M.Ed. In TESL Program
Language Group Specific Informational Reports

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In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Language Group: Vietnamese
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Vietnamese

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TESL 539
Language Acquisition & Learning

http://www.chui101.com/Map.html
History of the Vietnamese Language

Vietnamese belongs to the Sino-Tibetan, Tai, Mon-Khmer, Malayo-Polynesian, & Austroasiatic language family.

For information on Vietnamese language, start watching video at 2:35.
## Alphabet & Pronunciation

**Listen to Pronunciation of Vietnamese Alphabet**

(Ager, 1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Sound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aa</td>
<td>Áâ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>Cc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dd</td>
<td>Đđ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ee</td>
<td>Êè</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gg</td>
<td>[α]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>á</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>á</td>
<td>[ə]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>[b/ə]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>[k]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>[k]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[o]</td>
<td>[o]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñ</td>
<td>[n]</td>
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<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>[n]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oo</td>
<td>Óó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ò</td>
<td>[ɔ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ò</td>
<td>[ɔ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pp</td>
<td>[p]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q</td>
<td>[k]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>[z]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>[ʒ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>[t]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>[u]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>[w]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>[v]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w</td>
<td>[v]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>[p]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>[i]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other letter combinations:
- ch, gh, gi, kh, ng, ngh, nh, ph, qu, th, tr

Diphthongs and triphongs:
- ai, ay, ăy, ao, au, ău, eo, ơu, iē, ieu, iu, oă
- oai, oâ, oe, oî, oị, ua, uă, uô, uọ, ui, uôi, uâ
- uɛ, uo, uy, uyê, uī, uọ, uư

Listen to Pronunciation of Vietnamese Alphabet

(Ager, 1998)
## Tonal Language

**Vietnamese has 6 different tone marks**

- Pronunciation of a different tone will change the total meaning of the word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tones</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Vietnamese (Pinyin)</th>
<th>Vietnamese (IPA)</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. level (không đầu)</td>
<td>a â a e ê i o ô o d u u y m a [ mā ]</td>
<td>= ghost</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. high rising (đầu sắc)</td>
<td>á á a é ē ì ì o ô ô ú ú y m a [ má ]</td>
<td>= cheek</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. low/falling (đầu huyện)</td>
<td>ã ã ã é ē ì ì o ô ô ú ú y m a [ mà ]</td>
<td>= but</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. dipping-rising (đầu hôi)</td>
<td>ã ã ã é ē ì ì o ô ô ú ú y m a [ mǎ ]</td>
<td>= tomb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. high rising glottalized (đầu ngã)</td>
<td>ā ā ā e ê ì ì o ô ô ú ú y m a [ má ]</td>
<td>= horse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. low glottalized (đau nằng)</td>
<td>a ā â e ê ì ì o ô ô ú ú y m a [ mả ]</td>
<td>= rice seedling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Ager, 1998)*
Regional Varieties

Three main regional varieties

- Northern, Central, & Southern

Regional varieties do not cause a significant interference in communication

- Central Vietnamese has the most striking differences – lowest degree of comprehensibility

Common differences between the regional varieties

- Phonological differences
- Non-basic content vocabulary

Keys to Understanding Vietnamese

Syntax
- Positioning in sentences is key
  - Invariable words
  - No inflection, concords or agreements
- Meaning is expressed by function words
  - “Concepts of tense, aspect, voice, number, negation, interrogation, imperative, and explanation are all expressed by function words” (Sayavong 26).

Verbs
- Not conjugated
- Also invariable
  - Present, past, & future
  - First, second, & third person
- Tense is shown by auxiliary words or adverbs
  - “will” & “tomorrow”
- Participle is used to show completion
Linguistic Difficulties

Language Structure
- Understanding the syntax of English
  - Subject – Verb – Object

Omission of
- Plural (“two book”)
- Possessive (“Manh pencil”)
- Copula (“She running home”)
- Past Tense (“He eat lunch yesterday”)
- Articles (“I hear dog bark”)
- Conjunctions (“You I go to zoo”)

Misuse of Pronouns (“She husband is here”)
Pronunciation Difficulties

- Dropping final consonant sounds
- Difficulty in pronouncing
  - Consonant sounds such as /ð/, /θ/, /z/, /S/, /tS/
  - Consonant clusters such as sp-, dr-, br-, fr-, pl-, str-
- Inability to apply stress within words
- Absent *be* in sentences with a subject and adjective
Cultural Norms & Values

- **Hospitality**
  - Expected or unexpected guests are always welcomed

- **Modesty**
  - Dress, appearance, & humility are all important

- **Education**
  - Education is a priority & seen as a means of advancement

- **Respect**
  - Hierarchies need to be upheld & authority respected
  - Must save face for the family and self
Communication Styles

- Information is conveyed mostly through nonverbal communication
  - Gestures: Saying good bye, Signaling for someone
  - Postures: Arms should not be behind you or in pockets when talking, no leg crossed or arms behind the chair when sitting

- Confrontation is avoided
  - Direct eye contact, verbal interactions

- Agreement does not necessarily mean they are in agreement
  - Silence, “yes,” positive responses, smiling, etc.

- Indirect conversation
  - Looking at their watch, saying the weather is beautiful
Anticipated Roadblocks in Classroom Communication

- Classroom discussions
  - Authoritative, lecture based, & random
  - Quiet, attentive & reluctant to participate
- Conformity vs. Creativity
  - Rote learning, memorization, & copying
- Teachers’ dress & behavior
- Correcting mistakes
- Personal Questions
- Calling teacher, “Teacher”
Tips for Interactions with Vietnamese Students & Parents

- Direct eye contact may be avoided
- Gesturing for someone with your index finger is rude
- Not advisable to touch someone on the head
- Crossing index with middle finger is an obscene gesture
- Older members should be addressed first in conversation
- Develop a rapport with parents before moving into problem areas
- Shaking hands with the opposite sex & use of left hand is unacceptable
- Professional dress is expected at all times
Books


Images


http://www.omniglot.com/writing/vietnamese.htm


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