

Do Foreign Language Policies in Vietnam Align with Economic Policies? A Lesson Should be Learned

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Decision 4068/QĐ-BGDĐT, issued on 28 November 2023, states that English is no longer a compulsory test in the national exams. This has raised critical doubt in the population in general about the need to learn a foreign language at schools in Vietnam. A bigger question raised is whether foreign language policies support economic development. In order to answer the question, this article reviews the foreign language policies in Vietnam from 1945 to the present, as well as the economic growth using analysis, synthesis and comparison methods. The findings show that there were misconnections in the development of those policies, as well as a waste of human resources during the period. This article introduces the term “economics of language” to argue for the need for an overall foreign language framework for economic development in Vietnam. It also suggests a look at the bigger picture for English learning and teaching in Vietnam.

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