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# The Integration of Chinese Words into the Vietnamese Language

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**Keywords** : *Chinese words, Sino-Vietnamese words, Old Sino-Vietnamese words, Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words, Integration*

## 1. Types of Chinese words in the Vietnamese language

During its centuries-long relationship with the Chinese language, the Vietnamese language has borrowed a significant number of words from Chinese. Historically, the Chinese words in the Vietnamese language can be classified into four types:

- a. The pronunciation of the words borrowed from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries originates in the Chinese phonetic system of the Tang dynasty (618-907 C.E.) which was taught in Giao Chau at that time. These words are called *Sino-Vietnamese words*.
- b. Words borrowed before the 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries are pronounced (in reading) in the Vietnamese way which, in turn, originates in the Chinese pronunciation dating from and prior to the mid-Tang dynasty. These are usually referred to as *Old Sino-Vietnamese words*.
- c. Although there are Sino-Vietnamese words whose pronunciation originates in the Chinese pronunciation from the mid-Tang dynasty and thereafter, their pronunciation has not changed in the usual way, but rather in accordance with the rules of spoken Vietnamese (Nguyen Tai Can 2002: 426). These are usually called “Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words” (having been twice “Vietnamized”). Although “Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese word” is not a proper term, I will use it until a better one is coined.
- d. Chinese words which have come into Vietnamese through some South China dialect are pronounced with a Central and South Vietnam accent.

So, based on these types of words, we can label the words in (a.) as Sino-Vietnamese words, and

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the other words in (b.), (c.), and (d.) as non Sino-Vietnamese Chinese words.

## 2. Phonetic integration

### 2.1. Sino-Vietnamese words

#### 2.1.1. Changes and integration of the initials

According to Nguyen Tai Can's work *Nguồn gốc và quá trình hình thành cách đọc Hán Việt* (The origin and formation of Sino-Vietnamese pronunciation), the system of initials of the type of Chinese taught in Giao Chau during the 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries consists of 41 initials. (Nguyen Tai Can 2000: 146). These initials have changed and been integrated into the phonetic system of Vietnamese as follows (Nguyen Tai Can 2000: 174-219):

01) The initials *bang* 幫 /p/, *tinh* 并 /b/, and some such initials such as *bàng* 滂 /p'/, *phi* 非 /f/, *phu* 敷 /f/, *phụng* 奉 /v/, and *vân* 雲 (/Oiw/ and /yi/) of some words have changed and merged into /b/. For example, *băng* 崩, *bao* 包, *bội* 倍, *bạch* 白, *bái* 沛, and *ba* 葩;

02) The initials *bàng* 滂 /p'/, *phi* 非 /f/, *phu* 敷 /f/, *phụng* 奉 /v/, and some initials such as *bang* 幫 /p/, *tinh* 并 /b/, *thư* 書 /s/, *thường* 常 /z/, *thấu* 透 /t'/ of some words have changed and merged into /f/. For example, *phê* 批, *phiến* 片, *phủ* 否, *pháp* 法, *phu* 敷, *phúc* 覆, *phù* 浮, and *phụng* 鳳;

03) The initials *vân* 雲 (/yj/) > /Oiw/, /yi/, *vi* 微 /w/ and some initials such as *dương* 陽 (Oj>) /j/, *ảnh* 影 /ʔ/ of some words have changed and merged into /v/. For example, *viêm* 炎, *vĩnh* 永, *vệ* 衛, *vi* 為, *văn* 文, and *vọng* 望;

04) The initial *minh* 明 /m/ and some initials such as *bang* 幫 /p/, *bàng* 滂 /p'/, *vi* 微 /w/ of some words have changed and merged into /m/. For example, *mang* 茫, *mạo* 冒, *mẫu* 母, *mạc* 幕, and *mai* 埋;

05) The initials *tinh* 精 /ts/, *tùng* 從 /dz/, *tâm* 心 /s/, *tà* 邪 /z/, *thanh* 清 /ts'/ and some such initials *bang* 幫 /p/, *bàng* 滂 /p'/, *tinh* 并 /b/ of some words have changed and merged into /t/. For example, *tư* 資, *tài* 才, *tam* 三, *tà* 邪, *tiêm* 籤, *tân* 賓, and *tiền* 便;

06) The initials *thanh* 清 /ts'/, *thấu* 透 /t'/, *thuyền* 船 /d'z/, *thư* 書 /s/, *thường* 常 /z/ and some such initials *bàng* 滂 /p'/ of some words have changed and merged into /t'/. For example, *thương* 滄, *thảo* 草, *thần* 神, *thi* 詩, and *thuần* 純;

07) The initials *trang* 莊 /t's/, *triệt* 徹 /t'/, *trùng* 澄 /d/, *tri* 知 /t/ have changed and merged into /t/. For example, *trào* 潮, *trạm* 站, *trà* 茶, *trường* 長, *trừu* 抽, *trướng* 帳, *tranh* 爭, and *tráng* 壯;

- 08) The initials *sơ* 初 /tʃʰ/, *sùng* 崇 /dʒ/, *sinh* 生 /s/, *triệt* 徹 /tʰ/ have changed and merged into /s/. For example, *sinh* 生, *sân* 産, *sao* 抄, *sách* 冊, *sài* 豺, *sầu* 愁, *siêu* 超, and *sắc* 赦;
- 09) The initials *đoan* 端 /t/, *định* 定 /d/ have changed and merged into /d/. For example, *đa* 多, *đế* 帝, *đẳng* 等, *đầu* 頭, *đại* 大, and *đề* 題;
- 10) The initial *nê* 泥 /n/ and some initials such as *nghi* 疑 /ŋ/, *nhật* 日 /h/ of some words have changed and merged into /n/. For example, *nam* 南, *nào* 惱, *nap* 納, and *nông* 農;
- 11) The initial *lai* 来 /l/ has changed into /l/. For example, *lai* 來, *lão* 老, *lạc* 樂, *lâm* 林, and *lợi* 利;
- 12) The initials *dương* 陽 (Oj >) /j/, *minh* 明 /m/ have changed and merged into /z/. For example, *do* 由, *đi* 已, *dũng* 勇, *dân* 民, and *diện* 面;
- 13) The initial *chương* 章 /tʃʰ/ has changed into /c/. For example, *chương* 章, *chuyên* 專, *chỉ* 指, *chủ* 主, and *chúc* 祝;
- 14) The initial *xương* 昌 /tʃʰ/ and some initials such as *thanh* 清 /tsʰ/, *sơ* 初 /tʃʰ/, *khê* 溪 /kʰ/, *triệt* 徹 /tʰ/, *thư* 書 /s/ of some words have changed and merged into /s/. For example, *xung* 衝, *xâm* 侵, *xoa* 叉, *xoang* 腔, *xuy* 苔, and *xá* 赦;
- 15) The initial *kiến* 見 /k/ and some initials such as *quần* 群 /g/, *nghi* 疑 /ŋ/, *hiếu* 曉 /χ/ *hạp* 匣 /ɣ/, *chương* 章 /tʃʰ/ of some words have changed and merged into /dʒ/. For example, *gia* 家, *giai* 佳, *giảm* 減, *giảng* 講, and *giáp* 甲;
- 16) The initials *nhật* 日 /h/, *nghi* 疑 /ŋ/ and some initials such as *nê* 泥 /n/, *ảnh* 影 /ʔ/ of some words have changed and merged into /ŋ/. For example, *nhi* 兒, *như* 如, *nhẫn* 忍, *nhân* 顏, *nhạn* 鴈, and *nhạc* 樂;
- 17) The initials *kiến* 見 /k/, *quần* 群 /g/ and some initials such as *khê* 溪 /kʰ/, *hạp* 匣 /ɣ/ of some words have changed and merged into /k/. For example, *ca* 歌, *cơ* 基, *cảm* 感, *kỳ* 旗, *quyền* 權, and *kỹ* 技;
- 18) The initial *khê* 溪 /kʰ/ and some initials such as *kiến* 見 /k/, *hiếu* 曉 /χ/ of some words have changed and merged into /χ/. For example, *khai* 開, *khiêm* 謙, *khả* 可, and *khách* 客;
- 19) The initial *nghi* 疑 /ŋ/ has changed into /ŋ/. For example, *nga* 峨, *ngôn* 言, *ngã* 我, and *ngọc* 玉;

20) The initial *ánh* 影 /ʔ/ has changed into /ʔ/. For example, *am* 諳, *anh* 櫻, *á* 啞, and *ái* 愛;

21) The initials *hiếu* 曉 /χ/, *hạp* 匣 /γ/ and some initials such as *kiến* 見 /k/, *vân* 雲 /γi/, *tâm* 心 /s/, *tà* 邪 /z/ of some words have changed and merged into /h/. For example, *hảo* 好, *hanh* 亨, *hải* 海, *hàng* 杭, *hài* 諧, and *hạng* 項.

### 2.1.2. Changes and integration of the rhymes

The middle Chinese rhyme system reconstructed by Nguyen Tai Can (after comparing the changes in Chiehyunn to the Chinese phonetic system of the 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries) consists of sixty-one rhymes. (Note: This reconstruction is a bit different from the research results of Wang Lih, Dong Dong Hoa, H. Maspero, Ly Rong, T. Mineya, and others. [Nguyen Tai Can 2000: 155]). It also changes in accordance with the Vietnamese pronunciation.

At present, generally, the Sino-Vietnamese rhymes have changed completely and been integrated into the Vietnamese rhyme system, but they still reflect their origins in the middle Chinese rhymes.

Studies on the historical phonetics of Vietnamese and Sino-Vietnamese words offer an understanding of the Sino-Vietnamese rhymes as follows (Nguyen Tai Can 2000: 225-226):

		- i	- u	- m / - p	- n / - t	- ɲ / - k	ɲ / - c
i / wi	+			+	+		+
ie / wie	+		+	+	+	+	
e / we	+						+
ɛ / wɛ	+						
u	+		+			+	
uə	+					+	
ə	+	+			+		
ǎ / wǎ		+	+	+	+		
a / wa	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
ă / wă		+			+	+	
u	+	+			+	+	
wo		+			+	+	
o	+	+			+	+	
ɔ	+					+	

### 2.2. Old Sino-Vietnamese words

The Old Sino-Vietnamese words came into the Vietnamese language very early, before the formation of the reading (pronunciation) of Sino-Vietnamese words. Their pronunciation has become a part of the spoken language of the Vietnamese people, and is regarded as an integral part of the Vietnamese language; it is not seen as a variant of Chinese reading. Moreover, the way Old Sino-Vietnamese is read does not follow the rules of Chinese. It has come into the orbit of the Vietnamese language and has been passed on to the present; Old Sino-Vietnamese words have been accepted as

root words of the Vietnamese language (Nguyen Tai Can 2000: 46).

The integration of Old Sino-Vietnamese words into Vietnamese is so deep that the systematic changes in Chinese phonetics that took place from the Han (206 BCE -220 CE) to the Northern and Southern dynasties (420-589 CE) to the Tang dynasty do not have any impact. These words have persistently remained in the Vietnamese language as native words, and many synonymic pairs have been created which consist of two elements: the Old Sino-Vietnamese words and the Sino-Vietnamese words. They have remained and operated naturally in Vietnamese. There are many correspondences to their initials or rhymes. For example:

01) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /b/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /f/ such as: *buông* - *phòng* 房, *buông* - *phóng* 放, *buồm* - *phàm* 帆, and *buồn* - *phiền* 煩;

02) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /d/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /t/ such as: *đục* - *trọc* 濁, *đuổi* - *truy* 追, *đúng* - *trúng* 中, and *đỡ* - *trợ* 助;

03) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /m/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /v/ such as: *mùa* - *vụ* 務, *múa* - *vũ* 舞, *mây* - *vân* 雲, and *mùi* - *vị* 味;

04) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /k/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /j/ such as: *cởi* - *giải* 解, *keo* - *giao* 膠, *kép* - *giáp* 夾, and *căn* - *gian* 間;

05) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /ɛ/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /a/ such as: *hè* - *hạ* 夏, *xe* - *xa* 車, *chè* - *trà* 茶, and *đánh* - *đả* 打;

06) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /o/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /a/ such as: *nôm/nôm* - *nam* 喃, *nộp* - *nap* 納, and *hộp* - *hạp* 匣.;

07) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /ie/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /i/ such as: *bia* - *bi* 碑, *lia* - *ly* 離, *thìa* - *thi* 蒔, *đĩa* - *tri* 池;

08) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /ɛ/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /ie/ such as: *hẹp* - *hiệp* 夾, *kén* - *kiến* 繭, *phen* - *phiên* 番, and *sen* - *liên* 蓮;

09) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /uə/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /u/ such as: *chứa* - *trữ* 貯, *tự* - *tự* 序, *lừa* - *lư* 驢, and *ngựa* - *ngự* 禦;

10) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /ə/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /i/ such as: *ngờ - nghi* 疑, *thơ - thi* 詩, *dời - di* 移, and *cờ - kỳ* 旗;

11) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /uo/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /u/ such as: *chúa - chủ* 主, *chua - chú* 注, *múa - vũ* 舞, and *chuông - chung* 鍾;

12) The Old Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /ie/ correspond to the Sino-Vietnamese words with the vowel /i/ such as: *tiếc - tích* 惜, *thiếc - tích* 錫, *chiếc - chích* 隻, and *việc - dịch* 役.

### 2.3. Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words

The pronunciation of Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words, which had their origins in Sino-Vietnamese words, has not changed in the usual way, but in accordance with the rules of spoken Vietnamese (Nguyen Tai Can 2002: 426). Research has revealed the fact that the Sino-Vietnamese sounds, after being formed, were influenced and changed by the rules of Vietnamese historical phonetics. For example, the phenomenon of fricativization:  $c > j$ ;  $c > s$ ,  $d > z$ ;  $k > \gamma$ ;  $b > v$  or changes of  $t > d$ ;  $s > t$ ;  $s > t'$  explains why modern Vietnamese has many synonymic pairs in which one element is a Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese word and the other is a Sino-Vietnamese word. It is very clear that their formation is due to the process by which they changed and integrated into Vietnamese. For example:

The Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /ɣ/, originating from the initial /k/, came from the Sino-Vietnamese voiceless initial *kiến* 見 /k/ and the Sino-Vietnamese voiced initial *quần* 群 /g/, and created a series of corresponding pairs such as *gần - cận* 近, *gan - can* 肝, *gươm - kiếm* 劍, *ghi - ký* 記, *gân - cân* 筋, and *gượng - cường* 強.

Most of the Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /v/, originating from the initial /b/, came from the Sino-Vietnamese initials *bang* 幫 /p/, *bàng* 滂 /p'/, *tịnh* 并 /b/. Others came from the Sino-Vietnamese initials *phi* 非 /f/, *phu* 敷 /f/, *vân* 雲 /Oiw/, and *phụng* 奉 /v/ and created a series of corresponding pairs such as *vốn - bản* 本, *vách - bích* 壁, *ván - bản* 版, *vá - bổ* 補, *vái - bái* 拜, and *ven - biên* 邊;

The Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial /z/, originating from the initial /d/, came from the Sino-Vietnamese initials *đoan* 端 /t/, *định* 定 /d/, and created a series of corresponding pairs such as *dừng - đình* 停, *dao - đao* 刀, *dốc (- lòng) - đốc* 篤, and *dải - dải* 帶;

The Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words with the initial *phụng* 奉 /v/, originating from the Sino-Vietnamese initials /hw/, and *thấu* 透 /t'/, originating from the Sino-Vietnamese initials /f/, created a

series of corresponding pairs such as *vạch - hoạch* 畫, *vạ - hoạ* 禍, *vẽ - hoạ* 畫, *thừa - sở* 所, *thầy - sư* 師, *tha - xá* (xá) 赦.

The changes of the kernel vowels and the rhymes also bring about diversified correspondences. For example, in the following pairs, the first element is a Sino-Vietnamese word and the second is a Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese word: *ân - ơn* 恩, *bảo - báu* 寶, *đắc - được* 得, *khố - kho* 庫, *lệ - lễ* 例, *miêu - mèo* 貓, *nường - nàng* 娘, *nghi - ngờ* 疑, *tâm - tim* 心, *thì - thời* 時, and *viên - vườn* 園. (Dao Duy Anh 1957, Ly Lạc Nghi, Jim Waters 1998, Nguyen Ngoc San 1993, Nguyen Tai Can 2000).

#### 2.4. The distinction between the Old Sino-Vietnamese words and the Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words

However, the distinction between the Old Sino-Vietnamese words and the Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words is not actually so simple, and in reality the classification shows that there are cases in which the issue has treated differently by various researchers. Taking, for example, ĐÌA 地 with nặng tone and ĐÌA 池 with huyền tone: the Sino-Vietnamese reading pronunciation is TRÌ 池 and both have the same rhyme, “IA,” belonging to the old pre-Tang rhyme pattern, but ĐÌA 地 is considered a Sino-Vietnamese word, and ĐÌA 池 is considered a Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese word.

The correspondences and oppositions such as *che // già* 遮; *giống // chủng* 種; *giấy // chi* 紙 have been formed due to the changes from rhyme CHƯƠNG 章 /t's/ (c > j), but whereas GIÀ 遮 is considered a Sino-Vietnamese word, CHE is considered an Old Sino-Vietnamese word of the same type as *buông, bướm, mùa, mùi* ... But, *giống* and *giấy* are considered Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words, and *chủng* 種 and *chi* 紙 are considered to be the Sino-Vietnamese words (Nguyen Tai Can 2000: 46).

Moreover, sometimes the researchers categorize some words as Old Sino-Vietnamese or Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese, but their phonetic history runs counter to this classification. For example, according to Nguyen Tai Can (2000, 2002):

CẢ (gia – cost): the initial is Old Sino-Vietnamese but the rhyme is Sino-Vietnamese.

TIM (heart): the initial is Sino-Vietnamese but the rhyme is Old Sino-Vietnamese.

GAN (liver): the initial is Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese but the rhyme is Sino-Vietnamese.

CHÌM (to sink): the initial is Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese but the rhyme is Old Sino-Vietnamese.

As a result, it is not unusual for one Vietnamese word to belong to either one of the categories mentioned above, depending on the theory of the researcher. Ha Thi Tue Thanh (2008) summarized and listed 196 Old Sino-Vietnamese words and Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words and these were acknowledged by Wang Lih, Vuong Loc, Nguyen Ngoc San and Nguyen Tai Can. Of these 196 words, two or three researchers identify only 132 as Old Sino-Vietnamese words; one or two researchers



identify 51 words as Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words; and 13 words are considered as Old Sino-Vietnamese words or Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words depending on the theories of other researchers. For example, *vá, giáy, giêng, giống, rêm, rông, sen, vớ, vợ, tướn, thiếc, thùa, thóc*.

## 2.5. Other kinds of Sino-Vietnamese words

In addition to words that are classified in the three categories mentioned above, in Vietnamese, there are also Sino-Vietnamese words for which the reading pronunciation has the Dang Trong (Cochinchine of Vietnam) dialect/accents and Chinese words that come to Vietnam from some South China dialects took the Vietnamese pronunciation and followed that accent. These words are proof of the changes and the integration of Chinese words in Vietnamese, but they are rarely mentioned.

### 2.5.1. The Dang Trong and the Dang Ngoai (Tonkin of Vietnam) dialect variants

In the existing research, the majority of the researchers simply hold that the dialect/accents of Sino-Vietnamese words for which the reading pronunciation is Dang Trong are local phonetic variations seemingly due to the cessation of use of a number of Chinese words. In fact the answer to this question needs more study in terms of language, history, culture, and society. Hundreds of pairs of the Dang Trong dialect variants and the Dang Ngoai (Tonkin of Vietnam) dialect variants can be found. For example: *tràng - (trường 長), kiểng - (cảnh 景), chánh - (chính 正), lãnh - (lĩnh 領), sanh - (sinh 生), tánh - (tính 性), thịnh - (thịnh 盛), chơn - (chân 真 - chân thật), huỳnh - (hoàng 黃), hưởng - (hồng 紅), mạng - (mệnh 命), nghĩa - (nghĩa 義), nguồn - (nguyên 原), nhật - (nhật 日), quý - (quý 貴), châu - (châu 周), thu - (thu 收), tông - (tùng 從).*

### 2.5.2. Chinese words from South China dialects

Beside the issue mentioned above, a series of Chinese words came into Vietnamese from some South China dialects. Then, the South China dialect accents of those Chinese words were pronounced in a South Vietnam dialect accent. That is an issue that needs great attention. In the following pairs, the part in brackets is the Sino-Vietnamese pronunciation: *bò bía - (bạc bính 薄餅), sủi cảo - (thủy giảo 水餃), há cảo - (hà giảo 蝦餃), hên xui - (hạnh tai 幸災), hổ/hầu lốn - (hoả lư 火爐), hủ tiếu - (quế tiểu 桂小), lục tàu xá - (lục đậu trà 綠豆茶), mè lấu/ mè láo - (ma lô 麻廬), mè xừng - (ma đường 麻糖), phá lấu - (đả lỗ 打鹵), tài xỉu - (đại tiểu 大小), xá xíu - (xoa thiêu 叉燒), xập xám - (thập tam 十三), xíu mại - (tiểu mại 小邁), cắc - (giác 角), ké - (kỳ 寄), lấu - (lô 爐), tiệm - (điểm 店), tia - (gia 爺), xịn - (tân 新), xiu - (hưu 休), (nhỏ) xíu - (tiểu 小).*

It is very easy for everyone to agree that the above mentioned words are local words from a Southern dialect of Vietnamese.

The reason for the appearance and existence of the above mentioned 'Dang Trong variants' is primarily due to the impact and influence of the Dang Trong (Southern dialect) pronunciation. The

Southern dialect of Vietnamese is a mixture of different dialects from different migratory groups in the central part of Vietnam in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and North Vietnam in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as different groups of Chinese migrants from the South of China, especially during the great migration of rebels headed by Chen Shangchuan and Yang Yandi against the Qing dynasty in 1679 (Cao Tu Thanh 1999: 467). The migrants crossed the Eastern Sea, traveled along the Xoai Rap River, and resided in My Tho with the Khmer people. The *Gia Dinh thanh thong chi* (The Book on Gia Dinh) clearly recorded that in daily life the local people in the south of Vietnam usually use Vietnamese mixed with Chinese or Khmer words (Cao Tu Thanh 1999: 484). Observing the changes, we can see that the above mentioned pairs have irregular and unsystematic repetitive features.

It is the difference between the Dang Trong and the Dang Ngoai pronunciations that had an impact on the *pian qie* (*phien thiet* spelling) in Vietnam. This gave rise to the problem of one word having a different spelling (reading) in the North and in the South (Ha Thi Tue Thanh 2008). For example, *Dai Nam quoc am tu vi*<sup>1</sup> provides the reading pronunciation CẮN 緊 but this is transcribed KHẮN 緊 in *Han Viet tu dien* by Dao Duy Anh (Dao Duy Anh 1957) and Thieu Chuu<sup>2</sup>.

Similarly, *Han Viet tu dien* by Dao Duy Anh and the dictionary of the same name by Thieu Chuu give the pronunciation *câm* 橄, *cào* 稿, *kích* 激, *quần* 窘, *cước* 脚 while *Dai Nam quoc am tu vi* by Huinh Tinh Cua gives *khâm*, *khào*, *khích*, *khuẩn*, *khuốc*. Because of the impact of local pronunciation or the imitation of some South Chinese dialects, different pronunciations appear, as do different spellings for one Chinese word. For example, the word with the Sino-Vietnamese pronunciation *vân thôn* 雲吞 is pronounced *hoành thánh*, *mì thánh* in the South, and *vằn thắn* or *mằn thắn* in the North.

### 2.5.3. The Dang Trong dialect after the 17<sup>th</sup> century

Recently, the focus of this issue has been on the idea that the Dang Trong pronunciation of Sino-Vietnamese words or an imitation of the pronunciation of some South China dialects only began in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. This was especially the case when many Chinese moved to Dang Trong in the south of Vietnam as migrants in 1679 as well as during other Chinese migrations to the South later. It is possible that after Vietnam became independent at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese migration of the 17<sup>th</sup> century led to the greatest amount of contact between the Vietnamese and Chinese, and had the most significant influence on the Vietnamese language, especially that of the Dang Trong (South).

Due to the fact that Vietnam was a divided country during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Vietnamese language in the South was separated from that in the North. In terms of society and language, this situation created linguistic differences in the two variants of Vietnamese as mentioned

1 Huinh-Tinh Paulus Cua. 1895. *Đại Nam quốc âm tự vị*, Saigon: Imprimerie Rey, Curisol & Cie.

2 Thiều Châu. 2004. *Hán Việt từ điển*. Nxb Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh.

above. *Dai Nam quac am tu vi* (1895-1896) by Huinh Tinh Cua clearly recorded (although, of course, not entirely) the differences in Dang Trong (Southern) Vietnamese.

A survey of the vocabulary given in the dictionary, *Dai Nam quac am tu vi*, by Ha Thi Tue Thanh (2008) reveals the fact that the Chinese elements alone, not including those read in the Sino-Vietnamese pronunciation (non-Sino-Vietnamese words), consist of 441 words comprising:

255 words which are Old Sino-Vietnamese or Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese;

186 words in forms such as *bá* – (*bách* 百); *bửu* – (*bảo* 寶), *phước* – (*phúc* 福), *võ* – (*vũ* 武), *huỳnh* – (*hoàng* 黃). (Ha Thi Tue Thanh calls these “variants of Sino-Vietnamese words.”)

23 elements (words) which imitate in some way the pronunciation of some southern Chinese dialect such as Chaozhou, Hakka, or Guangdong. (Beside the phenomena mentioned above, a number of Sino-Vietnamese words are pronounced incorrectly when compared to the original. These could also be considered changes or integration. For example, *tiếp thu* ← *tiếp thụ* 接受, *cầu an* ← *cẩu an* 苟安, *sát nhập* ← *sáp nhập* 插入, *ảo huyền* 幻 / *hoạn* 患.)

### 3. Linguistic capacity and integration

#### 3.1. Word formation elements without indigenous Vietnamese synonyms

The Old Sino-Vietnamese words, Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words and more or less 25% of a number of Sino-Vietnamese words or word formation elements have a wide range of function and combinability as native Vietnamese words (Nguyen Tai Can 2002: 430). As they are borrowed, these words have no indigenous Vietnamese synonyms. That is why they have the operational role just as native Vietnamese words do. This is the borrowing of words for naming: *thánh* 聖, *tiên* 仙, *tuyết* 雪, *trúc* 竹, *mai* 梅, *khí* 氣, *chất* 質 ... *buồng* 房, *buồm* 帆, *mây* 雲, *đũa* 筯, *bia* 碑, *mùa* 務, *lia* 離, *đĩa* 池, *xe* 車, *múa* 舞... *gần* 近, *ơn* 恩, *báu* 寶, *vẽ* 畫, *vốn* 本, *vách* 壁, *vái* 拜, *dao* 刀, *sen* 蓮, and *rèm* 簾.

Such words have really been integrated into the Vietnamese language and are so localized that they are not at all strange to the Vietnamese people in any way, and they are even used to explain themselves in the teaching of the Sino-Vietnamese script, *chu nho*, in Vietnam. This is because Vietnamese learners have become so used to the pronunciation of the words except for their spelling. For example, from long ago up to the present, a Vietnamese teacher teaching *chu nho* to the Vietnamese students can explain as follows:

Character 聖 *thánh* (= saint) means *thánh*

Character 賢 *hiền* (= virtuous) means *hiền*

Character 仙 *tiên* (= angel) means *tiên*

Character 佛 *phật* (= buddha) means *phật*.

### 3.2. Word formation elements with indigenous Vietnamese synonyms

75% of Sino-Vietnamese words or word formation constituents are bounded. They are limited to the function of naming, as well as their ability to be combined (Nguyen Tai Can 2002: 429), usually because Vietnamese indigenous elements have competed with them. They and Vietnamese indigenous elements also have a complementary distribution in terms of operation, combinability, and semantic or stylistic features. For example, *ngư* 魚 - *cá*, *thảo* 草 - *cỏ*, *mộc* 木 - *cây*, *chi* 枝 - *cành*, *diệp* 葉 - *lá*, *thủy* 水 - *nước*, *giang* 江 - *sông*, *hỏa* 火 - *lửa*, *xa* 車 - *xe*, *tiếu* 笑 - *cười*, and *đắc* 得 - *được*.

The Vietnamese language users can easily use such combinations as *cá bơi*, *cá đớp mồi*, *nuôi cá*, *đánh cá*, *kho cá*, *rán cá*, but they cannot replace *cá* (fish) with *ngư*, the Sino-Vietnamese synonym 魚, in the above mentioned combinations. On the other hand, they cannot replace *ngư* in combinations such as *ngư cụ*, *ngư trường*, *ngư dân*, or *ngư nghiệp* with *cá*.

This is why even though Vietnamese already has such elements as: *hát*, *vắng*, *lửa*, *tre*, *máu*, *tróc*, *nước*, it still uses borrowed terms such as *ca* 歌, *tĩnh* 靜, *hỏa* 火, *trúc* 竹, *huyết* 血, *thủ* 首, and *thủy* 水. Of course, there are great differences between *hát*, *vắng*, *lửa*, *tre*, *máu*, *tróc*, and *nước* and *ca*, *tĩnh*, *hỏa*, *trúc*, *huyết*, *thủ*, and *thủy*. Vietnamese speakers usually say: *cứu hỏa*, *cháo huyết*, *viện huyết học*, *huyết thanh*, *truyền máu*, *gội đầu* ... but not \**cứu lửa*, \**cháo máu*, \**viện máu học*, \**máu thanh*, \**truyền huyết*, and \**gội thủ*.

In addition, the concept of the word *tre* (bamboo) does not include *trúc* 竹, a kind of bamboo. The two words, *tre* and *trúc*, denote two different concepts and they become two free-standing words that are not interchangeable in Vietnamese.

However, no matter what we claim, the frequency of use of Sino-Vietnamese words is very high in the daily lives of the Vietnamese people, especially in documents written in scientific style, and political commentaries.<sup>3</sup> For example, Ho Minh Nghia's study of the frequency of using Sino-Vietnamese words in a number of documents published by the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party (*08 Resolutions and Directives* issued by the Second Session of the Central Standing Party Committee from 1951 to 1960 and *08 Resolutions and Directives* issued by the Ninth Session of the Central Party Committee from 2001 to 2006) provides the data that follows.<sup>4</sup> In these documents, 870 words are borrowed from Chinese or are formed using Sino-Vietnamese constituents.

3 For example, the survey of the opening paragraph of *Tuyên ngôn độc lập*, the declaration of independence, by Ho Chi Minh is cited below and the italicized words are Sino-Vietnamese words: "Hỡi đồng bào cả nước. "Tất cả mọi người đều sinh ra có quyền bình đẳng. Tạo hoá cho họ những quyền không ai có thể xâm phạm được; trong những quyền ấy, có quyền được sống, quyền tự do và quyền mưu cầu hạnh phúc". Lời nói bất hủ ấy ở trong bản Tuyên ngôn độc lập năm 1776 của nước Mỹ. Suy rộng ra câu ấy có ý nghĩa là: tất cả các dân tộc trên thế giới đều sinh ra bình đẳng, dân tộc nào cũng có quyền sống, quyền sung sướng và quyền tự do. Bản Tuyên ngôn nhân quyền và dân quyền của cách mạng Pháp năm 1791 cũng nói: "Người ta sinh ra tự do và bình đẳng về quyền lợi; và phải luôn luôn được tự do và bình đẳng về quyền lợi." Đó là những lẽ phải không ai chối cãi được. Thế mà hơn 80 năm nay, bọn thực dân Pháp lợi dụng lá cờ tự do, bình đẳng, bác ái, đến cướp đất nước ta, áp bức đồng bào ta. Hành động của chúng trái hẳn với nhân đạo và chính nghĩa..." (The Complete Works of Ho Chi Minh. Vol.3, pp. 555-557. Ha noi, 1995.)

4 Ho Minh Nghia: BA. Graduation Thesis, USSH, VNU at Hanoi, 2006.

Table 1

TYPE OF DOCUMENT	LENGTH OF DOCUMENT (TOTAL OF WORD FREQUENCY - N)	TOTAL OF SINO-VIETNAMESE WORDS FREQUENCY (L)	RATIO (L / N)
Session II document	10,479	5,861	55.93 %
Session IX document	10,592	6,774	63.95 %
Total	21,071	12,635	59.96 %

Table 2

TYPE OF DOCUMENT	TOTAL OF SINO-VIETNAMESE WORDS FREQUENCY (L)	FREQUENCY OF SINO-ORIGINATING SINO-VIETNAMESE WORDS	FREQUENCY OF SELF-MADE SINO-VIETNAMESE WORDS
Session II document	5,861	4,720 (80.5 %)	1,141 (19.5 %)
Session IX document	6,774	5,227 (71 %)	1,497 (29 %)

It is very clear that the index of the frequency of Sino-Vietnamese words in the surveyed documents is very high.

### 3.3. Sino-Vietnamese repetitive or compound words

In terms of the ability of Chinese words in general and Sino-Vietnamese words in particular, as mentioned, to be integrated, we may easily be left with the impression that only monosyllabic words have a deep integration with high Vietnamization, but this is not the case. To understand this, we glanced through *Tu dien tu lay tieng Viet* (The dictionary of Vietnamese reduplicatives. 580 pages, 14.5 cm x 20.5 cm) (Vien Ngon ngu hoc 1995) and found 121 words present in both the *Tu dien tu lay tieng Viet* and the *Han Viet tu dien*, a Sino-Vietnamese dictionary (Dao Duy Anh 1957). In fact, those 121 words are Sino-Vietnamese repetitive or compound words.

This phenomenon is of great importance in terms of the integration of Chinese words: although they are either Vietnamese words in origin or Vietnamese-rooted reduplicatives, they have been collected and put into the dictionary of Vietnamese reduplicatives as typical Vietnamese reduplicatives. For example, *bàng hoàng* 傍惶, *bệ vệ* 陛衛, *bối hồi* 徘徊, *chi ly* 支離, *do dự* 猶豫, *đáo để* 到底, *đạo mạo* 道貌, *đê mê* 低迷, *đình ninh* 丁寧, *đột ngột* 突兀, *đường đường* 堂堂, *gian nan* 艱難, *hình hài* 形骸, *hô hoán* 呼喚, *hồ đồ* 糊塗, *hối hận* 悔恨, *hỗn hào* 混淆, *hùng hùng hổ hổ* 熊熊虎虎, *u u minh minh* 幽幽明明.<sup>5</sup>

5 In 2000, Hoang Minh Ngoc, under our supervision, provided a list of 94 words belonging to this type. Later,

We have not mentioned the fact that in the *Tu dien tu lay tieng Viet* (Vien Ngon ngu hoc 1995) there are series of words which are not recorded in the *Han Viet tu dien* (Dao Duy Anh 1957). This may be because these words were created by the Vietnamese people in combination with such Sino-Vietnamese elements as: *âm u* 陰幽, *dân dã* 民野, *đàng hoàng* 堂皇, *hài hòa* 諧和, *hồng hào* 紅豪, *hung hãn* 凶悍, *sơ sơ* 疏疏, *thanh thỏa* 清妥, and *thu thu* 且且. It is all the more interesting when we realize that beyond the scope of *Tu dien tu lay tieng Viet*, at present, the Vietnamese language has thousands of other Sino-Vietnamese words that people without or with knowledge of Sino-Vietnamese words consider reduplicatives of the Vietnamese language, even if they do not consult relevant dictionaries. For example, *đại đễ* 大抵, *hào hiệp* 豪俠, *hào hoa* 豪華, *hào hùng* 豪雄, *hào hưng* 豪興, *khí khái* 氣慨, *khắc khổ* 克苦, *lao lung* 牢籠, *lẫm liệt* 凜冽, *kiệt quệ* 竭蹶, *nhu nhược* 柔弱, *phê phán* 批判, *phủ phiểm* 浮泛, *sung sướng* 充暢, *tán tụng* 讚誦, *thanh thân* 清坦, *thôi thúc* 推束, and *trì trệ* 遲滯.

The above mentioned data are accurate evidence demonstrating the profound integration of Chinese words in general, as well as Sino-Vietnamese words in particular, into the Vietnamese language.

### 3.4. Function and combination of the non-Sino-Vietnamese words

The distribution in terms of linguistic operations, semantic abilities, and stylistic characteristics appears not only between the Chinese words and the pure Vietnamese words, but among the Chinese words, or between the Sino-Vietnamese words and non-Sino-Vietnamese words. The pairing of Sino-Vietnamese words and Old Sino-Vietnamese words or Sino-Vietnamese words and Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese words have been accepted and used as pairs of synonyms, but the individual words in each pair have the property of redistribution in terms of usage, stylistic function, or the intensional or extensional meanings of their concept. This provides the capacity for more resourceful and subtle expression in the Vietnamese vocabulary. For example:

Old Sino-Vietnamese word - Sino-Vietnamese word:

we cited these 94 words in our articles as evidence. At present, the redone survey shows that 9 of 94 these words should be taken off the list and 36 others should be added to the list, making 121 words in total on the list. The following is the list of these 121 words: *bàng hoàng*, *bào hao*, *bệ vệ*, *bối hối*, *bống bột*, *câu cú*, *chi ly*, *cổ lỗ*, *do dự*, *du dương*, *dư dật*, *đạo đễ*, *đàng hoàng*, *đạo mạo*, *đề mề*, *điểm đạm*, *đỉnh ninh*, *độc đoán*, *đột ngột*, *đường đột*, *đường đường*, *gian nan*, *hài hòa*, *hàng hoá*, *hình hài*, *hồ hoán*, *hồ đồ*, *hối hận*, *hồn hào*, *hồng học* (N), *hồng hách*, *hung hổ*, *hung hãn*, *khách khí*, *kháng khái*, *la liệt*, *lam lũ*, *lãng dãng*, *lang thang*, *lẫm lẫm*, *lầu la*, *liên miên*, *liên thiên*, *linh tinh*, *lục tục*, *lực lượng*, *lưỡng lự*, *lưu lạc*, *lưu luyến*, *mạo muội*, *mê man*, *mê muội*, *mệnh lệnh*, *mỹ mãn*, *miễn man*, *mi* (ê) *nh mộng*, *mộng mi*, *múu mô*, *ngang tàng*, *ngâm nga*, *nguy nga*, *nhân nhã*, *nhất nhất*, *ôn tồn*, *phân vân*, *phấn chấn*, *phiêu diêu*, *phong phú*, *phương phi*, *quy củ*, *quy quyết*, *quy lụy*, *quyển luyến*, *song song*, *sơ suất*, *tà tà*, *tán loạn*, *tế toái*, *tử tử*, *tha thiết/thiết tha*, *tham lam*, *thành thực*, *thao thao*, *thâm thúy*, *thân thiết*, *thê thảm/thảm thê*, *thi thổ*, *thiếp liệp*, *thô lỗ*, *thổ lộ*, *thống thiết*, *thung dung*, *thường thường*, *tiêu diêu*, *tiêu tụy*, *tin tức*, *tinh tế*, *tối tàn*, *tranh vanh*, *trầm ngâm*, *trầm trệ*, *trí trá*, *triển miên*, *trù trù*, *trùng trùng*, *tung tích*, *tứ lự*, *tử tử*, *tức tức*, *u ám*, *u ẩn*, *u uất*, *ung dung*, *uyển chuyển*, *vân vân*, *vân vi*, *vĩnh viễn*, *yé* (a) *n uy*, *đường đường chính chính*, *hùng hùng hổ hổ*, *u u minh minh*.

*buông* – *phòng* 房, *buông* – *phóng* 放, *bùa* – *phù* 符, *xe* – *xa* 車, *buồn* – *phiên* 煩, *mùa* – *vụ* 務, *mùi* – *vị* 味, *căn* – *gian* 間, *múa* – *vũ* 舞, *cởi* – *giải* 解, *chiềng* – *trình* 呈, *hè* – *hạ* 夏, *chém* – *trảm* 斬, *ngờ* – *nghi* 疑, and *chè* – *trà* 茶.

Sino-Vietnamese word - Vietnamized Sino-Vietnamese word:

*ân* 恩 – *ơn*, *u* 威 – *oai*, *biên* 邊 – *bên*, *điện* 殿 – *đền*, *di* 移 – *dời*, *khổ* 苦 – *khó*, *lượng* 量 – *lượng*, *mỗi* 每 – *mọi*, *nguyện* 願 – *nguyên*, *tầm* 尋 – *tìm*, *tiết* 節 – *tết*, *kíp* 急 – *gấp*, *ký* 几 – *ghế*, *bảo* 寶 – *báu*, *ấn* 印 – *in*, and *viên* 園 – *vườn*.

In general, the non-Sino-Vietnamese words which are root units have a large range of function and combination as native Vietnamese words. For example, *bánh*, *chầu*, *chuyển*, *cướp*, *dáng*, *dao*, *đai*, *bùa*, *búa*, *buộc*, *buồm*, *buôn*, *buông*, *buồng*, *búng*, *bùnh*, *bước*, *can* (-*ngăn*), *cao* (*nấu* -), *cân* (-*đổi*), *cậu*, *chạp* (*tháng* -), *chè*, *chém*, *chén*, and *chèo*.

#### 4. Word formation and integration

The Chinese elements, after integrating into Vietnamese, have been used as ready-made substances to make a series of new Vietnamese lexical units. In fact there are a number of the following structure patterns: (C = Chinese, V = Vietnamese, IE = Indo-European, E = element)

CE + CE: *cử động* 舉動, *đặc công* 特工, *sơ tán* 疏散, *trú ẩn* 駐隱, *âm u* 陰幽, *dân dã* 民野, *hồng hào* 紅豪, *hài hòa* 諧和

CE + VE: *binh* 兵 *linh*, *thanh* 清 *vắng*, *trưởng* 長 *lớp*, *cao* 高 *tay*, *hạ* 下 *màn*

VE + CE: *súng* 陸, *hát* 唱, *cửa* 大, *tàu* 水, *xương* 骨, *trẻ* 化

IEE + CE: *bê tông* 化, *axít* 化, *ba dờ* 化, *pin* 小

The number of words which have been constructed in the above mentioned patterns in Vietnamese is not small, but there have been no complete, in depth studies of them.

#### 5. Semantic aspect and integration

It is very clear that monosemantic words integrate into Vietnamese with all their semantic structures. For example, *thôn* 村, *xã* 社, *huyện* 縣, and *tỉnh* 省. However, their number is not great. For the most part, the Chinese words, especially the Sino-Vietnamese words, are polysemic, but not all their meanings follow when they integrate into Vietnamese. Moreover, all the borrowed meanings are subject to the control of the Vietnamese language rules. For example:

a. The word *Đao* 刀: According to the *Han Viet tu dien* (Dao Duy Anh. 1957), this word has two meanings: 1. *a knife*; 2. *a kind of weapon*. Modern Vietnamese has only borrowed the second meaning,

and not the first.

b. The word *Bạch* 白: According to the *Han Viet tu dien*, this word has four meanings: 1. *white*; 2. *clean*; 3. *clear*; 4. *to express*. The modern Vietnamese only borrows the first meaning used in such combinations such as *giấy tàu bạch*, *ngựa bạch*, *trắng bạch*; the second meaning in such combinations as *thanh bạch* 清白; the third meaning in *minh bạch* 明白, and the fourth in *tự bạch* 自白, and *bộc bạch* 暴白.

In fact, the derivation or change in the meaning of the Chinese words are important indications of the integration. For example, in the Chinese language the word *long nhãn* 龍眼 is used to denote the longan fruit. When it entered Vietnamese, it was shortened to *nhãn* 眼. This form is used to denote the longan tree, while *long nhãn* means the flesh of longan fruit which is dried and used as a kind of Eastern medicine.

A further step in the semantic changes to Chinese words when they integrate into Vietnamese leads to a complete difference between the Chinese meaning and the Vietnamese meaning. For example:

- To express the concept of 'productive power,' the Chinese people use *sinh sản lực* 生產力, while the Vietnamese people use *sức sản xuất*.

- To represent the concept of 'sexual desire,' Vietnamese people use the word *sinh dục* 生欲, and Chinese people use the word *tính dục* 性欲.

- To represent the concept of 'giving birth,' according to Cao Tu Thanh (1999), the Vietnamese people use *sinh sản* 生產 but the Chinese people use *sinh dục* 生欲, and the concept represented by the Vietnamese word *sinh dục* 生欲 is understood by the Chinese people as *tính dục* 性欲 (sexuality).

## 6. Conclusions

The age-old and deep contact between Chinese and Vietnamese has brought about very profound and great results. It has provided the capacity for more resourceful and subtle expression in the Vietnamese vocabulary.

None of the comprehensive changes (which take place in zig-zagging, complicated way) to Chinese words in Vietnamese fall under the control of the root language, Chinese, in terms of phonetics, semantics, and grammar. This separates the Chinese-rooted loan words even further from Chinese and integrates them into the Vietnamese language.



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