Solutions To Better The Implementation Of Multilingual Polices In Socio-Economic Development Context Of Vietnam

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Abstract

The purpose of this mixed-method study was to investigate the implementation of multilingual policies at University of Foreign Language Studies, the University of Danang, Vietnam in the context of socio-economic development in the middle area of Vietnam. The study examined a large number of university graduates in different times and employers to investigate the contribution of this policy thanks to the training of the University. Data collected from surveys and interviews were analysed to find out essential solutions to better the situations. It is revealed in the study that various kinds of solutions in different aspects are suggested to better the current situation.

Keywords: multilingual policy, language, employers, satisfaction, solutions

1. Introduction

In the current era of globalization, language is seen as a tool to connect people in countries around the world together. On the one hand, English, as an international language, has been asserting its important mission in all fields on a global scale. On the other hand, in terms of the domination of English over other languages, multilingual policies and practices have been proposed and implemented in many parts of the world today. It can be seen that English and other languages contribute to promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in the current context.

Language policy and practice in Vietnam has always been consistent with the maintenance and promotion of multilingualism. Specifically, beside the official language of Vietnamese, the languages of ethnic minorities are always paid attention to, encouraged and maintained in each minority community. This is clearly stated in the Education Law. Along with the diversity of native languages, language and education policy in Vietnam has always emphasized the importance of foreign languages in the national education system. Over the historical periods, many foreign languages are taught at all levels. An important policy that has impacted and greatly influenced foreign language teaching and learning in the past decade is the National Foreign Language Project 2020 issued by the Government of Vietnam. The focus of the project is on renovating foreign language teaching and learning, with English as the focus, towards the goal that people can use foreign languages, specifically English, in life and work.

Although language policies in Vietnam encourage linguistic diversity, promoting this

diversity in practice is quite difficult. The reason is that most of the population is concentrated in the plains and big cities. Among the foreign languages taught in the national education system, English is still the main language, not to say the only one.

In the current situation of multilingual training activities, this study was conducted to provide an overview of the reality of multilingual training activities at a university in the region and then, consider the impact of that training activity on the socio-economic development of the provinces in the region. Afterwards, solutions and recommendations are launched out to better the situation.

2. Review of Literature
2.1. Language Policy

Research on language choice at universities is intended to contribute to a picture of global socio-economic trends in different periods. According to Heller (2003), the globalizing economy is related to the transformation of the roles of languages in many different aspects. Therefore, it can be recognized that the development of language policy is related to changes in society, and language policy is also considered a type of social policy (Dannis, 1999).

2.2. Multilingual policy

Multilingual policy refers to the policy in the area of language use of a society. These policies reflect social relationships with the languages that can be used, including policies on roles and principles to be followed within a country (Van & La, 2012). Language is used as a means of communication and exchange of information as well as knowledge. Throughout the history of human development, many different languages have always prevailed in scientific research as well as communication in the world (Graddol, 1997). In the world, there are many countries that

apply a multilingual policy to meet the needs of society. In Singapore, linguistic diversity is becoming more and more popular with languages such as Chinese, English, Malay, Tamil (Nguyen, 2018). Also according to Nguyen (2018), Singapore's multilingual policy has two main points of view: (i) Internationalization: This view requires adopting a non-native language as an official language. The Singapore government has approved the use of English in addition to the native language of Singapore. (ii) Multilingualism: This view requires recognition and support of the coexistence of multiple languages in society. For China, a multi-ethnic and multilingual country, language policy in China has demonstrated a combination of diversity and unity clearly because the constitution of the People's Republic of China clearly stipulates, 'All ethnic groups have the right to freely use and develop their mother tongue' and 'The Government widely disseminates the common Mandarin language throughout the country.' (Van & La, 2012). In fact, China is investing heavily in building infrastructure and strengthening trade links with countries along the 'Silk Road' in the Asian continent as well as the 'Silk Road'. at sea', where languages other than English, such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Russia and Urdu, are more likely to be spoken. China's practice of multilingualism has improved rapidly with specific numbers. In 2012 China had the largest number of Japanese learners (1,046 million out of 3,985 million Japanese learners worldwide), which is an increase of 26.5% since 2009 (Gao and Zheng, 2019).

Beside China as analyzed above, many countries have been paying attention to language diversity. These include countries such as Korea, Japan, Singapore or New Zealand. In Europe, language policy is also built on the diversity principle. In addition to English, influential languages such as French, German, and Spanish are encouraged to be taught in the school system

and used in the community. In Europe and America, language policy is based on the principle of diversity (Porter, 2006). In the Asia-Pacific region, multilingualism is very common with many different languages being used in the workplace, school and society (Baldauf and Nguyen, 2012).

In the context of increasingly multilingual policies in many areas, according to Coulmas (2005), the trend of language selection at training institutions which is still mostly English, besides some other languages. also gradually gains more and more selective advantages. It can be seen that besides the sustainable popularity of English in the choice of learners over the years, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese languages, along with other languages, have become increasingly popular and more selective than before. This is also a very interesting multilingual trend shift.

2.3. Multilingual practice in Vietnam

The policy of multilingual teaching in Vietnamese education system was determined very early on the basis of the connection of economic and social cooperation with countries around the world. During the period from 1945 to 1968, four languages including English, French, Chinese and Russian were taught in the national education system. In 1994, English was considered the main foreign language in teaching, but other foreign languages have always been maintained and developed in teaching and learning. The purpose of foreign language learning in Vietnam has always been to train human resources proficient in foreign languages so that Vietnam can quickly integrate with the world economy effectively. In this respect, foreign languages are considered an effective and key tool in the process of integration and development.

It can be seen that Vietnam's policy of language diversity is reflected in many

documents, such as Directive 42/TTG by Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet in 1994 on enhancing foreign language training for civil servants, Decision 1800 issued in 2008 by Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung approving the National Foreign Language Project (NFL) until 2020, and Decision 2080 in 2017 by Deputy Prime Minister Vu Duc Dam on approving additional amendments to the National Foreign Language Project. The NFL focuses on language diversity through targets and implementation solutions for foreign languages. However, since the project was implemented until now, implementation activities still focus mainly on teaching English.

In Vietnam today, in the relationship of multilateral economic and trade cooperation, the proportion of cooperation is not completely tilted towards the English-speaking countries. Our country also has very good trade with European countries, Asia and other continents. Thanks to the policy and practice of language diversity, Vietnamese workers are equipped with many suitable languages to be able to work abroad. Beside labor export, another economic sector that brings great income to the country is tourism. Among foreign tourists coming to Vietnam, only one third of them use English as their native language. The remaining guests come from many different countries, mainly from China, Japan, Europe, Korea and recently Russia, etc.

2.4. Academic Training in terms of Multilingual Policies at University of Foreign Language Studies, the University of Danang, Vietnam

The training program at the University of Foreign Language Studies - the University of Danang (UFLS-UD) includes training level; training subjects, admission conditions and graduation conditions; training objectives, programme and course learning outcomes; volume of theoretical and practical knowledge; training plan according to the scheduled time; training methods and

forms; evaluation of learning results; program execution conditions. Each program is associated with a single discipline (single major) or several disciplines (dualistic model) and is structured from modules in two blocks of knowledge: general education and professional education. The Rector promulgates the training program implemented in the University, with the volume of each program which is not fewer than 120 credits for a 4-year university course; no fewer than 60 credits for a regular university course.

Based on the amount of knowledge of the training programs, the Rector of the university shall prescribe the allocation of the number of courses and other activities for each school year and each semester. Based on the results of the entrance exam and the candidate's desire to register for the exam, the university arranges the candidates to enter the correct training major for which they have registered for the exam.

At the present time, there are nearly 6,000 students studying 7 different languages at UFLS-UD. UFLS-UD has the function of training teachers and linguists with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in some common languages in the world, conducting scientific research and performing social services in the fields of science and technology, language and culture, and at the same time teaching foreign languages to member higher education institutions and units affiliated to the University of Danang.

For undergraduate level, the University is currently training 13 majors and 21 specializations, including foreign languages such as English, French, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Thai. The school has also been training Bachelor of Arts in Vietnamese language and Vietnamese culture for foreigners since 2006. The school has a tradition of training bachelors in English, French, and Russian pedagogy since its inception and for many years, and recently, the School has specialized in English Pedagogy at primary level and Chinese Pedagogy.

In order to meet the needs of human resources of the society and diversify the fields and majors of training, the University of Foreign Languages Studies - UD has conducted bachelor's degree programs in French for tourism, English for tourism, Business English, Tourist English, Business Chinese, Tourist Chinese; International Studies, Oriental Studies, Vietnamese Language and Vietnamese Culture.

3. Methods

University of Foreign Language Studies (UFLS) is one of the member educational institutions of UD, currently training 07 foreign languages at university level including English, Russian, French, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai and Vietnamese as a foreign language for foreigners. In the general structure of training scale, English has accounted for the highest enrollment rate for many years. However, it can be seen that more and more high school students are interested in and choosing other foreign languages with recent trends such as Korean, Japanese, and Chinese as their majors.

The methodology selected for this study is case study, which refers to an empirical inquiry developing an in-depth understanding of a real-life phenomenon (Yin, 2009). In case study, the researcher seeks to develop an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of the case by collecting multiple forms of data (Creswell, 2012). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) hold the viewpoint that in a research, the situations are changing all the time instead of keeping fixed and they are all affected by the. Also, according to these authors, with the help of case studies, researchers could observe effects in real contexts; henceforth, context is a powerful determinant of cause and effects as well (Cohen et al., 2011). In this case study, the study was built up on a combination of different sources of qualitative and quantitative data including participants' survey and participants' interviews from nearly alumni in 2020 and 2021 and 40 employers in the Middle Area of Vietnam.

4. Findings

Various kinds of solutions are given in different aspects thanks to survey and questionnaires from participants are as follows.

4.1. Solutions related to students' enrollment

- Develop a study plan and determine the enrollment scale in association with the training capacity of the University and forecast social human resource needs.
- Make an enrollment plan suitable to the characteristics, conditions, training capacity, and reputation of the University.
- In promoting and advising on enrollment, in addition to using the University's officials, it is necessary to have plans to invite management staffs, teachers at local teaching institutions, alumni to cooperate in the training process at the university.

4.2. Solutions related to curriculum

- The training objectives of the language majors must be closely linked with the output standards of the respective training majors, which meets the professional requirements of the society.
- The output standards of each training program need to flexibly meet the human demand of the labor market.
- The development of training programs must match the output standards which are associated with the requirements of developing learners' capacity according to social needs.
- It is necessary to involve a number of participants in the development of training programs including reputable teachers, scientists, enterprises, post-graduation employers, and former learners. At the same

time, it is necessary to have reference to advanced training programs of other countries towards the training of capable human resources in the context of international integration.
- The training program must meet the requirements of knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the human resource needs of the local industries.

4.3. Solutions related to teaching management

Managing the teaching process is an important element in training activities. As a consequent, some solutions have been proposed by stakeholders during the survey as follows.
- Manage the teaching activities of the lecturers: managing the teaching, compiling detailed course outlines, using teaching aids for practical activities.
- Manage the application and implementation of modern teaching methods by lecturers.
- Manage the practical guidance of lecturers and practice in association with enterprises.
- Manage students' learning activities: manage and build up learning methods, guiding and checking students' self-study and self-research activities. Managing student learning activities needs to be close to the characteristics and basic requirements of the training program, promoting the active role of students not only inside class but also outside class including group discussion, in self-study and research.
- Diversify different forms of regular and periodical examination and evaluation by lecturers in each module.
- Manage academic advising in order to build a dedicated and professional team of advisors to effectively advise and support students in study, scientific research, and career orientation.

4.4. Solutions related to teachers, staff and administrators

- Build up a human resource plan to meet the requirements of the University's goals and strategic plans on training scale development.
- Have satisfactory incentives to attract highly qualified people to work at the university
- Have expanding links through the form of visiting lecturers, collaboratiom on exchange of lecturers to promote the strengths of a team of highly qualified lecturers.
- Have policies to mobilize highly qualified staff from agencies and enterprises to participate in the training process in order to improve training quality and meet practical requirements. demand for local professional practice, facilitate the training process with the use of human resources after graduation.

4.5. Solutions related to infrastructure management

- Advising local authorities in considering land allocation and expanding land area, investing in construction funds, supplementing facilities to meet training development requirements of the school:
- Ensuring adequate, synchronous, standardized and modern facilities and information technology infrastructure to meet training requirements.
- Linking and making use of specialized and modern facilities of local training institutions and enterprises to support training activities.

4.6. Solutions related to academic training management

An important factor that can affect training activities is the role of the university management team, led by the university's Rector. The effectiveness of university management depends mainly on the personalities of the managers, in which, the quality, capacity and leadership style of the Rector and administrative officers are the most important factors.

- In the context of radical and comprehensive renovation of Education-Training and international integration, the role and leadership style of the rector and administrative officials are very important in university management. It is necessary for the management staff to strive to perfect themselves. Moreover, the leadership style needs to be democratic and flexibly adaptive to the working context.
- It is necessary to have the capacity to be sensitive to changes in the environment, the ability to behave appropriately to the circumstances, the ability to create consensus and inspiration, the ability to resolve conflicts
- It is necessary to pay attention to the socio-economic development of the locality in order to develop sustainable training to meet the needs of local human resources. The economic, cultural and social development of the locality will also favorably affect people's awareness and interest in Education-Training in general and the University in particular.

4.7. Solutions related to assessment

- It is necessary to clarify the aim of assessment, which is not only to test the knowledge learned, but also to be able to apply that knowledge to solve possible future tasks. From this perspective, stakeholders (administrators, lecturers, students) can apply appropriate teaching and learning methods to promote the effectiveness of the training process.
- Improve the requirements for testing and evaluating training programs according to the output standards
- Enhance the application of information technology in assessment in order to ensure fairness, objectivity as well as quick response.
- It is necessary to diversify forms of testing and assessment in order to be able to evaluate the results of the students' self-study process

5. Discussion and Conclusions

From the collected data and analysis results mentioned above, the following solutions will be proposed by this study.

- Determining human resource training needs is the first step to focus on in construction management and training program development.

- Determining human resource demand in terms of industry size, number of learners at all levels of training in the Middle and Highland region. Based on the forecast of human resource needs at the national level, the central level and the Central Highlands region's level and based on the training program development goals and plans of the University as forecasted in the strategic plan of the University. It is necessary to organize a survey of the needs of the size of the profession, the number of employees corresponding to the training levels of the employers' organizations and agencies by the time the students graduate. On that basis, it is essential to identify training disciplines that need to be developed new training programs as well as maintaining existing training disciplines need to continue to evaluate and improve training programs.

- The specific training objectives of the training programs must meet the professional requirements of the society, and at the same time must be suitable to the circumstances and conditions of the University as well as the situation in the Middle - Central Highlands region.

- The development of training objectives must also ensure flexibility, allowing students to easily change majors in the learning process when necessary. Training objectives must be regularly reviewed, supplemented, adjusted and implemented.

- It is necessary to develop a plan to periodically compare and contrast the goals with the achieved results in order to comprehensively evaluate training activities,

find out strengths and weaknesses, and take measures to improve training quality.

- The training program must have clear and specific goals with a reasonable structure. It must be systematically designed, meet the requirements and output standards in the direction of capacity development for students and meet the appropriate requirements. meeting the demand for quality human resources of the training disciplines serving the socio-economic development of the Middle - Central Highlands region.

It could be concluded that UFLS-UD with its history of establishment and development has contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of the locality as well as the provinces in the Middle and Central Highlands regions. From a small school with only 03 languages initially trained: English, French, Russian, the University has continuously developed new majors and specialties to meet the constantly developing needs of society. With the current digital transformation context along with a continuously developing society, universities must have a high capacity to respond effectively and quickly to social needs as required by the modern knowledge economy.

In order to deploy effectively, the quality of training programs in the direction of autonomy to ensure that graduates can meet the increasing requirements of the domestic and foreign labor market must be ensured. This study has also shown that the University needs to have a strategy to periodically adjust the structure of undergraduate and graduate training disciplines in the direction of expanding and/or building a number of new training programs in the field of foreign languages. language. At the same time, the University also needs to expand the scale of university training, diversify training types and training methods, and provide short-term training courses on foreign language skills, translation and interpretation skills, teaching methods, and teaching and developing professional capacity of

foreign language teachers, etc., in order to better meet social needs and socio-economic development in the new period.

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