

Vietnamese

Tiếng Việt

Spoken in: Vietnam, USA, Cambodia, France, and various others

Region: Southeast Asia

Total speakers: 67 to 73 million native 80 million total

Genetic Classification: Austroasiatic Mon-Khmer Viet-Muong Vietnamese

Official language of: Vietnam

Vietnamese is a tonal language. Although it contains many vocabulary borrowings from Chinese and was originally written using Chinese characters, it is considered by linguists to be an Austroasiatic language.

Vietnamese is spoken by about 68 million people in Vietnam. It is also spoken in Australia, Cambodia, Canada, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Finland, France, Germany, Laos, Martinique, Netherlands, New Caledonia, Norway, Philippines, Senegal, Thailand, the UK, USA and Vanuatu.

Vietnamese was originally written with a Siniform (Chinese-like) script known as *Nôm*. At first most Vietnamese literature was essentially Chinese in structure and vocabulary. Later literature developed a more Vietnamese style, but was still full of Chinese loan words. The greatest literary work in Vietnamese is *Kim Van Kieu*, the 'Tale of Kieu', a romance written by Nguyen-Du (1765-1820).

During the 17th century, Roman Catholic missionaries introduced a Latin-based orthography for Vietnamese, *Quốc Ngữ* (national language), which has been used ever since. Until the early 20th century, *Quốc Ngữ* was used in parallel with *Chữ-nôm*. Today only *Quốc Ngữ* is used.

Vietnamese alphabet

A a Ă ă Â â B b C c D d Đ đ E e Ê ê G g H h I i K k L l M m
[ɑ] [a] [ə] [b] [k] [z] [d] [ɛ] [e] [ɣ] [h] [i] [k] [l] [m]
N n O o Ô ô Ơ ơ P p Q q R r S s T t U u Ư ư V v X x Y y
[n] [ɔ] [o] [ɣ] [p] [k] [r] [ʃ] [t] [u] [w] [v] [s] [j]

Currently SSWAHS employs 12.5 FTE Vietnamese interpreters and 14 sessional Vietnamese interpreters.