

The Phonological Adaptation of French Loanwords in Vietnamese

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Due to the influence of France while Vietnam was a French colony, many French words have been adopted by the Vietnamese. Some of these words are in everyday use, while others are restricted to learned usage. The purpose of this paper is to state the regularities of sound shifts, or phonological adaptations, which French words undergo when they are taken into the Vietnamese language.

The phonemic system of French, according to Hall,¹ has twelve vowels, three semivowels, and eighteen consonants. These are represented in the following charts

Vowels & Semi-Vowels

	Front	Front	Back
	Unrounded	Rounded	Rounded
Semi-Vowels	j	y	w
High	i	y	u
High-Mid	e	ø	o
Vowels			
Low-Mid	ɛ	œ	ɔ
Low	a	ɶ	ɑ

Nasalization occurs with four of the above vowels /ɛ, œ, ɔ, a/, giving nasalized vowels / $\tilde{\epsilon}$, $\tilde{\alpha}$, $\tilde{\sigma}$, \tilde{a} /. Two of the vowels show allophonic variation: /ɛ/ : [æ] when nasalized, [ɛ] otherwise. /ɔ/ : [ɔ] before /r/ and when nasalized, [ʌ] otherwise.

Consonants

		Labial and		Palatal, Velar
		Labio-dental	Dental	and Faucal
Stops	fortis	p	t	k
	lenis	b	d	g
Fricatives	fortis	f	s	ʃ
	lenis	v	z	ʒ
Nasals		m	n	ɲ
Lateral			l	
Trill & Constrictive			r	