

Solutions for developing Chinese language teaching at universities in Vietnam from the perspective of Chinese language propagation

 Chi Tran Linh¹*

¹Hanoi Pedagogical University 2, Vietnam; tranlinhchi180186@gmail.com (C.T.L.).

Abstract: This comprehensive study investigates the development and current landscape of Chinese language education in Vietnam, contextualized within the broader framework of international Chinese language promotion initiatives. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study integrates document analysis and case studies from selected Vietnamese universities to evaluate the theoretical underpinnings, historical progression, and contemporary conditions of Chinese language instruction. The findings indicate that, at a macro level, strategic enhancements are imperative, including the formulation of more effective government policies, targeted training programs for educators, stringent administrative oversight, and the implementation of incentive structures to motivate lecturers. Additionally, fostering educational exchanges with China, expanding collaborative initiatives, and establishing Confucius Institutes are recommended to bolster the program. On a micro level, the study emphasizes the importance of localizing Chinese language instruction through recruiting and professionally developing domestic educators, developing culturally and contextually relevant teaching materials, and adopting innovative pedagogical approaches aligned with international standards. The research concludes that addressing systemic and operational deficiencies is vital for elevating the quality of Chinese language education. These insights offer both theoretical and practical guidance for policymakers and serve as a valuable reference for educators aiming to align their practices with global best standards, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of Chinese language education in Vietnam.

Keywords: Chinese language teaching, Development, Language promotion, Universities, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of China, the Chinese language has gained increasing global influence, especially in Vietnam. Over the past two decades, Chinese language teaching in Vietnam has experienced remarkable growth, ranging from primary education to postgraduate studies, with the university level being the most prominent. Issues related to lecturers, textbooks, and teaching methods have always been given particular attention. Chinese language teaching at universities in Vietnam is not only broad in scope but also highly diverse, meeting the rising demand for language learning and facilitating access to global opportunities.

However, Chinese language education at universities in Vietnam is currently facing a variety of theoretical and practical challenges. From a theoretical perspective, most studies on Chinese language teaching focus on micro-level issues such as lecturers, textbooks, and teaching methodologies, while lacking macro-level research and comprehensive theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, the majority of existing research is qualitative, with a notable lack of quantitative studies. On the practical side, there is an imbalance in teaching levels, a shortage of lecturers both in quantity and quality, and changes in students' career orientations are affecting the overall quality of Chinese language education. The main reason for these issues lies in the absence of systematic planning and limited teaching resources.

To ensure sustainable development, it is essential to establish a complete teaching system, learn from the experiences of developed countries, and improve current teaching models. Researching the development models of Chinese language education in Vietnam can help address existing problems and meet global demands.

This article combines both theoretical and practical perspectives in examining Chinese language education in Vietnam and proposes several solutions for the development of Chinese language teaching at Vietnamese universities from the standpoint of Chinese language promotion. The aim is to provide valuable references for policymakers on Chinese language education in Vietnam, as well as theoretical and practical guidance for Chinese language lecturers.

2. Historical Background of the Issue

Research on teaching Chinese in Vietnamese schools has attracted significant attention from Chinese scholars. These authors have utilized document analysis methods to review the history of the Chinese language's spread in Vietnam, introduce the current state of Chinese language education in the country, and analyze the favorable conditions contributing to its rapid development. Furthermore, they have applied theories from management, education, diplomacy, and sociology to examine the existing challenges in Chinese language teaching in Vietnam. These include lecturer shortages, low professional qualifications and academic degrees, an unbalanced age structure among lecturers, a lack of textbooks and teaching tools, and more. Based on these analyses, various solutions have been proposed to promote the rapid development of Chinese language education in Vietnam [1-4].

In Vietnam, research on teaching Chinese at universities has also drawn the attention of researchers and educators. Based on a comprehensive review of the existing literature, several research directions can be identified:

First, research on teaching methods, scholars have paid attention to explaining the teaching of linguistic elements such as grammar, vocabulary, Chinese characters, and phonetics, as well as different types of classes such as speaking, comprehensive courses, and listening. The most recent teaching method discussed is task-based learning. For example, Dao [5] analyzed the development of Sino-Vietnamese vocabulary and proposed methods for utilizing Sino-Vietnamese words to support Chinese vocabulary teaching. The conclusion demonstrated that leveraging Sino-Vietnamese words is one of the most effective methods in teaching Chinese vocabulary in Vietnam [5]. Phung [6] compared passive sentences in Chinese and Vietnamese, thereby identifying the difficulties that Vietnamese students encounter when learning passive sentences in Chinese. The study proposed suitable teaching methods and techniques, conducted classroom experiments, and analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of teaching method reforms Phung [6]. Wang, et al. [7] a Chinese scholar, focused on teaching Chinese characters to Vietnamese students. The author pointed out that learning Chinese characters is a major challenge for Vietnamese students, significantly affecting the efficiency of Chinese language teaching. The study analyzed common errors made by Vietnamese students in writing Chinese characters at elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels and suggested necessary and appropriate teaching methods [7].

Tran [4] conducted a practical and pioneering study on task-based learning in teaching Chinese as a foreign language in Vietnam. The author presented the theoretical foundation, characteristics, and implementation procedures of task-based learning through designing classroom activities for intermediate-level Chinese speaking courses. The study also surveyed the current situation of speaking classes for second-year students majoring in Chinese at the University of Languages and International Studies – Vietnam National University, Hanoi, analyzed the feasibility of task-based learning, and anticipated potential challenges. Unlike previous studies, this paper designed tasks that fit Vietnamese students' personalities and learning styles, making it highly applicable [4].

Second, research related to textbooks, scholars have focused on three main aspects of Chinese textbooks in Vietnam: textbook compilation, textbook usage, and textbook evaluation. The conclusions and proposals from these studies generally support the development and localization of Chinese

textbooks in Vietnam. According to the international Chinese textbook research framework proposed by Yu, et al. [8] current textbook research includes seven aspects: textbook history, textbook nature, textbook compilation, textbook analysis, textbook evaluation, textbook usage, and textbook promotion. This indicates that Chinese textbook research in Vietnam still requires updates, supplementation in content, methodology, and approaches. For example, Dang [9] surveyed advanced-level Chinese reading textbooks used in Vietnamese universities and selected three representative sets for her study: “*Advanced Chinese Reading Textbook*”, “*Modern Chinese Reading Textbook*”, and “*Developing Chinese: Advanced Reading*”. Through comparative analysis of textbook structure, text selection, and exercise design, the study pointed out commonalities and differences among the textbooks and provided conclusions. Dang [9] emphasized that Vietnamese-compiled textbooks need improvement and further research to develop distinctive features. The author concluded with reflections on compiling advanced Chinese reading textbooks in Vietnam Dang [9]. Nguyen [10] studied the feasibility of using *Journey to the West* as an audiovisual teaching material in Chinese classes. The study concluded that using audiovisual textbooks is entirely feasible and that watching films can stimulate students’ multiple senses (vision and hearing), enhance concentration, and improve teaching effectiveness Nguyen [10]. Tran [11] evaluated three elementary-level comprehensive Chinese textbooks from China (*New Practical Chinese Reader*, *Chinese Course*, and *Developing Chinese*) from a Vietnamese perspective. Based on Liu and Motoda [12] “Five Characteristics” principle, the study indicated significant differences in compilation viewpoints, text selection, vocabulary, annotations, and grammar among the three textbooks. Among them, *Developing Chinese* offers more advantages and support for Vietnamese learners. *New Practical Chinese Reader* has a more complete compilation framework but is limited by its use of English vocabulary annotations. *Chinese Course* overcomes this drawback by using bilingual annotations (Chinese and English), yet its compilation framework remains incomplete, with inconsistent content, resulting in lower quality and disadvantages for Vietnamese learners [11].

Third, research related to lecturers, lecturers play a crucial role in the entire teaching process; thus, research on lecturer-related issues is indispensable. Global research on Chinese language teaching focuses on areas such as local and localized lecturers, lecturer training, lecturer competency standards, and professional development. In Vietnam, the shortage and quality of Chinese language lecturers are the most prominent issues. These problems are reflected in the low educational qualifications and titles of lecturers and the severe imbalance in the lecturer-student ratio. Many studies have shown that Vietnamese Chinese lecturers often have limited Chinese proficiency and teaching theory knowledge, insufficient professional training, and are frequently assigned multiple duties. These shortcomings fail to meet the diverse requirements of different teaching forms and levels [1, 2, 13].

According to Jiang [14] current studies on Chinese language teaching in Vietnam still have many limitations in both quantity and quality. Vietnam has yet to establish a systematic discipline for Chinese language teaching; there are very few in-depth studies with high academic value. Research methods remain monotonous, primarily relying on document analysis; the theoretical foundation is weak. Despite a good trend toward interdisciplinary integration, the combination with research achievements from other fields remains superficial and insufficient. Academic research activities on specialized topics, although present, have not been strongly promoted. All of these factors reflect that the field of Chinese language teaching research in Vietnam is still in its infancy, with significant potential for development. This requires joint efforts from Vietnamese scholars for further advancement.

3. Research Methods

This article employs the literature review method to systematize existing research related to the teaching of Chinese in Vietnam. Through the review of relevant documents, it identifies existing issues in both research and practice regarding the teaching of Chinese in Vietnam. These issues serve as the starting point for this study.

The article also adopts a comparative method from a global perspective, referencing the development of Chinese language teaching in other countries. By comparing the current state of

Chinese language teaching in Vietnam with that in other nations, the study aims to determine whether Vietnam's situation is normal or atypical. Additionally, it seeks to learn from international experiences and to reflect on potential directions and development strategies for the future of Chinese language teaching in Vietnam.

Based on foundational theories, this article engages in theoretical reflection, striving to identify and synthesize the rules governing the dissemination of the Chinese language during the development process of Chinese language teaching in Vietnam. Finally, it proposes appropriate development directions and an ideal model for the sustainable growth of Chinese language teaching in Vietnam.

4. Results

4.1. Theoretical Issues in Chinese Language Teaching in Vietnam

4.1.1. Related Concepts

4.1.1.1. Chinese And Chinese of the Overseas Chinese Community

Chinese refers to the language of the Han ethnic group, which is also the common language of communication in China and is widely used around the world. Modern Chinese (Mandarin) is based on the Beijing dialect and draws from Northern dialects. In Vietnam, the Chinese language is referred to by several names, including “Hán ngữ,” “tiếng Trung Quốc” (Chinese), “tiếng Trung” (Chinese), and “Hoa ngữ” (Chinese of the overseas Chinese community).

The term “tiếng Trung” is often used to refer specifically to Chinese characters, while “Hoa ngữ” is more commonly used in Southern Vietnam, particularly among the Hoa (ethnic Chinese) community. As of 2007, the Hoa population in Vietnam was approximately 1.1 million people, and learning Chinese helps them maintain their connection to their ancestral homeland. Chinese is mainly taught in major cities and is considered a foreign language within Vietnam's educational system [14, 15].

4.1.1.2. “Second Language” and “Foreign Language”

A second language is one that is learned and used in an environment where it is the target language, outside the learner's mother tongue. In contrast, a foreign language is learned in an environment where it is not commonly used for daily communication. Chinese scholars tend not to make a clear distinction between these two terms, particularly in the context of teaching Chinese. However, some scholars, such as Stern and Ellis, distinguish between a second language and a foreign language based on the learning environment and the method of acquisition.

In this article, the relationship between second language and foreign language is understood as inclusive, meaning that second language learning also encompasses foreign language learning [15, 16].

4.1.1.3. Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

In Vietnam, there is no natural Chinese language environment. Learners are primarily exposed to the language through formal classroom instruction. Chinese is considered a foreign language, similar to English, French, or Russian.

Chinese language education is mainly offered at the university level, with only a few secondary schools providing Chinese language instruction. Chinese is not used in Vietnam's political or administrative sectors but is primarily used in commerce and education.

Vietnam's language policy identifies Chinese as a foreign language, marking its shift from a native and cultural language to a foreign language after 1945 [13, 17, 18].

4.1.2. The Development Process of Chinese Language Teaching in Vietnam

Vietnam and China have maintained a long-standing and profound relationship in various fields such as language, culture, and society. Chinese characters served as Vietnam's official writing system for over 2,000 years, from the Western Han period until the widespread adoption of the Vietnamese script in the

20th century. Early literary and historical works in Vietnam were written in Chinese characters, and the imperial examination system was also based on this script.

The development of Chinese language teaching in Vietnam can be divided into three main periods. During the period of Chinese domination (from the Qin-Han dynasties to 938 AD), Chinese characters and Confucian culture were introduced and propagated through Chinese dynasties ruling Vietnam. The subsequent Vietnamese dynasties, including the Ly, Tran, and Le dynasties, continued to use Chinese characters for state governance and in the imperial examination system. During the Nguyen dynasty, although Chinese characters were gradually replaced by Vietnamese script, they still played a role in religious ceremonies.

After 1945, following the fall of the feudal monarchy, Chinese characters lost their exclusive status but continued to exert influence. Chinese language teaching was revived in 1991 after Vietnam and China normalized diplomatic relations. Today, Chinese has become increasingly important in Vietnam's education system, reflecting the cooperative relationship and cultural exchange between the two countries.

4.1.3. The Role of Chinese in the Linguistic History of Vietnam

Chinese language and Han culture have had a profound influence on Vietnam throughout history. Chinese coexisted with the development of the Vietnamese language, contributing to the formation of a unique linguistic and cultural system. Vietnamese has gone through six major developmental stages from the 8th century to the present, with Chinese playing a crucial role in shaping the language [19, 20].

Initially, in the Proto-Vietnamese period (8th–9th centuries), Vietnamese society was bilingual: Chinese was used by the elite, while the Vietnamese vernacular was spoken by the general population. During the Old Vietnamese period (10th–12th centuries), Sino-Vietnamese pronunciations significantly influenced the Vietnamese language. In the Middle Vietnamese period (13th–16th centuries), the invention of Nom characters (a demotic script that combined Chinese characters and indigenous characters) helped unify the written and spoken forms of Vietnamese. In the Early Modern Vietnamese period (17th–19th centuries), both Chinese characters and Nom characters were used, while the Vietnamese script was also introduced. By the 19th and 20th centuries, Vietnamese had become a multilingual language due to the influence of French. Since 1945, Vietnamese has become the official national language, replacing Chinese characters and Nom characters, although Chinese continues to play an important role in academic studies and cultural traditions.

4.1.4. The Role of Chinese Language Teaching in Vietnam's National Education System

Vietnam's foreign language policy has long recognized the position of the Chinese language. In 1968 and 1972, Prime Minister Phạm Văn Đồng issued Directive 43-TTg and Decision 251-TTg to promote the teaching and learning of foreign languages in secondary schools. The government officially designated foreign languages as a core subject in the high school curriculum. Before 1973, the government had already established two universities specializing in foreign language education and one foreign language research center.

Today, there are several universities specializing in foreign languages, such as Hanoi University, the University of Languages and International Studies under Vietnam National University, the Military University of Foreign Languages and Culture, the University of Foreign Languages - University of Danang, and the University of Social Sciences and Humanities - Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, among others. In addition, many other universities and colleges have foreign language departments. The government has also authorized foreign language training centers operated by international organizations to enroll students in Vietnam [19].

4.1.5. *The Status of Chinese Language Teaching in Vietnam*

Ngo [1] proposed the “International Chinese Language Communication Circle Theory,” which divides Chinese language diffusion areas into four circles: the core circle, the peripheral circle, the outer circle, and the weak circle. The “core circle” includes areas where Chinese is spoken as a native language, such as China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. The “peripheral circle” refers to areas where Chinese is an official language, such as Malaysia and Singapore. Vietnam belongs to the “outer circle,” where Chinese is used to a lesser extent. However, more than 60% of Vietnamese vocabulary consists of Sino-Vietnamese words.

Although Chinese has been taught at all levels in Vietnam, from primary schools to universities, Chinese language education remains underdeveloped. There are currently only 44 universities and fewer than 20 secondary schools offering Chinese language instruction in Vietnam, a number that is significantly lower than in countries such as Thailand and South Korea [3, 13, 20].

4.1.6. *Overview of Chinese Language Teaching at Universities in Vietnam*

4.1.6.1. *Teaching Institutions*

Chinese language teaching at universities in Vietnam plays an important role in the development of this language. As of 2013, there were 44 universities offering Chinese language instruction. Public universities such as the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS), Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNU) and Ho Chi Minh City University of Education are the main centers, training students majoring in Chinese language as well as students from other disciplines. In addition, private and semi-public universities, such as Dong Do University and Hanoi University of Business and Technology, also participate in Chinese language instruction. The Han Nom Studies and Chinese Studies majors at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities focus on both classical and modern Chinese. Chinese language training centers also offer short-term courses for a wide variety of learners [13].

4.1.6.2. *Scale of Teaching*

The number of students majoring in Chinese language at Vietnamese universities has remained relatively stable, ranging from 20 to 200 students per university each year. Major universities such as ULIS – VNU Hanoi, Hanoi University, and Ho Chi Minh City University of Education typically recruit around 170–200 students annually. The total number of students enrolled in Chinese Language, Han Nom Studies, and Chinese Studies programs each year is approximately 3,000. Chinese language majors are generally divided into two main specializations: pedagogy and translation/interpretation. However, over the past five years, the translation/interpretation and commerce tracks have increasingly attracted students, while the number of students pursuing the pedagogy track has declined.

4.1.6.3. *Training Models and Teaching Content*

The Chinese language departments at Vietnamese universities are currently collaborating with other disciplines to offer dual-degree programs, enabling students to earn two degrees. For example, ULIS – VNU Hanoi collaborates with the University of Economics and the University of Social Sciences and Humanities to train students who can earn dual degrees in Chinese Language and disciplines such as Economics, Oriental Studies, or Han Nom Studies. The curriculum has also been adjusted to integrate language knowledge with specialized subjects such as Chinese for Tourism, Commerce, Foreign Trade Law, and International Economics. Despite the expansion of teaching content, universities continue to focus on fundamental Chinese language instruction, especially for students in the pedagogy track.

4.2. Current Status of Chinese Language Teaching Development at Universities in Vietnam

4.2.1. Background of Chinese Language Teaching at Five Universities

The five universities studied in this article represent Chinese language teaching in the northern, central, and southern regions of Vietnam. These institutions have a long history and are pioneers in this field. They include:

1/ ULIS – VNU Hanoi: Established in 1955, the university has trained thousands of foreign language lecturers and officials. Its Chinese Language Department has trained over 2,000 pedagogy graduates and 400 translators/interpreters, in addition to offering training courses for Chinese language lecturers.

2/ Hanoi University: Established in 1959, it has offered Chinese language instruction since its founding year and supplies human resources for companies and diplomatic agencies. The university organizes extracurricular activities to enhance communication skills and cultural understanding of China.

3/ University of Foreign Languages, Hue University: Established in 2004, it trains foreign language professionals for the central and Central Highlands regions, with many outstanding graduates in the Chinese language major.

4/ University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH) - VNU Ho Chi Minh City: Established in 1955, its Chinese Language Department was founded in 1997. It trains graduates in pedagogy and translation/interpretation and organizes cultural exchange activities.

5/ Ho Chi Minh City University of Education: Established in 1957, its Chinese Language Department was founded in 1989. It has trained over 3,000 graduates and provides lecturers for primary and secondary schools. The department also engages in research and the compilation of Chinese language textbooks.

4.2.2. Survey and Analysis of Teaching Practices

4.2.2.1. Training Objectives

Training objectives are an essential factor in determining educational goals and improving teaching effectiveness. This study surveyed the training objectives of Chinese Language Departments at five universities in Vietnam. The results show that these universities focus on three main objectives: developing language skills, communicative competence, and socio-cultural competence. All schools emphasize the practice of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation skills, with Hanoi University placing particular emphasis on skills development (54.5% of credits). Universities such as Hanoi University, University of Social Sciences and Humanities - VNU Ho Chi Minh City, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, and University of Foreign Languages – Hue University concentrate on developing communicative competence. Socio-cultural competence is the highest objective, especially at ULIS – VNU Hanoi.

4.2.2.2. Curriculum Design

Curriculum design is a broad concept that includes not only the subjects taught but also the perspectives and teaching methods applied. It relates to students' knowledge, skills, competence, attitudes, and emotions, and reflects the relationship between subjects, students, and society. Foreign language curricula encompass learning processes, planned teaching activities, courses, and the reproduction of cultural consciousness. This study mainly focuses on course structure and time allocation in the Chinese language programs.

Table 1.
Summary of Course Structure and Time Allocation at Five Universities.

University/Type of Knowledge			ULIS – VNU Hanoi	Hanoi University	University of Foreign Languages - Hue University	USSH – VNU Ho Chi Minh City	Ho Chi Minh City University of Education
General Education Knowledge			48	52	40	47	35
Internship			5	5	5	3	8
Graduation Thesis			10	10	7	10	6
Specialized Education Knowledge	Course Type	Language Skills*		72	20	25	39
		Linguistic Knowledge**	21	17	22	29	9
		Integrated Courses***	55		16		20
		Specialized Courses****	17	34	8	25	18
		Other Courses*****	6	9	20	7	4
	Course Characteristics	Compulsory	78	114	68	72	63
		Elective	21	18	18	8	27
		Total	162	199	138	140	139

(In this table, the unit "credit" is used; 1 credit is equivalent to 15 hours of study, and 1 study hour equals 45 minutes.)

Observations Derived from Table 1:

Teaching Chinese at the university level in Vietnam mainly focuses on language courses, which are divided into language skills classes, language knowledge classes, integrated classes, and specialized target courses. Language-related courses account for over 90% of the total courses at these universities, with the University of Languages and International Studies – Vietnam National University, Hanoi (ULIS – VNU Hanoi) having the highest proportion at 94%. The courses are designed following an integrated model, in which the integrated classes serve as core courses and the specialized language skills classes are emphasized to help students develop Chinese communication skills.

Students are required to complete between 140 and 160 credits over a period of four years. General education courses account for 40 to 50 credits, internships account for 5 credits, graduation theses account for 10 credits, and specialized courses account for 80 to 100 credits. Hanoi University has the highest total number of credits, reaching 199. However, there is a large disparity in the ratio between compulsory and elective courses. Compulsory courses make up 70% to 90% of the curriculum. Furthermore, differences in curriculum design across institutions have led to inconsistencies in teaching quality.

One major issue is the lack of extracurricular courses and activities, such as teaching practices outside the classroom, social internships, graduation theses, and extracurricular cultural activities. These activities account for a very small proportion—3.5% for social internships and 7% for graduation theses—limiting students' opportunities to enhance their practical skills and socio-cultural understanding.

4.2.2.3. Teaching Staff

Amid the global "Chinese language fever," the shortage of professional Chinese language lecturers has become an urgent issue. According to statistics released by the Ministry of Education of China in 2006, by 2010, the estimated global shortfall of Chinese language lecturers would reach around 4 million. Vietnam is also facing this challenge, as the current pool of local Chinese language lecturers is

insufficient in both quantity and quality. This situation is negatively impacting the quality of teaching and the overall development of Chinese language education in Vietnam.

Table 2.

The number and academic qualifications of local Chinese language lecturers at five universities.

No.	Universities	Total Lecturers	Professors	Associate Professors		Doctors		PhD Candidates	Masters		Master's students	Bachelors	
				Quantity	Percentage	Quantity	Percentage		Quantity	Percentage		Quantity	Percentage
1	University of Languages and International Studies - VNU Hanoi	63		2	3.17%	22	34.9%	18	33	52.4%	4	6	10.03%
2	Hanoi University	35				18	51.4%	8	17	48.6%			
3	University of Foreign Languages - Hue University	13				3	23.1%		6	46.2%		4	30.7%
4	University of Social Sciences and Humanities - VNU HCMC	29				8	27.6%	10	19	65.5%		2	6.9%
5	Ho Chi Minh City University of Education	21				6	28.6%	2	10	47.6%	2	5	23.8%

The issue of "insufficient in quantity and limited in quality" among Chinese language teaching staff in Vietnam is clearly reflected in their academic qualifications and titles. Although currently around 50% of lecturers hold a master's degree—most of whom graduated from China and Taiwan—there are still no professors specialized in Chinese language, and only two associate professors. Furthermore, the lecturer-to-student ratio at universities does not meet the national standard of 1:22 as regulated by the Ministry of Education and Training. At many universities, the ratio ranges from 1:30 to 1:60. This reduces the quality of teaching and impacts the development of higher education. To improve teaching quality and meet international standards, universities need to expand and develop their teaching staff, ensuring a reasonable lecturer-to-student ratio and enhancing their professional qualifications.

4.2.2.4. Teaching Materials (Textbooks)

Currently, the textbooks in use are mainly divided into four categories: linguistic knowledge textbooks, language skills textbooks, cultural knowledge textbooks, and specialized language textbooks. The five universities select textbooks that align with their training programs. Although there is a wide variety of textbooks, they are primarily grouped into four types.

First, linguistic knowledge textbooks, such as Chinese Phonetics (compiled by Cao Wen, published by Beijing Language and Culture University Press) and Chinese Vocabulary (compiled by Wan Yiling, published by Beijing Language and Culture University Press).

Second, language skills textbooks, such as Chinese Listening Course (compiled by Hu Ba and Yang Xuemei, published by Beijing Language and Culture University Press) and Written Translation Skills (compiled by the Chinese Department, University of Languages and International Studies - Vietnam National University, Hanoi, internally published).

Third, cultural knowledge textbooks, such as *Introduction to China* (compiled by Wang Shunhong, published by Peking University Press) and *Chinese Language and Culture* (compiled by the Chinese Department, University of Languages and International Studies - Vietnam National University, Hanoi, internally published).

Fourth, specialized language textbooks, such as *Business Chinese in 30 Lessons* Zhang, et al. [21] and *Tour Guide Practices* Chen, et al. [22].

The University of Languages and International Studies - Vietnam National University, Hanoi, with the goal of not only developing language and communication competence but also focusing on students' socio-cultural competence while combining theory and practice, has supplemented a variety of related textbooks. Examples include *Teaching Chinese as a Second Language Theory* Liu and Motoda [12]. *Research Methods and Thesis Writing in Applied Linguistics* (compiled by Yu, et al. [8] published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press), and *Foreign Language Assessment and Testing* (compiled by Yu, et al. [8] internally published by the Chinese Department).

There is a large number of standardized textbooks but a limited number of locally developed ones. Among the 68 textbooks currently used at the five universities, 46 are standardized (accounting for 67.6%), mainly published by presses such as Beijing Language and Culture University, Peking University, Beijing Normal University, and Central China Normal University. There are 22 locally developed textbooks (32.4%). Courses on linguistic knowledge, language skills, and cultural knowledge mostly use standardized textbooks. Over many years of practical use, these textbooks have proven their functionality, systematic approach, standardization, practicality, and international relevance, making their application in Vietnam understandable.

Integration Trend of Textbooks and Training Programs: The relationship between textbooks and training programs is an essential factor in Chinese language teaching. The training program is not only reflected through textbooks but is also greatly influenced by their quality. The integration trend between textbooks and training programs has become increasingly apparent, with many studies focusing on analyzing the textbooks in use. Training program design focuses on teaching effectiveness and the suitability of textbooks. New courses and modern teaching models are also implemented through appropriate textbooks. In Vietnam, textbooks are selected based on training objectives and programs, ensuring clear content and instructional goals.

4.2.2.5. *Teaching Methods*

The "three key factors" (lecturers, textbooks, and teaching methods) in Chinese language teaching are receiving increasing attention. However, teaching methods remain a challenging area to grasp and research. Current studies primarily focus on micro-aspects and give little attention to overall teaching models. In Vietnam, Chinese language lecturers mainly rely on personal experience and have not yet mastered teaching theories. Present teaching methods are still influenced by "exam-oriented teaching," causing students to focus on test preparation rather than developing their skills.

Although there is a trend shifting from "knowledge transmission" to "skills training," lecturers still lack in-depth training on teaching methods. Teaching methods at the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels have seen changes, but their effectiveness remains limited due to insufficient professional training for lecturers.

4.2.3. *Student Situation*

At Vietnamese universities, students majoring in Chinese currently tend to choose between two primary career paths: teaching and translation/interpretation. In the past, the teaching track held a dominant position, with higher entrance scores. However, over the past five years, this trend has shifted. The translation and interpretation path is now attracting more students, with an increasing number of registered classes and entrance scores approximately one point higher than those of the teaching track.

Graduates of the teaching major face difficulties in finding employment due to high qualification requirements and an oversaturated market for lecturers. In contrast, students majoring in translation

and interpretation have more job opportunities in various companies, particularly in fields such as interpreting, accounting, and marketing. These positions often offer higher salaries and better career development prospects.

However, the current university training programs still lack extracurricular courses and are not fully aligned with the objective of developing students' socio-cultural competence. The shortage in both the quantity and quality of teaching staff, along with teaching methods that remain heavily exam-focused, fail to meet the demands for innovation in teaching and learning.

4.3. Some Solutions for Developing Chinese Language Teaching at Universities in Vietnam from the Perspective of Chinese Language Propagation

4.3.1. Strengthening the Role of Vietnam's Government in the Top-Level Design for Promoting Chinese Language Education Nationwide

4.3.1.1. Establishing an Ideal Model for Chinese Language Teaching in Vietnam

The most ideal model for Chinese language teaching in Vietnam should be structured as a pyramid:

- Chinese language education at the primary and secondary school levels forms the base of the pyramid, representing the largest scale and belonging to the category of universal education.
- Chinese language education at the university level constitutes the middle of the pyramid, on a smaller scale, and is considered specialized education.
- Chinese language education at the postgraduate level makes up the apex of the pyramid, categorized as elite education.

With such a solid structure, current issues such as the shortage of qualified lecturers, career choices of university graduates, imbalances in the education system, and the lack of Chinese language professionals to meet social demands can be effectively addressed. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to implement the national project titled "Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in the National Education System for the Period 2008–2020" (Decision 1400/QĐ-TTg) issued by the Prime Minister of Vietnam. This project sets a 10-year training standard for foreign languages (including Chinese) in the general education system, thereby supporting the sustainable development of Chinese language education within Vietnam's national education system.

4.3.1.2. Developing a Focused Human Resource Training Plan for Chinese Language

To standardize Chinese language teaching in Vietnam, it is essential to define clear objectives for Chinese language human resource training and establish unified standards for what students at primary, secondary, university, and postgraduate levels should achieve upon graduation. However, due to regional differences in demand for Chinese language professionals (with the South requiring more professionals in business and tourism, and the North focusing on education and translation), it is necessary to develop training objectives tailored to the needs of each region.

4.3.1.3. Strengthening Governmental Supervision of Chinese Language Education

The development of Chinese language education cannot be separated from the supervision of government agencies. Decision 1400/QĐ-TTg proposes establishing a central steering committee comprising leaders from relevant ministries and agencies, chaired by the Minister of Education and Training of Vietnam. This committee will direct and manage all issues related to foreign language education (including Chinese) nationwide. Only with strategic guidance, quality control, and specific targets can quality management become mandatory, and Chinese language teaching be standardized.

4.3.1.4. Improving the Welfare of Lecturers

It is crucial to increase salaries and welfare benefits for lecturers, improve their quality of life and social status, and ensure they can devote themselves wholeheartedly to teaching and research.

In summary, if Vietnam's top-level design can begin with "accurate positioning and goal setting," followed by "scientific design" and "strategic control," and ensure that goals are "fully implemented," it will have a strategic impact on the entire Chinese language teaching system in Vietnam. This will serve as a prerequisite for the sustainable development of Chinese language education in the country.

4.3.2. Strengthening Educational Cooperation between Vietnam and China

4.3.2.1. Establishing Confucius Institutes in Vietnam

As of December 1, 2015, there were 500 Confucius Institutes and 1,000 Confucius Classrooms operating in 134 countries and regions worldwide. Specifically, these institutes are located in 125 countries and regions with 500 institutions distributed as follows: Asia: 110 institutes in 32 countries and regions; Africa: 46 institutes in 32 countries; Europe: 169 institutes in 40 countries; America: 157 institutes in 18 countries; Oceania: 18 institutes in 3 countries.

Confucius Institutes carry out Chinese language teaching and promote cultural and educational exchanges between China and other countries. Their services include: Teaching Chinese language; training Chinese language lecturers and providing teaching resources; organizing Chinese language proficiency tests and issuing Chinese teaching certificates; offering consultation services on Chinese education and culture; organizing language and cultural exchange activities.

In practice, Confucius Institutes have played a pioneering role in developing Chinese language teaching in many countries. The services they offer can help address the current shortages in Chinese language lecturers, teaching materials, and resources in Vietnam, making them an important support mechanism. After years of negotiation and effort, the agreement to establish the first Confucius Institute in Vietnam was officially signed in October 2013. This event marked a significant milestone in educational cooperation between the two countries.

4.3.2.2. Strengthening Exchanges between Universities in Vietnam and China

Since the normalization of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and China, dozens of Chinese universities have established cooperative partnerships with Vietnamese universities, and this number continues to grow. The main areas of cooperation include: Joint undergraduate training programs in Chinese language; training programs for Chinese language lecturers; dispatching Chinese language lecturers to Vietnam based on the requirements of partner universities; supporting Vietnamese universities that do not yet have Chinese departments or majors in establishing such programs

In my opinion, enhancing educational cooperation between Vietnam and China not only helps to resolve the issues of "four lacks and three shortages" in Chinese language teaching in Vietnam (the "four lacks" are: lack of policies, lack of standards, lack of textbooks, and lack of systems; the "three shortages" are: shortage of lecturers, shortage of textbooks, and shortage of teaching methods), but also makes an important contribution to strengthening comprehensive cooperation between the two countries.

4.3.3. Strengthening and Enhancing the "Localization" of Chinese Language Teaching in Vietnam

4.3.3.1. Developing a Local Workforce of Chinese Language Lecturers and Enhancing Lecturers' Professional Development Awareness

"Vigorously training local Chinese language lecturers is an important strategy to address the global shortage of Chinese language lecturers." For many years, due to the limited number of volunteer lecturers or lecturers dispatched from China to Vietnam, a significant portion of Chinese language lecturers at Vietnamese universities are master's and doctoral graduates who have returned from studying in China. However, the number of overseas students is limited and cannot meet the growing demand for Chinese language teaching. The shortage of lecturers remains a major challenge in the development of Chinese language education in Vietnam.

To develop the teaching workforce, the author proposes three approaches suitable for Vietnam's current situation:

First, it is necessary to restore the "lecturer training" orientation in Chinese language education, while establishing a comprehensive Chinese language education system. At the same time, a large number of Chinese language lecturers should be trained at various levels, with a focus on building a qualified teaching workforce and ensuring a sustainable succession plan.

Second, through official Chinese language teaching organizations (such as Confucius Institutes) or joint programs between Vietnamese and Chinese universities, invite dispatched or volunteer lecturers from China to teach in Vietnam.

Third, enhance cooperation between Vietnam and China in providing scholarships to outstanding students at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels. This will create opportunities for more students to study in China or participate in joint training programs. Offering scholarships to students majoring in Chinese is crucial, as many of them will dedicate their careers to fields related to the Chinese language and culture. A significant portion of these students will eventually become Chinese language lecturers at different educational levels in Vietnam, or even prominent Sinologists.

4.3.3.2. Focusing on the Research and Development of Localized Chinese Language Textbooks in Vietnam

Textbooks play a vital role in the teaching system; they are the link that connects various elements and stages of the teaching and learning process. Textbooks not only determine the quality and effectiveness of teaching but also reflect the objectives, principles, content, and requirements of instruction. Developing a comprehensive textbook system is a key factor in the development of any academic discipline and demonstrates the level of advancement of that field.

Textbooks can promote multiple aspects of teaching, including: 1/ Showcasing new teaching methods and theories to advance academic knowledge; 2/ Testing and refining the curriculum, driving course development and educational reform; 3/ Updating teaching and learning strategies through textbook innovation; 4/ Providing a basis for evaluating teaching effectiveness and improving assessment methods; 5/ Incorporating practical teaching experiences into textbooks, which serve as a foundation for future compilation efforts.

Currently, Chinese language textbooks in Vietnam often lack annotations in the learners' native language and are not sufficiently adapted to the local cultural context. To improve the quality of Chinese language teaching, it is necessary to develop localized textbooks with clearly defined educational objectives. This process should involve cooperation between Vietnam and China to ensure linguistic and cultural accuracy.

4.3.4. Bridging the Gap Between Chinese Language Teaching Methods in Vietnam and Advanced International Teaching Approaches

4.3.4.1. Shifting Teaching Concepts: From "Learning for Exams" to "Learning for Practical Use," Focusing on Skill Training as the Primary Goal and Knowledge Transmission as the Secondary

Chinese language teaching in Vietnam has long been exam-oriented, which has produced notable achievements. Many students have achieved excellent results in competitions such as the "Chinese Bridge" contest—for example, in 2004, a student from Hanoi University of Languages and International Studies won first prize. Additionally, many students have scored high on university entrance exams, civil service exams, and qualified for overseas study programs.

However, as society evolves, the demand for practical language proficiency has increased. This calls for a fundamental shift in teaching methodology. Chinese language teaching must transition from a knowledge transmission model to a skills development approach. Knowledge can change over time and is often easily forgotten, whereas learning skills and critical thinking abilities enable students to achieve sustainable, long-term development.

Therefore, future Chinese language curricula and teaching methods should prioritize "learning for practical use," with a strong focus on developing students' communication skills and practical language application as the core of teaching and learning activities.

4.3.4.2. *Innovating and Reflecting on Teaching Methods Under the Guidance of Post-Method Pedagogy*

Post-method pedagogy is a teaching philosophy that emerged in the mid-20th century, going beyond traditional teaching methods. Rather than replacing previous approaches, it emphasizes flexibility, openness, and dynamism. It encourages both learner autonomy and lecturer empowerment. Kumaravadivelu was the first to develop this concept, introducing macro-strategies such as maximizing learning opportunities, promoting interaction, and fostering learner autonomy.

This theory can be applied to Chinese language teaching in Vietnam, especially by transforming lecturers from being mere "knowledge transmitters" into "theorists and practitioners," who develop their own teaching theories based on the realities of their classrooms and students.

To meet these demands: First, it is necessary to enhance lecturer training by organizing professional development courses and inviting international experts to provide training and guidance. Second, the teaching model should shift from "lecturer-centered" to "learner-centered," focusing on developing students' ability to learn independently and think critically. Third, lecturers should increase the contextualization of language input, helping students learn Chinese in realistic, practical situations. Environmental factors such as real-life contexts and collaborative activities should be integrated into classroom practices to foster learners' initiative and engagement.

4.4. *Discussion*

Addressing the existing issues in Chinese language teaching in Vietnam, the author has proposed both macro-level and micro-level solutions in this chapter, providing references for policymakers and practitioners involved in Chinese language education in Vietnam.

At the macro level, two major tasks need to be prioritized:

First, strengthening the Vietnamese government's top-level design in promoting Chinese language education nationwide. This includes establishing an ideal development model for Chinese language teaching in Vietnam, formulating targeted training plans, enhancing governmental management of Chinese language education, improving lecturers' remuneration, and fully leveraging the decisive and promotive role of the government.

Second, increasing educational exchange activities between Vietnam and China. While continuously promoting comprehensive cooperation between the two countries, special emphasis should be placed on educational exchanges to foster the development of Chinese language teaching in Vietnam. Actively promoting the establishment of Confucius Institutes in Vietnam and expanding university-level exchanges between China and Vietnam are vital steps. The operation of Confucius Institutes can serve as a model for Chinese language teaching in Vietnam. Their services can help address current shortages in lecturers, teaching materials, and other educational resources, playing a crucial supporting role in the development of Chinese language education in the country.

At the micro level, two key requirements must be met:

First, solving the "shortage of Chinese language lecturers" should be combined with addressing employment issues for university graduates. Efforts should be intensified in lecturer training, supportive policy research, and investment to meet the increasing demand caused by the "Chinese language craze." Enhancing the "localization" of Chinese language teaching in Vietnam is essential. This can be primarily achieved by strengthening the local Chinese language teaching workforce, enhancing lecturers' awareness of professional development, and focusing on the research and development of localized textbooks. These measures will enhance the intrinsic capacity of Chinese language education in Vietnam, keep pace with the global trend of international Chinese language dissemination, and promote sustainable development in this field.

Second, narrowing the gap between Chinese language teaching methods in Vietnam and advanced international approaches is critical. It is often said that the development of second language teaching abroad hinges on advancements in teaching methodology [21]. This highlights the importance of teaching methods. However, research and implementation of teaching methods in Vietnam have not yet received sufficient attention. Currently, Chinese language education in Vietnam is in a stage of

exploration and construction. It is necessary to understand global research trends, outcomes, and the latest developments in Chinese language teaching, especially focusing on "the three teachings" (methods, lecturers, and teaching materials)—a key area in Chinese language education research.

In light of this, Chinese language lecturers in Vietnam need to shift their teaching philosophy from "learning for exams" to "learning for practical use, "prioritizing" skill training" over "knowledge transmission." Under the guidance of post-method pedagogy, lecturers should reflect on and innovate their teaching methods. Research suggests that Chinese language lecturers in Vietnam are evolving from "instructors" to "theoretical explorers," with classroom teaching shifting from "lecturer-centered" to "student-centered." Increasing the contextualization of language input has also been identified as an effective strategy to improve Chinese language teaching in Vietnam.

5. Conclusion

Research on Chinese language teaching in Vietnam is an important topic within the field of international Chinese language dissemination. This study investigates the current situation of Chinese language education at Vietnamese universities from the perspective of national top-level design. The research methods employed include literature review, field surveys, expert interviews, and descriptive statistics. Through macro-level system analysis and theoretical foundations, the study focuses on five influential universities in Vietnam. The article proposes optimization strategies for Chinese language education that offer valuable references for policymakers and educators involved in implementation. At the macro level, the Vietnamese government should strengthen its role in top-level design, develop targeted training programs, enhance management, and improve lecturers' remuneration. Simultaneously, educational exchanges with China should be expanded, including the establishment of Confucius Institutes to deepen bilateral educational cooperation. At the micro level, Chinese language education should be localized by building a robust team of local Chinese language lecturers, enhancing professional development, and developing culturally appropriate teaching materials. Finally, bridging the gap between Chinese language teaching methods in Vietnam and advanced international approaches remains a crucial goal to ensure quality and relevance in education.

Funding:

This research was financially supported by Hanoi Pedagogical University 2, Vietnam.

Transparency:

The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

Acknowledgements:

The author gratefully acknowledges the financial support from Hanoi Pedagogical University 2, Vietnam.

Copyright:

© 2025 by the author. This open-access article is distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

References

- [1] U. H. Ngo, "Discussion on the development issues of Chinese language teaching in Vietnam," *Chinese Language Learning*, p. 5, 2009.
- [2] C. H. Wei, "The current situation of Chinese language teaching at colleges and universities in Vietnam," *Journal of Guangxi University for Nationalities (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, vol. 26, no. 5, 2004.

- [3] T. Vuong, "Chinese language teaching in Vietnam," *Journal of capital normal university (social sciences edition)*, 2013 supplement, 2013.
- [4] T. M. Tran, "Task-based teaching design in Chinese speaking classes," East China Normal University, Shanghai, China, 2011.
- [5] T. N. Dao, "A brief discussion on the influence of Sino-Vietnamese words on Chinese vocabulary teaching in Vietnam," Suzhou University, Suzhou, China, 2011.
- [6] T. N. Phung, "Discussion on teaching the passive sentence quilt in Chinese-Vietnamese," Suzhou University, Suzhou, China, 2012.
- [7] H. N. Wang, Fujun, Z. Lin, J. Lu, and J. Luo, "Assessment of terrain susceptibility to thermokarst lake development along the qinghai-tibet engineering corridor, China," *Environmental Earth Sciences*, vol. 73, no. 9, pp. 5631-5642, 2015.
- [8] L. G. Yu, Xiaoguang *et al.*, "Direct, nonoxidative conversion of methane to ethylene, aromatics, and hydrogen," *Science*, vol. 344, no. 6184, pp. 616-619, 2014.
- [9] T. H. Dang, "A comparative analysis of advanced Chinese reading textbooks in Vietnamese universities ", Changchun, China, 2012.
- [10] T. D. Nguyen, "Feasibility study on using journey to the west as audiovisual material in Chinese language teaching in Vietnam," Guangxi University, Nanning, China, 2011.
- [11] T. T. L. Tran, "A Vietnamese perspective on Chinese integrated elementary textbooks," Tianjin Normal University, Tianjin, China, 2012.
- [12] H. D. Liu, Manoranjan and H. Motoda, "Consistency based feature selection," in *Pacific-Asia Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining*, 2000: Springer, pp. 98-109.
- [13] T. T. H. Phan, "Impacts of Vietnam's social context on learners' attitudes towards foreign languages and English language learning: Implications for teaching and learning," *Asian EFL Journal*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 169-188, 2009.
- [14] L. P. Jiang, *Theory of teaching Chinese as a foreign language*. Beijing, China: Beijing Language and Culture University Press, 2008.
- [15] W. Z. Hu and Y. H. Gao, *Foreign language teaching and culture*. Hunan, China: Hunan Education Press, 1997.
- [16] D. N. Ngo, "On teaching Chinese as a second language (TCSL) and Teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL)," *Journal of Chinese Language Teaching*, 2006.
- [17] S. L. Chen, *Foreign language teaching in Vietnam*. Hanoi, Vietnam: Vietnam Education Publishing House, 2006.
- [18] A. Q. Nguyen, "Evaluating Chinese language training programs at vietnamese universities amid educational innovation: A literary analysis," *Wah Academia Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 11-42, 2024.
- [19] H. Huang, " On Sino-Vietnamese words in modern Vietnamese," *Modern Foreign Languages*, vol. 3, p. 49, 1990.
- [20] L. Z. Chen, *The current situation of Chinese language teaching in Vietnam in the context of international promotion of Chinese . In Research on international communication of Chinese* Beijing, China: Commercial Press, 2001.
- [21] J. M. Zhang, Yuanzhu, D. Yuan, Y. Liu, and Y. Xiao, "Synthesis of hexagonal close-packed nanocrystalline nickel by a thermal reduction process," *Materials Chemistry and Physics*, vol. 89, no. 2-3, pp. 359-361, 2005.
- [22] G. Chen *et al.*, "Optically induced entanglement of excitons in a single quantum dot," *Science*, vol. 289, no. 5486, pp. 1906-1909, 2000.