

Developing Vietnamese Reading Competence for Ethnic Minority Students at Tay Bac University

Ha Thi Mai Thanh¹, Nguyen Thi Hien^{2*}

¹Tay Bac University, Son La, Vietnam
hathimaithanh@gmail.com

²Hanoi Pedagogical University 2, Vinh Phuc, Vietnam
nguyenthihien@hpu2.edu.vn

*Corresponding author: nguyenthihien@hpu2.edu.vn

Abstract

This article studies the development of Vietnamese competence for ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University. The basic theory of the article is the concept of competence, reading competence, and aspects of reading competence. To aid analysis, this paper applies methods of field research methods of linguistics and description. The article surveyed 500 ethnic minority students belonging to 20 different ethnic groups who are studying in 35 classes in 6 training faculties at Tay Bac University. As a result, the current situation of ethnic minority students' Vietnamese reading competence is demonstrated. Besides, the article also presents strategies to improve the Vietnamese reading competence of ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University.

Keywords: competence, reading competence, ethnic minority students

1. Introduction

For many students across the world, learning English is a critical aim to achieve. However, because of their non-English backgrounds, many students fail to acquire English in order to reach this goal (Sirait et al, 2020; Herman et al, 2020:465). It is a difficult task for teachers to manage the process of learning English for non-native English speakers. English skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing are always used as a tool of communication between people and communities (van Thao et al, 2021:92). Reading comprehension skills are one of the most common abilities taught to students and used around the world. In the world, reading comprehension has been deeply studied by linguists in recent years, which have achieved many great achievements. Besides, determining the reading skills in general and reading comprehension, in particular, strongly developed in the 80s and 90s of the twentieth century. They were differentiated into certain theoretical categories which complemented each other. During this period, there are a lot of books related to this research field such as Bloom (1956); Anderson and Krathwohl (2001); Smagorinski (2001); Snow (2002); Rychen and Salganik (2003); Gallagher (2004); McNamara (2009); Wharton-McDonald and Swiger (2009); Baker, Afflerbach, and Reinking (2009); Paris and Hamilton (2009); Pearson (2009); Duke et al (2011); McTighe and Wiggins (2013).

In the Handbook of Research on Reading Comprehension, Pearson (2009) divided the history of reading comprehension research and teaching reading comprehension into three periods: (1) The first period was around the first 75 years of the 20th century. This was the period before the revolution of cognitive psychology (the revolution that led to a paradigm shift in the concept of understanding and the teaching of reading). (2) The second period only lasted about 15 years (from 1975 to the early 90s). This is the stage of evaluating the results of reading comprehension researches based on the cognitive revolution. (3) The third period is shorter, from the early 1990s to the early years of the 21st century. In each period, the content of research on reading comprehension has its own characteristics associated with the development of theories of language, pedagogy, literary theory, and psychology. It can be admitted that these development stages also affect the process of teaching reading comprehension in schools.

In Vietnam, reading competence is also deeply studied by researchers. Su (2004:16) states that "reading itself has many levels, in which, reading the message that the text sends to the reader is considered as the high

Developing Vietnamese Reading Competence for Ethnic Minority Students at Tay Bac University

level". In the article about some strategies for reading comprehension in schools, Huong (2018) suppose that during the reading comprehension process, there are some stages when providing and using reading comprehension strategies are very effective for students. In addition, Huyen (2017) supports this idea in the research of the problem of developing reading comprehension competence for high school students in the literature program.

Tay Bac University was established to offer onsite teacher training with the aim to serve the need for socio-economic development in Northwest Vietnam. Currently, the University has 6 faculties of pedagogy and non-pedagogy. According to statistics provided by Tay Bac University on February 1, 2020, the total number of students at Tay Bac University is 2648. The number of ethnic minority students is 1520, accounting for 77.5% of the number of Vietnamese students and 57.4% of the total number of students.

When studying at Tay Bac University, the majority of ethnic minority students come from remote areas, so they have encountered many difficulties in the learning and training process. They don't achieve high results in the learning process, taking exams, writing scientific research topics, preparing lesson plans, and practicing exercises, etc. Consequently, it has negative effects on postgraduate students.

The article will conduct a survey on the Vietnamese reading competence of ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University, thereby some suggestions will be provided to help them improve this skill.

2. Literature review

A. The definition of competence and reading competence

The core and kernel of the definition of competence is the person with all basic personality dimensions such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. Competence is a complex psychological attribute, which has many convergence factors such as knowledge, skills, techniques, attitudes, experience, willingness, and responsibility. As far as education is concerned, it is necessary to understand that competence is an individual attribute that allows students to successfully perform certain activities and obtain the desired result in specific conditions.

According to Meier and Cuong (2019), competence-oriented education (competence development orientation) or output-oriented education has been highly discussed since the 90s of the twentieth century. Until now, it has become an international education tendency.

Reading competence is the ability to receive, analyze and understand linguistic units (words, sentences, paragraphs, and texts). The nature of reading competence is the active cognitive process of readers by applying complex thinking abilities from low level such as logical thinking, systematic thinking to higher-order thinking; In other words, it is the ability to not only perceive and evaluate, but also knows how to separate one's thinking subject with thought objects such as self-perception, intuitive contemplation, and premonition. Higher-order thinking requires the reader to explore and exploit the creative potential of the brain to simultaneously separate the object from the subject.

B. Aspects of reading competence

Reading competence is considered in terms of *selective reading competence, combined reading competence, and general reading competence*. Moreover, the selective reading competence can be divided into choosing the correct option to answer the question, choosing the right word to fill in the blank, matching words in two columns, arranging the words to form a complete sentence, finding and correcting mistakes, and choosing the true or false answer.

1. The selective reading competence

a. Choosing the correct option to answer the question

The most common type of test for vocabulary and grammar is to choose the correct answer option because it is easy to score test takers' responses. These tests may have a small context size but serve well for testing grammar and vocabulary. In addition, these tests demonstrate the candidate's reading competence by marking their choice. As can be seen, the survey subjects were ethnic minority students, so the questions also use for learning purposes in the university environment such as: preparing materials for a new course; doing the homework, classwork, as well as preparing for the final exam.

b. Choosing the right word to fill in the blank

This is one of the most common types of reading competence tests. In other words, this kind of test requires students to fill in the blanks with words in the passage. Specifically, some words in sentences are

usually hidden. Besides, the designer must provide enough context so that the readers can fill in the blanks with calculated predictions, linguistic predictions, experience, background knowledge, and some other strategies. Therefore, the fill-in-the-blank test is considered a way to measure reading competence.

c. Matching words in two columns

Matching words in two columns tests is very convenient in providing a choice in both lexical and grammatical forms. Moreover, this type of test has two requirements: (1) Matching words in two columns to form pairs of synonyms, (2) Matching words in two columns to form word pairs of antonyms. Below are examples of matching words in two columns to form pairs of synonyms.

d. Arranging the words to form a complete sentence

This kind of test requires students to put words in the correct order to complete sentences. For this reason, students must initially understand the grammatical structure of Vietnamese sentences and common pairs of words. In addition, students have to know the semantic-based requirements of a correct Vietnamese sentence in different communication situations to arrange words accordingly. For instance:

e. Finding and correcting mistakes

This type of test requires students to find mistakes and correct them. These errors are mainly word choice, word order, and choices of word meanings. For example “*When you encounter a red light, you should not stop*”. The mistake in this sentence is the choice of the word “*should not*” to be used in a way that is not appropriate with objective reality. This mistake can be corrected by deleting the word “*no*”. The correct version would be “*When you encounter a red light, you should stop.*”

f. Choosing the true or false answer

In the true/false choice test, students have a 50% chance of choosing the correct answers, so the answer must be carefully collected to ensure accuracy in the assessment process.

2. The combined reading competence

This kind of competence contains a text related to linguistic psychology, the reader will apply his or her knowledge during the reading text process. In addition, the information given in the text should be clear, scientific, and concise. Furthermore, this type of test consists of a reading text and a list of questions for the students to fulfill. As can be seen, most of the answer information comes from the reading text. However, some extended questions which don't derive from the text were designed to test the students' cultural and social background.

3. The general reading competence

To evaluate general reading competence, students need to apply understandings of objective reality to answer questions. In other words, they will observe a picture and answer the questions. The answers should stick to the keywords in the picture. However, they need to observe, think and apply background knowledge to provide complete and accurate answers. If the student's answer brings new information in comparison with the keys, but still reasonable, logical, it will still get good scores.

3. Research Procedure

A. Data preparation

The study surveyed 500 ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University. These students belong to 20 ethnic groups: Dao, Giay, Ha Nhi, Mong, Hoa, Khang, Kho Mu, La Ha, La Hu, Lao, Lo Lo, Muong, Nung, San Chay, San Diu, Tay, Thai, Tho, Xinh Mun, Ede. In addition, they are first-year, second-year, and third-year students in 35 classes belonging to 6 faculties (Primary - Kindergarten, Agriculture - Forestry, Social Sciences, Civil Engineering, Economics, and Natural Sciences - Technology).

Table 1. Statistical table of ethnic composition of ethnic minority students surveying Reading competence at Tay Bac University

No	Ethnicity	The number of students does survey in reading competence	Percentage
1	Dao	5	1.0
2	Giay	1	0.2
3	Ha Nhi	1	0.2

Developing Vietnamese Reading Competence for Ethnic Minority Students at Tay Bac University

No	Ethnicity	The number of students does survey in reading competence	Percentage
4	Mong	89	17.8
5	Hoa	1	0.2
6	Khang	2	0.4
7	Kho Mu	1	0.2
8	La Ha	1	0.2
9	La Hu	3	0.6
10	Lao	1	0.2
11	Lo Lo	1	0.2
12	Muong	18	3.6
13	Nung	2	0.4
14	San Chay	1	0.2
15	San Diu	1	0.2
16	Tay	2	0.4
17	Thai	366	73.2
18	Tho	1	0.2
19	Xinh Mun	3	0.6
20	Ede	1	0.2
	Total	500	100

The above table shows that Thai students make up the largest number (366 students, accounting for 73.2%), following by the students from Mong ethnic group (89 students, accounting for 17.8%). the number of Muong students is the third-largest number (18 students, accounting for 3.6%). Students of Dao, La Hu, Xinh Mun, Tay, Nung, and Khang ethnic groups are quite low from 2 to 5 students, 0.4% and 1.0% respectively. Students from Giay, Ha Nhi, Hoa, Kho Mu, La Ha, Lao, Lo Lo, San Chay, San Diu, Tho, Ede ethnic groups had the smallest number (1 student, accounting for 0.2%).

B. Research Methods

The article uses the following research methods:

1. Field research methods of linguistics

This method is used to survey the corpus of Reading competence of ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University. In the field research methods of linguistics, there are some techniques:

Techniques of recording, note-taking, photo-taking: These techniques are used to collect the data correctly and sufficiently.

Techniques of statistics: Statistics, classify, and systematize the data obtained.

2. Method of Description

The descriptive qualitative approach was used for this study's methodology.

The data is described using a qualitative technique. Bogden and Biklen explained that one of the hallmarks of the qualitative technique is that it allows us to see the process we're dealing with in terms of the context, or the location where the study will be conducted (Herman et al, 2019; Thao et al, 2020; Thao et al, 2020; Munte et al, 2021). The descriptive method is used to analyze the corpus data, thereby showing the current situation of Vietnamese reading competence of ethnic minority students.

4. Research Finding and Discussion

A. Research Finding

About 500 questionnaires (rated on a 10-point scale) were delivered to the participants and all were collected. These questionnaires have 50 questions with 8 parts including choose the correct option to answer the question, choose the right word to fill in the blank, match words in two columns, arrange words to form

complete sentences, underline and correct mistakes, choose true/false answers, read the text and answer questions, and study the picture and answer the following questions.

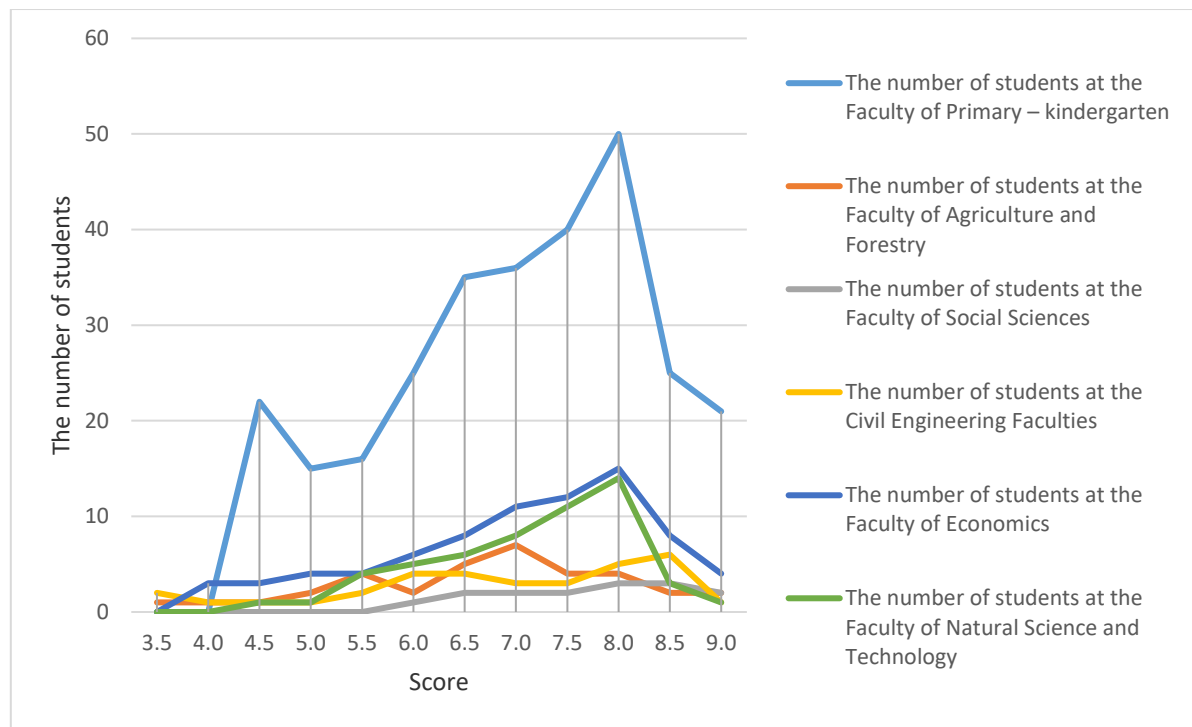


Chart 1. The number of scores on reading competence test of students belong to faculties of Tay Bac University

Overall, the data indicate that the spectrum of the scores on the reading competence test of ethnic minority students at the Faculty of Primary – kindergarten is quite high, the index tending to be skewed to the right (from score 5.5). From the score of 6.0, the chart has a uniform distribution. It then fell gradually from the score of 8.0 to 9.0. As can be seen, the graph shows a slight decrease between the score 5.0 and 5.5, about 5.3% and 5.6% respectively. At the score of 8.0, the number of students reaches the peak (50/285, accounting for 17.5%). The number of students with a score of 7.5 is the second-largest number (40/285, accounting for 14.0%), followed by students with a score of 7.0 (36/285, accounting for 12.6%). Similarly, the number of students who score 8.5 and 6.0 are the same (25/285, accounting for 8.8%). However, the number of students who have score 9.0 is quite a few (21/285, accounting for 7.4%).

The spectrum of the scores on the reading competence test of ethnic minority students at the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry stabilize, tending to be slight to the right. The number of students' score of 7.0 accounted for the largest number (7/35, accounting for 20%). It is noticeable that the number of students who get scores of 3.5, 4.0, and 4.5 accounted for the smallest proportion (1/35, accounting for 2.9%). The number of students who scores from 5.0 to 6.5 experienced an upward trend. The number of students has scored 7.5 and 8.0 remain the same (4/35, accounting for 11.4%). Similarly, the number of students who get scores of 8.5 and 9.0 stay unchanged (2/35, accounting for 5.7%).

In addition, the most dramatic change was seen in the spectrum of the scores on the reading competence test of ethnic minority students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, climbing from 6.0 to 9.0, with no score below 6.0. The numbers of students who get scores of 6.5, 7.0, 7.5, and 9.0 are unchanged (2/15, accounting for 13.3%). Similarly, the numbers of students who have scores of 8.0 and 8.5 also remain (3/15, accounting for 20%).

The spectrum of the scores on the reading competence test of ethnic minority students at the Civil Engineering Faculties unstable, tending to be skewed to the right. In addition, the number of students who have scored from 3.5 to 5.5 soared from one to two students, about 3.0% to 6.0% respectively. the number of students who achieve a score of 8.5 rocketed and ranked top, accounting for 18.2%, following by 15.2% of the number of students who get a score of 8.0. The number of students achieves scores of 6.0 and 6.5 as well as the number of students who get scores of 7.0 and 7.5 unchanged, about 12.1% and 9.1% respectively. Similarly, the number of students who get a score of 9.0 is the same in comparison with the number of students who have scores of 4.0, 4.5, and 5.0 (1/33, accounting for 3.0%).

Developing Vietnamese Reading Competence for Ethnic Minority Students at Tay Bac University

At the Faculty of Economics, the spectrum of the scores is quite stable, tending to be skewed to the right. The highest number of students belongs to the score of 8.0 (15/78, accounting for 19.2%). Besides, the number of the score of 7.5 is the second largest number (12/78, accounting for 15.4%). Such dramatic differences are not seen in the number of students who get scores of 4.0 and 4.5 (3/78, accounting for 3.8%). Similarly, the students who have scores of 6.5 and 8.5 are the same (8/78, accounting for 10.3%). It is noticeable that the number of students who get scores of 5.0, 5.5, and 9.0 accounted for the smallest proportion (4/78, accounting for 5.1%).

According to the data, the number of scores on the reading competence test of the Faculty of Natural Science and Technology is stability which tends to skew to the right. The spectrum of scores from 4.5 to 8.0 increases gradually. The number of students who get scores 4.5, 5.0 and 9.0 is similar (1/54, accounting for 1.9%). The number of students who achieve scores from 5.5 to 8.0 has a gradual increase from 4 to 14, about 7.4% and 25.9% respectively.

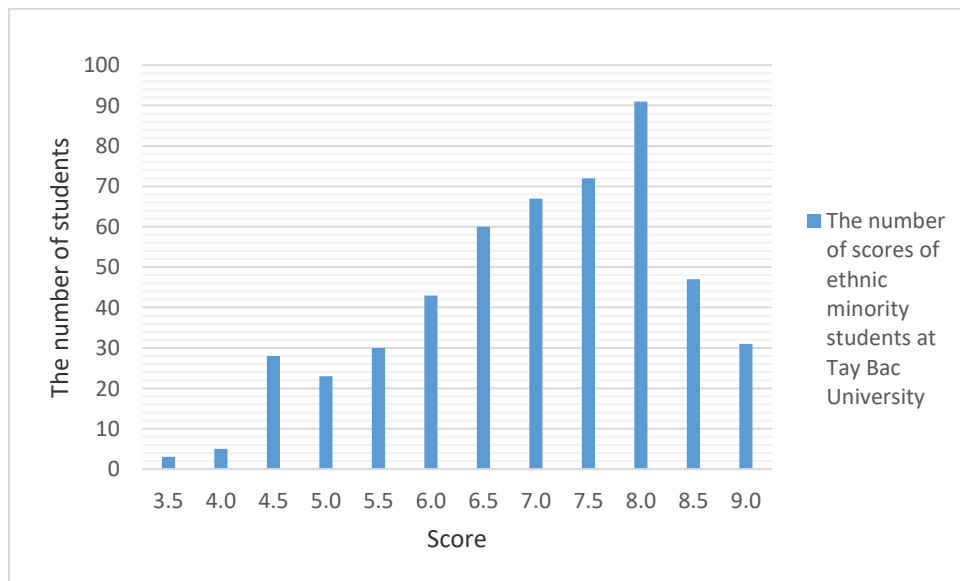


Chart 2. The number of scores of ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University

It is clear that the scores on the reading competence test of ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University are quite high, tending to be skewed to the right. From the score of 6.0, the number of students constantly grows. From scores of 6.5 to 8.0, the numbers of student rockets rapidly. The number of students reaches a peak at the score of 8.0 (91/500, accounting for 18.2%). Similarly, students with a score of 7.5 stand at the second-highest number (72/500, accounting for 14.4%), followed by students with a score of 7.0 (67/500, accounting for 13.4%). In contrast, fewer students (31/500) can achieve a 9.0 score, accounting for 5.3%. Besides, the number of students who get a 3.5 score is the fewest (3.5 points, 3/500, accounting for 0.6%).

a. Analyzing Vietnamese selective reading competence of ethnic minority students

Table 2. Mistakes related to the selective reading competence

No	Common mistakes	Number of incorrect sentences/words/word pairs	Percentage
1	Mistakes in choosing the correct option to answer the question	12	8.5
2	Mistakes in choosing the right word to fill in the blank	61	43.3
3	Mistakes in matching words in two columns	21	14.9
4	Mistakes in arranging the words to form a complete sentence	20	14.2
5	Mistakes in finding and correcting mistakes	17	12.1
6	Mistakes in choosing the true or false answer	10	7.1
Total		141	100

The above table demonstrates the proportion of common mistakes in the selected reading competence test, including 6 parts such as choosing the correct option to answer the question, choosing the right word to fill in the blank, matching words in two columns, arranging the words to form a complete sentence, finding and correcting mistakes, choosing the true or false answers. As can be seen, choosing the right word to fill in the blanks has the largest number of incorrect words (61/141, accounting for 43.3%). In contrast, the mistakes in choosing the true or false answer have the smallest number of incorrect words with five mistakes, accounting for 7.1%.

b. Analyzing Vietnamese combined reading competence of ethnic minority students

Table 3. Mistakes related to the combined reading competence

	Common mistakes	Number of incorrect answers	Percentage
1	The partially answers with incomplete information	6	15.4
2	The incorrect answers with no information	9	23.1
3	The incorrect answers (getting information from the text but the answer is not related to the question)	11	28.2
4	The answers with the information that aren't provided from the reading text	6	15.4
5	The answer is close to the correct answer but part of the information is incorrect	7	17.9
	Total	39	100

The Data indicate that when testing the combined reading competence of ethnic minority students, the incorrect answers occur in getting information from the text but the answer is not related to the question has the largest number (11 incorrect answers, accounting for 28.2%). In contrast, there is only 6 answer with the information that isn't provided from the reading text, accounting for 15.4%.

c. Analyzing Vietnamese general reading competence of ethnic minority students

Table 4. Mistakes related to the general reading competence

	Common mistakes	Numbers of incorrect answers	Percentage
1	The answers are incorrect compared to the picture	15	46.9
2	The answers have information that does not occur in the picture	7	21.9
3	The answers are general information and doesn't close to the correct answer	10	31.2
	Total	32	100

The result of the above table is obviously showed the student's evaluation about what kind of common mistakes related to their general reading competence. It demonstrates that more than half of students have the answers are incorrect compared to the picture, accounting for 46.9%. However, two students, about 21.9% think that they have the answers which have information, which does not occur in the picture.

B. Discussion

After analyzing the data from questionnaires, data tables were created to systematize specific mistakes made by ethnic minority students. The purpose of analyzing mistakes in Vietnamese Reading competence of ethnic minority students at Tay bac University is to find out effective strategies to overcome the limitations in reading competence of students. There are some strategies to improve the reading competence of Vietnamese ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University as follows.

1. Strategies to improve selective reading competence for ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University

Developing Vietnamese Reading Competence for Ethnic Minority Students at Tay Bac University

a. Guiding students to increase reading activities in the classroom

Class time is the most important time which mainly takes place during lectures at University. Meanwhile, teachers can design a list of questions and exercises to guide and help ethnic minority students not only gain knowledge but also practice basic skills. As a result, the teacher fosters and develops the Vietnamese Reading competence of ethnic minority students. In addition to the Vietnamese course, most other subjects in the university curriculum are organized on the basis of using Vietnamese for teaching. Students must use Vietnamese to fulfill the requirements of the exercises instead of their mother tongue. Therefore, the integrated teaching of the Vietnamese curriculum must be based on the organization of communication teaching in a Vietnamese-speaking environment with multilateral relations, such as teacher - student, student - teacher, student-student, and students - learning materials

b. Strengthening student' self-reading competence through reading activities beyond the class time

In order to enhance students' self-reading competence through reading activities beyond the class time, it is necessary to stimulate students to increase self-study activities through self-reading of textbooks and self-study the documents. The current training curriculum of higher education in Vietnam is a credit-based program, so students' self-study plays an important role in the learning process. For this reason, teachers initially need to provide requirements and exercises for students. Besides, It is necessary to guide students to read textbooks or study reference materials regularly. Hence, students will perform better in class-time. After class time, the teacher should also ask ethnic minority students to do practical exercises or give situations and problems to be solved for implementation. This will help them gradually get used to active self-study through self-reading beyond the class time.

c. *Expanding the Vietnamese-speaking environment in schools and communities*

One of the biggest difficulties in developing Vietnamese language skills for ethnic minority students is the limitation of their Vietnamese-speaking environment. Below are the strategies used to handle this challenge.

Firstly, developing group activities beyond the class time to create a natural communication environment for ethnic minority students. Unlike normal students, ethnic minority students often do not use Vietnamese in extracurricular activities. At recess, the children will play in ethnic groups and communicate in their mother tongue. If teachers participate, remind, and ask students to communicate in Vietnamese, it will the students to improve their Vietnamese Reading competence. Schools and faculties have to organize more activities using Vietnamese in communication such as poetry clubs, drama, stories, speeches, etc. to help students become more confident in communication.

Secondly, it is necessary to expand the communication environment in the family and community. Meanwhile, many ethnic minority students' parents have used Vietnamese instead of their mother tongue to talk to their children at home as a suggestion of Tay Bac University to improve their children's learning progress. Hence, it will greatly support ethnic minority students in enhancing their Vietnamese Reading competence in communication and learning.

2. Strategies to improve combined reading competence for ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University

a. Enhancing the ethnic minority students' competence in Vietnamese semantics and pragmatics, grammar and morphology.

The combined reading competence is more complex and difficult to implement than selective reading competence. Specifically, students have to use their background knowledge to analyze the text. Hence, students need to apply all their background knowledge of Vietnamese semantics and pragmatics, grammar, and texts to improve the combined reading competence.

Firstly, ethnic minority students need to expand and practice their Vietnamese vocabulary regularly. Besides that, teachers need to create more active teaching methods as well as provide more guidance to help student developing their Vietnamese vocabularies.

Secondly, ethnic minority students still face many difficulties in grasping and using Vietnamese grammar fluently. To help them over these challenges, the teachers need to guide them to firmly grasp the grammar of Vietnamese, particularly, to grasp the semantics and pragmatics of Vietnamese languages and words as well as the syntactic function of the words in the sentence, etc. Besides, it is also necessary to train them to adapt the skills appropriately and ethically to each specific communication situation.

Finally, ethnic minority students also need to grasp the structure of a text, the function of each part of the text and know how to create a document. As a result, they can grasp the content and meaning of the text and know how to summarize the content of the text.

To cut a long story short, combined reading competence will be associated with ethnic minority students' reading comprehension skills. In other words, the ethnic minority students can not only skim but also deeply read and understand the text.

Example:

After reading the text: Ceramics in Vietnam (Le Huy Hoa, Encyclopedia of General Knowledge, p. 1195), the reader must answer the following questions:

- 1. In Vietnam, which dynasty is the most important leaps in the ceramic industry?*
- 2. What are the special features of Ly Dynasty ceramics?*
- 3. What did Vietnamese archaeologists find in the ancient port of Van Don?*
- 4. What was the important milestone of Vietnamese pottery in the Le So dynasty?*

To answer these questions, the readers have to understand the content of the reading text. Most of the answer information comes from the reading text. However, a number of extended questions that don't derive from the text are designed to test the learners' cultural and social backgrounds.

b. Enhancing students' understanding of cultural and social knowledge

To be able to improve the combined reading competence, ethnic minority students must have rich cultural and social knowledge. The first way to beautify expertise of cultural and social information for ethnic minority college students is to release newspaper analyzing moves amongst these students. This now no longer simplest facilitates to fulfill the obtained information, now students additionally exercise self-study scientific documents.

The second solution is to mobilize and encourage ethnic minority students to regularly learn cultural and social knowledge through mass media such as radio, television, as well as the internet. This is a convenient way for ethnic minority students to easily access cultural and social knowledge in addition to daily life problems.

3. Strategies to improve general reading competence for ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University

a. Increasing students' access to the strategies for reading comprehension

Research on reading in general and reading comprehension, in particular, can be divided into three major categories: decoding, understanding, and responding. Decoding focuses on transforming printed text into spoken language. understanding is to create meaning from text with levels such as literal understanding, inference and enjoyment, and evaluation. Responding, in some ways, intersects with understanding in the cognitive aspect, but places more emphasis on the influence, evaluation, and application of the reader's reading process.

For ethnic minority students whose have limitation in the ability to use Vietnamese, it is even more difficult to build the general Reading competence. Therefore, increasing students' access to the strategies for reading comprehension plays an extremely important role in improving their general Reading competence. According to Huong (2018), based on the process of reading comprehension, in some stages, using these strategies is very helpful for the readers such as

When the teachers provide learners with initial strategies. The process of "transferring" strategy is normally carried out in the following steps: the teachers introduce the purpose, how to use the strategy; then, the teachers model the use of strategy through the technique of "Think-Aloud"; The teachers help the students to practice the strategy and students gradually acquire this strategy, the teacher only plays the role of "advisor".

When facing specific difficulties in the reading documents process such as terminologies; specialized knowledge, etc., teachers need to help students identify those difficulties, review whether the strategies being used are really effective or not, and then adjusting the strategies to achieve the goal.

The ability to "decompress" reading comprehension skills into aspects so that the reader recognizes and observes how these components are combined together in the reading process.

According to Huong (2018), some basic useful reading comprehension strategies for readers are: (1) Making margin notes, (2) Getting an overview of the text, (3) Note-taking in collaborative, (4) Literary communication, (5) Synthetic questions, (6) Question-answer relationships, (7) Cognitive and metacognitive relationships, (8) Inferential reading, (9) Desired character but..., (10) Think-Aloud.

b. Increasing connection activities to help students

Another important solution to improve the general reading ability of ethnic minority students is to build connection activities to regularly help students. Meanwhile, the teacher organizes group learning activities for students to exchange, explore, discover and acquire knowledge. For this reason, students must actively read, study the syllabus and materials, and then discuss with teammates to come up with the best answer. The group activities create a close-knit relationship between teachers and students. Hence, teachers will get feedback from students. Connection activities regularly help students, especially ethnic minority students in their learning process as they have to live far away from home.

5. Conclusion

The article presented the concept of competence in general and reading competence in particular. Aspects of Reading competence include selective Reading competence, combined Reading competence, and general reading competence. The article surveyed 500 first, second, and third-year ethnic minority students from 20 ethnic groups who are studying in 35 classes in 6 faculties at Tay Bac University. The questionnaires contain 50 questions rated on a 10-point scale. After analyzing the questionnaires, charts and data tables were created to systematize specific mistakes that ethnic minority students make in each aspect. On the basis of analyzing mistakes in Vietnamese Reading competence of ethnic minority students at Tay Bac University, some effective strategies are proposed to help students overcome limitations in reading competence.

To improve selective reading competence, the following strategies are mentioned: guiding students to increase reading activities in the classroom, strengthen students' self-Reading competence through reading activities beyond the class time, and expanding the Vietnamese-speaking environment in schools and communities. Secondly, there are some strategies to help students improve their combined Reading competence such as enhancing the ethnic minority students' competence in Vietnamese semantics and pragmatics, grammar and morphology, enhancing students' understanding of cultural and social knowledge. Thirdly, in order to improve general Reading competence, ethnic minority students need to Increase students' access to the strategies for reading comprehension, increasing connection activities to regularly help students. Therefore, ethnic minority students of Tay Bac University will improve their Reading competence in Vietnamese and their academic performance. As a result, the post-graduate students will find suitable job positions.

6. Acknowledgement

This research is funded by Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training under grant number: B2020-TTB-03

References

- Anderson, L. W. & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Complete edition)*, New York: Longman.
- Baker L., Afflerbach P., and Reinking D. (2009). *Developing Engaged Readers in School and Home Communities*, Routledge, New York and London.
- Bloom B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain*, New York: David McKay Co Inc.
- Bogdan, R. C. and Biklen, K. (1998). *Qualitative research for education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Duke, N.K, Pesron, P.D, Strachan, S.L, & Billman, A. K. (2011). "Essential elements of fostering and teaching reading comprehension", *What research has to say about reading instruction*, A. Farstrup & J. Sameuls (Eds.), 4th ed, Newark, DE: International Reading Association, pp. 291-309.
- Gallagher, K. (2004). *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts 4-12*, Stenhouse Publishers, Portland, Maine.
- Herman, Murni, S. M., Sibarani, B. and Saragih, A. (2019). Structures of Representational Metafunctions of the "Cheng Beng" Ceremony in Pematangsiantar: A Multimodal Analysis. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change.*, Volume 8, Issue 4, 2019. Retrieved from https://www.ijcc.net/images/vol8iss4/8403_Herman_2019_E_R.pdf
- Herman., Purba, R., Thao, N. V., & Purba, A. (2020). Using Genre-based Approach to Overcome Students' Difficulties in Writing. *Journal of Education and E-Learning Research*, 7(4), 464-470. <https://doi.org/10.20448/journal.509.2020.74.464.470>. Retrieved from: <https://www.asianonlinejournals.com/index.php/IEELR/article/view/2417>
- Huong, P. T. T. (2018). *Độc hiểu và chiến thuật đọc hiểu văn bản trong nhà trường phổ thông*, Nxb Đại học Sư phạm.

- Huyền, D. T. T. (2017). *Phát triển năng lực đọc hiểu văn bản cho học sinh phổ thông trong dạy học Ngữ văn (qua ngữ liệu lớp 10)*, Luận án Tiến sĩ Khoa học Giáo dục, Trường Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội.
- McNamara, D. S. (2009). "The importance of teaching Reading Strategies", *Perspective on Language and Literacy*. Spring, The International Dyslexia Association, pp. 34-40.
- McTighe, J. and Wiggins G. (2013). *Essential Questions: Opening Doors to Student Understanding*, ASCD, Alexandria.
- Meier, B. and Cường, N. V. (2019). *Lí luận dạy học hiện đại - Cơ sở đổi mới mục tiêu, nội dung và phương pháp dạy học*, Nxb Đại học Sư phạm.
- Munte, B., Herman., Arifin, A., Nugroho, B. S., and Fitriani, E. (2021). Online Student Attendance System Using Android. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*. 1933 012048, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1933/1/012048>
- Paris, S. G. and Hamilton, E. E (2009). "The development of children's reading comprehension", *Handbook of Research on Reading Comprehension*, Susan Israel, Gerald G. Duffy (Eds), New York and London: Routledge, pp. 32-53.
- Pearson, P. D. (2009). "The Roots of Reading Comprehension Instruction", *Handbook of Research on Reading Comprehension*, Susan Israel, Gerald G. Duffy (Eds), New York and London: Routledge, pp. 3-31.
- Rychen, D. S. and Salganik, L. H. (2003), "A holistic model of competence", *Key Competencies for a successful life and a well-functioning society*, Hogrefe & Huber Publishers, pp. 41-62.
- Sirait, M. F., Hutauruk, B. S., & Herman. (2020). The Effect of Using Speed Reading Technique to the Students' Ability in Comprehending a Text. *Cetta: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 3(3), 485-498. Retrieved from <http://jayapanguspress.penerbit.org/index.php/cetta/article/view/545>
- Smagorinski, P. (2001). "If meaning is constructed, what is made from? Toward a cultural theory of reading", *Review of Educational Research*, 71(2), pp. 133-169.
- Snow, C. (2002). *Reading for Understanding: Toward an R&D Program in Reading Comprehension*, Santa Monica, CA: Rand.
- Sử, T. D. (2004). "Đọc hiểu văn bản - một khâu đột phá trong nội dung và phương pháp dạy văn hiện nay", Tạp chí *Giáo dục*, số 102, tr. 16-18.
- Thao, N. V., Herman., and Tho, N. T. Q. (2020). A Comparative Study of Words Indicating 'Artificial Containers of Water' in Vietnamese and English. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*. www.ijcc.net, Volume 12, Issue 10, 2020, Pages 328 to 337. Retrieved from https://www.ijcc.net/images/vol12/iss10/121038_Thao_2020_E_R.pdf
- Thao, N. V., Herman., Ha, T. T., Thuy, N. T. T., and Tho, N. T. Q. (2020). Analysis of Argumentation in Nam Cao's Story 'Chi Pheo' Based on a Pragmatics Perspective. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*. www.ijcc.net, Volume 12, Issue 12, 2020. Retrieved from https://www.ijcc.net/images/vol12/iss12/121288_Thao_2020_E_R.pdf
- Thao, N. V., Herman, Napitupulu, E. R., Hien, N. T., and Pardede, H. (2021). Code-Switching in Learning via Zoom Application: A Study in an EFL Context. *Asian ESP Journal*, Volume 17 Issue 3.1, March 2021, ISSN: 2206-0979, PP. 91-111. Retrieved from: <https://www.asian-esp-journal.com/volume-17-issue-3-1-march-2021/>
- Wharton-McDonald, R., & Swiger, S. (2009). "Developing higher order comprehension in the middle grades", *Handbook of Research on Reading Comprehension*, Susan Israel, Gerald G. Duffy (Eds), New York and London: pp 510-530.