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Literature Textbook for 6th Graders in Relation to Developing Language Skills for Vietnamese Students

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Abstract: Developing language skills, especially for 6th graders, is becoming a matter of great concern. Developing such skills means equipping students with the most effective method to improve their logical thinking skills. This article examines the period of language development for students in their first secondary school year and provides background information for critically analyzing the "Literature Textbook for 6th Graders" composed for the new general education programme in 2018 and put into practical use recently.

Keywords: Language Skills, Logical Thinking Skills, Literature Textbook, 6th Graders, Vietnamese.

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INTRODUCTION

In the context that Vietnam is on the way of deep and comprehensive integration with the global economy, the renovation of educational policies and programs has become an urgent need. Especially when Vietnam's general education program has been completed and is in the process of developing textbooks, it is meaningful to learn and research about textbooks in schools theoretically and practically.

Lower secondary education is an important level in the national education system. The middle school program has many subjects, in which Literature plays an important role in the formation and development of general capacity as well as language ability and literary competence for students. Developing these capacities is to provide the most effective means of perfecting the powers of thought.

Textbooks in general, textbooks of Grade 6 Literature in particular are compiled according to the New General Education Program, absorbing the results of compiling mother tongue teaching textbooks from many advanced countries, inheriting experience compiled Literature textbooks in Vietnam through many stages with the desire to meet the requirements of innovation, improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching Literature in the current period and in the future.

The article initially summarizes the general picture of a language development stage for students at the beginning of junior high school, specifically mentioning the requirements for language competence of 6th grade students. At the same time, this will also be an information channel for the completion and criticism of Grade 6 Literature textbooks compiled under the New General Education Program (2018) in Vietnam, which are in the early stages of being put into use.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The concept of "language competence" can be understood as the ability to use a certain language well and effectively. In the world, studies on language competence have been mentioned since the middle of the nineteenth century. The first author to bring attention to the structural model of language competence was Noam Chomsky with the publication of two books "Syntactic Structure" (1957) and "Aspects of Syntax Theory" (1965). However, because it is too concerned with abstract syntax and sees language from the perspective of a cognitive-psychological mechanism, Chomsky's theory almost ignores the aspect of language as a communication tool of social interactions.

The views of Chomsky, N. about the creativity, the uniqueness of individual sentences, also thanks to the separation of semantics from poetic are the premise to initiate the interest of applied linguists to this aspect. functional and communicative aspects when

realizing that language competence is not only a mastery of grammatical structures but also proficiency in communication.

Halliday, M.A.K. found that the development of language competence is the ability to master three basic language functions, which he called "metafunctions", in which, "ideal functions" express content, helping to determine the speaker's way of seeing things; "interpersonal function" of establishing and maintaining relationships, demarcating social groups, and identifying and reinforcing individual characteristics; and the "textual function" that helps to create a link between the language itself and the features of the situation in which it is used, helping speakers (or writers) construct paragraphs of discourse suitable for the situation and at the same time assume that any language unit is the realization of the above three functions.

Research in the field of language proficiency testing and assessment, with the aim of providing a directional foundation for the development and use of language proficiency tests, Bachman(1990) in "Fundamental consideration in language testing", introduced a Communicative language ability model that he argued extended earlier models because it "described the processes by which components interact with each other and with the context of language use". The Model of Communicative Linguistic Ability introduced by Bachman includes three major components: linguistic competence, strategic competence, and psychophysiological mechanisms. According to him, linguistic competence includes a specific set of knowledge units used in communication through language. According to Bachman, L.F., earlier models of language competence have distinguished skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) from parts of knowledge (grammar, vocabulary, phonetics/spelling) but not show how these skills and parts of knowledge are related.

Also over time, with different times, with different approaches, researchers have understood, divided and named language competence in different ways. However, despite the changes in names or division of components, language competence is still agreed by most researchers that it includes both knowledge of language and the ability to use language skills. that knowledge in a communication event. It is quite easy to define, define and describe knowledge, but to describe and evaluate usability is very difficult because language ability is also related to the application of cognitive processes. Different and emotional factors.

In general, the studies we just mentioned above have mostly gone into aspects of language competence. However, most of the research comes from the perspective of dharma teachings.

Research on the development of language competence from the aspect of teaching and learning in schools has always received the attention of countries around the world, especially those with advanced and developed education. This is shown quite clearly through the framework program, from which it is applied to the compilation of textbooks, especially mother tongue teaching textbooks.

To meet the target of developing language competence, in the US, for Language subjects, textbooks focus on developing language skills, forming the ability to use language independently and confidently. Textbook content includes both informational text and literary text, helping students to have comprehensive knowledge, convenient for reading any text in life. Textbooks also support teachers and students about the level of knowledge and skills to be achieved in each Unit through the self-check at the beginning of each Unit and at the end of each Lesson (writing, speaking, listening, and presentation).

In France, with the view that the program is aimed at developing language competence, French textbooks have also clearly demonstrated that spirit. In addition to aiming at developing common competencies (self-reliance and creativity, acquiring social and civic competencies, mastering common techniques of information and communication technology...), subject French also focuses on developing the specialized competencies of the subject, which is mastering the "mother tongue", developing language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Textbooks not only focus on content, but also guide methods and ways to help students learn on their own.

In Russia, like other core subjects, Russian language textbooks aim to develop general and linguistic competencies, including four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition, Russian language textbooks also pay attention to the development of students' cognitive abilities (memory, attention, thinking...).

In Vietnam, language competence is one of the two specific competencies of the subject of Literature. Simply put, linguistic competence is the ability to clearly and coherently express one's thoughts and feelings in words, as well as facial expressions, gestures, and gestures. Persons with language ability are those who are good at their mother tongue (Vietnamese) and fluent in foreign languages. Here, we only discuss the Vietnamese language ability of students through studying Literature. Following Vietnamese at the primary level, Literature in middle school is considered a core subject that can help students develop language ability. Students' language ability includes the following three competencies:

- The ability to master the Vietnamese language requires students to have a certain vocabulary,

understand and feel the beauty of the Vietnamese language, grasp the rules of words, grammar, and spelling;

- The ability to use Vietnamese to communicate requires students to know how to use Vietnamese fluently in many different situations, different environments and different audiences;
- The ability to use language to create texts is a very important ability for students in high schools.

Literature subject in high school is built on the principle of integration from three basic knowledge parts: Vietnamese; Reading - understanding text and Writing. In addition to forming the competencies in the general competency group, the subject of Literature also forms in students the specialized competence of the subject. To meet that goal, the program must have a Vietnamese knowledge system; variety of text genres. Thus, besides the artistic knowledge, there is also the scientific knowledge. These blocks of knowledge have a completely different way of forming new perceptions, new values, and new emotions. However, as a tool subject, Literature subject has a special advantage in organizing experiential activities to develop general competencies as well as language competence for 6th graders.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article uses interdisciplinary research methods between Linguistics and Education.

- Descriptive method: Describing the characteristics of the Junior High School Literature Program, the sixth grade Literature textbook is compiled according to the New General Education Program (2018),...
- Analytical method: Analyze the relationship between the psycho-physiological characteristics of sixth graders and the language competencies that need to be formed for students in this period.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

From the school year 2021-2022, new programs and textbooks will be implemented for students in grades 2 and 6. In the first school year of implementing the new educational program, Literature 6 has 3 sets of books: *Canh Kite* of Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Publishing House, *Creative Horizons* and *Connecting Knowledge to Life* by Education Publishing House. Three sets of design books have different points, either by theme (*Creative Horizons*), or by genre and text style (*Kite*), or a combination of both, both by topic and text style (*Connecting knowledge with life*) but are divided into 10 lessons, 2 volumes (5 lessons each), in addition, there are "introduction lessons" and "review" section at the end of each volume. The basic similarity of the three sets of books is that they are all compiled for the

purpose of developing learners' personal abilities, including self-study.

Unlike all previous Literature, Literature and Literature textbooks over the period, the Literature 6 textbook is used from this school year, before presenting each specific lesson, there is an "introduction lesson". In this article, the compilation groups introduce the textbook's content, structure, and instructions on how to study Literature, especially the *Creative Horizons* book series, which also provides specific instructions on how to make a Literature Handbook; how to form groups/clubs to exchange; how to collect documents, pictures, video clips, how to make information cards... These contents have never been included in textbooks before, it can only be done by some teachers, but probably not many, because schools and professional groups do not require it. In each specific lesson, the textbook clearly states the requirements to achieve in terms of knowledge and skills. Therefore, it can be said that the new Literature 6 textbook has shown everything, learners can fully grasp the content of knowledge and basic skills from reading and self-studying from books.

Specific Competencies are Formed and Developed for Students' Self-Study

First of all, reading comprehension ability: In the "reading comprehension" section, all three sets of books are presented/designed in 3 steps (the names are different but the process and content are the same): 1. Before read/Prepare/; 2. Reading comprehension/Experience with the text; 3. After reading/Answering questions at the end/Reflecting and giving feedback. In the preparation step, the textbook instructs students what to do before reading the text; in which prompting questions are asked to guide learners during and after reading, as well as a way for students to learn the text. In step 2, the textbook not only presents the text, but intersperses it with small, recognizable questions. These questions either require students to pay attention, observe, or discover, predict, or imagine, or comment, reflect, or evaluate details, images, personalities, qualities, or qualities. character quality... For average and good students, they can answer 70-80% of the questions by themselves. Such a design helps students brainstorm, limiting reading that slips away, reading without thinking, not understanding. After reading the text, students will continue to answer the question at a more difficult level. Thus, students' self-reading ability will gradually be improved. The set of *Creative Horizons*, at the end of volume 1, has a "reading guide" that lists nearly 10 types of reading, which is an essential supplement for the development of students' self-reading ability.

The second is writing ability: Compared with the old textbook, Literature 6 of the new program, the writing part is also prepared in the spirit to develop higher self-study capacity, reduce theory, increase

practice. The content of the Writing section is designed to include: 1. Orientation; 2. Practice; includes steps a). Prepare; b). Find ideas and make an outline; c) Write, d). Check and edit.

The third is speaking and listening ability: This is the most recent content of the textbook of Literature 6 according to the 2018 Education Program compared to the old textbook. In the old textbooks, there were only 2 speaking lessons for each type of writing exercise, and never for listening practice. In the new Literature textbook, each lesson has a speaking and listening part. This section is also designed very specifically, in detail including: 1. Orientation; 2. Practice, including steps: a). Prepare; b). Find ideas and make an outline; c). Speak and listen; d). Check and edit: speaker and listener. The textbook has very specific instructions, for example, the instruction for speaking and listening (the kite set):

- **The speaker:**
 - Tell about the experience according to the outline.
 - Use words that show the chronological order or development of events; suitable words to describe details about things, actions, etc.
 - Speak clearly, at an appropriate volume, combine words and gestures, eye contact, gestures, images (if used). Ensure allotted time.
 - Answer questions from listeners (if any).
- **Listener:**
 - Listen attentively to understand the information being shared.
 - Use gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact to encourage the speaker.
 - Ask questions to get the speaker to share more about the experience (if you have the desire). (Example: Why do you think this is a memorable experience?).

This is a skill that previous general education programs (including university) have paid little attention to, leading to limited students' speaking and oral presentation skills. With the new curriculum and textbooks, it is hoped that students' speaking and listening skills will improve during their studies, especially after graduating from high school, students can confidently speak in front of a crowd about a specific content some content.

Fourth is self-assessment ability: This is also a very new capacity that the new Literature 6 textbook aims to form and foster for students. In the old curriculum and teaching methods, only teachers assessed students. It is essential to include "Self-Assessment" (Kite Set) as a part of the end of each lesson and the end of the semester. By answering how many questions, students can self-assess their knowledge. Along with the teacher's assessment, the learner's own self-assessment is a necessary channel to avoid misunderstandings, illusions, or confusion.

Above are the competencies that students will be formed and developed through 4 specific skills: reading-writing-speaking-listening that the textbook presents. Through these four skills, the program and textbooks aim at a larger goal, which is to form and develop language competence and the ability to appreciate and appreciate literature in accordance with the function of Literature (including language and literature), combined with other subjects to contribute to the formation and fostering of students' qualities and abilities.

Student Duties and Teacher Roles

Student's Duties:

Textbooks are prepared according to the New Program 2018 with the goal of developing students' abilities, providing them with enough materials and methods to acquire knowledge and form skills. Each lesson has specified specific tasks/tasks students have to do for each activity: reading-writing-speaking-listening.

Before each lesson, students must spend time preparing. For decades, teachers still require students to prepare lessons, prepare lessons, but in reality, students have not taken it seriously, many children do it through tangerines and cope, it is not uncommon to open books to copy. This is because textbooks and teachers do not guide students to prepare. The new Literature 6 textbook has overcome this, in each lesson, there are specific requirements and instructions on what students need to prepare in each skill. During class time, under the guidance of teachers, students actively participate in activities of reading, asking and answering questions, listening and speaking, discussing, doing exercises, practicing writing and participating other activities such as painting, writing poetry, telling stories, acting out scenes, etc.

After school, students do exercises, learn, and look up more documents, read books connected by topic or genre, or text style, take notes in "literary notebooks", group activities, and club, extracurricular...

New textbooks force children to do more things, participate in more activities, their "me" has the opportunity to be more clearly revealed, all four skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening are focused and balanced, harmony.

Teacher's Role

In order to help students really become the subject, the center of teaching activities, the role of the teacher is not blurred or weakened as some people understand. The role of the teacher is even more important, but in a different way. From being a knowledge transmitter, teachers now mainly guide students to follow set goals, organize classroom management, and comprehensively assess students' knowledge and skills. Helping students develop self-

study and self-control is not an easy job, requiring a lot of teachers' ability, bravery and time.

The first is that teachers master the educational goals in the Project on Fundamental and Comprehensive Educational Renovation that the Politburo has approved, so that they can change their views. For older teachers, the traditional way of teaching is already flesh and blood, the transition can be more difficult, requiring a longer time, but when all the steps and activities of the teaching process change. Changes, especially textbooks and testing and assessment activities change, teachers will change accordingly.

Second, teachers must prepare lessons more elaborately than before. Since 2000, the lesson plan has changed but not significantly, from this school year, the lesson preparation needs to be changed and supplemented in many steps and stages (but there is a part that is slightly reduced, that is: quizzes in the reading comprehension section of the existing textbook). Teachers prepare lessons with the spirit of being an organizer, guide, and manager of students to form and develop students' abilities and qualities, not as a transmitter or distributor of knowledge. Therefore, teachers, while preparing lesson plans, have to develop specific steps, how to prepare lessons for students, how to assign tasks, how to organize groups/groups, and imagine situations like these. how... to prepare in advance.

Third, the teacher should divide the class into groups and groups. In rural areas, children from close to each other can be arranged in the same group/group to easily meet face-to-face when needed. However, it is important to ensure uniformity between groups/groups with students of different levels. The division of groups/groups is not rigid and can be changed, as well as the leader/deputy leader/group should rotate so that all students can experience and challenge the leadership role.

Fourth, teachers organizing and managing classrooms will be more difficult than traditional teaching methods. The class will depend on each activity, sometimes it will be quiet, but sometimes it will be noisy and exciting. If the class size is large, over 40 students, it will be very difficult for teachers and the capacity development for students will be many obstacles.

Fifth, student assessment needs to be flexible and multimodal. This is an important issue. This has been directed by the Ministry of Education and Training. In short, teachers who teach according to new curricula and textbooks need to be proactive, creative and brave.

Discussion

The new Literature 6 textbook not only provides linguistic and literary knowledge appropriate to the level, with age-appropriate psychophysiology, is a tool for teachers to teach, but the most prominent feature is the material it provides. guide students how to learn. They can learn by themselves, know how to acquire knowledge and practice skills. Students no longer have to be passive. Students in any condition, remote or remote area, if they strictly follow the requirements and instructions of the textbook, they will gain basic knowledge and skills. In the still complicated situation of the Covid-19 epidemic, the textbook of Literature 6 is designed as a document and tool for self-study to be in the right direction and right target. Hopefully, with the change of curricula and textbooks, and the way of teaching and learning changes in a positive and progressive direction, Vietnamese education will train a new generation with the qualities and capabilities to meet the needs of the future. requirements of the times. Students will be autonomous, confident, creative in seeking and acquiring knowledge not only within textbooks but also in real life.

CONCLUSION

Developing students' language ability is currently receiving special attention in education in the world in general and in Vietnam in particular. That is clearly shown through the educational programs, contents and methods of many countries around the world, including Vietnam. Theoretical issues such as the theory of language ability are the guideline to help us deeply study the language ability of 6th grade students in general through studying the 6th grade Vietnamese textbooks. prepared according to the General General Education Program announced by the Ministry of Education and Training in 2018.

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