

PHẠM HUY THÔNG: CONSIDERATIONS ON LANGUAGE POLICY**Trần Thị Minh¹****Phạm Huy Dũng²***(Received 30 December 2024; revised 08 January 2025; accepted 09 January 2025)***Abstract**

This study explores Phạm Huy Thông's perspectives on language policy through selected manuscripts and speeches archived in the National Archives Center III. From the collection, 11 key documents on linguistic issues were chosen to highlight his contributions. These writings reflect his dedication to pressing concerns such as language standardization, bilingualism, and foreign language education - topics that remain central in contemporary linguistic discourse.

Phạm Huy Thông emphasized the urgent need for the standardization of Vietnamese in alignment with the nation's educational reforms, advocating collaboration among research institutions, government agencies, and schools. Notable initiatives included addressing orthographic and terminological standardization, producing a *Vietnamese Grammar* and *Vietnamese Dictionary*, and promoting the Latinization of minority languages to ensure their preservation alongside national language development.

In his writings, he proposed scientific and balanced approaches, valuing diverse methods and sources. He outlined the essential principles for scientific terminology - accuracy, systematic organization, national identity, and public accessibility. These ideas demonstrated his recognition of language as a dynamic entity, evolving under societal influences while retaining cultural heritage.

Phạm Huy Thông also explored the aesthetic dimensions of language, the historical significance of Nom script, and the importance of fostering linguistic diversity. His advocacy extended to foreign language education, emphasizing its role in global integration and scientific progress.

The study shows his systematic and inclusive approach, calling for gradual and deliberate implementation of language policies. His insights align with ongoing challenges in balancing language preservation, modernization, and societal needs. Future research is needed to fully

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understand the impact and development of his proposals within Vietnam's linguistic policy framework.

1. Professor Phạm Huy Thông - "Nam quốc kỳ nhân" (A genius of Việt Nam)

Professor Phạm Huy Thông was a brilliant intellectual, talented in various fields, ranging from poetry, law, archaeology, to profound historical studies. During his lifetime, he exemplified dedication to academic career and country love, consistently upholding precious spiritual qualities. Professor Phan Huy Lê once remarked, "Alongside the intellectual brilliance of a scientist with deep interdisciplinary knowledge and the foresight of an administrator, Phạm Huy Thông was also the embodiment of humanism, sophistication, and the elegance formed between the charm of Hanoi and the grandeur of Paris".³ Journalist Thanh An (2019) referred to him as a "Remarkable Individuals of Vietnam,"⁴ and I would like to borrow these words in the introduction.

Professor Phạm Huy Thông came from a wealthy business family on Hàng Bạc Street in Hanoi. From a young age, he demonstrated ambition and profound patriotism. He was not only associated with political and social activities but was also known for his deep passion for the culture and history of the nation. His father, Phạm Chân Hưng, was one of Hanoi's renowned merchants before the August Revolution, but Phạm Huy Thông chose a path of the spirit and aspiration for freedom.

At the young age of 15 or 16, Phạm Huy Thông had already written his name into the history of Vietnamese poetry during Phong trào Thơ mới (the New Poetry Movement) with a soul full of romance and heroic melancholy. He "managed, on a few occasions, to bring Vietnamese poetry with the dreamy atmosphere of Shakespeare's plays and the grandeur of Victor Hugo. Huy Thông also established a small poetry school that included Lam Giang, Phan Khắc Khoan, and a poet who would later leave a profound legacy: Chế Lan Viên." (Hoài Thanh & Hoài Chân, 1942)⁵. His passion for literature and language seemed to have been hidden in the young man's blood.

Later, he went to France to study and graduated with a bachelor's degree in law at the age of 21. He stayed on to pursue a doctorate in law and further studied for master's degrees in

³ <https://baotangvanhoc.vn/cau-chuyen-nha-van/pham-huy-thong-nha-tri-thuc-lon-tai-danh/>

⁴ <https://ttdn.vn/hoi-nhap-va-phat-trien/van-hoa-xa-hoi/gs-pham-huy-thong-nam-quoc-ky-nhan-30057>

⁵ <https://file.nhasachmienphi.com/pdf/nhasachmienphi-thi-nhan-viet-nam.pdf>

history and geography. Through perseverance and dedication, he became a brilliant scholar in different fields.⁶

In addition to his poetic and academic careers, Phạm Huy Thông also had a political career that significantly influenced the nation. According to the Museum of Literature, from 1940 to 1945, he participated in the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in France. In 1946, he was selected as the secretary to President Hồ Chí Minh at the Fontainebleau Conference, an experience that profoundly shaped his thinking and awareness. Meeting President Hồ Chí Minh inspired him to pursue the revolutionary path.

After his activities in France and a period of house arrest in Hải Phòng, he lived in Vietnam and dedicated himself to a political career. From then on, Professor Phạm Huy Thông held numerous key positions, including Deputy Chairman of the Vietnam Committee for Social Sciences (now the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences), Director of the Institute of Archaeology, Rector of Hanoi National University of Education, and a member of the National Assembly for the second and third terms, among others. The marks of his scientific works and policies reflect both his talented leadership and intellectual depth.

In addition to his significant achievements in archaeological research, he also left a mark in different fields of social science research. One notable area is language policy, as reflected in documents preserved at the National Archives Center III, which include 1,338 volumes containing tens of thousands of manuscript pages.

Among these thousands of manuscript pages, we find materials discussing language-related issues, speeches rewritten multiple times, and detailed marginal notes. For example, Document 256 is an opening text for the Oriental Linguistics Conference among Socialist countries. The final presentation consists of 8 pages, but the archive contains 44 pages, including handwritten and typed drafts with revisions and annotations, organized into six versions, three of which are handwritten.

Below are some illustrations:

Figure 1: Page 1, handwriting 1st

⁶ <https://baotangvanhoc.vn/cau-chuyen-nha-van/pham-huy-thong-nha-tri-thuc-lon-tai-danh/>

Đề mở đầu hội nghị 23

Thưa các nhà ngôn ngữ học dự hội nghị,
 Thưa các đồng chí và các bạn,
 Chào mừng các vị, các đồng chí và các bạn,
 họ như thiên một nơi đây để trao đổi kiến
 thức, kinh nghiệm và suy nghĩ về các ngôn ngữ
 Đông Á & Thuyết phát sinh sự mang tên
 một tư tưởng yêu cầu di sản Việt Nam chúng tôi,
 Chử Chi Minh, một người rất quen thuộc
 và có nhiều ý kiến rất hay về ngôn ngữ và ngôn
 ngữ học, nhất là về các tiếng nói Phương Đông,
 tôi muốn được tâm sự một đôi điều.
 Trong khi nghiên cứu di sản rất quen thuộc,
 nhưng vẫn đi sống lại đang đặt ra trước nhữ
 ng vấn đề, thế nào là loại, và đối với từng
 dân tộc, với di sản tinh và một số di sản
 phát triển phù hợp với tiến độ của xã hội
 đang, đang là nơi bắt đầu của một người,
 chúng ta, những người nghiên cứu ngôn ngữ học và
 ngôn ngữ, chúng ta phải chứng tỏ những con người
 của bộ, những con người thuộc lý cuộc sống,
 mới hay mà đến thì với ngôn ngữ chúng ta
 của chúng ta? Và chúng ta phải là những con
 người bị ảnh hưởng, khi luận về ý nghĩa xã
 hội và chính trị của tiếng nói, và quan hệ
 một thiết yếu ngôn ngữ và tư duy, ngôn
 ngữ và văn minh, khi trong số chúng ta có
 những người, ở những lúc nhất định, có
 chuẩn mực coi về học ngôn ngữ như một

Figure 4: Page 1, typed version 1st

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- 4 -

đó là vì chúng tôi có phần say sưa với thắng lợi, nên — như những người bản ngữ thuộc những thú tiếng nói đã phát triển cao, thường nghĩ về tiếng nói của mình — những nhà ngôn ngữ học Việt Nam cũng tương đàu như ~~tiếng Việt và ngữ học Việt Nam cũng tương đàu như~~ tiếng Việt và chữ Việt, đã đạt một đỉnh cao, cứ thế, tự mình, trong quá trình được sử dụng, dù sức để tự vạch cho mình lối đi mà đi. Nay chúng tôi đã thấy được tiếng Việt đã hiện đại hóa, cần được hiện đại hóa hơn nữa để đáp ứng yêu cầu của cuộc sống, đã bước đầu được cải tiến, nay cần được chuẩn hóa. Chỉ có điều là chúng tôi còn cần bàn thêm cho ra lẽ hiện đại hóa hơn nữa thì làm gì, chuẩn hóa thì làm thế nào ?

Chúng tôi mong đợi hội nghị mang đến cho chúng tôi những ánh sáng mới. *Việc này ghi ở thời m5 d1 t1, lý luận chỉ là lý luận tại b1, không là b1, Vay*

Các đồng chí và các bạn, *đều cần biết rằng cộng đồng dân tộc Việt Nam gồm 54 dân tộc và bộ tộc, 54 cộng đồng đó gần bó từ lâu thành một dân tộc Việt Nam chung. 54 cộng đồng dân tộc trải qua một lịch sử lâu dài và vẻ vang chung, lại đều đã gần bó với nhau gần đây trong một sự nghiệp đấu tranh cách mạng chung, nên mọi đều thống nhất trong ý chí chung xây dựng chủ nghĩa xã hội.* Muốn vậy, tất cả đều thống nhất hướng ứng chính sách dân tộc của Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam, trong đó có chính sách ngôn ngữ, mà cơ bản là chủ trương song ngữ đối với các vùng dân tộc thiểu số. Cụ thể là: cả nước phải sử dụng được tiếng phổ thông và chữ quốc ngữ; các dân tộc thiểu số có quyền dùng tiếng nói riêng của mình, hơn nữa có nhiệm vụ dùng tiếng nói đó để phát huy văn hóa của dân tộc. Tiếng nói riêng đó được khuyến khích la tinh hóa gần gũi chữ quốc ngữ, để thuận lợi cho việc nắm tiếng và chữ phổ thông, học hành có kết quả, làm chủ được khoa học và kỹ thuật, đồng thời tận dụng được sự giúp đỡ của cả nước, để ~~sáng tạo và~~ phát triển văn hóa *tiếng, góp phần xây dựng cuộc sống mới chung..*

Một quyết định của Hội đồng Bộ trưởng, quyết định số 53 CP ngày 22-2-1980, đã vạch ra con đường sáng lạng ấy, đi đến tăng cường đoàn kết, phát huy văn hóa, xúc tiến khoa học và kinh tế.

Figure 6: Page 1, typed version 2nd

ĐỀ MỞ ĐẦU HỘI NGHỊ

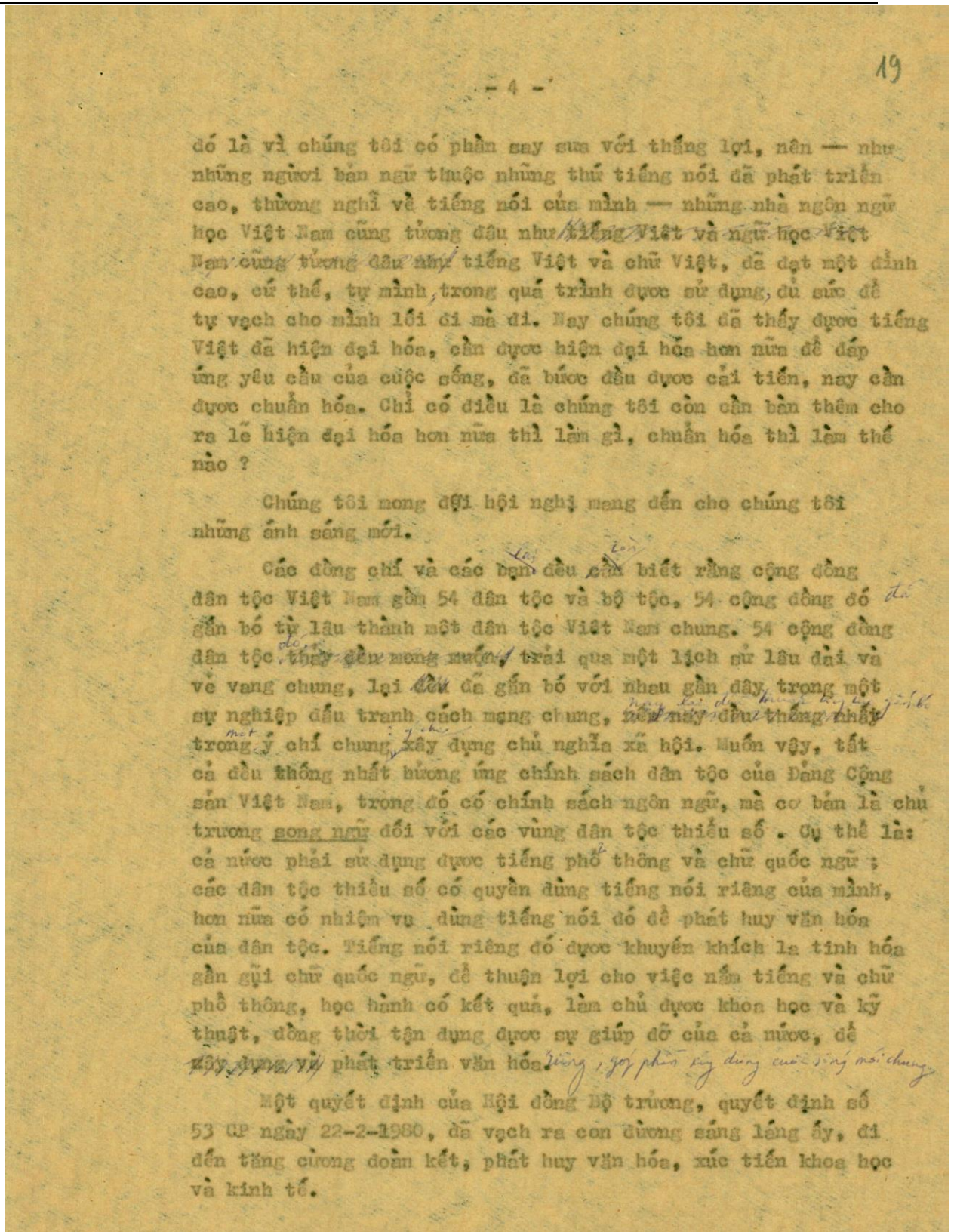
Thưa các nhà ngôn ngữ học dự hội nghị,
Thưa các đồng chí và các bạn,

Chào mừng các vị, các đồng chí và các bạn, họp nhau thân mật nơi đây để trao đổi hiểu biết, kinh nghiệm và suy nghĩ về các ngôn ngữ Phương Đông ở Thành phố lịch sử mang tên lãnh tụ kính yêu của dân tộc Việt Nam chúng tôi, Chủ tịch Hồ Chí Minh, một người rất quen tâm và có những ý kiến rất hay về ngôn ngữ và ngôn ngữ học, nhất là về các tiếng nói Phương Đông, — tôi muốn được tâm sự một đôi điều.

Trong khi những vấn đề rất quan trọng, những vấn đề sống còn đang đặt ra trước nhân dân các nước, trước nhân loại, và đối với từng dân tộc, vấn đề thức tỉnh về một con đường phát triển phù hợp với tiến độ của cả cộng đồng, đang là nỗi băn khoăn của mỗi người, — chúng ta, những người nghiên cứu ngôn ngữ học và ngôn ngữ, chúng ta phải chăng là những con người cục bộ, những con người thoát ly cuộc sống, mới say mê đến thế với ngành chuyên môn của chúng ta? Và chẳng phải là những con người bị ám ảnh ư, khi luận về ý nghĩa xã hội và chính trị của tiếng nói, về quan hệ mật thiết giữa ngôn ngữ và tư duy, ngôn ngữ và văn minh, ~~thì~~ trong số chúng ta có những người, ở những lúc nhất định, có chiều hướng coi văn hóa ngôn ngữ như một trong những vấn đề số 1 đặt ra trước con người và trước những cộng đồng dân tộc, trước những cộng đồng quốc gia?

Vấn đề này đặt ra với nhiều nhà tư tưởng ở nhiều nước. Nhiều người đặt ra câu hỏi: ở thời đại ngày nay nhiều cộng đồng quốc gia, điển hình là ở châu Phi, được thành lập, trở thành những lò luyện luyện nên những dân tộc mới trên cơ sở những đơn vị hành chính cũ của chủ nghĩa thực dân, mỗi đơn vị đó gồm nhiều tộc người nói tiếng nói khác nhau, — thì

Figure 7: Page 4, typed version 2nd



In the typed drafts, at the bottom of each document, he signed his name as "Huy Thông." This signature appears on all three typed versions of this speech.

Figure 9: Final page, typed version 1st

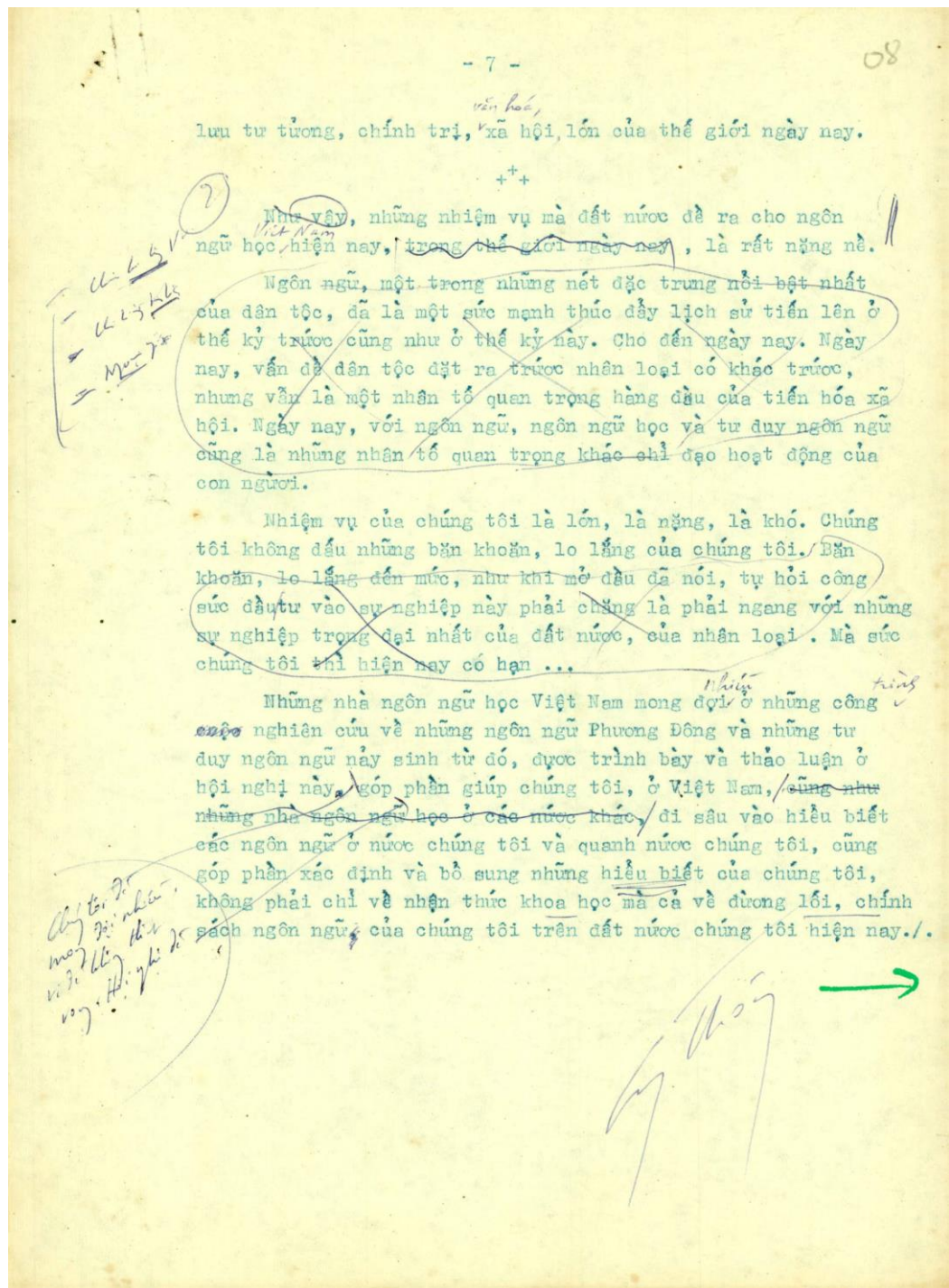
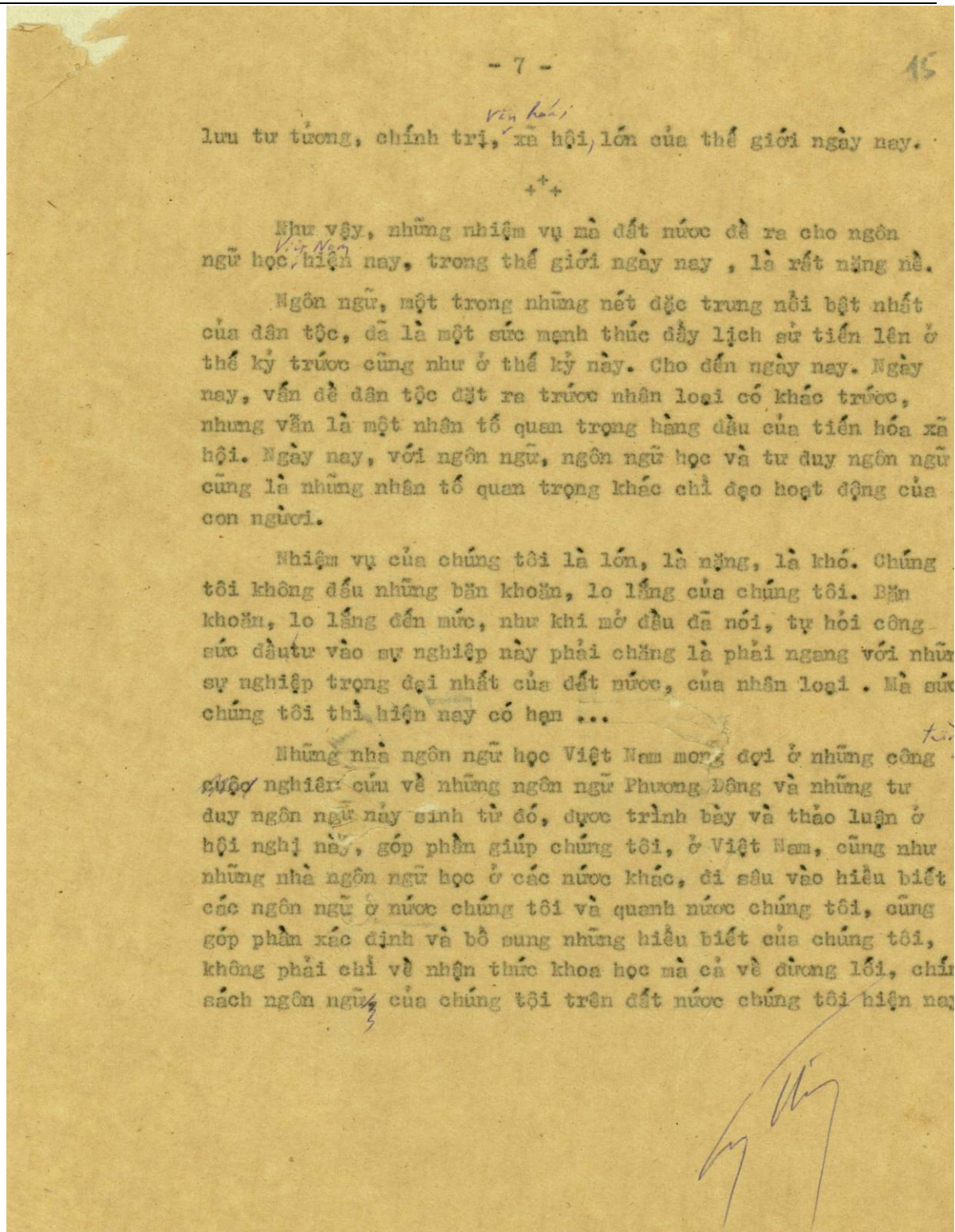
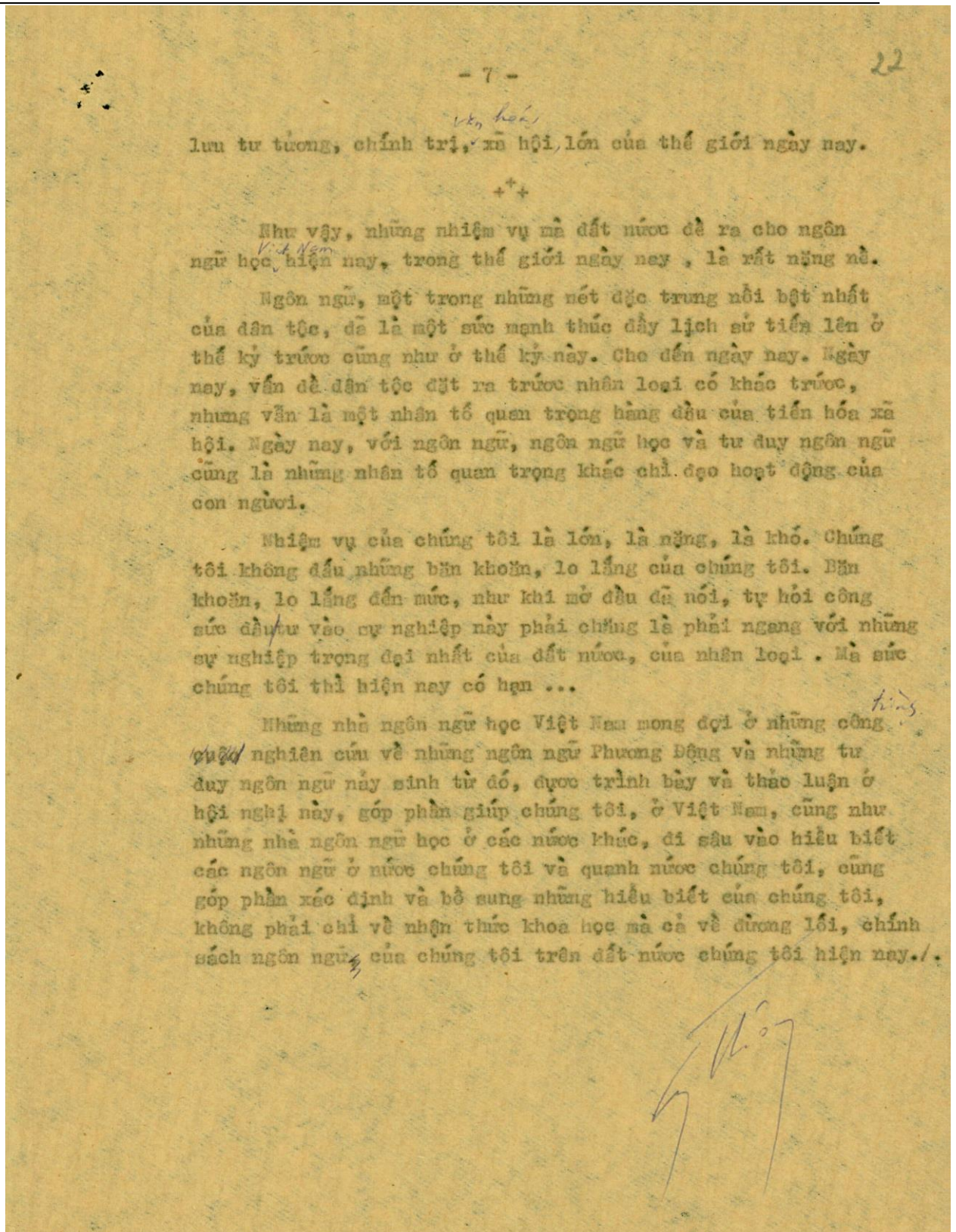


Figure 10: Final page, typed version 2nd

Figure 11: Final page, typed version 3rd



These drafts, therefore, may hold significant value for studying the dialogue on policy between linguistics scholars and an administrator like Professor Phạm Huy Thông.

The fact that the author of these drafts revised them multiple times demonstrates his seriousness and attention to this field. This is why we have chosen to compile Professor Phạm

Huy Thông's writings related to linguistics to share with readers. Our aim is to preserve the memory of a scholar who had a profound influence on Vietnamese society, an illustrious figure of Indochina, and to preserve materials related to the history of language policy in Vietnam.

2. Phạm Huy Thông's perspective on language policy in his discourse

The National Archives Center III holds a collection of 22 documents numbered from 254 to 275. Additionally, there is an opening speech for the scientific seminar celebrating Slavic Culture and Writing Day (referred to as "Slavo" in Phạm Huy Thông's documents) numbered 220.

After thoroughly examining these manuscripts, we selected 11 writings related to linguistic issues to analyze. Many handwritten drafts are quite difficult to decipher, so we plan to revisit them in the future.

Through the survey of these materials, we observed that Professor Phạm Huy Thông consistently showed deep concern about language policy issues—topics that remain "hot" in today linguistic discussion both nationally and internationally today, such as standardization, bilingualism, and foreign languages.

2.1. *Standardization*

Recognizing that the core task of the Institute of Linguistics and the Vietnamese linguistic research community was to gradually implement the State's policy of standardizing the nation's spoken and written language to preserve the purity of Vietnamese, Professor Phạm Huy Thông emphasized that this effort should not be delayed. This urgency was particularly significant because educational reforms were already underway, and the standardization of language and script had to be rooted in the school system.

While awaiting the establishment of a nationwide directive body, he took concrete steps, collaborating with the Institute of Linguistics and the Textbook Compilation Center to address issues related to the standardization of spelling and terminology. The efforts of the research team followed a bottom-up approach but included exchanges with various ministries and agencies, as outlined in the document *Một bước tiến mới trên con đường chuẩn hóa tiếng nói và chữ viết* (A New Step Forward on the Path to Standardizing Speech and Writing - date unknown; Document 265).

In his article *Nhiệm vụ trước mắt của ngành ngôn ngữ học Việt Nam (Immediate Tasks of Vietnamese Linguistics)* (date unknown, Document 258), Professor Phạm Huy Thông provided a scientific and convincing overview of critical issues in the national language development policy. These included the urgent need for standardization, emphasizing the importance of compiling *Ngữ pháp tiếng Việt (Vietnamese Grammar)* and *Từ điển tiếng Việt (Vietnamese Dictionary)*; the necessity of establishing a bilingual system, simultaneously Latinizing minority languages to preserve them while protecting cultural heritage; and promoting the use of the national language in minority areas. He also discussed the role of teaching and learning foreign languages for global integration and facilitating the publication of scientific research.

When outlining these tasks, he not only addressed them in general terms but also provided concrete examples. Moreover, his perspective was always multidimensional and comprehensive. For instance, while stressing the urgency of quickly publishing *Ngữ pháp tiếng Việt (Vietnamese Grammar)* and *Từ điển tiếng Việt (Vietnamese Dictionary)*, he also acknowledged the potential contributions of other comparative materials to the development of Vietnamese.

Professor Phạm Huy Thông also dedicated a separate article to introducing the book *Một cuốn ngữ pháp cơ bản phổ thông (A Basic Grammar for General Use)* (date unknown; Document 267). In discussing this topic, he demonstrated an objective approach, stating:

"We understand that grammar can be perceived through various methods, with each observational angle offering its strengths and weaknesses. In the current state of scientific research, it is challenging to affirm which approach best provides the most accurate, profound, and comprehensive understanding of Vietnamese grammar. However, by applying the latest achievements of linguistics to Vietnamese grammar, combined with traditional methods of observation and analysis, we can still grasp the essential highlights and unique features of Vietnamese."

This perspective illustrates that he did not regard state-assigned materials as the sole authoritative source but respected the value of other resources and contributions. In addition to discussing the *Vietnamese Grammar* and *Vietnamese Dictionary*, Professor Phạm Huy Thông also emphasized the need to develop specialized vocabulary in both the natural and social sciences as part of the standardization process. This remains an open and evolving issue, requiring continuous research and updates to meet the demands of modern development.

Beyond his general writings on policy, he authored specific articles addressing the standards for scientific terminology, such as *Khoa học, dân tộc, đại chúng - Những tiêu chuẩn của thuật ngữ khoa học (Science, National Identity, and Popularity – Standards for Scientific Terminology)* (December 15, 1970; Document 254). In this article, he discussed the importance of adhering to fundamental standards in developing scientific terminology: scientific accuracy, national identity, and public accessibility. He agreed with the assertion:

*"A good term must, in content, be scientific, meaning it achieves absolute precision and has a tightly organized system. In form, it should carry a national essence, resonate with Vietnamese culture, and be accessible to the public (clear, concise, easy to write, easy to say, and easy to remember)."*⁷

He summarized that scientific content encompasses two key requirements: precision and systematic structure. The standards of national identity and public accessibility are two interlinked aspects of form. He also acknowledged the hierarchy of these standards, asking which should take precedence. While advocating respect for Vietnamese language and its existing writing system to avoid chaos in terminology usage, he emphasized that this did not mean Vietnamese and its terminology should be rigidly confined. Instead, he recognized the dynamic nature of language, with changes often emerging under the pressure of acceptance by the majority of users. This meticulous and multifaceted article, rich in specific examples, requires careful and thorough reading to fully grasp the issues presented.

In addition, Professor Phạm Huy Thông addressed the issue of the Vietnamese writing system. To share his insights with an international audience and encourage diverse perspectives on this matter, he authored a French-language article titled *Vấn đề cải cách chữ viết của Việt Nam (The Issue of Reforming Vietnam's Writing System)* (date unknown; Document 259).

In this article, he acknowledged that while the Vietnamese writing system at the time reasonably reflected the phonetic structure of the language, it still had certain shortcomings, such as inconsistencies between spoken and written forms or outdated rules. However, decades of research and discussion had concluded that writing reform was not truly necessary, as the existing system was already simple and practical.

⁷ On the issue of using foreign scientific terminology, *Hà Nội, 1968, p. 62* (as cited in the original reference by Phạm Huy Thông in the article *Khoa học, dân tộc, đại chúng - Những tiêu chuẩn của thuật ngữ khoa học [Science, National Identity, and Popularity – Standards for Scientific Terminology]* (December 15, 1970; Document 254).

The article emphasized that any reform must be grounded in scientific research and practical needs, avoiding arbitrary decisions or subjective judgments. Proposed changes, such as adjustments to vowels, consonants, or the introduction of new symbols, required careful consideration. The ultimate goal was to achieve a balance between practicality and the preservation of cultural and national values.

Finally, the article affirmed that language reform is a collective responsibility, requiring societal consensus and careful evaluation to ensure decisions align with national interests.

Additionally, Professor Phạm Huy Thông emphasized the importance of fostering aesthetic values in communication through the teaching of literature. He also considered the study of linguistic history to be crucial, with the exploration of chữ Nôm playing a significant role.

In his opening speech for the *Ngày văn hóa và chữ viết Slavơ (Day of Slavic Culture and Writing)* (May 22, 1984; Document 220), he expressed pride and respect for chữ Nôm as part of Vietnam's national history. He regarded the creation of chữ Nôm and later chữ Quốc ngữ as monumental achievements, reflecting the Vietnamese people's resilience and creativity. These accomplishments, he suggested, could be likened to the Bulgarian people's creation of the Slavic script.

He wrote:

"Just like the Bulgarian people, the Vietnamese people have historically used their own writing systems—chữ Nôm in the past and later chữ Quốc ngữ—to preserve and develop national culture. In doing so, they not only nurtured the national language and enriched their cultural identity but also fought to protect not just their culture, but their national consciousness and the very soul of the nation."

This statement highlights his deep appreciation for the role of language and writing in shaping and preserving the national spirit and identity of Vietnam. Until recent years, the issue of maintaining the purity of the Vietnamese language and its standardization has remained a significant question for Vietnam's linguistic research community (Nguyễn Văn Khang, 2003; Đỗ Anh Vũ, 2021; Phạm Văn Tinh, 2021).

"Since the late Prime Minister Phạm Văn Đồng initiated the movement to 'Preserve the Purity of the Vietnamese Language' (Journal of Learning, Issue 4, 1966) until now (2021), 55 years have passed. This movement has been embraced by society as a whole, particularly by the Vietnamese linguistics community, following a 'trajectory'

of ups and downs, at times fervent, at times subdued... However, never before has the issue of preserving and protecting the Vietnamese language attracted as much public attention as in recent times." (Phạm Văn Tình, 2021).

This approach aligns with Einar Haugen (1985)'s theoretical framework (since 1966) on language standardization, which identifies four stages: *selection, codification, elaboration, and acceptance*. These stages, applied to many national language development processes, provide a useful lens for understanding Vietnam's efforts. For instance, Haugen (1985)'s concept of codification—involving the development of grammar, orthography, and dictionaries—is mirrored in Professor Phạm Huy Thông's call for the immediate publication of *Ngữ pháp tiếng Việt* (Vietnamese Grammar) and *Từ điển tiếng Việt* (Vietnamese Dictionary). Similarly, his work on developing specialized vocabulary echoes Haugen (1966)'s emphasis on elaborating language for diverse functional domains, including education and science. Perhaps now is the time for us to thoroughly reflect on the history of this research and the implementation of these policies.

2.2. *Bilingual policy: promoting the national language while preserving minority languages*

When discussing the bilingual policy, Professor Phạm Huy Thông emphasized the need for a synchronized approach that balances scientific development, advancement, and preservation. Specifically, in the report *Về chủ trương đối với chữ viết của các dân tộc thiểu số* (*On the Policy for the Writing Systems of Ethnic Minorities*), prepared by the Subcommittee on Ethnic Minority Scripts under his direction (July 8, 1977 – December 1978; Document 268), the subcommittee identified factors limiting the effectiveness of this work. These limitations, as understood today, were largely due to a lack of collaboration between the state and local communities, and an overly one-sided approach that focused exclusively on promoting the national language without adequately addressing the preservation and development of minority languages.

In this report, Professor Phạm Huy Thông presented detailed analyses of the linguistic situations in various regions and among representative ethnic groups. His proposals, which is still relevant today, reflect principles that contemporary researchers and policymakers continue to find it as a complex issue (Nguyễn Văn Khang, 2023; Vũ Thị Sao Chi & Nguyễn Đức Tồn, 2024).

The principles outlined by Professor Phạm Huy Thông were both objective and scientific:

- **Promote the National Language:** Ensure the widespread use of the national language for effective communication and administration.
- **Respect All Ethnic Languages:** Treat the languages of all ethnic groups with equal respect and importance.
- **Enhance Existing Latinized Scripts:** For ethnic groups that already had Latinized scripts, assess and improve these systems for better usability.
- **Latinize Non-Latin Scripts:** For scripts that were not yet Latinized and were difficult for the Kinh majority to learn and use, consider Latinization for better dissemination.
- **Develop Scripts for Oral Languages:** For languages without written scripts, explore the feasibility of creating a writing system to ensure their preservation and transmission.

In his article *Một chủ trương lớn: chữ viết cho từng dân tộc ít người* (A Major Policy: Writing Systems for Individual Ethnic Minorities) (1980; Document 269), he bridged state policies with the needs of local communities. The article offered scientific, flexible recommendations, emphasizing that language is a dynamic entity requiring continual adaptation. It also highlighted the close relationship between language and its social context (the speakers).

This approach shows Professor Phạm Huy Thông's view that language policy must not only reflect scientific principles but also adapt to societal realities, fostering harmony between linguistic development and cultural preservation. His perspective aligns Cummins's (1983) and Fishman (1989)'s works on language and ethnicity, where Fishman advocates for bilingual policies to sustain linguistic diversity while ensuring the dominance of a national lingua franca. Professor Phạm Huy Thông's focus on Latinizing minority languages reflects a similar goal of preserving cultural heritage while adapting to practical needs.

Professor Phạm Huy Thông's vision of linguistic standardization and preserving the cultural heritage of ethnic minority languages in Vietnam aligns closely with the comprehensive research conducted by Professor Nguyễn Văn Khang. In his seminal works, Nguyễn Văn Khang explored the challenges of maintaining linguistic diversity in Vietnam's ethnic minority regions while addressing the realities of multilingualism. His book *Ngôn ngữ sử dụng ở vùng dân tộc thiểu số Việt Nam* (Language Use in Ethnic Minority Areas of Vietnam) highlights the socio-linguistic dynamics of these regions, emphasizing the need for practical policies that ensure both the preservation of minority languages and their integration

into national development (Nguyễn Văn Khang, 2023). These findings resonate with Phạm Huy Thông's advocacy for promoting bilingual education policies and integrating minority languages into national development strategies, as articulated in his writings on the necessity of standardizing Vietnamese while respecting the cultural essence of ethnic languages. Both scholars provide a multidimensional perspective on how linguistic policies can balance the dual goals of modernization and cultural preservation, a challenge that remains critical in Vietnam's language planning efforts.

2.3. *Promoting foreign language learning*

When discussing the development of foreign language teaching and learning, Professor Phạm Huy Thông emphasized the close collaboration between the Institute of Linguistics and educational institutions, such as the University of Foreign Language Education and the National University. In his writings and speeches, he consistently conveyed a deep respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.

His opening speech for the *Ngày văn hóa của đất nước, ngày chữ viết Slavơ (National Culture Day and Day of Slavic Writing)* is a prime example of this spirit. In the speech, he demonstrated a profound understanding of the historical formation and significance of the Slavic script while expressing empathy for the Bulgarian people. He drew parallels between the struggles of Vietnam and Bulgaria, noting how both nations, despite the dominance of powerful empires, managed to create their own writing systems—Vietnam with *chữ Nôm* and Bulgaria with the Slavic script.

In the article *Nhiệm vụ trước mắt của ngành ngôn ngữ học Việt Nam (Immediate Tasks of Vietnamese Linguistics)* (date unknown, Document 258), Professor Phạm Huy Thông highlighted the necessity of learning foreign languages to disseminate scientific knowledge globally and publish research on an international scale. His vision echoes with the Vietnamese government's comprehensive efforts to reform foreign language education, particularly through the National Foreign Language Project (NFLP) 2008-2020 (Government of Vietnam, 2008). Approved by Decision No. 1400/QĐ-TTg, this project aimed to enable young Vietnamese graduates to become proficient in foreign languages, empowering them to communicate, learn, and work effectively in an integrated, multilingual, and multicultural environment. This national policy underscores the significance of fostering global integration through language education while strengthening Vietnam's international presence.

Recognizing the need for continued improvement, the government issued Decision No. 2080/QĐ-TTg in 2017 (Government of Vietnam, 2017) to adjust and extend the NFLP for the period of 2017-2025. This phase focuses on enhancing the quality of foreign language education across all educational levels, introducing foreign languages from preschool, and integrating foreign language teaching into other subjects. This initiative reflects the government's commitment to addressing the evolving needs of the education system and aligns with Professor Phạm Huy Thông's belief in the importance of linguistic exchange as a means of fostering global understanding while preserving national identity and cultural heritage.

By integrating these forward-thinking policies into Vietnam's linguistic strategy, the nation exemplifies how cultural preservation and global integration can coexist, echoing the ideals Professor Phạm Huy Thông advocated throughout his career. These efforts continue to build upon his vision, creating a foundation where language becomes both a bridge to the world and a vessel for safeguarding Vietnam's cultural legacy.

3. Conclusion

Through the documents preserved at the National Archives Center III, we can see that Professor Phạm Huy Thông made significant contributions to the social sciences and humanities in Vietnam, one of which is the field of linguistics. With a strategic vision, multidimensional thinking, and a consistent focus on the comprehensive development of the national language and ethnic minority languages, he made important and profound contributions to the development of Vietnam's language policy. These contributions are primarily reflected in three areas: regarding the standardization of Vietnamese, he emphasized the importance of compiling *Ngữ pháp tiếng Việt (Vietnamese Grammar)* and *Từ điển tiếng Việt (Vietnamese Dictionary)*, standardizing spelling and writing, developing scientific terminology, preserving the beauty and aesthetics of the language, and exploring the history of Vietnamese, such as research on chữ Nôm; regarding the bilingual policy for ethnic minorities, he paid special attention to implementing the policy in a flexible manner, avoiding imposition or one-sided thinking, while upholding the principles of science and humanity in promoting the national language alongside maintaining and preserving ethnic minority languages; regarding foreign language education, he emphasized the role of teaching and learning foreign languages in the process of integration and scientific development, respecting and finding the beauty in other languages.

When presenting these issues, he always maintained an objective attitude and respected various research resources. Professor Phạm Huy Thông's style of presenting arguments was characterized by caution, scientific criteria, and respect for cultural identity. He always viewed language as a dynamic entity that needs to be developed flexibly and in accordance with practical needs.

Professor Phạm Huy Thông's achievement lie not only in his research but also in his strategic vision of the role of language in preserving and developing national identity. His contributions remain valuable and continue to inspire modern linguistic researchers.

As the compiler and editor of these materials, I would like to revisit the questions posed in the introduction of this book: When were these specific documents written? What were the domestic and international research and action programs on language policy during that time? Did Professor Phạm Huy Thông work with linguists, and if so, to what extent? How far were his proposals implemented by relevant agencies? What is the value and influence of his discussions (notably the notes he made in the margins of works such as *Ngữ pháp tiếng Việt* or the *Vietnamese-French Dictionary*) on the outcomes of these projects?

These are questions that require careful and thorough research to answer comprehensively. Therefore, I hope that in the future, we can address the dialogue between past and present issues in Vietnam's language policy, as well as Vietnam's policies within a comparative context with the rest of the world.

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