

HCMC UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION <b>FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES</b> DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE SKILLS	<b>END-OF-TERM TEST</b> <b>Semester 1 -- Academic year 2024-2025</b> Subject: <b>Contrastive Linguistics</b> Code: <b>COLI320236</b> Date of test: <b>12 December 2024</b> Duration: <b>75 minutes</b>
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## SUGGESTED ANSWERS + SCORING SCALES

### QUESTION 1

State at least three differences between English and the following languages, using just the sentence(s) given. Ignore lexical differences (i.e., the different vocabulary).

#### a. FRENCH

In the **two given examples**, there are three differences:

- (1) **Attributive adjectives** (*intelligent/s*) **follow** the nouns they modify (*étudiant/s*). (0.25)
- (2) **Determiners** (demonstratives *cet /ces*, articles *le /les*) and adjectives (*intelligent/s*) **agree with the nouns they modify in number**. (0.25)
- (3) The **verb** is **conjugated** to express future time and **agree with the subjects in number** (*comprendra /comprendront*). (0.5)

#### b. KOREAN

In the **two given examples**, there are four differences:

- (1) The basic word order in Korean is **SOV**. (0.5)
- (2) Subjects and objects have post-attached **subject markers** and **object markers**. (0.25)
- (3) Verbs have the **post-attached auxiliary** “-*ass*-“ to mark past time. (0.25)
- (4) Korean has **sentence-final particles** “-*ta*, -*ninya*” to show whether the sentence is a statement or a question. (0.5)

### QUESTION 2

What class of languages is Japanese /Chinese slotted into in the linguistic typology of world languages? On what basis is the classification made? Give examples of your own to illustrate your points.

#### JAPANESE

- Phonologically, Japanese is a **pitch-accent, mora-timed** language. (0.5) Ex. (0.2)
- Japanese is an **agglutinative** language. (0.5)
  - Morphologically,
    - each morpheme expresses only one meaning element Ex. (0.2)
    - there is a clear-cut boundary between each morpheme Ex. (0.2)
    - grammatical processes are expressed through attached prefixes or suffixes and do not affect the form of the individual morphemes Ex. (0.2)
- In terms of basic word order, Japanese is an **SOV** language. (0.5) Ex. (0.2)

## (OR) CHINESE

- Phonologically, Chinese is a **tonal, syllable-stressed** language. (0.5) Ex. (0.2)
- Chinese is an **isolating** language. (0.5)
- Morphologically, words are not inflected. Ex. (0.2)
- Syntactically, grammatical functions are shown by word order Ex. (0.2)  
and the use of function words. Ex. (0.2)
- In terms of basic word order, Chinese is an **SVO** language. (0.5) Ex. (0.2)

## QUESTION 3

**Based on the notion of “learning transfer”, can you predict which part of Vietnamese phonology will likely cause difficulties for Japanese (or Chinese) learners of Vietnamese? Why?**

In language learning transfer refers to the effect of one language on the learning of another. As Robert Lado points out: “individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture.”

**Negative transfer**, also known as interference, is one that interferes with language learning in another later situation. Specifically, it refers to the use of a native-language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language. (0.5)

### Predicted difficulties for Japanese learners in learning V. pronunciation

#### Tones (0.5)

Japanese has a word-pitch accentual pattern based on the mora, while **Vietnamese is a tonal language**. The 6 tones, in particular “*ngã*”, can be very challenging.

#### Vowels (0.5)

Standard Japanese has only 5 pure vowels / a, i, u, e, o / while Vietnamese has a relatively complex vowel system consisting of 12 monophthongs / i, e, ε, v, a, ă, ɔ, o, ɤ, u, ɯ, ʌ /, and many diphthongs. Therefore, it’s highly probable that Japanese learners of Vietnamese will have difficulties in accurately perceiving and producing the Vietnamese vowel pairs/ triplets /**e/-/ε/-/v/**, /**a/-/ă/-/ʌ/**, /**u/-/ɯ/**, /**ɔ/-/o/-/ɤ/** and the diphthongs / **ie, uɤ, uo** /.

#### Consonants (0.5)

Vietnamese has a complex system of initial consonants. Some of these are non-existent in the consonantal system of Japanese and may present difficulties for Japanese learners: /**f/**, /**v/**, /**t’/** (thò), /**l/**, /**t/** (trò), /**ɲ/** (nhò), /**ŋ/** (ngò), /**x/** (khò).

Japanese learners may also need some time to grow accustomed to **the pronunciation of the word-final sounds in Vietnamese, all of which, unlike in Japanese, are unreleased** (silent sounds, without bursts). (0.5)

### Predicted difficulties for Chinese learners in learning V. pronunciation

#### Tones (0.5)

The tonal system of Vietnamese is more nuanced than Mandarin’s, which adds an additional layer of complexity to pronunciation. Chinese learners may struggle to distinguish between similar tones in Vietnamese, such as the “hỏi” and “ngã” tones.

#### Vowels (0.5)

Mandarin has a limited inventory of vowels / i, y, ε, ɔ, a, u, o / while Vietnamese has a more diverse set of vowel sounds, consisting of 12 monophthongs / i, e, ε, v, a, ă, ɔ, o, ɤ, u, ɯ, ʌ /, and many diphthongs. It’s highly probable that Chinese learners of Vietnamese will have difficulties

in accurately perceiving and producing the Vietnamese vowel pairs/triplets /e/-/ɛ/-/ɐ/, /a/-/ǎ/-/ɘ/, /u/-/u̯/, /ɔ/-/o/-/ɔ̄/ and the diphthongs /ie, uɤ, uo /.

## Consonants

**Initial consonants: (0.5)** Vietnamese has a complex system of **initial consonants**. Some of these are non-existent in the consonantal system of Chinese and may present difficulties for Chinese learners: /v/, /tʰ/ (thờ), /l/, /ʈ/ (trờ), /ɲ/ (nhờ), /ŋ/ (ngờ), /ɣ/ (gờ).

**Final consonants: (0.5)** In Mandarin the only final consonants allowed are the nasals /n/ and /ŋ/. Chinese learners may also need some time to grow accustomed to the pronunciation of the word-final sounds "t", "p", "c", "m" in Vietnamese. (Mandarin's tendency to end syllables with nasal sounds (like "n" or "ng") can interfere with the correct articulation of final plosives in Vietnamese.)

## QUESTION 4

1. **Case is a familiar grammatical category. What grammatical functions does 'case' indicate? Give examples in English.**
2. **What devices are used in Vietnamese to mark this grammatical category? Give examples to support your answer.**

1. Case shows the grammatical functions of a noun or noun phrase (agency, possession, naming, location, motion towards or from, etc.) in a sentence (0.5).

Typical formal contrasts in English are between: the subjective case, the objective case

(which marks pronouns only), and the possessive case (0.5).

Ex: **I** gave **them** to **her**.  
[subject] [object] [object]

Could **you** tell **me** where the **ladies'** room is? (0.5)  
[subject] [object] [possessive]

2. Vietnamese lacks morphological markings of case.

Syntactical relations are expressed by word order and/or independent function words.

(0.5)

Ex:

Word order

**Mẹ** yêu **con**.  
[subject] [object]

**Con** yêu **mẹ**.  
[subject] [object]

Function words

**cho** trường, **ở** trường,  
[dative]      [locative]

**từ** trường, ...  
[ablative]      **(0.5)**

