MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
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TEACHING INFORMATIONAL TEXT READING COMPREHENSION IN LANGUAGE ARTS TO HMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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LIST OF RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

1. La Thi Thanh Huyen (2013), *Training up speaking and listening skills in teaching Vietnamese to junior high school ethnic minority students in Ky Son, Nghe An*, Journal of Vietnamese Teachers (Vietnamese Association of Former Teachers), Vol. 80, December 2013.

2. La Thi Thanh Huyen (2014), *Reforming pre-service and in-service teacher training in teaching language arts to ethnic minority students*, Journal of Education (Ministry of Education and Training), Special Vol., March 2014.

3. La Thi Thanh Huyen (2014), *From the current situation of teaching Vietnamese in junior high schools in Nghe An's mountainous areas to the proposal to reform pre-service teaching training at universities of education*, National conference proceedings "*Teaching language arts in the context of a comprehensive general education reform"* held by Ho Chi Minh National University of Education (April 25, 2014).

4. La Thi Thanh Huyen (2014), *Using comparative methods in teaching Vietnamese to junior high school ethnic minority students in Ky Son, Nghe An*, Journal of Education Equipment (A body of Vietnamese Association of Education Equipment), Vol. 105, May 2014.

5. La Thi Thanh Huyen (2015), *Integrating life skills education for ethnic minority students in Nghe An province's mountainous areas in teaching junior high school language arts*, Journal of Education, Vol. 364 (issue 2, September 2015), pp.22-24.

6. La Thi Thanh Huyen (2015), *Teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts*, Paper presented at the National Conference on "Reforming research and teaching in language arts at universities of education" held by Hanoi National University of Education (December 2015).

7. La Thi Thanh Huyen (2016), *Teaching informational text reading comprehension in junior high school language arts to ethnic minority students in mountainous areas*, Journal of Education Equipment, Vol. September 2016, pp.34-36.

INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

1.1. In the twentieth century, Vietnam's education and training has observed a number of dramatic changes in line with the socio-economic, science and technology development and diversified needs of life. In recent years, education stands in the way of the transition from content to capacity development approach. Language arts as a subject has also shifted from a focus on equipping knowledge during the teaching and learning process to developing communication capacity (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

1.2. Teaching informational text reading comprehension in the field of language arts at general education level not only provides necessary and accurate information about science and life but also helps students know how to access, and receive information, views, thoughts, and social values, etc. through reading activities and helps them to be confident and proactive in life. Therefore, teaching informational text reading comprehension is important in the formation and enhancement of quality and capacity development for students in teaching activities in general and teaching language arts in particular at school.

1.3. For Hmong students, the biggest barriers to accessing scientific knowledge and educational information include the capacity to use Vietnamese language and reading comprehension competency with their informational text reading comprehension being still limited. Little attention is paid by their family and Hmong ethnic community in localities to their motivation and sense of learning in language arts as well as training skills in using Vietnamese language and informational text reading comprehension skills.

Based on the above rationale, we have chosen the project "*Teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts subject*". By investigating into the topic, we would like to make contributions, both theoretical and practical, not only to solving particular problems of teaching language arts, but also to solving socio-economic, security and defense and other social security issues in the areas where Hmong people live.

2. Research aims

+ Clarifying theoretical and practical foundations influencing the teaching of informational text reading comprehension to junior high school students, in particular, Hmong ones.

+ Contributing to improving the quality and effectiveness of teaching informational text reading comprehension, implementing reform in teaching language arts to Hmong students in particular and those at junior high school in general.

3. Research object and scale

3.1. Research object is the process of teaching informational text reading comprehension to students in junior high school language arts.

3.2. Research scale is the activities in teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong junior high school students. Targeted survey and field work were conducted in mountainous districts of Ky Son, Que Phong, Tuong duong and Con Cuong districts (Nghe An province); Muong Lat and Thuong Xuan districts (Thanh Hoa province).

4. Research tasks

- Analyzing and systematizing theoretical foundation of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts.

- Surveying and evaluating the current situation of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa provinces.

- Proposing measures to reform the contents and pedagogical approaches of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts.

- The measures were proposed based on theoretical foundation and practical information with experiments being conducted to verify their feasibility and effectiveness in practical application.

5. Research methodology

The study employed a number of research methods specific to the area of study. Main methods include analysis, theoretical synthesis, observation, survey, expert consultancy, and experiments.

6. Hypothesis: There is an urgent need to develop literacy capacity for students in general and informational text reading comprehension capacity for Hmong students in particular; however, the practice of teaching at junior high school is still limited, unable to meet this need. With a proper orientation and provision of specific and effective solutions for teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in language arts, teaching informational text reading comprehension to Mong ethnic students at junior high school will enjoy favorable conditions and bring more impact. This is also a way to develop reading comprehension capacity suitable for Hmong ethnic minority students in some mountainous districts of Vietnam.

7. Thesis contribution

+ Contributing to systematizing the theoretical foundation for teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts to Hmong junior high school students.

+ Contributing to evaluating the current situation of teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts to Hmong students at junior high school in mountainous areas of Nghe An and Thanh Hoa.

+ Suggesting principles, contents and methods to effectively organize the teaching of informational text reading comprehension to Hmong ethnic minority

students in language arts at junior high school. The above suggestions were tested in the experiments.

+ Providing recommendations for reforming language arts textbook and curriculum in general and informational text reading comprehension materials in teaching language arts to ethnic minority students at junior high school level after 2018.

8. Thesis organization

Apart from Introduction, Conclusions and recommendations, References and Appendices, the thesis consists of the following chapters.

Chapter1. *Literature review*

Chapter 2. *Theoretical and practical foundations for teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts*

Chapter 3. *Organizing informational text reading comprehension instruction to Hmong students in junior high school language arts*

Chapter 4. *Experiments*

Chapter 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Research into teaching informational text reading comprehension in the world

1.1.1. International studies

Reading comprehension is a concept that emerged around the 1940s of the twentieth century and received attention by scholars such as Descartes (1596–1650), A. Puskin (1799–1837), Bakhtin (1895–1975), and Karlin, and Miriam (2004). The works mentioned above are all concerned about and confirm reading as an important human activity; reading to acquire knowledge, and to develop the person both physically and mentally. Though coming from different perspectives and approaches in different phases, research in the world confirms the role of reading in general and reading texts in particular. Based on that, these studies have proposed methods of reading comprehension to be able to approach and to teach at school. These are the experiences and lessons that we need to select from the research results in order to use them in a flexible, and creative way, suitable for general education in general and teaching informational text reading comprehension at school in Vietnam in particular.

1.1.2. *Research findings in the word*

Countries in the world such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Singapore, etc. spend a great deal of time in language arts instruction on teaching reading compression, affirming the position and role of teaching and training reading comprehension in school education curriculum at all levels. Several issues have been discussed such as “Improving reading comprehension” (Saint Xavier University, Chiago, Illinois), “Creating an integrated approach to literacy instruction” (Taffy. E Rapcheal and Efrieda Hiebert), “Reading instruction that works” (M. Pressley), etc. According to PISA, an individual’s reading literacy is

understood as one's reading capacity, understanding, using, evaluating, reflecting on and engaging with texts in order to achieve one's goals, develop one's knowledge and potentials and to participate in activities in society.

1.1.3. Research into teaching informational text reading comprehension in the world

In the United States, the study "Informational text reading and writing at elementary school: theory and practice" has ben conducted. The French high school curriculum defines the contents of teaching in each grade with bodies of knowledge and capacity, as well as reading comprehension skills in areas related to reading, writing, listening and speaking and language studying. The British general education curriculum also devotes special attention to informational texts. Australian educators are very interested in teaching information texts in their curriculum and have provided specific insights into the types of texts that need to be introduced. Despite a difference in terminology or time allocations, in general, the education of developed countries around the world shows great interests in teaching informational texts at school, considering it as one of the important genres that students need to master, not only in reading comprehension, but also in how to create a standardized text. Regarding reading comprehension in many curricula around the world, informational texts accounts for even a higher proportion. Teaching informational texts is not only meaningful for languages (or language arts), but also for other subjects such as science and history, etc.

1.2. Research into teaching informational text reading comprehension in Vietnam

1.2.1. Research into text reading comprehension Studies in Vietnam

Many Vietnamese researchers have approached the topic of text reading comprehension from various perspectives. This is evident in the works by researchers Nguyen Thai Hoa, Nguyen Thanh Hung, Phan Trong Luan, Nguyen Trong Hoan, Tran Dinh Su, Pham Thi Thu Huong, Nguyen Thi Hanh, and Trinh Thi Lan, etc. Research into reading comprehension is basically the same in that it is considered as an activity. The theoretical foundations and nature of reading comprehension, the possibility to apply the nature and processes of reading comprehension into the study of literary criticism and language arts teaching and learning have been affirmed. The dialectical relationship between the process of reading texts and comprehending texts establishes that the process of reading texts is also the process of comprehending texts and the process of receiving texts. Reading texts is both a basic premise and an authentic outcome of comprehending texts; reading texts leads to comprehension which leads to further text reading. This is a case especially for informational texts; reading must always be accompanied by comprehension with intelligent information processing skills without which the values and the clean information of the informational text will be lost.

1.2.2. Research findings in Vietnam

Since the term "reading comprehension" was introduced in the curriculum and textbook, and the term "text reading comprehension" replaced "literature lecturing", the issue of text reading comprehension has been studied increasingly. The use of "text reading comprehension" instead of "literature lecturing", "literary work analysis", "commentary", etc. reflects the attention to the subject of activity—students and the main activity—text reading comprehension. Many scholars have explored this topic such as Nguyen Thanh Hung, Tran Dinh Su, Nguyen Thai Hoa, Le Phuong Nga, Do Ngoc Thong, Hoang Hoa Binh, Nguyen Thi Hanh, Nguyen Thuy Hong, Pham Thi Thu Huong, and Trinh Thi Lan, etc. The issues related to teaching reading comprehension as goals, requirements, contents, methods, and processes, etc. have been discussed, laying the foundation for the theoretical study of as well as application in the practice of teaching language arts at school.

1.2.3. Research into teaching informational text reading comprehension in Vietnam

Research into informational text reading comprehension in the future has been proposed by a number of researchers after conducting review studies into pedagogical approaches and teaching contents in several countries in the world.

Author Bui Manh Hung discusses the core curriculum standards of the United States and makes connection to curriculum reform in language arts in Vietnam. Author Pham Thi Thu Hien compares reading comprehension in Vietnam's language arts curriculum and that in other countries. Author Trinh Thi Lan investigates text linguistics and teaching informational text reading comprehension at school and other related topics. She defines informational text is a non-artistic linguistic unit with the main function of logical communication and provision of objective and accurate information.

Researchers in Vietnam recognize the advantages of curriculum in other countries and propose a direction for learning from them on the recognition with a selective mind. However, in general, the studies mentioned above are just viewpoints or based on international research or generalize current hidden views about informational texts at school. There is a lack of investigations based on Vietnam's theory of textual study.

1.3. Research into teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students at junior high school

There are a number of studies into the education and instruction for ethnic minority students. Authors Nguyen Thi Thu hang, Vi Van Dieu, Ha Duc Da, Kieu Thi Bich Thuy, Tran Thi Xuyen, Dao Thi Binh, Ta Van Thong, Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao, Nguyen Thi Kim Oanh, Pham Hong Quang, and Nguyen Van Sang, etc. conducted studies into education in general, bilingual education and teaching Vietnamese to ethnic minority students in mountainous areas. However, rarely any studies have focused on teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts.

Conclusion of Chapter 1

Thus, in general, Vietnamese educators have recognized the advantages of the American education program and some countries in the world, from that suggesting the direction of learning, absorbed in the spirit of selectivity. "Text document" is a phrase that has appeared in several reading studies in Vietnam in recent years also. However, in general, these studies are generalized or based on foreign research literature, or rather on some of the implicit notions of the textual information in schools today but lack of study based on the situation of Vietnamese literary theory. This is also a direction, a fertile soil for further studies continue to develop.

Chapter 2. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR TEACHING INFORMATIONAL TEXT READING COMPREHENSION TO HMONG STUDENTS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS

2.1. Informational texts and teaching informational text reading comprehension at school

2.1.1. Definition of informational texts

Researchers have discussed the definition of informational texts. Based on our analysis of their views and opinions, we selected the simplest definition that informational texts are to provide information.

2.1.2 Categorization of informational texts

According to the draft of language arts curriculum for general education (issued in January 2018) by the Ministry of Education and Training, informational texts are categorized based on their functions: direction, introduction, narrative, announcement, presentation, administration, explanation, press, synthesis and multimodal texts, etc. Such categorization is just relative as one informational text can belong to several categories.

2.1.3 Process of teaching informational text reading comprehension

The process of teaching informational text reading comprehension reflects the

teaching process in general. Nonetheless, features of informational texts makes its teaching process have specific steps. There are five steps in informational text reading comprehension: 1) Collecting information from the text; 2) Creating a general understanding of the text; 3) Explaining about the text; 4) Reflecting and evaluating the content of the text; 5) Reflecting and evaluating the form of the text.

2.2. Informational texts and teaching informational text reading comprehension in the new curriculum

The new curriculum identifies informational texts as one of the three types of texts (informational texts, literary texts, and essays) taught in general education language arts curriculum (elementary school, junior high school and senior high school). Accordingly, basic issues of informational texts taught at junior high school are identified in a relatively clear and detailed manner.

The teaching contents of informational text reading comprehension at junior high school are regulated in each grade: Grade 6 (Presentation texts: texts narrating a historical even – Texts for daily use: work minutes; Grade 7 (Presentation texts: texts narrating a cultural event or introducing a principle or rule in a game or activity – Texts for daily use: request and work-related communication letters); Grade 8 (Presentation texts: texts explaining a natural phenomenon or introducing a book Texts for daily use: news, reports, and contracts); Grade 9 (Presentation texts: texts introducing a political or economic event; describing and explaining an experiment – Texts for daily use: advertisements, interviews)

2.3. Relationship between informational text reading comprehension and social psychophysiological characteristics of Hmong students at junior high school

2.3.1. Hmong people in Vietnam and their socio-cultural characteristics

In the past, Hmong people in Vietnam was called Meo people including such groups as Mong Đo (white Hmong), Mong Đu (black Hmong), Mong Lenh (Chinese Hmong), Mong Jua (green Hmong), Mong Si (red Hmong). The categorization of the groups is mainly based on their differences in terms of clothes and languages. In Vietnam, there are more than 1,068,000 Hmong people, making them the 8th position among Vietnamese ethnic groups. They live in 62 out of 63 provinces nationwide. In Nghe An, there are 28,992 Hmong people mainly living in three districts of Ky Son, Tuong Duong and Que Phong. In Thanh Hoa, there are more than 14,900 Hmong people living in three districts of Quan Hoa, Quan Son and Muong Lat. Despite attention by the Party and State, in general, Hmong people have low socio-economic and intellectual levels.

2.3.2 Psychophysiological characteristics of Hmong junior high school students

Hmong students share similar psychophysiological characteristics with other junior high school students. However, they also have their own characteristics typical of their ethnic group and those shaped by natural, economic and cultural conditions.

Due to the influence of culture and living conditions, they have been familiar with a self-reliant life since childhood, familiar with hardship and gain knowledge from hardship in order to thrive. Hmong junior high school students learn to live independently, take care of themselves, work by themselves to serve their needs such as cutting wood, collecting water, cooking, hunting, girls doing embroidery and sewing, and supporting the family at home with hard work. They do not lack intelligence, cleverness and creativity. Many boys know how to knit into products for home use. Girls are known to embroider scarves and cloth with traditional patterns. Particularly, Hmong junior high school students love dancing; they can sing and dance well. The point is how schools and teachers know to arouse that source of creativity positively.

2.3.3. Hmong students' communication and Vietnamese language using capacity

There exists vocabulary limitations among ethnic minority children at the beginning of elementary school, carried forward to junior high school. In recent years, although most ethnic minority children have gone through kindergarten and started to acquire Vietnamese language, their vocabulary and listening skills are extremely limited.

2.4. Current situation of teaching reading comprehension and teaching informational texts to Hmong junior high school students

2.4.1. Process of surveying the current situation

2.4.1.1. Survey subjects and time

The targeted subjects for the survey were mainly Hmong students in seven junior high schools in two provinces of Nghe An (Muong Long Half-boarding Junior High School for Ethnic Minority Students, Nam Half-boarding Junior High School for Ethnic Minority Students, Nam Can Half-boarding Junior High School for Ethnic Minority Students, Na Ngoi Half-boarding Junior High School for Ethnic Minority Students, and Huoi Half-boarding Junior High School for Ethnic Minority Students) and Thanh Hoa (Luan Kh Half-boarding Junior High School for Ethnic Minority Students, Muong Ly Half-boarding Junior High School for Ethnic Minority Students)

- Number of participants in the survey: 840 students of grade 6, 7, 8, 9 (30 students in each grade x 4 grades x 7 schools); teachers and staff in charge of language arts professional matters (7 teachers in each school x 7 schools). The surveyed schools have a high percentage of Hmong students who account for 91–98%. The surveyed classes have 100% of Hmong students.

- Survey time: the academic years of 2015–2016 and 2016–2017.

2.4.1.2. Survey contents

* **Teacher survey**: Contents of teaching informational text reading comprehension in the current curriculum and textbooks: teachers' awareness of the role of teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts lessons; current situation of informational text reading comprehension teaching activities

organized by teachers in language arts lessons; as well as advantages and challenges faced by teachers in organizing teaching activities for informational text reading comprehension.

*** Student survey:** Students' awareness of the role of teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts lessons; current situation of informational text reading comprehension learning in language arts lessons among Hmong junior high school students; challenges faced by Hmong students during the process of accessing and comprehending informational texts; and causes of those challenges.

2.4.1.3. Survey methods

- For teachers:

+ Surveys: We used a survey form consisting of three parts with 22 questions (Part I: 4 questions about teachers' awareness of teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts to Hmong junior high school students; Part II: 6 questions about current situation of informational text reading comprehension teaching activities organized by teachers for Hmong junior high school students in language arts lessons; Part III: 12 questions about advantages and challenges faced by teachers in organizing teaching activities in language arts for informational text reading comprehension for Hmong junior high school students. 49 teachers participated in the survey and 49 surveys were collected.

+ Product survey: Six types of lesson plans: 1. Long Bien bridge – A historical witness (language arts, grade 6); 2. Phong Nha Cave (language arts, grade 6); 3. Hue singing on Huong river (language arts, grade 7); 4. Information about earth day in 2000 (language arts, grade 8); 5. Tobacco epidemic (language arts, grade 8); 6. A population mathematical question (language arts, grade 8).

+ Observation of six lessons in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa

+ Interviews and dialogues: conducting interviews with several teachers working in and outside half-boarding junior high schools about teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts

- For students:

+ Survey: We used a survey form consisting of two parts with 24 questions (Part I: 12 questions about students' capacity of using Vietnamese in communication and study; Part 2: 12 questions about their awareness and current situation of teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts). 840 students participated in the survey and 840 surveys were collected.

+ Product survey: We collaborated with teachers to develop a test which was administered to 420 students (5 tests in in grade, each school 60 tests).

+ Observation: We observed six lessons in the classroom.

+ Interview: We met and interviewed some students before and after observing lessons, during break time, and during evening self-study time in their half-boarding rooms.

2.4.1.4. Criteria for evaluating the survey

Quality evaluation: Observing and evaluating classroom atmosphere, students' activeness and self-regulation, and teachers' attitude in teaching, etc.

Quantitative evaluation: Based on the results of the survey, doing statistics; categorizing; calculating the quantity, percentage of opinion following such criteria as correct/wrong, accurate/inaccurate, suitable/unsuitable, yes/no, much/little, and frequent/infrequent, etc.; analyzing causes and proposing a research direction.

2.4.2. Current situation of teaching informational texts to Hmong junior high school students

2.4.2.1. Results of surveying curriculum, textbooks, informational text reading comprehension teaching materials for Hmong junior high school students

A comparison of number of lessons for informational texts in junior high school language arts

Grade	*No of reading comprehension lessons*	*No of informational texts reading comprehension lessons*	*Percentage*
Grade 6	44	2	4,5%
Grade 7	37	1	2,7%
Grade 8	40	3	7,5%
Grade 9	64	6	9,3%
Total 6+7+8+9	185	12	6,5%

Comment: By looking at the comparison table, it is clearly seen that informational texts only account for a small percentage of the total number of reading comprehension lessons (6,5%). Among the future tasks is to increase the number of informational texts reading comprehension lessons. The details of the informational texts instructed in all the grades are as follows.

2.4.2.2. Results of surveying teachers and students' awareness of informational texts and the role of teaching informational texts reading comprehension in junior high school language arts

- We surveyed teachers about informational texts and obtained the following results:

No	**Content**	**No of answers**	**Percentage (%)**
1	Are texts with main expressing form being scientific and social essays which contain and convey news objectively	2/49	4.1%
2	Are certain linguistic units, always presenting information objectively,	5/49	10.2%

	providing detailed information about objects, helping readers and listeners understand what is described by a non-artistic language in a multimodal form		
3	Are texts to provide information	19/49	38.8%
4	Are texts having non-artistic linguistics units with the main function of logical communication and provision of information in an objective and accurate manner	23/49	46.9%

Comment: There were quite a number of teachers who had difficulty in choosing definitions of informational texts. Little difference existed in the percentage of choosing definitions 3 and 4. Most teachers considered informational texts as ones with the main function of providing information; some were of the opinion that informational texts have forms of expression able to change human behaviors to make them suitable with needs and ways of life. Lack of consensus in the teachers' understandings of informational texts has resulted in difficulty in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of teaching. Despite accurate points in their understandings, they were not fully aware of the meaning in each criteria to recognize informational texts.

- The survey question "From which of the following sources did you gain knowledge about teaching informational text reading comprehension?" produced the following results.

No	**Content**	**No of answers**	**Percentage (%)**
1	Special topic reports and materials about informational texts	*13/49*	*26.5%*
2	Television and radio	*2/49*	*4.1%*
3	Internet	*21/49*	*42.8%*
4	Training workshops	*8/49*	*16.3%*
5	Other sources	*5/49*	*10.3%*

Comment: School managers and teachers' knowledge about informational texts and teaching informational text reading comprehension at the moment mainly came from Internet (42,8%), special topic reports, conferences and seminars (16,3%), training workshops (10%) and 4,1% from other sources.

To understand teachers and students' awareness of the role of teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts at half-boarding junior high schools with Hmong students, a survey was conducted among 49 participating teachers with a question: "Is it necessary to teach informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts?" with the following results.

No	Content	No of answers	Percentage (%)
1	*Very necessary*	*35/49*	*84.0*
2	*Necessary*	*5/49*	*11.9*
3	*Not so much necessary*	*2/49*	*4.1*
4	*Not necessary*	*0/49*	*0.0*

Comment: All the surveyed teachers recognized that teaching informational text reading comprehension at school plays a very important role currently. 84% thought that teaching informational text reading comprehension is very necessary for school students; a small percentage considered it not much necessary (4,1%). There was no case negating the value of teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts.

2.4.2.3. Results of surveying the situation of teaching informational text reading comprehension during the process of teaching comprehension

Results of surveying the situation show that the teaching of informational text reading comprehension was conducted as the teaching of other text types without highlighting the characteristics of informational texts. Therefore, teaching informational texts was yet to develop qualities and competencies for Hmong junior high school students.

2.4.2.4. Results of surveying teachers and students' advantages and challenges in organizing the teaching of informational text reading comprehension to junior high school students

Results of the survey show that there exist a number of objective and subjective difficulties faced by teachers and students in mountainous junior high schools with Hmong students in teaching and learning informational text reading comprehension. Teachers' level and capacity, teaching materials about informational texts, students' interest, difficulty in economic conditions, and ethnic minorities' living customs, etc. partly have negative influence on the enhancement of the quality and effectiveness of teaching informational texts to Hmong junior high school students.

Conclusion of Chapter 2

Teaching informational texts to students is one of the activities that contribute to the development of comprehensive capacity for school students. For Hmong junior high school students, teaching informational texts is even more important. Nonetheless, in order to achieve the best outcomes, the teaching of informational texts to Hmong junior high school students cannot be conducted improvisationally, voluntaristically, and superfically in a forced manner. Instead, it needs to be informed by theoretical foundations related to teaching reading comprehension and

informational text reading comprehension at school in general and at junior high school in particular, to psychophysiological characteristics, awareness, and living conditions of Hmong junior high school students, and to the current situation of teaching and learning informational text reading comprehension at junior high schools with Hmong students. These are theoretical and practical foundations to organize the teaching of informational text reading comprehension to Hmong junior high school students, meeting the requirements of the current educational reform.

Chapter 3. ORGANIZING INFORMATIONAL TEXT READING COMPREHENSION TEACHING ACTIVITIES FOR HMONG STUDENTS IN JUIOR HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS

3.1. Orientation to teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts

- Closely following the orientation to reform the general education curriculum: assuring teaching towards the development of learner capacity
- Assuring respect for the characteristics and goals of teaching informational text reading comprehension
- Assuring differentiation, feasibility, suitability for Hmong students

3.2. Methods of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong junior high school students

3.2.1. Developing the curriculum and contents of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts

3.2.1.1. Based on the curriculum and contents of language arts, concretizing teaching contents suitable for Hmong junior high school students

Once the teaching in line with reading comprehension capacity standards has been determined, the issue raised is that there is a need to have a pool of informational texts to conduct reading comprehension instruction. In addition to organizing teaching and learning of informational texts included in the curriculum, it is necessary to select informational texts in line with the ability, needs, interests and orientation to develop reading comprehension capacity of Hmong ethnic minority students. Identification of materials as a means to support informational text reading comprehension teaching plays an important role in providing orientation and tools to help teachers and Hmong students choose suitable texts for each level and specific learner.

3.2.1.2. Ways of implementation

a) Developing a system of materials from the contents of informational texts learnt: Classifying informational texts or groups of informational texts conforming to the criteria of specific language function styles, arranging and allocating selected lessons in line with students, classes, and grade levels.

b) *Developing a system of materials with contents closely related to Hmong students' life,* particularly informational texts which update daily life knowledge

c) Developing materials in organizing the teaching of informational text reading comprehension for the purposes of conducting new lessons, testing and evaluating, and supporting experiential learning activities.

3.2.2. Guiding to Hmong students using information text reading comprehension technique.

Identification of main idea, important information of HMong students play an important role in receiving literate knowledge.

Lowland students in secondary schools can quickly identify important ideas and information through important words, images and important information, but for the HMong students, whom have limit capacity of understanding the meaning of Vietnamese words, the recognition of words, images, important information becomes quite difficult.

Besides to regularly helping students develop their skills in cultivating vocabulary, explaining the meaning of words, The teacher needs to guide to Hmong students some reading comprehension techniques such as marked the margins, ask questions, use the mind map in order to identify and remember important information, the main idea in the information text.

3.2.2.1. Orgnizing the mobilization of background knowledge and supplementing reading comprehension skills for Hmong students in reading information text comprehension.

3.2.2.2. Guiding to Hmong students to indentify the core information, summarize the information text.

3.2.2.3. Guiding to Hmong students to connect information with practical teaching in reading comprehension the information text.

3.2.3. Organizing experiential learning activities in teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong junior high school students

3.2.3.1.The role of experiential learning activities in teaching informational text reading comprehension

Experiential learning activity is an educational activity in which each student is directly involved in practical activities at school or in society under the guidance and

organization of educators, thereby developing affection, ethics, skills and accumulation of personal experiences. Creative experience is a valued activity in every subject; at the same time, in the education plan, creative experiential learning activities are organized separately, each of which is a mix of different fields of education, knowledge and skills.

3.2.3.2. Goals and contents of experiential learning activities in teaching informational text reading comprehension at junior high school with Hmong students

To help students grasp the goals and contents of informational texts in relation to their practice of life skills, the contents should be suitable for students, closely related to life events in their own hamlets and villages (no forest fire so as not to harm the environment; fight against social evils such as drug addiction, pre-mature marriage, and old customs, etc.).

3.2.3.3. Forms of organizing experiential learning activities in teaching informational text reading comprehension at junior high school with Hmong students: organizing experiential learning activities through learning projects, creative experiences out of lesson time, and occupational experiences, etc., collecting information about activities at students' hamlets and villages related to the contents of informational texts, organizing activities for environmental protection, propaganda for new life habits, showing movies to introduce information about a new life, and visiting developed areas (towns, cities), etc.

3.2.4. Testing and evaluating the outcomes of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong junior high school students

Testing and evaluating of teaching the outcomes of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong junior high school students in reading comprehension lessons should follow the teaching goals, test requirements, and characteristics of texts and students. Closely keeping track of the living conditions of Hmong ethnic minority students to compile test questions to assure the amount of knowledge and closely monitoring learners according to the current reading comprehension capacity standards set by the Ministry of Education and Training. Implementing qualitative and quantitative evaluation, developing criteria and procedures for evaluating the learning outcomes of Hmong junior high school students.

3.3. Conditions to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong junior high school students

- Good propaganda and coordination to mobilize students to school and make them interested in informational text reading comprehension

- Good coordination with authorities and mass organizations to mobilize students to school, fight against school dropouts, illiteracy, and re-emerging illiteracy

-Training to enhance language arts teachers' level and experience of educating ethnic minority students

- Language arts teachers' knowledge of ethnic minority languages

- Dissemination and propaganda of habits and capacity to use Vietnamese language for ethnic minorities, creating an environment for students to practice their skills in using Vietnamese language.

Summary of chapter 3

Based on the premise of theoretical foundations for teaching texts and informational texts in language arts, and based on the characteristics of ethnic minority junior high school students, we set the general orientation and methods for teaching informational texts to Hmong students. The measures proposed are essentially the process of applying flexibly and creatively traditional methods of teaching language arts in teaching informational texts to specific subjects (Hmong junior high school students) in specific contexts (Junior high schools in mountainous and ethnic minority areas) to achieve specific objectives (capacity development for ethnic minority students). Therefore, the important issue is language arts teachers' flexible and innovative application in specific lessons and time based on other conditions. However, derived from the theoretical and practical foundations, the measures proposed are feasible and effective in improving the quality of teaching informational texts to Hmong ethnic minority students, meeting the requirements of the current educational reform.

Chapter 4. EXPERIMENTS

4.1. Purposes of experiments

- To make it concrete and materialize pedagogical approaches in teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts as proposed in the thesis

- To evaluate the outcomes by analyzing and comparing control and experimental groups both qualitatively and quantitatively. Draw out strengths and limitations during the experiments

- To confirm the impact and feasibility of the measures proposed in contributing to addressing existing limitations and improving the quality of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts currently

- To confirm the truth of the proposed hypothesis

4.2. Contents and requirements of experiments

4.2.1 Contents of experiments

Lesson 1: **Phong Nha cave** (language arts, grade 6), Lesson 2: **Tobacco epidemic** (language arts, grade 8)

The texts selected for the experiments are included in the curriculum of grades

6 and 8 at junior high school. With this selection, we would like to target representative and generalizable experiments in order to draw conclusions which are both scientific and practical.

All the experimental lesson plans were designed closely following the *knowledge and skill standards* as well as the curriculum, time allocations, and current textbooks to assure the objectives and the focused content of the lessons and ensure the unity between experimental and control groups.

Lesson plans for control groups: they are lesson plans for teaching control groups typically designed for usual reading comprehension lessons. The results of the survey show that usual lesson plans for control groups assured the key lesson contents, reflecting the process of teaching organization with activities by both teachers and students. However, measures to approach informational texts were not very clear and did not bring into play the role of informational texts whilst students did not take initiative to approach them. Teachers' teaching and students' learning were still repetitive, mainly in the form of question and answer and lecturing. Lesson plans only paid attention to students' activity of approaching and analyzing informational texts in a logical way but not taking initiative to search and create.

Lesson plans for experimental groups: They focused on the measures proposed in the thesis in close and flexible combination with instructional approaches and suitability with practical conditions. Different from other lesson plans, lesson plans for experimental groups emphasized the role of teaching informational texts reading comprehension in junior high school language arts to Hmong students who are the subjects to receive information. They also paid attention to instructional approaches in teaching informational texts reading comprehension so that students would master lesson contents, thus improving Hmong students' reception capacity. Lesson plans for experimental groups drew lessons from those for control groups; thus, attention was paid to student interactions before , during and after lessons to enhance teaching effectiveness.

Test: We developed a test in line with the knowledge and skill standards, lesson focus in particular and junior high school curriculum in general with answer keys and detailed scores. It was used for both control and experimental groups. The purpose was to evaluate the students' outcomes for the same lesson topics which used different lesson plans and instructional approaches.

During the process of preparing lesson plans as well as the test, we had dialogues with and sought ideas from teachers of language arts at junior high school in general and half-boarding junior high school for ethnic minority students in particular to assure suitability with current situation of teaching with a view to closely follow the orientation and measures proposed.

* Designing experimental lesson plans:

Lesson plan 1: Grade 6. Week 34 – lesson 129. Text: Phong Nha Cave

Lesson plan 2: Grade 8. Lesson 45. Text: Tobacco epidemic

4.2.2. Experiment requirements

- Selecting students for control and experimental groups based on the similarity in terms of level and condition.

- Exchanging ideas with the teachers about points to pay attention in the lesson plans for experimental groups as well as during the experiment process.

- Conducting experimental lessons to assure the continuity, following the timeline and plan, assuring natural lessons and objectivity during the teaching process

- Testing and evaluating closely and objectively by lesson observations, interviews and tests.

4.3. Experiment time and subjects

Time: The experiments were conducted in the academic years of 2015–2016, 2016 –2017

Subjects: To assure scientificity and continuity, we selected a satellite school of Na Ngoi Half-boarding Junior High School for Ethnic Minority Students and Nam Can Half-boarding Junior High School for Ethnic Minority Students to conduct the experiments. The subjects for experiment and control groups were selected randomly in line with classroom arrangement of the sites with details as follows.

School	**Experimental group**			**Control group**		
	Grade	*No of students*	*Teacher*	*Grade*	*No of students*	*Teacher*
Na Ngoi School	6A	30	Đang Thi Thanh	6C	28	Tran Thu Hien
	6B	26	Đang Thi Thanh	6D	26	Tran Thu Hien
Na Ngoi School	8A	26	Nguyen Thi Loi	8C	27	Tran Thi Hanh
	8B	26	Nguyen Thi Loi	8D	25	Tran Thi Hanh
Nam Can School	6A	32	Vi Thi Giang	6C	30	Tran Trung Son
	6B	31	Vi Thi Giang	6D	32	Tran Trung Son
Nam Can School	8A	30	Nguyen Thi Xuân	8C	30	Luong Thi Soa
	8B	32	Nguyen Thi Xuân	8D	31	Luong Thi Soa

4.4. Conducting experiments

Experiments were implemented by designing experimental lesson plans and conducting experimental lessons, testing and evaluating the results of the experiments. The experiments were conducted as follows.

Step 1: Preparing experiments: Designing experimental lesson plans which

reflected the orientation and measures proposed in the thesis with adjustment after a pilot experiment and developing test questions with answer keys and scores. Selecting the subjects for the experiments.

Step 2: Conducting experiments: Discussing with the selected teachers the core part of the thesis, particularly the orientation and measures in the experimental lesson plans; implementing the experimental lesson plans on the identified subjects following experiment schools' curriculum and teaching plan; Testing and evaluating the outcomes after lesson completion by means of observation and test administration for both experimental and control groups; discussing with the teachers and students after the experiments.

Step 3: Processing data and evaluating the outcomes of the experiments; marking students' test papers in both control and experimental groups; coding and entering into Excel; analyzing the data using SPSS software in order to find out the frequency, median score, standard deviation, the highest and lowest scores, level ranking and verify the meaning of differences; evaluating the outcomes by comparing the figures in experimental and control groups, drawing comparison charts and graphs.

4.5. Experiment outcomes in teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts

Test score analysis of experimental and control groups (with a total number of test takers of 229 and 233 for control and experimental groups respectively) show the results in terms of score frequency in control and experimental groups as follows.

Score frequency of experimental and control groups in test 1 (grade 6)			*Score frequency of experimental and control groups in test 2 (grade 8)*		
Score	Control (116 students)	Experimental (119 students)	Score	Control (113 students)	Experimental (114 students)
0	5	0	0	0	0
1	15	8	1	7	0
2	18	15	2	9	0
3	14	17	3	15	18
4	26	22	4	30	27
5	16	24	5	21	25
6	12	19	6	18	16
7	5	9	7	11	19
8	0	4	8	2	7
9	0	1	9	0	2

Results of the score types are shown in graph of score frequency of experimental and control groups in test 1:

Score frequency of experimental and control groups in test 2:

Ranking of students in experimental and control groups:

Test	Group	No of students	Poor (score 0–4)		Average (score 5–6)		Good (score 7–8)		Very good (score 9–10)	
			No of students	Percentage %	No of students	Percentage %	No of students	Percentage %	No of students	Percentage %
Test 1	Experimental	119	62		43		13		1	
	Control	116	78		28		5		0	
Test 2	Experimental	114	45		41		26		2	
	Control	113	61		39		13		0	

Comparison of student ranking in experimental and control groups (Test 1):

Comparison of student ranking in experimental and control groups (Test 2):

Median score and standard deviation in experimental and control groups:

Subject	***Median***	***Standard deviation***
Control (229)	3,4	1,564
Experimental (233)	4,75	1,425

Median score and standard deviation:

Conclusion of chapter 4

By conducting the experiments on concrete subjects and sites with concrete lesson plans, we confirm the feasibility and effectiveness of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong junior high school students as proposed in Chapter 1, 2 and 3 of the thesis. Experiment results were evaluated by qualitative and quantitative methods with algorithms used in educational science research methods. These results might have errors, but the probability was not significant which did not influence the conclusions made. This proves the truth of the scientific hypothesis stated in the introduction. It is important that each language teacher at junior high school needs to apply creatively, flexibly and appropriately in teaching Hmong students in specific areas in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching informational texts in particular and teaching language arts in general.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conclusion

1.1. Teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts in general and in reading comprehension lessons in particular is always a topic of both scientific and practical significance and, at the same time, in line with the scientific foundations and reflects humanity. Especially, the teaching of informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts subject is also a matter of national strategic significance when it reflects the viewpoint and plan of the Party and the State on policies related to ethnicity and the development of special education and culture in general, and that of Hmong people in particular.

1.2. The author researched, referred to and reviewed studies in teaching informational text reading comprehension in language arts in the world and in Vietnam in order to have an overview of extant research related to the thesis. Based on that, the author evaluated the research topics and missing ones or issues for further discussion in order to identify the heritage as well as the thesis contributions.

1.3. The thesis began with theoretical foundations such as the definition of informational texts, their role and importance. The thesis also analyzed practical foundations in terms of psychophysical characteristics, cultural characteristics and living areas of Hmong ethnic minority group; guidelines and policies of the Party and State on ethnic issues; evaluating the current situation of the role of teaching informational text reading comprehension in reading comprehension lessons, and in language arts subject from the characteristics of cognition and capacity of receiving informational texts by Hmong students. It also identified the advantages and disadvantages of teachers and students in organizing teaching activities and receiving texts respectively.

These theoretical and practical foundations guided the author in the research process to propose principles and measures to improve the quality of teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts, in line with the aims and contents with the subjects—Hmong ethnic minority students.

1.4. Principles and measures to improve the teaching of informational text reading comprehension to Hmong in junior high school students language arts are the foci of the thesis contributions.

These are the basic principles: Principle of assuring the purpose of teaching informational text reading comprehension; principle of respecting the characteristics and goals of language arts subject; principle of closely monitoring the subjects, assuring differentiation; and principle of assuring feasibility and effectiveness.

Based on these, the thesis proposed specific measures, namely, developing curriculum and contents of teaching informational text reading comprehension to

Hmong students in junior high school language arts; providing creative experiences in teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong in junior high school students language arts; increasing the use of teaching equipment, materials and mass media in teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students in junior high school language arts.

2. Recommendations

From the results of the research on teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong junior high school students, we propose the following suggestions:

- Language arts teachers at junior high school directly working with Hmong students should constantly improve their professional level, pedagogical skills and professional attitude to teach well in language arts in general and in informational text reading comprehension in particular. They need to keep track of their class and the commune, studying about Hmong students to well realize the goals, contents, and methods for teaching informational texts.

- Educational authorities at provincial and district levels in the areas where Hmong people live should make concrete the guidelines, policies and regulations of the Party, the State and the sector for the development of education in mountainous and ethnic minority areas, creating a legal framework and motivation for teachers to well perform the task of teaching and educating students. The Ministry of Education and Training and the agency that manages and develops language arts curriculum for junior high schools after 2019 should concretize the contents of local language arts to suit conditions, awareness and characteristics of Hmong junior high school students. Educational authorities continue to make recommendations to all levels of government, mass organizations, and social organizations, etc. to strengthen supporting policies, encourage education in mountainous and ethnic minority areas, and develop the socio-economic life in these areas, laying the foundation for educational development.

- Universities of education and teacher training institutes which provide training in language arts subject need to offer more effective advisory and consultancy work to language arts teachers in ethnic minority areas; compile topics related to teaching language arts and teaching informational text reading comprehension to Hmong students; and add some modules about the contents and instructional approaches in teaching ethnic minority students in language arts teacher training curriculum of universities and colleges.