

Bilingual, multilingual education: Pedagogical implications for policy and planning towards multicultural communities



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Abstract Knowing and using two or more languages significantly facilitates and enhances learners' linguistic capacity - competence and performance. Bilingual, multilingual education is strongly believed to provide both of the bilingual learners and teachers with several good opportunities to cultivate explicit and implicit learning and the best ways to make teaching significant. Likewise, theoretically an additional language makes them perfect in language use, it helps increase their declarative and procedural knowledge as well as effective input and output in SLA. They are going to be easy to help overcome the barriers of neighboring cultures and linguistic concepts (e.g., linguistic families: Austro-Asiatic, Sino-Tibetan, Romance, Altaic, cultural differences and ethnolinguistic difficulties and others). The main purpose of this paper is to clarify the features and highlights of bilingual education and bilingualism in Vietnam's pedagogical context. The last one, the pedagogical implementation of language policy and planning is briefly discussed to verify the route, rate and success of the foreign language learning in a specific context. A variety of bilinguals are carefully considered the core values of comprehensive development within the transitions of Vietnam's foreign language education in a new era.

Keywords: language two, biculture, additive, subtractive bilingualism, polyglots, language education

1. Introduction

According to Hoffman's brief qualitative description (Hoffmann, 2014), half of the population worldwide is bilingual. Such statistics may seemingly be slightly misleading and illusive but rather truly believable over time. Deductively, teaching and learning different languages to become bilingual is increasingly genuine and mushrooming due to the requirements of modern social life; that is, needs, desires, necessities and others. Such things are derived from an individual's personal internalization and government enforcement. Learning one more language in addition to the learner's native or primary language functionalizes an additive language (L2 is added without replacing L1) rather than a subtractive language (L2 is gradually replaced L1). For example, minority language learners may include Austro-Asiatic learners in submersion education, such as Khmer (Mien), Thai or H'mong (Miao-Yao). Plus, first, as a part of language policy and planning, helps language learners effectively sharpen their bilingual communicative competence. Next, it expresses learners' linguistic performance and then gradually increases their open-minded outlooks and perspectives. Finally, it produces critical metacognition and cultivates the integration of the nation's system of home education into the global community. Undoubtedly, teaching and learning one more language enables learners to become bilinguals in pedagogical and authentic (real-life) settings through various language education programs. For example, the transitional bilingual program is a good example that has been successfully run in Vietnam. However, this process may be so complex and it also can be conceptualized in several different ways; that is, it goes from the microperspective and then moves towards the macroperspective in terms of the close attachments between the learner's own characteristics, such as psycholinguistics, cultural identity, awareness, ethnic groups, community, linguistic acceptance, nationalism and language policy and planning (e.g., How much acceptance of assimilation-referring to ideological; global interaction-implying to international trades, traveling, and education; intergroup-referring to different individuals; and cultural awareness that is socialized within bilinguals' own circumstances). In a book entitled "Linguistics Across Cultures", Lado (1957) stated that cultural differences reflect the ways in which languages are used by different speakers, including monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual ones. Similarly, (Öztürk et al., 2023) noted that bilingual education is complicated and multidimensional. Further, bilingualism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has received increasing attention in the field of education.

From the points of view of education mentioned above, learning one more language as an additive language (one language added) into bilingual education in language policy and planning will help sketch out an overall outline of language learners' properties, e.g., the potential values, worthy opportunities for multicultural, cross-cultural communications, joint shares of education, socioeconomic, and target expressions among different communities. Moreover, it enhances the



importance of mutual understanding of the modern world—the open globe—with the linkage of a wide range of connections and interchanges. It sure is.

To increase awareness of full understanding of the role of bilingual education and the nature of bilingualism in Vietnam, many languages (e.g., Vietnamese, Khmer, Thai, H'mong, Chinese, English and others) are used with different frequencies, degrees and circles (L1; L2; L3 or even polyglots). Vietnamese speakers, owing to the multiethnic groups accommodating the north China across the south Vietnam (e.g., the Viet-Kinh, Khmer-known as Cambodian-Viet, Chinese, Thai, Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao), Catu and others), cannot stand beyond the cycle of this massive transition of bilingual education. This is, because, a trend of international integration. In accordance with Vietnam's government's far-reaching objectives, the English language is one of the major languages considered nationally targeted. It is widely taught and learned in all academic institutions (e.g., preschool, elementary, junior, senior, and higher education), and its main purpose is to serve the strategies-based development of language policy and planning; to meet national targets; and to end with comprehensively developed knowledge (especially I and E knowledge), (meta) cognition, competence and performance to maximize learners' sense of satisfaction with language objectives. Third language learning helps improve competency in target language communication (De Angelis, 2007; May et al., 2017; Cabrelli, 2023; Fäcke, 2024). Eventually, these objectives enable the nourishment and energization of learners' desires, wants and needs in periods of scientific, economic, political, and social changes and growth in the long run. Globalization has sped up a rapid increase in the need for dimensional communication in diplomacy, the world trade, and the international jobs in relevant fields, such as: tourism, law, media, medicine, technology and others (Oleksah, 2007). Closely allied, the diversification of language learning and cultural awareness offers potential economic benefits (Swadesh, 2017).

Any efforts to comprehensively define the term of bilingualism or multilingualism are imperfect. Wei (2023) challenged with a question of "Who is bilingual?". In other words, bilingualism and multilingualism are sometimes found and described in two linguistics aspects of highly respected scholars: expert meaning and dictionary meaning. First, Altarriba and Heredia (2018); Goldstein (2022) claimed that bilingualism involves speaking fluently in a language other than the mother tongue. Hirsch and Kayam (2020) mentioned that bilingualism uses two languages efficiently and naturally. In the same vien, Özşen et al., (2020), which is a term that refers to the communication of a person in two different languages once more. Continuously, bilinguality is an individual's psychological state for accessing more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication for varying along a number of dimensions, which are psychological, cognitive, psycholinguistic, social, sociological, sociolinguistic, sociocultural and linguistic (Harmer, 2007). Documentarily, according to Richards and Schmidt (2013) shortly described in the Longman dictionary published by Routledge that the term of bilingualism is defined as a person who has an equal ability to communicate in two languages but sometimes with greater skills in one language or uses or is able to use two languages especially with equal fluency. Malmkjær (2009) shortly described bilingualism in the Routledge linguistics encyclopedia as a situation where two languages are used with aspects of weak and strong forms. Likewise, Merriam Webster dictionary (n.d) defined the term of bilingualism as "if one person speaks two languages fluently like a native speaker and that person may use two languages habitually and with control through the constant oral use of two languages".

2. Literature Review

Crystal (1997) shortly described that it is not easy at all to fully systematize and focus on objectives about language study but it is quite necessary to do so. In the case of the topic of this current research, with its already extremely relative nature, the task is still more and more difficult. To start with the three catergorized subtitles side by side used in this research probably will require some snapshot at their following detailed descriptions.

2.1. Foundation of bilingual education

According to the points of view of Ellis (1989); Brown and Lee (2025); and Wright and Baker (2025), to become bilingual or polyglot, language learners must master linguistic knowledge (e.g., grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence) and (productive or receptive) L2 skills (second language—foreigner in countries, in which English is the native or official language) or L3 skills (third language—English can be learned anywhere else by anyone else). Linguistic knowledge and skills underlying learners' ability (linguistic ability) may drive them to cope with imperfect knowledge or, and knowledge gaps to look for the best ways to cultivate the speaker's fundamental knowledge for effective communication. It is so called what is learned and how is learned. In the same vein, a bilingual who uses both languages fluently must be active and available when one of them is being used (Hernandez et al., 1996; Dijkstra et al., 1999; Marian & Spivey, 2003; Sumiya & Healy, 2004; Rodriguez-Fornells et al., 2005; Chee, 2006; Kaushanskaya & Marian, 2007; Kroll et al., 2013). Recently, Espinosa and Lehner-Quam (2019) noted that bilingual education helps learners open a space for both languages to acquire knowledge. Furthermore, they noted that there were different major routes to achieve two monolinguals inside one person despite different aspects, such as original family descent (a father uses his native language while a mother uses her own language), facilitated context (the linguistic environment), psychology (emotions, feelings), education (models of training programs-additive language programs), culture (monoculture, multicultural), and intergroup (multiethnic group).

Additionally, they reported that a tri-set concerning language development—*route*, *rate* and *success*—is the primary framework used to help language learners become bilingual, trilingual or multilingual, as described below:

a) Learning two or more languages early at home or joining different sociolinguistic environments, such as media and authentic-based tasks (e.g., airport, traveling, and shuttling within neighboring communities). Otherwise, in some cases, learners may master some knowledge of another language from people around them or their relatives, who practice using it frequently. For example, in the language of the country in which they live, a Vietnamese baby child born in the USA may first learn Vietnamese from his parents and learn English later from English-speaking peers, teachers and others.

b) Acquiring L2 or L3 on the street, in the wider community, in the nursery school, in the elementary school, high school or university or in the community to learn one more language-additive language (formal or informal settings, one-way dual or two-way dual education model) (Baker, 2011; Reynolds, 2014).

c) Adapting a new language into a new culture requires mutual understanding of the system of language and psycholinguistics; the former consists of morphemes, lexical, syntax, phonology, etc., and the latter refers to emotions, beliefs, feelings, critical cognition, etc., used for daily communication (Ellis, 1989).

d) Using and expressing the new linguistic knowledge effectively must be based on the learner's ability to process language input and output (comprehension: reading and listening; production: speaking and writing) because comprehension always runs ahead of production (Brown & Lee, 2005).

e) Transforming difficulties underlying family languages (e.g., Sino-Tibetan, Romance, Austro-Asiatic and others) and linguistic properties (e.g., culture, the natures of language, the understanding of native speakers) into success depends on how much the learners perceive their own ability, such as the Thai and English languages, Khmer culture and Chinese culture, Vietnamese and Korean or Japanese or minority languages, and so forth. This is because learners of languages do not yet have fully developed abilities in categorization. Collinge (2002) and Strazny (2013) briefly described that linguistic categorization involves the treatment of distinct linguistic phenomenon-major language families, e.g., linguistic diversity, such as Thai, Khmer, Hmong and Hmong-Mien (Miao-Yao), Japanese, and Chinese languages (Sino-Tibetan, Altaic, and Cyrillic, such as an Arabic or Mongolic script or Sanskrit), versus modern languages-English, French, and German languages (Indo-European romance with the Roman alphabet structured system) (Richards & Schmidt, 2011).

f) Mastering interlanguage at a certain level (which can at least be comprehensible input or incomprehensible input: $i+1$ rather than either $i+2$ or $i4-0$); that is, how much awareness of L2 or L3 as a target language an individual raises; L2 or L3 may be well developed ($i+1$) or underdeveloped ($i+2$) or far beyond developed ($i4-0$) and acquired independently but related meaning, e.g., semantically, different linguistic signs share the same objects (Selinker, 1972; Krashen, 1982, Dulay, 1982; Hamers & Blanc, 2000).

To support the foundation of language education, Tomlinson (2013) proposed that how well and how much language is learned, used and subsequently acquired must be significantly dependent upon both meta-cognitive processes—consciousness and unconsciousness. He directly reported that the process may undergo different phases and circumstances to retain bilingual achievements and that its requirements may be either explicit or implicit (e.g., a bilingual learner may be (not) aware of what and when s/he is learning and using it for the authentic context). Like learning any live languages, without exceptions for any single bilingual learner, this means that before they become (perfectly) bilingual, they try gathering a series of knowledge of language—that is, declarative knowledge or procedural knowledge (knowledge of the language system or how language is used—as mentioned earlier—may help them develop learning effectively to obtain learning outcomes to backbone a concrete fundamental understanding of meaningful and significant communication between intragroup or intergroup, in which bilingualism or multilingualism (balanced bilingualism, dominant bilingualism, semibilingualism, and multilingualism, eliciting bilingualism) makes learners become polyglots—a polyglot is a person who can speak many languages (Aïkhenval'd, 2019).

2.2. Bilingualism and language acquisition theories

A question arises “May bilinguals have one or two differentiated linguistic system?” As cited in the books entitled “Understanding Second Language Acquisition” (Ellis, 1989); “Bilingual Education and Bilingualism” (Baker, 2011); and “Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics” (Richards & Schmidt, 2013); a statement was briefly quoted that “how to become bilingual must be closely allied with the goals of L2, L3 acquisition”; that is, it implies an equal ability to understand and communicate in two (or more) languages between L1 (native) and L2 (primitive), even L3 (foreign). There are several theories (e.g., Vygotsky's language theories in the classroom) related to linguistic and language development (e.g., balanced theory). In particular, Vygotsky's theory, as cited in Kozulin (2004), suggested that two languages exist together in balance and anchor the process of language acquisition to a different variety of linguists and theorists, who commonly explain the development of one person's language/s.

To fully explain how language is learned and acquired, as a strong catalyst, a variety of psychological, sociopsychological and pedagogical theories have highlighted the “route, rate and success” of becoming bilingual via L2 and L3. Such languages may be spoken across the nation's territory with clear-cut roles of either additive or subtractive language (it depends on the learner's objectives and circumstances). Consequently, language speakers may be either elective or circumstantial bilinguals.

If so, as Baker's (2011) pointed out that when a person integrates himself or herself into the world's new language, even cross-cultural communication occurs, he or she has to overcome proactive inhibition that he or she is confronting when learning. Moreover, as a learner learns how to accept new challenges and adaptations underlying different cultures and languages, his or her metalinguistic knowledge and metalinguistic awareness increase or accelerate L2 learning measurement through obtaining proficiency and the use of languages. In the book of Applied Linguistics (published by Oxford University Press, 1994), one of the prior conditions for becoming bilingual is that two languages are acquired chronologically (perhaps greater skills in one language) by its speaker (not necessarily occurring at the same time or in a situational background). For example, learners may acquire fundamental knowledge of another language from their mates, teachers, educational institutions or communities so that they can unconsciously master that language. As a result, they are encountering both linguistic competence and performance after they acquired their native language. In particular, the language of the community (localized language, it may be either vertical bilingual or diagonal bilingual) where they live, the school at which they go to, the classroom at which they have a seat and the language of their friends, or who they are strongly exposed to or interact with every day. Hence, minority groups (intergroup) such as Thai or H'mong-Mien (Miao-Yao), Catu, or Khmer and others born somewhere in Vietnam may learn minority languages such as Thai, H'mong or Khmer from their parents (even family descent), their community and the classroom where they are located. Additionally, they can learn English and Vietnamese later inside or outside the classroom, at school, in the community, from their teachers, mates, pals, and even from the relatives around them. Of course, more or less, they will be bilingual or multilingual with the growth of different language skills and different (meta)cognitive development inside them (minimal bilingual). However, according to Baker (2011) and Richards & Schmidt (2013), the challenges for explaining are when the two languages that are acquired are still left the answer open. Types of bilingualism can be found in the literature, e.g., Wei's (2020) variety of bilinguals. This term is used to describe a person, learner whose innate, inborn or rare ability learns one more language to enable him or her to become bilingual or multilingual with the following criteria:

Simultaneous bilingualism: This type of bilingualism refers to the development of two languages in a child who is exposed to both languages from birth or early infancy. The child learns both languages at the same time and uses them interchangeably without a preference for one over the other. Simultaneous bilingualism can occur in households where the child's primary caregivers speak different languages (Ebert & Kohnert, 2016). In fact, many minority populations live in southern Vietnam, some minority regions in which the Khmer or Chinese inhabitants reside are exposed to two languages: the "native or first" languages—Khmer or Chinese—and the "primary" languages—Vietnamese. Two language-exogenous languages, which are treated as terms of overtly interchangeable languages, are used equivalently within their life, e.g., Tagalog and English in the Philippines. In definite areas, these two languages are taught in schools as official subjects, as the "first" and "primary" speakers of such languages have no or few single distinctions or ranks in society. These types of bilinguals are highly proficient in both languages with no dominant or preferred language—maximal bilingualism. A situation in which a bilingual has near-native control of two or more languages (Wei, 2020, 2023).

Receptive or passive bilingualism: Receptive/passive bilingualism is the ability to understand two languages but not necessarily to speak or to write both languages fluently (Baker, 2011; Sherkina-Lieber, 2020; Wei, 2020; Fiorentino, 2020; Su et al., 2024). It occurs when a person grows up hearing and understanding two languages but may not speak or write one language proficiently. Hamers and Blanc (2000); and Wei (2020) reported that passive bilingualism reflects insufficient knowledge of either language. This can occur in situations where a child is exposed to two languages at home but primarily uses one language for communication outside home. Receptive bilingualism can also develop later in life, sometimes called late bilingualism (Wei, 2020). For example, when a person moves to a new country and learns to understand the local language through exposure and immersion, they may not be able to speak it fluently. Hymes (1987) summarized that a learner's ability to learn a language is unconscious by being exposed to it and by using it frequently. According to a report from research in the United States of America by Cutler and Norris (1992), many children in Vietnamese, Chinese, and Mexican immigrants heard English on television, on social media networks, in supermarkets, at stores, etc., but they were still using their own home language or first language (Vietnamese, Chinese, French) in everyday communications instead of English because of no primary language or because of avoidance or inhibition and so on. As a result, their SDA development, metalinguistic knowledge and metalinguistic awareness were fossilized and inactivated in the equal or balanced languages inside them. In line with this case, it is possible to say that neither subtractive nor additive language can be established distinctively unless simultaneous bilingualism takes place when languages are exposed.

Sequential bilingualism: Learning one language after the first language has already been established; this is the situation for all those who become bilinguals when they are mature or aged and many become bilinguals earlier in their life (Weber-Fox & Neville, 1996; De Houwer, 2009). In the allied linkage with the language policy and planning in Vietnam, English as a foreign language stands in line with an expanding circle (Al-Mutairi, 2019, cited from Kachru in Brachy's three concentric circles model of English language) rather than as a second language. Outer circle, the specific goal of the Vietnamese government is to revitalize the deep interest in English; it has implemented various policies and regulations for all statesmen and stateswomen, including potential workers such as nurses, teachers, workers and even the next generations (e.g., students and others may achieve proficiency in English and use this flag-shipped language for national targets and learner-themselves as global citizens). Recently, the most highlighted policy conducted in Vietnam's foreign language education has been known as the National

English Foreign Language Project (the NEFL 2020 Project). It focused on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as the use of based platform to measure an international standard and, it targeted to turn most individuals into elective or additive bilinguals as many as possible.

2.3. Bilingualism underlying foreign language education policy and planning

Viewing the angle of “*language policy and nationalism*” underlies within Vietnam’s prolonged language planning and policy. Particularly, English is a compulsory subject of all grades, and even higher education is being promoted and enhanced. The government of Vietnam desires to develop students’ English communicative competence and performance. Obviously, for the sake of the growth of home education with multiple cultures and multiple ethnic groups (multinational groups), one more additive language coexisting with other languages in different communities will help Vietnam more rapidly reach global integration and concrete a strong platform for individuals at the international level.

In the 21st century, bilingual education has been much more popularly used and interchanged in many countries worldwide, and a number of individuals are gradually growing. That is, bilingualism as a backbone in one country may be key for that country’s potential development, especially for cultural, educational, political and socioeconomic growth, e.g., Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and others. More importantly, bilinguals, who are able to design, shape, framework, and build their country’s vital development, are the mainly decisive factors. Bilingualism is not only the property of the individual but also the nation (Mackey, 1962). For example, the good model of bilingual education in the U.S. changed its history so quickly that it was labeled a “melting pot”. As a result, these changes were driven by opportunities for the education of dual languages. Undoubtedly, this has streamlined flow to the Asian region. In reality, this streamline increasingly affects the background of Vietnam’s society and system of language education. To look back into the history of the policy of foreign education, at the first stage, the English language was used only preliminarily as an optional subject taught in senior schools, tertiary education. During this time, the initial role of the English language was simply as a premised subject or unofficial subject rather than as bilingualism with much less bicultural awareness. However, time changed as the foreign language policy and planning were applied, Vietnam was committed to national target objectives such as global integration. Bilingual education (e.g., the model of a two—way dual bilingual education program) has become a new trend for transitions from monolanguage to multiple languages (Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese, and native or original languages that its speakers use in their speech inside and outside their community).

In Vietnam, all of the learners with different or many languages, called polyglots, at least as speakers of a series of bilingual or multilingual (both majority and minority speakers, such as Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese, Thai, Hmong, Catu, English and others), seemingly melt their cultures and linguistic communities. Lado (1957) noted that linguistics across cultures is a good model to fill a large gap in pluralism. In this case, it is linguistic cultural group and multinational ethnic group, and the term “the melting of the cultures and languages” implies two concepts with a clear-cut distinction: the quality of “schooling bilingualism” and “natural bilingualism”. Derived from Adler’s and Skutnabb-Kanga’s viewpoints in common (Adler, 1978; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996). These authors proposed that former-schooling bilingualism can definitely be achieved and that later-schooling bilingualism should be traditionally treated as cultural bilingualism. Both of these factors are closely related to the insiders: the subject (a person who becomes bilingual), context/setting (bi/multilingual community, society or country), and structured education (the formal or informal instruction inside or outside the pedagogical environment).

Schooling bilingualism as well as achieving bilingualism, and owing to individuals’, learners’ desirable and undesirable wants, needs are part of the command of target language learning derived from language planning and policy, and they cannot be separated from each other. For example, when preschool children are sent to their school to start learning foreign language(s), which are planned in a certain curriculum by the MOET (Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training), some of them can hardly achieve their best performance in L2/L3, and a few may do better. The parents force them to learn the language(s) to harvest the best schooling records for the coming-up levels such as university entrance and scholarship awards. Clearly, foreign language education (e.g., EMI, or EME, CLIL and others) is sometimes significant and meaningful for those who are ready to enjoy, to join this training, but in this case, more or less, the enforced education underlies beyond their desires, wants and needs rather than they really seem to engage. In the linguistic theory, language 2 or 3 can be acquired rather smoothly only by maximizing both performance and competence when the learners are aware of their learning process, especially when real motivation comes from within, and when linguistic awareness increases automatically and naturally, and when learning is just conscious, not what they have learned (Krashen, 1981). Obviously, in this case, the bilingual, multilingual individuals and learners are facing challenges and obstacles from their parents, learners’ linguistic capacity (e.g., limitation of aptitude, less motivation and relatedness, weak beliefs, out of linguistic intelligence—rare talent or far-reaching linguistic awareness, etc.) and language policy and planning in the language of education. For example, Vietnamese parents are quite keen on enforcing their child(ren) to learn new language(s), and they are ready or eager to send their kids to schools, communities, centers to study English, Chinese, and Khmer languages, which are taught in these academic places for the sake of students’ prospects, family prestige, parents’ personal fame or household reputation without preparing or paying attention to their kid’s fundamental background of knowledge of language, (personal) psychology and psycholinguistics. As a result, the rate of school dropout is gradually increasing, or ending the semester of their academic year, they fail to master the



communication skills in the target language, imperfect knowledge is gradually aggravated in a timely manner, their goals are aggravated, and their objectives are unexpected. Children refused to back to school because they failed to grasp the opportunity to embrace “I” (implicit) and “E” (explicit) learning (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025). More importantly, individuals’ psychology is damaged, readiness is collapsed, and self-access is not fostered. Bilingual education is an umbrella for a range of education programs which are designed for school children with more than one language and it is used to teach language academic subjects e.g., CLIL. These languages do not match well with the language at home or community that children used, so its meaning lies beyond effectiveness (Coleman, 1988; Ogbu, 1992; Lindgrén, & Laine, 2010; Bialystok, 2016).

The natural bilingualism known as cultural bilingualism underlies the individual's insider, learner's community, and family background. One parent-one language, one parent-dual language, two parents and poly-languages can promote the route of bilingualism more rapidly and remove or eliminate the fossilization, distance avoidance and obstacles in connection with second language acquisition (SLA). Selinker (1972) reported that the learners of L2 or, and L3 gradually stop, decrease the quality of learning as soon as they fail to reach the target language expected before, are impotent, cannot express themselves with other language(s) and absorb the other culture. Consequently, natural bilingualism can help individuals and students gain opportunities by sharing and sharing their own culture, which is a unique language with others in some or other ways—directly or indirectly, implicitly or explicitly. They become bilingual or multilingual throughout reciprocal relationships, cradles of neighboring communities, or systematic structured instructions at home from parents, relatives and so on.

In Applied Linguistics, Strazny (2013) noted that language acquisition refers to the development of a person's language, the way an individual learns first, second or third language. In a similar vein, when children's learning of their first language or native language is already acquired in monolingual society, they expand their cross-cultural communication to master the second or third language, sharpen their language skills and promote their linguistic and cognitive development of the language with which they are integrated. Therefore, they are ready to interact with their parents, teachers, friends, peers, classmates in their school, or intercommunity to become more or less speakers of another language (bilinguals' equality or inequality of language—depending on how much they are exposed to). As a result. One more new language is additive in their metalinguistic awareness, and they have plans to activate this just newly added language by more practising. In Vietnam, with a respect to language policy and planning with national objectives and orientations, many of the language students seem nearly to become bilingual or multilingual for the next generation, the not-so-distant-future. Therefore, most of the students have been enrolling in schools to learn English, Khmer, Chinese or other official subject(s) and, for its scheduled programme of language examinations, the first-term, mid-term, and final-term exams, both state tests (e.g., VSTEP) and international tests (CEFR, IELTS, TOEIC, APTIS, etc.) in addition to a number of small tests for anywhere, for any reason, provided that they keep making progress at the moment.

Undoubtedly, knowledge of foreign language in the sphere of education that the students must pick up is just necessary when they are still remaining in their schools, centers, and educational institutions but internally arrives from encourages of their parents, community, sociocultural aspects and daily communicative events and even from inside individuals (intrinsic, extrinsic or instrumental motivations), which will promote their creative thinking as well as language acquisition and language awareness.

The book entitled “Foundation of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism” published in 2006 by Baker (Baker, 2006), he proposed the idea that bilingualism; i.e., multilingualism, should be closely attached to a country's language policy and planning. He explained his idea is that because only the sustainable interaction between bilingual education and language policy and planning may promote the interchange between people, culture and language more effectively and more easily. To determine the main points of this relationship, we need to comprehensively understand the natures and correlations between bilingual education and language policy and planning in the country's system of language education. Similarly, “the SBTLEP School—Based—Target Language Education Programme and HELP—a Holistic English Literacy Programme”, which have been introduced as a backbone in the training programme scheduled by the MOET in Vietnam, highlights the natures and characteristics of language education. Currently, Vietnam contains numerical languages due to the variety of ethnic groups (multinational groups), so first language maintenance and language spread are the top priorities in the policy of national target education. It is not rare for native speakers to be bilingual, trilingual, or multilingual, all of which underlie the dual bilingual education program academically constructed by Vietnam's government and MOET; that is, one-way dual bilingual program and two-way bilingual program. As did Disbray et al., (2020) noted that the first language supports professional learning for the second language development so that it enhances learner's capacity to develop their additional language skills (L1 and L2 balanced) and promote their bilingual, and potentially biliterate, language development. The main goals of providing instruction are to maintain L1, acquire L2 or spread L3 or foreign languages to develop bilingualism, biculturalism and biliteracy skills in all speakers and foster language equality. For example, the Khmer, Vietnamese and English languages are taught in schools and educational institutions. The Khmer inhabitants acquired their first or native language and then second language—Vietnamese—and third language—English in a monolingual community, which means that these speakers can use their language synonymously, especially L1 and L2, during intertwisting daily communication. They truly become simultaneous bilinguals. In a line with this term “simultaneous bilingualism”, Baker (2006) stated that learning two languages as “the first languages” will make a person become a true bilingualm they are closley intertwined.

3. Methodology

The main purpose of the study was conducted with qualitative method and discourse analysis. According to Willig (2012), qualitative method and discourse analysis are so adequate in exploring the applicable meanings and values of detailed statements to highlight the findings. In the same vein, Stebbins (2001); Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that qualitative method is typically well-adapted and suited for researches of exploratory social matters. Fairclough (2001); Catalano and Waugh (2020) briefly described that discourse analysis is thought to be typical of language and language education, because it helps to identify effects of power on social life, social learning, and lifelong learning. Also, a systematic review is reliable and valuable in research method, which may help to identify, evaluate and interpret some of the core values of research literature on a certain topic. Its target is to look for the answer to relevant research questions or concerning issues (Mallett et al., 2012). Consequently, this method used to employ in this study is strongly believed to help find out if knowing more than one language will give learners and teachers advantages and opportunities in cultivating declarative and procedural knowledge, and if the teachers and the learners really overcome the barriers of neighboring cultures and linguistic concepts. To fill the big gaps in questions, concerns, not-yet-resolved matters still left open, the earliest and latest reviews were read and synthesized systematically. This research targets with papers, books, book chapters published in 89 academic journals or proceedings of the international conferences that have been published in the range of over the fifty years from 1972 to 2026. Most of the papers were selected from the academic resources and results of books in domestic and international university libraries, e.g., Ho Chi Minh University of Banking—HUB, Ho Chi Minh Open University—HOU, Phan Thiet University—PTU, Leyte Normal University—LNU, Victoria University—VU, Google Scholar, AI (i.e., www.researchrabbit.ai) searching engine for the reviews in order to reach the research objectives.

4. Findings

This finding found in this systematic review entirely agrees with that of Lado (1957); Ellis (1989); Hernandez et al., (1996); Dijkstra et al., (1999); Sumiya & Heal (2004); Rodriguez-Fornells et al., (2005); Chee (2006); Crinion et al., (2006); Marian et al., (2003); Brubaker (2005); Kaushanskaya and Marian (2007); Baker (2011); Kroll et al., (2013); Wright and Baker (2016; 2025); Brown and Lee (2025); and other well-respected scholars that learning and knowing two or more languages will bring to language(s) learners with some of the challenges in language policy and planning implementations and the certain advantages in the bilingual education.

4.1 Challenges in language policy and planning implementations

As described in Bylund's statement, bilingualism affords and boosts learners' cognitive advantages (Bylund et al., 2022). Over the years, the field of bilingual education and foreign language training has been highly attractive in the context of Vietnam. The following lines will be a good example of convincing and empirical evidence; there are many centers and schools of bilingual education in English, Khmer, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai and others for minor and major ethnic groups. Learning foreign languages must be closely allied to multicultural education (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2010; Lewandowska et al., 2023). However, the roadmap of the full development of bilingual, multilingual education seems to be not truly adequate and is less significant because it is relevant to many different problematic issues. Some of the hindering factors and seemingly impossible implementations include salary, the scale of growth, limitations of the workforce, and others. For example, bilingual, multilingual teachers (teachers of balanced bilingualism and biculturalism) who know best two or more languages are still minimized and rather poorly qualified or rarely found (especially CLIL teacher programme). On the other hand, training programs to produce true bilingual, multilingual education teachers are not enough to meet national targets (e.g., foreign language rights in the medium of instruction policy). Therefore, it wastes time and finance a lot. In reality, the medium of instruction in bilingual education produces proficiency only in terms of language quality (e.g., English and primary language). Bilingual education may bridge the large gap between the demands of the reciprocal growth of foreign education and society and culture (Disbray, 2020). Bilingual teachers are confident and capable of handling the intense pressures associated with managing students' behavior and culture because each learner brings different culture and behavior and a unique style of learning into the classroom to seek knowledge (Richards & Lockharts, 1994; Madrazo & Bernardo, 2012). Furthermore, the most important thing a teacher should do is to look for the best ways to encourage students' autonomy, raise awareness and cooperation to integrate into different speakers' cultures and high motivation to learn more successfully. Teachers' job provides learning to their students, and partnerships between them should be fostered through understanding their own cultures and languages (Harmer, 2007). Similarly, Richards and Lockhart (1994) stated that multiculturalism generally exists within each different student; this factor makes him or her become a member of a melting pot.

Second, bilingual, multilingual teachers who teach their students seem to be beyond acculturation (e.g., misunderstanding students' own culture, misleading behavior, and communication with multinational students with multiple cultures). Richards and Lockharts (1994) reported that language teaching programs reflect learners' cultures, collective beliefs, and personal behaviors. Additionally, Brown and Lee (2025) briefly claimed that culture is the way that people live, understand and behave with each other to facilitate their common integration for communication; they try to discover themselves to self-



adapt for progressive and lifelong success. These scholars further said that if someone understands one person, his culture must be understood and known first. In reality, teachers do not have enough in-depth knowledge of neighboring culture, sociolinguistic background, or educational experience to describe their students' own valued community well. Mainly, this has led them to failures of developing a deeper understanding of language teaching and learning, cultural identity and cultural awareness in different situations; these notions are labeled "burning ethnolinguistic" (Grenoble & Osipov, 2023), e.g., a Viet-Kinh teacher teaches Khmer students; a Khmer teacher teaches Chinese students tasks; and a H'mong teacher teaches Thai students lessons. Moreover, most of these teachers will limit, despair or fail to master their students' own primary languages, native cultures, decoded behaviors, customs and so on.

4.2 Advantages of language learning in the bilingual education

In contrast, we are living in the open world in which many windows of opportunity open to welcome any person who masters many different languages inside them. Remarkably, the so-called "polyglot" as a "trademark" will bring them a brighter future. In particular, as a global labor market, Vietnam is one of the flagship groups of workforce providers in Asia and further. Thus, it is possible to strongly believe that knowing more than one language will be highly profitable and top prior to anyone who is interested in integrating into the other countries. It is good for them to improve both materialistic life and knowledge cultivation as much as possible accordingly. A perfect bilingual makes a person have perfect prospects (Macnamara, 1967).

In today's world of globalization, it cannot be denied that if anyone who is nourished with one more language-additive language in one way or two-bilingual education, it will not only give them opportunities but also capture several advantages. Knowing more than one language helps citizens overcome their barriers or handicaps, such as language diversity, as a way of defending the equality of people born in different contextual conditions (Pérez-Milan & Tollefson, 2018). For example, they will surely facilitate work, promote positions, seek a scholarship for abroad study, do business, expose different cultures or live abroad more easily. A person who can use two languages without societal support (Chibaka, 2018). Moreover, it leads to exposure to different cultures. Language is usually closely related to the culture of the speakers, which makes its learners better in many ways. More importantly, the latest research by Coelho (1998) showed that bilingual, multilingual individuals, learners, and speakers will perform better IQ tests than monolingual individuals of the same socioeconomic class because they are able to adapt well to any circumstances because they possess better levels of linguistic intelligence and exceptional meta-cognition.

Briefly, bilingualism is so helpful when individuals travel to some foreign countries, which have different spoken languages, and it helps them communicate effectively and be independent of interpreters or translators for any help or support. For instance, at the opening ceremony for social, cultural, and economic events in Southeast Asia (the 32nd Seagames held in the Kingdom of Cambodia in May, 2023), cultural linguistics and languages were problematic, easily recognized and then criticized in the international event. The different coaches from different countries expressed their own native languages and then interpreted them into English and continuously turned English into Khmer at the conference. According to Shapson and D'Oyley (1984) shortly described that L1 is important for development of L2 if they are found to negotiate the nearly same features and natures. Supposed that If the degree of similarity between L1 and L2 is likely closely related, interference is not limited enough to take place and is less pragmatically problematic (Ellis, 1989).

In some other special situations, such as under undesirable sociopolitical and political economic circumstances. In a country in which bilingual, multilingual persons are residents who become unstable in political or socioeconomic scenarios, such as war breakouts or crises, they are able to move to safer countries and enjoy communicating language more smoothly and easily than those who are not bilingual (Strazny, 2013). Further more, we work as bilinguals: socioeconomic changes, sociopolitical changes (Tollefson & Pérez-Milans, 2018), and social and economic mobility (Ricento, 2018). Recently, Vietnamese people have become global citizens owing to bilingual education and bilingualism, most of which can be polyglots.

5. Pedagogical Implications

Findings from this study provided a comprehensive understanding of bilingualism. From the time being, it will advance knowledge as well as experience of two or more languages. Also, It may be useful and fruitful for teachers to develop appropriate teaching strategies, techniques, methods used in the classroom. Closely allied, policy and planning implementation should be maximized in the pedagogical context. For example, curriculum designers, material developers, language trainers are encouraged to pay close attention to different language learners (e.g., majority and minority groups) language learners' special needs, desires, wants and problems arising in vietnam context. Hakuta and Garcia (1989); García and Baker (1995); Öztürk (2023) suggested that using bilingualism in instruction as an implementation of the bilingual policy to structuring classroom, here are the best ways to enhance school, school community and bilingual education.

Last—but by no means least, some of the ambitious and rigorous researches of bilingualism and multilingualism are necessary to employ so that these ones may fill the big gaps of this topic in the future.

6. Conclusion

Summing up of all the above mentioned lines, bilingual, multilingual education is not completely new but truly important in Vietnam's pedagogical context. It enables people to use two or more languages for different communications with different people in different contexts for different purposes. Here, bilingualism serves as a backbone in the development of L2 and L3 education. It can fill large gaps in understanding and knowledge cultivation. On the other hand, bilingual, multilingual education can solve conflicts between different ethnic groups and bring happiness, innermost joys to people in society (Ozfidan & Toprak, 2019; Rossi & Kroll, 2013). In fact, bilingual education enhances the core values of education in foreign languages, cultural awareness, linguistic awareness, political background, religious identity and socioeconomic status in Vietnam, where a variety of cultures, ethnic groups and languages exist reciprocally. According to Ozfidan and Toprak (2019) and Wei (2023), bilingual education helps protect the cultural inheritance, linguistic knowledge, and ethnolinguistic and religious identities of minority peoples. More importantly, it fosters learners' bilingual passions and targets. Under the national objective, bilingual education significantly promotes language policy and planning so that learners can be highly motivated and become global citizens. Moreover, bilinguals find it easy to catch amazing opportunities to change their way of life, living conditions, personal cognition, (critical) thinking, and positive behavior by sharing and adapting to different cultures, languages and others. In particular, raising cultural linguistic awareness through practicing interlanguage lifts up various models of bilingual education, e.g., one-way or two-way dual bilingual education programs and transitional bilingual programs. All of them have been successfully implemented in Vietnam. Finally, by no means least, the greatest benefit of implementing foreign language education policy and planning is the ability of Vietnamese people to become global citizens. This highlights the increase in Vietnam's culture, education, political background and socioeconomic status, especially in terms of modern trends in transformed education methods.

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Ethical Considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

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