

Research on the Methodology of Borrowing Chinese Words in Vietnamese

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Abstract

Borrowing Chinese words to enrich a language system is a popular way that many Asian countries have applied. In the Eastern and Southeastern of Asia, Chinese characters were transformed into an official letters of many other countries, or at least become official letters for the governing class, the intellectual class of many countries. For centuries, in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, Chinese characters were considered as official language (Nguyen Tai Can, 2000). In Vietnam, the borrowing of Chinese words have existed for a long time, and these borrowed words are pronounced in Vietnamese, as called Chinese -Vietnamese words. Chinese -Vietnamese words have an important meaning in adjusting Vietnamese words that are not yet available or not yet appropriate. However, a lot of people don't understand and know the methodology of borrowing to form Chinese -Vietnamese words. As a result, research of how to borrow of Chinese words and to create the Chinese -Vietnamese words has important meaning in practice. Using the method of analysis and synthesis, this study shows the ways of borrowing Chinese words to enlarge and enrich Vietnamese vocabulary.

Keywords: Borrowing, Chinese, influence, Chinese -Vietnamese words.

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I. INTRODUCTION

There is always the interaction regularly and mutual influence between countries in many ways, including language because the society creates the environment for the interaction of language (Nguyen Van Khang, 2014). In the globalization context nowadays, the phenomenon of borrowing language to name things, natural phenomena that language system of the country is still lacking. In Vietnam, due to historical circumstances, there is a special interaction with Chinese, French and English languages. But the most imprinted one in the Vietnamese vocabulary system is Chinese language with more than 60 % of Chinese -Vietnamese words in Vietnamese (H. Maspero, 1912). Chinese - Vietnamese words account for a big part but not in all cases we always know how to borrow and use it properly and appropriately. Therefore, understanding how to borrow Chinese to create Chinese -Vietnamese words in the Vietnamese system is an issue that needs to be paid attention and is a practical meaning work to contribute to make Vietnamese language more and more abundant to be satisfied all communication needs.

Borrowing Chinese into Vietnamese has been going on for a long time and the method of borrowing is relatively abundant. However, according to Vo Ngan Vuong, linguistic researcher, there are some transformations in these borrowed elements (Vo Ngan Vuong, 2015) – that means existing some changes in the meaning or structure. In contrast, Nguyen Tai Can said: having the borrowing because we have two large interactions with Chinese language during the early period of the BC until the end of 10th century, that led to reading ways Chinese -Vietnamese" (Nguyen Tai Can, 1979). These views are highly appreciated by Vietnamese linguists, in addition to the changes in meaning and structure, the change in tone in the way to borrow Chinese also creates special features. There are different pronunciations in comparison with Chinese language of the Tang Dynasty... different in reading, and cannot understand each other in terms of speaking and listening (Nguyen Tai Can, 1979). Therefore, even Chinese people who contact with Chinese -Vietnamese hardly recognize the borrowed words from Chinese.

Studying how to borrow Chinese is to show the ways in which Vietnamese borrowed Chinese to complement missing or relevant words. From this research, Vietnamese people can know how to set up and utilize Chinese - Vietnamese words reasonably in the using process. It is undeniable that owing to the borrowing of Chinese words, the Vietnamese word system is increasingly complete, richer, more diversified and less difficult in communication (Hoang Thao Nguyen, 2011). Borrowing, refining to enrich, diversify the vocabulary system is truly a smart and creative work, especially in the current globalization. Concerning the Chinese - Vietnamese words, the first researcher is a French social linguist named H. Maspero (1912), he reserved a lot of

time to count the number of Chinese -Vietnamese words in Vietnamese system. The book was not a study of how to borrow Chinese, but it was still significant for those who love studying Chinese -Vietnamese words.

In China, Wang Lu (1948) was the first person who was interested in the Chinese -Vietnamese words in terms of classification. The article made a great significance in tracing the origins of Vietnamese, but it was not a study of the Chinese - Vietnamese formation. In Vietnam, Nguyen Tai Can (1979) spent a lot of time to study the origin and formation of Chinese -Vietnamese reading method. However, the author didn't mention the borrowing method of Chinese - Vietnamese words. In addition, there were numerous research on Chinese - Vietnamese words in the literature, newspapers, and paintings... but in general, the way to borrow Chinese - Vietnamese words has not been studied. For that reason, the current work selected this topic to conduct research with the purpose to show borrowing ways from Chinese into Vietnamese and using the Chinese -Vietnamese words appropriately. The results of this study give both theoretical and practical contributions in terms of creating new Chinese -Vietnamese words. This work mainly utilize the analysis and comparison methods to elucidate how to borrow Chinese language into Vietnamese. The article is presented in the following main sections: literature review, concept of Chinese -Vietnamese words and Chinese language borrowing ways.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, in the era of globalization, it is inevitable that countries in the world, interacting with each other, especially in countries with advanced civilization, will have influences on the neighboring countries, including languages. Between nations, there is close relationships in daily life, through direct contact, which influences the mutual interactions of languages in which the most influenced are the languages without writing systems (Nguyen Van Khang, 2014). Therefore, borrowing language to name things, phenomena which do not exist in indigenous languages happened naturally and continuously. In Asia, China is the most populous country and has the most advanced civilization, Chinese culture has reached a new stature (Nguyen Hai Hoanh, 2015). From this basic, their civilization has influenced many neighboring countries such as Korea, Vietnam, Japan... In Vietnam, due to the geographical position and history, there was an early interaction with Chinese civilization including Chinese language (Nguyen Van Khang, 2014). This interaction has left many Chinese words in Vietnamese, these words are timely added to the Vietnamese vocabulary system as called Chinese-Vietnamese words. French scholar H. Maspero was the first person who studied Chinese - Vietnamese words. The author synthesized and concluded there are more than 60% of Chinese -Vietnamese words in Vietnamese (H Maspero, 1912). Even this was not an in-depth study, only a statistical work but it makes people easily to recognize there are many Chinese -Vietnamese words in Vietnamese system. The author of this book did not mention how to borrow Chinese, which is also a good direction for language lovers to deeper study.

In China, perhaps Wang Li (王力) is the first linguist to study the Chinese - Vietnamese words in Vietnamese system. In 1948, he wrote the book *Study on Chinese Vietnamese* (Wang Li, 1948) discussing how to classify words in Vietnamese. Based on the origin, the author divided Vietnamese language system into 2 types: Vietnamese (original) and Chinese - Vietnamese (borrowed). Based on the time of formation, the author divided Chinese - Vietnamese words into three types: ancient Chinese - Vietnamese (古漢越語), Chinese - Vietnamese phonetic (漢越語) and Chinese - Vietnamese created by Vietnamese (漢語越化). This research is very important for Vietnamese linguists in the division of pure Vietnamese words and borrowed words. Recent years, many Vietnamese come to China studying, they have spent a lot of time to study Chinese -Vietnamese words. 覃盈 (2014) had an article "现代越南《人民报》中的汉越词研究" studying Chinese - Vietnamese words used in the "People of Vietnam" newspaper since its establishment. With the method of statistics, analysis, that article showed that the Chinese - Vietnamese words used in this newspaper were increasingly flexible and rich in the number and form of structure. The article led to a new perspective on the use of Chinese - Vietnamese words, but was limited to a newspaper without an overview of the use of Chinese -Vietnamese words in general. In other article, namely, 越南语中的日源汉越词形成研究" (郑青青, 2015) studied a number of Vietnamese words borrowed from Chinese - Japanese words (Japanese also borrowed Chinese to form words as called Kanji). In the same vein, Vu Kim Anh (2016), in the article "汉越词研究" attempted to clarify whether Chinese - Vietnamese words is a dialect or not? But finally, it confirmed that it was borrowed. The article "双音节汉越词词义特点研究" (范明芳, 2015) studied the characteristics of two syllable Chinese - Vietnamese words. In this article the author added a number of different points between the two syllable Chinese - Vietnamese words and the pure Vietnamese two syllables. In addition, 范明芳 (2016) by the article "论越语中的变体双音节汉越" indicated when changing positions Chinese - Vietnamese words had relatively different meanings. In general, these articles have brought the Chinese -Vietnamese words a colorful picture, but the way to form Chinese - Vietnamese words had not yet been discussed, which is the reason that our article continues to study about Chinese - Vietnamese in this perspective.

In Vietnam, Chinese - Vietnamese words were also interested by many linguists, Nguyen Tai Can (1979) wrote the book: "The origin and the process of forming Vietnamese phonetic". This was the first study of

the Chinese - Vietnamese words in Vietnam, the author had a great deal of collecting archaeological documents to find out the origin and the way of reading Chinese - Vietnamese (reading Chinese characters in the Vietnamese way). This work was a significant scientific document for Vietnamese linguistics. In the following years, Phan Van Cac (1981) wrote the book "The original Chinese words with the preservation of the purity of Vietnamese words" also affirmed Chinese - Vietnamese words have met all daily communication needs of Vietnamese people. In 1996, linguist Nguyen Thien Giap wrote the book "Frontier of Linguistics" in which he reserved an important part to define Chinese -Vietnamese words, through which readers can understand the nature of Chinese -Vietnamese words. In the magazine "Young talented", Vo Ngan Vuong (2015) wrote the article "Chinese – Vietnamese words - Vietnameseization Aspects", discussing Chinese – Vietnamese words with some phonetic changes to suit the Vietnamese system.

In general, the above articles have shown us a colorful picture of Han Vietnamese words in many different fields. However, the way to form Chinese – Vietnamese words has not been specifically mentioned. Therefore, the article will take time to study how to borrow from Chinese words to timely update the words that Vietnamese is lacking, or when they are not appropriate.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the current Vietnamese vocabulary system, Chinese - Vietnamese words are present in all areas of social life. However, not everyone understands and uses them appropriately. Borrowing Chinese words must have specific modes and methods. Studying on this issue, the current article mainly utilizes analytical methods to clarify how to form Chinese - Vietnamese words. The article uses this method to review the achievements in the past to draw useful conclusions for practice and science (Nguyen Van Quan, 2016). Owing to this method, readers can easily visualize ways to form Chinese - Vietnamese words. Resources used for analysis are Chinese - Vietnamese words in the current Vietnamese dictionary. Besides it, this article also uses the comparative method to facilitate the comparison between pure Vietnamese words and Chinese - Vietnamese words, to understand more clearly the role of Chinese - Vietnamese words when words are not available or inappropriate in Vietnamese pure words.

IV. CONCEPT OF SINO-VIETNAMESE WORDS

Chinese - Vietnamese is a topic that has been discussed by many scholars for a long time, but it is still an inspiring issue for many researchers. Because, Chinese - Vietnamese word is both a subject of linguistics studies and a phenomenon related directly to daily communication. The phenomenon of borrowing Chinese words became the capability and demand. At first, the words were monotonous and gradually both the multi-syllables words (Nguyen Ngoc San, 1994). Therefore, Chinese - Vietnamese words are not only interested by scholars in linguistic but also by many other people. So that, there are many researchers who spend a lot of time to answer the question: what are Chinese - Vietnamese words? Or how about the Chinese – Vietnamese words? The results showed that there are many different concepts. As a linguistic term, Chinese - Vietnamese words are explained as "The Vietnamese words are derived from the Chinese language, entered into Vietnamese vocabulary that are effected by the Vietnamese rules of phonetics and grammar, as called Vietnamese with Chinese origin" (Nguyen Thien Giap, 1996). According to the lexicon of linguistic terms, it is said that "Chinese - Vietnamese words are Vietnamese but originated from Chinese, have entered the Vietnamese vocabulary system, under the influence of phonetic, grammar and semantics rules of Vietnamese language, also called Chinese - Vietnamese words (Nguyen Nhu Y, 1996). Or "The words borrowed from the Chinese that are read according to the Chinese - Vietnamese reading method, so called Chinese - Vietnamese words" (Le Xuan Thiet, 2005).

Thus, understanding briefly, Chinese - Vietnamese words are words which come from Chinese origin but are read according to Vietnamese sounds, and are dominated by the general rules of Vietnamese, called Chinese - Vietnamese words.

V. BORROWING MODE OF CHINESE.

5.1. Phonetic changes

Creative reading is the first creativity of Vietnamese people in term of borrowing must be noted here. They read Chinese characters according to their pronunciation, and this is an effective way to memorize Chinese characters, so "this reading gradually distorts, under the influence of Vietnamese phonetic and historical phonetic rules, separating from Chinese reading to become a separate reading mode of Vietnamese people. The interaction of the Chinese language and the impact of society on the language created the way to read this distortion" (Nguyen Tai Can (1979). From this reading mode, the Vietnamese borrowed the sound of this mode to form new Chinese - Vietnamese. We can clearly see this expression in Vietnamese: for example, the Chinese character reads "Lán gan", but Vietnamese people read it as "lan can", not using tone. It is popular in Vietnamese, Chinese characters read "Lãngmàn" (romance) but Vietnamese people read as "lãng mạn", using

tone completely different from Chinese. Chinese read “làng fèi”, Chinese – Vietnamese words read “lãng phí”, change the markings and the rhymes to create a new way of reading. The Chinese words read “zhùyì” but the Chinese -Vietnamese words read are “chúy”, there is a change in the diacritic. From Chinese read “fengfù” but the Chinese -Vietnamese words read “phong phú”... These changes may be a change in the tone, the consonants or rhymes, but the meaning of the Chinese root is the same. This is a creation of Vietnamese people, and it is also a way that Vietnamese people use to borrow Chinese words in forming Chinese - Vietnamese words (Nguyen Tai Can, 1979). By this way, the Vietnamese people have created a lot of Chinese - Vietnamese words to integrate into the Vietnamese vocabulary system. That makes Vietnamese language richer and more diverse to be able in conveying the full content in the communication process. Looking at this Chinese – Vietnamese system, even Chinese people could not be able to understand and easily recognize that they are origin from Chinese.

5.2. Change the word order

In the Vietnamese system, Vietnamese pure words used to name concepts are still limited. Therefore, borrowing foreign languages, including Chinese to supplement the vocabulary system is inevitable. So the way to borrow Chinese is also more diverse, which can be a change in tone or changes in the structural aspects (Vo Ngan Vuong, 2015), but the meaning of the word remains the same.

- Reversing the position of the Chinese words: this is a popular way to borrow Chinese in Vietnamese. For example: Chinese language read 激奋 but when Vietnamese borrowed, it reversed the position of excitement call “phấn khích”; “欢欣” is changed to “hân hoan”; “振奋” changed to “phấn chấn”; 悲愁 changed to “sầu bi”; 仇恨 changed into hận thù; similar “Nhiệt náo” into “Náo nhiệt”, “thích phóng” become “phóng thích”... Although there is a change in word order when borrowing but does not change the meaning of the word. The reason for this change is to conform to the rules of Vietnamese language, create a sense of ease in listening and speaking (Vo Ngan Vuong, 2015).

- Shorten the Chinese words to simple words: this is an uncommon way of borrowing but still used in certain contexts. For example: Chinese speaking “Văn học” but Vietnamese can be shortened into “Văn”; Chinese says “Đảm đương” but Vietnamese says “Đảm”; Chinese says “Yếu điệu” but Vietnamese says “Điều”; similarly, “Cử nhân” is “Cử” in Vietnamese language; “tú tài” – in Vietnamese is “tú”; “tiểu đồng” – Vietnamese says “tiểu” (chú tiểu); tiểu tiện – Vietnamese says “tiểu” (đi tiểu). This shortened form is often used in everyday communication. The reason for this shortened form of borrowing is because “in the language, especially the spoken language of Vietnamese, it is allowed to use the shortened form, to comprehend the components of the sentence to match the speed of communication, but still in line with the general rules of Vietnamese language (Pham Van Tinh, 2013).

- Using a Chinese word with a Vietnamese word: Vietnamese people not only borrow the original Chinese words but also incorporate with pure Vietnamese words to create new words for daily communication needs. For example: “kỳ” in “kỳ” 磨蹭” incorporating with “cục” (pure Vietnamese word) to form “kỳ cục” which has different meaning with Chinese words; the word “cảm” in “cảm” 感谢” incorporating with “mến” to form “cảm mến” and its meaning is totally different with the Chinese word; similarly, “biển” + “đôi” = “biển đôi”, “bồi” + “đáp” = “bồi đắp”, “bày” + “biện” = “bày biện”... This way of borrowing represents “creative thinking, and flexible application of language, Vietnamese people always know how to create unique language products when exposed to foreign languages (Nhu Chau, 2018).

- Changing the word order of Chinese idioms: Normally, Chinese idioms often have a very stable language structure, but when borrowed, Vietnamese people made small changes. It is possible to change the word order in the sentence, but it can also replace a new word to create idioms bearing the imprint of the nation, and call it the Chinese - Vietnamese idioms (Nhu Chau (2018). For example: the idiom of Chinese “tác uy tác phúc” in Vietnamese is “tác oai tác quái”; or “Xà khẩu Phật tâm” 蛇口佛心 Vietnamese says “khẩu xà tâm Phật”; “du thủ hiếu nhân” in Vietnamese is “du thủ du thực”; “cử tử nhất sinh” in Vietnamese is “thập tử nhất sinh”, or “an phận thủ kỹ” in Vietnamese is “an phận thủ thường”, Chinese says “nhất lộ bình an” Vietnamese changes to “thượng lộ bình an”. Although there are some structural changes in borrowing idioms but the meanings remain the same. Perhaps this change is to avoid the difficulty in Vietnamese language (Truong Dinh Tin, 2004).

5.3. Change the meaning of the word

In the process of borrowing from Chinese, Vietnamese people can narrow, expand or completely change the meaning of Chinese words to match the actual situation of Vietnamese. This change is called a change of meaning (Vo Ngan Vuong, 2002).

- Narrowing the meaning in comparison with the Chinese word: for example 欢喜 in Chinese, there are two meanings: 1/ vui vẻ, vui mừng (happy); 2/ thích (like) but in Vietnamese, there is only one definition “vui

mừng, vui sướng”; 分心 (phân tâm) - in Chinese, there are two meanings: 1/ phân tán sự chú ý (disperse attention), 2/ quan tâm, để tâm (care and mind), in Vietnamese, “phân tâm” has only one meaning: it is not concentrated because it has to consider other things (Vietnamese Dictionary, 2012).

- Expanding the meaning: in many cases, when borrowing from Chinese root, Vietnamese people add some new meaning that the Chinese word does not have this definition. For example: In Chinese language (dìngníng) means “to instruct” (“dẫn dò”), when it becomes Chinese - Vietnamese word, there is also a new meaning to “think in mind like that”. The word 徘徊 (páihuái) in Chinese language means “going back and forth” (“đi đi lại lại”), but when Vietnamese people borrow it, it is understood as “restless, uneasy” (bồn chồn, lòng dạ không yên).

- A complete change in meaning: in the process of borrowing, many Chinese words are borrowed into Vietnamese form but not borrowed from the meaning of the word, it has a completely different meaning from the original Chinese words. For example: The Chinese word 迷离 (shūlí) means “ambiguous, unknown”, when it became a Chinese - Vietnamese word, it means “too good, wonderful”; or the word 凜冽 (lǐnlìè) in Chinese means “cold”, while the Chinese - Vietnamese word means a “majestic general”

When borrowing Chinese words, to match the context and way of thinking, especially to conform to the general rule of Vietnamese, people do not borrow all the meanings of the Chinese words, only using one meaning, or rather a completely new meaning compared to Chinese origin words.

5.4. Change the rhetorical nuance

Every language in the world has its own characteristics, there are languages itself, but many languages have to borrow from other languages to enrich themselves (Nguyen Huu Phong, 2011). Due to many reasons, Vietnamese people have the opportunity to interact with Chinese language which has brought words that are rich in rhetoric, or in other words it is a change of rhetoric nuance (Vo Ngan Vuong, 2002).

In the Vietnamese word system, although there are already some Vietnamese pure words that refer to concepts, Vietnamese people still borrowed Chinese words to form a similar Chinese - Vietnamese words, but difference in rhetoric nuances. Such as the following pairs: trường thọ/sống lâu; từ trần/chết; phụ nữ/đàn bà; nhi đồng/trẻ em; phu nhân/vợ; mẫu tử/mẹ con. For Chinese - Vietnamese words: trường thọ, từ trần, phụ nữ, nhi đồng, phu nhân, mẫu tử... that are more polite. For example, when announcing an elderly person who has just died, people use Chinese - Vietnamese words “từ trần”. This word has both a nuance of sadness and a reverence. If using pure Vietnamese words “chết”, the two nuances are not achieved. Or in the case of using Sino-Vietnamese words “phụ nữ” - it is both solemn and serious. If using the pure Vietnamese word “đàn bà”, it sounds both unserious and sarcastic. Therefore, in certain contexts, people are forced to use Chinese - Vietnamese words. Hence, Vietnamese people continue to borrow Chinese words to express concepts in daily life.

However, there are Chinese - Vietnamese words that have the opposite rhetoric nuance of the Chinese words. For example: 野心 (yěxin) in Chinese only means “tham vọng”, but when Vietnamese people borrow this word for reuse, it means “lòng dạ hiểm độc”. In this case, the meaning of the word changes, while the word “đả tâm” in Vietnamese also has the rhetoric nuance of condemning the action of a certain object. In Chinese 到底 (daodi) which means “to the bottom, to the end”, but when borrowed it means “riết róng, đánh đá” (“fast, sharp”). It also changes semantically and adds nuance that means “condemn someone's actions”. 手段 (shouduàn) in Chinese means “method, technique”, but when it becomes Chinese - Vietnamese it means “trick” in a bad sense, and when using this word, the speaker also intentionally condemning someone's actions.

VI. CONCLUSION

Vietnamese has many words originating from foreign countries, in which Chinese - Vietnamese word is a special part. Borrowing Chinese to create Chinese - Vietnamese words reflects the creativity of Vietnamese people in enriching the language. This article outlines a number of borrowing ways from Chinese words to supplement Vietnamese words system. Without the Chinese - Vietnamese words, Vietnamese words system will become more monotonous and difficult to complete. The results of this study are not only cognitively meaningful but also very practical for properly in forming Chinese - Vietnamese words. This is the acquisition of culture in general and language in particular in a flexible and creative way.

Due to the limited framework, the article does not mention other aspects of Chinese - Vietnamese words. But basing on this research, many new research directions on Chinese - Vietnamese words in administrative documents, or in Vietnamese legal documents can be executed in the future to affirm more the role of Chinese in forming and developing the Vietnamese vocabulary system.

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