

Japanese loanwords adopted into Vietnamese by newly arrived Vietnamese students and temporary workers

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In only six years the number of Vietnamese residents in Japan increased almost six times, from 44,444 in 2011 to 262,405 in 2017 (MOJ 2019). This influx of newcomers includes mostly temporary workers and students. As such, they are substantially different from the previous generations of Vietnamese, the majority of whom came to Japan as war refugees (Shingaki & Asano 2005). They have incorporated some Japanese words into the Vietnamese language.

While for the most part, the meaning of the loanwords remains unchanged. Most of the loanwords are concepts that are not available in Vietnamese and are closely linked to the daily life of Vietnamese residents in Japan.

While the meaning of the loanwords remains more or less the same, their pronunciation is significantly modified in two ways due to negative language transfer.

1. Adding accent marks to loanwords. There are six tones in Vietnamese: "ma" (mid-tone/dấu ngang), "má"(mid rising/dấu sắc), "mà"(low falling/dấu huyền), "mả"(mid falling and rising/dấu hỏi), "mã"(mid rising and glottalized/dấu ngã), "mạ"(mid falling, glottalized and short/dấu nặng) (Brunelle 2673). Many Vietnamese speakers add rising tone and mid falling, glottalized and short tone on light syllables which consist of one mora (Kubozono,2015) and obstruent germinate (small tsu). Vietnamese also add flat tone (dấu ngang) or low falling tone (dấu huyền) on heavy syllable which is consisting of two morae (Kubozono, 2015).
2. Adjusting the duration of Japanese syllable: Vietnamese is a syllable-timed language, and every syllable occupies an equal amount of time regardless of how many elements are there in a syllable (Dang, 2006; Pike, 1945; Tweedy, 2012). Also, the concept of long vowels is absent in Vietnamese. Japanese is a mora-timed language. As a result of negative transfer, Vietnamese frequently apply the syllable timing pattern to loanwords by adjusting the duration of syllables in Japanese. Vietnamese are likely to shorten the length of heavy syllables and lengthen light syllables.
3. Modifying Japanese consonants' pronunciation: The pronunciation of some Japanese consonants is changed by Vietnamese to be the same with similar consonants in Vietnamese to be easier to pronounce.

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