

Preparing Teachers for English-medium Instruction (EMI) in Vietnam: Challenges and Implications for English-as-a-second-language Education

Teacher Readiness for EMI in Vietnam

¹Trinh Thi Hai

¹Lecturer,

¹Faculty of English Language,

¹Dai Nam University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Abstract : The increasing adoption of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has become a prominent educational trend in many non-English-speaking countries, including Vietnam. In response to globalization and the growing demand for English proficiency, Vietnam has recently introduced educational policies aimed at gradually transforming English into a second language within the school system. As EMI continues to expand across different educational levels, teachers play a crucial role in ensuring its successful implementation. However, the effectiveness of EMI largely depends on teachers' readiness to teach academic subjects through English. This paper reviews the current state of teachers' readiness for EMI in Vietnam and examines the major challenges influencing its implementation. Drawing on previous studies, policy documents, and recent educational developments, the paper explores four key dimensions of teacher readiness: language competence, pedagogical competence, attitudes toward EMI, and institutional support. The review indicates that although many Vietnamese teachers recognize the potential benefits of EMI for students' language development and future opportunities, they continue to face difficulties related to English proficiency, EMI-specific teaching strategies, limited professional training, and insufficient institutional support. The paper argues that teacher readiness is a critical factor in the success of EMI and the broader national goal of introducing English as a second language in Vietnamese schools. Based on the analysis, several implications are proposed for teachers, educational institutions, and policymakers. Strengthening professional development programs, improving access to teaching resources, and creating supportive educational environments are essential to enhancing teachers' readiness and promoting more effective EMI implementation in Vietnam.

IndexTerms - English-Medium Instruction (EMI), teacher readiness, English as a second language, educational reform, challenges, implications, Vietnam.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In the era of globalization and internationalization, English has become the dominant language of education, science, technology, and international communication. As a result, many countries have adopted educational policies aimed at improving English proficiency and enhancing their competitiveness in the global arena. One of the most significant developments in this regard is the growing implementation of English-Medium Instruction (EMI), which refers to the use of English to teach academic subjects in contexts where English is not the first language of the majority population. EMI has gained increasing attention worldwide because it is believed to improve students' English proficiency while simultaneously providing access to subject knowledge and international opportunities.

In Vietnam, the importance of English has been increasingly emphasized through a series of educational reforms. Most notably, the Vietnamese government approved the project "*Introducing English as a Second Language in Schools for the Period 2025–2035, with a Vision to 2045*," which aims to gradually transform English from a foreign language subject into a second language used in teaching, learning, communication, and educational activities in schools. Under this initiative, English is expected to play a greater role not only as a subject of study but also as a medium of instruction across different educational levels. The project reflects the government's commitment to strengthening English education and preparing learners for participation in a globalized society.

To support this national goal, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has introduced additional policy measures to strengthen English education. Recent draft regulations on curricula and teaching materials in vocational education emphasize the priority of English in the educational system and highlight its role in the national roadmap toward establishing English as a second language in schools. These developments indicate that English is increasingly viewed as a tool for learning, communication, and

professional development rather than merely a foreign language subject. Consequently, educational institutions are expected to create learning environments where English is used more actively and meaningfully.

At the same time, schools and educational organizations have begun experimenting with innovative approaches to support this transition. For example, STEM-based English programs and blended-learning models have been implemented in several regions to address challenges such as teacher shortages and unequal access to English education. These initiatives demonstrate the growing demand for English-related educational innovation while also revealing the practical difficulties involved in implementing English-focused policies across diverse educational contexts.

A particularly notable example is the pilot implementation of the “English as a Second Language” (ESL) model at the Secondary School of Foreign Languages (UMS), University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi. Since 2024, the school has integrated English into a wide range of academic, administrative, and extracurricular activities, creating an English-rich environment for teachers, staff, and students. The initiative has required continuous professional development, peer support, and institutional commitment to help teachers and school personnel improve their confidence and competence in using English. The success of this model suggests that educational reform depends not only on policy initiatives but also on the readiness of teachers and school communities to embrace change.

Despite the growing expansion of EMI and the increasing emphasis on English as a second language in Vietnam, significant challenges remain. Previous studies have reported that many teachers continue to experience difficulties related to English proficiency, EMI-specific pedagogical skills, and access to professional development opportunities. Furthermore, the quality of English teaching and teacher preparation varies considerably across regions and institutions. These challenges raise concerns about the extent to which teachers are prepared to meet the demands of EMI and support the successful implementation of current educational reforms.

Given the central role of teachers in educational change, understanding teachers’ readiness for EMI has become increasingly important. Teachers are expected not only to possess adequate language competence but also to employ effective teaching strategies, adapt to new instructional expectations, and participate in ongoing professional development. Therefore, this paper examines teachers’ readiness for English-Medium Instruction in Vietnam by reviewing the major challenges influencing EMI implementation and discussing implications for educators, educational institutions, and policymakers.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The growing adoption of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Vietnam reflects the country’s commitment to educational internationalization and the national goal of gradually establishing English as a second language in schools. Recent educational policies and pilot initiatives have demonstrated increasing efforts to expand the use of English beyond traditional language classrooms and integrate it into teaching, learning, and school activities. However, the successful implementation of these reforms depends largely on the readiness of teachers, who are expected to teach, communicate, and support learning through English. Despite the importance of this role, many teachers continue to face challenges related to English language proficiency, confidence in using English, and the pedagogical skills required for EMI contexts.

Previous studies have identified several factors affecting teachers’ readiness for EMI, including language competence, pedagogical competence, attitudes toward EMI, and institutional support. Nevertheless, research has also revealed persistent difficulties such as limited professional development opportunities, insufficient teaching resources, and unequal access to English-rich learning environments. Furthermore, while considerable attention has been paid to EMI implementation, there remains a need to better understand the challenges teachers encounter and the support required to help them adapt to the increasing demands of English-based education. Therefore, this paper seeks to examine teachers’ readiness for EMI in Vietnam by reviewing the key challenges influencing its implementation and discussing implications for educational practice and policy development.

1.3. Research Aims

This paper aims to examine teachers’ readiness for English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Vietnam in the context of ongoing educational reforms and the national initiative to establish English as a second language in schools. Specifically, the paper seeks to review the major challenges affecting teachers’ readiness, including language competence, pedagogical competence, attitudes toward EMI, and institutional support.

In addition, the paper aims to analyze how these challenges may influence the successful implementation of EMI in Vietnamese educational settings. Based on the review and discussion, the paper also proposes implications and recommendations for teachers, educational institutions, and policymakers to enhance teacher readiness and promote more effective EMI implementation in Vietnam.

1.4. Research Questions

To achieve the aims of this paper, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What are the major factors influencing teachers’ readiness for English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Vietnam?
2. What challenges do Vietnamese teachers encounter when implementing EMI?
3. What implications can be drawn to enhance teachers’ readiness and support effective EMI implementation in Vietnam?

II. Literature Review

2.1. English-Medium Instruction (EMI)

English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has become an increasingly important educational approach in many non-English-speaking countries as a result of globalization and the internationalization of education. EMI is generally defined as the use of English to teach academic subjects in contexts where English is not the first language of the majority of the population (Macaro, 2018). Unlike traditional English language teaching, EMI focuses primarily on the delivery of subject content through English rather than on language instruction itself. Through this approach, students are expected to acquire subject knowledge while simultaneously improving their English language proficiency.

The growing popularity of EMI has been driven by several factors. First, English is widely recognized as the global language of science, technology, business, and international communication. As a result, educational institutions increasingly view EMI as a means of preparing students for participation in the global economy and academic community. Second, EMI is often associated with educational quality, international competitiveness, and access to international educational resources. Consequently, many countries in Asia, Europe, and Latin America have adopted EMI as part of broader educational reform strategies (Dearden, 2015). In Asia, EMI has expanded rapidly over the past two decades. Countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand have implemented EMI programs at various educational levels to enhance students' English proficiency and international competitiveness. However, previous research suggests that EMI implementation is often accompanied by significant challenges, including insufficient teacher language proficiency, limited pedagogical preparation, and concerns about students' comprehension of subject content (Hu & Lei, 2014; Macaro et al., 2018). These challenges highlight the complexity of implementing EMI effectively and the importance of providing adequate support for both teachers and learners.

In Vietnam, EMI has received increasing attention as part of the country's efforts to improve English education and strengthen international integration. Initially, EMI was primarily implemented in higher education institutions, particularly in programs related to science, technology, engineering, business, and international studies. More recently, the Vietnamese government has promoted policies aimed at expanding the role of English within the education system, including the national initiative to gradually establish English as a second language in schools. As a result, EMI is expected to play a more significant role in both general and higher education in the coming years.

Despite its potential benefits, the successful implementation of EMI depends on various factors, including teacher competence, student preparedness, institutional support, and educational policy. Among these factors, teachers play a particularly critical role because they are responsible for delivering content, facilitating classroom interaction, and supporting students' learning through English. Therefore, understanding EMI and its implementation challenges provides an important foundation for examining teachers' readiness in the Vietnamese educational context.

2.2. Teacher Readiness for EMI

Teacher readiness is widely regarded as one of the most important determinants of successful English-Medium Instruction (EMI) implementation. In EMI contexts, teachers are expected not only to possess adequate subject knowledge but also to deliver content effectively through English while supporting students' academic and linguistic development. Consequently, teacher readiness has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing language competence, pedagogical competence, professional attitudes, and institutional support (Macaro, 2018).

Language competence is often considered the foundation of EMI readiness. Teachers are required to explain academic concepts, facilitate classroom interaction, provide feedback, and manage learning activities through English. Previous studies have consistently identified language proficiency as a major factor influencing teachers' confidence and effectiveness in EMI classrooms (Macaro et al., 2018). In the Vietnamese context, teachers frequently report concerns regarding their ability to use English fluently and accurately, particularly when dealing with subject-specific terminology and spontaneous classroom communication (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019). These linguistic challenges may affect both teaching quality and teachers' willingness to adopt EMI practices.

Beyond language proficiency, pedagogical competence plays a critical role in determining teacher readiness. Effective EMI teaching requires teachers to integrate content and language learning, adapt instructional materials, and employ appropriate scaffolding strategies to support students with diverse levels of English proficiency. Unlike traditional content teaching, EMI demands a learner-centered approach that promotes interaction, critical thinking, and meaningful language use. However, many teachers have received training primarily in their subject disciplines and may lack preparation for EMI-specific pedagogical practices (Vu & Burns, 2014). Consequently, professional development in EMI pedagogy has become increasingly important.

Recent research has also highlighted the significance of teachers' professional agency and attitudes toward EMI. Rather than viewing readiness as a static set of competencies, scholars increasingly conceptualize it as a dynamic process through which teachers actively adapt to changing educational demands. In a study of Vietnamese higher education, Dang et al. (2024) found that EMI teachers demonstrated transformative agency by developing new instructional practices, improving their English competence, and negotiating challenges associated with EMI implementation. The study suggests that teachers' willingness to learn, adapt, and engage in professional growth is an essential component of readiness.

Institutional support further influences teachers' preparedness for EMI. Access to professional development programs, teaching resources, administrative support, and opportunities for collaboration can significantly enhance teachers' confidence and

instructional effectiveness. Conversely, limited institutional support may hinder teachers' ability to implement EMI successfully. Research in Vietnam has shown that many teachers continue to require sustained support in both language development and EMI pedagogy to meet the increasing demands of English-based education (Tran & Nguyen, 2018).

Overall, teacher readiness for EMI extends beyond language proficiency alone. It involves the interaction of linguistic competence, pedagogical expertise, professional agency, and institutional support. As Vietnam continues to promote English as a second language and expand EMI initiatives, strengthening teacher readiness will remain a critical factor in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of educational reform.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

This paper is grounded in the theory of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) proposed by Macaro (2018), which emphasizes that successful EMI implementation depends on the interaction of content knowledge, English language proficiency, and pedagogical competence. In EMI settings, teachers are expected to deliver academic content through English while simultaneously facilitating students' understanding and participation. Therefore, teacher readiness becomes a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of EMI implementation.

In addition, the study draws on the concept of professional agency in EMI developed by Dang et al. (2024). This perspective views teacher readiness as a dynamic process rather than a fixed set of skills. Teachers continuously adapt their instructional practices, improve their language competence, and respond to institutional and policy demands. Consequently, teacher readiness is shaped by both individual capabilities and contextual factors within the educational environment.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

Based on the reviewed literature, teacher readiness for EMI is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct consisting of language competence, pedagogical competence, professional attitudes, and institutional support. These dimensions collectively influence teachers' ability to implement EMI effectively in classroom settings. Previous studies have consistently identified these factors as essential components of successful EMI implementation (Macaro et al., 2018; Tran & Nguyen, 2018).

Furthermore, the framework recognizes the influence of recent national educational reforms promoting English as a second language in Vietnam. Such policies shape institutional support mechanisms and professional development opportunities, which in turn contribute to teacher readiness. Therefore, teacher readiness serves as the central link between educational policies and effective EMI practices.

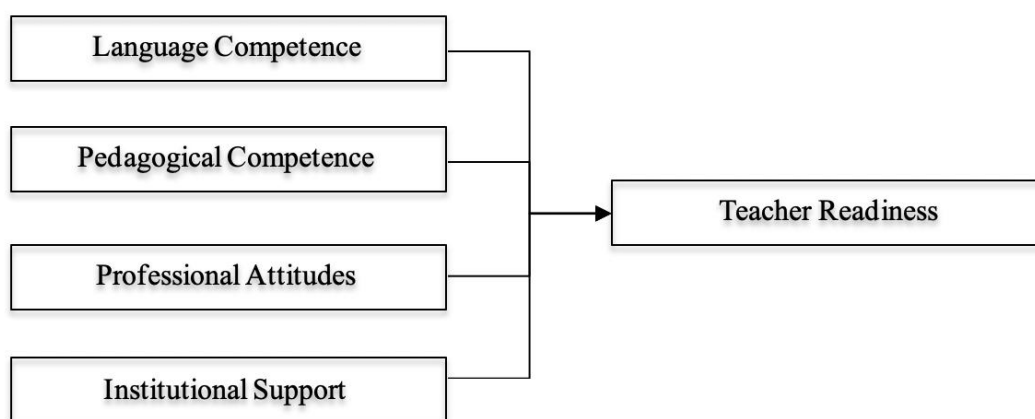


Figure 2.4. Conceptual Framework of Teacher Readiness for EMI

2.5. Related Studies

Over the past two decades, English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has attracted considerable attention from researchers worldwide. Previous studies have examined various aspects of EMI implementation, including teacher readiness, language competence, pedagogical challenges, and institutional support. Overall, the literature suggests that teachers play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of EMI programs.

Internationally, EMI research has consistently highlighted teacher language proficiency as a key factor influencing successful implementation. Macaro et al. (2018), in their systematic review of EMI studies, found that teachers often experienced difficulties using English effectively for classroom instruction despite possessing adequate subject knowledge. Similarly, Hu and Lei (2014) reported that teachers in China faced challenges in balancing content delivery and language use, which affected both teaching effectiveness and student comprehension. These studies suggest that language competence remains a fundamental requirement for EMI success.

In addition to language-related issues, previous research has emphasized the importance of pedagogical competence. Dearden (2015) noted that many teachers lacked adequate preparation for EMI-specific instructional practices and often relied on traditional teaching methods. Effective EMI implementation requires teachers to integrate content and language learning, provide appropriate scaffolding, and create interactive learning environments. Consequently, professional development and pedagogical training have been identified as essential components of teacher readiness.

In the Vietnamese context, research has reported similar challenges. Vu and Burns (2014) found that teachers often experienced difficulties related to English proficiency, classroom communication, and confidence when teaching through English. Likewise, Tran and Nguyen (2018) highlighted the challenges associated with limited professional training, insufficient teaching resources, and varying levels of student English proficiency. These factors were found to influence teachers' ability to implement EMI effectively and consistently across educational settings.

More recently, Dang et al. (2024) examined teachers' transformative agency in EMI implementation in Vietnamese higher education. Their findings revealed that teachers actively adapted their teaching practices, improved their professional competence, and developed strategies to overcome challenges associated with EMI. The study emphasized that teacher readiness should be viewed as a dynamic and developmental process rather than a fixed set of competencies. This perspective reflects the evolving nature of EMI implementation in Vietnam, particularly in the context of ongoing educational reforms promoting English as a second language.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into EMI implementation, most research has focused on language proficiency and pedagogical issues. Less attention has been given to the broader interaction between teacher readiness, institutional support, and educational policy in the Vietnamese context. Therefore, further discussion is needed to better understand the key challenges facing Vietnamese teachers and the implications for educational practice and policy development.

2.6. Research Gap

Although English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has been widely investigated in both international and Vietnamese contexts, existing studies have primarily focused on specific aspects of EMI implementation, such as language proficiency, classroom practices, and student learning outcomes. In Vietnam, previous research has largely examined EMI in higher education settings, with particular attention to language-related challenges and instructional effectiveness (Tran & Nguyen, 2018; Vu & Burns, 2014). While these studies have provided valuable insights into EMI implementation, they often address individual factors rather than offering a comprehensive understanding of teachers' readiness.

Furthermore, recent educational reforms in Vietnam, particularly the national initiative to gradually establish English as a second language in schools, have created new expectations and responsibilities for teachers. However, limited attention has been paid to how these policy developments may influence teachers' readiness for EMI and the challenges they face in adapting to changing educational demands. Recent studies such as Dang et al. (2024) have begun to explore teachers' professional agency in EMI contexts, yet a comprehensive review of the challenges affecting teacher readiness within the context of ongoing educational reform remains limited.

Therefore, there is a need for a review that synthesizes existing literature on teachers' readiness for EMI in Vietnam, identifies the key challenges influencing its implementation, and discusses implications for teachers, educational institutions, and policymakers. Addressing this gap can contribute to a better understanding of how teacher readiness can be strengthened to support the successful implementation of EMI and the broader goal of establishing English as a second language in Vietnamese schools.

2.7. Challenges of EMI Implementation in Vietnam

Although English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has expanded significantly in Vietnam in recent years, its implementation continues to face numerous challenges. The increasing emphasis on English as a second language and the promotion of EMI across educational levels have created new opportunities for internationalization and educational reform. However, previous studies suggest that many Vietnamese educational institutions still encounter difficulties in translating policy goals into effective classroom practices. These challenges are associated with language competence, pedagogical preparation, institutional support, and broader policy and contextual factors.

As EMI requires teachers to teach academic subjects through English while simultaneously supporting students' language development, successful implementation depends on multiple interconnected factors. Existing literature indicates that teachers often experience difficulties adapting to EMI requirements, particularly in contexts where exposure to English and professional support remain limited. Therefore, understanding the major challenges affecting EMI implementation is essential for improving teacher readiness and promoting sustainable educational reform in Vietnam.

2.7.1. Language Competence Challenges

Language competence is widely recognized as one of the most significant challenges affecting EMI implementation. Since English serves as the medium of instruction, teachers are expected to explain academic content, facilitate classroom interaction, respond to students' questions, and manage learning activities effectively in English. However, many Vietnamese teachers continue to experience difficulties related to English proficiency, particularly in speaking, classroom communication, and the use of subject-specific terminology.

Previous studies have shown that insufficient English proficiency often reduces teachers' confidence and limits their ability to teach effectively in EMI classrooms. Teachers may struggle to explain complex concepts accurately, provide detailed explanations, or engage students in meaningful discussions through English. Similarly, students with limited English proficiency may encounter difficulties understanding lectures, following instructions, and participating actively in classroom activities. As a result, language barriers can negatively affect both teaching quality and student learning outcomes.

Recent research also suggests that teachers frequently perceive English proficiency as closely linked to their professional identity and teaching effectiveness. In many cases, teachers report anxiety and self-doubt when required to teach through English,

particularly in contexts where opportunities to practice English remain limited. Consequently, language competence remains a fundamental challenge in the implementation of EMI in Vietnam.

2.7.2. Pedagogical Challenges

In addition to language-related difficulties, pedagogical challenges represent another major obstacle to EMI implementation. Teaching through English requires more than subject knowledge and language proficiency; it also demands specialized instructional strategies that support both content learning and language development. Teachers are expected to integrate language and content instruction, adapt teaching materials, provide linguistic scaffolding, and create interactive learning environments that facilitate comprehension.

However, many Vietnamese teachers have been trained primarily as subject specialists rather than EMI practitioners. As a result, they may lack the pedagogical knowledge required to manage English-medium classrooms effectively. Previous studies have reported that teachers often rely on traditional teacher-centered approaches and experience difficulties balancing content delivery with language support. Furthermore, some teachers remain uncertain about whether their primary responsibility is to teach subject knowledge or assist students in developing English proficiency.

The lack of EMI-specific pedagogical training may also affect classroom interaction and student engagement. Without appropriate instructional strategies, teachers may struggle to address students' language difficulties, encourage participation, and maintain effective communication in EMI classrooms. Therefore, pedagogical competence remains a critical issue in improving EMI effectiveness in Vietnam.

2.7.3. Institutional Support Challenges

Institutional support plays an important role in determining the success of EMI implementation. Effective EMI programs require adequate teaching materials, professional development opportunities, administrative support, and access to English-rich learning environments. Nevertheless, many educational institutions in Vietnam continue to face limitations in providing sufficient support for teachers.

Previous research indicates that teachers often report shortages of EMI-specific teaching resources and limited opportunities to participate in professional training programs. In some cases, schools introduce EMI programs without providing comprehensive preparation for teachers, leaving them to adapt independently to new instructional demands. Limited access to professional development may reduce teachers' confidence and hinder their ability to implement EMI successfully.

In addition, differences in institutional resources contribute to unequal EMI implementation across educational settings. Schools located in major urban centers generally have greater access to qualified personnel, educational technologies, and English-speaking environments than schools in less advantaged areas. Consequently, institutional support remains a significant factor influencing teachers' readiness and the overall effectiveness of EMI programs.

2.7.4. Policy and Contextual Challenges

Beyond linguistic and institutional issues, policy and contextual factors also influence EMI implementation in Vietnam. In recent years, the Vietnamese government has introduced ambitious educational reforms aimed at strengthening English education and gradually establishing English as a second language in schools. These policies reflect the country's commitment to international integration and educational modernization. However, the implementation of such reforms often varies across educational institutions due to differences in infrastructure, financial resources, teacher qualifications, and student backgrounds.

Several studies have identified a gap between national policy objectives and classroom realities. While educational policies encourage the expansion of EMI, many schools may not yet possess the necessary conditions to implement EMI effectively. Teachers are often expected to meet increasing professional demands despite limited preparation and support. In addition, educational contexts differ considerably across regions, creating challenges in applying uniform EMI policies nationwide.

Recent pilot programs promoting English as a second language have demonstrated promising outcomes in some schools; however, they have also highlighted the importance of sustained teacher development, institutional commitment, and contextual adaptation. Therefore, policymakers must consider local educational conditions when designing and implementing EMI-related reforms. Addressing contextual disparities and ensuring adequate support systems are essential for promoting more effective and sustainable EMI implementation in Vietnam.

2.8. The Role of Teachers in EMI Success

Teachers are widely regarded as the most influential factor in the successful implementation of English-Medium Instruction (EMI). While educational policies, institutional resources, and curriculum frameworks provide the foundation for EMI programs, teachers are responsible for translating these policies into effective classroom practices. Their ability to deliver subject content through English, facilitate student learning, and create meaningful learning experiences directly affects the quality and effectiveness of EMI implementation.

One of the primary roles of teachers in EMI is to serve as both content instructors and language facilitators. Unlike traditional subject teaching, EMI requires teachers to support students' understanding of academic content while simultaneously helping them navigate language-related challenges. This dual responsibility demands not only strong subject knowledge but also sufficient English proficiency and pedagogical competence. Research has consistently shown that teachers who possess higher levels of language and instructional competence are more likely to implement EMI successfully and foster positive learning outcomes among students.

Teachers also play a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes and motivation toward EMI. Through effective classroom communication, supportive learning environments, and appropriate instructional strategies, teachers can help reduce students' anxiety and encourage active participation in English-medium classrooms. Conversely, teachers who lack confidence or struggle with language-related difficulties may unintentionally limit student engagement and learning opportunities. Therefore, teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and confidence are important determinants of EMI success.

In addition, teachers act as agents of educational change. As Vietnam continues to promote English as a second language and expand EMI across educational levels, teachers are expected to adapt to new curricular requirements, participate in professional development activities, and adopt innovative teaching practices. Their willingness to engage in continuous learning and professional growth is essential for responding effectively to the demands of educational reform. Recent experiences from pilot schools implementing English as a second language initiatives have demonstrated that teacher commitment and professional development are key factors in creating sustainable English-rich learning environments.

Furthermore, teachers contribute to the development of institutional EMI culture. Through collaboration with colleagues, participation in professional learning communities, and engagement in school-wide language initiatives, teachers help establish environments where English is used more frequently and meaningfully. Such collaborative efforts can strengthen institutional capacity and support the long-term sustainability of EMI programs.

In summary, teachers occupy a central position in EMI implementation. Their language competence, pedagogical expertise, professional attitudes, and commitment to continuous development significantly influence the success of EMI initiatives. Therefore, enhancing teacher readiness should be considered a priority for educational institutions and policymakers seeking to promote effective and sustainable EMI implementation in Vietnam.

III. DISCUSSION

3.1. Current State of Teacher Readiness in Vietnam

The literature suggests that teacher readiness for English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Vietnam is improving but remains uneven across educational contexts. While national initiatives promoting English as a second language have increased awareness of EMI and encouraged professional development, readiness cannot be assumed to have developed uniformly throughout the education system. Existing studies indicate that teachers in well-resourced institutions generally demonstrate greater confidence and preparedness than those working in less advantaged settings. This finding suggests that teacher readiness is influenced not only by individual competence but also by contextual factors such as institutional support, access to training, and opportunities for professional growth.

A critical examination of the literature reveals that many discussions of teacher readiness continue to focus heavily on language proficiency. Although English competence is undoubtedly important, reducing readiness to language ability alone may oversimplify the complexities of EMI implementation. Teachers with adequate English proficiency may still experience difficulties integrating language and content instruction, managing classroom interaction, and supporting students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, teacher readiness should be viewed as a multidimensional construct that extends beyond linguistic competence and includes pedagogical expertise, professional agency, and institutional support.

Furthermore, the recent policy shift toward establishing English as a second language in schools has created new expectations for teachers. However, policy ambitions may progress more rapidly than teachers' actual preparedness. While pilot initiatives in selected schools have demonstrated encouraging outcomes, there is still limited evidence regarding the readiness of teachers across different regions and school types. Consequently, current discussions should move beyond celebrating policy achievements and instead focus on the practical conditions necessary for teachers to successfully implement EMI in everyday classroom contexts.

3.2. Key Challenges Facing Vietnamese Teachers

The challenges facing Vietnamese teachers are often discussed as individual deficiencies, particularly in relation to English language proficiency. However, the literature suggests that such an interpretation may be overly simplistic. Although language competence remains a significant concern, many difficulties associated with EMI stem from broader structural and contextual issues. Teachers are frequently expected to implement EMI without sufficient preparation, resources, or institutional support. As a result, challenges attributed to teachers may actually reflect systemic limitations within the educational environment.

Another important issue concerns the assumption that EMI automatically leads to improved educational outcomes. While EMI is frequently promoted as a means of enhancing both English proficiency and subject learning, empirical findings remain mixed. The effectiveness of EMI appears to depend heavily on teachers' preparedness, students' language competence, and the availability of support mechanisms. In contexts where these conditions are not adequately met, EMI may increase cognitive demands on both teachers and students, potentially limiting its intended benefits. Therefore, the success of EMI should not be taken for granted but should be evaluated within specific educational contexts.

The literature also highlights a tension between policy aspirations and classroom realities. National reforms envision a future in which English plays a central role in education; however, many schools continue to face constraints related to staffing, infrastructure, and professional development opportunities. This discrepancy suggests that educational reform should not focus solely on expanding EMI but also on ensuring that teachers are equipped to meet new expectations. Without sustained investment in teacher development, ambitious policy goals may prove difficult to achieve in practice.

Moreover, recent studies emphasize the importance of teacher agency in responding to EMI-related challenges. Rather than being passive recipients of educational reform, teachers actively adapt their instructional practices and develop strategies to overcome

difficulties. Nevertheless, expecting teachers to compensate for systemic shortcomings through individual effort alone may place an unrealistic burden on them. Therefore, responsibility for EMI success should be shared among teachers, educational institutions, and policymakers.

3.3. Implications for Schools and Educational Institutions

The findings of this review suggest that schools should move beyond viewing EMI as merely a language initiative and instead recognize it as a comprehensive educational change process. Successful EMI implementation requires long-term institutional commitment rather than short-term training programs. Schools that focus exclusively on improving teachers' English proficiency may overlook equally important dimensions of readiness, including pedagogical competence, collaboration, and professional confidence.

Furthermore, educational institutions should critically evaluate whether sufficient support structures exist before expanding EMI initiatives. The literature indicates that institutional support significantly influences teachers' willingness and ability to adopt EMI practices. Consequently, schools should invest not only in language training but also in mentoring systems, collaborative professional learning communities, and access to high-quality teaching resources. Creating English-rich environments may enhance teachers' confidence, but such initiatives should complement rather than replace systematic professional development.

Finally, schools should adopt context-sensitive implementation strategies. Given the substantial differences among schools in terms of resources, teacher qualifications, and student readiness, a uniform model of EMI implementation may not be appropriate. Flexible approaches that acknowledge local needs and capacities are more likely to produce sustainable outcomes than policies emphasizing rapid expansion.

IV. Conclusion

The growing adoption of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) in Vietnam reflects the country's commitment to educational reform, international integration, and the long-term goal of establishing English as a second language within the education system. As EMI continues to expand across different educational levels, teachers have become central actors in determining the effectiveness and sustainability of its implementation. Therefore, understanding teacher readiness is essential for ensuring that national educational policies can be translated successfully into classroom practice.

This paper has reviewed the concept of teacher readiness for EMI and examined the major challenges affecting EMI implementation in Vietnam. The literature indicates that teacher readiness is a multidimensional construct involving language competence, pedagogical competence, attitudes toward EMI, and institutional support. Although many Vietnamese teachers recognize the benefits of EMI and demonstrate a willingness to adapt to educational reforms, they continue to encounter challenges related to English proficiency, EMI-specific teaching skills, limited professional development opportunities, and unequal access to educational resources.

The review also highlights that the success of EMI extends beyond individual teacher competence. Institutional support, school leadership, professional learning opportunities, and policy implementation all play important roles in shaping teachers' capacity to teach through English. Recent national initiatives aimed at introducing English as a second language in schools have created new opportunities for educational innovation; however, they have also increased expectations and responsibilities for teachers. As a result, teacher readiness should be viewed not as a fixed characteristic but as a continuous developmental process requiring sustained support and investment.

Overall, the successful implementation of EMI in Vietnam will depend on coordinated efforts among teachers, schools, universities, and policymakers. Strengthening teacher preparation, expanding professional development opportunities, reducing regional disparities, and creating supportive English-rich educational environments are essential for achieving the objectives of current educational reforms. By addressing these issues, Vietnam can enhance teacher readiness and create more favorable conditions for the effective and sustainable integration of EMI into its education system.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and discussion presented in this paper, several recommendations are proposed to enhance teachers' readiness for English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and support the successful implementation of English-related educational reforms in Vietnam.

5.1. Recommendations for Teachers

Teachers should actively engage in continuous professional development to improve both their English language proficiency and EMI-related pedagogical skills. Since EMI requires the integration of content and language instruction, teachers are encouraged to participate in training programs, workshops, and professional learning communities that focus on EMI methodologies, classroom communication strategies, and subject-specific English terminology. In addition, teachers should seek opportunities to use English regularly in professional contexts in order to strengthen their confidence and fluency.

Teachers are also encouraged to adopt learner-centered instructional approaches that promote interaction, collaboration, and active student participation. The use of scaffolding techniques, multimodal resources, and technology-enhanced learning tools can help address language barriers and improve students' understanding of subject content in EMI classrooms.

5.2. Recommendations for Schools and Educational Institutions

Schools should establish comprehensive support systems to facilitate teachers' readiness for EMI. This includes providing regular professional development opportunities, mentoring programs, and access to high-quality teaching materials. Educational institutions should also create English-rich learning environments where teachers and students are encouraged to use English beyond formal classroom instruction.

Furthermore, school leaders should promote collaboration among teachers through professional learning communities and interdisciplinary projects. Cooperation between English teachers and subject teachers can contribute to the sharing of expertise and the development of effective EMI practices. Schools should also invest in digital technologies and learning resources that support innovative and interactive teaching approaches.

5.3. Recommendations for Policymakers

Policymakers should continue investing in teacher development as a central component of EMI implementation and the national initiative to establish English as a second language in schools. National training frameworks should be developed to provide systematic and long-term support for teachers at different educational levels. Special attention should be given to improving access to professional development opportunities for teachers working in disadvantaged or under-resourced areas.

In addition, policymakers should ensure that EMI policies are implemented gradually and flexibly according to local educational conditions. Rather than adopting a uniform approach, policy implementation should consider differences in institutional capacity, teacher qualifications, and student readiness. Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should also be established to assess the effectiveness of EMI initiatives and identify areas requiring further support.

5.4. Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should investigate teachers' readiness for EMI through empirical research involving teachers from different educational levels and geographical regions. Quantitative and qualitative approaches could provide deeper insights into the factors influencing teacher readiness and the challenges experienced in diverse educational contexts.

Moreover, future research may explore the impact of recent national policies related to English as a second language on classroom practices, teacher development, and student learning outcomes. Comparative studies across regions, school types, and educational levels would also contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of EMI implementation in Vietnam.

In conclusion, strengthening teacher readiness requires collaborative efforts from teachers, schools, educational institutions, and policymakers. By addressing linguistic, pedagogical, institutional, and policy-related challenges, Vietnam can create favorable conditions for the sustainable and effective implementation of EMI and achieve its long-term goals for English language education.

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