

To cite this article: Dr. Nguyen Tu Quyen and Prof. Dr. Do Viet Hung (2024). READING MATERIALS ON THE TOPIC OF FOSTERING PATRIOTISM FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE SUBJECT, International Journal of Education and Social Science Research (IJESSR) 7 (6): 148-155 Article No. 1000, Sub Id 1576

READING MATERIALS ON THE TOPIC OF FOSTERING PATRIOTISM FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE SUBJECT

Dr. Nguyen Tu Quyen¹ and Prof. Dr. Do Viet Hung²

¹Thai Nguyen University of Education

²Hanoi National University of Education

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37500/IJESSR.2024.7610>

ABSTRACT

Patriotism is one of the five core qualities to be instilled in students as part of Vietnam's 2018 National Education Program. To nurture this quality, various approaches can be utilized, including leveraging the content of reading materials in the Vietnamese language curriculum. This paper identifies expressions of patriotism and analyzes the themes within readings that convey patriotic values to demonstrate how these materials contribute to fostering patriotism among elementary school students.

KEYWORDS: development, quality, patriotism, students, elementary education

INTRODUCTION

Vietnam's 2006 National Education Program focused on content acquisition, leading to a limited emphasis on developing students' qualities and competencies, although these goals were indirectly referenced, as seen in phrases like "shaping the personality of the socialist Vietnamese person" and "participating in the construction and defense of the country" [1]. In contrast, the 2018 National Education Program places a comprehensive focus on developing both qualities and competencies, aiming to "enable students to master basic knowledge, apply learned skills effectively in life, engage in lifelong learning, pursue career-appropriate goals, build harmonious social relationships, and foster a rich inner life, thus leading meaningful lives and contributing positively to national and human development" [2, p. 6].

Language Arts (Vietnamese Language in elementary education) is one of the subjects that plays a significant role in helping students develop qualities under the 2018 Program, given its high aesthetic and humanitarian value. This paper focuses on the role of reading materials in nurturing patriotism in elementary school students. The study analyzes texts from the *Canh Dieu* textbook series.

2. CONTENT

2.1 Concept of Quality

The 2018 National Education Program (General Program) defines quality as “positive traits reflected in people’s attitudes and behaviors, contributing alongside competencies to form one’s personality” [2, p. 37].

2.2 Requirements for Patriotism in the 2018 National Education Program for Elementary Level

Patriotism is one of the qualities aimed to be instilled in students, with specific elementary-level goals, including:

- Appreciation of nature and engaging in meaningful acts to protect it.
- Love for homeland and country, with respect for national symbols.
- Reverence and gratitude toward laborers and those who have contributed to the homeland, including participation in activities to honor their sacrifices [2, p. 38].

2.3 Role of Reading Materials in Promoting Patriotism among Elementary Students

Patriotism has been a long-standing tradition in Vietnamese society. In his article "The Patriotism of Our People," President Ho Chi Minh emphasized, “Our people have a deep love for their country. It is a precious tradition of our nation” [3]. This noble legacy is passed from generation to generation.

Several methods are effective for fostering patriotism in students, including drawing from the content of reading materials. Analyzing images, characters, plots, and themes in these texts can significantly evoke students' patriotic sentiments and deepen their love for nature, their homeland, and their gratitude to those who have served the country. The following provides examples of how patriotic values are conveyed through specific themes in the curriculum.

2.3.1. *Love for the Scenic Beauty of Homeland and Country*

The Vietnamese language textbooks for elementary students (Canh Dieu series) include many readings celebrating the beauty of Vietnam’s homeland and landscapes. Examples include “The Ripe Rice Season”, “The Homeland Banyan Tree” [5], “On Ba Be Lake”, “The Perfume River”, “The Countryside River” [7], “The Skylark”, “The Road to Sa Pa” [9], “The Rural Scenery During Harvest” [11], and more. Although each reading reflects the author’s unique perspective on the scenic beauty of Vietnam, the landscapes are consistently portrayed as both majestic and familiar, evoking a sense of deep-rooted connection. The towering mountains with “steep slopes” and “floating white clouds” in the quiet atmosphere of Ba Be Lake (in “On Ba Be Lake”); the peaceful beauty of the Perfume River, harmonizing with the blue sky, clear water, cornfields, and green grass (in “The Perfume River”); and the golden rice fields surrounding the village with the “scent of ripe rice drifting gently” (in “The Ripe Rice Season”) are just a few of these examples. Sometimes, the homeland's beauty is captured simply through the image of a skylark soaring high in the sky, in the vast and serene countryside of Vietnam (in “The Skylark”). Regardless of how these images are depicted, they consistently anchor a profound sense of pride and longing in the hearts of Vietnamese people. Such readings, which celebrate the

homeland's scenic beauty, profoundly impact young students, nurturing a love for their homeland in their hearts.

2.3.2. Respect for National Symbols

Respecting national symbols is also a reflection of patriotism. In the Vietnamese language textbooks for elementary students (Canh Dieu series), the authors have thoughtfully selected images of national symbols that resonate with young students, making it easier for them to understand the significance of these symbols. An example is the text “Vietnamese Bamboo” [8].

“Bamboo of Đồng Nai, bamboo of Việt Bắc, bamboo spreading across Điện Biên Phủ, and bamboo hedges around my village... Everywhere we have bamboo as our companion” [8, p. 47]. From the very beginning of the excerpt, we see how deeply connected bamboo is to the Vietnamese people. This connection is so strong that, no matter where you are, “bamboo is there as a friend” [8, p. 47]. Bamboo, with its vitality, thrives everywhere, always green and robust. “Bamboo grows tall, strong, flexible, and resilient,” embodying “nobility, simplicity, and spirit” [8, p. 47]. At this point, bamboo is no longer just a plant—it personifies the Vietnamese people, embodying their noble, honest, and simple character.

The image of bamboo in “Vietnamese Bamboo”, with its profound meaning, deeply affects young minds, awakening in them a sense of pride in the Vietnamese people and the Vietnamese nation.

2.3.3. Love for Nature

Nature is an essential part of life, as it provides the necessities for human survival. Beyond this, the beauty of nature nourishes our spiritual lives. Therefore, fostering a love for nature in students is crucial. The Vietnamese language textbooks for elementary students (Canh Dieu series) feature numerous readings focused on this theme.

- Responsibility for Protecting Nature

To instill a love for nature, students first need to recognize its role in human life. “Humans cannot live without green trees. Rice, corn, sweet potatoes, cassava... sustain us...” “Trees act as air filters, benefiting human health...” “Trees provide shade and wood for building homes, furniture...” [5, p. 25]. After illustrating nature's importance, students are guided to take on the responsibility of caring for and protecting it. “Because green trees have so many benefits, we must consistently protect, nurture, and plant trees” [5, p. 25].

In addition to imparting knowledge through informational texts, Vietnamese textbooks also teach students about nature through deeply meaningful stories. For instance, in “The Skylark and the White Daisy” [5, p. 49], the story tells of two boys who trapped a skylark and a white daisy in a cage. As a result, the skylark died of thirst, and the daisy withered in sorrow. Even though the boys “placed the bird in a beautiful box and buried it respectfully” [5, p. 50], the poor bird never came back to life, and

the daisy could no longer bask in the sun's warmth. This poignant story teaches students to appreciate animals and plants, showing the impact of actions and fostering respect for living things. Similarly, in "Everyone is Useful" [5, p. 49], each animal uses its strengths to help care for and plant trees, helping students understand that they, too, can contribute positively.

- *Being Moved by Nature's Beauty*

Loving nature does not always require acts of protection. A heart that responds to the beauty of nature also shows a deep affection for it. Here are some examples:

"Spring arrives without us knowing" [5, p. 22]. At first, the author admits they do not notice spring's arrival. But each "voice of the garden" is delicately observed—the mango tree "boasts new rings of flowers," the jasmine beside the water tank blooms with "intoxicating fragrance," while the mahogany trees burst with "lush green sprouts," and the warblers chirp as they search for insects in the lemon bushes. Only a genuine love for nature allows the author to capture such subtle signs of spring.

Indeed, a genuine love for nature is necessary to fully appreciate the enchanting beauty of Vietnam's landscape. This beauty is reflected in its rich resources ("The sea gives us fish like a mother's love / Nurturing our lives since time unknown" [9, p. 40]); the magical, shimmering beauty of the scenery ("In an instant, autumn leaves fall, winter snow sparkles on peach, plum, and apricot trees. In an instant, spring breezes bring warm, rare gladiolas of black velvet" [9, p. 91]); or even in the serene stillness of midday, "Leaves close, a thousand green eyes / Shadows lie still / In the calm garden" [5, p. 84]. Such readings capture nature's humble yet colourful beauty, evoking emotions in students and inspiring a love for the world around them.

- *Fondness for Flora and Fauna*

As mentioned, Vietnam's nature is rich in biodiversity, with a vast variety of flora and fauna. The authors of the Vietnamese language textbooks thoughtfully selected readings to introduce this diversity, such as "Swallows", "Forest Birds of the Central Highlands", "Welcoming Guests at the Bamboo Grove", "Giraffes", "Baby Elephant", and "The Homeland Banyan Tree" [5]. Such readings help students understand the rich natural resources of their country and cultivate a deep respect and love for this invaluable natural heritage.

2.3.4. Respect and Gratitude Toward Laborers and Those Who Contributed to the Homeland

To achieve the peaceful, independent, and free life that Vietnam enjoys today, countless previous generations sacrificed their lives and defended the nation's sovereignty. The Vietnamese language textbooks for elementary students pay special attention to this theme to educate students on this value. Stories like *The Trung Sisters*, *The Aerial Battle* [7], *Ngô Quyền Defeats the Southern Han* [9], *The Diên Hồng Conference*, and *Citizen No. 1* [10] serve as examples. Vietnamese patriotism is depicted through unwavering determination, as reflected in the rallying call, "Fight! Fi...ght! Please, Your Majesty, let us fight!"—a cry rising like waves... "Fight!" thousands shouted in unison, like a single voice [10, p. 91]; courage on the battlefield ("The Trung Sisters mounted the elephants. The army

trembled as they marched. Spears, crossbows, axes, shields, and clubs surged alongside the shadows of the elephants” [5, p. 70]); and strategic intelligence in battle (Ngô Quyèn ordered soldiers to plant sharpened stakes in the river to ambush the enemy ships as the tide went out, leading to a resounding victory [9, p. 70]). Patriotism is also expressed in a longing for the homeland, a resolute desire to overcome hardships to find a path to save the nation: “I want to go abroad to learn their ways and knowledge, to save my people...” [11, p. 25].

Patriotism is not only found in the older generations. Even young children, who may seem too young to carry significant responsibilities, display profound courage and a fierce hatred for invaders. Their actions evoke immense pride.

“Under the fiery sky,
Like an arrow,
I soar over the dunes,
Piercing through the wind.”
“I unwrap my red scarf,
To wrap the bullets,
As the bombs explode,
Undeterred, I continue...” [9, p. 75]

One child, still school-aged, braves the dangers of the battlefield to pass ammunition to the soldiers.

“Pass the ammunition! Pass it along,
From trench to trench,
To the soldier,
To bring down the jets.” [9, p. 75]

When the enemy’s plane is hit, the child’s joy is boundless.

“I cheer, I leap,
I spread the news.” [9, p. 75]
The child’s image is beautiful:
“Like a small flower,
Blooming in the trench.” [9, p. 75]

There is also the example of a team of young guerrillas carrying out challenging missions, like delivering messages, safeguarding revolutionary leaders, transporting ammunition, cutting enemy phone lines, and entering enemy forts to destroy weapons and capture guns [9, p. 71]. They completed their tasks excellently.

Out of patriotism, these children are unafraid of hardship or danger. Knowing the risks and struggles in the war zone, they wholeheartedly volunteer, wishing to fight and even sacrifice for the nation.

“The National Defense Army marches once more,
With no thought of returning,

To preserve our rivers and mountains,
Marching forth, ready to die rather than retreat.” [7, p. 77]

Their songs “float over the streams, through layers of forest trees, blazing like a fire in the cold, dark jungle night” [7, p. 77], filling us with pride in a courageous, resilient young generation.

While the above readings highlight Vietnamese patriotism in wartime, stories such as *The Navy Soldier* [7], *Trường Sa*[9], and *The Policeman* [10] showcase patriotism during peacetime.

“Steadfast on a small island,
Gun in hand, guarding the sea and sky,
...
Through storms and sunshine,
They stand tall,
Every ship that passes by,
Sounds the horn in salute” [7, p. 67]

Even though Vietnam is independent and free, the navy soldiers remain vigilant, silently guarding the nation’s skies day and night.

Far from the mainland, life in Trường Sa is harsh and challenging, yet the soldiers remain optimistic and determined to preserve national territory.

“Trường Sa, scorching sun and stormy winds,
The coastal tree stands firm with our will,
A small garden with chickens crowing,
Steel guns with sweet songs.” [9, p. 59]

Even as citizens sleep peacefully, policemen carry out their night patrols, “keeping the peace for all homes.”

“While each house falls into slumber,
The fragrant areca flowers release a sweet scent,
The officers stay awake with fireflies,
Watching over until dawn.” [10, p. 124]

These readings positively impact students, encouraging them to respect and feel grateful towards those who have contributed to the country, fostering a deeper sense of patriotism. Additionally, they come to cherish the peace they currently enjoy.

Respect and Gratitude Towards Laborers

Building and defending the nation are two inseparable responsibilities of a country. While the previously analyzed readings discuss the contributions of those who protected the nation, others like *The Oil Rig Worker*, *The Fishing Boat* [9], and *The Broom Sound* [10] celebrate the beauty of laborers who work to enrich the homeland. These might be fishermen, united in collective labor, staying up all night to catch fish, joyfully contributing to the country's development and renewal.

“The sun sinks like a fiery ball,
Waves are latched, and night locks the door.

The fishing boat heads back to sea,
A song fills the sail with the wind's flow." [9, p. 40]

These may also be workers on an oil rig, so busy that their steps and handshakes are hurried, yet their eyes reflect optimism and enthusiasm:

"Young men stride with urgency,
Handshakes quickly as they meet their shift,
But smiles still light their faces,
Close comrades for half a lifetime." [9, p. 37]

Or it may be the street sweeper working quietly at night to "keep streets clean and orderly."

"In the winter nights,
As the storm subsides,
I watch,
The silent streets,
The street sweeper,
Like iron,
Like bronze,
Sweeps the street,
Through the cold winter night." [10, p. 81]

Thus, we see that each person has a different role, but all aim to build a socialist Vietnam. We love and respect them—ordinary yet noble laborers. Helping students recognize this reinforces another aspect of patriotism within them.

3. CONCLUSION

In summary, patriotism is one of the five core qualities that need to be taught to students according to Vietnam's 2018 National Education Program. Various approaches, including modern teaching methods and techniques, can be used to instill this quality in students. However, one particularly effective method is utilizing the content of reading materials. By analyzing images, characters, events, or plotlines in patriotic-themed readings, students gain an understanding of the underlying messages these texts convey, thus fostering and nurturing a sense of patriotism within them.

REFERENCES

1. Ministry of Education and Training (2006), National Education Program (Issued with Decision No. 16/2006/QĐ-BGDĐT dated May 5, 2006, by the Minister of Education and Training).
2. Ministry of Education and Training (2018), National Education Program (General Program) (Issued with Circular No. 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT dated December 26, 2018, by the Minister of Education and Training).
3. Ministry of Education and Training (2018), Vietnamese Language Education Program, Hanoi. (Issued with Circular No. 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT dated December 26, 2018, by the Minister of Education and Training).



4. Ho Chi Minh (1951), Political Report at the Second National Congress, February 1951, of the Vietnam Labor Party.
5. Nguyen Minh Thuyet (General Editor and Chief Author) (2021), Vietnamese 2, Volume 2, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Publishing House.
6. Nguyen Minh Thuyet (General Editor and Chief Author) (2022), Vietnamese 3, Volume 1, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Publishing House.
7. Nguyen Minh Thuyet (General Editor and Chief Author) (2022), Vietnamese 3, Volume 2, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Publishing House.
8. Nguyen Minh Thuyet (General Editor and Chief Author) (2023), Vietnamese 4, Volume 1, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Publishing House.
9. Nguyen Minh Thuyet (General Editor and Chief Author) (2023), Vietnamese 4, Volume 2, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Publishing House.
10. Nguyen Minh Thuyet (General Editor and Chief Author) (2024), Vietnamese 5, Volume 1, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Publishing House.
11. Nguyen Minh Thuyet (General Editor and Chief Author) (2024), Vietnamese 5, Volume 2, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education Publishing House.