Original Paper

Applying Metacognitive Theory in Teaching Vietnamese Reading Skills to Foreign Students

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Abstract

Since the late 1970s, the term "metacognition" has been used to generalize the thinking process of each individual in his or her own thinking. Theoretical contents of metacognition such as: understanding knowledge and thinking of oneself; monitoring and evaluating their cognitive processes; trying to adjust the cognitive process when solving problems... have brought a new perspective in teaching to promote the role of learners and make the process of learning turn the training process into self-training process. Within the scope of this article, we introduce briefly metacognitive theory in teaching Vietnamese reading skillto foreign students.

Keywords

manipulation, metacognition, reading skill, Vietnamese language, foreign students

1. Introduction

In the context of deep and extensive integration with growing knowledge at exponential rates, it is important to have a teaching style that focuses on how to teach rather than what to teach. This will help the learner get better results than recalling, repeating events. If teachers want to form this habit and skill for learners, they need to use learning methods that allow learners to think independently, explore, and discover things based on reasonable guesses. In other words, the teacher needs to turn the training process into a self-training process.

In order to meet the above requirements, many teaching methods are studied and practiced. One of the preeminent methods educators are now adopting and implementing is the theory of "metacognition". This theory originated in the 60s of the seventeenth century; however, it was not until 1976 when the term was officially introduced in the work of "Metacognitive aspects of problem solving" and its content refers to the thinking process of a person and the control and adjustment of that process. So far, there has been a lot of research from theory to practice; from psychology to many other disciplines; from the application of theoretical research in

classrooms to outside the classroom ... with a series of famous researchers such as J.H. Favell, Timothy and Achwartz, Hazt, Ann Brown, Borkowski and Muthukrishma, Phakiti, Broyon, Douglas J. Hacker and John Dunlosky, Flower and Hayes, Myers and Paris, Teong Su Kwang. Inheriting and promoting the results of metacognitive theory, Vietnamese researchers also applied this theory in the study on their subjects such as Nguyen ThanhDuc, Trinh Hong Tinh (2011), "The level of use of cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies of English language students"; Pham Thanh Nghi (2011), "Curriculum of Educational Psychology"; Nguyen Van Thanh (2012), "Practicing metacognitive skills for seventh graders in teaching proportion Mathematics"; Ho Thi Thu Huong (2013), "Studying Metacogitive Theory and Suggesting Applications in Secondary Education"...

Reading is one of the basic conditions for every person attending school. Especially for foreign students learning Vietnamese, reading is becoming the first basic requirement. Reading helps them to occupy the second language actively, positively, and to be applied in communicating and learning. Or, reading is a tool for learning, creating excitement, learning motivation and an opportunity for students to learn and study—This is an indispensable ability in the present time of man. Doing research on reading skills has long earned much interest among researchers including Grice (1975), Myers and Paris (1987), Baker (1989) Pearsons and Stephans (1994), Weaver and Bryant (1995), Maki (1998), Rawson, Dunlosky, Thiede (2000)...

The trend of rapid integration has affected all aspects of the lives of all nations. One of the fundamental implications for human development is that knowledge is also increasing at the rate of exponentiation and narrowing the gap among ethnic communities. The evidence for this is that in ASEAN, students in the world in general and ASEAN in particular studying at overseas is common.

Currently, Vietnamese is becoming one of the languages that many foreigners are interested in and learn. However, learners of foreign languages in general and foreign students studying Vietnamese in particular have many difficulties in learning Vietnamese language and lack necessary language skills and specific language learning strategies. This requires teachers to have teaching methods that are tailored to the needs of the learners.

Recognizing the superiority of metacognitive theory that can be applied effectively in teaching Vietnamese to foreigners, in the article based on theory of metacognition, I put forward some measures to apply this theory in teaching some Vietnamese modules related to subjects students in the Vietnamese language in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Udon Thani Rajabhat University, Thailand. I hope the process will help students develop, improve their reading skills in particular and contribute to improving the skills: listening-speaking-reading-writing to meet the requirements of innovating teaching method in order to turn the "training process into a self-training process".

2. Common Issues of Metacognitive Theory and Teaching Vietnamese Language to Foreigners

2.1 Common Issues of Metacognitive Theory

2.1.1 Concept of Metacognition

The term of *metacognitive* is derived from Greek. In Greek "meta" that means "after/pass" and "Cognitive" that means "awareness/understanding". Therefore, metacognition is awareness beyond thought and mention the higher functions (self-control function).

Since its official appearance (1976), research on metacognition has attracted many researchers in the world and Vietnam: J. H. Flavell, A Brown, Tobias & Everson, H. M. Wellman, J. Wilson, Teong Su Kwang, L. Baker, Vu Dung, Nguyen Van Thanh, Phan Thanh Nghi ... Due to the approach in different areas so there are many different definitions of metacognition. In the context of this article, I introduce some authors with perspectives that many people agree on and give their views on the application of research on their subject:

In 1976, the American Psychologist J. H. Flavell was first person to put forward the concept of metacognition. According to him, metacognition is: "The understanding of the individual is related to his or her own cognitive processes, products and other relevant factors, including monitoring attendance, adjusting results, and streamlining these processes in order to meet a target" (9). In this definition, Flavell has emphasized two processes in the perception, including monitoring and adjusting activity.

According to A. Brown (1987), "Metacognition is the flexibility in knowledge and control of one's cognitive processes" (Brown, 1987).

In "Dictionary of Psychology", the authors said: "Metacognition is a term of thinking of thinking or perception of perception. It's your ability to control your thoughts" (Vu Dung, 2008).

Thus, due to different approaches, the definition of metacognition is very diverse. However, the connotations of the definitions are relatively unanimous in some basic contents such as:

 - Awareness of oneself's thought process

  - Positive and active monitoring of oneself's cognitive process

 - Efforts to regulate cognitive processes in relation with learning tasks

 - Learners find the solutions by themselves

 - Evaluating the process and results achieved against the target (Ho ThiHuong, 2013).

On the basis of studying the definitions of metacognition, in the article I assume: Metacognition is a form of cognition, a process of thinking higher than cognition, including understanding of one's thinking; monitoring and adjusting the cognitive process in the effort of self; improving applicability in problem solving in practice.

2.1.2 Function of Metacognition

When referring to the functions of metacognition, Wilson (1998) pointed out three basic functions of metacognition: awareness; evaluation function; regulation function:

- The awareness function helps the learner to identify himself or herself about what he or she knows or does not know. This function is considered as the basic function for the remaining functions to be more

efficient.

- Evaluation function helps learners to detect strengths, weaknesses in their thinking in specific situations. From there, the learner can choose the right solution to his or her problem.

- The regulation function allows the learner to adjust his or her thinking process. In other words, in the process of solving this functional problem, each individual can manipulate his or her knowledge, adjust his or her thinking, and shape his or her scientific thinking.

Thus, with the above functions, metacognition helps the learner to be aware of himself/herself, his/her tasks, effective problem solving and flexible adjustment in the cognitive process. This helps the learner to improve self-learning, self-awareness, and to assert that innovation of teaching method is completely effective.

2.1.3 The Importance of Metacognitive Theory in Teaching

In the process of training, the teacher and the learner are the two main subjects of the training process, in which the learner is not only the cause but also the goal of the training process. So, I point out some highlights when applying metacognitive theory in performing teaching and learning tasks of these two subjects.

For learners, metacognition have the following roles: first, to help them recognize the available data and form the problem solving direction themselves; second, to help learners to self-assess and self-adjust aspects of learning;third, to make it easy for the learner to follow his or her learning process and in situations that offer appropriate methods of dealing with each situation; Fourth, to help learners develop logical thinking, strategic thinking when solving problems; Fifth, to help learners develop independence and adapt to specific situations.

For the teacher, metacognition has the following roles: first, metacognition supports the teachers during self-training process; second, metacognition helps the instructor adjust different teaching methods according to different learners, different goals and different situations.

Thus, in the process of teaching and learning, the application of metacognition helps learners to promote activeness. At the same time, it helps teachers to think about their thinking process in teaching and using knowledge and skills for learners. From that, it makes the generation of learners to have metacognitive thinking skills.

2.2 Reading Skills and Reading Vietnamese

2.2.1 The Concept of "Reading"

When discussing "reading" and reading skills, researchers came up with a lot of different definitions. In the scope of this article, I am in the view of academician M. R. Lơvôp in "Handbook of teaching Russian language" that defines: "Reading is a linguistic activity, a process of transcribing written words into verbal sounds and understanding them (in the form of pronounced speech), which is the direct transition from the written form to the meaning unit without sound (corresponding to whispering)" (Le Phuong Nga, 2009).

In the above definition, the author have considered reading a quadratic decoding process including: Level 1: script-sound and level 2: script-meaning. Accordingly, reading is not just spelling, pronouncing well with letters, but also reflecting the characteristic of thinking, culture (meaning) hidden in words.

2.2.2 Requirements for Reading Skills

Teaching reading and reading skills of teachers and students needs to meet the following requirements:

   - Pronounce correctly; distinguish sounds, syllables, and pronunciation associated with spelling.

   - Read clearly, fluently and correctly in punctuation.

   - Read expressively: reading in intonation; know how to emphasize in suggestive, sensual words; depending on reading content, the voice can be: *proud, happy, serious, sad ...*; read each language line in the work (words of the author's or the character's ...).

2.2.3 Levels of Reading

Reading is a process that goes from low to high level such as:

a. Read correctly: read clearly, clear words, correct sound (read correctly each phoneme and prosodeme-the bar mark in Vietnamese); know how to pause in the punctuations and semantics of the text; Accurately reproduce text written in sound, voice.

b. Expressive reading:

Expressive reading is the form of reading aloud, which requires to read not only properly but also emotively and to know how to combine intonation with nonverbal elements (facial expressions, gestures...) contributing to describing the content of the text.

In broader sense, the intonation of reading is the harmony of the voice stop, emphasis, intensity, pitch, ... creating the tone of the reading. So, to read expressively, readers not only have to master the correct reading techniques, but also have to perceive the content of text and intend to the listener so that the voice becomes inspirational, creating emotions for listeners (Chu ThiThuyAn, 2011, pp. 22-24).

c. Creative reading

Vietnamese language learners are highly cognitive individuals: they have ability to associate, imagine, and experience in both language and culture in Vietnamese. Therefore, teaching always requires teachers to help students have the knowledge between the content that has been taught, is being taught and will be taught to stimulate the cognitive development of students.

Under the influence of factors such as family circumstances, gender, thinking, practical experience, etc. of different students, the creative reading ability of the students is not the same. However, under the general framework of the program, planning and fostering for students gives them good reading skills and is the foundation for listening and speaking skills to be more effective.

2.3 Training Vietnamese Reading Skills to Foreigners

Like all other subjects, the method of teaching Vietnamese to foreigners also determines that learners are centered. However, learners mentioned here are identified as specific individuals with their own abilities, needs and preferences. Therefore, when teaching Vietnamese in general and teaching reading

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to foreigners, teachers need to pay attention to the following issues:

1) Factors affecting the learning of Vietnamese by foreigners such as: language experience; motivation to learn Vietnamese; learning style; personality and other factors such as gender, age, interest, family circumstance, etc.

2) The main objective of foreigners learning Vietnamese is to communicate. However, the formation of communication skills should be categorized and taught appropriately. Specifically, with four communication skills to achieve: listening-speaking-reading-writing, teachers need to identify the direct communication skills: listening-speaking; indirect communication skills: reading and writing. In particular, reading skill is often required before-during and after school. This is also the basis for students to learn Vietnamese actively.

3) Communication objectives have effects on learners such as: satisfying the needs, meeting the requirements of learning Vietnamese to communicate; promoting, motivating learning; learning Vietnamese naturally occurring; facilitating to practice with specific situations close to daily life.

4) When teaching Vietnamese, the following principles must be followed: Vietnamese must be used as much as possible; situations built in teaching Vietnamese language should be close to daily life; practical exercise should focus on meaning, content rather than form; learners should actively practice and debate with each other;

The above are some methods of teaching Vietnamese in general and teaching reading in particular to foreigners, which teachers should have. In the article, I consider this one of the criteria, the requirements in determining teaching goals.

3. Applying Metacognitive Theory in Teaching Vietnamese Reading Skills to Students of Vietnamese for Tourism at Udon Thani Rajabhat University-Thailand

3.1 Some Measures and Techniques Applying the Metacognitive Theory to Teach Vietnamese Reading Skills to Students

To improve the quality of teaching Vietnamese for students through supplying students with the ability to self-study, self-monitor, self-evaluate, self-adjust cognitive process and learning process of self, in Vietnamese lessons, teachers may use the combination of reading methods and techniques such as:

First, model and explain to students how to monitor, adjust and evaluate the thinking process of their own.

This is an important step before asking students to receive and solve a new thing. Before asking students to do a learning task-solve a problem of reading such as reading text recognition, reading content, reading content analysis ... teachers can play the role of a companion to students to help them identify problems and solve similar problems.

Specifically, teachers can guide students to find the main content of the lesson, indicate the content deployed and indicate the link between the contents. From there, teachers help them anticipate and capture the main points of the content, make assumptions about the direction of vocabulary

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development and adjust the direction of change when facing new problems in addition to personal experience.

Second, in order to deepen the student's problem-solving orientation, the teacher needs to use questions making students think and look at their knowledge and experience related to the problem.

For example, in order to understand the content of the text, the learner should know what the main topic of the reading is, relevant words (forming vocabulary fields), whether there are questions at the end of the text, if so, the questions at the end of the article are questions rewritten or questioned inference or not... From there, students form the most suitable way to read the text.

Third, the teacher must use the questions to get the students attention to the goal of the reading. Students know how to approach and plan their learning activities. From there, students present their ideas on how to solve the problem as well as how to complete the objective of the reading.

Fourth, the process of presenting students and taking steps to solve the problem, the teacher must listen to and adjust the cognitive process of students. Specifically, the teacher asks the students about the steps to solve problems such as whether there are words they cannot read, what words they do not understand, whether they have identified the main content of the reading, what topic is presented, whether they understand the type of question and how to find the answer... In those questions, which sentence is not implemented, the reason, whether they have tried out other alternatives when they asked the questions that did not work...

Fifth, to help students evaluate their cognitive process, teachers use questions that ask them to evaluate the results against their goals and plans. For example, what have/haven't you done with this reading? Is there a plan to solve the issues that have not been resolved?

Sixth, design and encourage students to participate in teamwork. Taking up new knowledge if well organized in group work, it will help students to shorten the time to understand the problem and solve the problem quickly. For reading, teamwork will help students gain knowledge faster, specifically: Through group activities, each member will acquire and adjust their perceptions in reading. However, group work is only effective when requirements are clarified, specifically on problem solving intentions. This will help students form frame of comments, evaluate the team members and adjust their own thinking. The process of reviewing, evaluating and adjusting students help them deepen the content of the reading and reinforce the critical thinking in the face of problems.

Seventh, for any subject in general and teaching Vietnamese reading to foreign students in particular, the repetition of the content, requirements and objectives of the reading is a meaningful work of the framework so that not only teachers but students adjust direction. Thus, the goal of the reading written on the board at the beginning of the lesson and summarized after the session and accompanied by the explanation, emphasis of the teacher's helps students determine the direction of reading content and mobilize the knowledge that is available intentionally.

Eighth, for the study, that the students recording the personal feeling of each particular reading and classin generalis extremely important. This will help students: deepen their knowledge; consolidate, memorize and use fluent Vietnamese; It is the basis for teachers and students to evaluate their progress after a process.

However, it can be summarised measures and techniques on 5 specific steps to design lessons applying metacognitive theory as follows:

Step 1: Define lesson objectives.

Step 2: Assign students to do tasks.

Step 3: Students perform the task themselves.

Step 4: Organize seminars so that students exchange, discuss the implementation process and performance result.

Step 5: Assign students self-evaluate, draw the direction of adjusting the process of performing their tasks.

3.2 Illustrative Example

After completing the study topics: travel, shopping, ... during the review period, teachers can train their students to self-observe, self-monitor, self-evaluate and self-adjust their perceptions through teaching reading skills of the following readings

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READING: TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN VIETNAM

Vietnam has many landscapes that you can go sightseeing. In the North there is Ha Long, Sa Pa, Mai Chau, NinhBinh ...; In the central there is PhongNha, Hue, Da Nang, NhaTrang, Da Lat ...; In the South there is Vung Tau, Ho Chi Minh City, ...

There are so many islands in the sea with wonderful and natural scenery: Cat Ba, Con Dao, PhuQuoc, etc. You can organize your trip or take part in tours. Expedition tours are usually in a package, which means you do not have to prepare for anything but the price is much cheaper. However, take the tour, you will be limited in time. If you have a good group of hobbyists, you should organize yourself because it is cheap and suitable with the needs of the group. At present, more and more foreigners come to Vietnam. Vietnamese people, thanks to better living conditions, travelling in the country and abroad also increases significantly. On summer vacation or holidays, the tourist attractions are bustling, crowded as ants. To meet the needs of rest of people, many companies, restaurants, hotels also stand out as tourism services. Travel companies always compete on price so the tour is quite pleasant.

1) If you want to tour somewhere in Vietnam, consider carefully before deciding to organize your trip yourself or join the tour agency. Hope you have a relaxing, fun and pleasant holiday.

2) Read the article and identify true/false information

	True	False
1. Vietnam has many beautiful landscapes on land and sea.		
2. If you want to travel, you can just travel on tour.		
3. Traveling on tour is usually a package tour.		
4. Traveling on tour you unrestricted time.		
5. Group traveling is more expensive than traveling on tour.		
6. Currently, more and more foreigners travel to Vietnam.		
7. On summer vacation or holidays, the tourist attractions have few customers.		
8. Travel agencies always compete on price.		

2. Answer the following questions

1) Name some landmarks on land in Vietnam?

……………………………………………………………………………….

2) Name some of the sea landscapes in Vietnam?

………………………………………………………………………………

3) How can you travel?

…………………………………………………………………………………

4) What are the benefits of traveling by tour?

………………………………………………………………………………

5) In order to save travel expenses, how should you travel? Why?

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6) Who do the landscapes in Vietnam now attract? Why?

………………………………………………………………………………

7) To meet and attract the needs of tourists; What do companies, restaurants, hotels do?

…………………………………………………………………………………

8) What are the notes for visitors?

……………………………………………………………………………….

3. Find the main points of the reading

1/ ……………………………………………………………………………….

2/ ……………………………………………………………………………….

3/………………………………………………………………………………

Design activities for teachers and students to perform the task of learning:

Action 1: Teacher asks the students to read the content of the readings following 2 steps (silent reading and loud reading). The purpose of this work is to help students understand the script, improve reading ability and through the looking up the new words to comprehend the content.

Activities of students: Students must proceed the following steps:

Step 1: Students must read silently and look up the new word to hold the content.

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Step 2: Students listen to their classmates to read and debug pronunciationthat individuals unread or read incorrectly. This step helps students improve their reading comprehension and reinforce their reading comprehension. Students will recognize the topic of the readings in the title of the text. From there, students start to comment on content related to the topic of Tourism.

Activity 2: Teachers ask students in turn to define the requirements of all answered questions and write down the answers.

The purpose of the activity is to help students identify the three requirements of the question, to plan their individual learning. In other words, students will have strategic answer to the requirements of the question.

Activities of students: After determining the requirements of the question and applying the methods of response, he or she identifies each specific case. Specifically, the student identifies three requirements in the form of: Requirement 1: Based on the text, students answer specific information questions (true/false); Requirement 2: Based on the text, students answer the inference questions; Requirement 3: Students identify the main idea of the reading.

Activity 3: teachers divide the class into groups of students to discuss, exchange ideas related to the implementing the requirements of the lesson and answering the questions: "In the above requirements, which requirements are the most difficult? Why? What did you do to solve this problem?"

The purpose of the activity: to give students an opportunity to present their ideas; It gives the students excitement when discussing the advantages and disadvantages of implementing requirements of the lesson; Students have the opportunity to review and evaluate the thinking of other students.

Activities of students: Students participate in the discussion and give different opinions.

The teacher synthesizes the comments and forms the main ideas:

- With requirement 1: Students get information from the text. If the information is true, students tick. If not, students cross. This is the easiest kind of questions.

- With requirement 2: Students get the information from the text, use their words to answer the question. For this requirement, the student's answer must meet the requirements: 1) True information; 2) Correct spelling; 3) Grammatical correct use; 4) Correct pronunciation.

Activity 4: Teachers explain to the students to solve the problems of the lesson, which arises due to their not understanding the contents of the reading; not determining the content of the questions. Therefore, in order to answer the questions, students need to know the content of the lesson and to correctly identify the question to answer. Teachers guide students to find keywords, the content directly related to the question.

The purpose of the activity: To train students to improve the ability to test, evaluate and recognize the shortcomings of their thinking. From that, they shift their attention and adjust their thinking. This adjustment is the second adjustment in the student's mind.

Activities of students: Based on the above guidelines, students will mobilize the knowledge, answering methods to apply in each specific request. With problems 2 and 3, if the student still has difficulties, the

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teacher can suggest the keywords so that students can focus and answer the question correctly.

Activity 5: Teacher asks students to write their answers.

The purpose of the activity is to help students become confident in their answers and to add new insights into a new lesson, at the same time, to engrave students types of questions and ways to answer the question. So, students will be able to receive the reading from the perspective of self-constructing the outline of the text, forming broad thinking and broadening the vocabulary as well as new cultural knowledge of Vietnamese.

Activities of students: Students will answer the following questions.

1. Read the article and identify true / false information	True	False
1) Vietnam has many beautiful landscapes on land and sea.	X	
2) If you want to travel, you can just travel on tour.		X
3) Traveling on tour is usually a package tour.	X	
4) Traveling on tour you unrestricted time.		x
5) Group traveling is more expensive than traveling on tour.		X
6) Currently, more and more foreigners travel to Vietnam.	X	
7) On summer vacation or holidays, the tourist attractions have few customers.		x
8) Travel agencies always compete on price.	X	

2. Answer the following questions

1) Name some landmarks on land in Vietnam?

Some landscapes on land in Vietnam: In the North there is Ha Long, Sa Pa, Mai Chau, NinhBinh ...; In the central there is PhongNha, Hue, Da Nang, NhaTrang, Da Lat ...; In the South there is Vung Tau, Ho Chi Minh City ...

2) Name some sea landscapes in Vietnam?

Some sea landscapes in Vietnam: Cat Ba, Con Dao, PhuQuoc ...

3) How can you travel?

You can organize trips yourself or take part in tours.

4) What are the benefits of traveling on tour?

Traveling on tour is usually a package, meaning you do not have to prepare anything but the price is cheap.

5) In order to save on travel expenses, how can you travel? Why?

To save money you can organize a tour with some people who have the same hobby. Because self-organizing is cheaper and more suitable for the group.

6) Who do the landscapes in Vietnam now attract? Why?

The landscapes in Vietnam attract tourists in the country and abroad. Because of the increasing living standards of Vietnam and the need to travel more; Vietnam has many beautiful landscapes so it attracts foreign tourists.

7) To meet and attract the needs of tourists, What do companies, restaurants, hotels do?

Companies, restaurants, hotels stand out as tourist services and compete on price.

8) What are the notes for visitors?

Consider carefully before self-organizing your trip or traveling on tour.

3. Find the main point of the reading

1/Introduction to Vietnam's famous landscapes.

(Vietnam has many beautiful landscapes ... Con Dao, PhuQuoc.)

2/Forms of traveling and some characteristics of tourism activities.

(You can organize your trips ... tours)

3/Note when deciding to travel.

(Traditional Vietnamese New Year ... explore the customs of the Vietnamese.)

Activity 6: The teacher asks students to record their journals and travel guides on travel experiences and information in Vietnam according to the reading.

The purpose of the activity: to help students gain knowledge of tourism, improve the ability to use fluent Vietnamese with vocabulary classes specialized; At the same time, it helps students keep track of the progress of their thinking, foster the love of Vietnamese language and be more interested in learning Vietnamese.

Student activities: Students remember more about the climate of Vietnam, the time and types of tourism to meet the needs of tourists.

3. Conclusion

Applying the theory of metacognition in the process of teaching Vietnamese to students, we found that reading skills of students move from the passive (receiving words from teachers) into the process of self-reception and self- adjustment (self learning). At the same time, they also make significant progress in the skills of listening-speaking-writing. This is reflected in the fact that students actively acquire knowledge, are interested in new lessons, make many questions for the teacher. Especially, with the help of technology (telephone, computer ...), students actively study relevant information and respond to lectures of teachers. This confirms that the training process has been transformed into a self-training process and that applying metacognitive theory in teaching Vietnamese to foreign students is effective and preeminent.

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