global peace”
2019 speech: “poverty eradication” “quality education” “sustainable development goals (SDGs)” “maternal and child health” “climate action” “Paris agreement”	**2020 speech:** “sustainable development” “2030 Agenda” “inclusive development” “human-centered development” “No one left behind”

(4) *List of words and phrases emphasizing respect for international law and the UN Charter*

2012 speech: “upholding international law” “United Nations Charter” “rule of law” “1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)” “peace and security”	**2013 speech:** “international law” “United Nations Charter”
2015 speech: “respect for international law”	**2016 speech:** “multilateral cooperation”

“peaceful conflict resolution” “non-use of force”	“international law” “United Nations reform” “peace and stability” “effective international institutions”
2017 speech: ‘international law” ‘Charter of the United Nations” ‘diplomatic processes” ‘dispute settlement” ‘legal frameworks” ‘treaties”	**2018 speech:** “international law” “UN Charter” “global norms” “treaty obligations” “commitment to peace”
2019 speech: “respect for international law” “UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)” “dispute settlement” “unilateral embargoes” “sovereign rights”	**2020 speech:** “international law” “diplomacy” “peaceful resolution” “unilateral sanctions” “conflict resolution”

(5) List of words and phrases emphasizing commitment and willingness to participate actively in international affairs and advocacy for United Nations reform

2011 speech: “reliable friend and partner” “responsible member of the international community” “United Nations reforms” “universal organization” “global peace and development”	**2012 speech:** “reform of the United Nations” “strengthening the General Assembly” “Economic and Social Council” “expansion of Security Council membership” “reform of its working methods”

2014 speech: "United Nations must accelerate its reform process" "Security Council must be reformed" "reform process in a comprehensive, balanced, transparent, and equal manner" "respond to global challenges" "adapting to a constantly changing world"	**2015 speech:** "UN reform" "Security Council reform" "organizational effectiveness"
2016 speech: "Vietnam's foreign policy" "independence and self-reliance" "UN peacekeeping operations" "UN Security Council candidacy" "development contributions"	**2017 speech:** "Vietnam's role" "peacekeeping" "human rights" "regional cooperation (ASEAN, APEC)" "national development" "commitment"
2018 speech: "UN reforms" "transparency" "accountability" "democratic processes" "regional cooperation" "ASEAN collaboration"	**2019 speech:** "UN reform" "transparency" "accountability" "effectiveness" "inclusivity" "Security Council reform"
2020 speech: "UN Security Council" "dialogue" "de-escalation" "global security" "non-permanent member"	

APPENDIX 3

LIST OF NOTABLE WORDS AND PHRASES EXPRESSING RELATIONAL VALUES IN THE SPEECHES

2011 speech:	**2012 speech:**
"On behalf of the Vietnamese delegation"	"On behalf of the delegation of Viet Nam"
"I wish to congratulate you"	"extend my warmest congratulations to you, Sir"
"your unanimous election as President of the General Assembly"	"I am confident that under your stewardship"
"I am confident that your diplomatic skills and experience"	"I appreciate the excellent work done by the Secretary-General"
"express my deep appreciation to Mr. Joseph Deiss"	"We would like to welcome the theme proposed for this year's general debate"
"significant contributions to the fruitful outcome"	"This theme is of particular relevance in today's world"
"congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon"	"We believe that the success of this General Assembly session"
"with the cooperation of member countries"	"Nations must strongly commit to the fundamental principles of international law"
"We most warmly welcome the Republic of South Sudan"	"We must promote dialogue and the use of peaceful means"
"Peace, cooperation, and development remain the over-arching themes of our time"	"We must not accept the imposition of sanctions like those against Cuba"
"call for effective responses and collective action"	"Viet Nam commends the work done by the United Nations"
"commends you, Mr. President, on the theme"	"We expect the Organization will continue to build further upon its experience"
"Never has the United Nations been so relevant and so urgently needed"	"The United Nations must step up efforts in disarmament"
"The Organization undoubtedly enjoys a unique legitimacy"	"Viet Nam fully supports ASEAN's six-point principles statement"
"We deeply value the initiatives"	

“The international community looks to the Organization as a source of inspiration and strength” “support efforts to end violence and strengthen national reconstruction and reconciliation” “We affirm our strong support for Palestine’s efforts” “strongly calls for an end to the economic embargo against the Republic of Cuba” “committed to working with other member states” “enhance the overarching role of the Economic and Social Council” “Viet Nam is a reliable friend and partner” “We shall work closely with the other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)” “strongly committed to that endeavour”	“We urge developed countries to fulfil their pledges” “Viet Nam has consistently been an active and responsible member” “pursuing the policy of proactive international integration” “Viet Nam continues to contribute actively to the work of the United Nations” “We look forward to the Assembly’s support” “Viet Nam always endorses efforts to enhance the role and effectiveness of the United Nations”
2013 speech: “distinct honour” “sincere congratulations” “deepest respect” “continuing work of the United Nations” “latent dangers” “community of nations” “give peace every possible chance” “unpredictable developments” “policy of peaceful resolution” “legitimate interests” “respect for independence, sovereignty, and cultural traditions”	**2014 speech:** “warmest congratulations” “leadership” “appreciation” “opportunity to look back” “fundamental rights and freedoms” “encouraging results” “joint efforts” “respect for international law” “Member States must live up to their responsibility” “renounce the use of force” “deeply concerned” “support all international efforts”

“honesty, sincerity, and concrete actions” “preserving peace” “efforts to preserve peace” “support of peace-loving people” “active and responsible member” “goal and centre of development” “common house for all South-East Asian nations” “participate in peacebuilding” “reliable partner and responsible member” “shared responsibility”	“balanced, inclusive, and sustained growth” “importance to the roles of multilateral institutions” “consistent, principled position” “willing to join global efforts” “actively participating” “respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity” “political-security cooperation, economic cooperation and social-cultural cooperation” “active and constructive role” “valuable support of members” “political will, mutual trust and equality”
2015 speech: “congratulate Mr. Lykketoft” “applauds the important contributions” “beacon of hope” “promoting human rights” “mutual respect, good faith” “peaceful settlement of disputes” “welcome the recent progress” “normalization of relations” “call for the timely lifting of embargoes” “global partnership” “shared planet” “transform our world” “amicable solutions” “common development” “of the people, by the people, for the people” “strong global partnership” “South-South cooperation”	**2016 speech:** “congratulate Mr. Peter Thomson” “thank Mr. Mogens Lykketoft” “special gratitude extends to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon” “common vision for the world” “greater partnership for people, the planet, peace, and prosperity” “turning our commitments into concrete results for our people” “our people, our children and grandchildren” “global and regional cooperation and integration” “multilateralism and adherence to international law” “multilateral cooperation” “promote their interests, effectively manage disputes and differences” “broadest participation of all countries”

“put people at the centre” “respect, protect, and promote human rights” “engage all relevant Government agencies and other stakeholders” “involve the people and their communities” “joining efforts with ASEAN” “peace and stability must come first” “maintain maritime safety and security” “active contributions to world peace and security” “free our people from fear and want” “building a world of peace, security, and prosperity”	“strengthen preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes” “align its national interests with those of humankind” “policy of humanity, peace, and friendship” “treasures peace and will spare no effort to maintain or achieve peace” “harmonizes the interests of all stakeholders” “multilateralism, international law, peace, cooperation, and development” “exercise self-restraint and solve disputes by peaceful means” “transforming ourselves and leave no one behind” “with the people at the centre” “stronger global partnerships” “peace-loving and friendly nation” “reliable partner and a responsible member of the international community” “stronger partnership and collaboration with the United Nations and Member States”
2017 speech: “warmest congratulations” “special thanks” “cooperate closely” “staunch supporter and proponent of multilateralism” “respect for sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity” “peaceful settlement of disputes” “place the interests of the people at the centre”	**2018 speech:** “honoured to deliver this statement” “congratulate Ms. Espinosa Garcés” “express my appreciation” “sincere gratitude” “scourge of the two World Wars” “foundations of peace on our planet” “symbol of global solidarity” “embodiment of humankind and progress”

“sustaining peace” “come together to strengthen multilateralism” “transparent, effective and responsive” “upholding international law” “confidence-building” “peace, stability and prosperity” “self-restraint and settle disputes by peaceful means” “active engagement in the work of the United Nations” “voluntary national review” “contribute to the cause of sustainable peace and security”	“staunch supporter of the central role of the United Nations” “active engagement in international integration” “spirit of dialogue and cooperation in the area of human rights” “cooperation and assistance from the international community” “common efforts and collaboration of all nations” “join hands for a world of peace, equality and sustainable development” “voices of small nations and the aspirations of the disadvantaged must be respected” “multilateralism and diversification in our foreign relations” “heartfelt gratitude to the 53 countries” “committed to being an active and responsible member of the international community” “solidarity and high level of commitment”
2019 speech: “congratulate Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande” “firmly believe that he will skillfully lead our session to success” “express my appreciation” “important contributions” “work and dedication” “collective security system based on multilateral cooperation” “foundation of a post-war global order” “indispensable”	**2020 speech:** “congratulate Your Excellency Volkan Bozkir” “fully confident that under your experienced and able leadership” “voice my appreciation for the important contributions” “tremendous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic” “resolve and ability to deliberate and seek solutions for issues of common concern” “welcome the theme of our Session”

“multilateral institutions provide the forums for States”	“reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism”
“establish common policies”	“global and regional multilateral mechanisms must be strengthened”
“coordinate the efforts of States”	“every member, large or small, rich or poor, can have a voice”
“achievements of peace efforts”	“multilateral cooperation initiatives for peace, development and prosperity”
“efforts to settle disputes by dialogue and peaceful means”	“UN must serve as the “incubator””
“significant achievements in global development”	“we must be resolute and perseverant in advancing cooperation and friendship”
“multilateralism is facing acute challenges”	“choose dialogue over confrontation”
“common values”	“calls for the removal of unilateral sanctions”
“cooperation, dialogue and respect for international law”	“stronger commitments and stronger actions to promote sustainable, inclusive and human-centered development”
“immediate and long-term impacts of climate change”	“our policies and actions should have the interest of our people at the heart”
“No nation is immune”	“no one, and no country, will be left behind”
“working with other States”	“express our deepest gratitude to countries and international friends for your generous support”
“expand our cooperation with nations of the world”	“Viet Nam has engaged in cooperation and experience sharing with many countries”
“ASEAN’s centrality in promoting peace, security and prosperity”	“a reliable partner and an active, responsible member of the international community”
“working with the broader United Nations membership”	“promotes dialogue, de-escalation of tension and confrontation”
“towards the ultimate goals of sustainable peace and development”	“champion multilateralism and the respect for international law and the UN Charter”
“revitalize multilateralism”	
“strengthen the United Nations”	
“respect for international law”	
“settlement of disputes by peaceful means”	
“enhance global and regional synergies”	
“supporting United Nations efforts”	

“regional institutions based on shared commitments and collective responsibility” “multilateral efforts need to put people at their heart” “lasting peace is a prerequisite for sustainable development” “attacks against civilians” “advancement of United Nations agendas on women, peace and stability” “multilateral institutions must be reformed” “political commitment of world leaders is indispensable” “greater good of the international community” “enter a new, brighter chapter in the history of humankind” “cooperation and dialogue” “sustainable peace and development”	“committed to the maintenance and promotion of peace, stability, maritime security and safety” “We are duty-bound to strengthen and reinvigorate the world’s largest multilateral organization.”

APPENDIX 4

PERSONIFICATION

Speech	Personification	Meaning
2011	"With its *universal membership*, the Organization undoubtedly enjoys a *unique legitimacy* and should thus be at the forefront of global governance and multilateral cooperation."	The UN - an active and purposeful entity (emphasize the importance and effectiveness of the UN and its role in addressing global challenges)
2012	"I am confident that under your stewardship this session will be *crowned with success."*	The meeting session – a person receiving a crown
2012	"International law is *an intellectual creation* of the civilized world, which all States must respect and abide by in good faith."	International law – deserving respect and adherence as a person
2013	"Over the past 100 years, the miraculous advances of science and technology have *changed our world profoundly*, making it appear smaller."	Science and technology - sentient beings (ability to perform miracles and change the world)
2013	"Humankind *yearns for peace*."	Humankind - ability to yearn or desire something.
2013	"The deadly hand of war, conflict, terrorism and violence *lies in wait* to *take the lives* of hundreds, thousands or even millions of innocent people."	War, conflict, terrorism and violence (abstract concepts) - having a hand like people that can "lie in wait" and "take lives"
2013	"The global economy is *growing*"	The global economy - having the ability to grow, similar to a living organism.
2013	"*Natural disasters, epidemics and pollution* have become increasingly severe and unpredictable."	Natural disasters, epidemics, and pollution - have human-like

Speech	Personification	Meaning
		ability to become severe and unpredictable.
2013	"*The international community* expects the major Powers to set an example for others in peacebuilding."	The "international community" - have human ability to have expectations.
2013	"*The Security Council* should be the fulcrum in building consensus"	The Security Council - an essential element in building consensus, which is a human-like activity.
2014	"*History* has taught us that the paths that lead to wars and conflicts lie in obsolete doctrines of power politics, of ambitions of domination and imposition, and of the threat of force in settling international disputes, including territorial and sovereignty disputes."	"History" - a teacher, having the ability to teach and provide lessons.
2015	"Born from the ashes of the Second World War, *the United Nations has grown*, during the past seven decades, to *embrace* 193 States and has become the most representative global organization and the true centre for the coordination of global efforts to tackle common challenges."	The United Nations - being "born" and having "grown" to "embrace" States.
2015	"*Guided* by its Charter, the United Nations has worked to uphold the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations."	The United Nations - being "guided" by its Charter and actively working to uphold principles.

Speech	Personification	Meaning
2015	"It is therefore incumbent upon each and every State and *the United Nations* to do their utmost to *ensure peace and security* at the national, regional and international levels."	The United Nations - having the responsibility to ensure peace and security, attributing it with human-like duties and actions.
2016	"The 2030 *Agenda* for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction not only seek to address short-term challenges, but also to *present a vision* for greater partnership for people, the planet, peace and prosperity."	The Agenda - has the ability to "present a vision", attributing it with a human-like capability to envision and articulate goals.
2016	"Opportunities are plenty. *Reform, innovation, creativity and economic restructuring* are *setting countries on a path to prosperity*."	"Reform, innovation, creativity and economic restructuring" - are actively setting countries on a path to prosperity, attributing them with human-like agency and purpose.
2016	"New advances in science and technology are *paving the way* for the fourth Industrial Revolution".	Advances in science and technology - an agent in guiding progress.
2016	"The United Nations has an indispensable role to *play* by *coordinating* international responses to global challenges and facilitating development cooperation."	The United Nations - a purposeful, active role in global efforts.
2016	"A policy of humanity, peace and friendship will *enable* us to eliminate hatred, narrow gaps, manage	Policies - have the power to "enable" actions and outcomes, giving them an active role in achieving results.

Speech	Personification	Meaning
	differences and open up opportunities to find lasting solutions.”	
2016	“The United Nations should also work to *strengthen* preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes, *utilizing* all tools, as provided in Article 33 of the Charter.”	Preventive diplomacy and peaceful settlement - can be “strengthened” and “utilized”, suggesting they possess inherent capabilities and functions.
2017	“Only 10 months into his term of office, Mr. Guterres has already *left his mark* on the Organization’s work for peace, development and human rights.”	Mr. Guterres’s impact - physically imprinted on the Organization, emphasizing his significant influence.
2017	“*The theme chosen* for this session, 'Focusing on people: Striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet' could not have been more *timely*.”	“The theme chosen” - having an inherent ability to be “timely”, attributing it with the capacity to fit perfectly with current needs.
2018	“Today the United Nations has truly become a *symbol* of global solidarity, the *embodiment* of humankind and progress and the *place* where our aspirations for a world of peace, prosperity and equality are realized.”	The United Nations - as a “symbol”, “embodiment”, and “place” that can hold or realize aspirations, which attributes human-like qualities to the organization.
2018	“Even the smallest opportunity for peace must be *cherished and nurtured*.”	Opportunities for peace - living entities that need to be “cherished” and “nurtured”, which imparts human care and attention to abstract concepts.
2018	“The voices of small nations and the aspirations of the disadvantaged *must be respected, heard and shared*.”	Voices of small nations and the aspirations of the disadvantaged – having the ability to be “respected”, “heard”, and

Speech	Personification	Meaning
		"shared", which typically applies to human qualities.
2019	"Yet multilateralism is facing acute challenges."	Multilateralism - a dynamic entity experiencing difficulties.
	"The global arms control and non-proliferation regime is becoming more *fragile*."	The regime - can become "fragile", attributing it with human-like vulnerability.
2020	"The UN must serve as the "*incubator*" for multilateral cooperation initiatives for peace, development and prosperity."	the UN - an "incubator", having the nurturing and developmental qualities of an incubator, which helps grow and support initiatives.
2020	"Third, the COVID-19 pandemic serves as a *stern warning* to us all, requiring our stronger commitments and stronger actions to promote sustainable, inclusive and human-centered development."	The pandemic – having the human ability to warn and admonish
2020	"Seventy-five years ago... President Ho Chi Minh delivered the Declaration of Independence that *proclaimed* the birth of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam."	The Declaration – having an active role, having the power to declare and announce.
2020	"Viet Nam was once a poor and backward country ravaged by war, *strangled by embargo."*	Embargo - having the ability to physically restrain or suffocate.
2020	"We are duty-bound to *strengthen and reinvigorate* the world's largest multilateral organization."	The UN – a person might need to be revitalized.

APPENDIX 5

METAPHORS

Speech	Sentence / Phrase	Metaphor
2011	"the key to *success* lies in each nation's own efforts"	Success – a locked door (need the right key – the effort of each nation)
2011	"peace, security and stability remain the *intense desire* of all nations"	Intense desire – nations have strong longing/yearning for peace, security & stability
2011	"We must *cultivate* a culture of peace and dialogue."	Peace and dialogue – plants (need to be grown and nurtured)
2011	"The United Nations should continue its *concerted and coherent efforts* to promote the peaceful settlement of civil wars and local conflicts"	Concerted and coherent efforts – musical or orchestrated endeavor (different elements work harmoniously to achieve peace)
2011	"We shall work closely with the other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other stakeholders for peace, stability, cooperation, and development in South-East Asia, East Asia and beyond through ASEAN-led *mechanisms and instruments"*	Mechanisms and instruments – tools & means through which ASEAN achieves its goals (organization's strategies – physical tools)
2012	"*under your stewardship* this session will be crowned with success"	the President of the UNGA's role – role of a steward guiding a ship (careful & responsible management)
2012	"the rule of law is fundamental to political dialogue and cooperation among States and is the indispensable *bedrock* for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world"	The rule of law – the solid foundation (for peace, prosperity and justice)

Speech	Sentence / Phrase	Metaphor
2012	"We expect the Organization will continue to build further upon its experience in that area and *promote a **culture** of peace and dialogue*."	Culture – set of values and practices that should be cultivated and maintained
2013	"the miraculous advances of science and technology have changed our world profoundly, *making it appear smaller"*	Making it appear smaller - advances in science and technology have made the world more interconnected and accessible
2013	"*The deadly hand of war, conflict, terrorism and violence* lies in wait to take the lives of hundreds, thousands or even millions of innocent people"	"The deadly hand of war, conflict, terrorism and violence" - threats are like a predatory entity waiting to cause harm.
2013	"let us not *offer war a hand* or *look away"*	offer war a hand – help/aid war look away – ignore it
2013	"a remote country called Viet Nam suffered 15 million tons of bombs - four times the amount used in the Second World War. Each Vietnamese *bore nearly 10 times his or her weight in bombs"*	bore nearly 10 times his or her weight in bombs - the immense burden and devastation experienced by the Vietnamese people during the war
2013	"According to a traditional Vietnamese expression, *benevolence triumphs over brutality and virtue drives out tyranny*"	moral qualities - physical forces overcoming negative ones
2013	"with courageous sacrifice and creativity and with the support of peace-loving people, nations and international organizations, Viet Nam has defended its independence, united and *rebuilt from the ashes of war"*	Vietnam's recovery and development after the war - a phoenix rising from ashes, symbolizing rebirth and renewal

Speech	Sentence / Phrase	Metaphor
2013	"the post-2015 development agenda will be created and finalized for a world free from war and hunger and devoted to peace and cooperation, for sustainable development and prosperity for humankind, and for *our evergreen planet"*	"Our evergreen planet" - a healthy, sustainable, and flourishing Earth.
2014	"*On the bright side*, increasingly the United Nations is playing better its central role in the promotion of the system of rules and norms of international law, thus facilitating solutions to global challenges, and of the interests of peace and development for all nations".	"On the bright side" - positive aspects or favorable circumstances.
	"This session of the General Assembly takes place … It gives us the opportunity to look back on the past almost 70 years of the United Nations implementing its mandate to assist nations to ***build*** *a world of peace, security and sustainable development*, a world where fundamental rights and freedoms are respected and promoted".	The creation or establishment of the good conditions (peace, security, ..) – construct a physical structure
2014	"History has taught us *that the paths that lead to wars and conflicts* lie in obsolete doctrines of power politics, of ambitions of domination and imposition, and of the threat of force in settling international disputes,	"The paths that lead to wars and conflicts" - the causes or courses of actions that result in wars and conflicts.

Speech	Sentence / Phrase	Metaphor
	including territorial and sovereignty disputes".	
2014	"Peace and development are inseparable companions".	Peace and development – human companions (close & interdependent relationship)
2014	"Peace and security are prerequisites for sustainable development".	"Prerequisites" - peace and security are necessary conditions for achieving sustainable development.
2015	"Born from the ashes of the Second World War"	the establishment of the United Nations - a phoenix rising from the ashes
2015	"A beacon of hope"	The UN – guidance and hope (providing direction and optimism for global challenges)
2015	"The Charter of the United Nations be our source of inspiration"	The Charter - a source of inspiration, (a guiding light or motivating force)
2015	"The 2030 Agenda be our guide in building a world of peace, security and prosperity"	The 2030 Agenda - a guide (providing direction and clarity for achieving future goals)
2016	"The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, …not only seek to address short-term challenges, but also to *present a vision* for greater partnership for people, the planet, peace and prosperity".	The frameworks – guiding plan for future
2016	"Opportunities are plenty. Reform, innovation, creativity and economic restructuring are *setting countries on a path to prosperity".*	Development and progress - a physical journey or pathway leading to a desired destination

Speech	Sentence / Phrase	Metaphor
2016	"New advances in science and technology are *paving the way* for the fourth Industrial Revolution".	technological advances - road construction (creating a route for future developments)
2016	"The United Nations has an indispensable role to *play* by coordinating international responses to global challenges and facilitating development cooperation".	The UN's role – active and crucial involvement in global efforts
2016	"Multilateral institutions are also *venues* for countries to promote their interests, effectively manage disputes and differences and expand their development opportunities"	"Venues" - international institutions as stages or platforms where countries can perform actions and pursue goals
2016	"International law remains the *linchpin* of a stable international security architecture".	"Linchpin" - something that is crucial for holding a structure together (international law is essential for maintaining global stability)
2016	"Having suffered from decades of war, Viet Nam *treasures peace* and will spare no effort to maintain or achieve peace".	"Treasures peace" - valuing something precious, emphasizing the deep appreciation and commitment to peace
2017	"Sustaining peace must always be at the top of our agenda".	"at the top of our agenda" - prioritizing peace (as if peace were a physical item that can be placed at the top of a list)
2017	"The danger of nuclear weapons will *loom over* humankind as long as they continue to exist".	"loom over" describes the danger of nuclear weapons as a dark, threatening presence, suggesting that it casts a shadow over humanity's future.

Speech	Sentence / Phrase	Metaphor
2017	"Enormous efforts to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are under way, and yet our world is still *fraught with turmoil, uncertainties and fragility".*	"fraught with turmoil, uncertainties and fragility" uses metaphor to describe the world as being filled with troubling and unstable conditions, as if these elements were physical burdens.
2017	"The fourth industrial *revolution*, particularly the advance of digital technology, is creating unprecedented opportunities for development for all".	"revolution" - a dramatic and fundamental change in technology and development, likening it to a major upheaval or transformation
2018	"Our planet is experiencing rapid change, propelled by the scientific and technological breakthroughs of the *fourth industrial revolution* as well as the irreversible trend of *globalization"*.	The "fourth industrial revolution" and "globalization" are metaphorically described as forces that "propel" change, suggesting they have the power to drive or push the planet's evolution.
2018	"Even the smallest *opportunity for peace* must be cherished and nurtured".	Opportunities for peace are metaphorically described as entities that can be "cherished" and "nurtured", (these abstract concepts require care and attention similar to living things)
2019	"We are at the threshold of the third decade of the twenty-first century".	The "threshold" - the point of transition into a new era or period, (we are on the brink of significant change)
2019	"The world is on the verge of a new Cold War".	The metaphor of being "on the verge" implies that the world is close to entering a new period of conflict, similar to the Cold War era.

Speech	Sentence / Phrase	Metaphor
2019	"The General Assembly should be the heart of cooperation among countries and peoples".	The General Assembly is metaphorically referred to as the "heart", suggesting it is the central and vital organ of international cooperation.
2019	"We must all *reaffirm the fundamental importance* of international law and the Charter of the United Nations in international relations and multilateral cooperation".	the importance of international law and the Charter - a tangible entity needing reassertion
2020	"The UN must serve as the *'incubator'* for multilateral cooperation initiatives".	The metaphor of an "incubator suggests that the UN should foster and nurture the development of multilateral cooperation, similar to how an incubator supports the growth of eggs or embryos.
2020	"The COVID-19 pandemic serves as a *stern warning* to us all."	The pandemic is metaphorically described as giving a "stern warning", implying that it is issuing a serious and urgent message about the need for action and commitment.
2020	"We must be resolute and perseverant in *advancing cooperation and friendship* to counter conflict and hostility."	The metaphor of "advancing cooperation and friendship" as if they are physical entities moving forward highlights the effort and determination needed to overcome conflict and hostility.
2020	"We are duty-bound to strengthen and *reinvigorate* the world's largest multilateral organization."	"We are duty-bound to strengthen and reinvigorate the world's largest multilateral organization."

APPENDIX 6

VOICE - MODE

VOICE:

Speech	Active	Example	Passive	Example
2011	68/72 %	(the rest)	4/72 %	- The Organization is therefore expected to uphold the values of peace and security, international law and multilateralism. - It is also expected to become more responsive and effective on the ground, with the ultimate objective of better serving the needs and interests of Member States, in particular the developing countries. - (Developing countries) They should be enabled to take part in the globalization process in a more proactive and effective manner. - Moreover, to promote inclusive and sustainable development, political commitment and efforts, with the central coordinating role played by the United Nations, must be doubled for the attainment of equitable and sustainable development for all.
2012	43/45	(the rest)	2/ 45	- Progress has yet to be made in disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, while the risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to grow. - Multilateral negotiating forums in this area, particularly the Conference on Disarmament, must be revitalized and intensified.
2013	61/73	(the rest)	12/73	- Violence in the Middle East and North Africa is of grave concern. The latest instance in Syria, involving the use of chemical weapons, needs to be strongly condemned.

Speech	Active	Example	Passive	Example
				- All men are created equal. - They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" - Therefore, any effort to prevent conflict must be valued and supported. - Any effort to preserve peace must be fully exhausted. - Any act to provoke war must be condemned and stopped. - And we must devote all of our efforts to preserving peace if there is but a feeble sign that war can be averted, for war will take the life of not only one, but many people, including many women and children. - Peace can be built and preserved only when all countries respect each other's independence, sovereignty and cultural traditions, without imposing one's own morality on another. Conflict and war can be averted only if we eliminate actions that run counter to the Charter of the United Nations and international law, dominance and power politics. - Strategic trust among nations must be constantly nurtured with honesty, sincerity and concrete actions. - In the lifting of the embargo against Cuba or the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, for example, the role of the United Nations and the Security Council should be promoted.

Speech	Active	Example	Passive	Example
				- The Security Council should be the fulcrum in building consensus for driving all nations to join hands in preserving peace. - I am deeply convinced that the post-2015 development agenda will be created and finalized for a world free from war and hunger and devoted to peace and cooperation, for sustainable development and prosperity for humankind, and for our evergreen planet. Viet Nam commits itself to that purpose.
2014	50/52	(the rest)	2/52	- This year's Assembly session is also convened against the backdrop of a world landscape that features numerous turning points and contrasts. - The Security Council must be reformed in both membership and working methods to better respond to global challenges to peace and security.
2015	58/62	(the rest)	4/62	- The work of the General Assembly needs to be revitalized so as to make it more focused, efficient and relevant. - The United Nations development system needs to be strengthened. - "Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security, and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development" - At the international level, Viet Nam is prepared to further its active contributions to world peace and security and the well-being of all.
2016	61/63	(the rest)	2/63	- That is why Viet Nam believes that multilateralism must be strengthened and the operation of multilateral institutions, particularly the United Nations, must be improved.

Speech	Active	Example	Passive	Example
				- We believe lasting peace can be secured only by long-term vision and a comprehensive and inclusive approach that harmonizes the interests of all stakeholders.
2017	61/67	(the rest)	6/67	- We are gathered here as the world is undergoing profound and fast transformations. - Developing countries should be allowed more favourable conditions and resources to realize the Sustainable Development Goals. - I do not believe that life can be decent when poverty, unemployment and epidemics are still not effectively addressed. - It cannot be decent if it is still threatened by climate change and disasters. - For today's global challenges, multilateralism has been shown to provide the most effective solutions. - Wars, conflicts and tension occur today mainly because international law is not fully respected or observed in good faith.
2018	65/69	(the rest)	4/69	- That includes in the South China Sea, where there are issues that should be addressed on the basis of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the need to safeguard maritime security and safety and the freedom of navigation and overflight. - World peace has yet to be guaranteed, although the situation on the Korean peninsula has seen new progress. - Even the smallest opportunity for peace must be cherished and nurtured.

Speech	Active	Example	Passive	Example
				- The voices of small nations and the aspirations of the disadvantaged must be respected, heard and shared.
2019	65/76	(the rest)	11/76	- Hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty. - The universalization of primary education has been achieved in many nations. - Maternal and child mortality rates have been considerably reduced. - Conflicts are protracted in many areas, especially in the Middle East and Africa, while the risk of conflicts looms large in other regions. - Battlegrounds are no longer confined within designated war zones but have spread to densely populated cities and villages. - Our history of reform, development and international integration are closely associated with our participation in global and regional multilateral institutions. - . I would like to offer some thoughts on how that can be achieved. - We urge the relevant parties in the South China Sea to respect international law, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982, which is appropriately referred to as the constitution for the oceans and seas. - In the South-East Asia region, ASEAN is a regional institution that is based on shared commitments and collective responsibility in enhancing regional peace, security and prosperity.

Speech	Active	Example	Passive	Example
				- Fourthly, multilateral institutions must be reformed in order to meet new requirements and better serve the interests of Member States, especially developing States in Asia, Africa and Latin America. - The United Nations and the multilateral system can be empowered only if all countries commit to the greater good of the international community instead of narrowly defined interests and invest their will and resources. - Only when such commitment is guaranteed can we enter a new, brighter chapter in the history of humankind - a chapter of cooperation and dialogue; a chapter of sustainable peace and development.
2020	38/41	(the rest)	3/41	- First, global and regional multilateral mechanisms must be strengthened. - Further reforms should be undertaken to transform the UN into a stronger and more effective organization that can fulfill its role of harmonizing the interests and behaviors of states in the face of the monumental changes of our time. - Second, the United Nations Charter and the fundamental principles of international law must be upheld and advanced as the norms of behavior for all countries in contemporary international relations.

MOOD:

Speech	Declarative	Imperative	Interrogative
2011	71/72	1/72 - Viet Nam strongly calls for an end to the economic embargo against the Republic of Cuba.	0/72
2012	44/45	1/45 In that regard, we urge developed countries to fulfil their pledges for increased development assistance and support developing countries in capacity-building.	0/ 45
2013	66/73	4/73 - Let us not offer war a hand or look away. - Let us stop it. - … but let us not forget that close to 40 per cent of global wealth rests in the hands of no more than 1 per cent of the world's population. - I urge the global community to craft, with a sense of responsibility and humanity, an ambitious post- 2015 development agenda and to redouble our efforts to promote peace, to end hunger and poverty and to protect our planet.	3/73 - Humankind yearns for peace, so why is it that many regions remain under the constant threat of disputes, conflicts and wars? - The global economy is growing, so how is it that billions of people still live in abject poverty? - Science and technology have brought about outstanding advancement, so why have natural disasters, epidemics and pollution become increasingly severe and unpredictable?

Speech	Declarative	Imperative	Interrogative
2014	51/52	1/52 - We call for an end to unilateral economic sanctions against developing countries and support General Assembly resolutions on ending the economic embargo against Cuba.	0/52
2015	59/62	3/62 - We call on the developed countries to take the lead in assisting developing countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, especially in the fields of financing, technology transfer and human resources development. - To free our people from fear and want and to leave no one behind, let us all join our actions on this path towards a better and more sustainable future. - Let the Charter of the United Nations be our source of inspiration and the 2030 Agenda be our guide in building a world of peace, security and prosperity for our people and succeeding generations.	0/62
2016	61/63	2/63 - With regard to certain recent complicated developments in the South China Sea, we call upon all parties concerned to exercise self-restraint and solve disputes by peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United	0/63

Speech	Declarative	Imperative	Interrogative
		Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, fully respect diplomatic and legal processes, implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and expedite the completion of the code of conduct for the South China Sea. - Viet Nam calls on developed countries to uphold their responsibility to take the lead in assisting developing countries, including Viet Nam, to realize the SDGs, especially in financing, capacity-building, technology transfer and trade facilitation.	
2017	63/67	4/67 - We call on developed nations to fulfil their commitments on providing financial assistance and technology transfer for developing countries. - … , and we call for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. - I am signing the Treaty today, and call on others to sign and ratify it so as to enable its entry into force as soon as possible. - Let us all be clear - the danger of nuclear weapons will loom over humankind as long as they continue to exist.	0/67

Speech	Declarative	Imperative	Interrogative
2018	67/69	2/69 - I ask now what we want the United Nations to be. - I would like, on behalf of the Vietnamese Government and people, to call for, and very much hope to receive, the support of all Member States.	0/69
2019	74/76	2/76 - We call for the immediate lifting of the unilateral embargoes imposed against Cuba, which contravene international law. - We urge the relevant parties in the South China Sea to respect international law, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982, which is appropriately referred to as the constitution for the oceans and seas.	0/76
2020	36/41	5/41 - Let me also voice my appreciation for the important contributions that His Excellency Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and Secretary-General António Guterres have made despite the tremendous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. - Allow me to share some of my thoughts along that line. - In this spirit, Viet Nam calls for the removal of unilateral	0/41

Speech	Declarative	Imperative	Interrogative
		sanctions that adversely affect countries' socio-economic development and people's livelihoods, especially the embargo imposed upon Cuba. - Let me take this occasion, on behalf of the Vietnamese people, to express our deepest gratitude to countries and international friends for your generous support towards our past righteous struggle for national independence and present national development. - We call on all concerned parties to exercise restraint, avoid unilateral acts that would complicate the situation, and settle disputes and differences through peaceful means with due respect for diplomatic and legal processes.	