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IMPROVING READING CULTURE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN HANOI CITY, VIETNAM

1. Introduction

1.1. Definition of reading culture

In recent years, reading culture is a term that is very popular in the mass media. We find this term not only in the field of library information but in many respects in other ranges. Reading culture is also a part of human culture which is handed down through many generations. Since the beginning of writing, human readings have come along with it. As print technology evolves, human readings are becoming more and more popular in society.

“Reading culture is the overall capacity of the subject towards the receipt and use of information in the material. This is reflected in the ability to navigate the material, the ability to comprehend the material creatively and at the same time the way of communication with each other’s materials [...].

A culture, broadly speaking, is an integrated pattern of behaviour, practices, beliefs, and knowledge. These constitute the operating rules by which people organize themselves”¹.

1.2. The limitations of reading culture of primary school students in Hanoi in the past 10 years

Firstly, students spend less time reading. Scholastic’s Kids & Family Reading Report says that: half of all children ages 6–17 (51%) are reading a book for fun and another one in five (20%) just finished one². And while 86% of parents say that reading books for fun is extremely or very important, only 46% of kids says the same. According to the data on the

¹ Behrman C., *The Culture of Reading’ in a Public School*, “Ethnogr. Serv. Undergrad. Res.” 2004, vol. 46, p. 22–28.

² Scholastic Inc. and YouGov, *Kids & Family Reading Report*TM. 5th Edition, “Scholast. Inc.” 2015, vol. 1.

“percentage of children engaging in major activities and weekly: minutes spent by all children, by age, 1997” shows that 43% American children (6 to 8 years) spends about 1 hour and 09 minutes per week for reading and 34% American children (9 to 12 years) spends about 1 hour and 15 minutes per week³. In Hanoi, Vietnam, according to Nguyen Nhu Ngoc’s research, the reading time for primary school children is as follows: children spend less than 30 minutes reading every day, accounting for 41%; over 30 minutes is 32%; 24% spent more than 1 hour reading a day and 3% did not spend time reading⁴.

Secondly, the ability of children to select books is not good and not diversified. 85% of the students surveyed reads fairy tales, 29% chooses science books, 60% chooses books about friendship, 21% chooses other topics⁵.

On the other hand, the children are lack of skill of reading book. When reading book, there is 9% children does the abstracts, 13% writes emotion note, 2% draws following the content of the book, 21% retells to their friends, 18% retells to their family, 36% does nothing. After reading books, there are 73% of children only remembers the details impress, 27% of them understands and remembers the contents of the book and 20% understands, remembers and manipulates things in books into life.

Moreover, one of the gaps of reading culture of primary school students is that student’s attitudes toward using material is not good⁶. When using books from the library, there are still students deliberately cut, tear off some pages, important images in many documents, books, to satisfy their own purposes. Borrowed books are curly, page folding even are also “student notes” with signatures, telephone numbers, drawings by students⁷.

1.3. Research questions

The research questions that need to be answered more clearly are: What are the factors affecting reading culture of primary school students in Hanoi, Vietnam? What is the causes of the limitations of reading culture? What is the solution to develop reading culture of primary school students in Hanoi, Vietnam?

³ Hofferth S.L, Sandberg J.F., *How American children spent their time*, “Popul. Stud. Cent.” 2000, no. 0, p. 24.

⁴ LTN, *How many book does Vietnamese read each year?*, <http://langmoi.vn/moi-nam-nguoi-viet-doc-bao-nhieu-cuon-sach/> [1.06.2018].

⁵ Nguyen T.T.M., *Hướng dẫn thiếu nhi đọc sách trong thư viện*, Giáo dục, Hanoi 2007; Duong B., *Gian nan con đường xuất bản sách khoa học cho thiếu nhi*, <http://infonet.vn/gian-nan-con-duong-xuat-ban-sach-khoa-hoc-cho-thieu-nhi-post194243.info> [23.03.2016]; Chinh B.T.X., *Ý thức giữ gìn sách*, <http://thieunien.vn/y-thuc-giu-gin-sach-6419.html> [19.02.2016]; Ngoc N.N., *Nghiên cứu văn hóa đọc của học sinh tiểu học trên địa bàn thành phố Hà Nội*, Hanoi 2009.

⁶ Ngoc N.N., *Nghiên cứu văn hóa đọc của học sinh tiểu học trên địa bàn thành phố Hà Nội*, Hanoi 2009.

⁷ Anh K.K., *Phát triển nguồn nhân lực trong mạng lưới thư viện trường học ở Hà Nội*, Hanoi 2010; Ngoc Đ.T., *Ý thức bảo quản sách công và của công*, <http://dantri.com.vn/ban-doc/y-thuc-bao-quan-sach-cong-va-cua-cong-1286266139.htm> [3.10.2010]; Phuoc C.T., *Phát triển văn hóa đọc cho thiếu nhi khu vực Tây Nguyên*, Hanoi 2017.

1.4 The objectives of this study

The objectives of this review article is to clarify the constituents of reading culture as well as to propose the recommendations to develop reading culture among elementary students in Hanoi, Vietnam.

1.5. Review method

The type of research that will be used in this study is collecting, analyzing and synthesizing available information sources related to reading culture of primary school student in Hanoi, Vietnam. The documents for reviewing include article, master thesis, report.

2. Results and discussions

2.1. Elements of reading culture

2.1.1. Reading needs

The reading need is the objective requirement of the human being to receive and use the material to sustain and develop the living activity.

Reading needs are mental needs stemming from cognitive needs, communication needs, and aesthetic needs. Reading is not only to perceive but also to feel, understand, enjoy a beauty, a value. Reading needs often present and are maintained in people with high spiritual growth. Reading needs stem from the demands of different activities in one's life and are directly influenced by social conditions. This is reflected in the content and the way in which the society satisfies the reading needs of readers. The demand for readings, if fully met, is more and more sustainable; otherwise, it will gradually decline and disappear.

When reading with emotion, reading excitement will appear. Reading excitement is the individual's particular attitude towards an object that is both meaningful in life and capable of giving pleasure. It has closely relation with reading need. They can be mutually transformed. The reading excitement of primary age children is governed by their age and gender, content, form of the material.

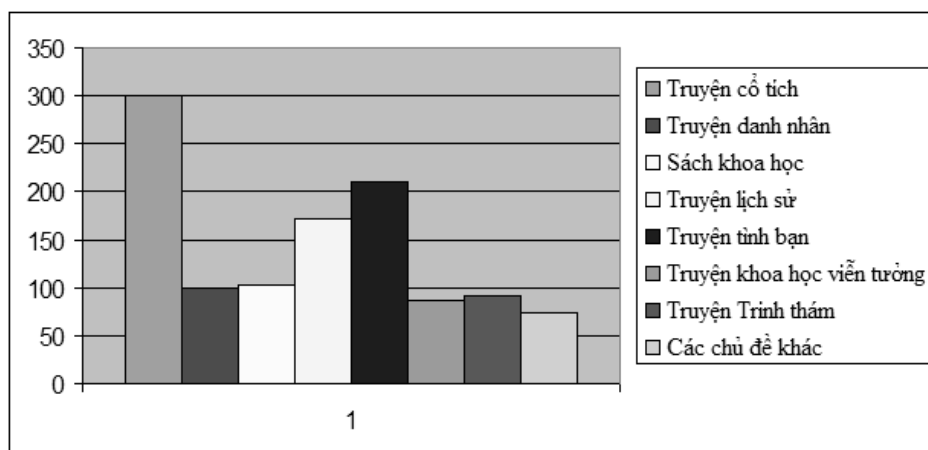
The reading need and reading excitement are the active basic of reading and decide the effectiveness of reading activity. The reading need is a factor that maintains the existence and development of reading culture, while reading excitement is a element that stimulates the development of reading culture. Reading excitement plays an essential role in shaping and developing reading needs, especially for children. Their activities are often influenced by emotions, interest. So if we know how to stimulate reading excitement, reading needs will be formed and sustained.

According to the study of Ngoc (2009): outside the school hours, the primary students spends a lot of time studying at home (94%); 89% of reading and 84% of children are watching TV. It can be said that in the activities after school hours, reading activities accounted for a very high percentage.

However, the amount of time children use for reading books is as follows: children spend less than 30 minutes reading book at 41%; over 30 minutes is 32%; 24% spend more than 1 hour reading a day and 3% do not spend time reading.

Their interest in reading is mostly stories book, especially fairy tales, accounted for 85%. Besides, they are also interested in stories books relating to friendship (60%), celebrities (28%), historical stories (49%), detective stories (26%), science fiction stories (25%), science books (29%) and books on other topics (21%).

Chart 1. Reading interest of primary school student in Hanoi



(Other topics / Detective stories / Science fiction stories / Literature about friendship / Historical stories / Science books / Literary works on the celebrities / Fairy tales).

Source: Nguyen Nhu Ngoc's research, 2009.

2.1.2. The ability to understand and comprehend values in books

The reading process is most effective when the reader changes the knowledge in the materials into his knowledge. In order to do that, he must firstly be able to understand exactly, solidly, and comprehend the values in the book. In other words, he must be equipped with reading skills.

Reading skill is an important factor in creating effectiveness of reading book. Reading skills are the ability to understand, perceive content contained in materials, transform knowledge, experience in documents into knowledge, experiences of the reader themselves, and ability of applying them in practice. Reading skills depend on many factors such as

knowledge, experience, ability of each individual reader and due to the long training process. Readers having high attention, rich knowledge and experience will have better reading skills.

The reading time of primary students also reflects this ability of each child. For children who read less than 30 minutes a day, the level of “memorize only impressive details” accounts for 73% and the ability to “understand, remember and manipulate things in books to life” is negligible (7%). However, this number changed when the number of children reading more than 1 hour a day, the ability to “understand, remember and manipulate things in books into life” is 47%; “understand and remember the content of the book” accounted for 35% and only 18% of the level “memorize only the striking details”.

The number of students who have a good result in study usually take notes after finishing reading a book is 67%; the remaining 23% are irregularly taking notes and only 10% do not record anything after reading a book. Meanwhile, the number of students who have not a good marks in study, do not take a note after reading a book occupies up to 71%, not regularly recorded 22% and only 7% after reading their favourite works, they have a habit of taking notes.

Asked if he wanted to follow his favourite characters, 85% said they had; 15% of respondents did not care about the character and none of the respondents did not want to follow the example, 92% of the parents said they wanted to follow their favourite characters (Table 1).

Table 1. Imitating characters in books

Imitation	Amount	Ratio
yes	269	85%
no	0	0%
indifferent	54	15%

Source: Nguyen Nhu Ngoc's research, 2009.

2.1.3. Attitudes toward using with the material

Books, newspapers and material in general are cultural products, so they must be behaved in a culturally way. Cultural behaviour is a wide scope and it is studied in different angles. Using and reading books culturally requires the reader to have the right attitude and behaviour: to appreciate, to preserve the material, to know how to use the materials effectively without damaging them, regardless of whether it is personal property or common property of the community. In addition, unauthorized possession of the materials is not allowed. Cultural behaviour in using documents is also expressed through the posture, the mind of the user, through the style of reading.

Research shows that when reading a book, if students have to pause reading, 43% of them will fold the page to mark the next reading. The number of students marked using the paper clip is 11%. The number of students folding the spine was 15%, while 21% used the other methods.

Table 2. Attitude of book protection of students (1)

What to do when reading a book unfinished?	fold the page	152	43%
	take a sheet of paper to the bottom of the page	39	11%
	folding the spine	54	15%
	other	75	21%

Source: Nguyen Nhu Ngoc's research, 2009.

When reading books, 23% of the students used pencil markers, 27% used ink pens, 6% of the students would take notes. The rest did not use the noting method.

Table 3. Attitude of book protection of students (2)

Memorizing content when reading	use pencil marking	82	23%
	use a marker pen	97	27%
	record a good passage into a notebook	21	6%
	do nothing	108	21%

Source: Nguyen Nhu Ngoc's research, 2009.

Ngoc's research (2009) also shows that students with good academic performance have a good attitude toward writing. Of the total number of carefully documented students, 79% had scores higher than 7.

2.2. The causes of the limitations

2.2.1. Elements of reading culture

The average number of books per year that a Vietnamese spends in reading is too small. The Ministry of Education and Training said that on average, one citizen reads 4 books per year, of which 2.8 books are textbooks and 1.2 books are other books. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism gives an average of only 0.8 books per year for Vietnamese people and the number of books distributed at the libraries is 0.35 copies per person. The Vietnam Publishers affirmed that textbooks and school reference books accounted for 80% of the books in the market and the rest were evenly distributed among the population

of only about one copy per person per year. Each year, a Vietnamese only spends 2\$ to buy books.

The development of multimedia devices such as televisions, telephones, tablets with internet connection have a direct impact on the lives of people in general and children in particular. Although the scientific and technological progress has made great contributions to society, it also has a great impact on children's reading. Currently, mobile smart phone, iPad, computer, connected internet is one of the favourite children's entertainment channels. It is even one of the agents that are addictive to children. Access to multimedia devices, along with a variety of interesting entertainment programs makes children not to focus on learning, and influences on the formation and development of reading culture for children.

2.2.2. The reading culture education activities in the school has not been properly attention

Education of reading culture for elementary students has not yet become an extracurricular course. Some schools lack equipment, facilities to invest in educating reading culture. Many elementary schools do not have a library dedicated room, but have a shared library with other in one room. According to Anh's study (2010), there are 201/665 elementary schools in Hanoi that are integrated into other functional departments.

The number of books available for elementary school students in the school libraries in Hanoi is low, not meeting the reading needs of the children. The total number of books for the entire elementary school library in Hanoi is 1,692,381.

Most school library staff are teachers who are not qualified enough to be assigned to the library or they are also teachers who spend half of time as a librarian. According to a study by Kieu (2010) 62% of all librarians are not full-time. In addition to their duties as librarians, they have to undertake other school work. Many of them have not been trained in the library profession, so the organization of propaganda activities to present books and newspapers to teachers and students has not been frequent and diversified. When asked outside of reading the textbook, if the teacher directs the students to read other books, 29% of the students answered that the teachers do it and 71% of them do not perform this duty.

Table 4. Extra reading activities outside official time in class

Does your school have extra reading activities outside official time in class?	yes	42	12%
	no	87	25%
	not often	172	49%

Source: Nguyen Nhu Ngoc's research, 2009.

2.2.3. The lack of publication for children

At present, in Vietnam there are two major publishing houses specializing in publishing books for children including Kim Dong Publishing House and Tre Publishing House. In addition, Giao duc publisher and 19 other publishers have been involved in publishing children's books. Every year about 850 books for children are born. There are about 500 newspapers and magazines in the country, of which 14 are reserved for children, accounting for about 2.5% of newspapers (Ngoc, 2009). Besides, children's publications are missing and topics for children's books are not abundant. The literature is mainly literary works, books on science are still small.

2.2.4. Coordination between school, family, library and social organization in reading culture education is not tight

The promotion programs of reading as well as coordination between families, schools, libraries and social organizations are not good that is one of the causes to affect the formation and development of reading culture for primary students.

2.3. Recommendations to help children form and develop reading culture

2.3.1. To build reading habits from family

The surrounding social environment has a great influence on the behaviour and habits of children. Family is a direct influence factor and an important one in shaping the reading habit of children. Reading habits need to be formed in the family:

- Every family needs to build bookcases, collections of materials. Family bookcases are the basis for parents to guide children to read books from an early age. The selection of book should be conducted by all family members. Bringing along with their children to buy and choose books at the bookstore is a way to help children approach and love books more.
- Families need to create a good space for reading. Having a reading room or reading corner with good lighting conditions, quietness and proximity to the bookcase should be encouraged. Ideal reading space will help children to have high concentration and interest in reading.
- In addition, each individual in the family should be conscious in building and forming reading habits, especially adults. The reading of parents, grandparents are a mirror for children to follow. The reading of each individual creates an atmosphere that affects each other. This helps to create a family reading tradition. That will help nurture reading habits for children.
- The use of books as gifts for each occasion should be encouraged. This helps children appreciate books as well as reading more.

Spending time discussing the content of books in family members is a good way to help children recognize and remember values in books. This helps children understand the content of books and make them love reading more.

2.3.2. Improving the quality of activities in the system of libraries serving primary school students in Hanoi

Firstly, libraries in Hanoi primary school need to build a rich and quality collection. Kinds of books should be diversified in terms of topics and have content that appropriate to the needs of primary students. In addition to literary works, additional scientific materials as well as vocational materials should be collected.

Secondly, attractive children's reading spaces should be created. Elementary school students are children ages, whose visual and dynamic thinking is better than abstract thinking. The reading area of the library should be beautifully designed in order to be paid attention by students. Quiet rooms, furnished tables and chairs, many decorative images will surely attract more students.

Thirdly, the well-organized library services of primary school are an important solution for developing reading culture. Libraries should diversify forms of service: home loans, on-the-spot reading, book introductions, book talk, extracurricular activities, etc. will attract more children to the library. So that will be interested in reading by children.

In addition to advancing the primary school library, improving the quality of service for elementary students in public libraries is also essential. Public libraries need to organize more activities that are appropriate for children. Public libraries should also coordinate with school libraries in meeting the needs of reading as well as stimulating the reading needs of primary school children.

2.3.3. Strengthen reading culture education in the study curriculum

Integrate literacy education in the Vietnamese subject

The age of elementary school children is the first stage of their access to written language. Language is a very important subject for children in this age group. Integrating reading culture into Vietnamese language classes will stimulate children's reading needs, enabling children to select appropriate books and to develop the skills necessary for reading.

Extending extra reading time for students

Weekly reading should be held at the school library or children's library in the city, district or ward, under the guidance of the teacher in cooperation with the library staff. It is necessary to consider collective activities between children and libraries as extracurricular activities of the school: reading, storytelling, book dissemination activities. For those who actively participate in these activities should have encouragement forms.

2.3.4. Enhancing the quality of books for children

Kinds of books for children need to be published more. At present, the number of publishers of educational materials for children is still small. Encouraging more publishers interested in publishing books for elementary students is essential. Topics for children also need to be expanded and strengthened in new books. More encouragement is needed for researchers and authors to write materials for elementary students.

2.3.5. Coordination between school, family, library and social organization in reading culture education for primary school students.

The task of educating of children is the responsibility of the entire society, which highlights the role of functional agencies such as education and culture. Therefore, the school should actively cooperate with other social organizations to fulfill the task of educating the future generations of the country. Firstly, there is a need for coordination between the school and the family in reading instruction. Schools need to have regular connections with their parents in guiding students to read, holding talks with parents to discuss the ways to shape reading culture for children.

Secondly, the coordination between the school library and the public library is also truly necessary. That will allow students to access more resources as well as provide students with the opportunity to benefit from the services of both the school library and the public library.

In addition, the responsibility of other social organizations for the formation and development of reading culture for elementary school students is also essential. That mobilizing social organizations, agencies, mass organizations (women's unions, trade unions, youth unions, child care and education committees, etc.) to participate directly in the guidance process of children reading book is a good idea. The mass media (newspapers, radio, television) should promote more forms of propaganda and introducing books for children.

3. Conclusion

The quality of education of reading at schools and in public libraries, the reading environment in the family, the quantity and quality of publications, the lack of coordination of institutions in the development of reading culture are factors that influence the reading culture of elementary school students in Hanoi. Improving the reading culture of elementary school students in Hanoi is a necessary work and requires synchronous implementation of various solutions: building reading habits in family, improving the quality libraries, enhancing the quality of books for children, strengthening reading culture education in the study curriculum, coordination between school, family, library and social in education of reading culture for primary school students.

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Nguyen Nhu Ngoc

Improving reading culture of primary school students in Hanoi city, Vietnam

Reading culture, as a behavioural culture of each individual, is formed from childhood and develops throughout human life. It is essential for the formation and development of the human personality. The paper evaluates the role of reading culture in the development of primary school students in general. The constituent elements of reading culture such as reading needs, reading skills, and attitudes towards the use of the information material are identified and analyzed. The factors affecting reading culture of primary school students in Hanoi, Vietnam and the causes of their limitations of reading culture are also discussed. The recommendation for improving reading culture for primary school students in Hanoi, Vietnam will be considered and conclusion made.

Keywords: reading culture; primary school; school library; school student; Hanoi; Vietnam.

Poprawianie kultury czytelniczej wśród uczniów szkół podstawowych w Hanoi w Wietnamie

Kultura czytelnicza, jak każde zachowanie kulturalne, formuje się od dzieciństwa i rozwija się przez całe ludzkie życie. Jest niezbędne dla uformowania i rozwoju ludzkiej osobowości. W artykule oceniono rolę kultury czytelniczej w ogólnym rozwoju uczniów szkół podstawowych. Zidentyfikowano i poddano analizie elementy składowe kultury czytelniczej, takie jak: potrzeby czytelnicze, umiejętności czytelnicze i postawy wobec wykorzystywania materiału informacyjnego. Omówiono także czynniki oddziałujące na kulturę czytelniczą uczniów szkół podstawowych w Hanoi w Wietnamie oraz przyczyny ograniczeń kultury czytelniczej. Po rozważeniu zaleceń dotyczących poprawiania kultury czytelniczej wśród uczniów szkół podstawowych w Hanoi zostaną wyciągnięte odpowiednie wnioski.

Słowa kluczowe: kultura czytelnicza; szkoła podstawowa; biblioteka szkolna; uczniowie; Hanoi; Wietnam.

Translated by Barbara Popiel