

# DEVELOPING VIETNAMESE READING SKILLS FOR THE FIRST YEAR PUPIL

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the paper is to improve Vietnamese capacity of the first-year pupil through developing their Vietnamese reading skills (the author mentions the case of Vietnamese pupils and Chinese ethnicity pupils living in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam). To implement this paper, the author has conducted a study on the reading ability results of first-year pupils in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, using a variety of research methods. Specifically, the author has used survey research to collect data from the participants, statistical analysis to analyze the data, and classification techniques to organize the data into categories or groups. Therefrom, the author would like to provide practical suggestions for improving their reading skills. These suggestions likely focus on teaching and learning methods that are suitable for the pupils' current level of reading ability. The paper is not only meaningful in terms of academic, theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and learning activities to develop Vietnamese reading skills for first year pupils in Vietnam but also can be applied to teach reading skills in other languages of the world.

**Keywords:** Vietnamese, Vietnamese reading skills, reading skills, exercise system, first year pupils

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## Introduction

First year pupils always face unique challenges in learning Vietnamese as a second language because these pupils may have limited vocabulary and reading experience, as well as an immature understanding of language, which can make it difficult for them to acquire Vietnamese reading skills.

Based on practical and score results on Vietnamese reading ability of groups pupils, the author offers creative teaching methods for developing Vietnamese reading skills, as well as an exercise system for practicing reading skills. These teaching methods likely involve strategies such as using context clues, providing visual aids, and scaffolding instruction to gradually build pupils' understanding of Vietnamese vocabulary and grammar. The exercise system may include a variety of activities designed to improve pupils' reading comprehension and fluency, such as timed reading exercises and comprehension questions. And then, the author's suggestions and recommendations may be useful for educators and policymakers who are interested in promoting capacity development in Vietnamese education in Viet Nam.

## Background of the research

Vietnamese is one of the main subjects of the curriculum in Vietnam, which is divided into subjects such as reading, writing, spelling, practicing words and sentences, practicing writing along with developing the four basic skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). The Vietnamese reading

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subject has the purpose of developing reading and comprehension skills for pupils, especially first year pupils.

Reading comprehension helps pupils have the ability to perceive and comprehend information from a certain text. Reading comprehension also helps pupils accumulate knowledge and stimulate the development of thinking and creativity. However, in reality, each pupil's ability is different, so their ability to receive and comprehend is also different, especially for first year Chinese pupils living in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam has lower reading ability than native Vietnamese pupils. Pupils also make many errors in reading skills such as mispronunciation, misreading, and incoherent reading, leading to not understanding the text content. Therefore, in this article, the author wants to offer solutions to develop their reading skills.

### ***The concept of reading skills***

The concepts of reading skills and reading comprehension have evolved over time in response to changes and developments in society, economy, culture, and education. As Alberto Manguel (1996) asserts, "Reading is often an individual activity carried out in silence, although sometimes one person reads aloud to another, or read aloud to ourselves for better understanding". Joe Pinsky (2019) said that "Reading is also considered an interesting recreational activity, it gives the reader a feeling of comfort and relaxation. People who are highly educated, fluent in languages, live in cities and have high socioeconomic status are more likely to read books." According to the Cambridge English Online Dictionary (2023) "Reading is the process of acquiring meaning through decoding symbols (letters, symbols, etc.)". In the Vietnamese Dictionary, Y (2010) wrote that "reading is an activity of eyes looking at the document and drawings to absorb the content, and then mouth talks out loud according to the content of the text of document"

Therefore, reading is an activity of the brain's recognition and transmission of information content from words in documents and screens through eyes and mouth. The process of reading involves a complex interplay between cognitive processes and linguistic abilities, including phonological processing, vocabulary development, syntax, and discourse comprehension.

The process of reading involves a complex interplay between cognitive processes and linguistic abilities, including phonological processing, vocabulary development, syntax, and discourse comprehension. Reading comprehension also involves the acquisition of knowledge and the fostering of the human soul through asking questions such as what, when, and how. It also involves a range of cognitive processes, including explanation, analysis, generalization, recognition, thinking, and verbal expression.

### ***Some characteristics of Chinese living in Viet Nam***

According to the Vietnamese Wikipedia Dictionary (2023) said that Chinese in Vietnam are referred to as Vietnamese of Chinese origin to avoid controversial cases of terminology and discriminatory attitudes (Chinese living in Viet Nam hate being called ethnic Vietnamese for many reasons). In the past, ancestors used the term "Các chủ" or "Cắt chủ" in an example of a term that was used to refer to Chinese living in Viet Nam as guests or temporary residents, likely reflecting the fact that many Chinese immigrants in Viet Nam in the past came as traders or laborers and did not have permanent

resident status. Similarly, the term “Chêch” which means “Uncle” or “Thúc” or “叔” in Chaozhou sound, may reflect the familial or kinship ties that existed between Chinese immigrants in Viet Nam and their local Vietnamese counterparts.

Additionally, the term “Ba Tàu” has been associated with Chinese traders who traveled to Viet Nam by train and carried goods for trade. The association with the number three and the three lands where Chinese traders were allowed to do business and live is also an interesting explanation for the term.

The word “Ba Tàu” has following explanation: “Ba” means the three lands of Viet Nam that Lord Nguyen (1680s) allowed Chinese to do business and live in Cu Lao Pho (Pho Island) of Dong Nai province, Cho Lon (Big Market) of Ho Chi Minh City and Ha Tien of Kien Giang province; And the word “Tàu” means “big ship” which originates from the means of transportation of the Chinese when coming to Viet Nam. Besides, there is another story that Vietnamese often address in the same order as Mr. Hai (the eldest son’s name in South of Vietnam) and Mr. Ba (the second son’s name), ect. for that reason, Ba Tàu often were call them formally, politely and intimately. While French also worked in Viet Nam. And then, Chinese called French in Viet Nam was “anh Hai = Mr. Hai or Hai brother” and personated “em Ba = Mr. Ba or Ba younger brother”. So, Chinese living in Viet Nam is called “anh Ba Tàu”.

From 1986 up to now, with the policy of renewing country, Viet Nam government has started a policy of support in preserving and ensuring the culture of Chinese who living in Viet Nam. Vietnamese of Chinese origin are recognized as Vietnamese citizens rather than overseas Chinese living in Viet Nam.

It is also noteworthy that Vietnamese of Chinese origin have excelled in fields such as bodybuilding, gymnastics, and music, indicating their talent and hard work. It is essential to recognize the contributions of different communities in a country as it fosters a sense of inclusivity and unity, which is crucial for the development of any nation.

In short, Vietnamese of Chinese origin who have been living in Ho Chi Minh City as well as in the whole country have many contributions to the development of Vietnam.

## **Study overview**

### ***Research purposes***

The author determined Vietnamese reading ability of first year pupils (Vietnamese pupils and Chinese pupils) who live in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in order to offer appropriate teaching and learning suitable methods for each subject with each appropriate specific lesson content.

The ability to read in Vietnamese is a crucial skills for first year pupils as it forms the foundation for their learning in various subjects. Understanding the reading ability of first year pupils, can help in designing appropriate teaching and learning methods that cater to their specific needs. Hence, improving the Vietnamese reading skills of first year pupils is crucial for their academic success and development, and the research can contribute to the ongoing educational reform in Vietnam. It is commendable that the author is undertaking this research to make a positive impact on the education system in Vietnam. Furthermore, by focusing on first year pupils of Chinese in District 5, the research

can provide insights into the factors that may influence their Vietnamese reading ability. This can help in identifying any challenges that they may face and developing strategies to address them. The research results contribute to improving Vietnamese reading skills of first year pupils in the educational reform towards capacity development in Viet Nam nowadays.

### ***Research mission***

To accomplish this paper, the author gives the following tasks:

- a. Determining the Vietnamese reading ability: This task involves assessing the reading ability of both Vietnamese and Vietnamese of Chinese origin pupils in the district. The assessment may involve tests, interviews, or observation of their reading skills to determine their level of proficiency.
- b. Specific analysis of difficulties affecting pronunciation and fluency: This task involves analyzing the specific challenges that first year pupils, especially those of Chinese origin, face when learning to read in Vietnamese. These challenges may include pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension, among others. The analysis should be specific and identify the causes of the difficulties.
- c. Provide suggestions to overcome difficulties: This task involves developing strategies to overcome the difficulties identified in the previous task. The suggestions should be practical and specific, tailored to the needs of first year pupils, and taking into account the specific challenges faced by those of Chinese origin. The suggestions may include teaching methods, materials, and resources that can improve their reading ability.

Consequently, the tasks outlined by the author are crucial in achieving the goal of improving the Vietnamese reading skills of first-year pupils in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City. By assessing their abilities and identifying their specific difficulties, appropriate strategies can be developed to overcome the challenges they face and help them become proficient in reading Vietnamese.

### ***Contributions of the study***

Based on a survey conducted on Vietnamese reading ability of first-year pupils (Vietnamese and Chinese) in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City, the author classified the Vietnamese reading ability of this group of pupils. Additionally, the author identified implementation difficulties as well as challenges in Vietnamese teaching and learning process. Subsequently, the author provided suggestions to enhance the Vietnamese reading ability of first year pupils, including Chinese origin pupils, during the educational reform period in Vietnam.

The research results serve as a valuable reference material for educational researchers and linguists. The article holds significant academic and practical implications, contributing to the development of teaching and learning theory and practice for enhancing Vietnamese reading skills in first year pupils. Furthermore, the research results can help develop reading skills in other languages, making them highly beneficial for academic and practical purposes.

## Research methods

### a. Methods of survey, classification and statistics

The author conducted a survey, classification, and statistical analysis of the reading skills of first-year pupils in both Vietnamese and Chinese origin residing in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City.

### b. Discourse analysis method

Based on the proficiency levels in Vietnamese reading skills of first year pupils (Vietnamese and Chinese) in District 5, ho Chi Minh City, the author analyzed and explained the difficulties and provided specific solutions). In addition to the aforementioned research methods, the author also employed techniques such as systematizing and modeling the challenges faced by groups of pupils when learning Vietnamese speaking. Furthermore, the author used both qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain results with relevant comments.

## Research results

Vienamese reading skills scores of first-year pupils in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City

Due to time constraints as well as conditions, the author can only conduct Vietnamese reading skill surveys from 60 first-year pupils (30 Vietnamese pupils and 30 Chinese ethnicity pupils) in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City as follows:

Table 1: Vietnamese reading skill scores of first-year pupils in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Reading skills Score level	30 first year Vietnamese pupils		30 first year Chinese ethnicity pupils	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Be low average < 5.0	0	0	0	0
Average $\geq$ 5.0 - 6.4	16	26,7	21	35,0
Fairly good $\geq$ 6.5 - 7.9	11	18,3	9	15,0
Good $\geq$ 8.0 - 10	3	5,0	0	0

From the table of Vietnamese reading skills scores of first year pupils in District 5, ho Chi Minh City above, the percent of Vietnamese pupils and Chinese pupils reading skills is not high, which is more than Vietnamese pupils because of various difficult reasons ranging from subjective and objective.

There were not any Vietnamese pupils and any Chinese pupils below the average score in Vietnamese reading skills.

There were 26,7% Vietnamese pupils and 35,0% Chinese pupils in the average score.

The percent of pupils achieving a fair good readinh ability is also low, 18,3% Vietnamese pupils and only 15,0% Chinese pupils.

In good score, there were only 5,0% Vietnamese pupils and 0,0% Chinese pupils.

So, we would like to improve the reading ability for all two groups of pupils to increase the percent of fair good score and have a lot of good score pupils in Vietnamese reading skills.

### ***Difficulties***

From the specific amount of Vietnamese ability in reading skills of first year pupils (Vietnamese and Chinese) in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City mentioned above, the author also investigated their difficulties that these pupils still face as follows:

Firstly, as Chinese is the mother tongue of pupils that these pupils of Chinese ethnicity, Vietnamese is considered their second language. Consequently, their learning environment and language practice are restricted, resulting in below-average reading skills.

Secondly, pupils of Chinese origin encounter pronunciation difficulties due to the influence of their mother tongue. When pronouncing Vietnamese words, they encounter difficulties with Vietnamese accents, including the six tones. These tones are expressed as:

- Tone 1 = unmarked (-).
- Tone 2 = grave accent ( ` ).
- Tone 3 = tilde ( ~ ).
- Tone 4 = hook above ( ˆ ).
- Tone 5 = acute accent ( / ).
- Tone 6 = under dot ( . ).

In addition, Vietnamese has circumflex accents in vowel alphabets such as a - ă - â, e - ê, o - ô - ơ with conical accent â, ê, ô.

Example 1: Tôi cần một con bê (I need a calf).

The hook accent like ơ, u.

Example 2: Tôi có ước mơ đẹp (I have a beautiful dream).

The new moon accent like ă.

Example 3: Cô Hằng có một căn nhà to (Ms Hang has a big house).

As a result, these first year pupils struggle to distinguish the different tones and accents clearly.

Thirdly, first year pupils have a limited vocabulary, making it challenging for them to comprehend the content of reading lessons or their teacher's instructions.

Fourth, the time allocated for reading practice in the first-grade curriculum is insufficient, as it is only 70 minutes per week.

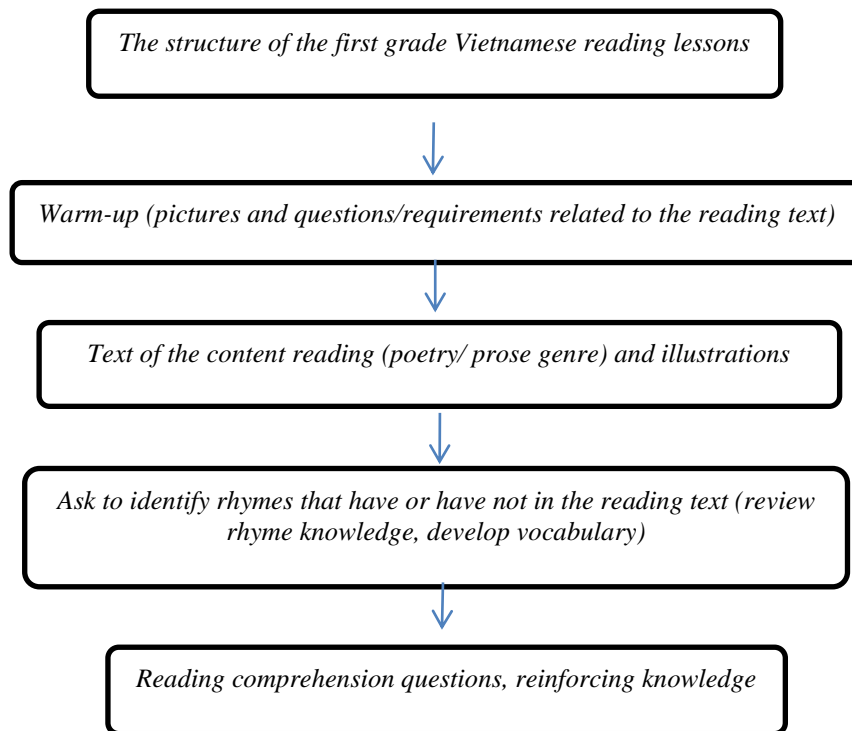
Finally, there is a lack of cooperation between the school and the family of the pupils.

### ***Discuss suggestions for developing first year pupils' Vietnamese reading skills***

From the above issues, the author gives suggestions and recommendations to overcome difficulties in the process of improving the ability to use Vietnamese in reading skills for first-year pupils as follows:

### ***Methods and creativity in teaching and learning first year Vietnamese reading skills***

Based on the first year Vietnamese learning program's duration, reading skills is taught and learned for 70 minutes per week across two classes (35 minutes per class for primary school). In the first year Vietnamese textbook - Creative Horizons - Volum 2, edited by Bui Manh Hung (2020), the structure of the reading lessons comprises content and reading comprehension and reading fluency requirements, which are modeled as follows:



*Model 1. Structure of first year Vietnamese reading lesson*

Firstly, teachers must meet professional requirements, possess good knowledge and constantly innovate teaching methods. They must also prepare lesson plans that are tailored to the pupils' needs and place the pupils at the center of the lessons to generate their interest and love for reading and facilitate their learning process.

Secondly, teachers should be flexible and guide the pupils to master the rules of rhyming and word matching in first year Vietnamese reading. Additionally, they should help the pupils memorize the meaning of each word in the appropriate context.

Thirdly, teacher should focus on developing first year pupils' Vietnamese reading skills by enhancing their observation and communication abilities.

Fourth, to make teaching and learning reading skills more effective for first-year pupils, teachers should prepare in three stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading.

- Pre-reading: During the pre-reading stage, teachers should briefly introduce the topic of the reading lesson and use visual aids, animations, pictures of vocabulary, grammar, songs, word guessing games, or questions to generate pupils' interest and facilitate their understanding of the lesson's content.

Example 4: The teacher shows a picture of Chinh Nghia Primary School yard in District 5, HCMC during recess (figure 1) and asks the pupils some questions about the lesson 3 in page 86-87, The first year Vietnamese Textbook - Creative horizon, volume 2 (Hung, 2020).

Question 1: What are the pupils in the picture doing?

Question 2: What do you usually do at the playtime?

pupils look at the picture to answer two questions:

Question 1: Some pupils are chatting together, many groups of schoolboys are playing shuttlecock kicking, and chasing around. Four schoolgirls are sitting around to share snacks and soft drink.

Question 2: I often play soccer or sometime participate in some silly competitions as picking up the most stones in one minute, etc.



*Figure 1: Chinh Nghia Primary School yard in District 5, HCMC during recess*

- While-reading: These are important activities to develop pupils' reading skills.

The teacher ask pupils look at the poem "Cùng vui chơi (Let's have fun)" by author Ngoc Khoi.

Cùng vui chơi

**Chuông reo reng reng**  
Giờ **chơi** đến rồi  
Nhanh chân các bạn  
Ra sân cùng **vui**



Bạn gái nhảy dây  
Dây bay vun vút  
Bạn trai đá bóng  
Bóng lăn xoay tròn  
Này các bạn ơi  
**Chơi cho khỏe người**  
Vùng **cười**, cùng hát  
**Chơi vui, học vui.**  
*Ngọc Khôi*

English poem:

**Let's have fun**

The bell rings  
It's recess  
Hurry up  
Have fun in the school yard

Schoolgirls jump rope  
The rope soars  
Schoolboys kick soccer  
Ball rolling around

Hey girls and boys  
Play for your healthy  
Laugh together, sing together  
Play fun, learn fun.  
*By Ngoc Khoi*

a. The teacher should provide the objectives of the activities in the reading lesson with the question "What are the goals of the activities in this reading lesson?".

For example, with the poem "Cùng vui chơi (Let's have fun)" by author Ngoc Khoi, the teacher's goal is to help pupils break the rhythm and pause in the right place when they read a poem; develop the ability to recognize rhyme, identify words, develop their souls, cultivate the qualities of kindness, love for friends, and develop thinking and knowledge through exchange, discussion activities and communication in group work.

b. The teacher should read the sample to pupils with a strong accent in places where the main idea of the reading is mentioned, such as "giờ ra chơi" (recess), "ra sân cùng vui" (have fun in the school yard), "chơi vui" (play fun), "học vui" (learn fun); instruct pupils on how to break the beat, stop at the right place such as "Chuông kêu/ reng reng// Bạn gái/ nhảy dây//"; explain new words and difficult words as "chuông," "reng," "giờ," "vui," etc.

Then, the teacher should ask pupils to repeat the new words three times (individually, in groups, and whole class).

Teachers should praise, encourage and correct pupils' mistakes (if they have).

c. The teacher should read the poem and ask the pupils to repeat it once.

Then teacher asks pupils to read the poem silently several times.

The purpose of this activity is to help pupils practice their own pronunciation and self-expression.

d. The teacher should ask three volunteer pupils to stand up to read aloud three paragraphs of the poem clearly.

Teachers should praise, encourage and correct pupils' mistakes (if they have).

The purpose of this activity helps pupils practice their own pronunciation clearly.



Figure 2: The poetry content "Cùng vui chơi (Let's have fun)" (Hung, 2020)

c. The teacher writes some questions about the poem content on the board, and then asks pupils to discuss in groups for 3 minutes.

Then teacher asks pupils to stand up to read aloud the questions and answer them (in pairs).

The purpose of this activity is to check the pupils' understanding and cooperating ability as example:

Example 5: The teacher asks pupils to find in the poem "Cùng vui chơi (Let's have fun)" the words that contain rhymes eng, oi, ươi and then read them aloud as reng reng (ring ring), chơi (play), người (people), cười (laugh).

The teacher asks pupils to look outside the poem about some words that contain the rhymes oi, ươi, ươi and then make sentences with these words.

In this request, the teacher uses pictures, gestures, explanations as:

Example 6 (Ex 6):

- Oi: bơi lội, hồ bơi, etc. (swim, swimming pool).

Ex 6.1: Bạn Na đang bơi ở hồ bơi Đại Thế Giới (Na is swimming at Dai The Gioi swimming pool).



Figure 3: Na is swimming at Dai The Gioi swimming pool (Internet)

- Ưoi: tưới cây, hoa tươi, etc. (watering plants, fresh flowers).

Ex 6.2: Bạn Lan đang tưới chậu hoa đẹp (Lan is watering a pot of pretty flowers).



Figure 4: Lan is watering a pot of pretty flowers (Internet)

Uì: khung cửi, mũi ngửi, etc. (weaving looms, nose smell).

Ex 6.3: Chú chó mực này có mũi ngửi rất thính (This black dog has a very good nose).



Figure 5: 18th century hand loom and the black dog has a very good nose (Internet)

- Post-reading: This is the last stage of teaching and learning reading skills process. Teacher checks pupils' understanding ability by asking some questions to develop pupils' reading comprehension skill:

Example 7: The teacher writes knowledge consolidation questions about the reading text “Cùng vui chơi” on the board, then ask pupils to discuss and answer these questions for example:

Question 1. Find the word that indicates the sound of the recess bell. (key answers: reng reng).

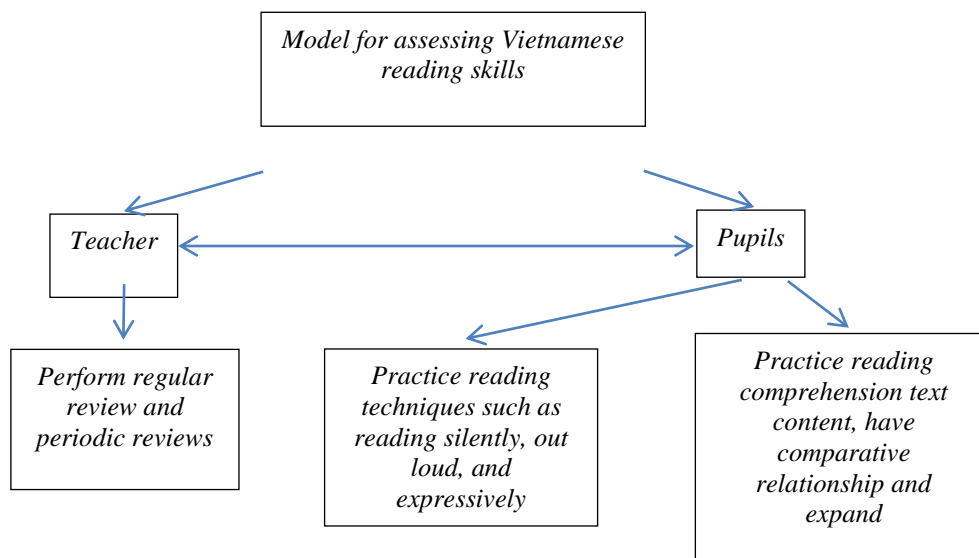
Question 2. What do the pupils do when the bell rings for recess? (key answers: nhanh chân ra sân, chơi nhảy dây, chơi đá bóng).

Question 3. Name the games mentioned in the poem. (key answers: trò chơi nhảy dây (jumping rope), trò chơi đá bóng (playing soccer)).

The teacher asks the pupils to practice ask and answer in free about the activities which they like during recess (some suggestions: chơi đá bóng (play soccer), chơi kéo co (play tug), chơi đuổi bắt (play catching), chơi lò cò (play hopscotch), chơi trốn tìm (play hiding and seeking), etc.

Finally, teacher guides pupils to do exercises in class and homework in the topic 27. Bạn cùng học cùng vui chơi (Learning and having fun together) in page 42 of The first year Vietnamese Workbook - Creative horizons - Volume 2 by chief editor Bui Manh Hung (2020).

Fifth, teachers must have a plan for regular assessment, periodical assessment of reading techniques: reading silently, reading aloud, reading expressively, reading comprehension texts, reading informational texts and the content: understanding content, understand the mode of expression, make comparisons outside the text, expanded reading according to the following model:



*Model 2: Evaluation model of first year Vietnamese reading skills*

Sixth, teachers should make pupil observation sheets according to the regular and periodic assessment model as follows:

Table 2. First year pupil observation sheets in Vietnamese reading ability

Components Name and skills	Positive attitude		Cooperation		Content				Accuracy			Score
	-	+	-	+	Fluency	Pronunciation	Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range	<50 %	≥50 %	≥80 %	
1. An, Le Nguyen Phuc		+		+	++	++	++	-+			++	8.5
2. Anh, Pham Ngoc Bao		+		+	++	++	-+	-+		+	+	7.5
3. Anh, Tu Hoang (Chinese)		+		+	++	++	-+	-+		+	+	7.5
4. Diep, Do Tran Ngoc (Chinese)		+		+	++	-+	-+	-+		+	+	7.0
5. Dinh, Luu Tuan (Chinese)		+		+	++	-+	-+	-+		+	+	7.5
6. Dung, Nguyen Doan Tien		+		+	++	-+	-+	-+	++			5.5
7. Dinh, Phan Uyen		+		+	++	-+	-+	-+	++			5.5
8. Duy, Bui Phuong (Chinese)		+		+	++	++	-+	-+	+	+		6.5
9. Hao, Nguyen Dinh Gia		+		+	++	++	++	++		+	+	8.5
10 Hoa, Lam Trien (Chinese)		+		+	++	++	-+	-+		++		7.5
...												

Seventh, teachers need to understand about groups of assessment methods, assessment tools, and forms of assessing first year Vietnamese reading skills such as choosing assessment methods: observation method, assessment method. evaluate the pupils' academic records and learning outcomes.

Eighth, teachers should ensure the principles of assessment: ensuring validity, ensuring comprehensiveness and flexibility, ensuring fairness, reliability, ensuring regularity, systematicity.

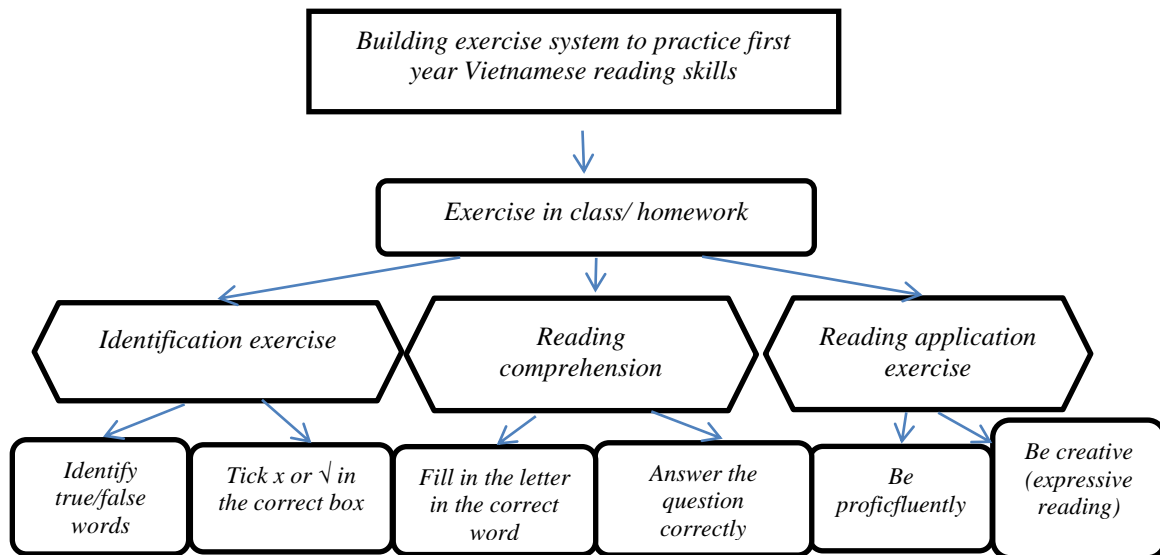
Ninth, teachers should also pay attention to pupils' learning process, training and experiences to understand their strengths and weaknesses as well as influences on them.

Tenth, teachers should prepare tools to assess Vietnamese reading skills through first year Vietnamese reading comprehension exercises, a reading comprehension test that combines two types of multiple-choice, essay and practice.

### ***Building exercise system for fostering practice of first year Vietnamese reading skills***

Teachers should have a clear, detailed and specific plan to assign class assignments and homework to each pupil so that teachers have plans to build the appropriate reading exercise content with the first year level.

Through the author's survey on models of exercise systems, first year Vietnamese reading teachers should design exercises system to practice reading skills as the following model:



*Model 3: Exercises system to practice first year Vietnamese reading skills*

In the model of the exercise system to practice first year Vietnamese reading skills, the reading level increases from low to high:

- Reading recognition exercises are the simplest and most basic exercises as asking pupils to recognize the right word, the wrong word or mark √ (x) in the correct box to train pupils' remembering ability.
- Reading comprehension exercises have a higher level, requiring pupils to think more in their reading comprehension ability and remembering reading content ability for examples: filling in the correct word exercises, finding meaningful words or understanding the content and information of the reading text to answer the questions correctly.
- Applied exercises are exercises of the highest level, requiring pupils to have higher thinking, combining their recognizing and understanding ability about the content of the reading text, the reading practice ability to read fluently, read fluency and expressive reading according to the intonation and situation of the reading content. For example, a reading text with humorous content, pupils should read with the happy voice, a reading text with sad, disappointing content, pupils should have the expressing sad disappointing voice, etc.

Teachers should combine multiple-choice reading comprehension exercises, essay exercises, role-playing stories, and story-telling to enrich pupils' practice.

In addition, teachers should also build more reading exercises in the form of prompts to solve situations related to real life to stimulate independent thinking, attract attention, and love reading skills more.

Teachers should have specific criteria for first year assessing Vietnamese reading comprehension exercises as follows:

Table 3: Criteria for assessing Vietnamese reading comprehension exercises

No	Full name	Learning attitude	Class assignments	Homework	Note
1	An, Le Nguyen Phuc	+++	+ + +	+ + +	
2	Anh, Pham Ngoc Bao	+++	- + +	+ - +	
3	Anh, Tu Hoang (Chinese)	+++	+ + +	- + +	
4	Diep, Do Tran Ngoc (Chinese)	+++	+ + -	+ + -	
5	Dinh, Luu Tuan (Chinese)	+++	+ - +	+ - + +	
6	Dung, Nguyen Doan Tien	+++	- + +	+ - +	
7	Dinh, Phan Uyen	+++	+ - +	- + +	
8	Duy, Bui Phuong (Chinese)	+++	+ + +	+ - +	
9	Hao, Nguyen Dinh Gia	+++	+ + +	+ + +	
10	Hoa, Lam Trien (Chinese)	+++	- + +	+ - +	

The author gives an example to practice first year Vietnamese reading skills as follows:

Example 8:

Part I. pupils read the poem "Bé vẽ (Baby draw)" by author Le Hai and then do the following requirements:

**Bé vẽ**

Bé ngồi vẽ  
 Cái nhà to  
 Kề bậc cửa  
 Bác ốc bò  
 Chú chó mực

Nhắc **gâu gâu**  
Chắc chú giục  
Đi học mau  
(Lê Hải)

English poem:

**Baby draws**

Baby sits and draws  
A big house  
Next to the door step  
A snail crawls  
A back dog  
Barks woof woof  
Perhaps it urges  
Go to school soon  
By Le Hai

Question 1. Circle the letter in front of the correct idea:

1a. How many sounds with the rhyme "âu" appear in the reading text?

A. 1                      B. 2                      C. 3

1b. What animals does kid draw?

A. Bác ốc bò (the snail crawls)   B. Chú chó mực (the back dog)   C. All A và B

Question 2. Based on the content of the poem Baby drew, pupils should mark (x) in the appropriate box:

Content	Right	Wrong
2a. Bé ngồi vẽ cái nhà to, kê bậc cửa. (Baby sits and draws a big house, next to the door step)		
2b. Chú chó mực nhắc gâu gâu, đi ngủ mau. (The back dog urges woof woof, go to bed soon)		

Part II. Pupils choose the correct letter and fill in the blanks to have meaningful words:



**Question 1. Choose c or k?**

1. ...on đường    2. Thước ...ê    3. ...on ...ênh    4. Lạnh ...óng

**Câu 2. Choose g or gh?**

1. ...ế ...ỗ    2. ...ánh hoa    3. Có ...ẩng    4. ...i nhớ

Part III. Pupils read aloud the following Vietnamese prose essay “Mùa đông (the winter):

**Mùa đông**

*Mấy hôm nay, trời mới thật sự là mùa đông. Buổi sáng, bé thức dậy, mở cửa sổ ra. Bé cảm thấy rét buốt. Gió rít từng cơn qua kẽ lá. Bầu trời âm ảm, nhiều mây. Máy chú chim đi trốn rét hết cả, vòm cây lặng im suốt mấy ngày liền.*

*Cành cây bàng trước nhà trơ trọi. Chỉ còn lưa thưa vài chiếc lá đỏ sắp rơi rụng. Trông thật buồn bã làm sao. Dưới phố, người đi đường thu mình trong lớp áo dày và tập trung di chuyển để nhanh được đến nơi ấm cúng. Vậy nên, trông ai cũng thật lạnh lùng.*

English prose essay:

**The winter**

*It's really winter these days. Baby gets up in the morning, opens the window. Baby feels so cold. The wind howls through the leaves. The sky is overcast and cloudy. All birds have flown away to escape the cold, and the canopy has been silent for several days.*

*The tree branch in front of the house was bare. Only a few red leaves are going to fall. It looks so sad. In the streets, pedestrians crouched in thick coats and focus on moving to get to a cozy place quickly. So everyone looks so cold.*

Answer keys:

Part I.

Question 1.    1a. The correct answer is B. 2

1b. The correct answer is C. Both A and B

Question 2.

Content	Right	Wrong
2a. Bé ngồi vẽ cái nhà to, kê bậc cửa. (Baby sits and draws a big house, next to the door step)	x	
2b. Chú chó mực nhắc gâu gâu, đi ngủ mau. (The back dog urges woof woof, go to bed soon)		x

Note: Question 2b. the right sentence is “go to school soon”.

Part II.

- Pupils spell (read silently) one at a time the words in the prose essay Mùa đông (the Winter) before reading aloud them one by one.
- Pupils pay attention to pronounce loudly, read expressively and clearly words (mở cửa sổ, cảm thấy rét buốt, gió rít, kẽ lá, âm đậm, roi rụng, buồn bã, ẩm cúng, lạnh lùng)
- Pupils read seamlessly, without arbitrarily stopping or interrupting for too long in the middle of a sentence.

### Part III. Spelling:

#### Question 1.

Pupils meet the following requirements:

- Pupils copy the correct spelling of the words in the sentences of the question.
- The space between the letters is even, according to regulations.
- The writing is regular, clear, easy to read and beautiful.
- Clean and neat presentation.

#### **Question 2.**

**2a.** Choose *c* or *k*?

1. Con đường    2. Thước kẻ    3. Con kênh    4. Lạnh cóng

**2b.** Choose *g* or *gh*?

1. Ghế gỗ    2. Gánh hoa    3. Cố gắng    4. Ghi nhớ

In addition, teachers should also be flexible about teaching methods and be creative in teaching first year Vietnamese reading skills. Teachers should carefully guide for pupils to understand the requirements and often encourage pupils to practice reading exercises in class and at home with plus points and bonus points.

### **Conclusion**

In order to be more successful in teaching Vietnamese reading skills to first year pupils (Vietnamese and Chinese) in District 5, Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, teachers should have a specific lesson plan on methods, creativity and a plan to design and build exercises system for fostering practice of first year Vietnamese reading skills. Teachers should also flexibly implement the teaching steps as author have mentioned to contribute to easier and more successful reading teaching activities.

Besides, teachers guide pupils clearly and suggestively about the requirements of the reading content to create a comfortable, happy, and easy-to-understand psychology for children. Pupils always must have a positive attitude and cooperation in teaching and learning activities that teachers set out.

In addition, teachers also need to have a logbook for each pupil with criteria for assessing first year Vietnamese skills ability in the context of practice and the development of each pupils. The

assessment content, assessment method and assessment form must be suitable to the characteristics of each skills in the first year pupils.

Last but not least, the paper is not only meaningful in terms of academic, theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and learning activities to develop Vietnamese reading skills for first pupils in Viet Nam but also can be applied to develop reading skills in other languages of the world.

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