English as Medium of Instruction in Vietnam Higher Education: Insights from the Perspective of a Language Policy Implementation Framework

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APA Citation:

Abstract

As the policy implementation of EMI across different education contexts, including that of Vietnam, has gained increased attention in language education research, it is vital to adopt a framework that could scaffold adequate analyses of the current literature. This paper thus attempts to adopt a policy implementation perspective to critically reflect on EMI policy and current milieu for its enactment in the context of Vietnam. With that critical analysis of the research findings and insights across different domains of a language-in-education framework including access, personnel, curriculum, teaching methods, materials, resources, community and evaluation, the paper endeavours to enrich the literature of and add new textures and

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dimensions to the framework of Kaplan and Baldauf (2005) as a meta-analysis tool to provide more insights into the prospect of EMI policy implementation.

Keywords: EMI, Vietnam, Framework, Meta-analysis, Language policy

Introduction

English-medium instruction (EMI) is one of the key tenets of the 21st century tertiary education landscape. According to a large survey in Europe, there were 2,637 higher education institutions (HEIs) in 28 EU countries offering 8,089 courses using EMI according to a large survey conducted by Wachter and Maiworm (2014). According to Mitchell (2016), approximately 8,000 courses are conducted in English at university level in non-Anglophone countries and the number keeps increasing. Especially in Asia-Pacific region, EMI is becoming a "new normal" (Walkinshaw et al., 2017, p.2), which can be attributed to at least three factors. Firstly, English has grown into "the sole contact language for trade, commerce, diplomacy, and scholarship" (Kirkpatrick, 2010) in the region. Secondly, universities in this region have witnessed "the hunger for learning" (Marsh, 2015, paragraph 3) and an "explosive growth" (Chien & Chapman, 2014, p. 21) in terms of domestic enrolments. They therefore become more confident in actively promoting themselves as higher education (HE) destination markets and thus promoting the need for EMI provision. Thirdly, governments in the Asia-Pacific region have acted decisively towards HE internationalisation. For example, they either promote bilingual curricular (Indonesia), or take the number of EMI courses in a university as an official evaluation criterion (China), or provide funding to an institution by considering the number of lectures in English (Japan).

Although gaining popularity, EMI is not always conspicuously defined and understood. In fact, Ernesto Macaro, Director of EMI Oxford's Center for Research and Development on EMI even declared that there is a lack of consensus on EMI definition (2018). Walkinshaw et al. (2017) thus claim that EMI is "a contest termed" and its meaning is still "a long way from being settled". However, it seems that most prominent researchers (e.g.,

Dafouz, 2018; Macaro, 2018; Walkinshaw et al., 2017) posit that EMI can be best defined as "teaching subjects using the English language without explicit language learning aims and usually in a country where English is not spoken by a majority of the people". Walkinshaw et al. (2017) also argue that EMI should not be conceptualized in a binary fashion (EMI versus non-EMI). Rather, it should be understood as a nuanced concept with different levels of usage, depending on the teaching and learning contexts.

Not only is the nature of EMI conceptualization difficult to be pinned down, but the explicit discourse on EMI policy across different polities is also not conspicuous or unanimous. Bangladesh, for example, is reported to adopt a laissez-faire approach to EMI policy in the private sector (Hamid et al., 2013) without particular policy mandates. Malaysia fails to find a permanent response to the issue and seems to be stranded in a quagmire of English and Bahasa Malaysia as medium of instruction (Ali, 2013). In Japan, English is usually suppressed by Japanese in terms of medium of instruction policy for the country and EMI is constrained to some universities language regulations (Hashimoto, 2013). Meanwhile, in Vietnam, EMI policy seems to be implemented in specific domains such as IT, Business Administration, Tourism, Accounting, Banking (Tri & Moskovsky, 2019). This obvious diversity in implementing EMI policy has invited divergent interpretations and understandings among researchers and educators. It is therefore important to recognize the fact that EMI policy is heavily context-based. Researching EMI implementation necessitates clarifying the contingencies of the specific contexts wherein the policy was constructed, translated, and conducted.

It is in this particular context that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Vietnam hereafter), a country geographically located in the dynamically developing region of South East Asia, has also announced her own new policies to address "new normal" situation. These policies, packaged in a multi-million-dollar national project launched in 2008 with a vision for quantifiable change in the foreign language education running from 2008 to 2020, are previously known as Project 2020 and later changed to National Foreign Languages Project with a vision from 2017 to 2025. The original purpose of Project 2020 is to transform foreign languages into the strength

of Vietnamese people in rendering service to the cause of industrialization and modernization of the country" (Project 2020 Committee, 2008).

In particular, Decision 1400 issued by the Prime Minister to accompany Project 2020 guidelines, declares that "educational institutions are encouraged to develop and implement bilingual programs" (Vietnamese Government, 2008). Courses with English as MoI can be designed and delivered in both high schools and higher education institutions. As a result, since 2008, many EMI courses and programs have been launched and offered in many education institutes across different levels (Tri & Moskovski, 2019).

However, moving from policy rhetoric to policy practice is always a complicated process involving diversified interpretations and perceptions which could distort the original intention of the macro - level policy-makers. In fact, Liddicoat and Baldauf (2008) have emphasized that "no macro-level policy is transmitted directly and unmodified to a local context" (p.11). Therefore, like elsewhere, this new EMI policy once announced has immediately triggered a lot of debate among educators. It has also attracted attention of many researchers and experts in the field of language education, resulting in a number of on-going surveys and research.

Despite the controversy and a growing interest in researching EMI policy in Vietnam, there seems to be a lack of an underlying meta-framework to lay the foundation for various researching efforts so as to explore and elucidate the policy implementation Vietnam and similar contexts in a systematic and comprehensive manner. As Hamid et al. (2013) have observed, studies on EMI tend to be convoluted in nature because it is still not clear whether EMI should be treated as an educational issue or a language policy one. They therefore argued for the necessity of a language policy implementation perspective on EMI since the process of EMI policy implementation is "the most crucial issue" (Hamid et al., 2013, p. 7). Such a policy implementation framework lens on EMI can help to shed light on "whether sufficient provision is made for smooth translation of the policy from the context of its formulation to its implementation, what kind of policy ownership is created for different actors and whether there is sufficient room for the

exercise of agency and power by them" (Hamid et al., 2013, p. 8). This paper thus attempts to adopt a policy implementation perspective to critically reflect on EMI policy and current milieu for its enactment in the context of Vietnam. With that aim, the paper endeavours to enrich the literature of and add new textures and dimensions to Kaplan and Baldauf's (2005) framework as a meta-analysis tool to provide more insights into the prospect of EMI policy implementation.

A meta-analysis framework of EMI policy implementation

As the policy implementation of EMI across different education contexts, including that of Vietnam, has gained increased attention in language education research, it is vital to adopt a framework that could scaffold adequate analyses to "offer a systematic way of organizing and synthesizing the rapidly expanding research literature while concurrently allowing for a holistic overview" of the phenomenon (Dafouz, 2018, p. 182). Recently, Dafouz and Smit (2016) have proposed a viable framework known as ROADMAPPING framework to explore the multi-faceted dimensions of EMI-based education. The framework consists of six aspects of EMI education including Roles of English (RO), Academic Disciplines (AD), Language Management (M), Agents (A), Practices and Processes (PP), Internationalization and Globalization (ING). This most recent framework is an audacious attempt to establish a "synthesizing" (Dafouz, 2018, p. 174), heuristic theoretical framework for EMI researchers; it is argued to be functional in multilingual university settings. However, as the definition of EMI and the implementation of EMI policy, especially in HE contexts, remain fluid and precarious, it is possible for researchers to adopt various theoretical lenses to explore EMI as a language policy phenomenon rather than an educational reality. While Dafouz and Smit's (2016, 2020) framework is gaining weight and popularity among EMI researchers, we believe that it is worth trying to propose other viable alternative perspectives by revisiting and substantiating available theoretically-grounded frameworks to understand this complicated glocal phenomenon so as for policy makers and experts can make decisions about educational issues related to EMI programs.

In this paper, we therefore attempt to adopt a language planning and policy perspective on EMI and draw on a neoclassical approach to language-in-education policy research originally proposed by Kaplan and Baldauf (1995, 2005). The domains, namely (1) Access, (2) Personnel, (3) Curriculum, (4) Methods and Material, (5) Resourcing, 6) Community, and (7) Evaluation are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Language-in-Education Implementation (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005, p.1014)

Language-in-education implementation	Explanations	Specific issues for EMI policy implementation
Access	Who learns what when?	Characteristics of EMI learners
Personnel	Where do teachers come from and how are they trained?	Vietnamese teachers' readiness to teach in English
Curriculum	What is the objective in language teaching/ learning?	Objectives of teaching and learning in English
Methods and material	What methodology and what materials are employed over what duration?	EMI instructional materials EMI teaching methodology
Resourcing Community	How is everything paid for? Who is consulted/ involved?	Costs of EMI programs Voices and attitudes of those who are involved
Evaluation	What is the connection between assessment, on one hand, and methods and materials that define the educational objectives, on the other?	EMI learning outcome assessment

This language policy implementation framework could be used as a meta-analysis framework employed as the basis for understanding language-in-education policy and issues associated with its implementation. It is argued that the framework explicates the "key elements for successfully implementing a language program (intervention), ensuring that language-in-education planning meets societal, institutional or individual needs" (Zhao, 2011, p. 914). It is also argued that this framework can function as "cursory points of investigation" (Ali, 2013, p. 17) in understanding language planning, though each policy domain can be otherwise examined individually. The framework is argued to offer a useful perspective in order to elucidate insights for policy makers and experts in the field to be systematically informed about EMI policy to provide support that "responds to the educational needs as well as social and linguistic challengers of local stakeholders" (Ou et al., 2022, p. 8).

This study adopts the framework of Kaplan and Baldauf (2005) not only as a conceptual foundation but also as a meta-analysis tool. According to Rosenthal and DiMatteo (2001), a meta-analysis framework helps to "allow researchers to arrive at conclusions that are more accurate and more credible than can be presented in any one primary study" (p. 61). The use of meta-analysis method is also conducted by Lundberg (2018) in order to examine the latest developments after a language act was introduced in Sweden. Carrilo (2021) also employs Timulak's (2009) qualitative meta-analysis method to explore how students use translanguaging in the U.S context. In this study we propose a qualitative meta-analysis on EMI policy implementation by conducting searches on Google Scholar, Proquest Central and Cambridge Core databases using "EMI policy" as a key word in combination of the seven key terms in the framework and "Vietnam" as a context. The retrieved information was various research articles reporting empirical studies conducted during the period from 2008 up to 2020. This information was used to substantiate the claims and arguments put forward in each implementation aspect of EMI policy.

Evidence for the usefulness of the framework has been accumulated with intensive work by Kaplan and Baldauf (2003) when they examine the language-in-education situation in fourteen polities in the Pacific basin. A

similar approach has been employed in studies compiled and edited in Baldauf (2012) to explore the feasibility and challenges in primary English education programs in the Asia Pacific region. Most of these investigations have applied the framework at the macro level in different polities. In this paper, we adopt this framework with a hope to elucidate and illuminate different facets and corners of EMI policy implementation in Vietnam as a unique polity within ASEAN (the Association of South East Asian Nations). Analysis based on this macro-level language policy framework is thus argued to shed more light on the societal factors that support or suppress the policy implementation process.

The following sections in this paper will be devoted to addressing each of the policy domains in the framework to provide a contextualized understanding of the factors that "impact on specific educational actions that need to be taken" (Nguyen, 2011, p. 227). This discussion is focused on addressing how EMI as a language policy fits in with the context of Vietnam tertiary education, based on seven aspects of Kaplan and Baldauf's (2005) meta-analysis framework.

Access

The domain of access seeks to address the question of who learns what languages at what age or to what level. Hamid (2010) clarifies that this policy domain refers to "the extent to which a particular language is made available to a language learning population or sections of the population through formal instruction" (p.292). Access is operationalized in this discussion as the level of English proficiency of learners and its impact on the implementation of EMI courses in Vietnam higher education.

Access to EMI courses and programs can be ensured if students' English proficiency meet the requirement for direct entry into EMI programs. For example, according to Tri and Moskovsky (2019), students have to attain the English proficiency equivalent to CEFR B2 level to be accepted to EMI programs. Those who cannot meet the English requirements must take intensive English courses in order to gain admission into the program (MOET 2008; Vietnam Government 2012). English proficiency level also

serves as a learning outcome filter at the exit level for EMI program graduates. According to current EMI policy documents in Vietnam, students are expected to achieve "at a minimum level 4 (B2) on CEFR for Vietnam" (MOET 2014, p. 39), IELTS band scores 6.0 (MOET 2013), or "TOEFL Paper-based scores 550" (MOET 2008, p. 19) to be eligible for their undergraduate degree.

The problem is that most learners in Vietnam find it difficult to attain the expected language proficiency in order to have access to EMI courses or programs. In Vietnam, the vicissitudes of the foreign language education in the history as well as the socioeconomic differences among different learner populations have, to some extent, resulted in different access level to a particular foreign language education. This can be argued to make considerable impact on the linguistic competence of different learner groups and thus could lead to social inequality in terms of access to EMI programs.

During the course of history in Vietnam, there are four foreign languages officially taught in schools: English, Russian, Chinese and French (Denham, 1992; T. H. Do, 1996). The competing process among such powers as China, France, the Soviet Union and the United States throughout the tragic modern history and their influence on Vietnam has contributed to the ascendancy as well the descendancy of these languages. English was probably first introduced to the South of Vietnam in 1945 during the brief contact with English speakers in the Allied troops in 1945 (Wright, 2002) and after that with the presence of American soldiers and advisers in the area. In the meantime, Russian and Chinese took the scene of foreign language education in the North, as a result of huge military and civilian aid from the Soviet Union and China. After the unification of the country in 1975, along with the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, English gave way to Russian. But soon afterwards, in 1986, when Vietnam implemented the open-door market-oriented policy (otherwise known as Doi moi), English re-emerged as the most widely used language and widely taught in schools even though Russian was still highly recommended to learners by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET 1986 as cited in Do, 2006, p. 7). The dilemma between market-driven need for English and politics-driven need for Russian caused the Vietnam authority to be entrenched in a

difficult situation and to end up in adopting a policy of no policy on foreign language education in the early 1990s (Denham, 1992). Since the beginning of the twenty first century, in an effort to carry out a nation rebuilding mission, the government officially has emphasized the role of English language education and therefore, English has become the preferred foreign language in Vietnam (Do, 2006, September).

The aftermath of this fluctuation in foreign language education can still be felt today in Vietnam with sizable implications for tertiary foreign language education. It is not uncommon to see an English learner or teacher flip-flopping among different foreign languages in their learning life and therefore they come to experience and response to the adoption of EMI policy in different ways.

Besides, the fact that English language learners and even teachers come from a varied background of foreign language education, with different levels of access to English language education, can arguably complicate or significantly exacerbate the quality of teaching content in English. Responding to the booming of English language learning after the American embargo on Vietnam was lifted in 1994, the Ministry of Education and Training issued a guideline No. 6627/TH on 18 of September 1996, allowing English to be adopted as an elective for all primary schools for two hours a week. This is carried out mostly in highly urban areas, leaving other areas inaccessible to this early English language education. Therefore, at present, there are students with seven years learning English while others have ten years learning English language in Vietnam (MOET, 2008). This is, for instance, reflected in a survey reported by Hoang (2008). Over 3,662 first-year students in Hanoi National University, there were 1,730 (62.48%) with only 300 contact hours of English instruction at high schools. These students began their English education at high school. Meanwhile, 936 students (27.7%) began their English education at the age of 11 and spent 700 contact hours of instruction at high schools, 104 (0.3%) were in language gifted classes and spent 1100 contact hours of instruction. The rest of them (23 %) studied another foreign language and switched to English in universities or did not have any hour of English instruction at high schools at all. This fact really adds to the complicated picture of access to language education and

its influence on student language level, generating the issue of social inequity and deprived opportunities in terms of accessing to EMI courses or programs.

Personnel

With any language in education policy, its feasibility and success lie in the hands of those who are directly involved in the implementation process. First and foremost, it has to do with the source, the training and the rewards for both language teachers and teachers teaching in English (Kaplan & Baldauf,1997, p. 130). In fact, the role that teachers play in the implementing process of a particular language policy is so salient that if they are not well-prepared or well-trained, "failure to achieve policy goals is inevitable" (Nguyen, 2011, p. 229). Hamid (2010), for example, believes that current language policy for "more and earlier" English language education in Bangladesh tends to reveal policy-makers' imprudence and that there seems to be "weakness of state's commitment and political will" to transform the policy into practice because the capacity of teachers has not been taken into adequate consideration. It is likely that a similar argument will be made in the case of the EMI policy in Vietnam at the present time.

EMI teaching staff are mainly Vietnamese lecturers who hold a postgraduate degree (doctor or master) and are able to use English for instruction and academic exchanges (Vu, 2014). A small number of EMI lecturers are non-Vietnamese academics from foreign partner universities or English-speaking foreigners exclusively recruited for the EMI program. In other words, EMI managerial and teaching staff mostly come from the universities' existing human resources who are probably involved in many other activities of the institution.

To explore pressing teaching issues in the EMI classroom, EMI lecturers have first screened for their language abilities, especially their oral skills, and confidence in lecturing in English and handling questions from students. This could be done in simulated or actual classroom situations where prospective EMI lecturers are observed as they teach a lesson. Also, language support has been provided for those wishing to enhance their

proficiency for an academic context. Such support could include taking English courses specifically oriented to academic teaching in a formal setting or engaging in more informal opportunities, such as study tours in English-speaking countries, scholar exchanges, and travel grants for international conferences.

Both language instructors and content teachers are responsible for developing students' disciplinary literacy in different phases. The pre-EMI phase involves intensive English courses by English language instructors whereas at later stage, content lecturers are in charge of content delivery. This stage is of critical importance, because it equips students with general English skills, discipline-specific vocabulary, and academic literacy skills related to their EMI disciplines (MOET 2013).

Reports of EMI-based programs in Vietnam universities have also pointed to the shortage of lecturers with sufficient English proficiency (MOET, 2009). The fact that many lecturers in the EMI programs had received their qualifications overseas did not necessarily mean that they satisfied language proficiency requirements (Pham & Doan, 2020). Teaching EMI courses requires lecturers to have disciplinary competence, teaching competence and language competence (Doiz et al., 2013).

Vietnamese EMI lecturers, like those in other countries, face a number of challenges and not all are ready to teach in English. First, teachers in EMI courses and programs are reported to experience linguistic difficulties. Vu and Burn (2014) expresses lecturers experienced difficulty in using English, especially in explaining things and answering questions. Some lecturers were concerned that their language abilities might negatively influence students' English or affect their understanding of content. They had difficulty in expressing themselves effectively, especially in paraphrasing, searching for words, and refining statements (Nguyen et al., 2017). Lecturing in English requires specific types of language skills appropriate to pedagogy while they might consider themselves skilled in English reading or writing. The instructors felt more challenged when their foreign accents and pronunciation errors could not satisfy students who expected native-like American and British accents (Ton & Pham, 2010). As a result,

communication in English fails, teachers may take it for granted that the mother tongue will provide a substitute for learning. Also, EMI teaching methodologies pose a considerable challenge for EMI lecturers. Their pedagogical approach in EMI classes was no different from that in the Vietnamese as MoI classes (Nguyen et al., 2016). All student participants showed misgivings about the level of English proficiency possessed by their lecturers, which negatively impacted on their comprehension, concentration and motivation. Tran & Nguyen (2018) report lecturers' concern about their teaching practices and raise issue about the lack of professional development activities for EMI lecturers in. Similar challenge was found by Vu (2020).

Curriculum, Methodology and Materials

In their original schema for the curriculum goals of a language-in-education policy, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) have discussed important curricular issues such as: the objectives of teaching and learning the language, the space for language instruction in the general curriculum, the duration and intensity of the teaching and learning the language. Although not all universities show the detailed curriculum and syllabus for each English course in the English preparatory programs, there are two different orientations which can be clearly seen. One curriculum just focuses on building up students' English general knowledge according to a certain type of test format chosen. The other one covers both general English and technical English terms or vocabulary together with basic knowledge or situations in specific disciplines so that students can be well prepared for studying EMI subjects later in the program. The curricula that are designed in other countries for sometimes dissimilar purposes. Researching EMI implementation in a public university in the North of Vietnam, Nguyen (2016) reports that curricula for joint programs (which are offshore programs delivered locally) were deployed unmodified. For overseas-franchised advanced programs and locally-designed high quality programs, 70–80% of the curriculum drew on programs imported or adapted for overseas partner institutions with the remainder reserved for locally-designed courses, including compulsory Vietnamese medium political education.

Beside curricular issues, methodology and material stand out as two important areas that need attention in the process of implementing a language policy (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). These policy goals seek to address the issue of the materials and methodology to be used for EMI instruction. Teaching materials are supposed to "coincide with the methodology being employed to deliver language instruction" and "methodologies need to be chosen with some awareness of the skills of the teacher corps available for the delivery of language instruction" (ibid., p.134).

In the context of EMI in Vietnam's HE, there has been no official policy mandating the use of textbooks or other reference materials for EMI courses. Teaching and learning materials are decided by program leaders or course lecturers, and the chosen textbooks are often those borrowed or adapted from overseas programs, mostly US, UK, and Australia. Such direct imports of materials have led to issues such as irrelevance for the Vietnamese context where learning examples are about the US and the UK (Duong, 2009; Nguyen et al., 2017), and ideologically, an impression that the Anglo-American model of education is the norm (Dang & Moskovsky, 2019).

Resourcing

Resourcing policy in this framework refers to the allocation of different resources, especially financial resources, for the operation of EMI programs. Generally speaking, the budgetary allocation given to education is usually spent on teacher salaries and school infrastructure (Hamid 2010, p. 293). In polities where education is mostly subsidized by government budget, this resource serves as a survival condition for a policy to be carried out and sustained. As Kaplan and Baldauf themselves (1997) have opined, "language change in one direction can easily revert to the other if adequate resources are not available to sustain and promote linguistic development" (p.139).

However, the real pitfall for resourcing policy implementation sometimes does not lie in inadequacy but inappropriacy. Looking into the situation of English language education in Bangladesh, Hamid and Baldauf (2008) have

remarked that "the overwhelming presence of English in the Bangladeshi curriculum thus can be argued to be the case of a 'white elephant' which consumes precious national resources but hardly produces any desirable outcomes" (p.22). Meanwhile, in the case of some East Asian countries, it has been observed that the government has been "investing considerable resources in providing English, often at the expense of other aspects of the curriculum, but the evidence suggests that these resources are not achieving the instructional goals desired" (Qi, 2009, p. 119). Also according to Qi, there must be a synchronic activation of different goals related to teacher proficiency, teaching methodology, learners' awareness, classroom realities so as to achieve the expected language policy goals.

In Vietnam, resources always come first among important factors determining the feasibility of any educational reform. For example, when examining language policy changes in Vietnam at the very beginning of the 21st century, Goh and Nguyen (2000) have observed that English language teachers in Vietnam "faced insurmountable obstacles, which included low pay and large classes" (p.350). This hits a chord with the recent report by the Ministry of Education and Training (2008). According to the report, the language teaching and learning facilities in Vietnam are generally very limited and degraded. In tertiary education institutes, the average number of language (non-major) students per classroom is stunningly high, about 2,000 students/room. Although the situation has been improved, the problem of allocating resources to achieve the goal of EMI policy remains unsolved. This might have detrimental implications for the teaching and learning via EMI.

One of the documents that provides obvious mandates on resources and finance for EMI policy is the resolution No. 1400/QD-Ttg which was issued by the government on 30th of September, 2008. It has indicated the allocation of an amount of 500 million dollars drawn mainly from the national budget to implement Project 2020 and upgrade language learning facilities in schools. The challenge is how to sustain the policy in ways that the resources available can be adequately and appropriately used.

Community

Kaplan and Baldauf (1997; 2005) emphasize that language policy has to take into consideration the voices and attitudes of those who are involved in the policy making process as well as those who receive the influence of the policy. However, it has been posited that, in some polities such as China and Vietnam, the language policy is normally decided by bureaucrats and disseminated in a top-down manner without much consultation from the involved community (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2003; Minglin, 2008; Nguyen, 2011). At the macro level, it is worth mentioning the role of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in Vietnam in terms of decision making. According to London (2011), the MOET's responsibilities "include the drafting of education planning strategies, the management of the education budget and human resources, and the formulation of laws and policies". These policies are then "approved by the National Assembly in accordance with the directives of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV)". In this manner of policy making, it is difficult to know which stakeholders are concerned and consulted for in the process of decision making.

Evaluation

It has been acknowledged that this goal of language policy implementation is "an issue that directly affects all the other areas" (Kaplan & Baldauf 1997, p.116) because it seeks to address an issue that connects other policy domains together, especially the consistency between assessment and curriculum. More specifically, it is concerned with the question "what is the connection between assessment on one hand and methods and materials that define the educational objectives on the other?" (Kaplan & Baldauf 2005, p.1014). There are three aspects of evaluation to guarantee such consistency which have been posited to be related to learners, teachers and the whole program:

Students must be evaluated to determine whether they are achieving the objectives set by the system; teachers must be evaluated to determine whether they have the language skills necessary to deliver quality instruction at the level demanded by the system; and the entire system must be evaluated

to determine whether the objectives set are commensurate with the needs, abilities, and desires of the population (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p.138)

This research draws attention to the question of how such evaluation can be performed within the context of the EMI-based policy implementation and what impact these types of evaluation would have on the other policy implementation goals and vice versa.

Complaints have been voiced on the lack of consistency between language curriculum and assessment in Vietnam (e.g., Hoang, 2008; Vu, 2006). Although the national language certificate system has been replaced in some universities with some sort of an international certificate such as IELTS, TOEFL or TOEIC, it does not respond to the issue of consistency and connectedness between curriculum, methodology and assessment (Vu, 2006). This circumstance results in the fact that capable students are not guaranteed to meet the program requirements because of the discrepancy between assessment system and curriculum goals.

It has been pointed out that "the use of foreign language tests employed as gate-keeping devices for access to general employment, higher education, and the professions lead to a sense of competition pervading all levels of education" (Ross, 2008, p. 5). This is also true for EMI-based policy implementation in Vietnam. Would this employment of standard-based assessment as a gate-keeping device into and out of EMI courses and programs contribute to the washback of narrowing the language curriculum and disadvantaged Asian students who are not exposed to authentic language use in their living environment?

Conclusion

This meta-analysis of the seven policy goals in the process of implementing a language policy is aimed to relate the meta-analysis framework for policy implementation to the context of Vietnam and the policy based on EMI. Adopting a critical analysis to depict a relatively "dark" picture on different domains of language policy implementing process in Vietnam, we do not intend to be over-cynical for EMI and its apparatuses deployed in Vietnam context. We would rather demonstrate our critical viewpoint on the prospect

and potential of EMI-based policy implementation in Vietnam. It could be posited that although it has been opined since more than a decade ago that "the rapid increase in the demand for English in the 1990s caught the country ill-prepared" (Goh & Nguyen, 2000, p. 350), it seems that the country today may still remain ill-prepared in terms of English language proficiency and thus lead to a gloomy prospect of policy implementation at the grassroot level. This situation therefore shows both the necessity and the challenges for the EMI-based policy implementation in Vietnam. It is argued via this analysis that the usefulness of Kaplan and Baldauf's (1997, 2005) policy implementation framework for analysis purposes can signify its value when being applied to a specific context of language policy enactment where it can serve a common platform for exploring the agency of different actors in the implementation site.

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