

## MASTER'S THESIS

# The perception and production of English vowel contrasts by Vietnamese speakers

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**THE PERCEPTION AND PRODUCTION OF ENGLISH  
VOWEL CONTRASTS BY VIETNAMESE SPEAKERS**

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims at: (1) investigating the effect of L1 in L2 speech perception; (2) locating L2 speech perception difficulties. To achieve these two goals, a perception test of four RP vowel contrasts (/i/-/ɪ/, /u/-/ʊ/, /ɔ/-/ɒ/, /e/-/æ/) is administered to 15 native Vietnamese speakers. Two of the contrasts (/i/-/ɪ/, /u/-/ʊ/) are not phonologically contrastive in Vietnamese, and the other two contrasts (/ɔ/-/ɒ/, /e/-/æ/) have phonological counterparts in Vietnamese. The perception test consists of two parts, a discrimination test examining auditory level perception and an identification test (labeling) examining linguistic level perception. A supplementary production test of the same vowel contrasts is also given to the subjects. The results of the perception test show that the subjects perform far better in the discrimination test than in the identification test, and that the subjects rely primarily on temporal cues to identify English vowels. Based on an analysis of the results, two conclusions are arrived at: (1) L1 transfer, which can occur at phonological level or at phonetic level, is an important factor in L2 speech perception, but its effect varies among different contrasts. (2) When presenting time is sufficient, difficulties in L2 speech perception do not occur at auditory level but at later linguistic processing level.

## 摘要

本次研究旨在：(1) 探究母語遷移對二語聽辨的影響；(2) 準確定位二語聽辨困難。為達到上述目標，本研究對十五名越南語為母語者進行了聽辨測試，測試的內容為四組英式英語元音 (/i/-/ɪ/, /u/-/ʊ/, /ɔ/-/ɒ/, /e/-/æ/)。其中的兩組元音 (/i/-/ɪ/, /u/-/ʊ/) 並不存在於越南語的元音系統當中，而另外兩組(/ɔ/-/ɒ/, /e/-/æ/) 在越南語元音系統中則有著對應的元音。本次聽辨測試由兩部份組成，前一部份為元音區分測試，後一部份為元音識別測試。前者旨在測試對象聽覺層級的聽辨能力，而後者旨在測試對象語言層級的聽辨能力。此外，對象還參加了針對同樣四組元音的發音測試。聽辨測試的結果顯示對象在區分測試中的成績優於在識別測試中的表現，並且對象主要依靠時長來分辨英語元音。基於對測試結果的分析，此次研究得出兩點結論：(1) 母語遷移對二語聽辨具有重要影響，但其影響程度隨不同的元音而異。同時，母語遷移即可發生在音系層面也可發生在語音層面，不同層面的遷移會導致截然不同的聽辨結果。(2) 當呈現時間足夠時，二語聽辨困難通常發生于語言層級，與聽覺無關。

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