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**Reading storybooks in Vietnamese families
as a language intervention: An activity analysis**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

**The University of Auckland
New Zealand, 2009**

Abstract

Leont'ev understood activity as a mutually influenced process between the subject and the objective world. This process makes changes in both the subject and the objective world. He described activity as a system with its own structure which is created by its basic components and interrelationships among these components and the environment in which the activity exists (Leont'ev, 1978, 1981). In this research, an adapted model of Leont'ev's activity psychology, incorporating Gal'perin's stage model of formation of mental action and concepts (Gal'perin, 1992), and other developmental concepts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bruner, 1977; McNaughton, 1995; Rogoff, 1990, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978), was employed for design, implementation and evaluation of a family storybook reading activity intervention. This new approach of joint activity to early language intervention is the original contribution of the present research.

This research aimed to describe and demonstrate effects of the intervention on individual children's vocabulary and comprehension development, before school and over the transition to school. A semi longitudinal set of case studies combined with a single-subject experimental design was chosen. Less well educated Vietnamese parents were provided with support, in order to develop their children's language, through storybook reading. Six families in Vietnam received storybooks, a workshop with shared reading techniques, a DVD of family shared reading samples, and home coaching sessions.

The data from the Baseline, Intervention and Maintenance phases showed that the parents made changes in their understanding of: Family shared reading benefits, how to select high-quality storybooks and how to set reading goals suitable to their

own child's ability and interest. They also improved their shared reading techniques. Through the joint reading activity, the children's vocabulary increased significantly, especially in using expressive words. Changes in narrative comprehension were recorded. This progress was sustained over a period of 22 weeks after the intervention.

The findings provide evidence of the completeness and generativeness of the theoretical framework for family literacy education. The model acted as a tool to guide a family literacy intervention. The research population was small and further studies in different literacy learning and teaching contexts are needed to enhance its practical implications.



Acknowledgement

This work was made by great contributions of many individuals and communities in both Vietnam and New Zealand.

I would like to thank Khiem, Anh, Huy, Trinh, Nhat and Tan as well as their families, preschool and primary school teachers and principals who were willing to devote their precious time and energy to this project. I would not have been able to complete this study without their collaboration.

I want to thank Thua Thien Hue College of Education very much, especially the principal Hoang Ngoc Quy and my colleagues Thao Nguyen, Mai Phuong who assisted me in designing language tests, organising a family shared reading workshop and inter-observing shared reading and testing sessions. Their support and collaboration enhanced the reliability of the research findings. My high appreciation also should go to Thanh Tra, a Fine Art student at Hue Institute of Arts, whose co-operation produced the pictured vocabulary tests and the family shared reading brochure in Vietnamese.

Many special thanks should go to my supervisors Professor Stuart McNaughton and Associate Professor Judy Parr, whose excellent supervision, great devotion and patience, and endless support and encouragement made the thesis possible.

I am very much indebted to the University of Auckland Scholarship Office and UniLodge Auckland, where provided me with scholarships and financial assistance. I could not pursue my learning dreams without their help.

I greatly appreciate the kind support of academic and general staff at the University of Auckland Graduate Centre, the General Library, the Sylvia Ashton-Warner Library, the Student Learning Centre, the Faculty of Education, the School of Arts, Languages and Literacies, and especially the team of the Woolf Fisher Research Centre. Their assistances were very important for my progress in professional knowledge, information technology skills, language skills, and lifelong learning interest.

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance from my friends Kevin Pope and Moe Fouvaa, PhD students at the Faculty of Education, in editing the English version of my translation from Vietnamese. Their collaboration contributed to ensuring that expression in the final report was accurate.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to my father Tran Minh Ky and my mother Nguyen Thi Lien who are my first and lifelong teachers. They fostered my belief in the role of family literacy, and awakened my interest in this research topic. I would very much like to thank my brothers Tran Xuan Thanh and Tran Xuan Duong, and my sister Tran Thi Phuong, whose whole-hearted help contributed to the completion of my study. I am very thankful to my father-in-law Ha Van Mai, my mother-in-law Le Thi Dang, my brothers-in-law Ha Van Quan and Ha Van Loc, and my sisters-in-law Ha Thi Thuy, Ha Thuy and Ha Vy for their immense love and care. I could not overcome difficulties and challenges while living and studying far from my home country and family without their sincere compassion and overwhelming support. Many special thanks also should go to my husband Ha Van Hieu, my daughter Ha Binh Minh, my son Ha Tran Duc Minh, whose support, encouragement and sacrifices for my study were boundless.



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