CURRENT STATUS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING VIETNAMESE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT HANOI UNIVERSITY

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Article info	Abstract:
	The current foreign language training in Vietnam is not only about teaching a new language to Vietnamese people but also about teaching Vietnamese to international students studying in Vietnam. Over the years, Hanoi University has trained a large number of international students coming to learn Vietnamese and has achieved certain results. In this article, we study the current situation of teaching and learning Vietnamese for international students at Hanoi University, thereby offering specific recommendations to overcome the shortcomings in the process of Vietnamese language training for international students, and at the same time improve the teaching quality.

THỰC TRẠNG DẠY- HỌC TIẾNG VIỆT CHO LƯU HỌC SINH TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC HÀ NỘI

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Thông tin bài viết	Tóm tắt
	Đào tạo ngoại ngữ hiện nay ở Việt Nam không chỉ là việc giảng dạy ngoại ngữ cho người Việt, mà việc giảng dạy tiếng Việt cho các lưu học sinh đến Việt Nam học tập cũng được coi như việc giảng dạy một ngoại ngữ. Trong những năm qua, trường Đại học Hà Nội đã đào tạo số lượng lớn lưu học sinh học tiếng Việt, và đã đạt được kết quả nhất định. Trong bài viết này, chúng tôi nghiên cứu thực trạng dạy - học tiếng Việt cho lưu học sinh tại trường Đại học Hà Nội, từ đó đưa ra những giải pháp cụ thể nhằm khắc phục những tồn tại trong quá trình đào tạo tiếng Việt cho lưu học sinh, đồng thời nâng cao chất lượng giảng dạy.

1. Introduction

In the era of increasing international integration, language is the key to opening the door of knowledge for learners. Foreigners coming to Vietnam to work and study need to know and use Vietnamese. Through the study of the language, they understand more about the people, the culture as well as the economic and political development of Vietnam.

Currently, many Vietnamese language training institutions for foreigners in Vietnam have achieved certain successes, including Hanoi University - one of the cradles of foreign language training in the northern region of Vietnam. For over eighteen years, Hanoi University's Faculty of Vietnamese Studies has been teaching Vietnamese to thousands of international students from more than twenty-five countries around the world. In this article, we start with a general introduction to the training institution, the training scale, and the training form. We proceed to share the result from a conducted survey of 10 lecturers and 68 students (third year and fourth year) studying Vietnamese at Hanoi University to shed light on the current situation of teaching and learning in the faculty. We conclude by providing specific solutions to overcome the shortcomings in the process of Vietnamese language training for international students and to improve the quality of education and training.

2. Research content

2.1. Overview

There is various research on the topic of teaching Vietnamese to foreigners by both foreign and Vietnamese scholars.

First of all, it is necessary to mention the research related to teaching as well as common mistakes in teaching Vietnamese to Chinese people by Mo Ziqi in the article "Analysis and countermeasures of Chinese students' mistakes about Vietnamese personal pronouns" (莫子祺《中国学生关于越南语人称代词的偏误分析及对策》) [13]. Next are articles by Tan Yuhui on "An analysis of the mistakes of quantifier words in Vietnamese by Chinese Students" (谭于慧《中国学生越南语量词偏误分析》) [14] and by Nong Hongxing on "An analysis of Chinese students learning Vietnamese social address words" (农鸿幸《中国学生学习越南语社会称呼词语探析》) [15]. The above articles analyze the common mistakes made by Chinese students when learning Vietnamese.

Research has also been done by Vietnamese scholars on the same topic. One of the prominent works is "Contributing to the teaching of Vietnamese as a foreign language" by Doan Thien Thuat (2014) [12]. Other relevant works include "Introducing a way to teach writing to foreign students: Six steps to implement in a writing lesson" by Tran Thi Minh Gioi [5], "The current situation of management and organization of teaching Vietnamese to Laotian students in recent years and recommendations" by Nguyen Thi Huong [8], "Application of information technology to improve the quality of teaching phonics for Laotian students studying Vietnamese at Son La College" by Hoang Minh Hien [7], or "Measures to improve the quality of Vietnamese language training for Laotian students at Northwestern University" by Le Thi Ha [6].

These works only outline the similarity in the teaching of Vietnamese to foreigners, without going into details about the differences in language, culture, expression, etc. that create hurdles for international students in their Vietnamese learning process

In this article, we rely on the research results of previous works, combined with the survey results on the current situation of Vietnamese language teaching, thereby making recommendations to improve the quality of Vietnamese language teaching and learning for third- and fourth-year international students studying at the Faculty of Vietnamese Studies of Hanoi University.

2.2. Introduction to Hanoi University's Faculty of Vietnamese Studies

2.2.1. Training facilities

Hanoi University's Faculty of Vietnamese Studies is one of the formal training institutions specializing in Vietnamese language and culture at the bachelor's level for international students. Established in 2004, the Faculty has a team of 22 lecturers with Doctoral and Master's degrees in languages major and years of experience in teaching international students, who have been contributing significantly to the development of the Faculty. Before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, every year, the Faculty has been sending lecturers to Thailand, China, Poland, etc. to teach Vietnamese.

After nearly 20 years of development, the Faculty of Vietnamese Studies has so far welcomed thousands of international students from countries such as China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Laos, Palestine, Russia, the United States, and Australia to come to study and conduct research.

In 2019, under the direction and guidance of Hanoi University, the Faculty of Vietnamese Studies collaborated with the Faculty of Graduate Training, to open a new program for Master of Vietnamese Language for international students.

2.2.2. Training scale

The establishment of the Faculty of Vietnamese Studies marked an important turning point in the teaching of Vietnamese at Hanoi University. Since its establishment, the number of students coming to study at the Faculty has increased year by year. On average, the Faculty enroll 350 to 450 students each year.

2.2.3. Training model and curriculum

Implementing the academic credit system is an inevitable trend of educational reform towards modernization in order to improve the training quality and meet the labor resources needs for the country. In line with that general trend, starting from the 2017-2018 academic year, the Faculty of Vietnamese Studies, following the general training model of Hanoi University, has changed from an annual training model to a credit training model with three major concentrations:

Translation and Interpreting concentration, Vietnamese in International Economics and Tourism concentration, and Vietnamese language and culture concentration.

The curriculum at the Faculty of Vietnamese Studies is divided into two stages as follows:

Stage 1: Graduates majoring in Vietnamese language and culture in the first two years (1st and 2nd years) will be taught practical Vietnamese courses from 1A1 to 3C1 and other supplementary courses in informatics or a second foreign language.

Stage 2: Graduates majoring in Vietnamese language and culture in the following two years (3rd and 4th years) will be taught specialized Vietnamese courses and have the option to choose from one of three concentrations offered by the Faculty.

The formal university-level training model for Vietnamese language and culture majors is divided into many types such as 0 + 4, 1 + 3, and 2 +2 (joint program with Guangxi University for Nationalities, Guangxi University of Foreign Languages). In addition, the Faculty also collaborates with several schools in China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand to provide short-term training courses for 3 months, 6 months, or 1 year, namely: Yunnan Normal University, Yunnan Nationalities University, Yunnan Agricultural University, Wenshan University, Yunnan University of Economics and Finance, Qinzhou University, Guangxi Vocational & Technical College, Osaka University (Japan), Asia University (Japan), Kanda University of International Studies (Japan), Kogakuin University (Japan), Utsunomiya University Japan, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (Korea), Kookmin University (Korea), Mahasarakham University (Thailand), etc.

2.2.4. Overview of students' profile and trends in career path after graduation

In the past decade, with its open policies to attract international investment, many large and small multinational companies have chosen Vietnam as a place to expand their business in Asia. Subsequently, the number of international students coming to Vietnam to study Vietnamese has also increased significantly. When it was first established, the Faculty of Vietnamese Studies of Hanoi University mainly trained foreign students majoring in Vietnamese language and culture. However, in the past 5 years, the trend of choosing

majors has changed. Currently, choosing a major that helps to secure jobs after graduation is the top concern for students. According to statistics, there are up to two-thirds of graduates at the Faculty of Vietnamese Studies choose translation and interpretation concentration and one-third choose international economics and tourism concentration.

The university training model in the form of formal training in the Vietnamese language and culture of Hanoi University provides an application-oriented bachelor's degree with in-depth knowledge of Vietnamese and Vietnamese linguistics, and Vietnamese studies (nature, society, people, culture, and literature). After graduation, students can take on various jobs such as Vietnamese language lecturer and researchers; translators, interpreters, editors, office secretaries, foreign affairs staff, or working in the tourism and communications industry. Job opportunities for graduates concentrating in translation and interpretation are increasing as more and more Korean, Chinese, and Japanese companies choose to invest in Vietnam. Additionally, graduates with translation and interpretation concentration can work as translators and interpreters for individuals, public or private organizations in fields of diplomacy, economy, education, tourism, and social work, or works as notarized translators at public and private notary offices or as editors at publishing houses that have publications in Vietnamese.

2.3. The current situation of teaching Vietnamese to international students at Hanoi University's Faculty of Vietnamese Studies

In this study, we surveyed teachers and learners (10 lecturers, 68 students (including 39 third-year students and 29 fourth-year students) via Google Form to find out the current situation of Vietnamese language teaching and learning at the Faculty, thereby offering recommendations.

We used Microsoft Excel to conduct quantitative analysis, specifically percentage and mean analysis, of the data obtained via the survey. The results show that the difficulties and shortcomings mainly focus on the following area: textbooks and reference materials, lecturers' teaching methods, and the part of learners themselves.

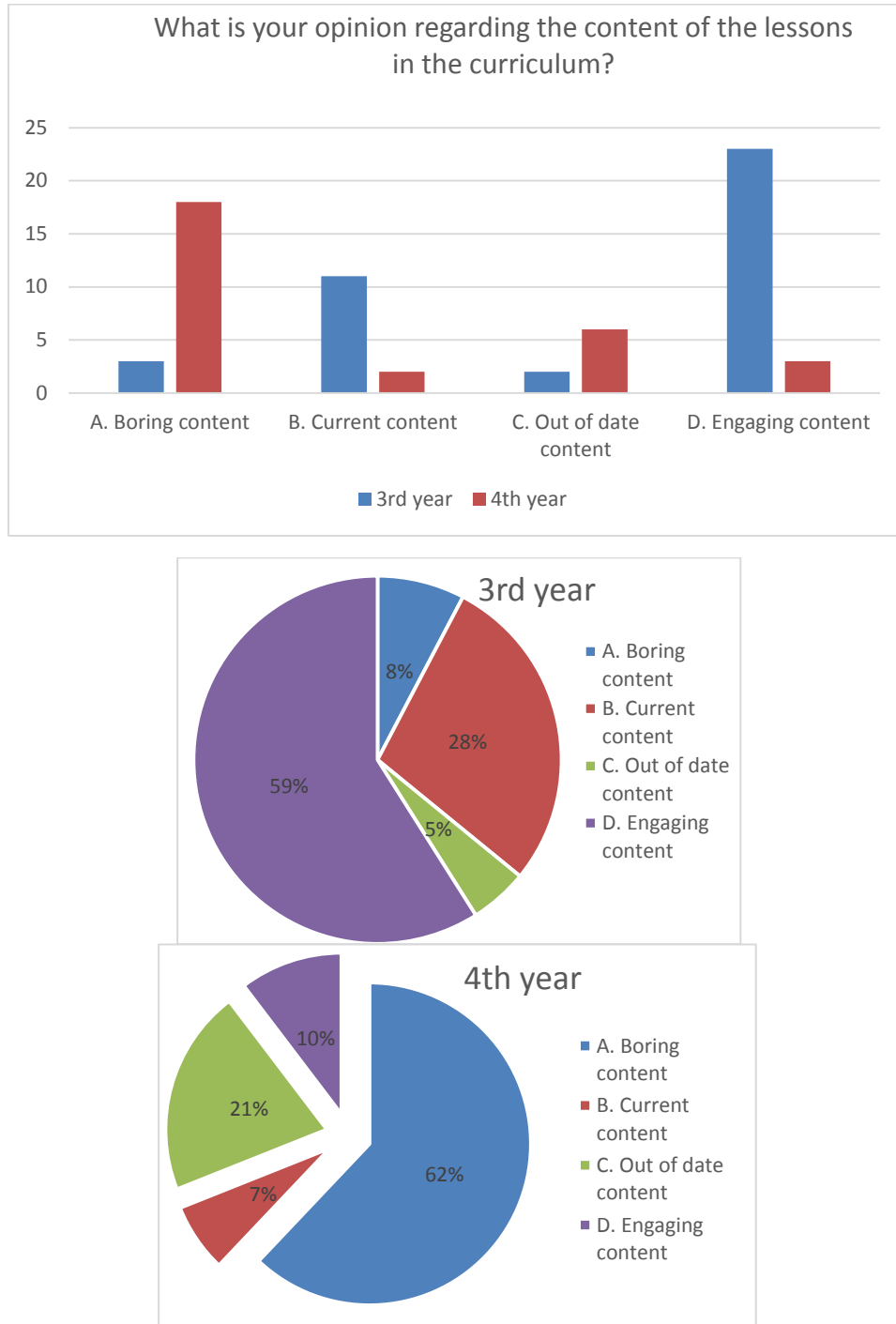*2.3.1. Textbooks and reference materials*

Figure 1: Evaluation of the content of 3rd and 4th year curriculum textbooks

The data shown in figure 1 demonstrates that the evaluation regarding the curriculum textbooks that are offered to 3rd and 4th-year students are markedly different. Most of the 3rd year students feel satisfied with the curriculum being taught, specifically: 59% think the course content is interesting, and 28% states that course content is contemporary. Meanwhile, the majority of fourth-year students are not satisfied with the current curriculum, specifically: 62% find the course content boring, and 21% think the content is out of date. The reason for these differences is that the new compilation of textbooks has not been carried out synchronously. While most of the curriculum textbooks for 3rd-year students have been newly compiled to cater to the new credit-system orientation, many textbooks for fourth-year students are compiled nearly ten years ago.

According to the academic credit system, the distribution among different learning methods of the courses offered by the Faculty has changed. For example, in addition to in-class study, students also have to study at home. Moreover, in line with the new concentrations, the Faculty has added many new courses and adjusted the number of lectures and sessions for each course accordingly.

As a result, many of the textbooks that were and are currently used for teaching do not entirely meet the requirements of the credit system. Stemming from the actual needs, the Faculty has asked individual departments to make plans to compile new textbooks. However, up to now, there are still many textbooks, especially those for 4th-year students that have yet to be newly compiled as the author groups are requested to compile the textbooks in a very limited time window. For certain courses, the curriculum was put into teaching immediately after it was drafted, and the author group has not had enough time to edit and compile the material together. Therefore, many curricula have not been designed synchronously, and lack of systematicity in both quantity and quality, thus causing difficulties for teachers. Some textbooks place too much emphasis on specialized knowledge content while some are too brief and lack content on fundamental practical skills required for an advanced language practice course with specialized content.

Figure 2: Overall evaluation of the teaching curriculum

From figure 2, it can be seen that most of the 4th year students think that the current curriculum has too much theoretical content and few practical exercises. This is also one of the reasons why students are not interested in the subject. Having very few exercises to practice, also affects the learning quality.

The library lacks reference materials for international students learning Vietnamese, especially specialized materials for Chinese students learning Vietnamese.

2.3.2. Teaching methods

The teaching method is "the way the teacher and students work together under the teacher's guidance that enables students to master the knowledge, skills and techniques voluntarily, actively, and independently so that students can develop new cognitive capacity and form a scientific materialism worldview…" [11].

In addition, some also refer to the teaching method as a combination of how teachers and students operate in the teaching process, conducted under the leading role of the teacher, to perform well the task of teaching and learning and help students actively achieve their learning goals.

Despite the variation in definition, when it comes to teaching methods, it always refers to the cooperative dynamics and mechanisms between lecturers and students. It can be generalized as follows: teaching

methods are the forms and modes of operation of lecturers and students in prepared teaching environments, to achieve teaching purposes and develop individual competencies. [2]

It can be seen that teaching and learning activities are influenced by many factors. That's why, up to now, many scientists and educators have proposed various teaching methods. In the survey below, we would like to present only a few methods that lecturers at Hanoi University's Faculty of Vietnamese Studies have been utilizing to teach Vietnamese to foreign students.

According to the survey results, 55% of lecturers who are currently teaching 3rd and 4th-year students still adopt the traditional teaching method: imparting - explaining - illustrating examples. The reason that more than half of the lecturers participating in this survey choose this teaching method is that the courses for third- and fourth-year students are all specialized sources (Linguistics Commentary, Vietnamese Vocabulary, Basis of Vietnamese Culture, Economic and Commercial Law, Vietnamese Economy, Translating and Interpreting Profession, etc.). These subjects are heavily theoretical and require many specialized terms, while many students' self-study abilities are still weak, which leads to students having difficulties presenting the prepared material in class. Therefore, to help students understand and remember the contents of the textbook, the lecturers still use the traditional teacher-centered method. In addition to the main teaching method, on average, about 70% of lecturers use it in combination with other teaching methods, such as the question-and-answer method, role-playing method, and games-using method.
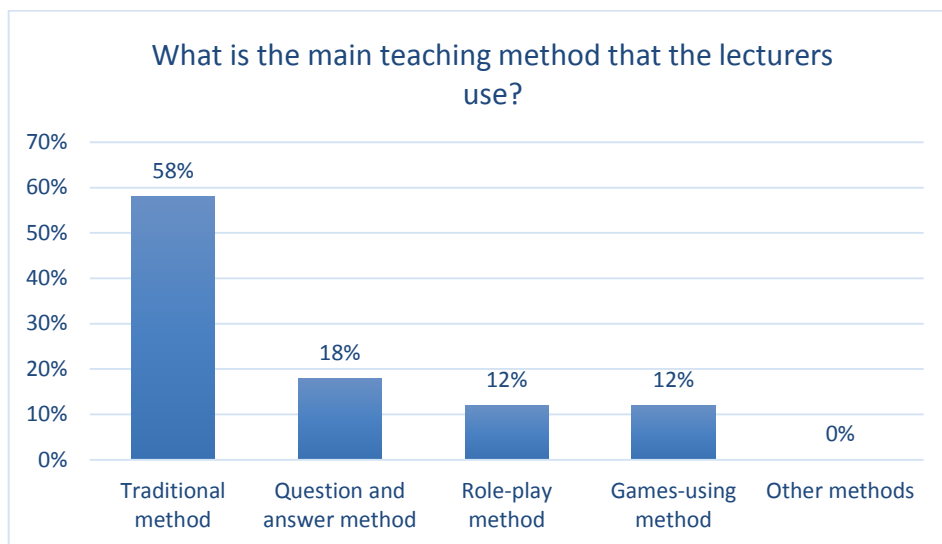

Figure 3: Main teaching methods of lecturers for 3rd and 4th-year students

In the 4.0 technology era, lecturers have also actively applied information technology devices in teaching. According to our survey, to increase interaction with students as well as attract students, most lecturers have applied information technology in the teaching process, specifically, 88% regularly apply information technology in teaching, 7% sometimes apply and only 5% reports rarely applying information technology in teaching. Nevertheless, due to the influence of using traditional teaching methods, students have not yet been "returned" the right to participate, master, and apply IT to their lesson and knowledge.

2.3.3. About the learners

The Faculty of Vietnamese Studies is currently teaching students from more than 10 countries around the world. Due to the complicated development of the Covid-19 pandemic, since the beginning of 2020, most students have not been able to go to Vietnam to study, but mainly study online. Therefore, students' exposure to Vietnamese is limited as students do not have an environment to communicate and practice the language. Moreover, some international students are learning passively, not participate in activities that teachers introduce during class, especially group activities, so the effectiveness of the lesson is not high. Specifically:
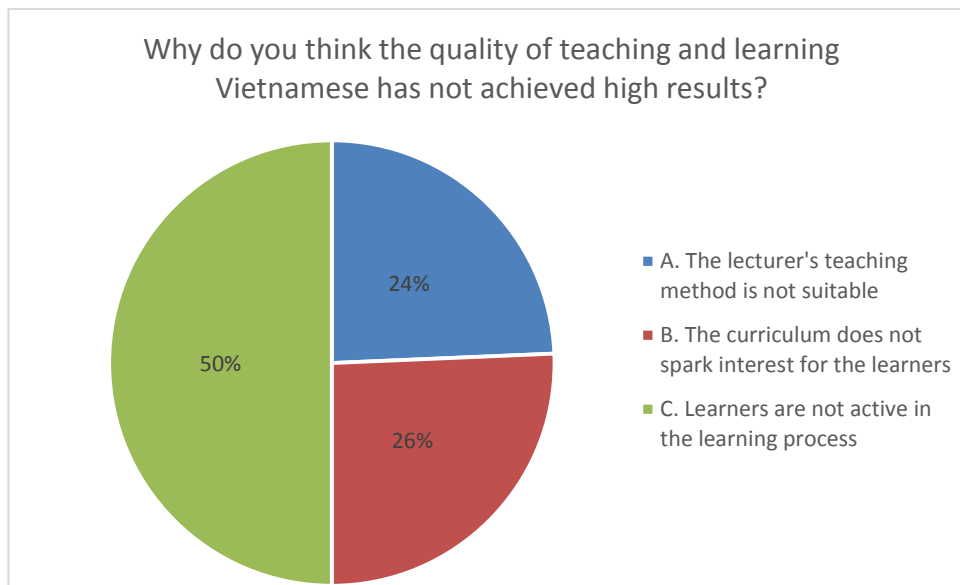
Figure 4: Causes of poor results in teaching and learning

Through the survey results in Figure 4, it can be seen that up to 50% of the students participating in the survey think that the quality of teaching and learning Vietnamese is not effective because the learners themselves are not active in the learning process. In fact, the results of learning depend a lot on the self-discipline of students, especially when it comes to online learning.

2.4. Measures to improve the quality of teaching and learning Vietnamese for international students

In order to help international students improve their Vietnamese language learning and communicating ability, we would like to suggest the following measures:

2.4.1. Regarding the teaching methods

In pedagogical science, there is no single optimal teaching method, therefore, teachers must constantly explore and innovate their teaching methods to best suit a particular targeted group and specific circumstances.

For international students, it is crucial that the presentation be easy to understand, while ensuring that the content is fully conveyed. Therefore, when teaching international students, lecturers, should not only rely on their accumulated experience but should also invest time and effort in word choice and presentation skills.

In order for students to actively and effectively absorb the material, lecturers need to coordinate different methods in the teaching process to achieve the teaching goals. In the framework of this article, we do not go into the detailed process of teaching methods, but only based on the current situation to make the following suggestions to further improve the quality of teaching international students at Hanoi University's Faculty of Vietnamese Studies:

Firstly, lectures should be built by combining deductive and inductive methods. At the beginning of the lecture, the lecturer should make comprehensive generalization, then go into each specific issue, and at the end of the lecture, the conclusion should be inductive. The lecturer should design the lecture in a logical manner as each lecture should always be a unified and structured whole.

Second, for specialized subjects that are heavy on the theory, such as Simplified Vietnamese History, Vietnamese Literature Commentary, Linguistics Essays, etc., throughout the teaching process, the lecturer needs to practice "teaching" rather than "reading" because "lecturers re-read each paragraph in the lesson that students already have at hands" [3] is not suitable for specialized Vietnamese course. To help students more actively think and participate, instead of "reading" the content already in the textbook, lecturers should use the "question and answer method". Specifically, the lecturer will ask questions and encourage and prompt students to answer based on the knowledge they have learned to consolidate and test new knowledge. In this method, students will absorb the lesson creatively to learn new knowledge. When answering the lecturer's questions,

students not only apply to the corpus previously-stored but also have to apply multiple methods such as analyze, synthesize, compare, select, generalize, etc. to give the most accurate answer.

Third, to improve the effectiveness of the interaction between lecturers and students, and among students, the "group teaching method" can be applied. Group teaching is one of the active teaching methods widely applied in foreign language teaching. This is a teaching method that focuses on the group's ability to work independently. The procedure to apply this method is as follows:

Step 1: Whole class work:

- The teacher will divide the class into groups, each group has 4-6 members.

- The groups will receive the topic and identify the task of their group

Step 2: Working in groups:

- Groups form their work plan

- The groups negotiate working rules

- The groups assign team members to solve tasks

- The groups prepare to report results.

Step 3: Whole class work

- Each group takes turns presenting their results

- Other groups listen and ask questions

- The lecturer will base it on the presentation of each group as well as the opinions of other groups to give the final assessment results.

This is one of the highly praised teaching methods today. If the lecturer is well-organized, it will help students to be more active in learning. In addition, it also helps them improve their teamwork skills, their sense of responsibility as well as their ability to present in front of crowds.

Fourth, apply the "case teaching method". This is a teaching method that links theoretical knowledge with practice, thereby increasing the learning interest and promoting students' initiative, positivity, and creativity in learning and researching. The method of conducting this teaching method is as follows:

Step 1: Based on the theoretical content, raise the situational questions arising in practice. This can be done in two ways:

- Open-ended questions: After receiving the questions, students come up with their solutions to solve the problem in the case study, allowing students to be more active and comfortable.

- Closed questions: The lecturer offers several solutions (usually using multiple choice or true/false questions) for students to choose the most appropriate and correct solution after researching the data of the given situation.

Step 2: After students give answers to open-ended questions, the lecturer continues to lead students to discuss (in groups or study groups). For the closed-ended question type, the lecturer can continue to ask questions around the content of the situational question for students to exchange ideas and discuss.

Step 3: Lecturer summarizes (according to learning objectives).

Fifth, incorporate multimedia in lecture design. Due to the necessity to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, during the past two academic years (2020-2021 and 2021-2022), almost all of the faculty's classes were taught in the form of online or hybrid (online and in-class), which make it an absolute necessity to design multimedia lectures. Throughout the lecture designing process as well as in-class sessions, for students to focus on the lectures and increase the interaction between lecturer and students, and create a lively atmosphere for the class, lecturers should utilize several supporting tools to make online learning more effective and attractive such as Quizizz, Kahoot, etc.

Sixth, organizing extracurricular activities, cultural arts, and sports activities that allow students the opportunity to experience first-hand, thereby practicing their Vietnamese communication skills and social skills, creating an open, friendly and solidarity relationship between lecturers and students, as well as the solidarity between Vietnamese students and international students. Organizing talent contests such as painting, story-telling, history quizzes, word puzzles, etc. Through these interesting and meaningful activities, international students can not only practice speaking Vietnamese but also learn about the diversity and richness in culture, customs and practices of the Vietnamese people, thereby gradually improving their language ability academically and socially.

2.4.2. Editing and compiling textbooks

To build a suitable curriculum, first of all, it is necessary to identify the target audience, specifically here, the curriculum for full-time and short-term international students of the Faculty. Identifying the target audience helps the editors get closer to the Faculty's training goals. We have surveyed to find out the students' expectations with results are as follows:
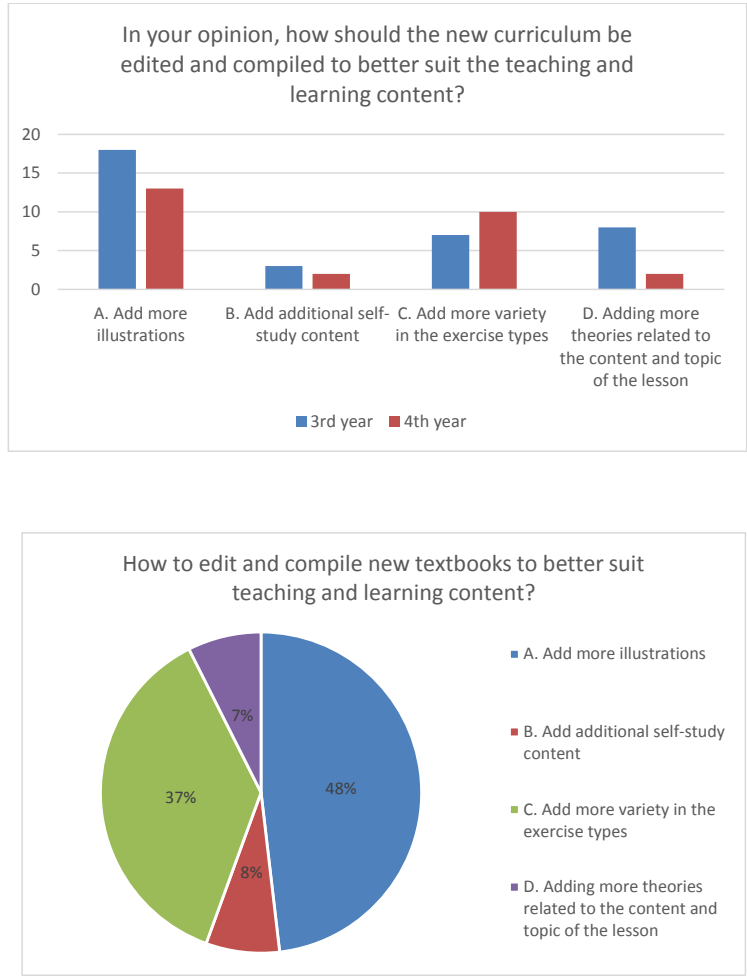

Figure 5: Survey on curriculum design

The survey results in figure 5 show that 48% of students want to learn a textbook with illustrations, followed by 37% hope to see a variety of exercises types in the curriculum, 8% want to see more self-study content to be added, and7% want to have more theory related to the learning content. Based on the above results, we propose some recommendations related to the editing and compiling of the curriculum as follows:

+ The curriculum needs to serve the right audience who are international students learning Vietnamese. It needs to be practical and highly applicable, and not inclined to academic theory.

+ The presentation structure should be easy to understand, and eye-catching (with illustrations)

to make an impression on students. The structure consists of two parts: lecture content and exercises. The content of the lecture provides knowledge while the exercises provide content to practice the language. The exercise part needs to compile questions and exercises of different forms for students to consolidate their knowledge, including objective multiple-choice exercises and exercises that promote students' creativity and practical communication practice.

+ Textbooks of different courses need to be linked together into a system, ensuring the consistency of the viewpoints, compiled content, and schools of thought selected as guidelines for the curriculum.

3. CONCLUSION

Vietnam is undergoing industrialization, modernization, and an international integration process. Many people around the world have come to Vietnam to visit, invest, study, research, etc. Among them, many people come to learn Vietnamese to help them communicate confidently and successfully in Vietnam.

Therefore, language training institutions must research and provide effective Vietnamese learning methods. Through this article, we hope that our analysis and recommendations to improve the quality of Vietnamese language teaching will be useful references for Vietnamese language training institutions.

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