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ENVIRONMENTAL CONTENTS IN LAO LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT:

The government of Lao PDR has a clear environmental policy which is specified in the national economic and social development plan. Therefore, environmental issues are included in the Laotian textbooks to raise environmental awareness among children at the elementary school level. This research is a qualitative research with documentary data in language area focusing on Lao language textbooks in Grade1-5. Content analysis was employed. The environmental issues are the physical environment and biological environment or organism.

The results showed that there were 232 words in relation to the environment. There were 70 words about physical environment which can be classified into 30 hydrographic words, 21 climate words, and 19 topography words. In addition, there were 162 words in relation to biological environment or organism which can be categorized into 91 animal words and 71 plant words. In the animal word category, it is found that the most vocabulary found was about wildlife. In the plant word category, trees or perennials were mostly found. The physical environmental terminology related to hydrology is found, including water, rivers, swamps, and floods. Obviously, there were a large number of vocabulary about living things, including wildlife and trees. This reflects that the Lao language textbooks emphasize knowing, preserving, and paying attention to water resources, wildlife especially forests and rivers since childhood.

INTRODUCTION

The Lao People's Democratic Republic or Lao PDR was officially established on December 2, 1975 (B.E. 2518). The Lao democratic form of government with the King as Head of State was changed to a republic governed by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. The government has been striving for reforming the country and developing the citizens' new traits which are related to the new regime.

The students, the vital mainstay for the development of the country, are cultivated with the desirable traits via the teaching and learning in a compulsory education system, and the creation of Lao language textbooks, in the national language, which conform to the social change.

Not only focusing on the Lao literature and language, the textbook is also the government's important tool which collects the way of life, culture, society, and the government's considerable purposes, as well as environmental issues. According to environmental policy on Guaranteeing Green and Sustainable Development in the current 8th National Socio-economic Development Plan 2016 – 2020, the goal has been set to be pursued by 2030, whereby the socio-economic situation is concurrently developed with the good domestic environment, known as "Green economic development". It can be said that economic development must be eco-friendly. With this consideration, all sectors are obliged to implement the environmental policy, so the people are aware of the environmental conservation and human development, as well as the development of the country.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for creating Lao language textbooks. In creating contents for learning the Lao language, it needs to consider the government's priority assignments and the cultivation of environmental awareness for students, especially in elementary school which forms the basis of the country's compulsory education. It can be said that the insertion of the significant socio-economic keystones from the government, the producer of the textbook, is inevitable. The Hidden curriculum concept that the textbook's content not only specifically teaches language-learning objectives and the particular content, but it is also the production mechanism of the nation's citizens in accordance with the ideal of the textbook's producer (Apple & King, 1977; Khongphianthum, 2014). This concept is used to analyze the textbooks of elementary education which form the general compulsory education and the groundwork for the citizens in the pre-stage of the entrance to the educational system. The hidden curriculum in textbooks is not only having in the national language textbooks but the English language textbooks are also present the cultural issues in lesson and exercises (Chao, 2011; Djerfi, 2013).

The analysis of Lao language textbooks in this article aims to explore how the contents in elementary education textbooks teach and insert environmental aspects. The researcher chose to analyze elementary education textbooks because they form the compulsory education in the nation's educational system. When giving priority to environmental aspects, Laos should simultaneously start educating through the Lao language: the definitions, story reading, or illustrations which affect the learning, awareness raising, and the gradual cultivation of environmental aspects. The word "environment" in this article refers to the natural environment. It can include natural-born living or non-living creatures which can be divided into 2 groups: physical environment, such as atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere; and biotic environment, for example plants, and animals (excluding humans). This research will clarify which environmental aspects are prepared by the government, the textbook producer, for their students. It can also show the government's viewpoint towards the nation's environmental aspects.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

This part talks about the analysis of the curriculum and textbooks in foreign countries and in Lao language textbooks. It is obvious that the government, the textbook producer of each country, will approve the insertion of the particular prioritized aspects in the textbooks which comprise format, content, and illustrations (Smart & Jagannatha, 2018). The government's attitudes toward significant national aspects are reflected through national and foreign language textbooks so students can gradually absorb the contents. The analyses on language textbooks are mostly conducted on English language textbooks, as the foreign language or the second language, and the national language textbooks. The analysis of English language textbooks, as the international language taught in Indonesia's elementary schools, shows the Indonesian government's great consideration on moral aspects by inserting 3 essential

aspects in those English textbooks: helping others, behaving politely, and caring (Oskembay, et al, 2020). In English teaching in Australia's higher education, and in the national language teaching for students of foreign languages such as French or Mandarin, Keeves (2007) proposed that the formation of the curriculum and textbooks should also include cultural aspects of the migrant students in the textbooks. It is important to understand that the English language is not the mother language, but it is the international language for this group of students. In addition, many studies on English textbooks mentioned the insertion of significant issues, particularly about morals and cultures, in the textbooks (Banegas, 2012; Rynanta & Cyntia, 2013; Malek, et al, 2014; Shabbir et al., 2019; Shahid et al., 2019). The research on the curriculum development in language teaching in many countries (Peng, 2015; Alsubaie, 2015; Semper & Blasco, 2018; Siddiqi et al., 2019; Sulaiman et al., 2020) proved that social content will have to be put into language teaching because the government needs to develop and form the students' appropriate characteristics to fit into good citizenship roles and conform to the government's development direction.

There is no research on Lao language textbooks from a Lao researcher. However, reports are found in the study of Thai researchers (Mettariganond, 1999; Sarawasee, 2003; Turaluk, 1990; Sintumal, 2011; Shabbir et al., 2020; Usak et al., 2019) who analysed Lao language textbooks published from 1975 to 2009. The studies only covered historical and literature aspects. Therefore, this research completes the picture and covers the aspects of research on Lao language textbooks by using the information of the elementary textbooks published from 2016 to present.

Most of the research studies or articles in the early stage relate to historical aspects. Mettariganond (1999) analyzed Lao history through Lao language textbooks and found that Laos has told its history through Lao language textbooks and formed a nationalist history. Found from Lao social studies, Osatharom (2001) revealed that Laos puts a spotlight on the forming of the Lao people's identity – knowing culture, tradition, and history of the regime change by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, which guides the development of the country. Furthermore, the content focuses on good citizenship, the people's rules and duties, and the unity of the nation. The contents of social studies are different in each level, and relate to the rules and duties of the citizen. Students should pay attention to obedience and being members of the society according to the nation's regime structure and politics. The research results of Sarawasee (2003) and those of Mettariganond (1999) are similar. It shows that Lao language textbooks in secondary school educate about nationhood through historical contents. Sintumal (2011) compared Thai and Lao textbooks to study the formation of Thai-Lao history. It reflects the building of nationalist histories of both countries. The study of Sintumal is different from the previous two studies because Thai and Lao histories are compared at almost the same time. The study of Turaluk (1990) might be the only work which analyzed the illustrations in Lao language textbooks. Pictures of women in Lao textbooks represent the modern Lao women who want to create benefits for the society while conserving the traditional women's practices: appropriate manners, mellifluousness, responsibility for house chores, and modest dress.

The above literature review shows that Lao language textbooks have not been analyzed on their environmental contents, while the government has been attempting to create awareness among Lao people to see the importance in developing the economy and the country simultaneously with environmental conservation, especially considering the fertility of the existing nationwide forests and water resources.

There are have 2 hypothesis of this research that are;

- 1) What is the most environment content being discussed in the textbook ?
- 2) What is the environment issue mostly discussed in the reading practices?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This Lao language textbook research is a qualitative research and documentary research study. The data were acquired from Lao language textbooks from the first year to the fifth year in elementary schools of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The articles related to natural environment content were specifically selected. This set of Lao language textbooks has been publicised and assigned for the nation's textbooks since 2016. Content analysis was used as a conceptual framework and descriptive analysis was applied to present the research findings.

The level of data in the reading textbooks used for analysis were words, essays, stories, short stories, and poetry related to nature. The data were categorized into 2 types according to the type of natural environment: physical environment, i.e. geography, climate, hydrosphere; and biotic environment, i.e. plants, and animals (excluding humans). This article aims to explore the environmental aspect, the country's significant aspect as it appeared in the eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan, in the Lao People's Democratic Republic's elementary Lao language textbooks. The research questioned how the environmental aspect was inserted in the elementary Lao language textbooks. It was also hypothesized that the elementary Lao language textbooks might contain biotic environmental content to a greater extent than physical environmental content.

RESEARCH RESULT

The environments in this research are divided into 3 parts: physical environment, such as geography, climate, water, and soil; biotic environment, including plants and animals; and environmental lessons in each elementary year. This research does not include the environment referring to human and human activities. It is found from the research that elementary Lao language textbooks integrate environmental contents of both types into all reading lessons through vocabulary, sentences, words, stories, reading articles, and poetry.

1) Physical environment

Physical environment is pronounced "Thammachat" (Nature) in the Lao language. There are also other nature-related words, such as fertility, forest resources, and environment. This research categorized the physical environment into 3 types: geography, climate, and hydrography. There were 70 environmental terms in the reading articles which were repeatedly integrated in each lesson. They were also used in writing exercises, so the students could recognise vocabulary along with meanings and usage. They listened to these environmental words from the teachers:

Geography (19 words)

Forest, Woods, Jungle, Tree, Field, Rice field, Plain, Plain of Jars, Mount, Rocky mountain, Phu Phiang, Mountain, High mountain, Phu Doi, Mountain range, Hill, Island, Highland

Climate (21 words)

Weather, Hot weather, Stuffiness, Cold weather, Pure weather, Sunlight, Sunny, Soft sunlight, Strong sunlight, Sky, Air, Cloud, Wind, Cold wind, Lightning, Thunderbolt, Overcast sky, Dry, Bright, Dark, Meteorological Department

Hydrography River (30 words)

Water, Pool, Mekong River, Nam Ngum River, Nam Ou River, Nam Khan River, San River, Grading river, Xebangiang, Xedon, Stream water, Swamp, Leephe, Deep

water, Waterfall, Dew, Rain, Downpour, Showers, Drizzle, Rainfalls, Water stream, Water flows, Water way (Laew Nam), Torrent (Nam Tang), Whirlpool (Wern Giew), Flood, Water course, River bank

From the 70 environmental vocabulary terms, 19 vocabulary items were geography terms, 21 vocabulary items were climate terms, and 30 vocabulary items were hydrography terms. It was found that the hydrography group contained the greatest amount of vocabulary, especially the detailing of the important rivers in all regions nationwide. The word “river” is normally called “Nam” followed by the name of the river, such as Nam Kong referring to the Mekong River. In the south, “Xe” is used. It also means river and originated from the Mon-Khmer language. Therefore, “Xe” is followed by the name of the river, for example, Xe Bang Fai, etc.

The textbooks talked about the significant rivers in each region: Nam Ou River and Nam Khan River in the north; Nam Ngum River, San River, and Grading River in the central part; Xebanghiang and Xedon in the south. In addition, the lessons in the fifth year elementary school on “natural attractions” also talked about Leephe waterfall, the waterfall in the middle of the Mekong River and a famous tourist destination in Laos.

Apart from the important rivers, Laos also provided education about vocabulary related to rivers, such as swamp, pool, brook, stream (waterway). It talked about the characteristics of the water flows, for example, whirlpool, deep water, torrent (Nam Tang), flood. It also talked about the characteristics of the rainfall, such as drizzle, downpour, large raindrops, etc. These words could educate and create students’ awareness and caution in accessing dangerous water resources, such as whirlpools or torrents, etc.

The Mekong River is the significant river which flows from the northern parts to the southern parts of Laos, so Lao language textbooks create reading exercises and educate students about the importance of the Mekong River. The lesson of the fifth year elementary school on “Mekong River” talked about cleaning and attending to the Mekong River. Moreover, this lesson contained additional vocabulary: island and highland. These two words allowed students to understand Laos’ geography which has islands or highlands (mound) which are related to the Mekong River. The south of the country has an important city called Samphan Don, which explains that there are over three thousand mounds in the middle of the Mekong River.

The words related to climate were inserted in general lessons, especially weather and sun. They explained Laos’ specific climate, such as weather, hot weather, stuffiness, cold weather, sun, sunlight, sunny, soft sunlight, strong sunlight (bright sunlight). The words in this category were also included in the fifth year elementary school lessons on “Meteorological Department”. They explained how the rainfall was measured, and the country’s weather and rain were forecasted, so the students knew the daily living and future career information resources.

The northern part of the country has grass fields with small and large rocks called Thoong Hai Hin or the Plain of Jars. It is located at Xiangkhoang, between the central and the northern parts of the country. This word reflects the country’s grassland geography. There were also additional words related to the field: i.e. grass field, rice field, plains (Thung Pieng/Lao language). As most parts of Laos are mountains, mountain-related vocabulary was taught. The terms include Phu, rocky mountain, Phu Phieng, mountain, high mountain, Phu Doi, mountain range, hill. Mountain in Lao language is called Phu, followed by the name of the mountain, such as Phu Si, Phu Ngua (cow mountain), etc.

2) Biotic environment

The research found that vocabulary, sentences, quotes, stories, articles, and illustrations about the biotic environment were inserted in Lao language textbooks as follows.

Animal

Aquatic animals (13 words)

Fish, Carp, Snakehead fish, Climbing perch, Catfish, Crab, Turtle, Crocodile, Green frog, Frog, Prawn, Shell, Otter,

Poultry (15 words)

Duck, Crow, Heron, Peacock, Pelican, Warbler, Sparrow, Wren, Owl, Firefly, Bat, Butterfly, Dragonfly, Swan

Pets (13 words)

Pig, Cat, Dog, Sheep, Goat, Chicken, Hen, Rooster, Acorn, Duck, Buffalo, Cow, Young cow

Wild animals (28 words)

Wolf, Dhole, Fox, Muntjac, Deer, Eld's deer, Elephant, Lion, Tiger, Bear, Wild boar, Horse, Hedgehog, Rat, Vole, Rabbit, Squirrel, Monkey, Colobines, Snake, Water snake (snake eating fish), Rattlesnake, Cobra, Skink, Lizard, Camel, Rhinoceros, Bull Insect-Bug-Worm (22 words)

Millipede, Slug, Centipedes, Xylocopa latipes, Dragonfly, Cockroach, Jewel beetle, Scorpion, Water bug, Spider, Grasshopper, Mosquito, Cicada, Beetle, Ant, Red ant, Ant nest, Termite, Red bug, Bee, Cricket

From 91 environmental vocabulary items about animals inserted in the lessons, 13 words were poultry terms, 15 were aquatic animal terms, 13 were pets, 28 were wild animals, and 22 were insect-bug-worm terms. Students learn vocabulary about animals of various types from the first year elementary school via Lao language textbooks. Many vocabulary items were found, for example dog, rat, pig, snake, fish, turtle, rabbit, duck, sheep, bird, etc. These animals were generally found around students' residences and way of life. For higher levels, Lao language textbooks would provide writing exercises and longer reading articles. These articles reflect the essence of the animal of each type towards human lives. For example, in the lesson of the fourth year elementary school on "the importance of taming animals", such as cow, buffalo, or horse, students would learn about the animals' roles in Lao agriculture and travel.

The first year of elementary school did not have reading articles. There were only easy vocabulary reading and writing exercises. Therefore, there was no story reading. However, it was found that nature illustrations were used for students to practice their presentation skills. The textbooks about the environment of the second to the fifth years in elementary schools would talk about types, qualifications, habitats, and the wildness or kindness of the animals through reading articles and tales. Therefore, students could learn the way of life and nature-dependent lives of these animals. This creates awareness of value, conservation, and wildlife cruelty opposition.

Plants

The textbooks of the first year to the third year elementary schools allowed students to practice reading and writing, and to learn the names of plants, especially vegetables generally consumed as side dishes in each Lao meal, and vocabulary about trees and flowers. Most of the textbooks of the fourth year and the fifth year elementary schools would give details of the trees, particularly standing timber and herbaceous plants. The research divided plants into 3 groups: trees, vegetables-fruits, and flowers as follows:

Trees (31 words)

Trees, Tree stump, Twig, Roots, Tree hollow, Leaf, Banyan tree, Sindora, Padauk wood, Red wood, Iron wood, Teak, Siamese rosewood, Bare wood, Stick, Bamboo, Bamboo stick, Bamboo clump, Bamboo shoot, Schizostachyum, Bamboo tube, Forest bamboo, Solid bamboo, Mango, Tamarin, Rattan, Incense, Grass, Coffee, Bush

Vegetables-Fruit (13 words)

Pumpkin, Galangal, Tomato, Taro, Pandan, Nut, Soy, Vegetable, Paco Fern, Cabbage, Cucumber, Long Cucumber, Zucchini, Mushroom, Lemon grass, Garlic, Onion, Spring onion, Lettuce, Eggplant, Chilli, Parsley, Corn, Sugarcane, Job's tears, Pineapple, Banana, Banana tree, Banana leaves, Custard apple, Cardamom (local fruit)

Flower (12 words)

Flower, Golden shower, Red Sappan flower, Champak, Bastard Teak, Cowslip creeper, Red lauan, Water lily, Lotus leaf, Roots, Lotus, Lotus fruit

From the above 74 environmental vocabulary items, 31 items were tree terms, 31 items were vegetables-fruits terms, and 12 vocabulary items were flower terms. The number of tree and vegetables-fruits terms were the same. This reflected the needs of the textbook producers to have elementary students know about the environment, and especially trees. In addition to knowing the names of trees, vegetables, and fruits, as seen in the reading exercise mentioned in the next topic, the students were also taught to grow and nurture forests.

3) *Environmental aspects in school*

By studying the insertion of environmental aspects in each Lao language lesson of each elementary year, it was found that the first year and the second year elementary lessons would explain vocabulary about the biotic environment, especially types of animals for the students' learning and recognition. When understanding sentences and short statements about the environment in the third year and the fifth year elementary schools, students were taught to know plants and trees, as well as receiving explanations about animals of the same type, such as birds of different types. The reading articles were longer in the fourth year and the fifth year elementary schools. Students would learn about the conservation of natural resources, particularly the forest.

This table shows details about environmental aspects and reading articles related to the environment. This is to show that the Ministry of Education and Sports has formed Lao language lessons by continually inserting great amounts of environmental content in all elementary school levels. The first year elementary school students will not be provided with reading exercises, since these start in the second year of elementary school.

There are 66 reading exercises of each lesson in each elementary year, from the second year to the fifth year, which comes to 264 lessons in total. A total of 77 reading lessons (29.2%) mentioned at least one category of the environment, which is considered high and close to one-third of all the lessons.

The environmental contents were presented through one-to-two-page reading exercises. The introduction was the information of that particular topic. The content would be the explanation and expansion. The conclusion generally talked about conservation and suitable behaviour for the environment, so they became Laos' ideal citizens with environmental awareness. The topics of reading exercises were clearly defined in Lao language textbooks. Students were educated and know the suitable environmental behaviours. The topics of the reading exercises of which reflects the priority assignment of the environment of each elementary year are shown below.

Example 1: Reading exercise of the environment contents

The weather of our home	Love wild animals	Conserve forest
Nature and Environment	Mountain and Forest	Stream and River
Lam Xe River in our country	Our hometown's seasons	Nature and Life
Nam Ngum River Banks	The advantages of water	Forest fire
The advantages of wildlife	Forest resources	Mekong River
Natural tourist destination	Flood disaster	
Grow trees into forests	The Meteorological Department	

The quantities of environmental contents on forests, wildlife, and rivers were presented in the above reading exercise. It reflects that the government, the textbooks' producers, prioritized the learning, awareness creation, and teaching of elementary school students, so they know and behave themselves appropriately in line with the government's environmental policy. For example, the fourth reading exercise on "the forest conservation" in the fourth year Lao language textbooks (The Ministry of Education and Sports, 2016) is shown in example 2.

Example 2: Lesson 5 Forest conservation

The forest is the beneficial natural resource for humans and animals. It relates to economics, the environment, and human life. Laos is rich with the fertilities of various forest resources. Everywhere in our country is forest resources. If we destroy forests, every living creature will starve. It affects the humans' and animals' lives. Trees can reserve water for a long time, which keeps the soil moisture, and at the same time purifies the air. The forest can prevent flooding or drought disasters, and river bank erosion. With fertile forests, these natural disasters will never happen. Not only environmental aspects, but also the environment and natural state are inserted in other lessons, such as the reading exercises of the third year elementary school on "Attempt and diligence". The story compares the ants' activeness and unity in building a nest by pushing larger leaves of the greatest size. The determination, attempts, and unity allow them to complete all the work. The red ants' nest is cooperatively built and can be seen in the trees, the home, or the forest as shown in Figure 1.

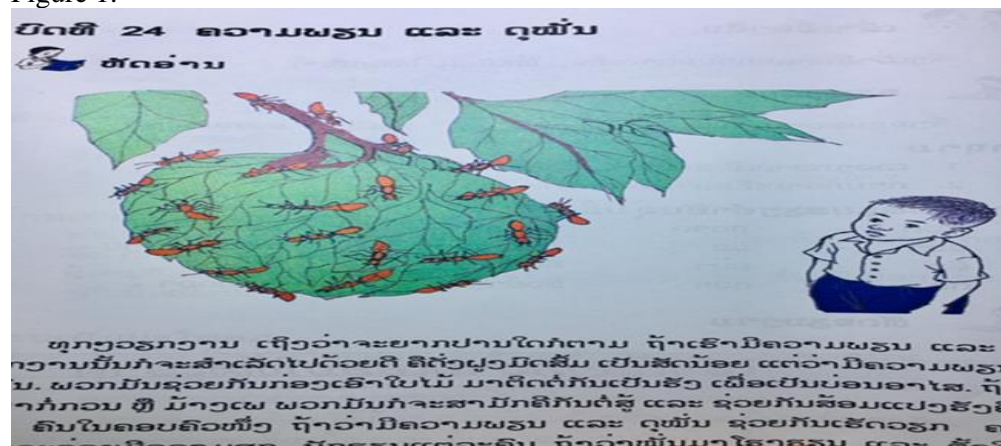


Figure 1 Reading exercise with environmental contents about the ants' life

Reading exercises show that environmental contents are continually inserted in the exercises of Lao language conversation lessons in all levels of elementary schools as shown below.

Example 3: The second year elementary school, lesson 51 "Mekong River"

The Mekong River is important for human living and transportation. Therefore, we must all conserve and keep the river clean because a dirty river is hazardous to humans and animals.

Example 4: The second year elementary school, lesson 51 “Conserve forest”
Forest is the nation’s valuable treasure which produces fresh air. It is the residence of animals and a place where people can make a living. So, all of us must conserve and grow trees. We should not cut nor burn the trees, so we can keep the green forest forever.

Example 5: Lesson 15 “Lam Xe River in Our Country”
Lam Xe River and many streams of our country give beauty to the nature.
As it immensely facilitates Lao people, we, as the new generation, should keep water resources clean and fresh for the benefits of Lao people onwards.

Lao language textbooks present environmental contents by directly talking about conservation and the appropriate characteristics of good citizens who have good environmental awareness. They indirectly present the information, such as learning vocabulary, and learning about animals’ behaviors through reading articles and stories in each lesson. They also educate about the country’s regions, for example, geography, climate, rivers, and forests. It can be said that Lao language textbooks of all elementary years of the Lao People's Democratic Republic contain environmental content.

DISCUSSION

After the colony period, the government rebuilt the country by pushing the key issues through various discourses to their people. On the other hand, people can also express their attitude towards state policy through literature such as poetic (Oskembay et al, 2020). This research results showed that Lao language textbooks were infused with environmental content via vocabulary learning, particularly forest, river, and wildlife word lists. This conforms to the hypothesis saying that the number of words in the biotic environment word lists is higher than that of the physical environment word lists.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic owns vital forest and water resources for people and the nation's economy. So, the government has assigned Green Economic Development in the current National Socio-economic Development Plan. The formation of environmental content in elementary Lao language textbooks is the reinforcement for students to learn, understand, and perform for themselves as the nation's environmental protectors.

This research also supports the Hidden Curriculum concept of Apple and Nancy (1983) who presented the idea that the textbooks are the government's important mechanism which forms the nation's desirable citizens. Therefore, the government's hidden issues are put into learning textbooks for students to learn and gradually absorb, which later becomes their conscience. It affects the citizens' behavior in accordance with the nation's aims. It also indirectly supports the socio-economic development of the country.

However, this research broadens the knowledge in analyzing the textbooks' contents conducted by Thai researchers (Mettariganond, 2002; Sarawasee, 2003; Turaluk, 2010, Sintumal, 2011) who studied Lao historical content, Thai and Lao histories, and the literature contents in the Lao textbooks which reflect the sacrifices of the ancestors to form the nation.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to explore the environmental content inserted in Lao language textbooks of all elementary years, from the first to the fifth year. The findings showed

that the former developer of Lao language textbooks is the Research Institute of Educational Sciences, Ministry of Education and Sports. It is the government sector which takes responsibility for pushing the government's environmental policy into teaching and learning by inserting environmental aspects into Lao language textbooks in the form of vocabulary, reading exercises, conversation practice, writing practice, and story-telling in each lesson. This research found environmental vocabulary, i.e. physical environment, biotic environment. There were 232 environmental terms: 70 words in the physical environment word lists and 162 words in the biotic environment word lists.

For physical environment, there were 19 words in the geography word lists, 21 words in the climate word list, and 30 words in the hydrography word list. The great number of words related to the river, water resources, and rain reflects the significance of the environment. For environmental vocabulary, there were 91 words in the animal word lists and 71 words in the plant word lists. Wildlife vocabulary was mostly found in animal word lists, while vocabulary related to the types of tree or standing timbers was mostly found in the plant word lists. The findings of wildlife and tree word lists show that Lao language textbooks focus on the acknowledgement of wildlife and trees in the forest. It forms the learning about the environment, especially about the forests.

In addition, environmental content was also presented in each lesson in the form of reading exercises. In total, from 264 reading exercises in elementary schools, there were 77 environmental reading exercises or 29% of all the contents. This finding can clearly show that Lao language textbooks do not focus on only grammar nor literature, but also continually teach significant issues of the government and the country for elementary students. In terms of the hypothesis was found that the most environment topic in the textbooks is geographical topic and the most issue was discussed is about forest.

RECOMMENDATION

This research has many restrictions, especially the possibility in observing classroom teaching which allows us to witness the conversations and questions related to the environment during the class. Therefore, this research is not the final conclusion of environmental contents analysis in Lao language textbooks.

The next research should include environmental contents analysis in Lao language textbooks of the high school level, or environmental contents analysis in other subjects, for example, social science textbooks and science textbooks in elementary schools and high schools.

Furthermore, there should be the analysis on the presentation of environmental aspects in Lao literature, short films, short stories, poetry, and so forth. The results will lead to the emphasis of the insertion of environmental contents in Lao language textbooks. It can justify the policy of the Lao government to assign the priority to the environmental aspects. This can therefore form the international cooperation for economic development, involving Thailand's investment or for the possible future environmental issues. It may develop cooperation on multiple levels by essentially holding on to environmental issues

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