CHAPTER 14

English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Vietnamese Universities: Policies of Encouragement and Pedagogies of Assumption

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The growth of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) on a global scale has been well reported (e.g. Dearden, 2015) and in many Asian countries, including Vietnam, this trend has recently become more and more visible, especially in tertiary education (Macaro, Curle, Pun, An, & Dearden, 2018; Tran & Marginson, 2018). To date, the literature on EMI in Vietnamese higher education has largely placed emphasis on the macro-level perspective (Nguyen, 2018; Nguyen, Walkinshaw, & Pham, 2017; Tran & Marginson, 2018), with little attention to addressing the practicalities of EMI at the level of the institution and within the classroom. This chapter therefore focuses on how EMI is enacted through policies and pedagogical practices in public Vietnamese universities at both institutional and classroom levels.

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While offering EMI courses has been a significant trend in Vietnamese higher education over the past ten years, Vietnamese universities are facing considerable issues in the delivery of EMI courses (Dang, Nguyen, & Le, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2017). These include issues such as students' low level of academic English (Le, 2016), lecturers' limited awareness and use of EMI pedagogies and access to suitable materials (Le, 2019; Vu & Burns, 2014; also see Chapters 15 and 16). However, the question of how to address these issues is largely bypassed. Thus, a key remaining concern is how students' content learning can best be assured alongside the development of academic English, both for studying in their discipline and for eventual professional purposes.

Such a question calls, in the first instance, for an investigation into how EMI is currently being enacted through policy and pedagogical practice. This is needed in order to better understand the supports and constraints for EMI implementation, and to identify possible pathways to achieving the outcomes anticipated by the various stakeholders. This chapter therefore reports findings on the actual enactment of EMI courses. These are derived from in-depth interviews with four university managers and ten lecturers teaching EMI courses at various public universities in Vietnam. The findings have led us to propose the following argument, which will be elucidated as the chapter progresses.

Data from the four university managers show that the drivers behind the offering of EMI courses are several, and largely to do with matters of status, student numbers and government funding allocations, rather than with educational goals for students. These drivers are in fact common in universities from other countries such as Japan and Turkey (Kirkgöz, 2019; Shimauchi, 2018). The focus on non-educational goals exists despite the ethical requirement that both non-educational and educational perspectives must be considered (Hamid, Nguyen, & Baldauf, 2013; Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008). We argue that, together with a lack of professional development preparedness and resources, these non-educational drivers have led to the practice of what can be conceptualised as a 'policy of encouragement' for EMI, encouraging faculties and lecturers to provide EMI courses, but offering little or no policy guidance on EMI pedagogy. Furthermore, based on lecturers' personal accounts of their EMI course practices, we contend that this unguided encouragement has been a primary reason for the practice of a 'pedagogy of assumption' on the part of lecturers—assumptions about what EMI 'is supposed to be' and 'what the university expects', as well as assumptions

about EMI learning challenges for students. The chapter ends with a review of the key features characterising the EMI project in the context of Vietnamese higher education reform, followed by recommendations for a more coordinated approach to the delivery of EMI at both institutional and classroom levels.

14.1 Design of the Study

The data for this chapter was collected via semi-structured individual interviews with four senior managers and ten EMI lecturers from several public universities in Hanoi, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City, in other words from North, Central and South Vietnam. It is important to note that only one senior manager and one EMI lecturer were from the same institution, while the other participants were from different universities.

Of the four managerial interviewees, one was the Rector heading a university, and the other three were Vice-Rectors in charge of academic programmes. All four had prior experience of EMI teaching in their own disciplines, which can be expected to enrich their understanding of how EMI institutional policies are perceived and enacted (Table 14.1).

The ten lecturers interviewed all had achieved at least one postgraduate degree from a programme overseas in which English was used as the medium of instruction. All have at least two years of experience in EMI teaching, and some have taught more than one course while others have taught only one EMI course repeatedly over the years. As shown in the table below, these lecturers are diverse in terms of gender, discipline and EMI experience (Table 14.2).

For reasons of anonymity, no more information can be given here on these lecturers' additional roles in their institutions.

Two separate sets of open-ended questions were developed to interview senior managers and lecturers, and participants were encouraged to

Table 14.1 Senior participant managers

Manager	*Position*	*HE Institution*	*Location*
Manager 1 (M1)	Vice-Rector	Public	Northern Vietnam
Manager 2 (M2)	Rector	Public	Central Vietnam
Manager 3 (M3)	Vice-Rector	Public	Southern Vietnam
Manager 4 (M4)	Vice-Rector	Public	Southern Vietnam

Table 14.2 EMI participant lecturers

Lecturers	*Gender*	*EMI experience*	*Disciplines*	*Qualifications*
Lecturer 1 (L1)	Female	2 years	International Studies	Ph.D.
Lecturer 2 (L2)	Female	3 years	Business Management	Ph.D.
Lecturer 3 (L3)	Female	3 years	Tourism Studies	Ph.D.
Lecturer 4 (L4)	Male	2 years	Communication	Ph.D.
Lecturer 5 (L5)	Male	4 years	Computer Science	Ph.D.
Lecturer 6 (L6)	Male	3 years	Information Technology	Ph.D.
Lecturer 7 (L7)	Female	3 years	Economics	Ph.D.
Lecturer 8 (L8)	Female	2 years	Nursing	Ph.D.
Lecturer 9 (L9)	Male	3 years	International Relations	M.A.
Lecturer 10 (L10)	Female	2 years	Physics	M.Sc.

elaborate on topics and feel free to move the interview in the direction of their choice. The interviews with the four managers focused on their institutions' EMI policies, while the interviews with the ten lecturers were about their pedagogical practices. All participants were asked if they preferred to be interviewed in English or Vietnamese and all chose to use Vietnamese as the main medium but referred to English whenever appropriate. All the interviews were audio recorded and notes were also taken for the purpose of asking to follow up questions without breaking into the conversation, and for clarification if needed. The data collected from these 14 interviews were transcribed and analysed using content analysis. Specifically, the transcripts were first read individually and then dissected so that emergent themes could be identified and grouped. These themes were then re-tracked holistically to ensure that the entire information in the data was reflected.

14.2 Results of the Study

Given the focus of the study on the drivers behind university offerings of EMI courses and on how EMI is addressed by managers and lecturers, we start from institutional objectives in introducing EMI and then consider policy in the light of those objectives before looking at lecturers' readiness for EMI, their willingness to engage in it, and how they go about practicing it. All of these points must be seen in the context of

students' low level of academic English acting as a major stumbling block to successful EMI, as has been repeatedly demonstrated in studies of EMI across Asia (Macaro et al., 2018; Yamagami & Tollefson, 2011; Zhao & Dixon, 2017).

14.3 Institutional Objectives for EMI: 'EMI Can Help Our University'

The introduction of EMI has often been regarded as a strategy to internationalise higher education in non-English-dominant contexts such as Korea, Japan, Malaysia and Thailand (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Cho, 2012; Evans & Morrison, 2011; Toh, 2013), and attracting international students is considered an important objective of introducing EMI, e.g. Japan's Global 30 Project (Rose & McKinley, 2018). Internationalisation, however, was barely mentioned in this Vietnamese study, whereas all four interviewee managers specifically mentioned that attracting more domestic students was a key objective of introducing EMI at their institutions. M1 as a Vice-Rector in charge of academic affairs labelled himself a strong advocate of EMI, believing that the use of EMI could help the university to attract more domestic students, particularly in the context of a recent decline in the number of students enrolled in his university. M2 likewise shared this perspective, as did M3:

> *We try to increase the number of students enrolling in our university by offering them more options and EMI is one of these options.*

According to M4, it may be too early to think about attracting international students as EMI courses are still in the process of development. He elaborated that:

> *EMI can help our university with two things. First, it can help to attract more students and we can expand our program. Second, it can give our institution recognition as a high-quality university so that we can employ more staff and get more funds from the Ministry and the government.*

From these comments, two inferences can be readily made regarding the key objectives of introducing EMI in these Vietnamese HEIs. First is that the objectives relate to domestic competitiveness rather than to internationalisation, thus running counter to the international findings

reported by Dearden (2015) and Bradford (2016). Second is that the objectives highlighted in this study are primarily non-educational. In other words, they focus on status, growth and resourcing, not on the learning goals of students for their university education—educational goals. This is not to say that EMI is seen as unrelated to educational goals, but the relationship was not mentioned explicitly by any of the four administrators, who all prioritised non-educational goals. This has implications for the place of EMI in institutional policy.

14.4 Institutional Guidelines for EMI: 'No Official Policy Document'

The four senior managers interviewed in this study all acknowledged that EMI is a growing phenomenon and seems to be inevitable in higher education, referring specifically to national policy documents, especially Project 2020. They were insistent that HEIs in Vietnam should not be left behind.

> *EMI is an inevitable trend in higher education in the world; some institutions in Viet Nam have already implemented their EMI courses and therefore our university should join in this trend.* (M2)

Nevertheless, despite this high-level commitment to EMI, most of the ten lecturers interviewed indicated that they were not aware of any specific policy document that stipulated the introduction of an EMI programme. They said it was often just mentioned as a small reference in other broader documents as a way to improve teaching and research outputs or a way to internationalise higher education.

> *There is no official policy document stipulating that lecturers or departments have to offer EMI courses… but I remember that our head of the university has mentioned this a few times in our staff meetings and in his opening speeches to various international conferences.* (L1)

Similarly, L9 received only a verbal message about the introduction of EMI passed on from the head of university to all the staff members in the department.

> *I remember one day Mr. A [head of the department] said in our staff meeting that the University Rector wanted to promote EMI courses and he [the Rector] said that since our department has some lecturers who had studied abroad, we should take the lead in offering some EMI courses. But I have never seen a particular document about this with my own eyes. I am not sure if there is such a document.* (L9)

Thus the institutional commitment to EMI is not formalised in a transparent way, and lecturers are not made aware of the objectives of the innovation nor what their role should be in implementing it. This suggests a process that could be conceptualised as a 'policy of encouragement' rather than a precise guiding policy. It also suggests a certain lack of preparedness for the introduction of EMI in terms of achieving the universities' intended objectives as well as students achieving their intended educational goals.

14.5 Lecturers' Readiness for EMI: 'I Am Not Sure'

As all of the respondents had achieved at least one postgraduate degree from overseas institutions where English was used as a medium of instruction, most described themselves as 'confident enough' to teach their own discipline subjects in English; however four of them were openly hesitant about it.

> *I am not sure about it [teaching in English]. You know, if student comments about me are good, that would be lovely but if not, other colleagues would say that I achieved my degree overseas but my English, especially speaking, is bad. I am not confident about my speaking skill, students may not understand what I say…and they may make fun of my English.* (L2)

L1 also expressed similar reasons for hesitating to teach in English:

> *My colleagues and students say that my English pronunciation is very good, but teaching subject content in English is a different story. I do not want other people to say that I am not good at teaching if I teach an EMI course.* (L1)

From these comments, it appears that unfavourable judgements from colleagues and students could be strong reasons for some lecturers hesitating to adopt EMI.

Other lecturers had specific concerns relating to aspects of methodology. While all ten had been teaching in Vietnamese as the medium of instruction for many years, teaching in English was still something new to them. As a result, although they were confident about their content knowledge of the discipline, they were not confident about teaching it in English. A lecturer in Tourism Studies made this very clear:

> *I rate my own English proficiency as good or between average and good. I know that speaking English to other colleagues or doing an oral presentation is easy, but giving a lecture in front of students is totally different. I may not know how to explain a technical or abstract concept in English. If students' English proficiency is limited, then it would double the difficulty to teach.* (L3)

How to explain technical or abstract concepts was also a concern for L5 who pointed out that science subjects can have some very complex concepts. He added that his accent was difficult for students to understand and that he was concerned that his language ability could negatively influence not only students' English development but also their understanding of subject contents.

This links to a related concern expressed by the lecturers, namely the lack of professional development to guide them in how to teach using EMI; for example, how to explain complex concepts in English, how to design an EMI course, how to select and/or adapt materials, how to gauge students' understanding of the content provided through English.

> *I come from a different background, International Studies - as you know, I learned English as an additional language and I have been teaching academic English for many years. But I know teaching other disciplinary contents in English is different. Speaking English and understanding content does not mean that I can teach an EMI course. Many things we have to learn; for example, how to balance between English and content, how to design assessments, or how to select materials relevant to both the course content and students' English ability so that they can learn well.* (L1)

Lack of readiness in terms of human capital and resources was well recognised by all four senior managers, who admitted that the English language proficiency of their staff and especially of students was one of the biggest hurdles to EMI. However, they insisted their institutions had to implement EMI courses regardless; they could not wait for readiness to be established. In all four cases, the chosen strategy for introducing

EMI courses without delay was 'learning while doing'. None of these institutions had provided professional development training for their staff members before they started teaching through EMI; everything was to be learned on the job.

This acknowledged lack of readiness raises concern as to the possibility of students satisfactorily achieving their educational goals through EMI coursework at these universities. It also raises concerns as to the sufficiency of a policy of encouragement to address the situation, as well as questions about lecturer willingness to engage in EMI.

14.6 Willingness to Engage in EMI: 'Do We Have Choices?'

When asked how willing they were to teach EMI courses, the majority of the lecturers expressed ambivalence, for reasons such as students' limited English proficiency and additional workload. Some lecturers commented that the use of EMI enabled them to continue using English in teaching and research, which meant that they would continue to improve their own English proficiency. For example, L10, originally a French speaker who only recently learned to speak English, considered the use of EMI as an opportunity for professional development. More generally, however, the lecturers mentioned feeling obligated to engage in EMI, referring to concepts such as 'responsibility', 'no choice' and 'setting example', which were accompanied by verbs such as 'have to', 'must' and 'get to'. Perhaps L1 was most illustrative of this sense of obligation:

> *If the university says we need to have EMI courses, we have to try our best to do it. If they say we have to use English, we will have to do it. Do we have choices? I am not sure.* (L1)

In this comment, lecturers are positioned as having little or no choice or freedom to act; teaching in English is a responsibility that lecturers are obliged to take on in response to institutional policy.

To address this sense of obligation and to compensate for the lack of readiness in their institutions, managers provided various incentives for staff to take on EMI teaching. For example, one university:

> *calls on the willingness of our staff members who are able to teach in EMI to develop EMI courses on the basis of their current Vietnamese medium*

> *instruction (VMI) courses. We consider this as their contribution to the university. In return, we give them flexibility in teaching, such as timetable choices. Also, the workload [in teaching an EMI course] can be multiplied by 2.5 compared to the workload in a similar VMI course.* (M1)

Such incentives were used to motivate lecturers to develop and teach in EMI courses, reflecting what seems to be common institutional practices elsewhere with respect to EMI teaching (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2011; Tatzl, 2011).

However these Vietnamese institutions struggled to find funding and resources to provide such material incentives:

> *The major problem is financial issues. Designing EMI courses, selecting materials, purchasing textbooks from international publishers, and so on add up to a huge amount of work for our lecturers. We know that lecturers should be provided with professional development too. But we do not have sufficient budget for all of these. Consequently, we just encourage our staff members to teach in English if they want to do so… we cannot force them.* (M2)

This comment was echoed by M4 who stated that his university had to rely on their academics' goodwill to teach in EMI given that financial incentives for EMI lecturers were very limited.

Relying on academics' goodwill and willingness to fulfil what they see as their obligations is further evidence for the conceptualisation of these universities' EMI strategy as 'policy of encouragement'—encouragement through material incentives, through personal approaches from senior managers and through reliance on lecturers' sense of duty to the institution.

Students were also recipients of this policy of encouragement, sometimes being given incentives to enrol in EMI courses. One university offered both VMI and EMI courses in parallel and encouraged students to enrol in EMI courses as an option. The Vice Rector of this university further detailed:

> *First, we advise students about potential benefits if they enrol in an EMI course. For instance, we let them know that it [taking an EMI course] will be clearly stated in their academic transcripts upon their graduation. This would benefit them to showcase to their future employers. Second, we do not charge students additional fees for EMI courses. They just have to pay the same amount as for normal [VMI] courses. Third, while we only offer a VMI course if at least 15*

> *students enrol, we can offer an EMI course as long as at least 5 students enrol. You can see, the university is happy to compensate for the fees. Finally, the university gives students flexibility to enrol in an EMI course from any discipline which is relatively relevant to their own program. This means that students from International Studies can choose an EMI course in another discipline such as History or Journalism. As an EMI lecturer myself, I always encourage students to enrol in my EMI course although this is not compulsory.* (M1)

The financial incentives for students indicated here suggest that the objective of generating revenue through domestic student enrolments in EMI courses is one that this university is prepared to defer in the short term in order to establish its EMI offerings.

In terms of achieving educational objectives, however, there are some issues to be considered. For example, although students were being actively encouraged to enrol, there was no guidance to them as to how to support their content learning and how to develop their English proficiency through the coursework. Likewise, there was no guidance to lecturers as to how to support students in these educational goals, nor how to ensure student learning of content through EMI processes. This could be interpreted as a severe limitation in the universities' introduction of EMI and raises questions about how lecturers have responded to the challenges they and their students face.

14.7 Enacting EMI in Coursework: Making Adjustments

Lecturers spoke in some detail about how they adjusted their teaching in response to what they saw as the expectations of EMI coursework, by both the institution and the students. Adjustments were in three key pedagogical areas: course design, selection of materials, and the use of language in lectures and tutorials.

14.7.1 Adjustments to Course Design

The participating lecturers had different understandings about ways to design their EMI courses. Most of them indicated that they just translated into English the courses that they previously taught in Vietnamese. Specifically, they translated their lecture slides and handouts from Vietnamese into English and used English to give their lectures. L7

mentioned that she had taught an economics course using VMI for years and she just had to translate all the course activities in English to offer it as an EMI course. Another two lecturers followed the same practice (L2 and L3). L2 shared her story:

> *I met my university Rector after one of our staff meetings and said to him that I am not sure if I can teach in an EMI course as I do not know how to teach in English. He told me not to worry and advised that I should use English as much as possible and I just need to translate my course from Vietnamese into English. I felt more confident then but still did not know exactly what I would have to do.*

On the one hand, this excerpt nicely illustrates a policy of encouragement on the part of the university leadership, and the lecturer's acceptance of that. On the other hand, it sheds light on the perceptions of senior managers and lecturers on the delivery of EMI courses as being primarily a matter of translation without necessarily any international orientation in the content nor any intercultural component. In other words, EMI is seen as just a language switch and need not include an international orientation nor an expansion of intercultural knowledge, nor necessarily any change in pedagogy.

Although recognising the challenges of EMI for students, none of the lecturers was willing to simplify the course content to assist the students' understanding. L3 reasoned that simplifying some advanced course content would render her course at an introductory level while it was supposed to be designed for second or third-year students. While her concern was to avoid negatively influencing student achievement of course objectives, L9 was worried that simplifying or reducing course content to accommodate students' English language level could damage his career reputation.

> *I have been teaching different EMI courses for various universities and I know that English proficiency of their students is very limited. But I cannot leave out some advanced contents of the courses because they would think that I teach easy things to their students and may not invite me to teach again next year…I still want to teach for these universities.* (L9)

Whether concerned about students' educational outcomes or personal career outcomes, these lecturers refused to adjust their course content despite their appreciation of students' limited English proficiency and its

hindrance to content learning. Based on their pedagogical assumptions, they found themselves in a dilemma of professional ethics which their universities were not addressing either through policy, professional development or student support services.

Other lecturers said they tried to adapt their course content in order to make it 'EMI appropriate', but when asked how they did this they chiefly referred to the selection of reading materials appropriate to their students' English language proficiency. For them, the most significant difference between VMI and EMI seems to be the language used in the materials, the lectures and the tutorials. None of them mentioned pedagogical differences although a few mentioned thinking that teaching in EMI should be different from teaching in VMI, whilst admitting that they did not have clear understandings of the differences. This suggests a powerful need for professional development focusing on successful EMI pedagogies.

14.7.2 Adjustments to Selection of Course Materials

With respect to the selection of course materials, the lecturers had different approaches, but almost all agreed that the official course outline document should only refer to materials in the English language. They noted, however, that they had never seen an official policy document stipulating whether or not Vietnamese materials could be used in EMI courses. In other words, they made the assumption that only English language materials were permitted in EMI courses. However, in order to cater to what they saw as the learning needs of their students, they often adopted supportive cross-lingual strategies. One common practice is that, while all the materials listed in their EMI course outlines are in English, in practice both English and Vietnamese materials are offered in parallel. One participant noted:

> *It is an EMI course and thus all the reference materials should be in English, at least, those materials included in the course outline. I have selected some [English language] academic articles and textbooks…I often have to prioritise a textbook which I know has been translated into Vietnamese so that students can refer to it when needed. I do not include [the Vietnamese version] in the course outline but I suggest students refer to this book. I know it would be very challenging for them to read such an academic textbook in English.* (L7)

Another lecturer mirrored the above sentiment, and recommended students:

> *refer to some Vietnamese materials which I know would have similar content, so that they can understand key terminology in our discipline.*

This strategy was also shared by L9, a lecturer in International Relations:

> *Because students' English is still limited, I often select some articles which I know are translated and free to access on the Nghiencuuquocte website [a website which provides Vietnamese translations of numerous academic papers in the area of International Studies].*

Despite believing that an EMI course should only comprise English language materials, these lecturers provided access to Vietnamese language materials because they were well aware of the difficulties that students would face when reading academic materials in English, and were committed to responding to those difficulties.

In contrast, several lecturers were quite content to use only English materials, being excited to be able to refer to a wider range of publications.

> *When I studied in Australia, I collected a lot of materials in English and if I wanted to use them as reference materials (additional reading) for students in my courses I would have to translate them into Vietnamese. Now, with EMI, I can use these materials and do not have to provide the translation.* (L8)

This comment from L8 suggests a pedagogical assumption that teaching through EMI means that students can be expected to read and comprehend materials in English, without needing Vietnamese language support of any kind.

14.7.3 Adjustments to Classroom Language Use

All of these lecturers considered that they should use English as much as they could in EMI lectures and tutorials, but opinions varied as to the degree to which classroom language use should include Vietnamese. Some believed that English should be the only language used throughout lectures and tutorials. For instance, when asked if students were allowed to speak Vietnamese in class, L2 commented:

> *I think English should be the only language used in lectures and tutorials because this is an EMI course. It's a norm, unwritten norm. It's not something that I find in a policy document or a handbook but students should know this because when they choose to enrol in an EMI course, they expect to use English in class.*

Some lecturers mentioned that it was advantageous to be able to use specialist terms in English when they do not translate easily into Vietnamese, and that EMI allowed them to express the ideas of the discipline better in class. They apparently assume that their students will understand the concepts underlying the English terms; however a recent study at an Australian university (Heugh, Li, & Song, 2017) found that targeted pedagogical practices need to be in place to assist students with understanding specialised technical terms before they can actually use them.

Although an English only perspective was shared by other lecturers as the ideal situation for their classes, in actual fact they often allowed students to use Vietnamese in class discussion and as a way of double-checking if the content had been understood.

> *Sometimes students look confused so I have to ask them to summarise what I have just said in Vietnamese. That's not what EMI is about, but I need to make sure that they understand the lecture content. If not, I have to re-explain it. It's time-consuming. But they have to do assessments so they need to understand the content first.* (L1)

It appears that L1 was caught between her allegiance to what she believes 'EMI is about' and her sense of moral responsibility to the students. This dilemma was echoed by other lecturers, including a computer science lecturer making a similar assumption about EMI:

> *The goal of EMI is to use English all the time. But some concepts are very complicated and students sometimes ask me to explain these concepts in Vietnamese. It's good that I can know whether students understand a concept or not but it takes a lot of time while I may not be able to cover all the content.* (L5)

Another interview participant chose to ignore the dilemma and accept her students' use of their first language during class discussion, preferring to consider it a feature of inclusive teaching.

> *When I ask students to discuss in groups, I know that some of them speak in Vietnamese but I pretend that I pay no attention to it. I do not want those who use Vietnamese to feel bad about it. I do not want them to be excluded from group discussion. At least, they learn something.* (L8)

Despite their assumption that an ideal EMI course employs the use of English only, these lecturers often let students use their L1 in EMI classes, primarily due to their concern to meet the students' learning needs for achieving the educational goals of their courses.

14.7.4 Summary: Adjustments as 'Pedagogy of Assumption'

The foregoing account of how lecturers enacted EMI in coursework suggests that a number of adjustments made were based on a pedagogy of assumption. Key assumptions were:

1. EMI means English only (in course materials, lectures and tutorials)
2. EMI is just a language switch and need not include an international orientation nor an expansion of intercultural knowledge.
3. * EMI courses should maintain the content level of VMI courses
   * VMI course contents can be adjusted to be 'EMI appropriate'
4. * Students cannot access the course contents through English only, therefore supportive cross-lingual strategies are a necessary pedagogical inclusion
   * Students can be expected to read and comprehend materials in English, as well as English terminology given in spoken lectures, without needing Vietnamese language support of any kind.

All the lecturers made the same assumption that what EMI 'is supposed to be' is English only, and that was 'what the university expects'. Similarly, none of the lecturers mentioned considering EMI as including an international orientation and an expansion of intercultural knowledge; all of them focused on the language aspects. However, assumptions about maintaining content level and the EMI learning challenges for students varied, with associated differences in pedagogical practices.

14.8 Conclusion

The managers in this study clearly indicated the dominance of non-educational goals for the introduction of EMI courses, notably goals relating to matters of status, student numbers and government funding allocations. The emphasis on such non-educational goals indicates domestic competitiveness rather than internationalisation as the primary driver for the introduction and delivery of EMI courses in Vietnamese higher education institutions, unlike many of their counterparts in other

countries (as reported in Bradford, 2016; Dearden, 2015). However, institutional bias towards non-educational goals not only runs counter to expert recommendations (Hamid et al., 2013; Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008), but also to the interests of both domestic competitiveness and internationalisation in the context of higher education reform. While the introduction of EMI programmes was often cited as one of the strategies in internationalising higher education (Hoang, Tran, & Pham, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2017; Tran & Nguyen, 2018), the dominance of non-educational goals signifies that Vietnam's higher education reform seems to be far from vision.

Furthermore, it is apparent from the data that the bias towards non-educational goals is a contributing factor to the practice of what we have termed a policy of encouragement for EMI, and which we can now define based on the data presented earlier. A policy of encouragement is policy lacking transparent guidance and formal documentation, in which verbal injunctions are substituted for implementation planning. It is policy reliant upon incentives to lecturers and sometimes to students, and typically without sufficient back-up by way of related professional development and EMI support provisions for students. In addition, a policy of encouragement overlooks students and lecturers as key actors in the policy implementation process and as potentially valuable contributors to the policy-making process itself.

From this study, it is clear that a policy of encouragement relies on lecturers' willingness to teach EMI courses, but this should not be mistakenly interpreted as their readiness to do so. Rather, lecturers' willingness in this study might be best seen as their personal efforts towards professional development. This is particularly important because lecturers are indeed the 'gatekeepers' of any language policy implementation (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008); the success of EMI policy implementation therefore relies on these lecturers. HEIs should function as mediators between the macro-level (the national policy level) and the micro- level (classroom level) to involve lecturers in the policy-making process. This may contribute to eliminating the disconnection in the top-down model that seems also to be common in other institutions across the world (Macaro et al., 2018).

A policy of encouragement for EMI can also be considered a contributing factor to a pedagogy of assumption in the actual practice of EMI coursework. Lecturers' efforts in EMI teaching in this study were undoubtedly conditioned by the lack of clear policy guidelines,

in interplay with the absence of professional development together with the limited English proficiency of students. However, despite the lack of specific policy and professional development, these lecturers appear to have found a pathway to teaching EMI courses on the basis of their best judgement of what EMI teaching should be and what the learning needs of their students are. This pathway we have conceptualised as a pedagogy of assumption—assumptions about institutional intentions, assumptions about the nature of EMI globally, assumptions about students' learning needs, and assumptions about how best to address those needs.

In some ways the lack of guidelines and professional development has given lecturers the pedagogical freedom to develop their own classroom teaching techniques to address the needs of students. One of these techniques was to provide support materials in Vietnamese, and another was to allow the use of Vietnamese in class in order to compensate for students' lack of English. Several lecturers perceived this practice of code-switching as an effective linguistic strategy for achieving EMI policy intentions, whilst also assuring student grasp of content. Other lecturers saw it as unacceptable in terms of policy intentions, which has also been a common perception in other contexts (Peek, 2010; Setati, Adler, Reed, & Bapoo, 2002). This finding is not surprising as these lecturers have not been trained in how to teach their discipline contents via English as the medium of instruction. They are therefore not aware of translanguaging as an EMI pedagogy which acknowledges learners' linguistic and epistemological repertoire and utilises their first language to develop class activities that simultaneously promote content and language learning (García & Kleyn, 2016; García & Wei, 2014; Heugh, 2015). Based on this understanding, and given the limited English proficiency of students, it is appropriate for code-switching to be recognised and woven into EMI classroom practices as a legitimate strategy to optimise content learning.

To achieve a more coordinated and effective approach to EMI than that represented in this study, we make five broad recommendations:

1. HEIs must clearly identify their educational goals for EMI, recognising that EMI involves international cultural and intercultural knowledge as well as English language
2. HEIs should develop formal and transparent policy for implementing EMI, based on current research and experience

3. HEIs should involve experienced lecturers and students in developing implementation plans
4. As important actors for EMI policy enactment at the operational level (Liddicoat & Baldauf, 2008; Martin, 2008), lecturers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve the institution's educational goals for EMI
5. In addition, where there is a lack of preparedness on the part of both institutions and lecturers, together with limited English proficiency of students, institutional policy makers should allow the gradual use of English in EMI courses as a strategy to progress EMI implementation.

These recommendations are based on analysis of data from public HEIs in three regions of Vietnam, which we believe can provide insights into the enactment of EMI policies and pedagogies in other similar contexts where EMI has become an increasing trend. Further research would provide more dynamic insights into what kinds of professional development training are needed for EMI lecturers and how HEIs can develop a more coordinated approach to their policies to maximise teaching and learning in which English is used as the medium of instruction. Meanwhile, we suggest that policies of mere encouragement, whether they occur nationally or internationally, should be identified and replaced with evidence-based guidance on best EMI practice. This in turn would allow for pedagogies of assumption to be replaced with informed and consistent pedagogical decision making.

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