

# Current Situation and Management Solutions for Bilingual Education in Primary School

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Less than a quarter of countries around the world recognise the use of two official languages in their country. In multilingual countries, governments either openly or implicitly enforce a monopoly policy even though the number of people who can speak two or more languages overwhelms the number of people who can only speak one language. This monologue policy has caused many political, socio-economic, and educational disadvantages for minority language speakers. Therefore, a new education - bilingual education has gradually been expanded in these multilingual countries. Vietnamese - English bilingual education at the primary level in Vietnam is attracting much attention from managers, educators, and parents. At most primary schools in Vietnam, English is introduced, and the program is from grade 3; even some schools have tried to use English to teach some subjects such as Math and Science from 1st grade towards bilingual education for children. This study was conducted at two primary schools in Hanoi to understand the model, orientation, and views on bilingual education through a survey of 41 teachers and interview 2 professional managers and 2 school leaders. The research results show that although the shared opinion of both schools' leaders and lecturers supports bilingual education, at present, new schools are only in the direction of intensive English, there is no bilingual training model due to reasons such as the number of subjects that can be taught in English, the length of class, teachers and education policy.

**Key words:** *Bilingual education, bilingual model, primary school, English teaching.*

## Introduction

Bilingual education is not a new concept in Vietnam with the context of more than 11 million of the ethnic minority population of over 90 million. Over the last decade, Vietnamese



education has had many policies implemented to develop and test bilingual programs in the direction of preserving students' native languages (ethnic minority language and development of the ability to use Vietnamese language (language of administration in Vietnam); The goal is to help learners to use both Vietnamese and their mother tongue fluently and to achieve the goal of universal primary education (UNICEF and Ministry of Education and Training, 2012) (Hoa & Woodward, 2019). Under this program, Vietnamese is taught as a second language in preschool, grade 1, and grade 2, the native language of students (ethnic minority language is the primary language of instruction. From grade 3 to grade 5 (3 years), Vietnamese and the mother tongue of students are used in parallel. At the end of primary school, ethnic minority students can read and write in both languages, reaching the national standard of knowledge. According to a report by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education and Training, in 2012, bilingual education based on mother tongue in Tra Vinh, Lao Cai and Gia Lai provinces has achieved positive results, in which the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard of Vietnamese language accounts for 89%, and the rate of meeting the standard of mother language is 85% (T. T. T. Nguyen & Hamid, 2017).

For fostering foreign languages for Vietnamese students, English is considered a critical foreign language and attracts a large number of learners. English has been included in the curriculum since grade 3, and it has even been introduced and taught from grade 1 in many schools. However, teaching and learning English still stop at improving foreign language skills, improving listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. In other words, English is introduced, and the school curriculum is like a language subject, not a means to provide subject knowledge and other skills (T. T. T. Nguyen, 2018).

Currently, many inter-school schools in Hanoi have implemented or are aiming to deploy part or the whole of the program according to the bilingual education model or the international system such as Hanoi Academy, Nguyen Sieu, Doan Thi Diem, Vietnam - Australia, Wellspring. However, whether the model being applied is a bilingual model or an English enhancement model, the subjects in English are divided according to the ratio of this bilingual model (T. T. T. Nguyen, 2017). Training objectives and conditions to meet the bilingual education environment, such as curriculum, course length, whether teachers meet the standards of bilingual education, are issues that need to be adequately and seriously studied. In order to meet the requirement “by 2020, the majority of young Vietnamese will graduate from intermediate schools, colleges and universities with sufficient foreign language competence, confidence in communication, learning, working in an integrated, multilingual and multicultural environment; turning foreign languages into a strong point of the Vietnamese people, serving the cause of industrialisation and modernisation of the country”, need a standardised and bilingual approach model based on solid theoretical foundation, with input from stakeholders such as educators, policymakers, investors, parents, etc.

First of all, if the purpose of bilingual education is for students to master English and Vietnamese quickly, bilingual education must focus most strongly on the primary level. A common mistake of bilingual schools is about time, spreading bilingualism into 12-15 years, while only 5 years of elementary school has been able to solve for students the problem of using language (literacy), whether English or Vietnamese. Only when determining primary is the central stage, we do not divide the resources evenly over the 12 years, in which the following years mainly overcome the consequences of "not doing enough" at the elementary level for bilingual learning. In terms of time, schools should have just let parents know, for children to have literacy skills (reading fluently) in English takes an average of 5 years, and if progressing fast, 3 years, study continuously and stably at the elementary school (Mehisto & Genesee, 2015). The transfer back and forth during the child's formation of this literacy capacity affects the bilingual process of the child. The next problem is the program duration. An extraordinarily conservative and clumsy way of doing school in Vietnam is to "complement" the program in two, half Vietnamese, half English, spread over 12 years of study.

Meanwhile, if students choose the English Immersion model, they can design more scientific programs: The ratio of English/Vietnamese over the years must follow the "backward" model: 1st grade learns 90% English/10% Vietnamese, then 80/20, 60/40 until the end of the fifth year, about 50/50. However, ask if any school has done this based on the results of scientific research (research-based) and actual results verified in the US? The design of the Vietnamese high school program was rigid; in turn, the bilingual program designer was also mechanical. Therefore, bilingual students mostly continue to eat this 50/50 "mixed rice" dish, though we have not found it useful in the last time (Pérez Cañado, 2016). That is students who attend 5 years of primary school instead of B2 level only reach A1 - A2 level in English — incredibly wasting their time, resources, and opportunities (Chen, Tabssum, & Nguyen, 2019).

Meanwhile, if the English Immersion model is implemented correctly, after only 5 years, students will have B1 - B2 level and be fully ready to step into the process of independent language users (Independent Users). Not only do the machines divide the 50-50 program during the 12 school years, but the schools also divide the school day of the students according to the formula 50-50, i.e. morning study Vietnamese program, afternoon study English program (Vu Anh & Le Quoc, 2019). Meanwhile, there are countless more efficient models for bilingual implementation, for example, 5 days a week, 2 days learning Vietnamese, 2 days learning English, and 1 day using both languages, but NOT currently applicable. They only learn a little about bilingualism, buy programs and assemble with Vietnamese programs in an "everyone's way" way without any language link, or bilingual anywhere (Albright, 2018).

Another drawback of bilingual programs in Vietnam is that bilingual schools but no bilingual experts. Moreover, because there are no experts, schools often implement mechanically

according to their feelings or market practices, take the Cambridge program, for example. In essence, CIE, the provider of the Cambridge curriculum, is a testing organisation, not a bilingual education institution. They only offer exams and bilingual curriculum for bilingual schools, but they do not do bilingual program design work for schools, because every country, every school has different student backgrounds, language communities, and learning goals (Lam Hoang & Filipi, 2019). However, many schools "cling" to Cambridge to implement bilingual programs without designing their programs. That is, they "pressed" the Cambridge program into the school, and thought that it was bilingual. Cambridge only offers programs and exams and certificates for "Core" subjects such as English, Maths, and Science, recently more ICT and Global Perspectives. Schools use their programs for bilingual or bilingual education or something else that's their job (Hoang & Pham, 2018).

The most recent study shows that intensive English learning (corresponding to the Structured English Immersion model) is more effective than bilingual education for students who are at the beginning of bilingual learning. For example, the state program of Arizona (USA) spends up to 4 hours of intensive English learning for students every day so that they can quickly catch up with the program of thoroughly learning English, instead of "immersing" students in the environment of learning science subjects in English immediately without having enough language preparation (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017). For example, the Cambridge program in the previous public school, and now the integrated English program, how to study Math and Science well, understand concepts correctly and fully when English is still lumped and understand the language? This may also be the reason why students studying in a bilingual school have no better English results, even lower than students who focus on improving English, whether at the British Council or through an intensive English program (learning 10-15 hours for only English classes per week) at the school.

In this study, we focus on understanding the educational model implemented in two primary schools in Hanoi and the bilingual education perspective of teachers, professional leaders, and principals, who have an essential role in the selection and implementation of the program, to answer two research questions: (1). Are elementary schools following this model of education (bilingual or intensified in English)? (2). What is the school's opinion on the conditions for bilingual training?

## **Literature**

### ***The Concept of Bilingual Education***

First of all, it is advisable to clarify the concepts of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and bilingual education because of their different contents. The term "learning English as a foreign language" (EFL) is used when describing the study or use of English in countries where English is not a native language or is used as a means of communication. In other words, EFL is taught

in settings where English is not a language of communication in the community or at school (X. P. Nguyen, 2019). In contrast, the term "bilingual education" is used when both languages are used as a means to teach subjects to students according to the school curriculum. Overall, bilingual education means using two languages for teaching purposes. Besides, since language and culture cannot be separated, bilingual education also requires cultural and ethnographic education for learners (Porter, 2017).

### ***Bilingual Education Model***

Canada was the first country to introduce a bilingual education model in the 1970s when it decided that French would become the second official language besides English. In most bilingual schools, children will learn to speak French and study subjects such as History, Music, Geography, Maths, Art, Gymnastics, and Science in French. To implement the bilingual education policy, Canada applies full bilingual types (100% in the first 3 years and then gradually decreases to 80% or 40% in subsequent years) and partial bilingualism (50% of the mother tongue and 50% of French and the same in the following years) (H. T. T. Nguyen, 2018). According to the overview of Roberts (1995), there are 5 models of bilingual education being applied, including:

***Submersion:*** This is a model of language assimilation for students whose native language is not English. The objective of these programs is to help students integrate into the learning and social environment, where communication activities are mainly conducted in English. Their mother tongue was not focused on school development, so it disappeared; for example, this model was implemented in California schools (García & Sung, 2018).

***ESL Pullout:*** Students are allowed to take some regular class hours to learn English. This is also a bilingual model in the direction of assimilation; Language learning in this form hurts students making friends, mingling with teachers and friends in the absence of other subjects to learn English.

***Transitional:*** The subjects in the program are taught in their native language, in parallel with the teaching of English. At first, English was taught as a foreign language; The subjects that do not require too much language are also taught in English. The ultimate goal of this model is to help students with good English ability, easily integrate into the "mainstream" academic environment (García & Lin, 2017). Studies also show that it takes 5-7 years for students to learn English to reach the level of language that their English-speaking classmates can learn. However, this model in the US usually lasts only 3 years (Pratiwi & Furusho, 2019).

***Maintenance:*** unlike all the models mentioned above, bilingual conservation education is also known as one-way bilingual education, targeting students from immigrant families but to the



second generation, only speak very little or do not speak the language of the family (Supply et al., 2019).

**Enrichment:** Also known as two-way bilingualism, the feature of this form of education is the dual use of two languages in teaching. Students include native English speaking students and students whose native language is not English. The goal of enrichment bilingualism is to help students be able to use both languages fluently. Bilingual / enrichment bilinguals use both languages for teaching, but students will be more diverse, including students whose native language is English and students whose mother tongue is a minority (Zhang, Li, & Phuong, 2019). This model divides the time it takes to use each language in the classroom rather than mixing two languages (Bialystok, 2018).

(Wright, Boun, & García, 2015) grouped models based on purpose. He divided these models into two poles: additive and subtractive. The elimination model includes Submersion and ESL, while the additional bilingual includes transition, maintenance, immersion, and heritage programs. Bilingual education, defined by May, includes only extremist programs (Phuong, 2019). Similarly, (Sinclair, 2018) pointed out that strong bilingual education models are those of immersion, maintenance/heritage language, two-way/dual language, and mainstream bilingual. The characteristics of each model can be summarised as follows:

**Table 1:** Active bilingual training programs (Sinclair, 2018)

<b>Education program</b>	<b>Student object</b>	<b>The language used in teaching</b>	<b>Educational and social objectives</b>	<b>The rate of language use</b>
Immersion	Students whose native language is (one or more) active languages	Both languages, the first phase emphasizes the second language	Enrichment	The ratio of language 1: language 2 in the original teaching 100: 0 gradually decreases to 80:20 then 50:50 or the 50: 50% ratio is applied completely
Maintenance/ heritage			Conserve, bilingual, multilingual, get rich	The rate of using the mother tongue in teaching varies between 50-100% depending on the period
Two-way			Get rich, multilingual	90:10, 80:20, 70:30, 60:40 or 50: 50% ratios depending on training period / facility
Mainstream bilingual			Enrich, multilingual, supplement	

Although the classifications are more or less different (in terms of names, students, the rate of use of each language), it can be seen that a robust bilingual model must meet the following requirements: Using two languages in teaching, subject knowledge is transmitted in both languages, although the ratio of using 1: 2 languages can vary from around 100: 0 (then increase the amount of instruction in language 1 to reach a balance of 50:50), 90:10, 80:20, 70:30, 60:40 or 50: 50. Output goals are students' ability to listen, speak, read, and write in both languages,

with academic knowledge. Teachers who speak at least two languages even can teach subjects in both languages. When considering the factors to evaluate the success of a bilingual program, (Valdiviezo & Nieto, 2015) listed several other essential factors such as The minimum bilingual training period is 6 years, and it will take about 8 years for students to have equal knowledge in both languages; Teaching and learning objectives are to acquire subject knowledge; Do not mix the two languages when teaching.

In the context that Vietnam is very interested in bilingual education, it is necessary to build a bilingual education model appropriate to the country's situation. Vietnam has successfully applied the bilingual education model of preserving the mother tongue for ethnic minority students. However, this model is not suitable for using English and Vietnamese in the academic environment in developed economic regions in Vietnam. Due to the conservation model only at the primary level, it is not possible to meet the language requirements for students to acquire knowledge at higher levels. We also find that no in-depth studies have been conducted to understand and build an English-Vietnamese bilingual education model in Vietnam, especially at the primary level. Therefore, this study focuses on understanding the current state of the educational model being implemented in elementary schools, learn the views of educators on the approach to English, the factors to build a Vietnamese-English bilingual education model applied to this level.

### **Materials and Methodology**

We conducted data collection at two well-known private schools in the field of primary English training in Hanoi, Northern Vietnam. In these two schools, on a total of 40-45 periods/week, students are taught English, Maths in English and Science in English with a total of 8-15 periods/week with the imported curriculum. From abroad, English textbooks of the Ministry of Education and Training are also used in parallel teaching in the school's program with several 2-4 periods/week. The subjects of the study included 02 principals, 02 professional leaders, and 41 teachers of the two schools. The managers of the two schools have long seniority in primary education, with more than 25 years of teaching experience and over 10 years of management experience, two professional leaders have teaching experience and management experience for 5 years or more. The teachers who answered the questionnaire were English teachers or teachers of Math and Science subjects in English, Vietnamese and foreign nationals with university or higher degree. The first primary school has 11 teachers under 30 years old (36.7%), 15 teachers aged 30-40 (50%), and 4 teachers aged 40-50 who participated in the survey. Most teachers have teaching experience of 5-20 years. The other primary school had 10 out of 11 teachers (equivalent to 91%) participating in the survey. Most teachers are under the age of 30 with less than 5 years of experience, 2 teachers (equivalent to 18.2%) have more than 5 years of teaching experience.

We used the survey method and interviews in this study. Data collected from the two elementary schools, we named School TH1 and School TH2 to protect school identity. The questionnaire is written in both English and Vietnamese teachers can answer the questionnaire in either language. The questionnaire has three main parts including (1) general information about the education and experience of management and teachers; (2) training model (curriculum, objectives and orientation of the school, ratio, duration of subjects taught in English); (3) the views of managers, teachers on bilingual education, and conditions for supporting bilingual education. The research team also conducted interviews with two principals of the two schools (referred to as Principal TH1 and Principal TH2) and two professional leaders of the school's English subject (abbreviated as TH1 Leader and TH2 Leader). The questionnaire was sent to the principal and the head of the two elementary schools by the research team for comments, corrections, supplements, and completions before the official interview. Each interview takes place in 40-90 minutes and is recorded then transcribed to serve data analysis.

Results obtained from teacher questionnaires and management interviews are categorised and analysed according to key topics such as the educational model being implemented at the school, the rate of using English in subjects, lessons, views on the ability to deploy bilingual models at schools.

## **Results and discussion**

### ***Educational Model at the School***

The managers of both schools participating in the survey confirmed that the school they manage does not have a bilingual training model, as Principal TH1 shared: Currently, it is only reinforcement, not bilingual because there are many subjects in Vietnamese. [...] Only international schools are taught bilingually. This view was also confirmed by Principal TH2 and the two English professors in the interview. There are two main reasons why schools believe that the model they use is not bilingual education yet: (1) the duration of using English compared with Vietnamese (in terms of several periods) is low; and (2) the percentage of subjects taught in English is too small. Both TH1 and TH2 schools believe that the current English program at the school is intensive English, not bilingual (Although TH1 said, the school's students have 8-10 lessons/week. For TH2 school, students study 10-15 English classes per week for a total of 40-45 lessons). That is, English accounts for about 25-33.3% of class time. Most teachers of both schools (87%) stated that during English classes, teachers still had to use a certain number of Vietnamese. Also, even though students in both schools use English after school with their teachers and friends, the ratio of English to Vietnamese is still at 20:80 up to 40:60.

Also, the lack of a bilingual model is also reflected in the training objectives. In terms of language, high school has a clear orientation on the goal of knowledge students need to achieve

each year. High-quality system with this curriculum and the number of periods like this when students finish school, for example, grade 3 will achieve the Starters program, grade 4 will be Movers, and grade 5 will have some Flyers - that is equivalent to the European rating of approximately A2, that is what the school is like. (Principal TH1)

In the interview, the professional manager of TH1 shared that Math is taught in English with a period of 1 period/week and Science with 2 periods/week. However, she also said that students are still learning Math and Science in Vietnamese, besides the 3 English periods mentioned above. It is not difficult to recognise the content of knowledge of Mathematics that they are taught quite simple compared to the level of grade 3 students, because the course is "familiar with the concept of calculation" in English, students only learn math in English for 1 period, and 2 more classes for foreigners to teach '(Leader of TH2)

In other words, there is still no link between the curriculum in Vietnamese and the knowledge taught in English. There is also a lack of consistency in the training objectives of the bilingual teaching knowledge to avoid duplication. Compare with the bilingual definitions and models mentioned in the theoretical overview. It can be affirmed that the two universities participating in the study do not have a bilingual model, although the ratio of using English and Vietnamese in teaching accounts for about 20:80 to 40:60. The reason is that the subject knowledge taught in English (Math and Science) only takes 2-3 classes out of a total of 40-45 lessons, while most of the remaining time (10-15 periods) is devoted to teaching English as a foreign language.

### ***General View on Bilingual Training***

In general, managers of both TH1 and TH2 schools support bilingual education and orient their educational activities towards the goal of bilingual training. TH2 also aims to help students "use English to acquire knowledge. Thereby moving towards the great goal of bilingual training, rather than "comprehend the current English" (Leader of TH2). Alternatively, more accurately, Principal TH2 emphasises using language as a tool to acquire knowledge: *[...] they can use this language relatively well after a period of study to be a tool to study some subjects and their ability to communicate in this language reaches a level of naturalness, fluency, and can be demonstrated in a variety of communication situations, without being afraid to communicate with native speakers* (Principal TH2). However, the point of interest in the data collected is that all teachers and managers participating in the interview appreciated the role of Vietnamese as well as the importance of students proficient in Vietnamese. They think that living in Vietnam, in a Vietnamese-speaking environment, children need to be able to use Vietnamese fluently, be able to communicate feelings, talk with parents, and can still succeed if students choose to study and work in Vietnam in the future but not abroad: *From the beginning, the school's criteria [...] are like that, the first is that whatever students want to*

*learn, they must ensure Vietnamese. Make sure your children are proficient in that language, and speak and write well in Vietnamese.* (Leader of TH2)

The Vietnamese want their children to learn Vietnamese: *the secondary school must still complete all the subjects of Vietnamese basically because not everyone who stays will stay because if you go home, there must be a bit of Vietnamese.* (Leader of TH1)

This is also the opinion of many teachers participating in the survey. The survey provides three open-ended questions explaining the views of participants in bilingual education. Specific figures obtained from the TH1 school are as follows: 56% support bilingual education, of which 26.7% believe that the application of bilingual education should be prudent, and at present, it is impossible to apply all basic subjects in English. Notably, 10% said that bilingual education is not feasible in Vietnam. For secondary school, 18.2% of teachers said that they should not teach basic subjects in English, 18.2% mentioned considering the resources of teachers, programs, curriculum as well as the ability of students, about 45.5% support teaching basic subjects in both English and Vietnamese. Also in the open-ended questionnaire survey, 45.5% of teachers thought bilingual education was a right way, but not the best way to learn English for Vietnamese students, only 18.2% thought it was the best way.

As such, most teachers and administrators have a positive attitude toward bilingual training. However, they also express specific concerns around bilingual education development and the impact of this process on children learning their native language, leading to an emphasis on the importance of using multiple Vietnamese languages and teaching basic subjects in Vietnamese. In our opinion, in order to successfully build a bilingual education model, it is essential to balance research results related to successful bilingual models in the world and the characteristics and unique requirements of the Vietnamese environment and the views of those who directly teach.

### ***Conditions Needed to Build a Bilingual Model Teachers and Programs***

From the standpoint of supporting bilingual education as well as gradually shifting some science subjects into English teaching, the group of teachers and administrators participating in the study also pointed out that this can only be done when schools can meet teacher quality. Currently, both elementary schools do not require teachers of basic Science subjects to have English proficiency. High school TH1 is encouraged through the form of giving tutors to foreign teachers with payor sending students to summer camps while the secondary school does not have the task of fostering primary teachers to help them teach their subjects in English. Also, 53.6% of teachers directly mentioned the importance of the curriculum and the curriculum. Teachers believe that bilingual programs require a high level of curriculum, student

quality, and curriculum and investment challenges. Principal TH1 said that with such high requirements, the original bilingual model would be challenging to apply massively, especially in public schools do not have the resources to support teachers, facilities, and especially the program and curriculum policies.

### ***Choose Your Preferred Language***

Currently, Vietnamese is a widely used language in the economy, education, administration, and daily activities of over 90 million Vietnamese (2018 data). Therefore, teachers and administrators are right when it comes to emphasising the importance of teaching students how to read, write, and use Vietnamese fluently. This makes the bilingual model building in Vietnam much more complicated than in previous countries. For example, in India or Singapore, English is used as an official language in administration and transaction, so outside of the classroom, children are exposed to English and have to use English is very large. Meanwhile, in Vietnam, out of school, children have very few such opportunities. As Headmaster TH2 said: *[...] I am not a country that uses the English language like Singapore or like Malaysia in parallel with my mother tongue. Those countries use both languages, both national languages, that is, used in schools. The English they use in school and their mother tongue they use to communicate either in the performing arts or literature, while all other subjects are in English. In Vietnam today, it is not possible to do so because of the community they know and speak English regularly, generally bilingual community. Vietnam is not a bilingual community; in the family, every generation has to know almost two or three languages already. They know it as their mother tongue; they know it very deeply. If they do not know English like that, then skip their mother tongue, because the mother tongue is still the language of identity and it gives the child the confidence when he or she joins another community.*

The leader of TH2 also gave a reason to support the development of fluency in Vietnamese before moving to learn English and providing examples of children needing Vietnamese to communicate and express affection. The above characteristics show that a bilingual model suitable for Vietnam is a model that helps develop the ability to listen, speak, read and write and student communication and cultural knowledge of both languages (English and Vietnamese). However, it is not difficult to recognise the shyness of teachers and administrators in using English more than in the first years of elementary school because of the students' ability to use the Vietnamese language. This is utterly contrary to the evidence cited in the studies cited in the theoretical basis of this study. We believe that the first step in building a bilingual model is indispensable to help teachers and managers and policymakers who have accurate and up-to-date knowledge of bilingual education through sharing research findings from countries that have successfully developed and implemented bilingual education.

### ***Policy***

Through interviews, principals and school leaders also said that the policy has a decisive role in education. All four managers said that the new bilingual model could only work if the schools had more autonomy over their programs. The current difficulty, according to them, partly comes from the fact that all schools still have to earnestly implement the program that the Ministry of Education and Training has introduced nationwide: for Vietnam at present, the primary level is not allowed to abandon the Vietnamese program [...] *primary level still has to teach and not abandon the Vietnamese program.* (Principal TH1)

To apply the Vietnamese-English bilingual model, the application of regulations on compliance with the Ministry's framework program will cause specific difficulties in terms of curriculum and training duration. It can be said that changes related to policies will be the decisive factor for the success of the bilingual model. Also, to apply the bilingual education model successfully, families and schools should join hands in education. However, according to the shared of Principal TH1 and TH2 in Vietnam, this is still quite rare, almost none. They also added that Vietnam does not currently have policies on the extent to which parents can contribute to the educational program.

### **Conclusion**

The research team analysed interview data and surveyed data from two private primary schools in Hanoi. Research results have shown that these schools have not applied the bilingual education model but only follow the orientation of intensive English. Although most teachers and administrators participating in the interview have a favourable view of the effect of the bilingual model on learning English in elementary school. However, there are still concerns about the feasibility of bilingual education in Vietnam (duration of using language, policies, teachers, programs). Our analysis also provides some suggestions on conditions to consider for bilingual model building projects in Vietnam (especially in terms of the scope of use of Vietnamese and English).

Along with the above suggestions, building a bilingual training model starting at primary school should consider the rate of using English in Vietnamese through the school years, building an additive-oriented model, propose a minimum time for bilingual training, considering the elements of the curriculum and syllabuses to suit the context of Vietnam. For Vietnamese - English bilingual education program, if we want to develop a bilingual training model, a certain percentage of Math, Art, Science, and Physical Education must be taught in English. The ratio of English to Vietnamese used in teaching may be 90:10, 70:30, 60:40 or 50: 50 depending on the stage of bilingual education, the conditions of the school as well as the characteristics of the student. Applying to the situation of Vietnam, in the early years, the



language used more in schools would be English, gradually increasing the number of subjects and teaching time in Vietnamese. The reason is that Vietnamese is a strong language, used in all areas of life, more exposure to the second language in the early stages of bilingual education will be more beneficial for students.



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