

Applying metacognitive theory in teaching Vietnamese to foreigners in the direction of improving self-study capacity

Dr. Nguyen Thi Hong Chuyen¹

Abstract

The Article is based on metacognitive theory (concepts, models, functions, importance of metacognition in teaching and steps of applying the metacognition in teaching); the theory and the practice of teaching Vietnamese to foreigners to improve self-study capacity for foreigners then propose 8 measures and 5 steps of applying metacognitive theory in teaching Vietnamese to foreigners ; at the same time, to design illustrative cases to demonstrate the effectiveness of the above mentioned measures. The research results show that: the above application helps learners to actively absorb knowledge, enjoy new lessons, give questions to teachers. In particular, thanks to the combination and support of teaching methods and teaching technology facilities (telephones, computers, smart boards, etc.), learners actively learn relevant information and respond to teacher's lessons. This confirms the effectiveness of that teaching method and help the foreigner's learning process from a passive process to a process of self-reception and self-adjusting.

Keywords: application, metacognition, teaching, Vietnamese, foreigner, self-study capacity

¹ Tan Trao University, Tuyen Quang Province, Viet Nam
Corresponding author E-mail: hongchuyennnvn.tn@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Teaching method innovation is always a matter of concern in order to improve the quality of education and contribute to the general development of the country, the region and the world. Discussing the role of teaching methods in education, educator A. Komenski (17th century) commented: “Education has the purpose of awakening the capacity of sensitivity, judgment, personality development so teachers should find a method that allows teachers to teach less and students to learn more”. This is absolutely true: Teachers cannot teach learners everything they need. Therefore, in order for learners to satisfy what they need, the teacher must put them where they can find those things and help them determine what they need to know and when to use it.

Currently, Vietnamese is interested and studied by many foreigners. However, foreign language learners in general and foreign students studying Vietnamese in particular have many difficulties in learning Vietnamese and they lack the necessary language skills and specific foreign language learning strategies. This requires teachers to have teaching methods to suit the needs of the target audience.

Realizing the superiority of metacognitive skills that can be applied, which gives the effectiveness in teaching Vietnamese to foreigners. In the article, basing on the theory of metacognitive skills, I propose some measures of applying this theory in teaching Vietnamese to foreigners in the direction of improving self-study capacity in order to help learners develop and improve Vietnamese self-study skills such as: Listening-speaking-reading-writing Vietnamese with the aim of turning “training into self-training process”.

2. Content

1. Some issues about metacognition and teaching Vietnamese for foreigners towards developing self-learning capacity

1.1 Common issues of metacognitive theory

a. 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 mentions the higher functions (self-control function).

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, 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.” [10]

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.” [2]

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.[4]

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 oneself; improving applicability in problem solving in practice.

b. Some metacognitive models

Researchers in different fields often come up with different models of metacognition. In this study, we introduce the Metacognitive model of Flavell, Ann Brown and Tobias and Everson for a number of reasons:

- Flavell was the first to come up with the definition of metacognition, so his studies including the metacognitive model serve as the foundation for later studies.

- Ann Brown was the first to distinguish and clearly explain some components of metacognition including: Knowledge of perception and cognitive adjustment.

- The model of Tobias and Everson is the model that we use a lot in research to propose the applicability of metacognitive theory in current teaching. [14]

Within the topic, we apply the Tobias and Everson models to proposing measures to apply metacognitive theory for teaching Vietnamese to foreigners.

Like many other researchers, Tobias and Everson also believe that metacognition is a fine combination of factors such as skills, knowledge (knowledge of perception), monitoring of cognitive processes and learning of a person as well as directing the process. However, they organize their metacognitive model in a hierarchical fashion, considering the knowledge/ understanding tracking as the foundation for the above factors.

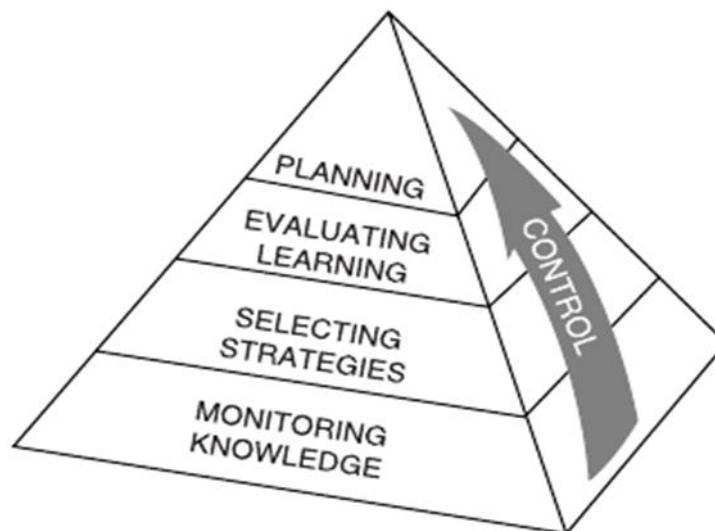


Diagram: hierarchical model of metacognitive processes

(Source: Hacker, 2009)

Note: - Planning: Lập kế hoạch

- Evaluating learning: Đánh giá việc học

- Selecting strategies: Lựa chọn chiến lược

- Monitoring knowledge: theo dõi hiểu biết

- Control: kiểm soát

The two men define that knowledge monitoring is the ability of a person to know what he or she knows and don't know. In their research, they said that if learners cannot distinguish exactly what they know and what they do not know, it is difficult to

participate in metacognitive activities such as assessing their learning, plan or direct that learning process. On the contrary, people who know their own knowledge, they know the core knowledge they need to gain. From there, they can effectively use time and measures for their tasks, making their learning more effective. According to Tobias and Everson, students' first job is planning, including defining learning goals, learning time, product plans ... then, they need to choose strategies, suitable methods to perform that learning task; assessment of learning including evaluating the process and evaluating the results achieved against set goals; This is an important job to give them a basis to adjust their learning.

The hierarchical model is used by Tobias and Everson as a foundation for other jobs, which means that in the learning process, students need to actively monitor their own understanding at different stages, tracking the effectiveness of the methods used to select the optimal method.

The factor that governs this whole process is the control. Control activity to coordinate the learning process or perform their own tasks when learners can make a decision to continue or stop when a certain direction is no longer suitable for the goal.

c. Functions 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 learners 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.

- The 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 learners 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. [13]

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

d. 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 has 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 use knowledge and skills for learners. From that, it makes the generation of learners to have metacognitive thinking skills.

e. Steps to apply Metacognition theory to teaching

The studies of processes or strategies of the metacognition for learners all offer three basic contents: planning, monitoring / adjustment and evaluation ...

In this study, we choose the models of Tobias and Everson to research and propose applicability in teaching at high school for a number of reasons:

First, this model is given as the inheritance and concretization of previous models. In order to be able to plan, choose a strategy or monitor, and adjust, it is necessary to use all the components such as experience, self-knowledge, about the task ... This is a universal model and can be applied in many different fields.

Second, the models of Tobias and Everson are systematic and clear, in which learners easily see what to do first and in solving cognitive tasks, learners always have to pay attention to supervision and monitor. This model helps learners promote their autonomy.

Moreover, in the scope of the proposed research for students, we find that in the development of students' observational and cognitive abilities at this level they can completely learn learning strategies and they are better able to track and evaluate their cognitive behavior from being assisted by others to working independently. Implementing flexibly following the model of Tobias and Everson can support teachers in the teaching process and help students' learning become more effective.

1.2 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 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.

2. Proposing some measures to apply metacognition in teaching Vietnamese to foreigners in order to improve self-study capacity

2.1. Training measures

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 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 class in general is 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.

2.2 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 teachings.

Readings: TOURISM SEASON

In the North, the climate is divided into four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter. January to April is suitable for festival tourism, spiritual tourism, because most of the festivals in the North take place in the spring. From May to September, suitable for sea tourism or resort in the high mountains. October to December is the ideal time for nature lovers who want to explore the wild and majestic beauty of the northern mountainous region.

Southern climate is divided into two distinct seasons (rainy and dry seasons), weather moderate all year round with an average temperature of 27°C. The types of tourism here are quite plentiful such as: cultural tourism, ecotourism, marine tourism, original tourism, community tourism ...

Vietnam's traditional Tet takes place around the end of January and early February. Visitors to Vietnam on this occasion will enjoy the bustling atmosphere of Tet flower markets, experience and explore the customs of Vietnamese.

1. Read the text above and determine the true / false information

	True	False
1. In the north, the climate has four distinct seasons.		
2. Festival tourism and spiritual tourism usually take place in the fall.		
3. From May to September, people often travel to the sea		
4. From October to December is the time when most people travel.		
5. The South has 3 seasons.		
6. In the South, the climate is mild, so various types of tourism develop.		
7. Traditional Tet in Vietnam takes place from January to early February.		
8. Coming to Vietnam on the traditional Tet, visitors will experience and enjoy the bustling atmosphere to welcome Tet.		

2. Answer the following questions

1. Can you name the seasons in the South?

.....
.....

2. Which type of tourism is suitable for from January to April? Why?

.....
.....

3. When should tourists travel to the sea or relax in the highlands?

.....
.....

4. Who likes to travel from October to December?

.....
.....

5. In the south, What are the climate seasons? Can you name the seasons?

.....
.....

6. What kind of tourism will the climate of the South be suitable for?

.....
.....

7. When does the traditional Tet in Vietnam take place?

.....
.....

8. What will visitors to Vietnam and the traditional Tet enjoy?

.....
.....

3. Find the main idea of the text

Design activities (DA) of teachers and students to perform learning tasks

Active 1: Teacher asks students to read and grasp the content of the text with 2 steps (read silently and read aloud). The purpose of this activity is to help students grasp the word surface, improve their reading ability and understand the content of the reading through word searching.

Student activity: Students must proceed through the following steps:

Step 1: Students must read silently and look up new words to grasp the content.

Step 2: Students listen to their classmates reading and correct pronunciation errors with words that have not been read or read incorrectly. This step helps students improve their reading ability and reinforces the identity of the reading content. Students will recognize that the topic of the reading is in the title of the article. Since then, students began to make comments about the content related to the topic of Tourism.

Activity 2: Teacher asks students to take turns to identify the answers to the questions of the article and write down the answers.

The purpose of the activity is to help students determine the 3 requirements of the question in the lesson, and make a plan for their individual learning activities. In other words, students have a strategy to respond to the requirements of the lesson.

Student activity: Students are based on determining the answer requirements of the lesson and applying the answer methods that they define for each specific case. Specifically: Students determine 3 requirements to answer questions to be performed of the following types: Requirement 1 is based on informative answers (true / false); Requirement 2, based on inference question answer; Requirement 3, determine the main intention of the reading.

Activity 3: Teacher divides a group of students to discuss and exchange around the implementation of the requirements of the lesson and answer the questions: In the above requirements, which requirement is the most difficult? Why? What have you done to solve this problem?

The purpose of the activity: to help students have the opportunity to present their individual thoughts; create excitement for students when discussing advantages and disadvantages when implementing lesson requirements; Students have the opportunity to consider and evaluate the thoughts of other students.

Student activity: Students participate in discussion and give different opinions.

Teacher synthesizes the ideas and forms the main ideas:

- With requirement 1: Students determine the information through the reading text. If the match is correct, mark it true or mark it incorrect. This is the easiest post format.

- With requirement 2: Students determine information from the reading text and answer according to their understanding. To this request, the student's answer must meet the following requirements: 1. correct spelling; 2. correct grammar; 3. correct content; 4. Expressive reading.

Activity 4: Teacher points out to students, in order to solve the problems of the lesson if having difficulties, it may be due to: not grasping the content of the text; The content of the question has not been determined yet. Therefore, to answer the requirements, students need to understand the content of the lesson and must determine the correct focus of the question to answer. Teachers instruct students to find keywords, contents that need interest and are directly related to the question.

The purpose of the activity: To train students the ability to check, evaluate, and recognize the deficiencies in the individual's thinking. From there, they have a change of attention and their thinking adjustment. This adjustment is the second adjustment in students' thinking.

Student activity: Based on the above guidance, students mobilize knowledge, methods and answers to apply to each specific requirement. If with problems 2 and 3, students still have problems, the teacher can suggest with keywords in the answer so that students can focus their attention and answer.

Activity 5: Teacher asks students to write the answers.

The purpose of the activity: to help students be confident in their answers and add new awareness about a new content of the lesson. At the same time, indulge students in question types / types and answers. From there, forming for students the ability to receive the reading from the perspective of self-building out the outline of the reading, forming a comprehensive thinking and expanding the vocabulary as well as new cultural knowledge of Vietnamese.

Student activity: Students will take turns to answer the questions

	True	False
1. In the north, the climate has four distinct seasons.		
2. Festival tourism and spiritual tourism usually take place in the fall.		
3. From May to September, people often travel to the sea		
4. From October to December is the time when most people travel.		
5. The South has 3 seasons.		
6. In the South, the climate is mild, so various types of tourism develop.		
7. Traditional Tet in Vietnam takes place from January to early February.		
8. Coming to Vietnam on the traditional Tet, visitors will experience and enjoy the bustling atmosphere to welcome Tet.		

Answer the following questions

1. Can you name the seasons in the South?
-> The North has 4 seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.
2. Which type of tourism is suitable for from January to April? Why?
-> From January to April is suitable for festival tourism, spiritual tourism, because most of the festivals in the North take place in the spring.
3. When should tourists travel to the sea or relax in the highlands?
-> Tourists should travel to the sea or relax in the highlands between May and September.
4. Who likes to travel from October to December?
From October to December is the right time for nature lovers who want to explore the wild and majestic beauty of the northern mountainous region to travel.
5. In the south, What are the climate seasons? Can you name the seasons?
Southern climate is divided into 2 distinct seasons. These are: rainy season and dry season.
6. What kind of tourism will the climate of the South be suitable for?
The temperate southern climate will be suitable for many types of tourism such as: cultural tourism, ecotourism, marine tourism, original tourism , community tourism, etc.
7. When does the traditional Tet in Vietnam take place?
Vietnamese traditional Tet takes place around late January and early February.
8. What will visitors to Vietnam and the traditional Tet enjoy?
Visitors to Vietnam on the occasion of the traditional New Year will enjoy the bustling atmosphere of Tet flower markets, experience and discover the customs of the people.
Find the main idea of the text
1/ Introduction about the northern climate and tourist times of the year suitable to the types of tourism and the needs of tourists.

(In the North, the climate is divided into four seasons Northern mountainous region.)

2/ Introduction to the climate of the South and the tourist times of the year suitable to the types of tourism and the needs of tourists

(Southern climate ... original, communities ...)

3/ Introduction to traditional Tet in Vietnam.

(Traditional Vietnamese New Year ... discover Vietnamese customs)

Activity 6: Teachers ask students to write study diaries and travel notebooks about travel feelings and information in Vietnam according to the readings.

The purpose of the activity: to help students grasp the knowledge of tourism, improve their ability to use Vietnamese fluently with specialized vocabulary classes; At the same time, it helps them keep track of the progress of their thinking, foster their love for Vietnamese and get more interested in Vietnamese lessons.

Student activity: Students remember more about Vietnam's climate, time and types of tourism to satisfy the travel needs of tourists.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Applying metacognitive theory in teaching Vietnamese to foreigners, we find that their Vietnamese skills change from passive process (absorbing teacher's words) to self-receptive and self-absorbing processes correction (self-study). At the same time, listening - speaking - writing skills have also improved significantly. This is reflected in the fact that learners actively absorb knowledge, enjoy new lessons, and give many questions to the teacher. Especially, under the combination and support of other teaching methods (collaborative teaching, constructivist teaching, teaching projects ...) and teaching technology facilities (phone, computer ...), learners actively learn relevant information and give feedback to teachers' lessons.

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