

Contrastive analysis between Vietnamese half-open rhymes with Lao half-open ones

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Abstract

In the article Contrastive analysis between Vietnamese half-open rhymes with Lao half-open ones, our research results have shown that in addition to the similarities, the Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes also have many differences points that make up the different types of language interferences. Thereby, we have predicted the errors, analyzed the causes of errors in pronouncing Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes through analyzing the types of language interferences to propose solutions. The research not only contributes to clarifying some theoretical issues for Eastern languages but also has practical implications in language education, compilation of bilingual Vietnamese - Lao and Lao - Vietnamese textbooks to help Lao people learn Vietnamese well and vice versa.

Key words: *Contrastive analysis, phonetics, phonemics, half-open rhyme, Vietnamese, Lao language.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Contrastive analysis is a subject of Linguistics. According to the author Le Quang Thiem, the term *contrast, comparison* is often used to refer to the method or sub-sector of research which mainly gets the subjects two or more languages. The purpose of the research is to clarify the similarities and differences or just to clarify the different features [1, p. 37]. The comparison of between the original language and the target language based on the structure characteristics is the first thing to do during a phonetic contrastive analysis.

In the world in recent years, contrastive analysis has been explored, developed, applied in foreign language teaching and learning. There are some typical authors in this field of study such as: The authors Taylor, Harvey M. published a study on *Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis in Current Language Teaching*. In this scientific works, the authors presented the research results of contrastive analysis and divided the error analysis process into 5 steps: Recognition, Understanding, Reconstruction, Classification and Explanation [2, p. 11].

In Vietnam, the contrastive analysis of languages has also met the practical requirements of the study and teaching Vietnamese to foreigners and vice versa. In the work of *Contrastive linguistics and contrast of Southeast Asian languages* [3], the author Nguyen Van Chien presented General issues of Contrastive Linguistics (Introduction): Position, task, purpose, method and general principles of the contrastive language. He also presented the test results about Vietnamese personal pronouns in the contrastive analysis with personal pronouns of the difference, near and the same type languages: Contrasting grammatical categories of personal pronouns in two types of languages; Contrasting units, quantity, structure, meanings and performance of the personal pronoun system in Vietnamese with personal pronoun system in Khmer and Lao languages. According to the author, contrastive research can be extended to languages, without any geographical area. Those are all languages of the world [3, p. 118].

With the research work of *Contrastive study of languages* [1], the author Le Quang Thiem has mentioned aspects of contrastive linguistics such as: The process of formation and development; Theoretical premises; Methods of contrasting languages in different aspects: Contrastive study of morpheme; Contrastive study of words and meanings; Methods, tips of contrastive study. Moreover, in this scientific works, the author illustrated his ideas with the sources of Russian, English, Bulgarian, Polish and Vietnamese.

Regarding the contrastive analysis of Vietnamese with the languages of ethnic minorities in Vietnam, the author Nguyen Van Loi paid his attention to studying *The phenomenon of phonetics - phonemics interference in bilingual conditions of Hmong - Vietnamese* [4, p. 123-127] and indicated the four phonetics - phonemics interference patterns (based on U. Weinreich 's distinction) as follows: Phone substitution interference is a common type and Over-differentiation interference, applied to the initial consonant system; Under-differentiation interference mainly occurs with the rhyme and tone system; Re-interpretation of distinctions interference also occurs with the tone systems of these two languages [4, p. 124-126]. The author

also recommended: In the program of teaching Vietnamese phonetics for Hmong people, it should be paid special attention to the Vietnamese rhyme system, where interference often occurs [4, p. 127].

Inheriting and developing this research direction, the author Phung Thi Thanh published the research results of the *Contrastive analysis of the Vietnamese - Mong phonetics - phonemics system to propose solutions to correct Vietnamese pronunciation errors for the Mong ethnic minorities students* [5]. In particular, the author analyzed and contrasted the Vietnamese - Mong phonetics and phonemics system. The author also pointed out that the language interference is the cause of errors; predicted and surveyed the Vietnamese pronunciation errors of the Mong ethnic minorities students; explained the causes of errors by analyzing the Vietnamese - Mong phonetics and phonemics interference patterns; proposed some solutions to correct Vietnamese pronunciation errors for the Mong students. According to the author, this work can be considered as a test step to meet the urgent requirements both the theory and practice research, teaching of Vietnamese language for the Mong people as well as teaching the Mong language for Vietnamese people in Vietnam today [5, p. 39].

Besides, the contrastive analysis between foreign languages and Vietnamese has been attracted by several authors. Specifically, the author Cho Myeong Sook published *Some results from phonetic contrastive between Korean and Vietnamese languages* [6, p. 58-70]. In this research, the author presented the research results: Contrasting each position in the syllable structure, considering the vowel system, initial consonant, final consonants in the Korean and Vietnamese, together with contrasting prevocalic sound, tone [6, p. 69]. A number of new findings in this work can be applied to practice and correct pronunciation errors in bilingual language teaching of Korean - Vietnamese or vice-versa.

Apart from that, the author Pimsen Buarapha successfully defended the doctoral thesis in Literature entitled *Contrastive analysis of Thai and Vietnamese tone system. Error correction application for Thai people learning Vietnamese language* [7] at the Institute of Linguistics - Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. The content of this thesis presenting the results of contrastive analysis of Vietnamese and Thai tones, has shown the similarities and differences in phonetics, phonemics between the two that systems. The author also analyzed the error of pronouncing Vietnamese tones due to the interference of Thai students learning Vietnamese to find out the causes and correction [7]. This research result can be applied to practice and correct pronunciation errors in bilingual language teaching of Thai - Vietnamese or vice-versa.

Looking back in the history of research related to this topic, it can be noticed that the contrastive analysis of the phonetics, phonemics characteristics of Vietnamese half-open rhymes with Lao half-open ones has not been paid much attention and widely published. Therefore, the scientific research results presented in this paper can be considered as a test to contribute to improving the quality of bilingual language teaching of Vietnamese - Lao and vice-versa at present.

II. CONTENTS

2.1. Phonetics, phonemics structure and characteristics of Vietnamese half-open rhymes

According to Vietnamese linguistics researchers, Vietnamese is one of the languages belonging to the South Asian Linguistics [8, p. 91], a type of isolating, syllabic and there is tone language. Based on the characteristics of the monolingual, syllabized and rhythmic language of Vietnamese, we choose the following presentation: Record these Vietnamese transcription characters using the characters of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). In this study, we temporarily stipulate of the notation of Vietnamese tones as follows: *without mark* tone in Vietnamese is signed as 1; *huyen* tone (˘) in Vietnamese is signed as 2; *hoi* tone (ˆ) in Vietnamese is signed as 3; *nga* tone (ˊ) in Vietnamese is signed as 4; *sac* tone (ˋ) in Vietnamese is signed as 5; *nang* tone (ˌ) in Vietnamese is signed as 6.

Regarding Vietnamese rhyme, in the *Dictionary of common Vietnamese*, the authors present the definition of rhyme as follows: Rhyme is the main part of syllable, except for the tone and initial consonants [9, p. 868].

Similarly, the author Doan Thien Thuat also raised the view on Vietnamese rhyme as follows: Vietnamese syllables consist of 3 independent parts - tone, initial sound and the rest. The third part contains the nuclear sounds of syllables. It is the only part combined with the tone that creates the rhyme in poetry so it is temporarily called the rhyme [10, p. 75].

Based on the way rhyme ends, there are four types of Vietnamese rhymes: Open rhyme (single rhyme), half-open complex rhyme, half-closed complex rhyme, closed complex rhyme. Half-open complex rhyme refers to the semi-vowel ending rhyme [11, p. 39].

In this study, we inherit the following Vietnamese rhyme descriptions: From the beginning of the rhyme (including the prevocalic sound), the Vietnamese rhymes have the same type of distinguished according to the original characteristics of vowel sounds: Tongue positions (high/medium/low) and pure/are changed; tongue line (front/ middle/ back) and shape of the lips - (unrounded lips/rounded lips) [11, p. 39]. From the end of the rhyme, Vietnamese complex rhymes have same type of segregation according to the characteristics of semi-vowel or characteristics of consonant at the end of the rhyme. For example: Half-open rhymes are distinguished according to two characteristic groups (characteristics of semi-vowel, high, first line) unrounded lips /-i/, (characteristics of semi-vowel, high, back lines) rounded lips /-u/ [11, p. 40]. In this study, we choose and inherit the way to handle the problem as follows:

The structure of Vietnamese rhyme includes: prevocalic sound /-u-/, nuclear sound and final sound. Based on this perspective, we have listed the half-open rhymes in syllable structure to create the meaningful words in modern Vietnamese as follow: [i_u, i_{eu}, e_u, e_u, u_u, u_{yu}, ɤ_u, ə_u, a_u, u_ɤ, u_ɤ, ɤ_ɤ, ɤ_ɤ, ə_ɤ, a_ɤ, u_ɤ, u_{oɤ}, o_ɤ, o_ɤ, u_{ai}, u_{ai}, u_ɤ, u_{ay}, u_ɤ, u_ɤ].

Summary of half-open rhymes included in syllable structure to create meaningful words in Vietnamese and the representation on the written symbols are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary table of Vietnamese half- open rhymes and written symbols

Number ordinary (No.)	Vietnamese half-open rhymes (Sign Vietnamese writing)	Transcription by International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)	Vietnamese half- open syllables (Sign Vietnamese writing)	Transcription by International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
1	iu	[i _u]	riu	[ʒi _u ²]
2	iêu	[i _{eu}]	biêu	[bie _u ⁵]
3	êu	[e _u]	kêu	[ke _u ¹]
4	eo	[e _u]	kẹo	[ke _u ⁶]
5	uu	[u _u]	hư	[h _u u _u ¹]
6	ươu	[u _{yu}]	rươu	[ʒu _{yu} ⁶]
7	âu	[ɤ _u]	gấu	[ɣɤ _u ⁵]
8	au	[ə _u]	cau	[kə _u ¹]
9	ao	[a _u]	sao	[sə _u ¹]
10	ui	[u _ɤ]	gửi	[ɣu _ɤ ³]
11	ươi	[u _ɤ]	tươi	[tu _ɤ ¹]
12	ây	[ɤ _ɤ]	lây	[lɤ _ɤ ⁴]
13	ơi	[ɤ _ɤ]	sợi	[sɤ _ɤ ⁶]
14	ay	[ə _ɤ]	hay	[hə _ɤ ¹]
15	ai	[a _ɤ]	vãi	[və _ɤ ⁴]
16	ui	[u _ɤ]	túi	[tu _ɤ ³]
17	uôi	[u _{oɤ}]	đuôi	[du _{oɤ} ¹]
18	ôi	[o _ɤ]	xôi	[so _ɤ ¹]
19	oi	[o _ɤ]	còi	[ko _ɤ ²]
20	oai/uai	[u _{ai}]	khoai/quai	[χu _{ai} ¹] / [ku _{ai} ¹]
21	oay/uay	[u _{ai}]	xoay/quay	[su _{ai} ¹] / [ku _{ai} ¹]
22	uây	[u _ɤ]	quây	[ku _ɤ ¹]
23	oao/uao	[u _{au}]	ngôáo/quáo	[ŋu _{au} ⁵] / [ku _{au} ²]
24	o eo/ueo	[u _{eu}]	khoeo/queo	[χu _{eu} ¹] / [ku _{eu} ¹]
25	uyu	[u _ɤ]	khuỷu	[χu _ɤ ³]

Studying the phonetics, phonemics structure and characteristics of the Vietnamese half-open rhyme system that is listed in Table 1, we have achieved the following results:

In terms of structure, the Vietnamese half-open rhymes contain elements such as the prevocalic sound /-ɥ-/ , nuclear sound (either monophthong or diphthong) and the final sound (semi-final vowel /-ɥ/ or /-i/). The structural components of Vietnamese half-open rhymes are described in Schema 1.

Schema 1: The structural schema of Vietnamese half-open rhymes

The structural schema of Vietnamese half-open rhymes		
Prevocalic sound (/-ɥ-/)	Nuclear sound (monophthong or diphthong)	Final sound (semi-final vowel /-ɥ/ or /-i/)

From Schema 1, it can be found that the components in the Vietnamese half-open rhymes structure are arranged in a linear order from front to back. Accordingly, the spelling to read Vietnamese syllables is also made in the sequence of their occurrence.

Regarding phonetics and phonemics characteristics, Vietnamese half-open rhymes may or may not include initial rhyme that is the prevocalic sound /-ɥ-/. It brings the characteristics of depressed timbre and rounded lips articulation.

In terms of elevation, after the prevocalic sound /-ɥ-/, the nuclear sound in Vietnamese half-open rhymes includes one of the high vowels /i, u, u/; one of the medium vowels /e, ɤ, ɤ, o/; one of the low vowels /ɛ, ɛ̃, a, ă, ɔ, ɔ̃/; one of the diphthongs are changed from high to medium /ie, uy, uo/.

About the position and shape of the tongue and lips, after the prevocalic sound /-ɥ-/, the nuclear sound in Vietnamese half-open rhymes is one of the monophthongs or diphthongs of front tongue, unrounded lips /i, ie, e, ɛ, ɛ̃/; one of the monophthongs or diphthongs of middle tongue, unrounded lips /u, uy, ɤ, ɤ̃, a, ă/; one of the monophthongs or diphthongs of back tongue, rounded lips /u, uo, o, ɔ/. The nuclear sound of Vietnamese half-open rhymes is followed by one of the semi-final vowels /-ɥ/ or /-i/ to end the Vietnamese half-open rhymes.

2.2. The phonetics, phonemics structure and characteristics of the Lao half-open rhymes

According to Vietnamese linguistic researchers, Lao language is one of the languages belonging to Tai - Ka Dai system [8, p. 96]. Based on the characteristics of the monolingual, syllabized and rhythmic language of Lao, we choose the following presentation: Using Lao characters to record Lao syllables; transcription of Lao syllables according to Vietnamese transcription; record these Vietnamese transcription characters using the characters of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

In this study, we temporarily stipulate of the notation of Lao tones as follows: *without mark* tone in Lao language is signed as 1; *ec* tone (x̣) in Lao language is signed as 2; *chat-ta-va* tone (x̣̄) in Lao language is signed as 3; *thó* tone (x̣̄̄) in Lao language is signed as 4; *tri* tone (x̣̄̄̄) in Lao language is signed as 5.

There are Lao half - open rhymes in the syllable structure to create Lao meaningful words in the *Vietnamese - Lao, Lao - Vietnamese Dictionary* [12] following: “ື່ວ (liu)” [12, p. 2116], “າຮວ (chiêu)” [12, p. 1321], “ເື່ວ (liêu, liêu)” [12, p. 2116], “ເື່ວ (leo)” [12, p. 2116], “ເື່ວ (vau)” [12, p. 2021], “າວ (cào)” [12, p. 1096], “ື່ວ (hiết)” [12, p. 2215], “ເື່ວ (cuoi)” [12, p. 1055], “ເື່ວ (coi)” [12, p. 1054], “າວ (vay)” [12, p. 2119], “າວ (hạt)” [12, p. 2215], “ື່ວ (hùi)” [12, p. 2215], “າວ (cuoi)” [12, p. 1055], “າວ (cói)” [12, p. 1054], “າວ (đóó)” [12, p. 1549], “າວ (chối)” [12, p. 1297], “າວ (hooi)” [12, p. 2215], “າວ (hoài)” [12, p. 2226], “າວ (khoáy)” [12, p. 1129], “າວ (may cóong)” [12, p. 1901], “າວ (may mai)” [12, p. 1902], “າວ (may muôn)” [12, p. 1902].

The structure of Lao syllables consists of three parts: Tone, initial sound and rhyme. Based on the rhyme ending, there are four types of Lao rhymes as follows: Open rhyme, half-open rhyme, half-closed rhyme and closed rhyme. Lao rhyme includes elements: Prevocalic sound, nuclear sound and final sound. Based on this point of view, we have listed the Lao half-open rhymes as follows: [i, ie, e, ɛ, ɛ̃, a, ă, u, uy, ɤ, ɤ̃, a, ă, u, uo, o, ɔ, ɔ̃, ɔ̃̄, ɔ̃̄̄, ɔ̃̄̄̄, uai, uaĩ].

Summary of half-open rhymes included in the syllable structure to create meaningful words in Lao language and the expression in the written symbols are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary table of Lao half-open rhymes and written symbols

Number ordinary (No.)	Lao half-open rhymes (Sign Lao writing)	Lao half-open rhymes (Sign Vietnamese writing)	Transcription by International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)	Lao half-open syllables (Sign Lao writing)	Lao half-open syllables (Sign Vietnamese writing)	Transcription by International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
1	ຮົວ	iu	[iɯ]	ຮົວ	liu	[liɯ ²]
2	ຮຸ້ວ	iêu	[iɛu]	ຮຸ້ວ	chiêu	[ciɛu ¹]
3	ຮຸວ	êu	[ɛu]	ຮຸວ	lêu	[lɛu ²]
4	ແຮວ	eo	[ɛu]	ແຮວ	lèo	[lɛu ⁴]
5	ເຮົາ	au	[äu]	ເຮົາ	vau	[väu ⁴]
6	ກາວ	ao	[au]	ກາວ	cào	[kau ²]
7	ຮີຍ	uri	[uri]	ຮີຍ	hưi	[hưi ²]
8	ເຮືອຍ	uroi	[uroi]	ເຮືອຍ	cuoi	[kuroi ¹]
9	ເຮັຍ	oi	[oi]	ເຮັຍ	coi	[kvi ¹]
10	ໃຍ / ໂຍ	ay	[äi]	ໃຍ / ໂຍ	vay	[vãi ⁴]
11	ກາຍ	ai	[ai]	ກາຍ	hại	[hại ⁴]
12	ກຸຍ	ui	[ui]	ກຸຍ	hùi	[hùi ²]
13	ກຸວຍ	uoi	[uoi]	ກຸວຍ	cuoi	[kuoi ⁴]
14	ໂກຍ	oi	[oi]	ໂກຍ	côi	[koi ⁴]
15	ໂດຍ	ôoi	[o ^o i]	ໂດຍ	đôi	[do ^o i ¹]
16	ກຸຍ	oi	[oi]	ກຸຍ	chôi	[coi ⁴]
17	ກຸຍ	ooi	[o ^o i]	ກຸຍ	hooi	[ho ^o i ¹]
18	ກວາຍ	oai/uai	[uai]	ກວາຍ	hoài	[huai ²]
19	ໂຂວ	oay/uay	[uäi]	ໂຂວ	khoây	[ɣuäi ²]

By studying the phonetics, phonemics structure and characteristics of the Lao half-open rhyme system listed in Table 2, we have achieved the following results:

In term of structure, the Lao half-open rhyme consists of prevocalic sound, nuclear sound and final sound. However, the half-open rhyme structure in the Lao syllable with the order of elements shown in the script shows that the initial sound does not stand at the beginning of the syllable but interferes enter between the structure of the rhyme. The nuclear sound (vowel, sign) in this structure can appear in one of four positions such as before, above, below or after the initial sound and after the prevocalic sound (if any). To facilitate the distinction of nuclear sounds in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation, we temporarily stipulate the following rules:

The *nuclear sound inscribed on the initial sound* is the vowel or the sign is inscribed in the upper position the initial sound in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation.

The *nuclear sound inscribed* equally with the initial sound includes the nuclear sound inscribed before the initial sound, the nuclear sound inscribed after the initial sound and after the prevocalic sound (if any) in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation.

The *nuclear sound or half-open rhyme inscribed before the initial sound* is the vowel or the sign to write half-open rhyme inscribed in the equal position, before the initial sound in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation.

The *nuclear sound inscribed after the initial sound* is the vowel inscribed after the initial sound and after the prevocalic sound (if any) in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation.

The *nuclear sound inscribed below the initial sound* is the vowel inscribed below the initial sound in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation.

With the above designation, the half-open rhymes structure in Lao syllables including the elements shown on writing inscribed Lao syllables notation is modeled in the Schema 2.

Schema 2: The structural schema of Lao half-open rhymes

The structural schema of Lao half-open rhymes				
The element inscribed on the initial sound in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation				
	The nuclear sound inscribed on the initial sound (vowel \bar{x} (i/i/), \bar{x} (u/u/); $\bar{m}\bar{a}\bar{i}$ (<i>may cōng</i> [mäi ⁴] [ko ⁵ ŋ ¹] sign: \bar{x}))			
The elements inscribed in equal position with the initial sound in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation				
The half-open rhyme inscribed before the initial sound ($\bar{m}\bar{a}\bar{i}$ sign (<i>may mai</i> [mäi ⁴][mai ¹]): \bar{x} (<i>ay</i> [äi]); $\bar{m}\bar{u}\bar{o}\bar{n}$ sign (<i>may muon</i> [mäi ⁴] [muon ⁴]): \bar{x} (<i>ay</i> [äi]))	The initial sound (in syllable, not in half-open rhyme)	The prevocalic sound (consonant σ (v/v/))	The nuclear sound inscribed after the initial sound, after the prevocalic sound (if any) (vowel)	The final sound (consonant σ (v/-v/); consonant υ (nh/-p/); vowel η (a/a/ in rhyme $\bar{a}\bar{u}$ (<i>au</i> [äu]))
The elements inscribed in below the initial sound in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation				
	The nuclear sound inscribed below the initial sound (vowel \underline{e} (u/u/))			

Regarding structure, through Schema 2, it can be seen that the structure of the half-open rhyme inscribed in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation includes the following elements:

The nuclear sound element in this structure can be a vowel or sign written at one of the positions before, above, below or after the initial sound and after the prevocalic sound in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation.

Considering the syntagmatic relation, the structure of Lao half-open rhyme is shown writing inscribed Lao syllables notation in the following order: The nuclear sound (The vowel or the sign inscribed before the initial sound) + space - initial sound position (not part of rhyme structure but containing nuclear sound inscribed above or below initial sound) + prevocalic sound + nuclear sound (inscribed after initial sound and prevocalic sound) + final sound.

The nuclear sound inscribed before the initial sound of the Lao half-open rhyme is the vowel or the sign inscribed in the equal position, before the initial sound in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation. For example: The nuclear sound \bar{x} (σ /r/) of the half-open rhyme $\bar{a}\bar{u}$ (σ /r/) has \bar{x} element in the equal position, before the initial sound η (k /k/), enclosed by \bar{x} above the initial sound η (k /k/) in the syllable notation, the Lao word “ $\bar{a}\bar{u}$ (*au*)” [12, p. 1054] - [kräi¹].

In addition, the half-open rhyme inscribed before position the initial sound of the Lao half-open syllable is also inscribed by one of the signs like: $\bar{m}\bar{a}\bar{i}$ ((*May Mai* [mäi⁴] [mai¹]): \bar{x} (*ay* [äi])) or $\bar{m}\bar{u}\bar{o}\bar{n}$ ((*May Muon* [mäi⁴] [muon⁴]): \bar{x} (*ay* [äi])). For example: Half-open rhyme $\bar{a}\bar{u}$ (*ay* [äi]) has sign $\bar{m}\bar{a}\bar{i}$ ((*May Mai* [mäi⁴] [mai¹]): \bar{x} (*ay* [äi])) is the half-open rhyme inscribed before position the initial sound σ (v /v/) in writing inscribed the syllable notation, the Lao word “ $\bar{a}\bar{u}$ (*ay*)” [12, p. 2119] - [väi⁴].

The nuclear sound inscribed on the initial sound of the half-open rhyme is the vowel inscribed above the initial sound element. For example: The nuclear sound \bar{x} (i /i/) in above the initial sound - zero (x) in the rhyme $\bar{x}\bar{o}$ (*iu* [iü]); the nuclear sound \bar{x} (u /u/) in above position the initial sound - zero (x) in the rhyme $\bar{x}\bar{u}$ (*ui* [ui]).

Besides, the nuclear sound inscribed on the initial sound of the Lao half-open rhyme also is the sign $\bar{m}\bar{a}\bar{i}$ ((*May Cōng* - [mäi⁴] [koon¹]): \bar{x}). For example: The rhyme $\bar{a}\bar{u}$ (*au* [äu]) in the syllable, the Lao word “ $\bar{a}\bar{u}$ (*au*)” [12, p. 2021] - [väü⁴] in Lao is spelled as follows: \bar{x} (\bar{e} /e/) + $\bar{m}\bar{a}\bar{i}$ (*cōng* [koon¹]) + η (a /a/) = $\bar{a}\bar{u}$ (*au* [äu]).

The nuclear sound inscribed below the Lao initial sound is the vowel in below position of the initial sound. For example: The vowel ອູ (*u /u/*) is the nuclear sound inscribed in under position the initial sound of the half-open rhyme ຫູຍ (*ui [ui]*) in the syllable, the Lao word “ຮູ້ຍ (*hũt*)” [12, p. 2215] - [huĩ²].

The prevocalic sound of the Lao half-open rhyme is a consonant ອ (*v /v/*). For example: The prevocalic sound ອ (*v /v/*) of the half-open rhyme ຶ໊ອ (*oay/uay [uäi]*) in the syllable, the Lao word “ໂຮ່ອ (*khooay*)” [12, p. 1129] - [χuäi²].

Thus, in the Lao half-open rhyme has the sign ຶ໊ (ay [äi]) or ຶ໊ (ay [äi]) as the nuclear sound inscribed before the initial sound, the prevocalic sound ອ (*v /v/*) stays behind the initial sound and also at the end position of the rhyme and syllable.

The nuclear sound inscribed after the initial sound is the vowel, inscribed stay behind position the initial sound and the prevocalic sound (if any) in Lao syllables. For example: The vowel ອ (*a /a/*) of the half-open rhyme ອາຍ (*oai [uäi]*) in the syllable, the Lao word “ໂຮ່ອຍ (*hoait*)” [12, p. 2226] - [huäi²] inscribed after the initial sound ອ (*h /h/*) and the prevocalic sound ອ (*v /v/*).

However, there are cases where vowels play the role of the nuclear sound inscribed stay behind position the initial sound, but are transcribed in the position of the final sound - ending the Lao half-open rhyme. For example: The vowel ອ (*a /a/*) is the nuclear sound inscribed in behind position the initial sound of the half-open rhyme ອາຍ (*au [äy]*) in the syllable, the Lao word “ໂຮ່ອ (*vau*)” [12, p. 2021] - [väu⁴], but inscribed in position of the final sound - ends this half-open rhyme.

The final sound that ends the Lao half-open rhyme is the consonant ອ (*v /-v/*); consonant ບ (*nh /-p/*). For example: The final sound rhyme is the consonant ອ (*v /-v/*) ends the half-open rhyme ອາຍ (*eo [ey]*) in the syllable, the Lao word “ໂຮ່ອ (*leo*)” [12, p. 2116] - [ley⁴]; the final sound is the consonant ບ (*nh /-p/*) ends the half-open rhyme ຶ໊ອ (*oi [oi]*) in the syllable, the Lao word “ໂຮ່ອຍ (*oioi*)” [12, p. 1054] - [koĩ⁴].

In terms of phonetic and phonemics features, the Lao half-open rhyme has the nuclear sound which is the high vowel /i, u, u/; medium vowel /e, ɤ, o, ø/; low vowel sounds /ε, a, ä, o, ø/; diphthongs are changed from high to medium /ie, uy, uo/.

Regarding the position of the tongue and the shape of lips, behind the prevocalic sound, the Lao half-open rhyme has nuclear sound which is a monophthong or diphthong, front tongue, unrounded lips /i, ie, e, ε/; monophthong or diphthong, middle tongue, unrounded lips /u, uy, ɤ, a, ä/; monophthong or diphthong, back tongue, rounded lips /u, uo, o, ø, o, ø/.

After the nuclear sound is the element ending the rhyme - consonant ອ (*v /-v/*); consonant ບ (*nh /-p/*); vowel ອ (*a /a/*) in the rhyme ອາຍ (*au [äy]*). Particularly in the structure of the Lao half-open rhyme [oäi] (equivalent to *au [äy]* in Vietnamese), having the final sound in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation is the nuclear sound ອ (equivalent to the vowel *a /a/* in Vietnamese).

2.3. Similarities and differences in the phonetics, phonemics structure and characteristics between Vietnamese half-open rhymes with Lao half-open ones

2.3.1. Similarities in the phonetics, phonemics structure and characteristics between Vietnamese half-open rhymes with Lao half-open ones

In terms of structure, the similarity between Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes is that they have the same structure including elements such as prevocalic sound, nuclear sound and final sound.

In terms of phonetics, phonemics features, the similarity between Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes is that they have the nuclear sound formed by monophthongs or diphthongs distinguished by the criteria of elevation, position and shape of tongue and lips as follows:

In terms of elevation, the nuclear sound in the Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes is a monophthong distinguished according to the elevation at three levels: high /i, u, u/; transition is changed from high to medium /ie, uy, uo/; medium /e, ɤ, o/; low /ε, a, ä, o/.

Regarding the tongue position, after the prevocalic sound /-y-/ , the Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes have the same the nuclear sounds distinguished by the tongue at 3 positions: Front, middle, back.

Regarding lip shape, criteria of rounded lips and unrounded lips join to distinguish nuclear sounds in the Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes, as follows:

The nuclear sound elements in both Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes are monophthongs or diphthongs which are front tongue, unrounded lips /i, ie, e, e/; monophthongs or diphthongs which are middle tongue, unrounded lips /u, uy, y, a, a/; monophthongs or diphthongs which are back tongue, rounded lips /u, uo, o, o/.

After the nuclear sounds, the half-open rhymes of both languages are the same the final sounds - the rhymes ending elements.

2.3.2. Differences in the phonetics, phonemics structure and characteristics between Vietnamese half-open rhymes with Lao half-open ones

In terms of structure, the difference between Vietnamese half-open rhymes with Lao half-open ones is as follows:

In Vietnamese half-open rhyme structure, the prevocalic sound, nuclear sound and final sound are arranged in a linear order from front to back: Prevocalic sound + nuclear sound + final sound. Therefore, the Vietnamese spelling also follows the sequence of the occurrence of these elements in writing inscribed Vietnamese syllables notation.

However, the components in the Lao half-open rhyme structure in writing inscribed Vietnamese syllables notation do not follow the linear order from front to back: The initial sound does not stand at the beginning of Lao syllable but it is inscribed middle of the rhyme structure. Therefore, the difference in the structure of the Lao half-open rhyme is that it also contains the location of the initial sound that is part of the Lao syllable structure. The nuclear sound element (vowel, sign) in this structure can be written in one of four positions such as: Before, above, below or after the initial sound element and after the prevocalic sound (if any) in writing inscribed Lao syllables notation.

Unlike the Vietnamese half-open rhyme structure in which the prevocalic sound is inscribed by /-y-/ , the prevocalic sound in the Lao half-open rhyme is written with the consonant \varnothing (equivalent to the consonant /v/ in Vietnamese). Another difference is that if the final sound in Vietnamese half-open rhyme is inscribed with one of the final semi-vowels /-y/ or /-i/, the final sound in Lao half-open rhyme is inscribed with consonant \varnothing , (equivalent to the consonant /v/ in Vietnamese) or consonant \varnothing (equivalent to the consonant /-p/ in Vietnamese). Particularly in the structure of Lao half-open rhyme [$\epsilon\varnothing\epsilon$] (equivalent to the rhyme *au* [ãu] in Vietnamese) there is a final sound - the rhyme shown in the script is the nuclear sound ϵ (similar to the vowel *a* /a/ in Vietnamese).

Because script is a conventional sound-recording line for each set of letters, there are differences in the way the elements are located in the structure of Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes. Therefore, the spelling of Lao language is also not performed in the order of the appearance of phonetic components like Vietnamese spelling.

In terms of phonetic and phonemics characteristics, the similarity of Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes is that they all have the nuclear sound, which is made up of monophthongs or diphthongs distinguished by the criteria of elevation, tongue position and lip shape, as follows:

In terms of elevation, the Vietnamese half-open rhyme ends with semi-final vowel /-y/ in which the nuclear sound is distinguished according to the elevation criterion: high /i, u/; transition is changed from high to medium /uy/; medium /y/, low /e, a/ such as rhymes: *uu* [uɯ], *uu* [uɯ], *au* [ãu], *oao* [uau], *oao* [ueu], *uyu* [uiɯ]. However, the Lao language does not have half-open rhymes with the nuclear sound as monophthongs distinguished by such elevation criteria. There is also no half-open rhymes in Lao language ending with semi-final vowels /-i/ in which the nuclear sound is distinguished by the elevation criterion of medium /y/ like rhymes *ây* [ãi], *uây* [uãi] in Vietnamese. In contrast, Vietnamese language does not have half-open rhymes ending with semi-final vowel /-i/ in which the long length nuclear sound is distinguished by medium /o^o/ and low /o^o/ like rhymes *ôi* [oi], *oôi* [oi] in Lao language.

Regarding the tongue position, the Lao language does not have half-open rhymes ending with one of the semi-final vowels /-y/ or /-i/ in which the nuclear sound is distinguished according to tongue position: Front /i, e/, middle /u, uy, y, a/ like Vietnamese rhymes: *uu* [uɯ], *uu* [uɯ], *au* [ãu], *ây* [ãi], *uây* [uãi], *uyu* [uiɯ]. In contrast, Vietnamese language does not have half-open rhymes ending with semi-final vowel /-i/ in which the long length nuclear sound is distinguished by the tongue position back /o^o, o^o/ like rhymes *ôi* [oi], rhymes *oôi* [oi] in Lao language.

Regarding the lip shape, Lao language does not have half-open rhymes with one of the nuclear sounds distinguished by the criterion unrounded lips /i, e, u, uy, y, a/ like Vietnamese rhymes: *uu* [uɯ], *uu* [uɯ], *au* [ãu], *ây* [ãi], *uây* [uãi], *uyu* [uiɯ]. In contrast, Vietnamese does not have half-open rhymes ending with semi-final vowel /-i/ which has one of the long length nuclear sounds, rounded lips /o^o, o^o/ like rhymes: *ôi* [oi], *oôi* [oi] in Lao language.

2.4. The types of interference that lead to errors in Vietnamese half-open rhyme pronunciation for Lao people learning Vietnamese

From the results of the contrastive analysis of the phonetics, phonemics structure and characteristics of Vietnamese and Lao half-open rhymes, we had predicted the interference cases that lead to errors in Vietnamese half-open rhymes pronunciation for Lao people learning Vietnamese as follows:

Because the Lao half-open rhymes have long length nuclear sounds, should Lao people learning Vietnamese can put this way of pronunciation in their mother tongue into short length nuclear sounds of the Vietnamese half-open rhymes. For example: The Lao people may make a mistake when pronouncing the long length nuclear sound of the half-open rhyme *xəu* (*ooi* [o^oi]) in Lao language to represent the short length nuclear sound of the half-open rhyme *oi* [oi] in Vietnamese; introducing the long length nuclear sound of the half-open rhyme *ḡxəu* (*óoi* [o^oi]) in Lao language to represent the short length nuclear sound of the half-open rhyme *ói* [oi] in Vietnamese. These pronunciation errors are caused by the effects of the Under differentiation interference.

When pronouncing vowels as the nuclear sounds of Vietnamese half-open rhymes with the semi-final vowel /-u/, Lao people may pronounce the vowels /u, ury/ of the Vietnamese half-open rhymes mixed with characteristics of the monophthong /a/. For example: Lao people may make mistakes in pronouncing rhymes *ıu* [ıu], *ıou* [ıy] which are not included in their mother tongue into rhyme *au* [ãu] available in both Lao and Vietnamese languages. Lao people also maybe pronounce the vowel *á* /ɤ/ of the Vietnamese half-open rhymes mixed with characteristics of the monophthong *o* /ɤ/. For example: Lao people also maybe make mistake in pronouncing rhyme *áıu* [ɤı] not included in their mother tongue into rhyme *oi* [vi] in Vietnamese. These pronunciation errors are caused by the effects of the Over differentiation interference.

In addition, Lao people may make mistake in pronouncing vowels /i, e, ɤ, a/ which are the nuclear sounds after prevocalic sound /-u-/ and before one of the semi-final vowels /-u/ or /-i/ of Vietnamese half-open rhymes into one of the vowels /ɤ, e, ɤ, a/ characterizing the Lao half-open rhyme. For example: Lao people may make mistake in pronouncing the rhyme *uáy* [uɤi] in Vietnamese into rhyme *oi* [vi]; make mistake when pronouncing rhyme *ıııu* [ıııu] in Vietnamese into rhyme *ıı* [ıı]; pronouncing rhyme *oao/ıao* [ııı] in Vietnamese into rhyme *au* [ãu]; pronouncing rhyme *oao/ıeo* [ııı] in Vietnamese into rhyme *eo* [ıı]. These pronunciation errors are caused by the influence of the Re interpretation of distinctions interference.

In both Lao and Vietnamese languages together there are half-open rhymes such as rhyme *oi* [vi] in Vietnamese and rhyme *oıı* (*oi* [vi]) in Lao language; rhyme *oai* [ııı] in Vietnamese and rhyme *xoıı* (*oai* [ııı]) in Lao language; rhyme *ıoi* [ııı] in Vietnamese and rhyme *xoıı* (*ıoi* [ııı]) in Lao language. However, due to pronunciation standards of those rhymes in these two languages has not the same exactly, so Lao people may still make mistakes when pronouncing the above mentioned rhymes. For example: Lao people may still make the mistake in pronouncing the rhyme *oi* [vi] into rhyme *ıoi* [ııı] in Vietnamese; Lao people may still make the mistake in pronouncing the rhyme *ıoi* [ııı] into rhyme *oai* [ııı] in Vietnamese. These pronunciation errors are caused by the Phone substitution interference.

III. CONCLUSION

In terms of genre, Lao language and Vietnamese all belong isolating syllabic and there are tone languages. The syllable structure in both languages the same includes of three independent parts: Tone, initial sound and rhyme (open rhyme, half-open rhyme, half-closed rhyme, closed rhyme). The half-open rhyme in Vietnamese and Lao syllable structure has similarities and differences in terms of phonetics, phonemics structure and characteristics. The results of our contrastive analysis presented in this article have helped to point out the similarities and differences in term of phonetic, phonemics structure and characteristics between Vietnamese half-open rhymes with Lao half- open ones. This is the scientific basis to help us predict the types of interference that are the causes of errors in pronouncing Vietnamese half-open rhymes for the Lao people such as: Under differentiation interference, Over differentiation interference, Re interpretation of distinctions interference, Phone substitution interference. Predicting, analyzing errors and the causes of pronunciation errors due to these types of interference will help us continue researching and proposing solutions to correct the pronunciation errors of Vietnamese half-open rhyme for Lao people. Thereby, contributing to improving the quality of teaching Vietnamese to Lao people as well as teaching Lao to Vietnamese people in the current period. This research not only contributes to clarifying some theoretical issues with Eastern languages but also has practical implications in language education, compilation of bilingual Vietnamese - Lao or Lao - Vietnamese textbooks to help Lao people learn Vietnamese well and vice versa.

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