THE CURRENT SITUATION OF TEACHERS' PHILOLOGY TEACHING IN SOME SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE NORTHERN MIDLAND AND MOUNTAINOUS REGION OF VIETNAM IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in recent years, the application of information technology in teaching in general and teaching Philology in particular is a requirement to make teaching uninterrupted and help improve efficiency. However, the application of information technology in teaching in mountainous and remote areas of Vietnam still faces many difficulties such as no Internet network or unstable connection. Besides, equipment is inadequate to serve teaching and learning. The level of information technology of teachers and students is still limited… Within the scope of this article, we will present the current situation and suggest some measures to overcome difficulties and improve the application of information technology in teaching Philology by teachers in some secondary schools in the northern midland and mountainous region of Vietnam in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key Words: Teaching, Philology, Information Technology, Covid-19, Northern Midland And Mountainous Region.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of modern education, the application of information technology in teaching and learning is a requirement and an inevitable trend. Information technology has shown an extremely important role, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The application of information technology in schools helps to fulfill the goal of innovating teaching methods and forms. More and more software supports the teaching and learning process, contributing to promoting the activeness and initiative of learners.

In order to achieve the goal of educational innovation, the General Education Program 2018 by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam sets out the requirements in terms of quality and competence, which emphasizes "*Specific competencies are formed and developed mainly through a number of certain subjects and educational activities: language competence, computing competence, scientific competence, technological competence, informatics competence, aesthetic competence and physical competence*" [1;7]. Education researchers also point out that it is necessary to "encourage students to read on their own, know how to collect and select materials in the library and on the Internet to conduct individual or group research, then present and discuss research results in front of the class, practice skills in using information technology to support presentation" [2; 32]. The Ministry of Education and Training has also issued a document guiding the implementation of an information technology application model in schools with four basic classes: communication class, online public service class on home education and training, application and database layer class, infrastructure layer and other

guarantees class [3; 42-43]. Thus, the application of information technology in teaching and learning is a mandatory condition for the current educational innovation to be realized.

In the complicated situation of the Covid - 19 pandemic, many schools have to stop their students from going to school. For this reason, the application of information technology is even more necessary to make teaching and learning uninterrupted. However, in schools in some northern midland and mountainous provinces of Vietnam, due to difficult socio-economic conditions, the application of information technology in teaching and learning activities is still limited. In this article, we conduct research to see the current situation of Philology teaching by teachers in some secondary schools in the northern midland and mountainous region of Vietnam in the context of the covid-19 pandemic.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

In the research process, we used the methods of documentary research, analysis, data synthesis, survey, statistics, interview, objective observation ... We researched relevant sources to serve as a theoretical basis for conducting survey and interview. In the process of collecting teachers' opinions, we used the methods of interview, objective observation, survey, statistics... The survey results of teachers' opinions were synthesized and analyzed to see the current situation of teaching Philology in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in some secondary schools in the northern midland and mountainous region of Vietnam. On that basis, we made specific comments, assessments and suggestions.

We have designed questionnaires and survey forms and conducted a survey with 297 teachers of Philology in some provinces of Vietnam such as Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Lang Son, Ha Giang, Tuyen Quang. The schools we surveyed are located in difficult mountainous areas, which are the residential areas of ethnic minorities such as Tay, Nung, Mong, Dao, etc. We have surveyed in many different ways, such as sending email, exchanging by phone, sending and receiving votes by post, using Google Form tool...

3. CONTENT
3.1. Survey results

We conducted a survey in the form of multiple choice and obtained the following results:

Questions	Result
In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, what teaching methods have been implemented at the school (for Philology)?	A. Face-to-face teaching: 12.1%; B. Online teaching: 11.1%; C. Face-to-face teaching combines with online teaching: 14.1%; D. Depending on the situation to select the methods above: 62.6%
What form of teaching is effective and still safe in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic (for Philology)?	A. Face-to-face teaching: 11.1%; B. Online teaching: 18.2%; C. Face-to-face teaching combines with online teaching: 9.1%; D. Depending on the situation to select the methods above: 61.6%

Could you indicate the level of online teaching of Philology during the Covid-19 pandemic at your school?	A. Seldom: 17.2%; B. Sometimes: 46.5%; C. Usually: 30.3%; D. Always: 6%
What software is used in online teaching of Philology?	A. Zoom: 30.3%; B. Google Meet: 18.2%; C. MS Teams: 9.1%; D. All: 42.4%
How do you comment on students' ability to interact in the learning process when teaching Philology online?	A. Excellent: 11.1%; B. Good: 40.4%; C. Average: 43.4%; D. Weak: 5.1%
Do you use supporting software in teaching such as Mentimeter, Padlet, Kahoot, Quizzi... to increase the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom?	A. Yes: 63.6%; B. No: 36.4%
Do you use images and videos to increase students' interest in Philology class?	A. Yes: 99%; B. No: 1%

Besides, we also conducted interviews to get more specific and clear information.

In online teaching of Philology, teachers use forms and assessment tools such as checklists, multiple choice, study sheets, exercises, tests, scales, rubic, multiple choice combined with close-ended questions, group discussion and question-answering, google forms, academic records, essays, face-to-face quizzes, students work on assignments and take photos to send via zalo...

In some schools in difficult mountainous areas, most of the students are ethnic minority children, so they do not have the conditions to learn online through software. Therefore, teachers assign lessons to students to do on a weekly basis, then they take a photo of the assignment and send it to the teacher via Zalo or Messenger groups. This method has the advantage of testing many skills such as reading comprehension, writing paragraphs, making social and literary essays as well as students' ability to perceive, present, and use language. However, the limitation is that students can easily copy, take pictures and share leading to unbiased examination and inaccurate assessment of students' abilities. Therefore, it is difficult for teachers to detect weak students for tutoring.

The difficulties that teachers face when teaching Philology in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic are: there is no Internet in the locality, if there is, the network is weak, the transmission line in many students' families is unstable. There are not enough computer rooms to study because boarding students are not allowed to use phones. Students are often absent from school, learning is interrupted, the interaction between teachers and students is limited, and students do not have devices to participate in learning and are still timid and afraid to interact. Teachers can't control students, both teachers and students are not proficient in information technology. Class time is a bit short (45 minutes/class), difficult to practice writing skills, teachers do not have measures to interact well with students, their ability to cover students is limited, they do not practice much, do not interest students, cannot control their writing skills…

3.2. Discussion

- The teachers have been very flexible in the teaching process. Depending on each case and specific situation, there are appropriate teaching forms, a harmonious combination of face-to-face and online teaching for the purpose of ensuring teaching quality while maintaining safety during the pandemic situation.

- In the situation of social distancing, online teaching is necessary. However, due to the difficult mountainous area, teaching via the Internet is not popular.

- Teachers have made great efforts to self-study to improve their level of information technology and are flexible in the application of software for online teaching, combining many different software and applications depending on their specific objects and circumstances to help students learn the best. However, the majority of students in this area are ethnic minorities with many difficulties, so meeting the requirements of online teaching has not been as expected.

- In online teaching of Philology, teachers use diverse, rich and flexible assessment forms and tools to suit the actual situation of the locality and students.

- The main difficulty faced by teachers and students when teaching Philology online is the lack of facilities (Internet, teaching equipment) and the limited level of information technology of teachers and students. This requires the support of many forces and the whole system of local government.

3.3. Recommendations

Teachers must strive to improve their ability to apply software to increase the attractiveness and interest of the lesson, attracting students' attention to the lesson. Teachers actively seek out appropriate teaching methods to promote positivity and be suitable for each student, such as assigning many exercises, encouraging students to read and study on their own, etc. Each teacher can consider the following suggestions: applying knowledge to reinforce lessons with question design software, games, quizzes ...to create excitement for students; spending more time investing in essay writing; having flexible and creative teaching methods; applying appropriate technology and teaching methods; actively supervising to improve students' sense of self-discipline and self-study; working closely with parents to manage their children's learning; having a new and attractive way of imparting knowledge, attracting the interest of students; encouraging students to apply knowledge in life; increasing assignments for students to learn at home; being flexible in inspection and examination; always interacting with students, promptly recognizing and rewarding in the teaching process… Teachers need to make full use of available and popular means such as zalo, messenger, facebook, email... and enhance their interaction in the classroom in both online and face-to-face forms via texting, chatting, taking photos of articles and sending them to the group, stimulate students' enthusiasm through group work and competition between groups, such as drawing competition, drawing mind maps, reading contest, reciting poetry, singing songs with music from works of art, storytelling through pictures…

Teachers can change the form of assessment by organizing contests for students, such as storytelling contests about literary works, presentation contests about an author studied in the program and competitions to tell a story about a given picture on a topic related to the work they have studied… The product for the contest is a 5-7 minute clip that is choreographed and recorded by the students themselves. Through such contests, students can have access to and improve their ability to apply information technology, be more excited about learning, and parents can also participate in supporting their children, avoiding the pressure of testing and assessment and developing learners' capacity...

Localities need to invest in infrastructure and ensure stable network transmission for remote areas. Organizations and agencies support teachers and students in areas with special difficulties in teaching equipment (computers, phones that can connect to the Internet, etc.).

Schools also need to have flexible management and measures, such as adjusting program distribution to suit each specific condition, supporting learning devices for students when learning online, combining online learning with face-to-face learning flexibly, combining different teaching forms and being flexible according to the actual conditions of each locality, encouraging students to self-study, developing detailed plans of each specialized team...

Educational management agencies need to train teachers on how to exploit and apply teaching support software in teaching and learning, and improve the quality of online teaching and learning tools. Teachers who have the ability to use a lot of supporting software, videos and pictures when teaching online will contribute to creating learning excitement for students. In addition, it is also necessary to train teachers on how to use some software in assessing students. Schools also need to strengthen close cooperation with students' families in managing, monitoring and improving students' sense of learning.

4. CONCLUSION

The application of information technology in teaching in general and in teaching Philology in particular has a very positive meaning in helping to improve efficiency and innovate teaching methods. The Ministry of Education and Training has also oriented the need to promote the application of information technology at all educational levels and majors. However, in some difficult mountainous provinces, the application of information technology is still limited, requiring teachers to learn by themselves to improve their professional and technological level to apply information technology in teaching and learning. In a stressful pandemic situation, students are not allowed to go to school directly, the appropriate and correct application of information technology in teaching can bring high efficiency. Schools and localities also need to organize training and improve information technology capacity for teachers. In particular, localities also need to have plans to help and support students with learning equipment and Internet connections to be able to participate in online classes.

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