The Phenomenon of Expletive Infixation in Vietnamese Language From the Perspective of Pragmatics

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Abstract—Vietnamese has to date been considered to be a language without infixation. This study is an attempt to change that notion. Infixation does exist in the Vietnamese language, but in restricted discoursal and social contexts. Our analysis shows that infixes have pragmatic functions and convey one of three implications. They can be used to (1) express a complaint, (2) express disagreement, or (3) to enhance a compliment. For each pragmatic purpose, the social context must be considered so that offensiveness and impoliteness can be avoided. Our results reveal that the majority of the Vietnamese words containing the infix voir chá express complaints and that voir chá is most often inserted into nouns. This study provides Vietnamese language teachers, learners, and translators with an in-depth understanding of the Vietnamese infix voir chá, as added into base words in certain styles of language play.

Index Terms—infixation, Vietnamese, expletive, social context, pragmatics, infix

I. INTRODUCTION

Infixation is not only a phenomenon of linguistics but also an expression of culture. Ultan (1975) claimed that infixes seem to be less familiar to students of linguistics than prefixes and suffixes even though all three belong to the phenomenon of affixation. According to Yu (2003, p. 2), infix can be defined as “an overt continuous morph that appears within a derived discontinuous morph that exists in a continuous form independent of the infixed form, and the individual parts of this resultant discontinuous morph must not be continuousmorphs themselves.” More succinctly, Mattiello (2013, pp. 186-187) defined infixation as a process in which an affix (infix) is inserted in the middle of a word. This description implies that infixes are distinct from other affixes in the way that they stand in the body of a base word. Mattiello (2013, p. 186) also reported that in some Indo-European and Austronesian languages, such as Greek and Atayal, infixes have important grammatical functions, whereas English has infixes “only within extra-grammatical morphology.” In other words, infixes in English, for example, bloody in abso-bloody-lutely and diddly in ac-diddly-action, are employed mostly as expressive expletives for the purpose of additional emphasis.

Beljan (2015) stressed that infixation is a process that is not easy to describe due to its unpredictability and irregularity. As explained by Mattiello (2013), in most cases infixes function as intensifiers or emotive stress amplifiers. This implies that in English infixation serves a stylistic purpose. Thus, no difference is found between important and im-bloody-portant, or violin and vio-ma-lin. From these two examples, the only change that infixation conveys to the new word is related to its pragmatic meaning; in other words, this is a form of language play. It can also be seen from the examples that the infix does not change the grammatical category of the word or its meaning. Hence, after the infix—bloody— is inserted in the adjective important, im-bloody-portant still remains an adjective with the same semantic meaning.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW
A. A Bird’s-eye View of Infixation Across Languages

As categorized by Beljan (2015), there are four relevant types of infixation in English: expletive infixation, diddy-infixation, Homeric infixation, and hip-hop iz-infixation.

It is widely known that expletive infixation is used most frequently in the English-speaking community. Expletive infixation is defined by Beljan (2015) as the process of inserting an expletive or a profanity within a word with the purpose of emphasis and intensification. Moreover, Zwicky and Pullum (1987, p. 7) concluded that expletive infixation has “clear applicability to phrases alongside words” and “highly expressive colloquial effect.” Beljan (2015) further observed that expletives are a phenomenon of both morphology and phonology. The following examples from McCarthy (1982) provide evidence for this case.

(1) English expletive infixation (McCarthy, 1982)

together    to-bloody-gether
advance    ad-bloody-vance
Bhowani    Bho-bloody-wani
perhaps    per-bloody-haps
enough    e-bloody-nough
important    im-fuckin-portant
Kalamaizo    Kalama-fuckin-zoo
Tatamagouchee    Tatama-fuckin-gouchee
Winnipesaukee    Winnipe-fuckin-saukee

(2) Canonical examples

(Elfner & Kimper, 2008, p. 151)

It is observed from example (2) that “the process involves infixation of the nonsense word diddy into a base word with initial stress as well as a reduplication of the rhyme and the stressed syllable” (Elfner & Kimper, 2008, p. 151). Elfner and Kimper also explained that placing the infix –diddly– within the base with initial stress causes difficulties for stress assignment; therefore, the role of reduplication in these examples is to “allow the position of stress to remain faithful to its base form” (Elfner & Kimper, 2008, p. 151).

Considered as a form of expletive infixation, diddy-infixation is actually a novel language game since “it shares with other language games the characteristic of being easily generalized by speakers to be applied to a variety of environments” (Elfner & Kimper, 2008, p. 151).

(3) The Simpsons example


(Elfner & Kimper, 2008, p. 151)

Yu (2003) states that the main purpose of ma-infixation is humor. Yu also noted that the “meaning of this construction indicates roughly attitudes of sarcasm and distastefulness, although, it can also be used as a form of language play” (Yu, 2003, p. 174). Mattiello (2013) observed that Homeric infixation can be applied to words regardless of their grammatical categories, for example, noun (e.g., tele-ma-phone, vio-ma-lin), adjective (e.g., wonder-ma-ful), verb (e.g., underest-ma-mate), participle (e.g., unsub-ma-stantiated), or even place/personal/river names (e.g., Ala-ma-bama, Micha-ma-langelo, Missi-ma-sippi).

The final infixation that can be found in English is called iz-infixation. This phenomenon is derived from the American hip-hop community.

(4) Lyrics example

I'm still standin’ strizong (strong)
And waitin’ on my thrizone (throne)
And live for the dizzay (day) that God calls me hizome (home)
Until then I'll rizzoam (roam), the face of the Izzeth (Earth)
And shoot for the stizars (stars), on days of my bizzerth (birth)
—Playa Fly, “N God We Trust”
(from Original Hip-Hop Lyrics Archive)

(Lindsay, 2010, p. 159)

Example (4) shows that the iz-infix is inserted before the stressed vowel. Therefore, if the word is monosyllabic, -iz- occurs between the onset and the nucleus, for example, str-iz-ong. If the word is disyllabic, -iz- occurs before the stressed vowels, as in G-iz-ogle and beh-iz-ave (Mattiello, 2013). Mattiello also states that iz-infixation rarely occurs in words that have more than two syllables.

From these four types of infixation in English, it can be concluded that infixation is a process involving both morphology and phonology. Infixation does not have any grammatical function, so it does not affect the grammatical category of the infixed word. However, it is considered a case of language play when it indicates certain stylistic and pragmatic meanings.

In some languages, however, infixation can function as a grammatical process, which means that the infix can change the grammatical category of the word.

(5) Uradhi pluractional reduplication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old word</th>
<th>New word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wili</td>
<td>willili</td>
<td>‘run’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arja</td>
<td>agaga</td>
<td>‘dig’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ipiiji</td>
<td>ipipiiji</td>
<td>‘swim’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wamp</td>
<td>wampampa</td>
<td>‘float’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ikyya</td>
<td>ikiyka</td>
<td>‘speak’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Crowley, 1983, p. 364)

Uradhi is a dialect of the Pama-Nyungan language in which the reduplicant copies the morphological and/or phonological unit of the base. In this language, pluractionality is marked by (C)CV reduplication, as shown in example (5). This implies that the infix changes the numeric feature of the base from singular to plural.

In other languages, infixation can result in changes in the part of speech of the infixed word.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old word</th>
<th>New word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. guh ‘to be ablaze’</td>
<td>grnuh ‘flames’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kap ’to sing’</td>
<td>krnap ‘singing, song’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peelh ‘to sweep the ground/floor’</td>
<td>prneelh ‘a broom’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tek ‘to hit’</td>
<td>trnek ‘a hammer’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. kwel ‘to be rolled up’</td>
<td>krvel ‘spiral’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gla? ’to speak’</td>
<td>grla? ‘speech, words’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pluut ‘to peel’</td>
<td>prluut ‘layer’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>klaap ‘to hold’</td>
<td>krlaap ‘forceps of split bamboo’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gweec ‘to poke’</td>
<td>grweec ‘finger’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. chreet ‘to comb’</td>
<td>chnreet ‘a comb’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all cases of example (6), the verbs become nouns after infixation, as also happens in the Mon-Khmer language. However, the process follows certain phonological rules. As in (6a), if the stem begins with a single consonant, the infix –rn– occurs right after that consonant. If the stem begins with two consonants, the infix –r– is used instead and inserted between the two consonants (6b). In the case of (6c), when the stem contains a rhotic in the initial consonants, the allomorph –n– is employed and inserted before the rhotic.

It can be seen from the literature review that infixation exists in many dialects of languages. It plays different roles in each dialect. As native speakers of Vietnamese, the authors of this study attempt to examine the phenomenon of infixation in Vietnamese, which has been overlooked. Based on our observations, Vietnamese infixation is common in literary works and daily conversations. However, it has never been considered in an academic way; in other words, there has been no study on infixation in the Vietnamese language.

B. Vietnamese Morphology and Term of Affixation

As addressed many years ago by Thompson (1963), Vietnamese is a language that appears to be devoid of morphology; as a result, the argument about what constitutes a “word” has been continuously raised by linguists. Noyer (1998) classified Vietnamese as a canonically “isolating” language. It is obvious that Vietnamese lacks morphological markings for case, gender, number, and tense; thus, it has no finite/nonfinite distinction. A Vietnamese word may consist of a single morpheme or more than one morpheme. Polymorphemic words are either compound words or words consisting of stems plus affixes or reduplicants. As estimated in Nguyen (1976), roughly seven-tenths of Vietnamese dictionary entries are idiomatic polysyllabic collocations. Consider the following examples.

(7) Vietnamese morphology
In example (7a), the word *mưa* has only one syllable and one morpheme. Example (7b) is a case of a word that has two syllables but only one morpheme, since, if we separate this word into two morphemes, *niệc* conveys no meaning. On the other hand, (7c) shows a word that is both disyllabic and bimorphemic, since both morphemes have their own meaning. In this example, *nhaus* means *house* and *tắm* means *to take a shower*. Thus, when they are combined, the meaning of the compound word can be understood as “a house (a room) where we can take a bath.” Example (7d) is an example of reduplication, which is very common in Vietnamese. The word contains more than two syllables and morphemes.

As analyzed in Noyer (1998), examples (7b) and (7c) can be categorized as two types of collocations: separable collocations and inseparable collocations, respectively. For example, *bếp niệc* can be separated by the “idiom” *với*, which means *and*, an overt conjunction. However, Noyer did not indicate the purpose of this linguistic phenomenon. In the case of (7c), it is claimed in Noyer (1998) that the word cannot be separated by any element. As native Vietnamese speakers, the authors of this study would argue against these two notions of Noyer. First, Noyer only used the term “idiom” in a general way to describe the function of *với*, which in this paper is argued to be an infix. Second, the word *nhaus tắm* in example (7c) can be separated by an infix, as will be demonstrated in Section 4.

It is widely known that the Vietnamese language has prefixes and suffixes. These two phenomena of affixation are taught and discussed in any Vietnamese language teaching program. The following examples provide some cases of affixation in Vietnamese.

(8) Vietnamese affixation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vietnamese word</th>
<th>English gloss</th>
<th>Phonological form</th>
<th>Morphological form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) <em>mưa</em></td>
<td>&quot;rain&quot;</td>
<td>monosyllabic</td>
<td>monomorphemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) <em>bếp niệc</em></td>
<td>&quot;kitchen chores&quot;</td>
<td>disyllabic</td>
<td>monomorphemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) <em>nhaus tắm</em></td>
<td>&quot;bathroom&quot;</td>
<td>disyllabic</td>
<td>bimorphemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) <em>vội vội vàng vàng</em></td>
<td>&quot;hurry-scurry&quot;</td>
<td>polysyllabic</td>
<td>polymorphemic (reduplicative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix/suffix</th>
<th>English gloss</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) <em>bán</em></td>
<td>“half, semi-”</td>
<td><em>bán thân</em> (body): a body half (upper/lower)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) <em>phi</em></td>
<td>“non,“</td>
<td><em>bán câu</em> (globe): semi-globe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) <em>họa</em></td>
<td>“-ize, -fy”</td>
<td><em>phi pháp</em> (law): illegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) <em>gia</em></td>
<td>“profession, occupation”</td>
<td><em>phi lợi nhuận</em> (profit): non-profited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen from these examples that prefixation and suffixation in Vietnamese are expressed very clearly. They each have their own function in grammar and semantics. Consider example (8a). The stem is *thân*, meaning *body*, which is a noun. After prefixation, the new word *bán thân* changes the meaning of its stem and grammatical category to become an adjective. The same pattern can be found in the remaining examples.

As mentioned above, the authors’ observation is that Vietnamese language does have infixation, but somehow the phenomenon has been ignored and never closely examined by linguists. The present paper is an attempt to give the phenomenon academic consideration. The following sections provide an analysis of why the issue is worthy of study.

### III. METHODOLOGY

A. **Research Design**

This research mainly used a qualitative approach, but a quantitative method was also used. Examples of Vietnamese inflexions were collected from social media and websites to form a dataset.

B. **Data Analysis**

After the data were collected, the samples were categorized into groups. The groups were then analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the size of each group was expressed as a percentage.

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. **Expletive Affixation in Vietnamese**

As stated previously, infixation in Vietnamese is commonly used in less formal contexts, such as movies, literature, and daily conversations. It is true that infixes do not have any grammatical or semantic function with regard to the stem; the infixation does not change the grammatical category or literal meaning of the infixed word. Therefore, like English, infixes in Vietnamese function as expletives and can be considered aspects of language play or style. The four most common infixes and infix clusters are examined in this study, as shown in Table 1.
Table 1 shows that an infix can be used as a single infix (1 & 2) that is inserted into the base, or it can be combined with other suffixes (3 & 4) to make up a cluster that is added to the stem. As the English gloss shows, the infixes have no clear "real" meanings. This means that these infixes are nonsense in terms of semantics, especially when they occur in collocations or clusters. The following examples show that infixes in Vietnamese are expletives. It should be noted here that all the examples of infixation in Vietnamese in this study were assessed by the first author, who is a native Vietnamese speaker. The data were then discussed with three other Vietnamese linguists to ensure acceptability. Therefore, the examples in this study are the best representatives of infixation in Vietnamese language usage.

Let us take a look at the following examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Infixed word</th>
<th>Working gloss</th>
<th>English gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(5a) cà phê</td>
<td>cà với phê</td>
<td>&quot;with/and-&quot;</td>
<td>coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) -với  chá-</td>
<td>cà với  chá  phê</td>
<td>&quot;with/and + neither/not-&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) -với  cái  gì</td>
<td>&quot;with/and-what&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) -với  chá-  cái  gì</td>
<td>&quot;with/and + neither/not-what&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example (5) clearly demonstrates the phenomenon of infixation in Vietnamese. It can be observed that the infixes can be added in words with upwards of two syllables, regardless of the number of morphemes or grammatical categories. Explicitly, whether the word is monomorphic or bimorphic does not affect the use of infixes. One more argument to show that infixes in Vietnamese are expletives is that they do not change the grammatical category of the words; rather, they retain the original meanings of the words. Also, it can be generalized that the infix is inserted after the first syllable of the base.

As mentioned above, this section argues against the analysis of Noyer (1998) that some of the listed words are inseparable. The word nhà tâm, shown in example (6) below, was considered inseparable by Noyer. The examples Noyer provided could be true if the expletive is not considered an infix. However, if the expletive is an infix, then the word nhà tâm can be separated. Example (6) shows that all four infixes can be inserted into the word nhà tâm, which was considered impossible by Noyer (1998).

(6) nhà tâm
    nhà với tâm
    nhà với  chá  tâm
    nhà với  cái  gì
    nhà với  chá-  cái  gì

In Vietnamese, the function of intonation is expressive. It adds to the cognitive meaning of the words in the utterance and indicates the attitude and emotion of the speaker. Moreover, the system of intonation, pause, and tone of voice can help to deepen understanding of speech. Diacritics are used to indicate the tones of Vietnamese. The tone markings are a (no mark), ā, á, ā, ā, and ā. They can be separated into two groups according to register: a, ā, ā are realized in a higher register while ă, ă, ā are realized in a lower one. Therefore, of the four Vietnamese infixes that can be inserted into a word, the infix với is realized in a higher register and infixes với  chá, với  cái  gì, and với  chá-  cái  gì are realized in a lower one.
For example, a girl is walking on the street and a boy runs into her. She yells out in pain: “Tớ ơi! Đi với đương!” (Bold letters indicate primary stress.) This example shows that the Vietnamese infix với expresses anger. Moreover, đi với đương makes up a sequence a-á-á at a fairly high level because anger is expressed by a very high register and marked by a fast tempo.

From this evidence, it can be inferred that inflexion in Vietnamese is very flexible and can be applied in many cases. As with English, inflexion in Vietnamese has certain pragmatic implications that will be discussed in the next section along with the contexts for its use.

B. Vietnamese Inflexion from a Pragmatic Perspective

The possibility of inflexion allows us to note what the speaker’s attitude is, which means that inflexes in Vietnamese have a pragmatic meaning or play a pragmatic role.

The use of inflexes depends greatly on the setting of the discourse. In particular, inflexes are not used in contexts with a high level of formality. This means that social factors should be considered in the use of inflexes. It is consciously understood by Vietnamese people that inflexion can only be employed in certain situations and not in a spontaneous way. The issue implies that inflexes do have certain pragmatic and social functions that show the user’s language style.

In this study, the pragmatic functions of inflexes are categorized into three groups by purpose: (1) to express a complaint, (2) to express disagreement, and (3) to enhance a compliment.

1. Complaint

Inflexes are mainly used in Vietnamese to express negative attitudes. Inflexion is a type of language play in which users emphasize their ideas or opinions. The most common use of inflexes is to express a complaint. Consider the following example and its context.

(7) A mother is talking to her son.

Mother:  Con với chả cái!  Học với hành cha ra gì?
child INFIX REDUPLICANT Study INFIX practice not show what
What a bad child!
Your study habits are really poor!

(8) Two friends are talking to each other.

Person 1:  Thời với chả tiếp cái gì mà như chào lâu!
weather INFIX XXX SUFFIX like pan fire
The weather is as hot as fire

Example (7) shows the pragmatic function of inflexes in Vietnamese. By inserting the inflex into a base, we can clearly grasp the implication that the mother is complaining about her son’s performance. This can be seen as an interesting linguistic phenomenon that can rarely be found in other languages. It should be noted that the context for using inflexes in complaints is very limited. There should be a certain power relationship between the people involved. Inflexes can only be used by people with a higher social status or familial relationship, or among people with the same social status. Those who are younger or of lower social status should be very careful not to use inflexes with elderly people or people with higher status; otherwise, it could be considered offensive.

In example (8), the conversation takes place between two friends. This is slightly different from the previous example in that the speaker is trying to judge a subjective entity. It has no purpose to blame or offend on any subjective matter. In this case, without the inflexion, the sentence already has its own implication of complaining about the weather. The inserted inflex cluster emphasizes the level of seriousness of the matter. In other words, the inflexion makes the complaint stronger. In this case, the sentence could be uttered by a son to his mother without offense.

Therefore, the implication of inflexion can vary in different social contexts. Even though inflexes show complaints, their use still depends upon the target of the complaint. This phenomenon requires Vietnamese learners to have a solid knowledge and understanding of the language.

2. Disagreement

Another interesting use of inflexion in Vietnamese is to express disagreement without adding any structures of negation. Consider the following examples.

(9) A son is talking to his mother.

Son: Mẹ cho con xin ít tiền nhé!
Mom let me insist some money EXCLAIMER
Could you give me some money, Mom?

Mother: Tiền với bạc cái gì. Con xài nhiều quá rồi đó.
Money INF coin SUF you spend much so already
No way! You have spent so much already.

(10) Two friends are talking to each other.

Person 1: Đi uống cà phê không?
go drink coffee QUESTION WORD
Wanna go to the café?

Person 2: Cà với chả phê.  Đang ban rỗi.

Therefore, the results of this research were only based on 146 samples of vıebsites. The number of samples found was 165, within which 146 were identified as eligible for sample of vıelected from Facebook, Tiktok, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, Flickr, Forum, news online, story online and other

Statistics expressed as a percentage because mostly vıeferences and other

In this study, the researchers focused on analyzing the data of vıelected from Facebook, Tiktok, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, Flickr, Forum, online news, online conversations, short stories, news online, and social networks nowadays. The dataset in this study was obtained from

4. Quantitative Analysis

Despite being rarely used in formal writing, Vietnamese infixes can be heard in colloquial language, daily conversations, short stories, online news, and social networks nowadays. The dataset in this study was obtained from various online sources, including Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Forum, online news, online stories, and other websites.

The researchers collected 165 samples of infixations. The data consist of 4 samples of vı, 146 samples of vı cha, 13 samples of vı-cá i gì, and 2 samples of vı cha-cá i gì. The research focused on analyzing the vı cha sample data because mostly vı cha samples were collected. Descriptive statistics were calculated and the results were expressed as percentages.

The researchers have collected the data of the actual process with 4 samples of vı, 146 samples of vı cha, 13 samples of vı-cá i gì and 2 samples of vı cha-cá i gì. Despite being rarely used in formal writing, Vietnamese infix can be heard and used in colloquial language, daily conversations, short stories, news online, and social networks nowadays. In this study, the researchers focused on analyzing the data of vı cha samples which were handled using descriptive statistics expressed as a percentage because vı cha samples were collected the most.

The data set used in this study were obtained from different online sources. The data specific to this research were collected from Facebook, Tiktok, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, Flickr, Forum, news online, story online and other websites. The number of samples found was 165, within which 146 were identified as eligible for sample of vı cha. Therefore, the results of this research were only based on 146 samples of vı cha.

Hereafter Table 2 lists some Vietnamese words containing the infix vı cha collected for this study.
When the Vietnamese infix với cha is inserted into a word stem, the original meaning of the word generally does not change. However, với cha influences the listener’s emotions and expresses the speaker’s attitude in a particular rhetorical situation. As discussed above, với cha can convey one of three implications in the infixed words: (1) to express complaint, (2) to express disagreement, or (3) to enhance a compliment. Figure 1 illustrates the frequency with which với cha is used to convey each implication in infixed words. Of 146 Vietnamese words containing the infix với cha, 80.14% express a complaint, 10.96% express disagreement, and 8.90% enhance a compliment.

As can be seen from the pie chart in Figure 1, the majority of the Vietnamese words containing the infix với cha are used to express complaints. Many people often post their status on Facebook to express a negative attitude toward some topic. For example, thí với cha cứ shows the bad feeling of not getting good exam results. After complaining, their mental state may improve when their friends comment to encourage them. In contrast, only 10.96% of Vietnamese words containing the infix với cha expressed disagreement. Most of them include expressions of refusal and a reason. For example, the sentence, “An với cha ương gì tâm này nữa, trê rồi,” expresses disagreement very clearly, and the reason for it is late time. However, people can suffer from a sense of disagreement. Why are they so bothered by good friends refusing their requests or declining their invitations posted on Facebook? Why does it ruin their mood? Why would something so seemingly insignificant make them feel angry with their friends and relatives? The reason is that many people fear disagreement. If they have experienced it once or a few times, they probably remember how much it hurt and worry about it happening again. Finally, a minority of usages (8.90%) enhanced a compliment. The example, “Xin với cha đẹp như gia đình chỉ thì ai chồng thích chỉ esto,” illustrates how the Vietnamese infix với cha is used to enhance a positive attitude toward gia đình chỉ. Thus, the infix với cha helps enhance a compliment. This example is from a comment on Facebook by a fan of a famous singer. This means that the infix với cha can be used to express positive attitudes toward those who are of higher social status, but, of course, only in informal settings.

Importantly, as illustrated in Figure 2, a significant majority of the Vietnamese words containing the infix với cha (47.06%) are inserted into nouns that refer to objects, people, and more sophisticated abstract concepts. Some Vietnamese nouns containing the infix với cha can change their implications depending on how they are used and what combinations they form. For example, the sentence, “...chồng với cha con, cụ đẹp trả trai thế này ai mà chịu được...,” illustrates how the Vietnamese infix với cha is used to enhance a compliment. On the other hand, với cha expresses a complaint in “Chồng Với Cha Con, Chân Xiu.” Therefore, expressing a negative or positive attitude toward some matter depends on the context.

A large proportion of Vietnamese words containing the infix với cha (41.18%) are verbs used in everyday conversations and emotional expressions. These uses can be easily categorized as complaints, expressions of disagreements, or enhancements of compliments. The phrase óm với cha áp provides an illustration. First, the writer of an online short story used the phrase, óm với cha áp, còn khoảng mầu đỏ anh may ngoài đày,..., to express a complaint. Second, a sentence, Lần rồi còn dòi óm với cha áp, em nó cười cho, collected from a website exemplifies a disagreement. Finally, the phrase óm với cha áp is used to enhance a compliment. The writer posted this phrase with a picture on Instagram of herself hugging her boyfriend to show their happiness.

(See the Appendix for the sources.)

![Figure 1. Use of the Infix với cha by Implication](image-url)
Finally, a minority of the Vietnamese words containing the infix với cha (11.76%) are adjectives. People always use adjectives to make their expressions more visual and vivid, so the implications that Vietnamese infix với cha can convey with the infixed words are clearer. Readers or listeners will get a better idea of what speakers or writers wish to bring to their attention or to picture in their minds when they read or listen to messages containing infixations.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper investigates the phenomenon of infixation in Vietnamese, which has been overlooked by linguists. The analysis shows that Vietnamese infixes are expletives added to base words in certain styles of language play. However, in terms of pragmatics, the functions of infixation in Vietnamese are more obvious. Infixes can be used to express complaints and disagreements, and to enhance compliments. It should be noted that the context in which the discourse takes place must be carefully considered; otherwise, listeners may take offense or feel the expression is impolite. This study has not considered the grammatical roles of infixed words in sentences, which we suggest as a topic of future research. Despite this limitation, this study challenges the traditional notion of infixation in Vietnamese, which we consider its main contribution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX

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132 https://www.facebook.com/Tin-469869273130404

133 https://www.facebook.com/Tin-469869273130404

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Om vùng cha ép, còn nhiều người đã
anh máy ngày dầy, tôi làm bấm lâu
bầu lúc qua vài tháng Nam xem
những người còn lại trong dòng.

Chính cut ra, đã noni chỉ cho lá
om vùng cha ép, hôm nay tạo cho
mây đi theo anh Huỳnh Anh Phương
dây

...om thì để đo om vùng cha ép khó
châu bo sóng

Đổng rứ xem nữa nha, phun vùng với chà
anh số làm

Tên backup chỉ ý nghĩa với tôi cả.

Trả về chỗ sửa dây nay, đồ có nhỏ người

Trả về chỗ sửa, xin bổn tại

---

Quản với cha áo

Sách với cha vô

Sách với cha vô

Tràn về cha tỏa

Thây bồi vùng cha thật bừng…bể sì
bảo cười là cười!

Thù với cha cứ, ngồi về chỗ

Tóc ở cha tỏa

Đưa đời tới đồn đôi, chỉ em vòi
mạng “tóc ở cha tài chỉ phi tiếng”

Tóc ở cha tài

Tóc ở cha tài

Xe vùng cha cơ. Không đi thì, họa

Chơi hết những ngày hôm hết hãng rò

E Quá trời oí xè với cha cứ cát hệ

Để nhờ ông co nhiều rò mà dài xem với
cha xô

Giết còn người ta rõ mà còn xem với
cha xo, nò còn mừng tự có tơ mà,

Yêu vùng cha dưng cách gì nữa

Biết duy yếu với cha dưng cad gi!

An vùng với ống nè, nên nhà

An vùng với ống gì làm này nữa, trẻ rój

Du với chà ích, hết thời gian

Hơn vùng cho họ, còn dùng việc dạy.

Om vùng cha áp

Để thêm máy lớn trước tập không
om người ở đì, bày đặt dấy đãi chỉ đì
khắc co xong giới làm giữ ông với cha áp

Chỉ thà như cái mà bày đặt ông với cha áp!

Lớn rồi còn dồi ở vùng với cha áp, em nhờ

Chính cut ra, đã noni chỉ cho lá
om vùng cha áp, hôm nay tạo cho
mây đi theo anh Huỳnh Anh Phương
dây

...om thì để đo om vùng cha ép khó
châu bo sóng

Đổng rứ xem nữa nha, phun vùng với chà
anh số làm

Tên backup chỉ ý nghĩa với tôi cả.

Trả về chỗ sửa dây nay, đồ có nhỏ người

Trả về chỗ sửa, xin bổn tại

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