

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG



KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP

CHUYÊN NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH TRUNG

Sinh viên : Đinh Thị Mai Phương

HẢI PHÒNG – 2025

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG

**LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES
OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS ABROAD**

KHÓA LUẬN TỐT NGHIỆP ĐẠI HỌC HỆ CHÍNH QUY
CHUYÊN NGÀNH: NGÔN NGỮ ANH TRUNG

Sinh viên: Đinh Thị Mai Phương

Giảng viên hướng dẫn: Th.s Nguyễn Thị Huyền

HẢI PHÒNG – 2025

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC QUẢN LÝ VÀ CÔNG NGHỆ HẢI PHÒNG

NHIỆM VỤ ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Sinh viên: Đinh Thị Mai Phương

Mã SV: 2212756026

Lớp : NA2601C

Ngành : Ngôn Ngữ Anh Trung

Tên đề tài: Language Communication Challenges of Vietnamese Students
Abroad

CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

Họ và tên :

Học hàm, học vị :

Cơ quan công tác : Trường Đại học Quản lý và Công nghệ Hải Phòng

Nội dung hướng dẫn:

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày tháng năm 2025

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày tháng năm 2025

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Sinh viên

Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

Giảng viên hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày tháng năm 2025

XÁC NHẬN CỦA KHOA

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM

Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

PHIẾU NHẬN XÉT CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN HƯỚNG DẪN TỐT NGHIỆP

Họ và tên giảng viên:

Đơn vị công tác: *Đại học Quản lý và công nghệ Hải Phòng*

Họ và tên sinh viên: Chuyên ngành:

Đề tài tốt nghiệp:

.....

Nội dung hướng dẫn:

.....

1. Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp

.....

.....

.....

2. Đánh giá chất lượng của đề án/khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu...)

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Ý kiến của giảng viên hướng dẫn tốt nghiệp

Được bảo vệ Không được bảo vệ Điểm hướng dẫn

Hải Phòng, ngày ... tháng ... năm

Giảng viên hướng dẫn

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported me throughout the completion of this thesis entitled “Language Communication Challenges of Vietnamese Students Abroad.” This research journey has been filled with valuable learning experiences, and I am deeply thankful for the guidance and encouragement I have received. First and foremost, I wish to extend my profound appreciation to M.A. Nguyễn Thị Huyền, my supervisor, whose thoughtful guidance, constructive feedback, and constant encouragement have greatly shaped the development of this study. Her expertise, patience, and dedication motivated me to refine my academic skills and remain committed to producing meaningful work. I am truly grateful for the time she devoted to helping me overcome challenges during each stage of the research process. My sincere thanks also go to the Vietnamese students studying in South Korea, Japan, China, and other countries who willingly participated in the survey and interviews. Their openness in sharing personal experiences and challenges provided essential insights and rich data that significantly contributed to the quality and depth of this research. Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family and close friends for their unwavering support, patience, and understanding. Their belief in me has been a continuous source of motivation, helping me stay strong and focused even during stressful moments. Without the collective support of all the individuals mentioned above, this thesis would not have been possible, and I am truly grateful for all the contributions that have made this academic endeavor both successful and memorable.

Declaration of Originality

I here by declare that this thesis entitled “Language Communication Challenges of Vietnamese Students Abroad” is my own original work and has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for the award of any other degree or qualification at any other institution. All sources of information, data, and ideas used in this research have been properly acknowledged through citations and references following academic standards. I take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the content presented in this study. Any contributions from supervisors, participants, authors, and other supporting individuals have been clearly recognized in the Acknowledgements or referenced appropriately.

I affirm that this thesis fully complies with the ethical guidelines for academic research, including the protection of participants’ privacy, the voluntary nature of participation, and the responsible use of data. No part of this thesis has been produced through plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, or the use of artificial assistance beyond acceptable academic support guidelines.

By signing below, I confirm that the work submitted is a true and original representation of my intellectual effort.

Student’s Name: Đinh Thị Mai Phương

Student ID: 2212756026

Date: 05/10/2025

Signature: Phương

Abstract

This thesis investigates the language communication challenges experienced by Vietnamese students studying abroad, with a focus on those living in Korea, Japan, and China. As the number of Vietnamese international students has grown significantly in recent years, language barriers have become a central concern affecting their academic performance, social integration, and daily communication. The objectives of the study are to identify the major linguistic difficulties Vietnamese students encounter, examine how these challenges influence their academic and social experiences, and propose effective strategies to enhance communication competence in foreign environments.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative interview insights from Vietnamese students currently studying in the selected countries. The survey measured levels of language proficiency, communication anxiety, academic struggles, and cultural adjustment, while interviews provided deeper perspectives on personal experiences and coping strategies. Findings reveal that Vietnamese students commonly struggle with pronunciation, limited vocabulary, fast native-speaking pace, and difficulties understanding academic terminology. Social communication challenges include misinterpretations, lack of confidence, and cultural differences in conversational styles. These language barriers negatively influence students' classroom participation, academic results, social engagement, and overall well-being.

The study contributes to existing research on international student communication by providing updated data specific to Vietnamese learners in Asian countries with high linguistic and cultural contrast. It also offers practical recommendations for universities, language centers, and students themselves, such as strengthening pre-departure language training, implementing support programs, and encouraging active communication strategies. The findings highlight the importance of improving

language competence as a key factor in ensuring successful adaptation and academic success for Vietnamese students abroad.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Declaration of Originality

Abstract

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rationale of the Study

1.2. Research Background & Objectives

1.3. Scope and Delimitation & Research Methodology

1.4. Significance of the Study & Structure of the Thesis

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Key Concepts and Definitions

2.2. Relevant Theories Applied in the Study

2.3. Review of Previous Studies

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Design

3.2. Participants and Sample Description

3.3. Data Collection Methods and Research Instruments

3.4. Research Procedure and Data Analysis

3.5. Findings, Analysis, and Discussion

CHAPTER 4 : SOLUTIONS

4.1. Enhancing Language Proficiency

4.2. Practicing Real-life Communication

4.3. Improving Cross-cultural Communication

4.4. Promoting Self-directed Learning

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Overall Conclusions

5.2. Limitations of the Study

5.3. Suggestions for Future Research

References

APPENDIX

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rationale of the Study

In recent years, the number of Vietnamese students studying abroad has increased rapidly, especially in Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Korea. These destinations have become popular because they offer affordable tuition fees, diverse scholarship programs, and strong economic and cultural connections with Vietnam. However, along with these opportunities, many Vietnamese students also face significant challenges when they begin their new academic journey overseas. One of the most common and important difficulties is language communication.

For Vietnamese students studying in China, Japan, and Korea, the host-country language is often very different from Vietnamese in terms of pronunciation, grammar, and writing systems. Many students struggle to communicate effectively in daily life, such as buying food, using public transportation, or talking to local people. In academic settings, understanding lectures, completing assignments, and participating in group discussions can become even more challenging. These language barriers may lead to stress, loneliness, and difficulties adapting to the new environment.

Although a number of studies have explored the experiences of international students, research focusing specifically on Vietnamese students in East Asia remains limited. Most previous studies discuss general cultural adaptation or academic challenges but do not examine language communication problems in detail.. Therefore, this study is important because it helps to identify the specific language difficulties Vietnamese students face in China, Japan, and Korea. Understanding these issues can help universities, language centers, and support organizations develop better training programs and support services. It will also provide useful information for Vietnamese students who plan to study abroad in these countries, helping them prepare more effectively before their departure.

1.2. Research Background & Objectives

a. Research Background

In recent years, the number of Vietnamese students studying abroad has increased, especially in Japan, South Korea, and China. These countries are popular because they are close to Vietnam, have scholarship opportunities, and offer good education. Many students go to Japan for advanced technology and scholarships, to South Korea for modern education and international programs, and to China for affordable tuition and Chinese language learning.

Despite these advantages, students face language challenges. The Vietnamese students' language skills are often not enough to fully understand lectures, communicate with teachers, or interact with local students. In Japan, students must learn three scripts (hiragana, katakana, kanji) and use polite expressions. In Korea, grammar, honorifics, and formal speech levels are challenging. In China, tones, Chinese characters, and fast speaking make communication difficult. Language barriers also affect social life. Students may find it hard to make friends, join activities, or work part-time. This can cause stress, anxiety, and isolation, affecting their overall experience abroad.

Although there are studies on international students, research focusing on Vietnamese students in East Asia is limited. Most previous studies look at English-speaking countries or general challenges. Therefore, studying Vietnamese students' language difficulties in Japan, Korea, and China is necessary to help them adapt, improve learning, and enjoy their time abroad.

b. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify which countries Vietnamese students are studying in abroad — specifically focusing on South Korea, Japan, and China. (This reflects the first question in the form: “Which country are you studying/ have studied abroad?”)

2. To examine the duration of Vietnamese students' stay abroad, by categorizing respondents' time abroad (e.g. under 6 months / 1–3 years / over 3 years), in order to see if communication challenges correlate with length of stay.
3. To explore the main language communication difficulties faced by Vietnamese students abroad, including academic communication (lectures, reading, writing) and daily-life interactions (speaking, social communication).
4. To analyze how these communication challenges vary across different host countries (Korea, Japan, China) — assessing whether certain languages / cultural contexts present more difficulties than others.
5. To assess the impact of language communication barriers on students' academic adaptation and social integration abroad, including aspects such as participation in class, social activities, friendships, and general sense of belonging.
6. To suggest practical recommendations and coping strategies that can support Vietnamese students studying abroad to improve their language communication competence and ease their adaptation process.

1.3. Scope and Delimitation & Research Methodology

Scope and Delimitation

This study focuses on Vietnamese students who are currently studying or have studied in Japan, South Korea, and China — the most common East Asian destinations for Vietnamese students according to the survey. The participants include undergraduate, college, or vocational students who have spent at least six months abroad. The research primarily examines language communication challenges (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and social-cultural communication. The study does not extend to students in other countries, nor does it analyze economic, political factors, or the teaching quality of host institutions.

Research Methodology

The main research method is a survey conducted through an online questionnaire targeting Vietnamese students in the mentioned countries. The questionnaire includes personal information (country, duration of study), self-assessment of language skills, description of encountered difficulties, and the impact on academic and daily life.

1.4. Significance of the Study & Structure of the Thesis

Significance of the Study

This study provides a clear understanding of the communication difficulties that Vietnamese students commonly face in Japan, South Korea, and China. The results can help students preparing to study abroad understand potential challenges and prepare more effectively. Furthermore, the findings offer valuable information for educational institutions, student associations, and study-abroad support organizations, helping them develop language support programs, cultural integration strategies, and proper guidance. Academically, the study fills a research gap on the linguistic and cultural communication challenges of Vietnamese students in East Asia.

Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction — including rationale, research background, objectives, scope and delimitation, methodology, significance, and thesis structure.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework.

Chapter 3: Research methodology, findings and discussion

Chapter 4 & 5: Conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

References & Appendices: Questionnaires, collected data, charts, and supplementary materials.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Key Concepts and Definitions

Definitions

Language and communication challenges for students abroad include difficulties with comprehension and fluency (e.g., vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar), cultural nuances that affect how language is used (e.g., politeness, humor, non-verbal cues), and a lack of confidence in using the new language.

Key Concepts

This section introduces and explains the key concepts used throughout the study

1. Language Communication

Language communication refers to the process of exchanging meaning through spoken or written language in academic, social, and daily-life contexts. For international students, it involves the ability to understand others, express ideas clearly, interact in class, and manage conversations in unfamiliar environments. It includes four core skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and also covers pronunciation, vocabulary use, and fluency.

2. Communication Challenges

Communication challenges are obstacles that prevent smooth and effective interaction. These challenges may arise from limited language proficiency, difficulty understanding native speakers' accents, misunderstandings of grammar structures, or lack of confidence in speaking. For Vietnamese students in Japan, Korea, and China, these challenges can also be influenced by differences in communication styles, politeness levels, and cultural expectations.

3. Communicative Competence

Communicative competence refers to the ability to use language appropriately and effectively in real-life situations. It includes several components: Grammatical competence (knowledge of grammar and vocabulary)

Sociolinguistic competence (understanding cultural norms and politeness)

Discourse competence (organizing ideas logically)

Strategic competence (using strategies to overcome communication problems)

For Vietnamese students abroad, communicative competence is essential for academic participation and social integration.

4. Cross-Cultural Communication

Cross-cultural communication involves interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds. It requires understanding not only language but also cultural values, gestures, politeness rules, and communication styles. Vietnamese students in East Asian countries must adjust to new cultural norms—such as hierarchical politeness in Korea, indirectness in Japan, or tonal expressions in China—which may lead to misunderstandings or communication difficulties.

2.2. Relevant Theories Applied in the Study

The theoretical foundations that support the analysis of language communication challenges experienced by Vietnamese students studying abroad. The theories discussed include Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory, Hymes' Communicative Competence Theory

1. Krashen's Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theory

Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory is one of the most widely recognized explanations of how learners acquire a second language. Krashen distinguishes between language acquisition and language learning. Acquisition refers to the subconscious development of language through meaningful interaction, whereas learning involves conscious knowledge of rules and grammar. According to Krashen, successful language acquisition requires two main conditions: comprehensible input and a low affective filter.

Comprehensible input, often referred to as “i+1,” means that learners can understand language that is slightly above their current proficiency level. For Vietnamese students studying abroad, encountering comprehensible input can be challenging due to the speed of native speech, regional accents, and complex academic vocabulary. Lectures, classroom discussions, and informal conversations may contain vocabulary and expressions unfamiliar to learners, making comprehension difficult.

The second component, the affective filter, explains how emotional and psychological factors influence language acquisition. High levels of stress, anxiety, or lack of confidence can block the intake of linguistic input. Vietnamese students studying in foreign countries often experience affective filters due to homesickness, culture shock, or fear of making mistakes. This can lead to hesitation in speaking, avoidance of social interaction, and limited engagement in academic activities. Krashen’s theory suggests that reducing affective barriers through supportive learning environments, peer interaction, and gradual exposure to language can significantly improve acquisition outcomes.

Krashen also emphasizes the importance of natural communication and meaningful input over explicit grammar instruction. This aligns with the experiences of Vietnamese students who often report that memorized grammar rules are insufficient when interacting in real-life situations abroad. Practical, context-based exposure to the target language—such as participating in group discussions, social activities, or internships—enhances acquisition by providing repeated exposure to language in authentic contexts.



2. Hymes' Communicative Competence Theory

Hymes' Communicative Competence Theory complements Krashen's framework by focusing on the broader ability to communicate effectively and appropriately. Hymes argues that knowing grammar is insufficient for successful communication; learners must also understand sociolinguistic norms, discourse structures, and strategic aspects of language use. Communicative competence is divided into four components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence involves knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, and morphology, which forms the foundation of language learning. Vietnamese students often acquire basic grammatical knowledge through formal education, yet this does not automatically translate into effective communication in Japanese, Korean, or Chinese contexts.

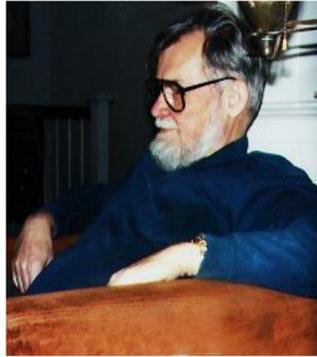
Sociolinguistic competence requires understanding how social norms, relationships, and cultural expectations shape language use. For example, Japanese keigo and Korean honorific systems demand that learners adjust their

speech based on hierarchical relations, age, and social status. Misuse of these forms can result in misunderstandings or social discomfort, highlighting the importance of sociolinguistic awareness. Discourse competence focuses on the ability to produce coherent and cohesive communication, connecting ideas logically in conversation or writing. Vietnamese students may struggle with discourse organization in foreign languages, especially in academic settings where rhetorical conventions differ from those in Vietnamese.

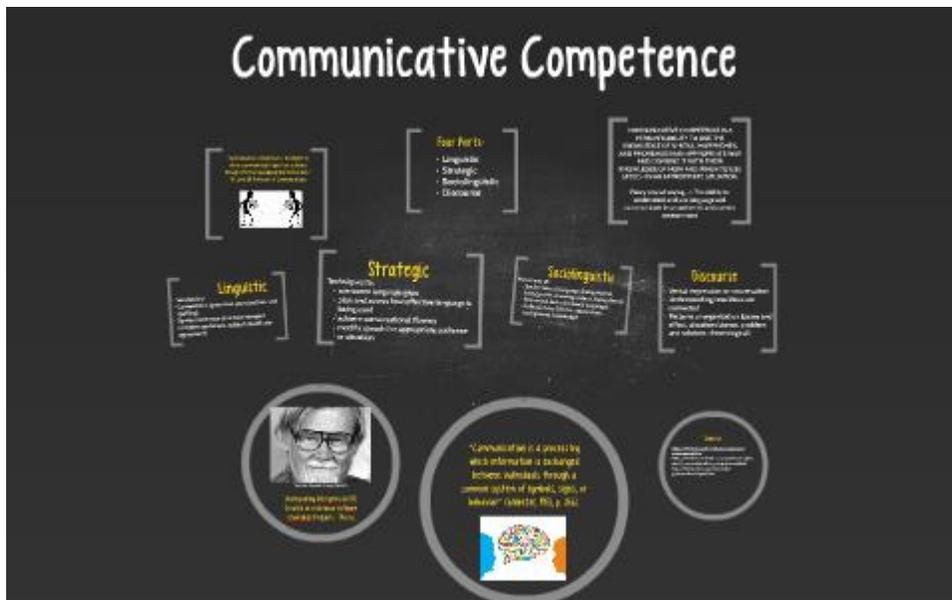
Strategic competence involves using strategies to overcome communication problems, such as paraphrasing, asking for clarification, or using gestures. This is critical for Vietnamese students who may encounter gaps in vocabulary or pronunciation when interacting with native speakers. Combining Krashen's emphasis on meaningful input with Hymes' broader notion of competence provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the challenges faced by Vietnamese students abroad. While Krashen explains how learners acquire language and the impact of emotional factors, Hymes highlights the importance of sociocultural and strategic abilities that enable students to use language effectively in real contexts.

Applying these theories to the experiences of Vietnamese students in Japan, Korea, and China allows researchers to understand not only the linguistic difficulties they face but also the social and cultural challenges that affect communication. For instance, a student may understand a lecture in principle (acquisition) but fail to participate in discussions due to uncertainty about appropriate honorific usage (sociolinguistic competence). Similarly, anxiety about making mistakes may prevent them from seeking clarification, limiting learning opportunities (affective filter).

DELL HYMES (1971)



- Notion of *competence* (grammar) extended to be *communicative competence* (pragmatic)
- Communicative competence = knowing
 - when and when not to speak
 - what to talk about with whom, when, where and in what manner



2.3. Review of Previous Studies

Previous research on language communication challenges among international students shows that linguistic and cultural barriers significantly affect academic performance, social integration, and psychological well-being. For Vietnamese students, particularly those studying in Japan, South Korea, and China, these difficulties are caused not only by language differences but also by unfamiliar cultural norms and communication styles. Studies on Vietnamese students in Japan indicate that listening comprehension and the use of honorific language (keigo) are major challenges. Rapid speech, regional accents, and strict classroom etiquette

make participation in discussions difficult, often causing anxiety and social hesitation. Research in South Korea highlights pronunciation, grammar, and honorific speech as key obstacles. Vietnamese students often face pressure to follow hierarchical and group-oriented communication norms, which can reduce confidence and limit participation in class activities. In China, students encounter challenges with tonal pronunciation, Chinese character writing, and differentiating between formal and informal expressions. Listening comprehension is complicated by dialect variations, while reading and writing require memorization of thousands of characters, leading to stress, social isolation, and reduced academic engagement. Comparative studies emphasize that communication barriers are not only linguistic but also cultural. Misunderstandings of indirect speech, gestures, or politeness rules often increase stress and hinder social adaptation. Research also suggests that pre-departure preparation, language proficiency, and cultural awareness can reduce these difficulties and support smoother adaptation. However, most studies focus on a single country or specific linguistic aspects, leaving a gap in understanding Vietnamese students' experiences across multiple East Asian contexts. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the language communication challenges faced by Vietnamese students in Japan, South Korea, and China, providing a comprehensive perspective on both linguistic and cultural obstacles in academic and social settings.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

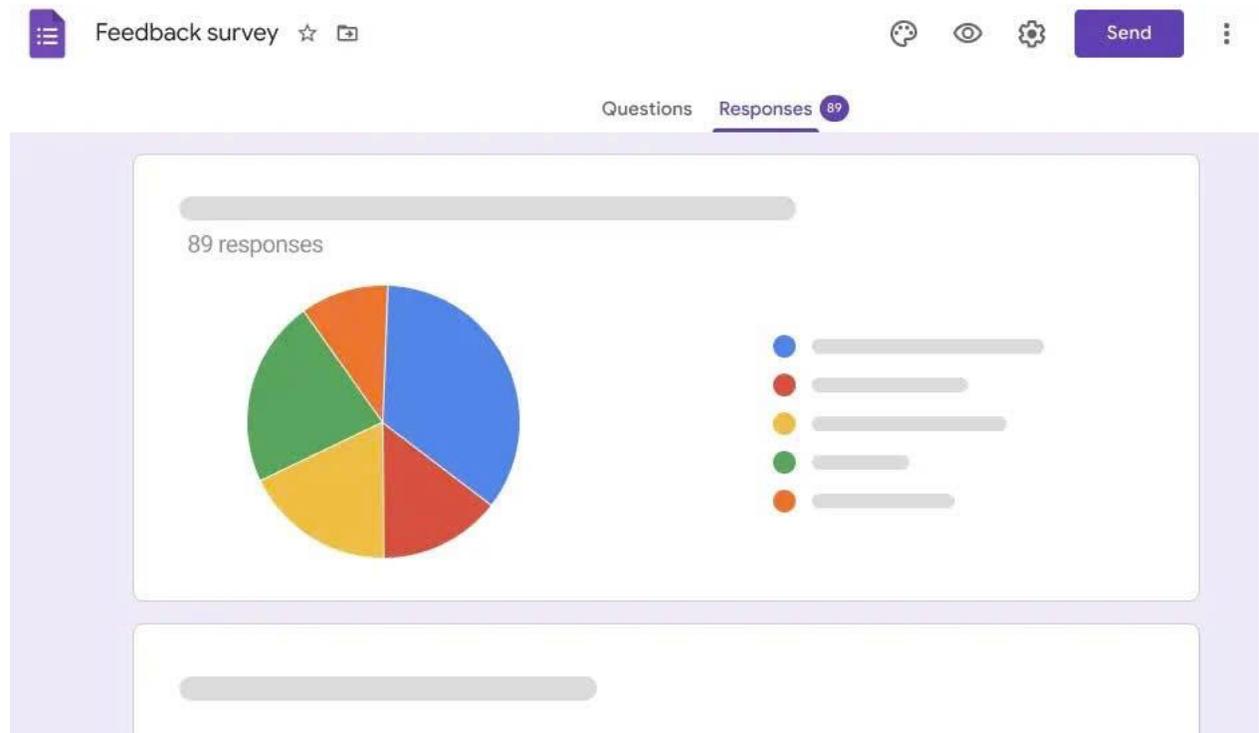
This study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design to investigate the language communication challenges experienced by Vietnamese students studying abroad, specifically in Japan, South Korea, and China. The primary aim is to identify the types of communication difficulties, understand their underlying causes, and explore the impact of these challenges on academic performance and social adaptation. A descriptive design is suitable because it allows for the systematic collection and analysis of data to provide an accurate picture of students' experiences, while the exploratory aspect helps uncover patterns, behaviors, and factors that may not have been previously examined in depth.

The research focuses on Vietnamese undergraduate and graduate students who have spent at least six months studying in one of the three target countries. By selecting participants who have experienced sustained exposure to the host language and culture, the study aims to gather relevant and meaningful insights into real-life communication challenges. The design integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches, combining structured surveys with optional follow-up interviews to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Surveys enable the collection of standardized data across a larger sample, while interviews provide richer, in-depth information about personal experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies.

In line with the study's objectives, the research uses a cross-sectional approach, collecting data at a single point in time. This design is efficient for capturing current experiences and perceptions of Vietnamese students in multiple countries, facilitating comparison across different linguistic and cultural contexts. The research also incorporates demographic variables such as age, gender, level of study, duration of study abroad, and previous language proficiency. These variables help to identify

patterns and correlations between personal characteristics and communication difficulties.

The study places emphasis on ethical considerations and participant confidentiality. Participation is voluntary, and all data collected are treated anonymously. Consent



forms clearly outline the study's purpose, procedures, and the participants' rights to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Overall, this research design allows for a comprehensive examination of the types and causes of language communication challenges, while accounting for sociocultural, academic, and individual factors. By integrating descriptive and exploratory methods, the study provides both quantitative evidence and qualitative insights, offering a robust foundation for understanding how Vietnamese students adapt to and navigate communication barriers in Japan, Korea, and China

3.2. Participants and Sample Description

The participants of this study are 100 Vietnamese students studying abroad in Japan, South Korea, and China. They include both undergraduate and graduate students who have studied in their respective host countries for at least six months. The study applies a purposive sampling method, which ensures that the selected participants have sufficient exposure to the host language and culture to provide meaningful insights into real-life communication challenges.

Among the 100 participants, 33 students are from Japan, 33 from South Korea, and 33 from China, which allows for a balanced comparison of experiences across different linguistic and cultural contexts. The participants vary in age, gender, field of study, and prior language proficiency. Including these demographic variations helps identify potential correlations between individual characteristics and the types or severity of communication challenges. For example, students with stronger prior knowledge of the host language may face fewer linguistic barriers, while those studying in highly interactive academic programs may experience different communication demands compared to those in lecture-based programs.

In addition to the initial description of participants, the study provides a detailed profile of each participant to facilitate meaningful analysis. The 100 participants are evenly divided among the three host countries, ensuring a balanced representation of experiences in Japan, South Korea, and China. This balance allows for comparisons of country-specific challenges, as language structures, cultural norms, and classroom environments differ among these countries.

Each participant is asked to self-assess their communication proficiency in the host language, classified into beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. This self-assessment is critical as it provides a quantitative measure of participants' perceived ability to communicate effectively in both academic and social contexts. Beginner students typically struggle with basic conversation, comprehension of lectures, and

understanding cultural expressions. Intermediate students may face more subtle challenges such as interpreting idiomatic expressions, adapting to classroom interactions, and writing structured essays. Advanced students may encounter

difficulties with nuanced expression, complex reading material, and culturally appropriate social interaction.

To better visualize the distribution, the study uses a participant summary table, showing host country and self-assessed proficiency.

Participation is voluntary, and all participants are informed about the research objectives, procedures, and confidentiality measures. Consent is obtained from all participants prior to data collection. The relatively small sample size of 100 allows the researcher to conduct detailed follow-up interviews while still providing sufficient data for descriptive analysis of patterns and challenges.



3.3. Data Collection Methods and Research Instruments

Data are collected using a mixed-methods approach. The primary instrument is an online survey questionnaire, including closed-ended questions to measure the frequency and types of communication challenges, as well as Likert-scale items to assess self-perceived language proficiency and confidence. Secondary data are gathered through semi-structured interviews with selected participants to explore personal experiences, strategies for overcoming difficulties, and cultural adaptation processes. All surveys and interviews are conducted in Vietnamese or English, depending on participants' preference, to ensure accurate responses.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, are calculated for each country and proficiency level. Participants are categorized by country (Japan, South Korea, China) and communication proficiency (beginner, intermediate, advanced) to allow a clear comparison of how language challenges vary across different contexts and skill levels. For example, preliminary analysis may show that students in Japan report higher difficulty with honorific language usage, whereas students in China may experience more challenges with tonal pronunciation and character recognition. In South Korea, the most frequently reported difficulties may relate to fast speech and understanding grammar in real-life interactions.

The analysis also explores the relationship between language proficiency and perceived communication challenges. Students with beginner-level proficiency may report frequent difficulties in listening comprehension and speaking, while intermediate or advanced students may face challenges related to nuanced expressions or culturally appropriate communication. Percentages and mean scores are presented in tables and charts to clearly demonstrate the distribution of reported challenges by country and proficiency level.

This purely quantitative analysis allows the researcher to identify the most common communication obstacles for Vietnamese students abroad and highlight the

differences between host countries and proficiency levels. The results provide a focused, systematic understanding of the types of challenges that students encounter in academic and social settings without relying on qualitative narratives. Visual representations such as bar charts and tables help in summarizing the data and making comparisons more straightforward.

Data analysis is conducted entirely on the quantitative survey results from the 30 participants. The main focus is on the relationship between host country and self-assessed communication proficiency, and how these variables correspond to reported difficulties in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

3.4. Research Procedure and Data Analysis

Step 1: Categorization of Participants

Participants are first categorized by host country (Japan, South Korea, China) and language proficiency (beginner, intermediate, advanced). This categorization allows the identification of patterns and trends within each subgroup.

Step 2: Descriptive Statistics

Frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations are calculated for each language skill to determine the prevalence and intensity of communication challenges. For example, among beginner-level students in South Korea, 60% may report difficulty in listening comprehension, while 50% struggle with speaking fluency.

Step 3: Comparative Analysis

Mean scores for each skill are compared across countries and proficiency levels. This comparison highlights differences between students in Japan, South Korea, and China, and between beginner, intermediate, and advanced learners. Bar charts and tables are used to visualize patterns and identify the most common communication challenges by country and proficiency.

Step 4: Interpretation of Results

Analysis focuses on identifying which skills are most challenging for each proficiency level in each country. For example:

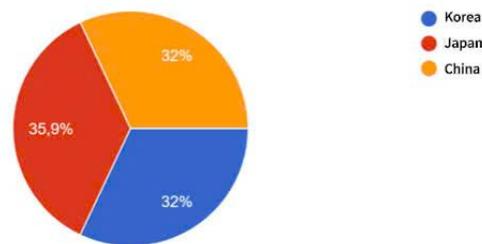
Japan: higher difficulty in speaking and understanding honorific expressions

Korea: moderate difficulty across all four skills, with listening being the most challenging

China: tonal pronunciation affects listening and speaking more than reading and writing

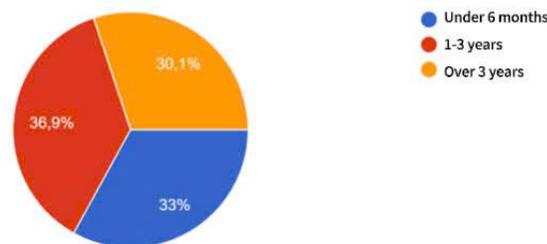
Step 5: Presentation of Findings

Which country are you currently studying in/have you studied in?
103 câu trả lời



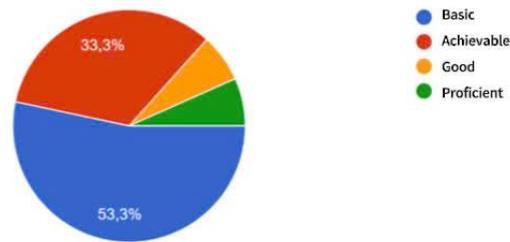
Host Countries of Vietnamese Students Abroad

Time you have lived and studied abroad ?
103 câu trả lời



Duration of Living and Studying Abroad

What was your foreign language proficiency level before going abroad to study?
30 câu trả lời



Foreign Language Proficiency Prior to Studying Abroad

The descriptive statistics provide an overview of the participants' backgrounds and their initial communication challenges while studying abroad. Regarding the country of study, the distribution of respondents is relatively balanced: 35.9% of Vietnamese students are studying in Japan, while South Korea and China each account for 32%. This balanced representation allows for a more comprehensive understanding of communication challenges across different East Asian contexts.

In terms of duration of residence and study abroad, 36.9% of participants have lived and studied overseas for one to three years, representing the largest group. Students who have stayed for over three years account for 33%, while 30.1% have been abroad for less than six months. This indicates that the sample includes students at different stages of adaptation, from newcomers to those with longer-term international experience.

Before going abroad, most students reported limited language proficiency. Specifically, 53.3% evaluated their foreign language level as basic, and 33.3% considered it intermediate. Only a small proportion reported having good or advanced proficiency. This suggests that many students began their overseas studies without a strong linguistic foundation, which may contribute to subsequent communication difficulties.

When asked about initial challenges in daily communication after arriving abroad, the most common difficulty was the inability to express intended ideas clearly

(42.7%). This was followed by a lack of vocabulary (22.3%) and difficulty keeping up with native speakers' speed of speech (19.4%). Additionally, 15.5% of respondents reported problems understanding cultural contexts in communication. These findings highlight that communication challenges are not only linguistic but also cultural, emphasizing the complexity of real-life interaction in a foreign environment.

When you first moved abroad, what difficulties did you encounter in daily communication?

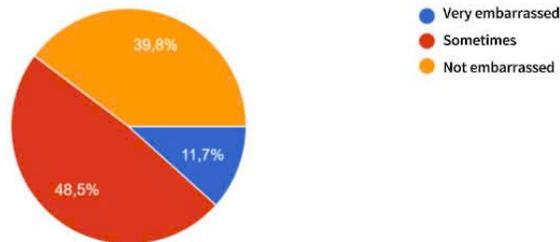
103 câu trả lời



Major Daily Communication Difficulties Experienced Upon Arrival

Do you often feel shy when talking to native speakers?

103 câu trả lời



Communication Attitudes and Emotional Responses

What do you usually do when you encounter difficulties in communication?

103 câu trả lời



Common Coping Strategies When Facing Communication Difficulties

This section presents descriptive statistics related to students' attitudes, emotional responses, coping strategies, and perceived solutions regarding language communication challenges while studying abroad.

Regarding attitudes and emotional factors in communication, nearly half of the respondents (48.5%) reported that they are not afraid to communicate with native speakers. However, a noticeable proportion still experience hesitation, with 11.7% indicating that they sometimes feel shy when speaking with locals. Although the percentage of students who feel shy is relatively low, this emotional barrier remains a factor influencing communication effectiveness.

When encountering communication difficulties, students tend to rely on various coping strategies. The most common approach is using dictionaries or Google Translate, reported by 43.7% of participants. Additionally, 28.2% seek help from Vietnamese friends, while 15.5% ask native speakers to repeat or clarify information. Notably, 12.6% choose to avoid communication altogether, suggesting that language difficulties can lead to withdrawal and reduced interaction opportunities.

In terms of perceived key skills for improving communication, vocabulary was considered the most important by 35% of respondents. Listening and speaking skills were selected by 28.2%, followed by understanding local culture (21.4%) and pronunciation (15.5%). These responses indicate that students recognize communication as a combination of linguistic competence and cultural awareness.

Regarding self-initiated improvement strategies, 40% of students reported watching movies or listening to music in the target language. Meanwhile, 26.7% actively practiced communication without fear of making mistakes, and 20% joined clubs or groups with local students. A smaller proportion (10%) participated in additional communication skills courses or focused on note-taking and daily vocabulary learning.

Finally, students expressed clear expectations regarding institutional support. The most preferred solution was establishing international communication clubs (36.3%). Other recommendations included organizing free language classes (24.5%), providing native-speaker mentors or advisors (24.5%), and creating multicultural exchange environments (14.7%).

3.5. Findings, Analysis, and Discussion

Based on the analysis of the survey data, several key findings emerge regarding language communication challenges faced by Vietnamese students studying abroad. First, most students begin their overseas studies with limited foreign language proficiency, as more than half reported having only a basic level before departure. This weak linguistic foundation significantly affects their ability to communicate effectively, especially during the initial period abroad.

Second, expressive difficulties are the most common communication problem. A large proportion of students struggle to express their ideas clearly, followed by limited vocabulary and difficulty understanding native speakers' speech speed. Cultural misunderstandings, although reported by a smaller group, still represent an important barrier to effective interaction.

Third, in terms of attitudes and emotions, nearly half of the students feel confident when communicating with native speakers. However, a notable number still experience hesitation or occasional shyness, which can reduce their willingness to participate in conversations.

Fourth, students tend to rely heavily on supportive tools and social networks when facing communication problems. Translation tools are the most frequently used strategy, followed by seeking help from Vietnamese friends or native speakers. A small but concerning proportion of students avoid communication altogether.

Finally, students clearly recognize the importance of vocabulary development, listening–speaking skills, and cultural understanding. Although they actively use self-directed learning strategies, they strongly expect more institutional support, particularly international communication clubs, language classes, and native-speaker mentoring.

The findings reveal several major issues underlying the communication difficulties of Vietnamese students abroad.

The first major challenge is insufficient linguistic competence, particularly in vocabulary and spontaneous speaking. Many students find it difficult to formulate sentences quickly and accurately in real-life situations, leading to communication breakdowns and misunderstandings.

The second challenge relates to listening comprehension, especially the ability to keep up with native speakers' natural speech. Differences in accent, speed, and informal language use further intensify this difficulty.

The third issue is emotional and psychological pressure. Fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and occasional shyness discourage some students from engaging in conversations. In certain cases, this leads to avoidance behaviors, which significantly limit language exposure and practice opportunities.

Another important issue is the over-reliance on translation tools. While dictionaries and translation applications provide short-term assistance, excessive dependence may prevent students from developing independent communicative competence.

The data indicate insufficient institutional support. The strong demand for communication clubs, free language courses, and native-speaker mentors suggests

that existing support systems do not fully meet students' needs in language and cultural adaptation.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings confirms that language communication challenges among Vietnamese students studying abroad are multidimensional, involving linguistic, emotional, and cultural factors.

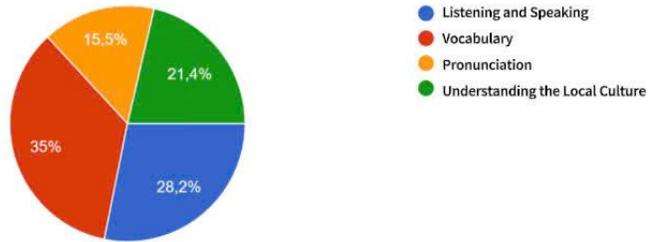
The prominence of vocabulary and speaking difficulties supports previous research emphasizing the importance of communicative competence over purely grammatical knowledge. Students' recognition of cultural understanding as a key skill highlights the role of pragmatic and intercultural competence in successful communication.

Moreover, the reliance on informal learning methods, such as watching films, listening to music, and engaging in real-life conversations, reflects students' awareness of the value of authentic language exposure. However, these individual efforts are often fragmented and lack systematic guidance.

The strong preference for institutional initiatives, particularly international communication clubs and mentorship programs, suggests that students seek supportive environments where they can practice language confidently and interact with native speakers in low-pressure contexts.

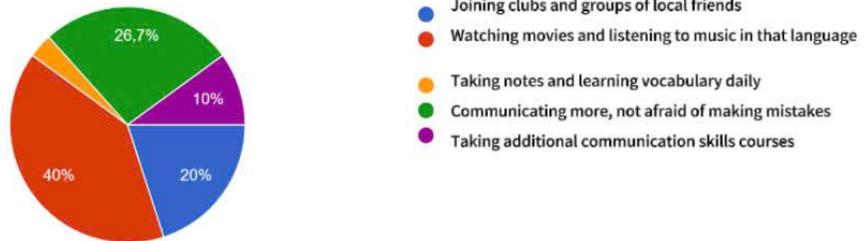
Overall, the findings suggest that effective solutions require an integrated approach, combining students' personal learning strategies with structured institutional support. Such an approach can help reduce anxiety, enhance communicative competence, and promote successful academic and social integration in the host country.

In your opinion, what is the most important skill for improving language communication abroad?
103 câu trả lời



Key Skills Perceived as Most Important for Improving Communication

What have you done to improve your language communication skills?
30 câu trả lời



Student-Initiated Strategies to Improve Communication Skills

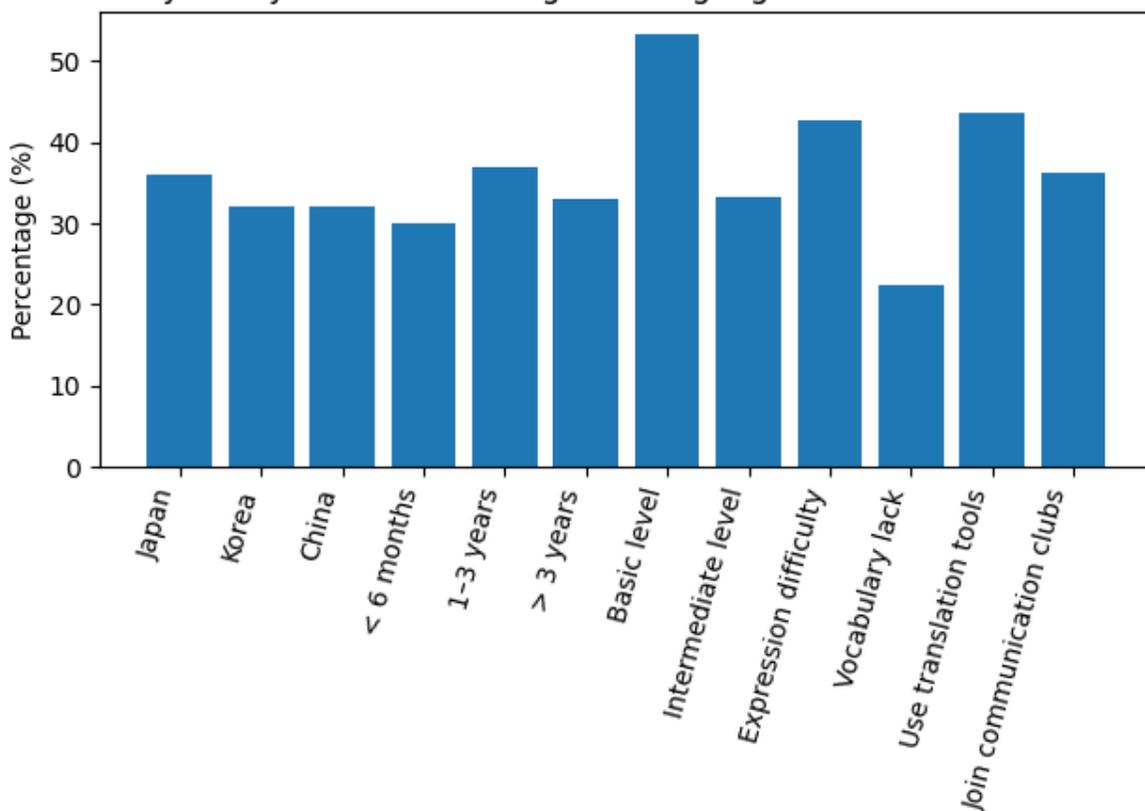
In your opinion, what should schools or organizations supporting Vietnamese students do to help improve their language communication skills?
102 câu trả lời



Institutional and Organizational Support Suggested by Students

Interpretation of Results and Their Significance

Summary of Key Research Findings on Language Communication Challenges



The results of this study provide important insights into the linguistic realities faced by Vietnamese students studying abroad and highlight the multifaceted factors influencing their communication performance. The interpretation of these findings helps clarify not only what challenges students experience but why these challenges occur and how they shape academic, social, and cultural integration.

To begin with, the data suggest that the mismatch between pre-departure language proficiency and real-life communicative demands is a major source of difficulty. Even though many students had studied the foreign language in Vietnam, their knowledge was largely grammar-based, with limited exposure to authentic spoken interaction. This explains why a majority struggled to follow native speakers or articulate their thoughts naturally during the early stages of adaptation. The findings support theoretical frameworks such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which emphasizes the necessity of comprehensible input in promoting second language

acquisition. When students are suddenly immersed in environments where linguistic input far exceeds their proficiency level, communication breakdowns become inevitable.

Additionally, the survey shows that contextual complexity plays a crucial role in shaping communication challenges. Difficulties were highest in informal or fast-paced situations—such as part-time jobs or conversations with local people—where speech tends to be less structured and more idiomatic. In contrast, challenges in academic settings, group work, and administrative tasks demonstrate that students require not only conversational fluency but also academic literacy and cultural awareness. This reinforces the concept of Communicative Competence, which includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence necessary for successful interaction in varied social contexts.

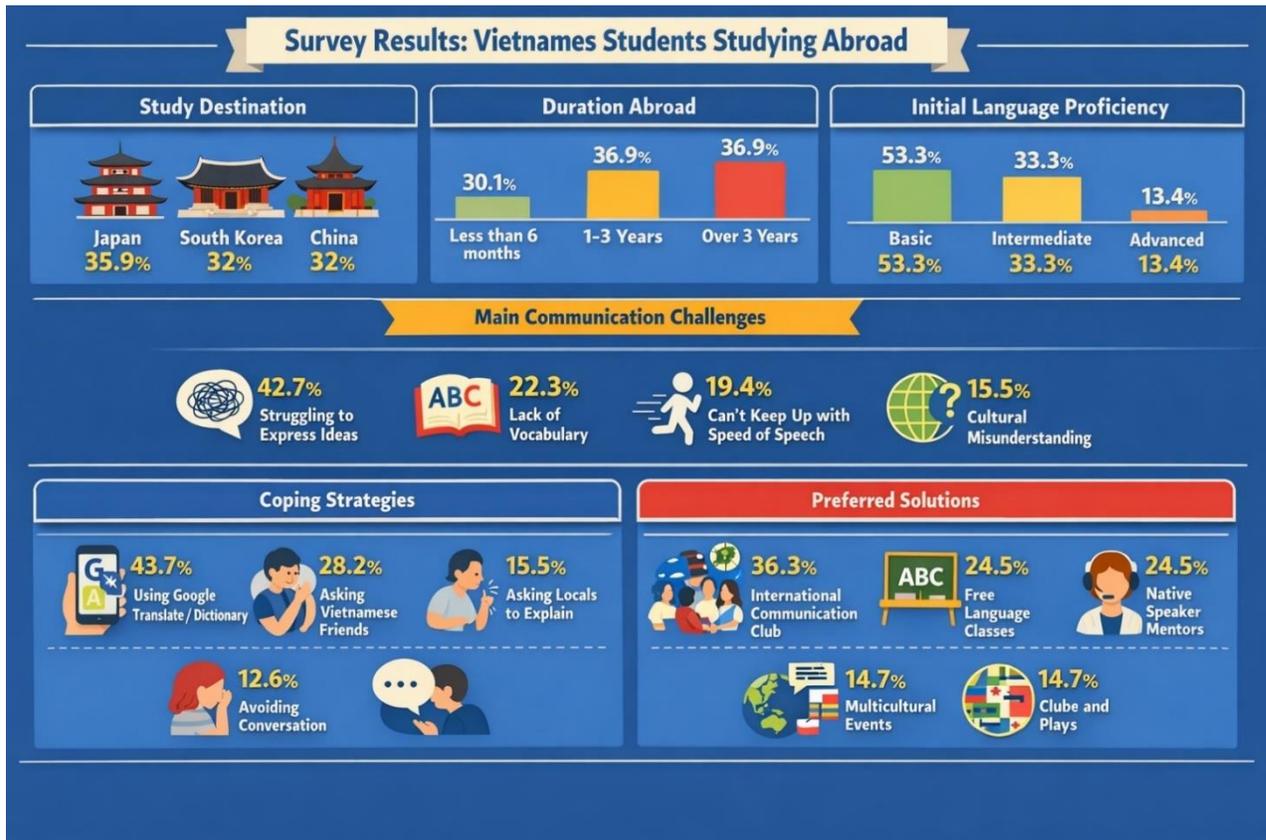
Another important interpretation involves students' psychological responses. The fact that over half of the participants felt shy or hesitant when communicating with native speakers reflects the influence of affective factors on language performance. Anxiety, fear of judgment, and lack of confidence can significantly reduce students' willingness to communicate, a key predictor of language development. These psychological barriers may even outweigh linguistic limitations, suggesting that emotional readiness is as critical as language competence.

The strategies students employed to cope with their difficulties—such as using translation tools, watching foreign-language media, increasing direct interaction, or joining clubs—demonstrate varying levels of autonomy and adaptability. Students who actively immersed themselves in the language or engaged socially tended to make faster progress, highlighting the importance of learner agency. However, reliance on translation tools in place of real communication suggests that some students struggle to develop effective learning strategies, potentially slowing long-term improvement.

The significance of these results extends beyond individual experiences. They underscore the need for institutional support systems that are better aligned with the linguistic and emotional needs of Vietnamese students abroad. The recommendations provided by students—such as free language classes, multicultural exchange spaces, international communication clubs, and native-speaking mentors—highlight the importance of structured, accessible, and culturally sensitive programs. These forms of support can ease students' adaptation, enhance communication skills, and improve academic and social outcomes.

From a broader perspective, the findings contribute to the understanding of linguistic adjustment among international students and can serve as a foundation for improving student support policies in universities worldwide. They emphasize that language learning is not merely a cognitive process but a holistic experience shaped by culture, emotions, confidence, and environment. Therefore, addressing communication challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates language instruction, psychological support, and social integration opportunities.

The survey provides a comprehensive overview of the language communication experiences of Vietnamese students studying abroad. The results indicate that most participants began their studies overseas with limited language proficiency, which significantly influenced their early communication performance. Difficulties in expressing ideas and insufficient vocabulary emerged as the most common



challenges, highlighting gaps between classroom-based language learning and real-life communicative demands.

CHAPTER 4 : SOLUTIONS

4.1. Enhancing Language Proficiency



Limitation

Vietnamese students studying in Japan, South Korea, and China often have a basic foundation in Japanese, Korean, or Mandarin before departure; however, their practical language proficiency remains limited, especially in listening and speaking. This limitation is mainly caused by a learning background that emphasizes grammar, vocabulary, and test preparation (JLPT, TOPIK, HSK) rather than real-life communication.

As a result, students face difficulties in:

- Understanding natural speech, local accents, and fast speaking speed in lectures
- Following academic explanations and classroom discussions
- Responding fluently in the host country's language during real-time interaction

Example:

A Vietnamese student in Japan passes JLPT N2 but struggles to understand lectures delivered in natural Japanese at normal speed.

Illustrative Image / Authentic Context:

Real listening practice for Japanese, Korean, and Chinese learners:

- Japanese listening practice (JLPT-style but natural):

<https://www.nhk.or.jp/lesson/>

- Korean listening practice (academic & daily context):

<https://www.topikguide.com>

- Chinese listening practice (HSK & real-life speech):

<https://www.chinesepod.com>

Solution

To enhance language proficiency, Vietnamese students should shift from test-oriented learning to communication-oriented language exposure. This includes increasing contact with authentic listening materials and participating in speaking-focused language support programs offered by host universities.

Key strategies include:

- Regular exposure to real lectures, campus announcements, and local media
- Participation in language exchange programs with native students
- Attending listening–speaking support classes designed for international students

Example:

A Vietnamese student in South Korea listens to recorded university lectures and joins a Korean language exchange club to improve listening accuracy and speaking fluency.



4.2. Practicing Real-life Communication

Limitation

Vietnamese students in Japan, Korea, and China often struggle with real-life communication in daily situations and academic settings. These countries use different languages (Japanese, Korean, Mandarin) that require high levels of oral interaction, and classroom learning alone does not adequately prepare students for spontaneous conversation or nuanced responses.

Example:

A student in Korea understands prepared sentences but fails to follow informal discussions in group work.

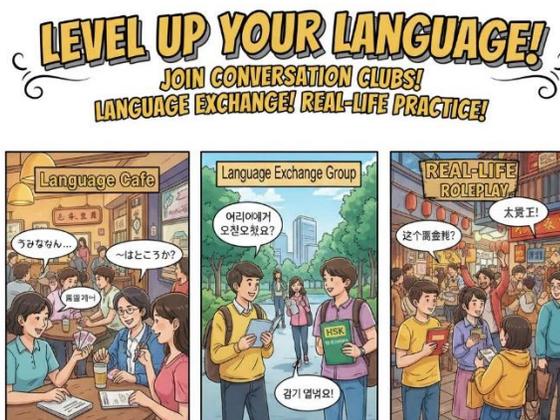
Image Resource (Academic Interaction):

Students practicing conversation in a university club:

<https://www.toastmasters.org/about/all-about-toastmasters>

Solution

Encourage participation in conversation clubs, language exchange groups, and real-life role-play activities in the local language (JLPT practice in Japan, TOPIK in Korea, HSK in China). These activities simulate everyday interactions and help students learn practical expressions.



Join Japanese language meetups to practice asking for directions and shopping phrases in real contexts.



4.3. Improving Cross-cultural Communication

Limitation

Students often lack cross-cultural awareness of nonverbal cues, communication norms, and classroom etiquette in East Asian contexts, leading to misunderstandings. For example, indirect communication in Vietnam may be misinterpreted in Japan or China, where subtle non-verbal expectations are important. This problem stems from limited cultural exposure before departure. [OBJ]

Example:

A Vietnamese student in Japan avoids eye contact to show respect, but this is misread as disinterest in group work.

Cross-cultural group discussion:

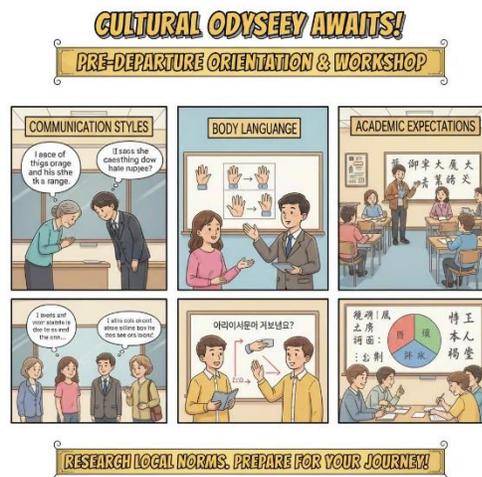
<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/models/national-culture/>

Solution

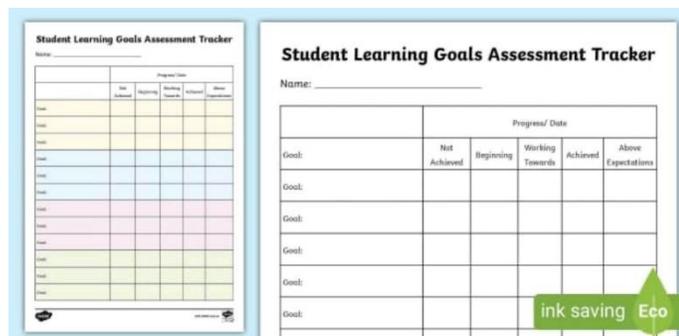
Provide cross-cultural orientation and workshops covering communication styles, body language, and local academic expectations. Before departure, students should learn about culture-specific norms (e.g., hierarchical respect in Japan, indirect feedback in China).

Example:

Workshops on Korean classroom participation norms improve students' confidence to speak up in seminars.



4.4. Promoting Self-directed Learning



Limitation

Vietnamese students often lack effective self-directed learning strategies, including clear goal setting and consistent practice routines. Without structured planning, language learning becomes irregular and less effective, particularly in developing communication skills.

Example:

A student practices speaking only before exams instead of maintaining regular communication practice.

Solution

Encourage learners to take responsibility for continuous improvement.

How to Implement

- Use language apps for daily practice
- Set measurable goals (e.g., learn 10 new academic expressions/week)

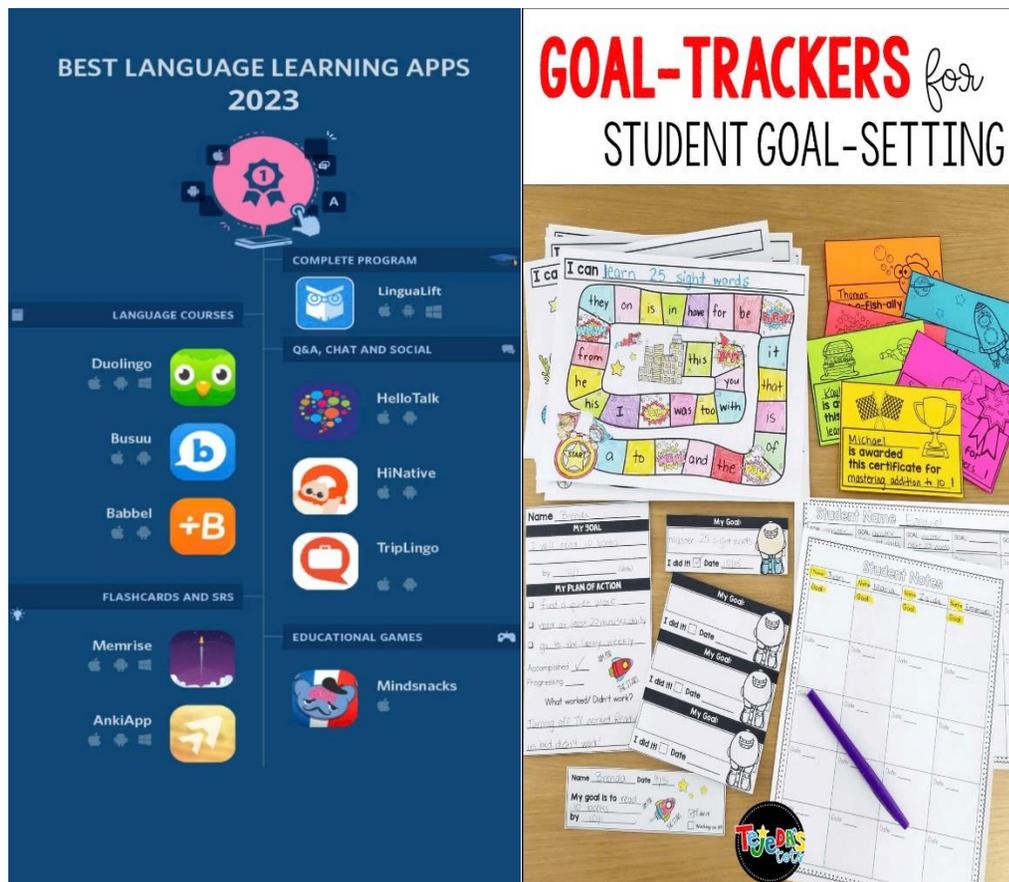
Useful Tools

- Anki – Spaced Repetition Flashcards – <https://apps.ankiweb.net>
- Grammarly – Writing Assistant – <https://www.grammarly.com>

Example

A student uses Anki flashcards to memorize academic vocabulary relevant to their major:

<https://apps.ankiweb.net>



CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Overall Conclusions

Conclusions

The findings confirm that Vietnamese students abroad face considerable linguistic barriers that influence their academic performance, social integration, and psychological well-being. Communication difficulties are experienced across various settings—academic, social, administrative, and professional—indicating that language challenges are not isolated but rather form a continuous part of daily experiences.

The results also highlight that emotional factors, particularly anxiety and hesitation, significantly contribute to communication challenges. Even when students possess basic proficiency, fear of mistakes or judgment can hinder their willingness to interact with native speakers.

Despite these difficulties, many students demonstrate proactive efforts to overcome language barriers through self-directed learning, exposure to authentic materials, and participation in social activities. However, self-study alone is not sufficient. Students clearly expect stronger institutional support, especially opportunities for immersive language practice.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes that improving communication competence requires a combination of linguistic training, psychological support, and culturally rich environments. Enhanced cooperation between universities, student organizations, and local communities is essential to help Vietnamese students integrate more effectively into their host countries.

5.2. Limitations of the Study

Although the study provides valuable insights, several limitations should be acknowledged:

Sample size was limited; therefore, findings may not represent all Vietnamese students abroad.

Self-reported data may involve bias, especially regarding emotional experiences or communication competence.

Focus on three countries (South Korea, Japan, China) limits generalization to other study destinations.

The questionnaire format does not allow in-depth exploration of individual stories or nuanced experiences.

The study scope focuses primarily on language barriers, while external factors such as academic pressure or cultural shock were not deeply analyzed.

Future research should aim to address these gaps.

5.3. Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations, several directions for future studies are proposed:

1. Expand the sample size and include Vietnamese students from a wider range of countries to enhance the generalizability of findings.
2. Conduct qualitative research, such as interviews or focus groups, to explore personal experiences, emotions, and coping strategies in greater depth.
3. Investigate the relationship between language barriers and academic performance, including how communication affects classroom participation and learning outcomes.
4. Examine cultural adaptation and how cultural differences influence communication confidence.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of institutional support programs, such as language classes or mentorship programs, to determine which strategies work best.



References

1. Canagarajah, S. (2013). *Translingual practice: Global Englishes and cosmopolitan relations*. Oxford University Press.

<https://global.oup.com>

→ Provides a strong theoretical foundation on multilingual communication and explains how non-native speakers negotiate meaning in international contexts.

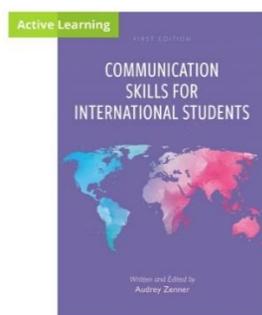
2. *Challenges faced by Vietnamese university English majors in speaking English*.

<https://jshou.edu.vn>

→ Examines speaking difficulties among Vietnamese students, offering contextual background for pre-departure language limitations.

3. *Communication skills for international students*. Cognella Academic Publishing.

<https://titles.cognella.com/communication-skills-for-international-students-9781793513373>



♥ Add to Interest List

📖 Open Preview

Communication Skills for
International Students

→ Focuses on academic and social communication skills needed by international students in English-speaking and multicultural environments.

4. English-medium instruction (EMI) challenges in Vietnamese universities.

<https://sfeducation.springeropen.com>

→ Analyzes challenges in English-medium instruction in Vietnam, helping explain why students may struggle with real-life communication abroad.

5. Factors affecting the intercultural adaptation process of Vietnamese postgraduate students in Taiwan.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333661487>

→ Investigates language barriers, academic communication issues, and cultural adaptation among Vietnamese postgraduate students.

6. Intercultural communication and international students.

Google Books:

https://books.google.com/books/about/Intercultural_Communication_and_Internat.html

→ Offers a theoretical framework for understanding intercultural interaction, communication breakdowns, and adaptation challenges.

7. Language and intercultural peer interactions: Vietnamese students in Taiwan's bilingual academic settings. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0147176721001085>

→ Explores language choice and peer interaction challenges in bilingual academic environments.

8. Let all voices be heard: Exploring international students' communication challenges in the internationalized classroom.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344605265>

→ Discusses classroom participation anxiety, communication barriers, and interaction challenges faced by international students.

9. Speaking anxiety among Vietnamese EFL learners.

→ Provides insight into psychological factors and communication anxiety affecting Vietnamese learners of English.

10. Tra, N. N. T., Han, W., & Pill, S. (2025). Willingness to communicate, L2 self-confidence, and academic self-concept: A mixed-methods study of Vietnamese students in the UK. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(9), 1176.

<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-328X/15/9/1176>

→ A key empirical study on willingness to communicate (WTC), self-confidence, and academic identity among Vietnamese students abroad.

11. Wilczewski, M., & Alon, I. (2022). Language and communication in international students' adaptation: A bibliometric and content analysis review. *Higher Education*, 84, 1005–1030.

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9274966/>

→ A comprehensive review of language-related challenges in international students' academic and social adaptation.



ScienceDirect



Access through your organization

[Purchase PDF](#)

International Journal of Intercultural Relations

Volume 84, September 2021, Pages 86-94

Language and intercultural peer interactions: Vietnamese students in Taiwan's bilingual academic settings

[Trang Thi Thuy Nguyen](#)  



Language and communication in international students' adaptation: a bibliometric and content analysis review

Michał Wilczewski¹ · Ilan Alon^{2,3}

Accepted: 14 June 2022 / Published online: 12 July 2022
© The Author(s) 2022

Abstract

This article systematically reviews the literature (313 articles) on language and communication in international students' cross-cultural adaptation in institutions of higher education for 1994–2021. We used bibliometric analysis to identify the most impactful journals and articles, and the intellectual structure of the field. We used content analysis to synthesize the results within each research stream and suggest future research directions. We established two major research streams: second-language proficiency and interactions in the host country. We found inconclusive results about the role of communication with co-nationals in students' adaptation, which contradicts the major adaptation theories. New contextualized research and the use of other theories could help explain the contradictory results and develop the existing theories. Our review suggests the need to theoretically refine the interrelationships between the interactional variables and different adaptation domains. Moreover, to create a better fit between the empirical data and the adaptation models, research should test the mediating effects of second-language proficiency and the willingness to communicate with locals. Finally, research should focus on students in non-Anglophone countries and explore the effects of remote communication in online learning on students' adaptation. We document the intellectual structure of the research on the role of language and communication in international students' adaptation and suggest a future research agenda.

Keywords Literature review · Language · Intercultural communication · International student · Adaptation · Bibliometric analysis

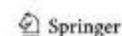
✉ Michał Wilczewski
m.wilczewski@uw.edu.pl

Ilan Alon
ilan.alon@uia.no

¹ Faculty of Applied Linguistics, University of Warsaw, Dobra 55, 00-312 Warsaw, Poland

² Department of Economics and Business Administration, University of Ariel, 40700 Ariel, Israel

³ School of Business and Law, University of Agder, Gimlemoen 25, 4630 Kristiansand, Norway



APPENDIX

Language Communication Challenges of Vietnamese Students Abroad

Please read the following statements and indicate your level of agreement by marking (✓) the appropriate box.

No.	Survey Statements	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1.	I find it difficult to understand native speakers in conversations.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.	I feel nervous when speaking in a foreign language.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3.	I struggle to use formal or professional language correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4.	I often misunderstand idioms or slang in the local language.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5.	Cultural differences make communication more challenging.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6.	I find it hard to adapt to indirect communication styles abroad.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7.	Language barriers negatively impact my academic performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8.	I often feel insecure about my language skills in social settings.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9.	Non-verbal cues and gestures are difficult for me to interpret.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10.	I make mistakes when speaking with local people.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11.	I practice speaking with local friends or language partners regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12.	My university provides helpful language support services.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13.	There are cultural orientation programs available for international students.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14.	I watch local media to improve my listening skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15.	I feel confident in my ability to overcome language challenges.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Interview



Interviewer Information:

Name: Dinh Thi Mai Phuong

Role: Undergraduate researcher

Field of study: Chinese Language in Korea

Purpose of interview: To collect qualitative data for the graduation thesis entitled “Language Communication Challenges of Vietnamese Students Abroad”.

Interviewee Information:

Name: Dinh Van Hieu

Age: 32

Nationality: Vietnamese

Current status: International student

Program: Master’s degree in Chinese Language and Culture

Interview Q&A Transcript

Interviewer (Dinh Thi Mai Phuong):

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to better understand the language communication challenges faced by Vietnamese students studying abroad. First, could you briefly introduce yourself?

Interviewee (Dinh Van Hieu):

My name is Dinh Van Hieu. I am 32 years old and currently studying for a master’s degree in Chinese Language and Culture as an international student.

Interviewer:

Q1. As a Vietnamese student studying abroad, what are the main language communication challenges you have experienced?

Interviewee:

One of the main challenges I experience is listening and speaking in real-life communication. Native speakers often speak quickly and use informal language or slang, which makes it difficult for me to fully understand and respond confidently.

Interviewer:

Q2. How do these language difficulties affect your academic studies?

Interviewee:

They mainly affect my participation in class discussions and oral presentations. Sometimes I understand the academic content, but I find it challenging to express my ideas clearly and accurately in the foreign language.

Interviewer:

Q3. Do cultural differences influence your language communication?

Interviewee:

Yes, cultural differences have a significant influence. For example, communication styles abroad are usually more direct, while Vietnamese students tend to be more indirect and cautious. This difference can sometimes cause misunderstandings or hesitation in communication.

Interviewer:

Q4. What strategies have you used to overcome these language communication challenges?

Interviewee:

I try to practice speaking as much as possible by joining group discussions, language exchange programs, and interacting with local students. I also watch local media to become familiar with pronunciation and everyday expressions.

Interviewer:

Q5. In your opinion, what should universities or Vietnamese student support organizations do to help improve language communication skills?

Interviewee:

They should provide more practical language training courses that focus on real-life communication and academic interaction. In addition, cultural orientation programs and speaking clubs would help students improve confidence and communication skills.

Interviewer:

Q6. What advice would you give to Vietnamese students who are planning to study abroad?

I would advise them to prepare their language skills early, especially listening and speaking. More importantly, they should not be afraid of making mistakes, because mistakes are a natural and important part of learning a foreign language.



INTERVIEW Q&A TRANSCRIPT

Interviewee Information:

Name: Nguyen Quang Huy

Age: 26

Nationality: Vietnamese

Current status: International student in Japan

Major: Hotel Management

Interviewer:

Could you briefly introduce yourself and your current study situation?

Interviewee (Nguyen Quang Huy):

My name is Nguyen Quang Huy. I am 26 years old and currently studying Hotel Management in Japan as an international student from Vietnam.

Interviewer:

Q1. What language communication challenges have you faced while studying and living in Japan?

Interviewee:

The biggest challenge for me is speaking Japanese in professional and service-related situations. Japanese communication requires a high level of politeness and formality, which is difficult to use correctly, especially in real-time conversations.

Interviewer:

Q2. How do language barriers affect your studies in Hotel Management?

Interviewee:

Language barriers affect both my academic learning and practical training. In class, professional terminology is sometimes difficult to understand. During internships or part-time work, using incorrect expressions can lead to misunderstandings with customers or supervisors.

Interviewer:

Q3. What specific difficulties do you face when communicating with Japanese customers or colleagues?

Interviewee:

I find it challenging to use honorific language (keigo) correctly. Japanese customers expect polite and indirect communication, so even small language mistakes can affect service quality and professional image.

Interviewer:

Q4. Do you think cultural differences make language communication more difficult? Why?

Interviewee:

Yes, cultural differences play a major role. Japanese communication often avoids direct expressions, while Vietnamese students may be more straightforward. Understanding implied meanings and non-verbal cues is especially difficult for international students.

Interviewer:

Q5. How have these communication challenges influenced your confidence and adaptation abroad?

Interviewee:

At the beginning, I felt stressed and lacked confidence when speaking Japanese. However, over time, frequent practice and exposure helped me adapt better and become more confident in professional communication.

Interviewer:

Q6. What methods have you used to improve your language communication skills in Japan?

Interviewee:

I practice Japanese daily through part-time work, role-play situations related to hotel services, and communication with native speakers. I also learn common service expressions and cultural norms specific to the hospitality industry.

Interviewer:

Q7. In your opinion, what support should universities or Vietnamese student organizations provide?

Interviewee:

They should offer specialized language training related to students' majors, such as Japanese for hospitality. Cultural training workshops and mentoring programs would also help students communicate more effectively in professional environments.

Interviewee Introduction



The interview participant is Pham Nhu Quynh, a 22-year-old Vietnamese international student who has been living and studying in China for eight years. Having spent most of her teenage years and early adulthood in China, she has extensive experience adapting to the Chinese linguistic and cultural environment. Her insights provide valuable perspectives on the psychological challenges, language-learning strategies, and practical communication skills essential for Vietnamese students studying abroad in China.

Interview Dialogue

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. To begin, could you share your thoughts on the biggest psychological barrier Vietnamese learners face when studying Chinese?

Pham Nhu Quynh: In my opinion, the biggest psychological barrier is the fear of making mistakes. Many Vietnamese learners are scared of saying something wrong and being laughed at. They actually want to speak, but they don't dare to open their mouths because they worry about being judged by others.

Interviewer: I understand. When you first came to China, did language difficulties affect your self-confidence?

Pham Nhu Quynh: Yes, they did. At the beginning, my confidence was heavily affected. I didn't dare to talk to other people because I felt insecure about my

Chinese level. But after spending more time here and gradually adapting to the environment, I became more confident. I realized that making mistakes is completely normal, so day by day, I became braver and more willing to speak.

Interviewer: Based on your experience, what language-learning advice would you give to Vietnamese students who plan to study in China in the future?

Pham Nhu Quynh: I would recommend practicing listening beforehand. Students should listen to real conversations at natural speed, not just slow, artificial textbook recordings. People in real life speak much faster, so being familiar with natural speech can help reduce stress and make communication easier from the start.

Interviewer: That's very helpful. In your opinion, which language skill is the most essential for living comfortably in China?

Pham Nhu Quynh: I believe listening comprehension is the most essential skill. Many people here speak very fast, and sometimes they mix in local dialects. Without strong listening skills, even simple daily conversations can become difficult. So, for me, listening is the key to adapting to life in China.