Chapter 14
Student Strategies in an Undergraduate English-Medium Business Course: A Vietnamese Case Study

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Abstract Calling on data from a university case study in Vietnam, this chapter reveals students' learning strategies used to address their difficulties in taking English-medium instruction (EMI) courses. 36 third-year students majoring in International Business and Logistics completed an open-ended questionnaire, and seven students provided individual semi-structured interviews. Students struggled with six distinct aspects of learning: general language-related issues, language-related issues in understanding academic content, certain types of teaching pedagogy employed by lecturers, assessment, learning resources, and workloads. Their pre-class, in-class, and post-class strategies mainly focused on language-related issues in understanding academic content. The students made pre-class preparation by investigating the given materials, searching for related resources in Vietnamese, or looking up new terminology. In-class strategies aimed to maximise their content understanding, and included taking notes in both English and Vietnamese, guessing the meaning from the context, illustrating abstract theories by examples or diagrams, and consulting lecturers or classmates for clarification. After classes, they listened to their class recordings to gain a better understanding; they also asked for explanations from students in senior years. These strategies are shown to have clear implications for administrators, lecturers, and students in regard to moving forward with EMI teaching and learning practices.

Keywords English-medium instruction · EMI · Vietnam · Higher education · Business education · Learning strategies

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14.1   Introduction

Global higher education has experienced a number of changes in the last two decades, of which internationalisation is one of the most prominent and powerful (Rumbley et al., 2012). Related to this, a significant international trend is the adoption of English-Medium-Instruction (EMI) programs in higher educational institutions. In Vietnam, EMI has been implemented at postgraduate levels since the 1990s, and since the 2000s at undergraduate level (Nguyen, 2018). This chapter refers to an undergraduate EMI cohort at one regional public university, and focuses both on the difficulties students encountered and more particularly on the strategies they developed in response to those difficulties.

The participating university commenced its undergraduate EMI engagement in 2009, in cooperation with international universities. The university leadership decided against Joint Programs, which would have involved borrowing whole programs from their international partners, including the full curriculum and teaching resources. Instead, they engaged in Advanced Programs, in which the borrowings could be adjusted or adapted to align with local programs and interests (Nguyen et al., 2017). While Joint Programs offer students an overseas qualification, Advanced Programs offer local degrees. The university is currently running three Advanced Programs: International Business and Logistics, Global Marketing and Administration, and Business Marketing Management. All three programs are imported from co-operating partners, with some changes to adapt to the local context. All materials are entirely in English, and all academic subjects are delivered in English from the second year by both Vietnamese and overseas lecturers. This chapter demonstrates students' ways of moving forward in their engagement with EMI, recognising their difficulties and developing productive strategies.

14.2   Literature Review

EMI programs initially mushroomed in Europe as a result of the Bologna Process (European Commission, 1999), and shortly spread to the rest of the world, resulting in EMI education becoming a considerable research field. On the one hand, research revealed that students could benefit from taking EMI programs, such as having better future career prospects (Kırkgöz, 2005), since these programs provide students with necessary skills and knowledge to enhance their competitiveness in the context of globalisation and internationalisation (Hamid et al., 2013; Jensen & Thøgersen, 2011; Li & Wu, 2017). On the other hand, a number of difficulties have been recorded from the perspectives of learners, teachers, and administrators, of which the former are the focus here.

Research on challenges for students taking EMI programs reveals both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Regarding intrinsic factors, most students report that their inadequate English competence prevents them from achieving lesson comprehension (e.g.

Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Collins, 2010). Students also find it hard to deal with the range of technical and academic vocabulary (Yıldız et al., 2017) as well as take notes during lessons (Hellekjær, 2010).

Extrinsic factors come from various sources. For example, students complain about the limited English proficiency of local lecturers, which interferes with lecture comprehension (Aslan, 2016). On the other hand, with foreign lecturers who are native English speakers or have high competence in English, students struggle with unfamiliar accents and rapid speaking speed (Le, 2017). Lecturers' style of classroom instruction is another problem reported, particularly by students studying abroad, who have to accommodate a different style of teaching from what they are used to. He and Chiang (2016) report on international students' problems when taking EMI courses in China, where the lecturers often considered themselves as information providers and students as receivers, and where classrooms had few interactive activities and little discussion or explanation about the teaching content. Taking EMI courses means students have to read many materials in English, which increases their workload. In addition, students find difficulties in searching for related reading materials (Yang et al., 2019). As a result of such learning demands, their level of anxiety is high, to the extent that students in some places express resistance to EMI due to the extent of the difficulties they have to cope with (Huang, 2018).

However, there are some reports of students developing various strategies to compensate for their low English level, such as asking lecturers after class, conducting cooperative learning in groups (Yeh, 2014), or preparing lessons at home in advance (Airey & Linder, 2006). Soruç and Griffiths (2017) have identified a variety of cognitive strategies students have applied to overcome difficulties in learning, such as asking questions, visualising, and using prior experience. In order to deal with vocabulary difficulties, students reported frequent usage of strategies such as guessing from context, using a dictionary, or translating. From China, Yang et al. (2019) reported on medical students' strategies to adapt to challenges in EMI programs. For example, students actively managed to find additional reading materials or simplified versions in Chinese to compensate for insufficient or inappropriate EMI teaching resources.

Nevertheless, according to Macaro (2018), there is a dearth of studies investigating strategies used by students to accommodate their EMI learning environment. This is certainly true in Vietnam where, although EMI programs have been widely implemented nationwide, there is limited research in the field, and students' strategies in EMI courses are largely unexamined. A study conducted by Le (2017) into the broad area of students' experience reported students' dissatisfaction with lecturers' inadequate English competence, specifying their difficulties but without any further investigation into students' learning strategies. Aiming to bring out more details on this topic, this chapter reports on a study of students' difficulties in taking EMI courses and their various strategies to cope with those difficulties within the particular setting of one Vietnamese university.

14.3 Research Context, Participants, and Method of Investigation

14.3.1 Research Context

This study took place within a four-year Advanced Program in International Business and Logistics at the public university referred to earlier. In Vietnam, universities admit students based on the scores they achieved in the National High School Exit Exam, and each university has its own benchmark. To be accepted into this university's Advanced Programs, applicants first need to satisfy the cut-off admission score. With a possible maximum score of 30, they need to achieve at least 21.5 in one of the four following groups of subjects: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry; Mathematics, Physics, English; Mathematics, Vietnamese Literature, Chemistry; or Mathematics, Vietnamese Literature, English.

The English language entry requirements are more flexible, in order to cater for a wide range of proficiencies. Students who have an English certificate of at least TOEIC 600 or IELTS 5.5 or other equivalent are exempted from the first-year preparatory English course. All other students have to take a Basic English course over 30 weeks during their first year. At the end of the first year, those students take a mandatory internal IELTS test to determine if they will be allowed to study specialised subjects through EMI from the second year. The required score for this internal test is IELTS 4.0—considerably lower than the IELTS 5.5 required of students having an international certificate at the beginning of the first year. In the IELTS documentation, the overall description for IELTS 4.0 is 'limited user', with students said to have a basic competence limited to familiar situations, to frequently experience problems in understanding and expression, and not to be able to use complex language (IDP, 2020). This means that such students will need to rapidly improve their English in order to achieve adequate content learning in the discipline.

In their second year, the students start on their content subjects through EMI and continue to take English subjects such as English for Logistics, English Composition, Speech Communication, and Advanced Writing. Those English courses provide students with basic terminologies and study skills related to their major. In the third and fourth years, there are no such English language courses, and students are expected to continue to develop their English through the EMI content courses and through self-study. In order to graduate, the language outcome requirement is IELTS 6.0.

Thirty percent of lecturers in the content subjects in this program are foreigners, either from English-speaking countries or countries widely implementing EMI, for example, Japan, Norway, or Turkey. Vietnamese lecturers need to have at least a Master's degree with IELTS 7.0 or an overseas qualification from an English-speaking country. Some Vietnamese lecturers previously attended a one-semester English language training program at the overseas university from which the teaching program was borrowed. This allowed them not only to improve their English, but to become familiar with ways of teaching in such a university.

14.3.2   *Participants and Method of Investigation*

This case study of university students' difficulties and responsive strategies was carried out with a class of third-year students enrolled in an Advanced Program at the participant university in Vietnam. Survey data came from 36 students (22 females, 14 males), most of whom were Vietnamese (n = 34), while two were Burmese (n = 2).

Data were generated using an open-ended questionnaire with 36 respondents and individual semi-structured interviews with seven students. Both the questionnaire and the interview were in Vietnamese for local students and English for international peers. The survey comprised three questions. The first background question asked for participants' self-evaluated English proficiency, as a means of better interpreting the next two items that were the focus of the study. The second question asked students to list their difficulties in studying in the EMI environment, while the third one asked for their strategies to deal with those difficulties. The semi-structured interview aimed to explore the story behind the information given in the questionnaire to reach a deeper understanding. The qualitative data in the survey and semi-structured interviews were analysed by adopting a grounded theory approach. Grouping related items enabled coding of all the difficulties and respective strategies. The quantitative perspective is related to the number of students mentioning the same or similar challenges and strategies.

14.4   Students' Difficulties in Coping With Their EMI Program

The majority of students rated their English as Average (72.2%); a small number (16.7%) rated themselves as Poor, while an even lower number (11.1%) rated themselves as Good. No one rated himself or herself as Very Good or Very Poor. As might be expected, students who rated their English proficiency as Poor or Average mentioned more difficulties than those who rated themselves as Good. In fact, the open-ended questionnaires recorded a wide variety of difficulties that the students faced when taking EMI courses. These we clustered into six themes: listening comprehension (38 mentions), grasping academic content (38 mentions), workload (10 mentions), assessment (9 mentions), speaking in English (6 mentions), and teaching method (3 mentions).

Students' emphasis on difficulties related to listening comprehension and grasping academic content clearly reflects a classroom emphasis on the use of language for knowledge transmission from lecturer to students. Difficulties in listening comprehension are illustrated in Table 14.1.

Students who rated their English as Poor (16.7%) or Average (72.2%) identified two contrasting sources of their listening comprehension difficulties: internal and external. In terms of the internal source, students believed that their own inadequate

Table 14.1 Difficulties in listening comprehension

No	Difficulties in listening comprehension	Students N = 36
1	The foreign teachers speak too fast	16
2	Listening and understanding the lesson at the same time	7
3	Understanding the course itself because of my low English level	6
4	Some Vietnamese teachers speak English not very well or fluently	5
5	Foreign teachers' use of idioms or abbreviations	2
6	Understanding foreign students' speech	2
Total		**38**

English was the cause of them having trouble in absorbing knowledge in English (items 2 and 3, totalling 13 mentions).

> S6: My listening skills are bad. I could not understand the foreign lecturers. In addition, my ESP vocabulary is limited, which makes the lesson hard to follow.

> S5: I found it difficult to keep up with the lectures since I could just understand words or phrases in the lessons. However, I could not get the overall meaning of what the lecturers said.

In terms of the external source, some students laid the blame squarely onto their teachers. On the one hand, the international lecturers were blamed for speaking too fast (item 1, with 16 mentions) and using idioms or abbreviations (item 5, with 2 mentions); on the other hand, some Vietnamese teachers were blamed for the quality of their English and lacking fluency (item 4, with 5 mentions).

> S5: I have problems keeping up with the speaking pace of foreign lecturers. I can understand single words or phrases but not the overall meaning of the ideas.

> S4: Lecturers speak different types of English, such as Australian English or American English, with different accents, and I do not understand, especially with elderly lecturers.

> S3: Vietnamese lecturers sometimes do not pronounce correctly; therefore, I did not pay much attention to their lessons. I prefer to do self-study to comprehend the lessons.

From these statements, it can be inferred that such students learn little from the lectures they attend, adding to their self-study workloads.

The specific difficulties students mentioned regarding grasping academic content were mainly related to the number and meaning of technical terms (23 mentions), which also links to the difficulty of the content itself.

> S2: There are too many technical terms, which are hard to find equivalents for in Vietnamese. When I search on the Internet, those terms are explained in English. Thus, it is not easy to understand.

> S7: I always have to spend lots of time looking up all technical terms in revising and preparing for lessons.

Once again we see the additional self-study workload associated with EMI classes. This finding that technical terms are hard to understand, and yet essential to achieve a full understanding of content, is consistent with previous studies (Yıldız et al., 2017). The vocabulary difficulty is exacerbated because the materials reflect international settings unfamiliar to Vietnamese students, making it difficult for them to process the key concepts.

Students also reported a heavy workload integral to the course itself, which included a lot of reading materials to digest, as well as homework and short deadlines. This was exacerbated when international lecturers visited just for a short period, meaning that students had to complete a subject within a tight time frame, with continuous deadlines and tests, as well as intensive preparation for classes. The students mention becoming stressed and not having sufficient time to digest the knowledge.

The next problem area revealed by the student questionnaire concerns assessment, which is not mentioned in previous research on EMI learner difficulties but was mentioned by 9 of the 36 students. The interviews suggest that the primary assessment challenge relates to the emphasis on questions requiring higher order thinking rather than memory alone.

> S1: Tests require students' understanding of the classes, synthesising all the content of the subject rather than learning it all by heart. Thus, sometimes I do not know whether I answered the question correctly or not.

While Vietnamese students are used to memorising knowledge for assessment (Luong, 2015), they have not been taught how to synthesise knowledge and apply it in unfamiliar contexts. Therefore, both the language and the expectations of assessment were obstacles for them.

Concerning speaking skills, students found it hard to use English when answering questions (2 mentions), even if they knew the content.

> S5: When the teacher asks me questions, I always find it difficult to express my ideas in English even though I understand the questions and know the answers. However, I try as hard as I can to answer in English, but I think I can express only 40–50%. Then the teacher adds more information or asks other students to give additional ideas.

Students also needed to give presentations in English, which they found stressful.

> S4: I often feel nervous when making a presentation because I am not confident about my English or the presented content.

While it is natural for students to be nervous about the quality of their presented content, when EMI is at play students not only are uncertain about their spoken English but carry an additional uncertainty about whether or not they have fully understood the input provided.

The last area of difficulty, teaching method, was identified by only three students, perhaps reflecting a cultural unwillingness to criticise the teacher or because of uncertainty as to whether their own English proficiency was the problem rather than teaching method. It was reported that some lecturers simply read out the content of prepared slides with few explanations or questions for students, so students just

passively listened and took notes in a low-interactive environment. Additionally, students reported being unhappy with a fast teaching pace since too much knowledge is given in a short time (S7).

Across the six categories of difficulty, students indicated both intrinsic and extrinsic factors as causally involved. Intrinsic factors were mainly rooted in students' English competence, notably their inadequate listening ability and their limited vocabulary knowledge. Extrinsic factors were various: the technical or academic language associated with course content, lecturers' use of English, a tight and demanding learning schedule, challenging assessment, and boring teaching methods. It can also be seen that the difficulties reported by students interact with each other. Students' limited language ability contributed to their problems in understanding the content, which in turn impacted on their workload since they needed more time and effort to study.

14.5   Students' Strategies to Cope With Difficulties

To address both intrinsic and extrinsic sources of their difficulties, students referred to 23 strategies they used (56 questionnaire mentions), both personal and interpersonal, aiming to enhance their English competence and improve lesson comprehension. Oral communication (listening and speaking) was a key focus (Table 14.2).

Most students believed that direct study was essential (items 1 & 2 with 13 mentions). This included practicing IELTS-oriented tests, reflecting the value placed by the university and student peers on achieving a high IELTS score, and the belief that a high score was directly related to the level of fluency.

In order to sharpen their listening skills, students employed various personal strategies while at home, such as practicing IELTS listening tests or watching films without subtitles. At university, the students adopted both personal and interpersonal strategies, such as concentrating during lectures, sitting near the teachers, or asking classmates.

Table 14.2 Strategies addressing oral difficulties

No	Strategies addressing oral difficulties	Students n = 36
1	Enhancing language competence through self-study or taking English courses	7
2	Improving listening skills through self-study	6
3	Communicating with international students and other English language users	3
4	Doing presentations	2
5	Being confident in communication	1
6	Practising speaking skills	1
7	Seeking help from friends good at English	1
Total		**21**

Table 14.3 Strategies addressing difficulties with academic content

No	Strategies addressing difficulties with academic content	Students n = 36
1	Enlarging their repertoire of technical terms	8
2	Reading academic materials related to subjects in Vietnamese	7
3	Paying attention to the lectures	4
4	Asking senior students for advice on content or assignment preparation	4
5	Discussing with friends after class	3
6	Taking notes during the lessons	2
7	Discussing with lecturers after class	1
8	Translating all the content into Vietnamese	1
9	Finding key elements, summarise the course content	1
10	Preparing the lesson in advance	1
Total		**32**

S6: In classes, if I do not understand what the lecturers said, I often ask my classmate(s) next to me during lessons or break time.

S5: I found keeping up with lectures is difficult. In that case, I like asking my desk mate or the teaching assistant. However, very few subjects have a teaching assistant.

Students also employed many personal strategies to enhance their speaking skills: from specific strategies such as doing presentations (2 mentions) to more general statements, for example, being confident in communication, practicing speaking skills (1 mention each). Some also referred to interpersonal strategies such as communicating with international students and lecturers (1 mention) and seeking help from students with good English (1 mention).

To overcome difficulties in understanding and learning academic content, students' questionnaire responses indicated a very different set of personal and interpersonal strategies, as shown in Table 14.3.

The students proposed both personal strategies (Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10) and interpersonal strategies (Items 4, 5, 7) to deal with obstacles in accessing and understanding academic content. These strategies are related to moments either before class (Items 2, 10), during class (Items 3, 5), or after class (Items 1, 4, 7, 8, 9). Before class, students prepared in advance by reading given slides and looking up new words in the dictionary or searching for technical terms on the Internet. During class, students tried to take notes in English and/or Vietnamese for later revision. After class, they would ask friends or lecturers to explain some ideas they were uncertain about, as well as ask senior students for advice on dealing with difficulties in studying. Students also tried to read supplementary materials or find reading sources in Vietnamese for an intensive understanding of the lesson content. Generally, students considered self-study as the critical element to acquire knowledge—seven out of ten mentions were personal strategies.

S6: I print out the slides that my lecturers sent in advance and find the meaning of specialised vocabulary

S2: I often record the lesson and take notes. If the lecturers speak too fast, I will note in both English and Vietnamese. I will replay the lessons and look at the notes to clarify parts that I did not understand.

S4: With unfamiliar terminology, I often note down then search Google for the meaning or explanation. If it is hard to understand, I try to find illustrations…

In regard to assessment, students mentioned few strategies to cope with challenges, the most common way being to study hard for the final test. Also, although the students complained about the busy schedule, once again nobody suggested any ways of dealing with this problem apart from working hard, especially prior to the exams. Concerning 'lecturers' ineffective teaching method', the students did not give any formal feedback to the lecturers or institution but responded during class in a negative way by choosing to play games rather than attempt to actively engage.

Nevertheless, a few students did make suggestions for external strategies on the part of the institution. One was to have more bilingual teaching assistants in classes taught by international lecturers, so students can ask for explanations, clarifications, or a Vietnamese equivalent if necessary.

S6: I hope that there are more teaching assistants in classes given by foreign lecturers. They can help us to interpret technical terms or 'lecturers' instructions.

S5: I would like to have a teaching assistant in some difficult subjects or to tutor homework because I feel embarrassed when asking lecturers so many questions.

The other external strategy was twofold: to improve and update the first-year ESP course and to provide an ESP subject in the second year:

S4: I think the ESP subject should be revised to provide students with more related terminology. It also can be an optional subject for students in the second year. Students could either choose to take the ESP subject or not depending on their confidence in their knowledge of technical vocabulary.

As mentioned earlier, there are four second-year English language courses offered: English for Logistics, English Composition, Speech Communication, and Advanced Writing. While English for Logistics is targeted towards students' broad discipline area, the other three are not, indicating a possible gap in provisions.

14.6   Conclusion and Implications for Moving Forward with EMI

Consistent with previous studies on students' experience of EMI (e.g. Jiang et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2019), language competence is the main difficulty that the students faced in this study, causing them trouble in understanding both lectures and learning resources. Additionally, students complained about the local lecturers' inadequate

English speaking skills, including inappropriate pronunciation; this too has been found in other studies (Byun et al., 2011, and this volume, Chapter 12). Students also encountered difficulties in understanding native speakers due to their unfamiliar accents or fast speaking speed.

Regarding extrinsic factors such as lecturer language delivery, lecturers' pedagogy, academic content, teaching schedule, or assessment, students proposed a number of suggestions. To deal with lecturer language delivery, students showed a preference for being taught by native English speakers. With non-native and Vietnamese lecturers, the students requested that the School be more selective in recruiting lecturers with a high level of English fluency, especially in pronunciation. To improve teaching quality, the students suggested that lecturers should have more interactive activities that can attract students to engage in the lesson. Also the given knowledge should be more specific with more explanations as well as meaningful application and practice. Vietnamese lecturers should explain technical terms or difficult content in English. The students also preferred lecturers to slow down their pace. Difficulties regarding pace and understanding course content have also been noted as issues in first language undergraduate classes (Hellekjær, 2010), with these being intensified in EMI settings. In terms of assessment, the students suggested that English grammatical errors should not be included in the evaluation. They believed that lecturers should be more generous in giving marks, and tests should be easier to suit their level. They wanted the number of presentations and assessments to be reduced.

To address intrinsic factors related to language, especially in understanding academic content, the students mostly turned to internal cognitive strategies such as self-study or hard work, including practicing at home via IELTS practice tests, watching TV programs or series in English with or without subtitles, taking English courses at language centres, reading materials in English and looking for similar reading sources in Vietnamese, and translating new words into Vietnamese. In the same vein, some committed to paying more attention to the lectures by focusing closely during class hours and taking notes. All the students primarily mentioned personal strategies like these, but some also referred to a few interpersonal strategies, mainly for achieving a better understanding of content. These included discussing with lecturers and classmates after class or asking senior students about their experience in learning, taking exams, or preparing assignments.

These strategies indicate the students' sense of responsibility for solving their difficulties themselves. However, no students mentioned seeking formal solutions through the intervention of university administrators and the establishment of institutional support systems, although some students did mention ideas for institutional change. Thus, while they saw a need for some institutional actions to improve EMI offerings, they had not to date made their voice heard by program administrators through the student feedback pathway. This suggests that the students did not see that as either their right or their responsibility, which in turn suggests that the institution should more actively seek out student feedback. Implicit feedback from this study of student perspectives suggests a number of implications for moving forward

with EMI pedagogically, whether on the part of students, lecturers, institutional administrators, or policymakers.

First, since English competence is the main problem reported by students, it is suggested that universities should review the English language entry requirements for future EMI students, to reflect the cognitive expectations of the disciplines involved. As mentioned above, the current minimum requirement for students to commence EMI coursework in the institution where this study took place was 5.5 IELTS for those who were exempted from the preliminary English language courses and 4.0 IELTS for those having taken the one-year English preparation courses. This level of competence clearly did not allow students to readily engage with the cognitive challenges involved in their undergraduate EMI coursework, especially lessons taught by overseas lecturers and with international learning materials.

Second, while some supporting English classes were available for second-year students at this university, there is a clear need for English development related directly to students' actual studies within their discipline. Such a focus would highlight skills for listening and speaking in class, and the language related to the content of the discipline. This need is implicit in the strategies developed by students in this study, which mainly served the purpose of understanding the lectures, in other words accessing the knowledge for which they had enrolled. However, connecting English development to students' disciplinary studies requires content and language teachers to work closely together, which in turn requires policy direction and resourcing from university management.

Third, the internal strategies reported by the students denote their current learning capability, which is still at a low level in terms of the cognitive processes involved and does not reflect the higher order thinking and academic literacy required to succeed in an EMI program. To benefit from the Advanced Programs that they are attending, students should be helped to gain some additional meta-cognitive strategies and step further into acquiring, synthesising, evaluating, and applying knowledge. EMI lecturers and EMI program administrators need to carefully consider this issue, given that teaching, learning, and assessment hold a reflexive relationship. The institution should provide students with some additional training through tutorials or workshops to introduce them to the nature of undergraduate EMI study, making clear that EMI is not just a language shift but also a learning shift. Learning is not solely to remember knowledge but also to become a critical thinker.

Fourth, students struggled with technical terms in learning academic subjects in English. It is therefore recommended that lecturers regularly provide students with glossaries of terms in their subjects, using English with Vietnamese equivalents. It is important for students to have the necessary knowledge of technical terms before studying each new topic (Airey & Linder, 2006; Hellekjær, 2010). It is also suggested that universities should not only provide students with intensive General English courses in first year, but also courses in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses introducing specialised terminology related to their proposed majors. Additionally, ESP courses provided for EMI students should be constantly updated to reflect ESP teaching materials with reference to ongoing teaching and learning resources in EMI courses; this would enhance the

authenticity of the ESP experience for students. To this end, a collaboration between content specialists and English language specialists would be highly beneficial.

Fifth, students have complained about busy and unstable learning schedules and workloads with large amounts of reading to be done in a short space of time. This calls for institutional consideration of arranging suitable learning schedules and workloads, so the students can deal with learning academic content effectively in a foreign language.

Sixth, it is evident that students' difficulties are partly caused by some lecturers' ineffective teaching methods, which lead to negative reactions among students, as reported in this study and elsewhere (e.g., Huang, 2018; and Chapter 12 in this volume). Therefore, EMI lecturers should be provided with in-service training related to EMI teaching. Currently, limited professional development of EMI lecturers has been conducted, and at the time of writing there was no official EMI preservice teacher training in Vietnam.

The seventh and final implication is that students should not only be encouraged to develop strategies to deal with intrinsic factors causing difficulties in undertaking EMI courses, but also to give feedback to the institution to let them know about extrinsic factors affecting their learning situation. Universities should actively encourage feedback and also invite suggestions about dealing with specific problems. For example, implicit feedback from students in this study indicates that institutional responsibility lies in improving its own processes, including regulation and support for students' English language proficiency, appropriate selection and training of lecturers, localising program and teaching content, and either adjusting assessment or actively scaffolding students' transition into EMI types of assessment.

This study has also raised some implications for further research, especially in the context of tertiary institutions in Vietnam. First, future studies into student difficulties and responsive strategies should involve various types of universities in different settings and include a range of disciplines. Second, research into EMI learning could investigate strategy variation among students on the basis of gender, discipline, home language, English entry levels, and grade point average scores. Third, a longitudinal study could be conducted to see how effective are the strategies employed by students and in what ways their strategies change over time.

To conclude, such research studies, as well as the student reflections in the present study, can provide valuable input for moving forward with EMI as an educational enterprise, whether for policymakers, institutional administrators, or designers of professional development programs for EMI lecturers. Such input can inform decisions regarding EMI processes and practices to effectively address real EMI issues in particular contexts.

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