

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS
RELATED TO METHODOLOGIES
TO HANOI FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHERS' COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

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ABSTRACT

With the increasing contact between Vietnam and English speaking countries and the growing demand for foreign language professionals in the last decades, the teaching of foreign languages, especially English, has gained considerable prominence in Vietnamese education. However, English has been taught in Vietnam for a relatively short time, there are significant deficiencies in this area. If these deficiencies are to be addressed then methodology is a crucial variable worthy of examination.

Many of the EFL teaching (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) methods developed in the last twenty years are unfamiliar to a great number of the Vietnamese teachers, although they may be introduced to Vietnam in the near future. In this study a historical overview of language teaching development is provided. Since language teaching methods are products of Western experience, a scrutiny of their relevance to the Vietnamese teaching situation is necessary. In particular it is important to focus on the psychological and cultural appropriateness of different methods to the Vietnamese settings. A number of most crucial psychological issues such as the learner's motivation,

aptitude, personality and learning style are discussed together with some social and cultural influences which may affect the learner's psychological attributes. The study also provides a specific investigation of the psychological attributes of Vietnamese students and a number of cultural problems faced by this type of learners in their English learning process. Finally some practical, though tentative, suggestions are made in the hope that more and more Vietnamese teachers of English will respond to the problem of teaching methodology and search for ways to bring about effective learning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABSTRACT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
CHAPTER	
1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS	1
2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE TEACHING	10
2.1 Definition of Terms	10
2.2 The Grammar-Translation Method	13
2.3 The Audio Lingual Method	17
2.4 The Direct Method	21
2.5 The Cognitive Approach	24
2.6 The Communicative Approach	27
3 SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS RELATED TO ENGLISH LEARNING AT HFLTC	33
3.1 Factors Influencing Language Learning	33
3.1.1 Intrinsic Factors	34
3.1.1.1 Student's Motivation	34
3.1.1.2 Student's Aptitude	39
3.1.1.3 Student's Personality	43
3.1.1.4 Learning Style	48
3.1.2 Extrinsic Factors	50
3.1.2.1 Social Factors	51
3.1.2.2 Cultural Factors	54
3.2 Psychological Attributes of HFLTC Students	59
3.2.1 General Considerations	59

3.2.2	HFLTC Students' Aptitude	61
3.2.3	HFLTC Students' Motivation	62
3.2.4	HFLTC Students' Personality	65
3.2.5	HFLTC Students' Learning Style	67
3.2.6	Teacher-Student Relationship at HFLTC	70
3.3	English Learning and Cultural Problems Faced by HFLTC Students	73
3.3.1	Historical Background	74
3.3.2	Vietnamese Speakers of English and Their Problems in Learning British Culture	75
3.3.2.1	General Considerations	75
3.3.2.2	Differences between English and Vietnamese Cultures in Doing Certain Speech Acts	85
4	APPROPRIATENESS OF METHODOLOGIES TO HFLTC STUDENTS	89
4.1	TEFL, TESL and TESOL	89
4.2	The Grammar-Translation Method	92
4.3	The Direct Method	94
4.4	The Audio-Lingual Method	97
4.5	The Communicative Approach	100
5	SUGGESTIONS FOR A VIETNAMESE METHOD OF LANGUAGE TEACHING	107
5.1	Psychological Characteristics of HFLTC Students Related to Choice of Methods	107
5.2	Teaching the Target Culture to HFLTC Students	110
5.3	The Search for an Eclectic Method	112
5.4	Practical Suggestions for Classroom Teachers	120

5.4.1 "Communication" as Understood by Many HFLTC Teachers	120
5.4.2 Mechanical Drills vs Conscious Practice	121
5.4.3 Teachers' and Students' Responsibility in the Classroom	122
5.4.4 Use of Authentic Materials	125
CONCLUSION	128
APPENDIX	130
BIBLIOGRAPHY	137

Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

Since the whole of Vietnam was united in 1975, the country has been developing its cultural and technological relationships with different countries in the world. Since the Vietnam-America War, there have been technical assistance and cultural and educational exchanges between Vietnam and other nations regardless of their differences in political system. As a result, foreign languages especially English, French and Russian, have been in great demand. Fully aware of the important role of foreign languages, the Vietnamese government officials and the Vietnamese Educational Ministry have decided that foreign languages should be a compulsory subject in a great number of secondary schools. In its circular letter dated December 18, 1979, to secondary schools the Ministry of Education states : " ... Foreign languages must be considered as important as Literature and Mathematics". From 1986 on foreign languages will be an obligatory subject for school leavers in their State Examinations. For these reasons English and Russian, the most popular foreign languages, are taught in schools, colleges and universities in Vietnam, but English did not gain its present important status until 1975 when

the Vietnam war was over.

During the last decade communication between Vietnam and other countries has increased dramatically and there has been an upsurge in international commerce, technical assistance, tourism and cultural and educational exchanges. As a result, there is an increasing demand in Vietnam for interpreters, translators, tourist guides and foreign language teachers who have a good command of a foreign language and can use it effectively in communication. Thus, foreign language teaching has gained considerable prominence in Vietnamese education. Since English is the most widely used language in the world, it is regarded as a necessary tool which can facilitate access to modern scientific and technological advances and help promote commerce and understanding between Vietnam and countries where English is a major language. This great demand for foreign language teachers and for people who know foreign languages in general led to the foundation of Hanoi Foreign Languages Teachers' College, generally abbreviated to HFLTC, in 1966 with four departments, Chinese, which was dropped in 1979 due to the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, English, French and Russian. The course is five years in length and there is a total of about 1500 students in all.

The main aim of HFLTC is to supply secondary schools with foreign language teachers. It also trains foreign language teachers for colleges. The aim of the whole curriculum in the three departments of the college

is to train foreign language teachers. According to Dr. Nguyen Hao, Deputy Head of the college, such teachers should :

1. be able to use the target language as a means of communication (with the five skills : speaking, listening, reading, writing and translation , with reading more emphasized)

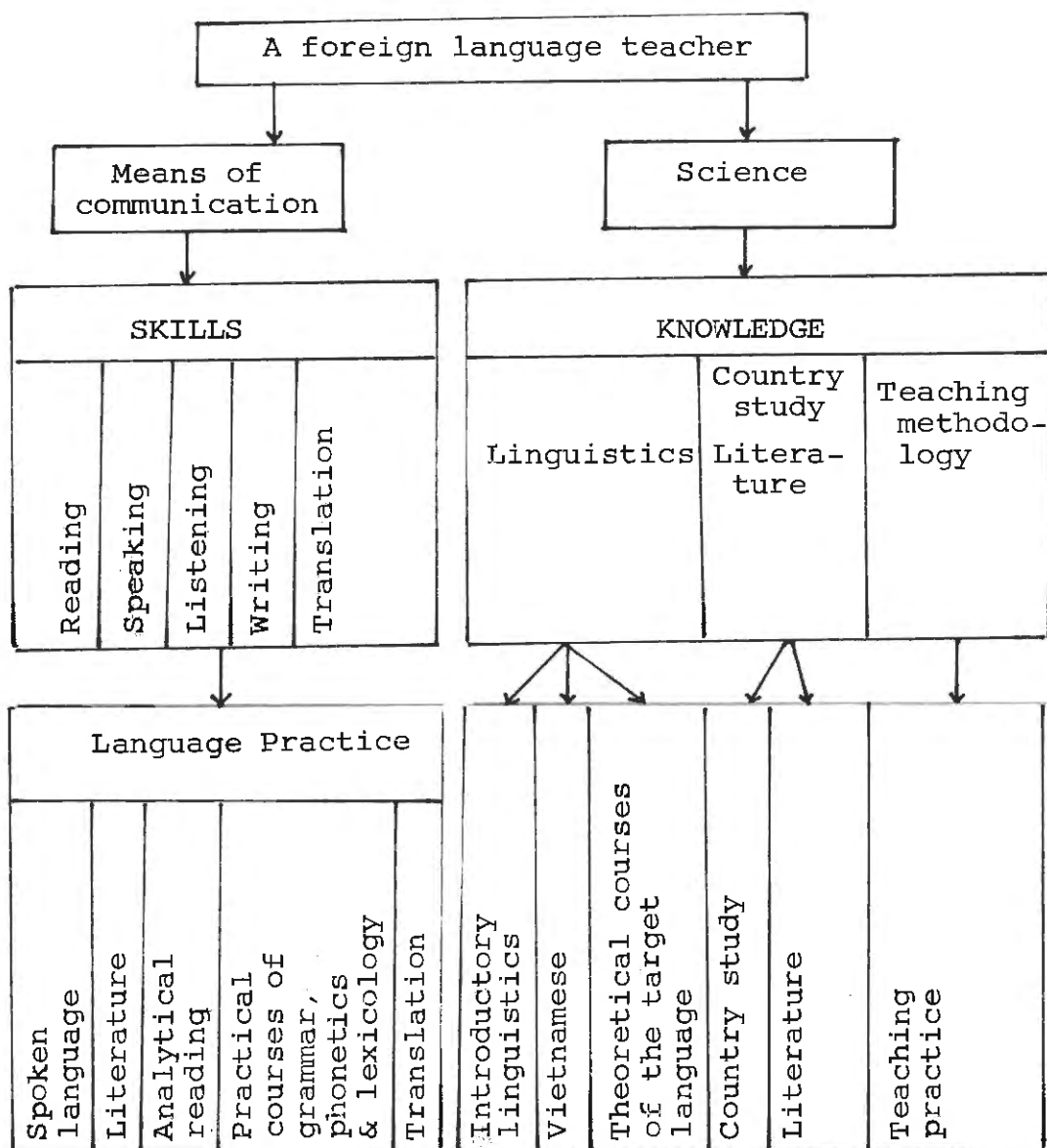
2. have mastered the structure of the target language and have a fairly good knowledge of a) culture and civilization of the people of the target language b) literature of the target language people and c) teaching methodology.

3. have a good knowledge not only of the structure of their own mother tongue but also of their own people's culture and civilization.

The diagram on the next page initiated by Dr. Nguyen Hao (1983) can well illustrate what has been said so far about what is required of a graduate from HFLTC.

Whether or not this aim can be achieved depends very much^{g h} on teaching methodology. In the history of foreign language teaching in Vietnam, the Grammar-Translation Method has always been the major method, especially in teaching English to non-major tertiary students. This method is still widely used in most of the general English courses. However, an Audio-Lingual Method was introduced to HFLTC in the late 1950's when the responsibility of the English department was to train interpreters and

DIAGRAM 1 Qualifications of a Vietnamese foreign language teacher. (translated from Ng. Hao and Ng. Tuyet Minh, 1983: 7)



translators. But the influence of this method stopped when a generation of teachers, who were trained in Russia returned to Vietnam with their teaching methodology influenced by the Russians.

For nearly twenty years teaching English at HFLTC has been the teaching of what is known as

'Literary Language', translated from Russian 'litiyra-turnya iaduc', which is in fact prescriptive language. Also for these twenty years English textbooks have been mainly imported from the Soviet Union until very relatively recently. Due to this one-sided viewpoint of teaching, after five years at college many students can hardly speak a word of English nor can they understand a native speaker of English. In addition to this, those students have a very distorted picture of the Western world. The image of England, America or Australia they have in their minds is the exploitation of man by man or unemployment or the gap between the rich and the poor. According to the Board of Directors at HFLTC, the weak points of graduates from the three departments lie mainly in the following areas :

1. Listening comprehension;
2. Speaking;
3. Writing; and
4. General knowledge.

The students' weakness in general knowledge is due to the fact that they are blocked from having contact with culture of the West, a matter which will be discussed in Chapter 3. This weakness was pointed out by Premier Pham Van Dong in one of his speeches :

To learn a foreign language one needs also to learn the culture of those who speak that language ... I know some of my interpreters

often make big mistakes most of the time they translate for me. To me, this is not strange. I know they make those mistakes because their general knowledge is too poor.

(June 22, 1972)

The leadership of HFLTC is now looking rather differently from in the past at what to teach and how to teach a foreign language. Professor Truong Dong San, Head of the college, expressed his view on language teaching and learning :

We should not only teach our students a foreign language but also acquaint them, through the foreign language, with what is fine of the life-style of the people who speak it, with a civilized world. It is wrong to think that whatever is English or French is bad.

(August 5, 1984)

Owing to the change in point of view, and to the fact that since 1975 the Vietnamese government has sent a number of teachers of English to Australia and the UK for further education, there is new access to teaching materials. At present, the instructional materials being used are British or American. Just to cite here a few of English courses for general purposes, English 900, New Concept English, Kernel Lessons (Kernel One, Kernel Intermediate and Kernel Plus) Mainline Skills A, Mainline Skills B, Strategies, Viewpoint are in use. Materials for teaching translation and methodology are prepared by Vietnamese teachers who base their approach on both Soviet and Western sources. As for teaching

methodology, there has been a big change as well. The following teaching principles, which will be discussed at length in Chapter 5, are widely agreed on among language teachers at HFLTC :

The correct way of teaching foreign languages in a non target language environment should be based on these two basic principles : On the one hand to teach the students to speak the target language and on the other to gradually equip them with the language structure on which they can base themselves to produce their own speech patterns, i.e to teach the foreign language as a system.

(Hoang Lai and A.A Chukuev, 1983:19)

But whatever method has been adopted and whatever textbooks are used, without doubt, there is scope for improvement and English as a foreign language methodology is a rich area to examine for means of improvement. The subjects studied in this paper are year-one and year-two students of the English department at HFLTN. They range in age from seventeen to twenty three and are all non native speakers of English. Their first language is Vietnamese with the same spoken version and written form. They have learnt English as a general course for at least two years in middle school and are carefully selected according to their state and entrance examination results. None of them has ever been to an English speaking country, and all have learnt English through purely formal instruction. One third of the students are from the city and the other two thirds are from the countryside, which is an important factor to be dealt with in Chapter 3.

Though as the name of the college suggests, HFLTC has the responsibility to train foreign language teachers, about two per cent of the graduates often take up non-teaching positions. This motivation will be further considered in Chapter 3.

The learner and the textbook are obviously very important factors in language teaching and learning. Another, no less important, factor which should be mentioned here is the teacher. The majority of teachers of English at HFLTC are quite unfamiliar with the new methods which have flourished in the last two decades. Out of the eighty five English teachers at HFLTC there are only twenty five who have been trained overseas, mostly in the UK and Australia with a few in India, Rumania and the Soviet Union. But hopefully, with the increasing demand for competent English speakers new teaching methods may be introduced into HFLTC in the near future.

Since most of the teaching methods are products of Western experience, a close examination of their relevance to teaching English as a foreign language in Vietnam seems necessary. This paper will examine the psychological and cultural appropriateness of different methods to HFLTC students. Judging from what has been stated so far, methodologies should not be adopted without careful investigation and it is the aim of the next chapter to study the historical development of language teaching

methods before the appropriateness of those methods to HFLTC students is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The results of the whole investigation will suggest practical implications for the teaching of English to year-one and year-two students at HFLTC.

Chapter 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.1 Definition of Terms

For a great number of years, language teachers and linguists have been inventing and using a bewildering variety of terms which describe the activities they engage in. As teachers of English we are sometimes confused and puzzled by such terms as approach and method (Audio-Lingual Approach or Method? Should it be Grammar-Translation Method or Approach?) and also the term technique. We sometimes find that a particular writer talks and writes of the Aural-Oral Approach, the Audio-Lingual Method and Translation Method; the Direct Method and the Mimicry-and-Memorization Method, Pattern-Practice Technique and even the Natural or 'Nature' Method of language pedagogy. W. Rivers (1968) puts almost everything in the same basket. She refers to the Grammar-Translation, the Direct, the Reading and the Audio-Lingual as methods of teaching. Chastain (1976) refers to the Audio-Lingual Approach but the Grammar-Translation Method and at times he uses the term Grammar-Translation procedures. Celce-Murcia (1979) uses both teaching methods and language teaching approaches. Rivers talks of the Grammar-Translation Method but

Celce-Murcia calls it an approach. Bell (1981:30) states: "Neither approach or method have been adequately defined yet". Prator and Celce-Murcia, however do not seem to be differentiating method and approach :

In the course of the century one method has succeeded in another in official favour : Grammar-Translation gave way to the Direct Method, which was in turn followed by the Reading Approach.

(1980:13)

It is useful at this stage for the sake of convenience of our present discussion, to consider the three terms : approach, method and technique.

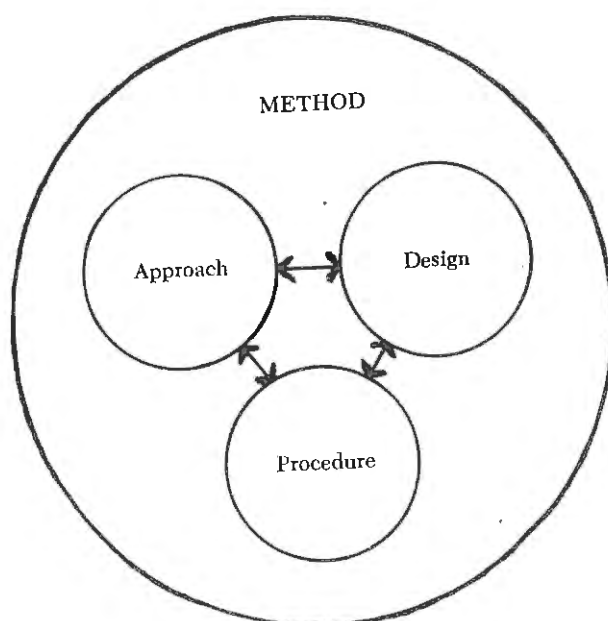
More than twenty years ago, Edward Anthony proposed an analysis of various language teaching practices using the terms approach, method and technique (Anthony: 1963). Anthony arranged these terms in a hierarchy and his explanation for this hierarchical arrangement is as follows. "The organizational key is that technique carries out a method which is consistent with an approach (Anthony: 1965:5) Richards and Rogers prefer method as the umbrella term referring to the specification and interrelation of theory and practice, they have modified Anthony's terminology and speak of Approach, Design and Procedure. These they define as follows :

These terms will be used to label three interrelated elements of organization upon which language teaching practices are founded. The first level, approach, defines those assumptions beliefs and theories about the nature of language and the nature of language learning which operate

as axiomatic constructs or reference points and provide a theoretical foundation for what language teachers ultimately do with learners in classrooms. The second level in the system, Design, specifies the relationship of theories of language and learning to both the form and function of instructional materials and activities in instructional settings. The third level Procedure, comprises the classroom techniques and practices which are consequences of particular approaches and designs.

(Richards and Rodgers, 1982:154)

To illustrate their point of view Richards and Rodgers give the following figure, (1982:155):



Morrow (1981) also has the same viewpoint on terminology. He also agrees that by method is meant some overall means of achieving the general objectives of a course; a method will be realized as the carrying out of a set of procedures or activities. According to him (1981: 59) "A method is thus realized as a set of procedures; the procedures themselves involve the use of specific techniques to ensure their success".

Such a view of method relates theory to practice by focusing on assumptions and on the content and techniques which relate to these assumptions. Approach, Design and Procedure together form a system which is interdependent as shown in the figure. But, as Richards and Rodgers clearly state later in the article, their definition does not imply that the ideal methodological development proceeds rather neatly, from the first level to the third. Methodologies can develop out of any of the three categories. It is possible that one stumbles on a teaching procedure that appears to be successful on some measure and then later develop a design and a theoretical approach which explain and justify the given procedure. As we look at different foreign language teaching methods, we will find this is more often the case than otherwise.

However, in spite of what has been discussed so far about terminology, in the next section traditional terms i.e terms which are familiar in the language teaching world, will be used for the sake of convenience, and these terms will be used throughout the whole paper. That is to say, we will study in turn the Audio-Lingual Approach, the Direct Method, the Grammar-Translation Method, the Cognitive Approach and finally the Communicative Approach.

2.2 The Grammar-Translation Method

We know that the Grammar-Translation Method dominated the profession of foreign language teaching

for a long time. In the past it was the only way to teach a language and today it is still the only method in some countries where English is taught as a foreign language.

This method is always associated with the formal teaching of Latin and Greek which prevailed in Europe in the 19th century when the learning of these two languages was justified as the key to the thought and literature of a great and ancient civilization.

This method was intended to provide the student with a wide literary vocabulary. During the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's the primary purpose of this method was to explore the second language literature, to understand better the first language and to develop the student's mind. Its aim can be summarized as follows :

Grammar-Translation teaching satisfied the desire of the mental "faculties" school of thought and the traditional humanistic orientation, which placed primary emphasis on the belles-lettres of the country

(Chastain, 1976:103)

To achieve these aims, textbooks are prepared with meticulous detail to give a prescriptive description of the grammar of the language, usually prescriptive, based on the traditional categories of Latin and Greek grammars. The preoccupation is with written exercises, especially translation exercises, and lengthy bilingual vocabulary lists. Texts are usually long extracts from

great writers chosen for their intellectual and literary content rather than for the standard of difficulty of the language or their inherent interests for the students. Such textbooks act as the main teaching materials and dominate the work of the teacher who follows this teaching method. His role in the teaching/learning process is as an interpreter explaining what is contained in the textbook to the students. The immediate aim is the completion of all the exercises in each lesson and of all the lessons in the book in a given period of time. The students, meanwhile are expected to learn the grammatical rules stated in the textbook, to recite verb paradigms, to memorize new vocabulary items for each lesson, and eventually to translate the foreign language into their native language. Systematic learning is required since the textbooks are written according to a systematic grammatical sequence. Introduced first are linguistically simple sentences such as There is ... , There are ... or a verb paradigm like the following :

I	}	go	He	}	goes
You			She		
They			It		
We					

By proceeding in this way, Grammar-Translation based textbooks often do not take into account the psychological complexity of language utterances and of course the functions of utterances are ignored.

Grammar-Translation teaching is sometimes called the "traditional" method and consists of the following basic tenets (Heskell, 1978:19) :

1. Read, then translate (into the student's native language).
2. Learn, (often "Copy into your notebook") the rules (again, in the student's native language)
3. Memorize (lists of) vocabulary items and their meaning (in the student's native language).
4. Write sentences (in the target language) using the memorized rules and vocabulary.
5. Read 'good' literature (no matter how stylistically or grammatically complex or archaic) history, and other aspects of the target language culture.

Students who are taught by this method have to learn a great number of vocabulary items with meanings in their mother tongue and of course very many grammar rules with lengthy and boring explanations. Learners are supposed to know a great number of grammatical terms. They are not supposed to speak the language but to be able to analyze simple and complex sentences in the target language. Actually they are taught about the language. The good aspect of this method is that hard-working and intelligent students are very successful in learning a foreign language. They can, after many years, have an intellectual grasp of structure, which may become active if they have an opportunity to live for a period

of time in an area where the language is spoken. But slow learners can get bored quickly as they always find that it is such a tedious task to memorize a great heap of vocabulary items and very puzzling grammar rules. As far as the teacher is concerned, this method is convenient just because he does not have to work very hard in the classroom. Whenever he is tired he can give the students a great deal of learning load right in the classroom : writing, translating etc. The traditional translation exercises are regarded by many linguists as a dangerous occupation in the early stage of learning a foreign language because of the tendency of the students to look for exact equivalents of individual words.

As foreign language education, using this method does not generally intend to produce speakers of the language but rather to provide the broad liberal arts education necessary to produce a well educated person (who could read a foreign language), it proved entirely unsuitable for the world that emerged with World War II. As the need for second language speakers became more widely recognized in America, a widespread reaction against Grammar-Translation Method occurred. Hence the favourable position of the Audio-Lingual Approach which will be studied in the next section.

2.3 The Audio-Lingual Method

According to Chastain (1976:103) the Audio-

Lingual movement originated among experimental psychologists trying to establish their discipline as an exact science and cultural anthropologists and linguists studying unwritten Indian languages. At the beginning this method used to be known as the "Aural-Oral" Method, but as it was found confusing and difficult to pronounce Brooks (1964) of Yale University suggested the term "Audio-Lingual".

The Audio-Lingual Method, which had its theoretical bases in descriptive linguistics and behaviourist psychology was a reaction against the Grammar-Translation Method. It appeared when there was a world-wide awakening to the importance of being able to speak a foreign language and understand it when spoken by a native speaker, and a growing impatience with methods which taught students about a foreign language.

The pioneers of the Audio-Lingual Method based their techniques on the following slogans initiated by W. Moulton :

- Language is speech, not writing.
- A language is a set of habits.
- Teach the language, not about the language.
- A language is what its native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say.
- Languages are different.

(Cited in Rivers, 1968:31)

The following are basic tenets of the Audio-Lingual Method :

1. The ultimate aim of the method is to enable

students to handle language at an unconscious level:

The single paramount fact about language learning is that it concerns not problem solving, but the formation and performance of habits, "... The acquisition of nonthoughtful response is the very core of successful language learning"

(Brooks, 1964:49&62)

2. Teaching the second language without referring to the first language system. The use of the first language is banned from the classroom.

3. Students are conditioned to give correct responses to oral or written stimuli. Students are also expected to established automatic, nonthoughtful responses to language stimuli and are taught to talk without paying attention to the way language is put together. The core of this method is to condition responses by means of dialogue memorization pattern drills.

4. Pattern drills are to be taught without explanation as those who advocate this method believe that knowledge of rules impedes students' progress.

5. Complete explanation as in the Grammar-Translation Method is to be avoided.

6. Procedures of teaching are : Listening, speaking and later reading. Writing comes at the last stage of learning.

Just like other methods of teaching, the Audio-Lingual Method has its own weaknesses and strengths . Students who are taught by this method, are highly motivated

in the classroom. After each lesson they feel that they have achieved something. They can talk a little in the foreign language. They also sense that they are learning a 'real language', a 'living language'. In Delattre's two articles (1949a - 1949b) he stated that with this method :

.... results of high quality - such as private instruction alone has generally produced, can be attained with students working en mass. Yet it is effort-saving to the teacher (it has machines to do the tedious work) and labour saving to the students

And later he added that :

Students came so well prepared to class, their answers were sharp that it took only a few minutes to cover the assignment or check that it was done in the right manner. No excruciating effort on the part of the embarrassed students

Those who have applied this method in their teaching should have found that when students are audio-lingually taught in a mechanical way they often progress like parrots. Due to mechanical drilling, students sometimes produce correct utterances which do not fit in a particular communicative context. As the use of the mother tongue is avoided in the classroom, students feel exasperated as they are forced to guess the meaning of certain lexical items. As a result, the Audio-Lingual Method can be very time-consuming at times. Slow learners often feel disheartened right at the very first lesson.

Since its rise the Audio-Lingual Method has had great influence in language teaching. At HFLTC this method was in fashion for five years from 1960 to 1965. The appropriateness of this method will be discussed in Chapter 4.

2.4 The Direct Method

Towards the end of the last century, people started to think of teaching and learning a foreign language for speaking purposes. A popular method at the turn of the century was the Direct Method which was the outgrowth of a swing away from the traditional methodology employed to teach Latin and Greek. This method was vigorously proposed by Francois Gouin and Wilhelm Vietor, opponents of the classical Grammar-Translation Method.

Gouin seriously questioned the unsuccessful academic routine of the classical Grammar-Translation Method after his own failure trying it. He applied the principles of the growing science of modern psychology to the learning of language, such as the principles of associating speech with appropriate action, of learning through the senses and of centres of interest. He believed that the language was first introduced through the ear, and then reinforced through the eye and hand by reading and writing (Mackey, 1965). Vietor's view towards the nature of language is that language is made up of sounds, not letters therefore speaking should be the first aim, since it is

primary (Childers, 1964); and the sentence was considered the basic unit of speech, thus words should be learned in sentences, not in isolation. He then suggested that language should be learned in a natural way as a child learns its native language; and students should learn grammar inductively (Mackey, 1965) Celce-Murcia and Prator (1979: 3) give the following basic tenets of the Direct Method :

1. Lessons begin with a brief anecdote or dialogue in the target language, and in modern conversational style.
2. The material is first presented orally with actions or pictures.
3. The mother tongue is never, never used (i.e there is no translation)
4. The preferred type of exercise is a series of questions in the target language based on the anecdote or dialogue and is answered in the target language.
5. Grammar is taught inductively; rule generalization comes only after experience.
6. Verbs are used first, and systematically conjugated later.
7. Advanced students read literature for comprehension and pleasure; literary texts are not analyzed grammatically.

The ultimate aim of the Direct Method is to develop students' ability to think in the target language whenever they are talking, reading and writing. Since the emphasis on the foreign language in this method is the medium of instruction in the classroom, correct pronunciation becomes very important, learning is advocated by the direct association of words and phrases. In such a method the teacher takes the place of the book in the Grammar-Translation

Method. He has to be able to make a dialogue or a short story understood by providing explanatory information, often with body language and acting. So the teacher must be very fluent in the target language and very resourceful in order to make meaning clear in a variety of ways without resorting at any time to the use of native language (Rivers, 1968). The students are not as passive as they would be in a Grammar-Translation class, but instead they have to work out the meaning by using as much of their perceptual power as possible, so as to make a direct association between foreign phrase and situation. Rivers (1968:20) states

At its best, the Direct Method provided an exciting and interesting way of learning the foreign language through activities. It proved to be successful in releasing students from the inhibitions all too often associated with speaking in a foreign tongue, particularly at the early stage.

But the Direct Method did not lack critics. For one thing, the theory of natural selection by the child in his first language acquisition did not apply to second language learning. Too many difficulties at early stages could easily cause confusion, errors, waste of time and inaccuracy. Rivers (1968) said that this could be very discouraging for the less talented, as she noted that the members of an average class soon diverged considerably from each other in degree of foreign language acquisition. In addition, this method is demanding for both students and teachers.

Interestingly enough, as we will see later, most methodologies or approaches to language teaching that have developed in the twentieth century reflect the basic tenets of the Direct Method, in whole or in part. Together with the Audio-Lingual Method, the Direct Method was dominant at HFLTC during the period of 1960-1965 but it did not work very well when the college's duty switched to training teachers in 1966 and this was also the time when English teaching in Vietnam began to be influenced by Soviet methodology. In Chapter 4 the Direct Method will be dealt with again in relation to English teaching and learning at HFLTC.

2. 5 The Cognitive Approach

The Audio-Lingual Method, as is pointed out above was found out to be unsatisfactory because the teacher found it impossible to eliminate the mother tongue from the classroom. To avoid explanation of grammar rules was impossible. This method was time-consuming and frustrating to students. To eliminate the mother tongue from the students' mind was also impossible. This led to the rise of Cognitive Approach which was a strong reaction against the Audio-Lingual Method. This reaction can be well illustrated by Hanzelis' statement when he describes the situation in 1967 at the annual meeting of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages ,

Our craft has been stagnating for the last five or six years, and there are signs the Audio-Lingual Method, approved by the majority of American applied linguists, has been losing momentum

(Cited in Chastain 1976:132)

In late 1950's and early 1960's, structural linguistics on which the theory of the Audio-Lingual Method was based, came under attack by Noam Chomsky. Chomsky's idea was that language cannot be scrutinized simply in terms of observable stimuli and responses rather that it is rule governed behaviour. Chastain (1976) also states that, based on the latest research findings in first language acquisition, cognitive theorists conceive of first language learning as an internal process that is creative and rule governed. Like Chomsky cognitive theorists believe that both learning and language the emphasis is on the internal process of the individuals and their contributions to what they learn and how they use what they have learned.

The cognitive theorists and behaviourists differ in their opinions on language learning. The term 'cognitive' implies mental activity, mental process. Cognitive psychologists emphasize the role of the mind in acquiring information. They say that learning is controlled basically by individuals and not by their surroundings. Cognitive theory in language learning moved away from the conditioning models of the behaviourists. It should be pointed out here that the mental process

is quite different from memorizing grammar rules, as in the old Grammar-Translation Method. Nor is it simply the manipulation of examples of grammar rules. One of the leading cognitive theorists is David Asubel whose key concept of cognitive theories of learning is that learning must be meaningful . He thinks that the acquisition of large bodies of knowledge is simply impossible in the absence of the meaningful learning. In other words, all learning, including language learning must involve active mental process in order to be meaningful and that only by means of meaningful learning can students acquire significant amounts of knowledge (Chastain, 1971).

Celce-Murcia and Prator (1979:3) point out a great number of the features of this approach, which can be summarized as follows :

1. There is emphasis on communicative competence and pronunciation is deemphasized.
2. Language acquisition is seen as a rule formation. Deductive explanation of grammar is preferred.
3. The four skills, reading, writing, speaking and listening are viewed as of equal importance.
4. Repetition is discouraged, silence is considered as useful and necessary.
5. There is contextualization of all teaching points through teaching aids. The use of the mother tongue and translation are permitted.

6. Bilingual-bicultural proficiency is seen as an ideal goal.

According to cognitive theories of learning, students should be encouraged to undertake a large cognitive load in learning, rather than imitating without thinking about the utterances they hear. The task of the teacher in a cognitive classroom is to facilitate student acquisition, organization and storage of knowledge rather than to develop automatic, nonthoughtful responses through reinforcement procedures. Various studies in Chastain (1970) have indicated that the Audio-Lingual Method is more successful with students of low verbal ability, while the Cognitive Approach is more successful with students of high verbal ability.

2.6 The Communicative Approach

During the last few decades foreign language teachers have been confronted by a quick succession of structuralism, audio-lingualism, situational teaching etc. and the latest arrival is the quest for communicative competence. According to A. Kerr (1977: 81) the notion of communicative competence is not really a new approach to language teaching. He states that basically the Direct Method of the early twentieth century embraced such an emphasis but it suffered from lack of a grammatical description of language that was sufficiently inclusive to support it, and also from lack of a theory of language

function that paid a sufficient attention to social context. In his article 'Communicative Competence as an Emphasis in Language Teaching' (TEFL/TESOL Newsletter 2,4:2-7) Kerr agrees with Allen and Widdowson, pointing out that for years language teaching has concentrated on teaching the code rather than the use of code and they list a number of criticisms of approaches that do not admit of communicative competence. The proposals (Allen and Widdowson, 1974) for a new syllabus espouse what they call a 'notional' approach which is sometimes referred to as 'Notional/Functional Approach' or Communicative Approach. The Communicative Approach has been developed and advocated as a result of dissatisfaction with the Structural/Situational Approach to the teaching of English as a second or foreign language.

The Communicative Approach differs from other approaches in that it aims at creating communicative acts which are not only grammatically correct but also socially appropriate. Traditional methods like the Grammar-Translation Method or the Structural Method tend to develop the learners' linguistic competence : i.e the ability to produce correct sentences but the Communicative Approach concentrates on fostering the learners' communicative competence. For example, linguistic competence allows a hearer to interpret "I'm cold" as a grammatical sentence with a noun phrase and a verb phrase and a meaning related to the coldness

of the subject. Communicative competence on the other hand, allows him to interpret "I'm cold" as an appropriate or inappropriate utterance which may be a statement of fact or a covert request for a sweater. Richards (1982) also points out that in order to communicate one needs to have not only grammatical competence and communicative competence but also social competence . According to him (1982) :

Grammatical competence - the purely linguistic component of competence - may be regarded as our knowledge of the rules used to create sentences as linguistic units for the coding of propositional meaning. Communicative competence represents our knowledge of how sentences are used to create communicative acts, such as requests, apologies, denials, descriptions and so on. Social competence is our use of the knowledge of the rules of grammatical and communicative competence to realize and maintain social goals and to create harmonious interpersonal relationship (p. 61)

Richards (ibid) warns language teachers that, in the process of communication, although the mechanisms for the realization of social competence are extremely subtle, their effects are profound. Misuse of those mechanisms, also according to Richards, lies at the heart of much communication conflict, communication breakdown or misunderstanding, particularly when speakers of different ethnolinguistic and cultural traditions interact. Recently Coolley and Roach (1984) have presented a similar view of the notion of communication. According to them, to be able to communicate in a foreign language one must have linguistic competence, discourse

competence and social competence. So it is essential that language teachers should understand the notion of communication in the full sense of the word before actually using communication based textbooks. The notion of communication will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

The Communicative Approach may be characterized as follows :

1. Unlike the Grammar-Translation or the Structural Methods which view language in terms of its form, its grammatical and lexical units, the Communicative Approach views language in functional terms as 'notion' realized by formal items of language.

2. Materials and teaching procedures are developed in keeping with the learner's need.

3. The skill(s) the learner needs get practised from the outset; so if the learner's main use for language will be reading, he concentrates on reading skills first and little emphasis is given to speaking.

4. Native language is used for explanation and discussion when useful.

It should be pointed out here that 'communication' does not always mean oral communication as it has been assumed by many language teachers. The dimension of communication have been set out by Hymes following R. Jakobson. Any speech event, Hymes suggests is made up of seven components or factors :

1. The sender (addressee, speaker, writer)

2. The receiver (addressee, listener, reader)
3. a message form
4. a channel
5. a code
6. a topic and
7. a setting.

This means that the listener is taught to communicate in all the four language skills; speaking, listening, writing and reading.

Since its coming into being the Communicative Approach has been widely supported as it involves the learner in communication tasks, problem solving and information seeking. Taught by this approach, the learner is often encouraged to utilize the language creatively as an instrument of learning. The learner's study is thus made meaningful and effective.

The Communicative Approach, which has been causing a revolution in language teaching, has also been subjected to criticism and investigation. Linguists like Widdowson have advocated this approach in principle and have tried to put it into practice in the preparation of teaching materials. As long as fifteen years ago Widdowson began to doubt the traditional Structural Approach of language teaching. He wrote (1971) :

There seems no reason at all why we should not , for example, say 'For this course, we will select undertakings, promises, warnings, definitions,

classification' and so on rather than 'For this course, we will teach the simple present tense, present continuous, count and mass nouns' and so on .

(Cited by Florence,)

But two years later, Widdowson (1973:1-4) modified his views : "I think we ought to be careful of assuming too readily that syllabuses of this kind are universally appropriate".

Since, like other methods, the Communicative Approach originated from the West, which is culturally and socially very different from Vietnam, careful consideration should be taken before it is adopted. However, during these few years foreign language teachers in Vietnam have been discussing this approach, and communication based textbooks, as has been stated in Chapter 1, are becoming more and more familiar with teachers and students in many colleges like HFLTC. More than in any other approaches and methods, in the Communicative Approach the use of authentic materials is always encouraged and favoured, which means that the teacher and the learners are confronted with a great number of cultural problems, as this will be studied in Chapter 4. In addition to this , the approach also involves a number of psychological factors. For these two reasons, the next chapter will examine some cultural and psychological factors related to English learning at HFLTC and Chapter 4 will discuss how appropriate the above discussed methods, approaches are to HFLTC students.

Chapter 3

SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS

RELATED TO ENGLISH LEARNING AT HFLTC

3.1 Factors Influencing Language Learning

It is widely agreed that language learning is a highly complex activity involving a mix of interpersonal, psychological, social and cultural factors. However, language teaching can be greatly improved when teachers have a better understanding of the learner, of the learning process and of the variables that may help or hinder language learning.

To analyze what stimulates successful language learning and what places obstacles in the learner's path to language proficiency, we will examine a number of potentially pertinent factors. In doing so, we will obtain criteria relevant to the review of methodologies discussed in the preceding chapter and will also consider the appropriateness of these methodologies to HFLTC students. Following is an investigation into some psychological and cultural factors that influence language learning in general and how they affect English learning at HFLTC. The discussion comes under two headings : 'Intrinsic Factors' and 'Extrinsic Factors'

3.1.1 Intrinsic Factors

3.1.1.1 Students' Motivation

Most experienced teachers would agree that motivation is a major factor in deciding the learner's failure or success. Motivation has to do with the reasons for learning and with attitudes - attitudes towards the language and towards the group that speak the language as a mother tongue. However, success and motivation are correlated i.e when the learner is successful he is more motivated to learn. If to satisfy our needs, to influence the actions and thoughts of others, to pursue an occupation and our recreation, it is necessary to use a foreign language, then we will learn that foreign language more rapidly and effectively than under any other conditions. Several writers, among them Wilkins (1972) agree that this environmental pressure is a form of motivation which operates mainly among immigrants. This form of motivation is characteristic of language learning but not of language teaching situations. We are here concerned with motivation related to foreign language teaching and learning. Wilkins (1972) points out that 'motivation' is not a general covert term for possibly distinct concepts such as energy, interest and enjoyment, but instead, restricted to the degree of willingness to learn which depends largely on the learner's needs in learning the language.

Psycholinguists have distinguished two major types of motivation which play an important role in

determining how willing the learner is to persevere with the task : Integrative (or integrational) motivation and instrumental motivation. A number of studies (Lambert and Gardner, 1959, Lambert et al., 1963, Anisfield and Lambert 1961) have drawn attention to the major importance of what they call integrative motivation to the learning of foreign languages. They suggest that there are two classes of motivation of language learning, instrumental and integrative. According to Lambert, possible forms of motivation the student can take are :

... an 'instrumental' outlook, reflecting the practical value and advantages of learning a new language and an 'integrative' outlook, reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group

(Gardner and Lambert, 1972:132)

A learner is said to have instrumental motivation when he is learning the language to fulfil an educational requirement, to get a better position, as to read materials in the language. According to Richards (1976) simply learning a language to acquire course credits, or to carry out a limited range of tasks that do not involve the learner in close face-to-face interaction (For example a taxi driver learning enough English to collect tourists at an airport) does not generally lead to a high degree of accomplishment in learning.

Instrumental motivation is commonest among adults who want to use the language in their job or to use on

holiday. At school, in general, the instrumental motivation for language learning (where it is solely concerned with passing of the examinations which open up further educational horizons) is likely to be influenced by the general climate of opinion in the student's home communities about language learning. This may or may not be favourable. The learner may come from a social background which regards language learning as a waste of time and of no practical value. On the other hand, he may come from a social group which accepts language learning as 'culturally' desirable, and the possession of a foreign language as a mark of the educated man.

However, the effect of success and failure, especially at school, are also noteworthy in discussing the learner's motivation to succeed and his motivation to avoid failure. According to Weiner (1972) success and failure at tasks have different effects on motive strength, depending on whether motivation to succeed (M_s) is greater than motivation to avoid failure (M_{af}). The relationship between M_s/M_{af} and success and failure at tasks is shown in Table 1 on page 36 (Gage and Berliner 1979:390)

According to Gage and Berliner (1979) when M_s is greater than M_{af} , success at some tasks will probably result in decreased motivation to work at these tasks but failure at these tasks will result in increased motivation, which seems contrary to common sense

TABLE 1 Change in Motivation to Work at Task as Function of Initial Motivation Pattern and Success or Failure at Task.

	M_{af} greater than M_s	M_s greater than M_{af}
Success	Motivation Enhanced	Motivation Decreased
Failure	Motivation Decreased	Motivation Enhanced

M_s = Motivation to succeed.

M_{af}^s = Motivation to avoid failure

(Source : Adapted from Weiner 1972
by Gage and Berliner)

Another motivation is integrative motivation by which Gardner and Lambert (1959) mean learning a language because the learner wishes to identify himself with or become integrated in the society whose language it is. It has generally been thought that integrative motivation is the more powerful of the two because it implies a desire to integrate with speakers of the target language. Instrumentally oriented students would be expected to acquire the second language, only to the point where their instrumental goals were satisfied. It is likely that when the learner merely wanted to be able to buy food and take public transportation he could achieve those goals with a very low level of proficiency in the second language and if the learner had to use

the target language in his professional life, his level of learning would be much higher. One thing, however, should be made clear here is that the learners' success does not only depend on his motivation, but the motivation in its turn depends on the settings. School students in some countries, instrumentally oriented of course, can be very strongly motivated to learn a foreign language only in order to pass exams. Of course the type of language learned (namely forms as mainly for communicative use) will be directly affected by the type of examination students need to pass.

In settings such as Vietnam, learners who learn English for special purposes have a great deal of instrumental motivation to acquire English in order to be able to deal with English-speaking technical advisors, educators, etc. and they learn the language very fast just because they want to communicate orally, in very simple English with other speakers of English. But, being instrumentally motivated such learners are not likely to achieve a high standard of English because what they need for communication is only the rudiments of grammar and a few common expressions. So early success does not necessarily lead to a high standard of English ultimately.

Learners with integrative motivation view the language as a key to social and cultural enrichment through the opportunities to provide for association

with members of a different culture. Then their goal in learning the language is to be able to use the language as a means of communication and also for acceptance by the people who speak the language. Such motivation often leads to high accomplishment. However, in recent years, according to Brown evidence has begun to accumulate which challenges such a claim. Brown also quotes Braj Kachur (1977) as stating that Indian English is but one example of a variety of Englishes, which, especially in Third World countries where English has become an international language, can be acquired very successful for instrumental reasons alone.

3.1.1.2 Student's Aptitude

As has been discussed in the previous section success in mastering a foreign language depends very much on the learner's motivation. Besides the motivation factor, social psychologists have also found out that whether a student can learn a foreign language very successfully or not also depends on his language aptitude, on his perception of the other ethnolinguistic group, his attitude towards representatives of that group. This section is an attempt to discuss an intrinsic factor influencing foreign language learning : Language aptitude, which Carroll (1973) defines as the 'rate at which persons at the secondary school, university and adult level learn to criterion' (p.5).

How is it that some people can learn a foreign

language quickly while others, given the same opportunity experience utter failure? Does this depend on how language is taught? Partly this is true as when the teacher is equipped with a better language teaching method his students can learn faster. But partly it is not true as in the same group there always exists fast and slow learners. Another answer to the question is the problem of 'motivation', but not all students with the same motivation can have the same accomplishment. Another possible answer to the question is that some people have language aptitude while others do not. Language aptitude is purported to be measured through tests such as Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) used by a number of linguists and socio-psycholinguists (J.B. Carroll 1958, Lambert and Gardner 1972, Pimsleur, 1964). But it is not simple to determine what language aptitude is. According to Wilkins (1978):

Whether their (some people's) language learning potential is the product of innate abilities or the result of their previous learning experience does not matter much. We suppose that neither influence can be reversed and that therefore each individual possesses a stable and permanent ability, to which we give the name 'language aptitude'.

(p. 178)

Assuming that people are not identical in their capacity for learning a foreign language, psycholinguists, like Lambert and Gardner (1972) have investigated this aspect i.e language aptitude, of the nature of second language acquisition. In order to find factors influencing foreign language learning, motivation, general intelligence,

aptitude, Lambert and Gardner selected three bicultural communities, one in Louisiana, one in Maine and one in Connecticut. They used the MLAT to measure aptitude. Their language aptitude measures were based on the five subscales of the Carroll-Sapon MLAT (1959) :

1. Number Learning : to measure both memory and general auditory alertness.

2. Phonetic Script : memory of speech sounds and the ability to associate speech sounds with orthographic symbols.

3. Spelling clues : knowledge of English vocabulary and sound symbol association .

4. Words in Sentence : sensitivity to grammatical structures.

5. Paired Association : rote memory ability.

Their Louisiana study shows that the presence of all the aptitude and intelligence measures indicate that the dominant feature of this factor is verbal intelligence and aptitude for academic study. They also notice that standing on this verbal aptitude dimension is a very good indication of how well a student will achieve in French grammar, vocabulary and reading. Their study also indicates that aptitude for academic study seems to play an essential role in the development of competence in French grammar, vocabulary and reading achievement. In their Connecticut Study, Lambert and Gardner discovered that students of French at high schools demonstrated clearly how language aptitude affects proficiency.

It was also found that grades and progress in reading vocabulary and grammar are presumably based at least in part on linguistic aptitude. In their analysis of their Maine Study Lambert and Gardner note that the aptitude-intelligence measures were not such powerful indicants of achievement in French as they were in the Louisiana setting. Nevertheless, certain MLAT subtests are fairly strong predictors of grades received in French grammar, vocabulary and reading. It should be noted at this point that, according to Brown (1980) while Carroll and Sapon (1959) and Pimsleur (1966) claim to measure global aptitude in their MLAT and Aptitude Battery respectively, it seems more appropriate to say that they predict success in a typical foreign language classroom - which may be somewhat removed from actual language aptitude.

To some extent, these studies have shown that some people have a knack for languages, others have not. While social psychologists take pains to investigate language aptitude, Wilkins (1978) claims that language teachers, without doing any experiments, assume that a student who is good at maths is also good at a foreign language. But is it true that in order to be able to learn a foreign language one has to be good at maths? So far no experiment has been carried out to prove this. But as language teachers, we all find that some of our students can cope easily with the learning material and activities, while some cannot. Some students are good

at certain language skills but poor at other aspects; others are just the opposite. This is because all human beings do not behave or think indentially. Many of the differences in achievement will be due to circumstances such as opportunities, reinforcements and inherent characteristics of the learner. Aptitude may be one of them or a combination of two or three factors. Naiman et al., (1978) in their 'The Good Language Learner' give a model of the second language learner and language learning, in which they also mention language aptitude as a factor in second language learning.

3.1.1.3 Student's Personality

The previous section dealt with the learner's language aptitude, a factor that influences language acquisition a great deal. This section will take into consideration some specific personality factors in human behaviour in relation to second language acquisition. The psychological factors to be discussed here are self-esteem, inhibition, emphathy, extraversion/introversion, field-dependence/field-independence and tolerance of ambiguity.

Self-esteem is the degree of value, a worthiness which an individual ascribes to himself. Schuman (1978) and Brown (1980) describes three aspects of self-esteem 1/the global self-esteem, which refers to self-evaluation in various life situations (education work and social interaction, sports etc.) and various individual characteristics.

(personality, intelligence and attractiveness) 2/ Situational or Specific self-esteem referring to one's appraisal of oneself in certain life situations, such as social interaction, work, education, home etc. and 3/ Task self-esteem, which involves self-evaluation in specific tasks (driving a car, taking a test). How is self-esteem related to second language acquisition? Brown (1980) states that specific self-esteem might refer to second language acquisition in general but task self-esteem might approximately refer to one's self-evaluation of a particular aspect of the learning process : speaking, writing etc. or even a special kind of classroom exercise . A study by Adelaide Heyde (1979) revealed that all three aspects of self-esteem correlated positively with performance in oral production and students with high self-esteem actually performed better in the foreign language. Studies by Brockey and Shore (1976) also discovered that self-esteem appeared to be an important variable in second language acquisition particularly in view of cross culture factors in second language acquisition, as it will be seen in detail later.

Inhibition, sets of defences built to protect the ego, is a concept closely related to self-esteem and of course has to be considered by teachers. Language learners, children or adults, make progress by learning from making mistakes but at the same time, making mistakes can be viewed as a threat to one's ego. As a result the

learner tends to build a certain degree of defence to protect himself. Guiora et al., (1972a) produced one of the few studies in inhibition in relation to second language learning, and the experiments have been highlighted a possibility : the inhibition, the defence, which we place between ourselves and others, can prevent us from communicating in a foreign language.

In addition to self-esteem and inhibition, empathy is another personality factor which needs to be discussed to define the characteristic of a good language learner. The term empathy needs a definition at this point. In general, empathy refers to emotional knowing, it means sharing another person's feelings with the purpose of understanding him. According to Brown (1980) psychologists generally agree with the following definition of empathy by Guiora :

Empathy is a process of comprehending in which a temporary fusion of self object boundaries, as in the earliest pattern of object relation permits an immediate emotional apprehension of the affective experience of another, this sensing being used by the cognitive functions to gain understanding of the other

(Guiora, 1965: 105)

When considered as a personality factor empathy is seen as a stable characteristic that some people have and some people do not have.

The fact that in a second language situation the problem of empathy becomes acute is admitted by some

linguists and psycholinguists like Guiora (1968:261):

We hypothesized that the personal characteristic of empathy plays a significant role in the acquisition of native-like authenticity of pronunciation especially people who can be described as high empathizers, may achieve greater degree of authenticity than those who are low empathizers

In the same study Guiora also points out the relation between the student's empathetic capacity and second language acquisition. Guiora (1968) hypothesizes that individual differences in the threshold level for perception of micro-momentary expressions would reflect corresponding differences in empathetic capacity. This statement suggests that the ability to empathize is a useful characteristic in language learning and is related especially to pronunciation. Oral communication is the case in which it is easier to achieve empathetic communication since there is immediate feedback from the hearer but written communication requires a cognitive empathy in which the writer, without immediate feedback from the reader, must communicate ideas by means of the reader's state of mind and structure of knowledge. As for the implication of the study of empathy Brown (1980: 109-110) concludes :

Probably the most interesting implication of the study of empathy is the need to define empathy cross-culturally to understand how different cultures express empathy

Another factor which also needs some examination

is extraversion/introversion. Language teachers often assume that the extraverts are better language learner than introverts. In a language class the teacher tends to prefer to have more students with an outgoing and talkative personality. But to learn a foreign language often means to learn to speak, to write, to read and to understand, and for some students it may mean to learn to speak and to understand or to learn to read and to write the language. At an early stage extroverts may seem to speak the language better than the introverts, but this does not mean that the 'proficiency' of a more introverted student will be lower. This depends very much on the goal of learning. It can be argued that the reserved learner may be very quiet but he can be a good language learner in the sense that he is good in aural and reading comprehension even though he cannot speak. So it is not clear then, that extraversion/introversion helps or hinders the process of second language acquisition. Schumann (1978) believes that experimental evidence does not even seem to support popular notions about the role of extraversion in second language acquisition. It should be pointed out here that the notions of extraversion/introversion vary from culture to culture, which will be discussed in section 3.2, and these two notions may depend on sex as well. It is hard to say which is ideal for language learning.

3.1.1.4 Learning Style

Learners differ from one another in their way of learning. Some gain a lot from rote learning, some do not; some are more visually oriented, some are orally oriented. Some are quick at giving responses; some are rather slow, but accurate. So obviously learning style is another personality factor that cannot be ignored.

Psychologists and methodologists have paid a lot of attention to the matter of learning style, such as perceptual, affective or cognitive styles. In recent years a lot of research has been carried out in the area of cognitive styles and language learning, though it can be argued that so called cognitive style is purely a cognitive matter, that it mediates between emotion and cognition. Brown (1980) stated that

A person's cognitive style is determined by the way he internalizes his total environment and since that internalization process is strictly cognitive, we find that physical affective and cognitive domains merge in cognitive style

(p. 90)

However, in this paper, by 'cognitive style' we refer to that which involves mental processing. Also according to Brown there are several cognitive styles that are particularly relevant to second language acquisition. Brown (1980) distinguished between two psychological factors which influence second language acquisition : field-dependence/field-independence.

A field-independent person is usually able to perceive a particular, relevant item or factor in a field of distracting items. By contrast a field-dependent person tends to be dependent on the total field such that the parts embedded within the field are not easily perceived. Schumann (1978) believed that :

A learner who is field dependent gets lost in the totality of the visual or auditory stimulus and fails to detect relevant subpatterns and sub-systems. In terms of second language learning we would expect a field independent learner to be able to focus upon the relevant grammatical items of a lesson or conversation, whereas we would expect a field-dependent learner to be distracted by less significant aspects of the linguistic interaction at hand"

(pp. 171)

In relation to second language learning Naiman et al. (1978) think that the more successful learner is the one who is able to focus on those language stimuli relevant to the language learning task at hand and to disregard the inappropriate ones, whereas the less successful language learner will be distracted by irrelevant cues which produce an overall effect of noise. But field-dependence/independence depends on the context Brown (1980) thinks that

In second language learning, then, it may be incorrect to assume that learners should be either field dependent or field independent. It is more likely that persons have general inclinations, but, given a certain context, can exercise a sufficient degree of an appropriate style

(p. 93)

In learning style tolerance/intolerance of ambiguity is another variable which is relevant because language learning is a very complex endeavour in which the learner often has to perform in highly ambiguous situations where the purpose of activity, the topic of the conversation, and the appropriate response are unclear. Again both variables have advantages and disadvantages, and few research findings are available on this issue in second language learning. In their research Naiman et al. (1978) reported :

It has been suggested by Stern (1975) and Rubin (1975) that the ability to tolerate ambiguous language situations is a quality that could promote successful second language learning
(p. 31)

According to Brown (1980) Naiman, Frolich and Stern found that tolerance of ambiguity was only one of two significant factors in predicting the success of their high school learners of French in Toronto.

Rather than giving a complete report of all the research on personality and language learning, this discussion has focused on cognitive issues which will be relevant to our discussion later.

3.1.2 Extrinsic Factors

The previous section examined aspects of the affective domain of second language acquisition: How these very personal variables within oneself and the reflection of that self to other people affect our

communication interaction. This section accounts for some equally important external factors which also affect learning. As language teachers we are faced with factors such as the social context of learning, the cultural differences between two languages involved, the learning environment or the educational context and the teaching method being used. Most of these are largely beyond our control but nevertheless they are important because they can affect, sometimes decide the learner's internal factors in learning. To improve teaching and stimulate better learning these factors should be taken into consideration. This section touches on two major and very crucial factors influencing second language acquisition : the social factor and the learning of another culture which cannot be avoided in learning another language.

3.1.2.1 Social Factors

As language is now defined not only as a means of conveying thought but also as a means of social control, the social influences on its acquisition are numerous.

The child's acquisition of his mother tongue is affected by the conditions under which it takes place. The same influence is also relevant to the learning of a second or foreign language. Any attempt to consider the social context in foreign language learning cannot avoid the immediate social factors arising in the classroom setting and the distant social factors including

political, historical and economic influences.

The classroom itself is a kind of social setting where each pupil has a role, so his success of learning a foreign language is, to some extent, determined by the teacher-pupil relationship and the pupil-pupil relationship. The teacher's love for his job is often an encouragement to his pupils in their learning. According to Chastain (1976) the pupil is also strongly encouraged to learn the language when his teacher is always hopeful and often stresses the career opportunity for school leavers who know a foreign language, or often convinces his students of the practical advantages of foreign language study. The pupil-pupil relationship is no less important. This instance concerns face-saving. No student likes to let his errors be known to his friends, so correction of errors by the group is helpful when there is a non-hostile trusting climate in the classroom. How these two interpersonal relationships influence the learning process will be further discussed in 3.2.

In addition to the classroom features of the learning situation itself, there are factors in the wider social context that influence language learning. Teaching never occurs in a vacuum. Any subject occupies a position in the syllabus in order to meet a need of all or part of the school population. Second language or foreign language teaching is not an exception. As the political, economic and historical conditions change

the course objectives are altered. In a great number of countries it so happens that shifting political economic and social conditions often bring about the change in status of a foreign language or second language. The historical role of Britain in India has made English an important second language in India. The rise and fall of Russian in China were caused by the ties and splits between the two communist parties. The same thing also happened in Vietnam where Russian and Chinese were the most popular foreign languages taught in secondary schools for about twenty years. French and English were not introduced into the school curriculum until 1971. When China began to attack Vietnam in 1979 Chinese became less popular and since the two countries were no longer on good terms, Chinese was dropped from the school curriculum. After 1975 when Vietnam began to develop her relationships with other countries, both capitalist and socialist, social attitudes towards English and French became favourable. Thus historical facts have rather effectively determined the status of foreign or second language taught in various countries.

Political factors are not the only ones that influence second language learning. Other attitudes towards language learning which are characteristic of the society to which the learner belongs are particularly important to the success of language learners. In some countries like Japan, learning English is a special

qualification for certain favoured jobs, but in others like the U.K or the U.S.A learning another language is for many people little more than a hobby. Obviously all the different attitudes, which actually stem from political, economic or historical causes play an important part in the overall achievement in foreign language learning. How social and political factors influence second language learning and choice of methods will be further studied in Chapters 4 & 5.

3.1.2.2 Cultural Factors

Anyone who has either a formal or informal knowledge of linguistics sometimes asks : What is language? There are all sorts of different answers to this question. For some linguists, language is 'form' : sounds and letters and their combination into larger units such as words, utterances, sentences and so forth. For those who are interested in the function rather than the form, language is a set of culturally transmitted behaviour patterns shared by a group of individuals (Greenberg, 1963). Like anthropologists and social psychologists, many linguists nowadays have begun to pay attention to both the form and the function of language. According to Lado (1962) a language is part of the culture of a people and the chief way by which the members of a society communicate. The view that language cannot be separated from culture may be illustrated by the following definition of

language by Cornfield :

Language is a system of human, vocal behaviour culturally required for the purpose of transmitting information. It is a universal, exclusive mark of man

(1966:6)

Cornfield's definition of language is also a comprehensive one in that it recognizes the function of language as a communication process and also calls attention to the socio-psychology of language learning and information theory. In their definitions of language Greenberg and Cornfield draw attention to cultural content in foreign language learning. So in foreign language learning, the cultural element of language is too important to be ignored and language cannot be learned without familiarity with features of the culture it belongs to simply because of the inextricable connection between the two.

At this point it is necessary to point out what is meant by 'culture'. Culture may mean different things to different people. It can be the life style of a population. It may also focus on the major products and history and geography of a nation in general. For some people "Culture is sometimes defined as that training which tends to develop the highest faculties, the imagination, the sense of beauty and the intellectual comprehension" (Rivers, 1966:263). In this paper culture refers to the lifestyle of a people, the patterned ways

of doing things, talking, acting and feeling (Chastain, 1976).

Knowing a second language now no longer means merely having acquired some linguistic competence : the ability to construct grammatically correct sentences; it includes the acquisition of communicative competence i.e the ability to communicate in the second language. There are writers like Richards who are not satisfied with the term 'communicative competence' let alone 'linguistic competence'. In his article 'Talking Across Cultures' (1981) Richards argues that those who are supposed to know a foreign language must have linguistic competence, communicative competence and social competence as well. By social competence he means that the learner is expected to know how to behave in a speech community of speakers of the target language. In other words, he must be familiar with the culture of the native speakers otherwise he will be shocked, or fail to understand native speakers even though he is linguistically competent, as was mentioned in Chapter 2. Let us take a very simple example. When a Vietnamese learner of English comes across the following conversational exchange :

- It's not very nice in the hotel, is it?
 - I've never been there, of course
- (A Town Like Alice. N.Shute, 1950:165)

he would fail to understand it unless he knew that women in Australia were supposed not to go to pubs at the time this was written.

To the extent that language is culturally acquired, one can never learn a second language successfully without learning the culture of that language. An important consideration here is social distance which "refers to the cognitive and affective proximity of two cultures which come into contact within an individual" (Brown, 1980:135) A French person may well learn English with less difficulty than a Vietnamese because the English and the French are culturally similar but the English and the Vietnamese are culturally relatively dissimilar. Right at the beginning stage of learning English a French or a Russian can say 'Good morning', or 'Good afternoon' or whatever form of greeting with comfort but it often takes a Vietnamese learner much longer to utter those forms of greeting in the right situation because in Vietnamese there are no equivalents of 'Good morning' or 'Hello' whereas in French or Russian, the English 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon' have almost exact equivalents.

Culture has such an influence on language learning because it is an integral part of interaction between language and thought. It is also because culture patterns, customs and ways of life are expressed in language and different peoples have different ways of picturing the world. In learning a second language adults often face a huge difficulty because they bring with them an already established set of concepts from their own culture about how language functions and in learning they meet a new

set. The extent to which they succeed in acquiring the underlying concepts of the new culture partly determines whether their choice of utterances is appropriate and governs the likelihood of language learned in the classroom being used outside. For example, in Vietnamese culture it is not very necessary for people to introduce each other. In English classes, students may learn how to carry out introductions, but unless they understand their cultural importance they are not likely to actually use introductions outside the class. So it is clear that people talk to each other not only because they have things to say to each other but also because they have things they want to do, as Richards (1982:62) points out:

Why do people talk to each other? This question may seem obvious as well as trivial, since it is self evident that people talk to each other because they have things they want to say to each other. But it could be more accurate to say that people talk to each other because they have things they want to do. What they say and how they say it reflect their social goals. Speaking is thus desirable as a form of social encounter

Due to cultural differences, in a similar social encounter a Vietnamese and an Australian may have different social goals. The matter of "What they say and how they say it reflect their social goals" will be studied and further illustrated in 3.3 by more examples of different social interactions where Australians and Vietnamese behave differently.

It can be concluded here that anyone decides to

learn a certain language properly, culture is something he cannot avoid in the process. In teaching English, we need to be aware of the cultural assumptions that the students already possess. We also need to be aware of the cultural assumptions that surround the use of English. Functions and structures used to be examined for cultural content, it cannot be assumed that they are neutral. The question of language and culture in conflict will be dealt with in more detail in 3.3

3.2 Psychological Attributes of HFLTC Students

3.2.1 General Considerations

When deciding which method to choose one must consider psychological factors which are very important in language teaching and learning. Some of the many psychological factors influencing language learning in general have already been discussed, for example, language aptitude, extraversion/introversion, field-dependence/independence. Here it is proposed to examine the psychological attributes of HFLTC students as presented in the previous section and how they influence their second language acquisition.

Psychological studies are normally confined to investigation of mental and emotional process and states of individuals. However, as those are largely influenced or forged, by the environment they live in, people from

different cultural backgrounds will be likely to have different psychological characteristics.

The existence of cultural stereotypes may be a typical example of the existence of national identity. A stereotype is actually a kind of prejudice and can be either positive or negative. Brown (1980:125) describes stereotyping as this :

In the bias of our own culture-bound world view, we picture other cultures in an oversimplified manner lumping cultural differences into exaggerated categories and then we view every person in a culture as possessing corresponding stereotypical traits. Thus Americans are all rich, informal, materialistic and overfriendly. Italians are passionate and demonstrative. The British are reserved, polite, thrifty and drink tea. Germans are stubborn, industrious, methodical and drink beer. Orientals are reserved, wise, cunning and 'inscrutable'

A proper evaluation of stereotypes can be helpful in understanding other cultures in general and the differences between two cultures in particular; but negatively biased stereotyping can be very harmful, creating hostility between nations. No matter what the stereotype of the Vietnamese has been the following is not an attempt to set one. Though it is clear from the previous discussion that the Vietnamese are culturally different from Americans, Australians and British, yet it is by no means claimed that all Vietnamese students can be neatly fitted into certain rigid categories.

Teachers of psychology, language teachers and leaders of the Youth Union at HFLTC have been undertaking

various studies concerning issues such as students' motivation, emotion, personality and learning style. Like all investigations using questionnaires, those various studies do not exclude the possibility that subjects might answer what they feel they should answer, or give answers that could please the teacher rather than what they really think or feel.

3.2.2 HFLTC Students' Aptitude

As has been pointed out in 3.1.1.2, some specialists have shown a high correlation between aptitude and achievement as measured by series of popular aptitude tests. But the reliability of these tests remains doubtful.

When it comes to the Vietnamese situation, language aptitude becomes almost impossible to investigate. Though HFLT College has a school for high language aptitude students, never so far has it carried out any tests of intelligence. Students in this school are believed to have high aptitude for language only because they are good at maths and other school subjects in general. According to leaders of HFLTC only about 50% of the enrolled students succeed in learning the foreign languages (French, English and Russian) to the required standard within the time allowed (five years). After working in HFLT College for a number of years, French and Russian experts often come to a conclusion that the Vietnamese students are 'hardworking and diligent'. It

might be pointed out here that in general Vietnamese college students are not very fast language learners. This situation may exist because not many of them have an aptitude for foreign languages and also because they are not very strongly motivated, and also because of the cultural barrier. It could also be that language teaching method need to be improved. These factors will be considered in the following sections.

3.2.3 HFLTC Students' Motivation

Motivation, as has been pointed out earlier, is a crucial variable in foreign language learning. Usually learners in a foreign language learning situation often have different motivations from those of second language learners because of their various needs. Learners like HFLTC students are usually instrumentally-oriented students, though there might be a small number of them who are integratively oriented. Despite the fact that HFLTC exists to train teachers, students have different aims in learning a foreign language. Some wish to become language teachers but some hope to be interpreters, translators or even if they do not wish to work in remote areas, they may take up non-teaching positions like waiters or waitresses. Most of them hope to have a good job in big cities like Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City. After the reunification of Vietnam in 1975 a craze for English and French began to sweep the whole country as

there was a great demand for professionals such as doctors, engineers, technicians to work in Africa and to go on study tours in countries such as Australia, Britain and New Zealand. This, of course, gave students of English and French more interest in learning these languages. Prior to 1971, learning English usually led to a position as a translator, hence the domination of the Grammar-Translation Method at the time. In recent years, however, with more and more people going overseas to study or to work, and with more foreigners coming to Vietnam, students' needs in learning a foreign language have been changing. More and more students of English are learning the language for the purpose of communicating with speakers of English. Thus for a number of students at HFLTC, the motivation for learning English seems to be moving from instrumental towards integrative.

At this point it is important to recall the historical background. In the past almost 90% of students before entering the college did not know what English is and did not want to become teachers of English. No survey was taken but since Vietnam was still at war young people's knowledge of the outside world was limited and their knowledge of English was associated with American involvement in the war. For this reason, a great number of them knew very little about English speaking countries like America, Australia or Britain. The tendency for the HFLTC students to move from instrumental to

towards integrative motivation is shown in results of a survey which was reported by the Youth Union of the College in 1983. Three hundred students, taken at random, were involved and the entire questionnaires were in Vietnamese.

QUESTIONNAIRE 1 (Students were asked after one year's study in late 1983)

	YES	NO
1. Do you like foreign languages?	39%	61%
2. Do you want to become a foreign language teacher?	35%	65%

QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (Students were asked after their first semester at college in early 1983)

Why did you choose HFLTC ?	
1. Because I like foreign languages.	39%
2. Because I took my parents' advice.	5%
3. I hope to get a good job after graduation.	5%
4. I had no other choice.	42%
5. I was good at (English) at school	9%

On the whole, in comparison with the past, the results of these questionnaires indicate that students at HFLTC are becoming more interested in learning foreign languages. The writer's experience suggests that

the number of students who are moving from instrumental motivation to integrative motivation also increases when they have learnt the target language for two or three years. This impression is also that of the leaders of the College.

3.2.4 HFLTC Students' Personality

At a general and superficial level, personality refers to the unique and distinctive characteristics which set one person from another. However, the formation of personal characteristics is a complex one and involve not only individual but also environmental factors. It is true that just as nations differ from one another, so no individual within one nation is precisely like his fellows. But while the variations are many, the majority of Vietnamese or the majority of Australians would tend to share a large body of common ideas and personal traits.

The Vietnamese in general, and students at HFLTC where the majority are women, in particular are often withdrawn, shy and reserved. These qualities can be shown by Questionnaire 3 on page 66. Ninety six year-one students were involved in the questionnaire, which was also an exercise in their textbook

All the items in Questionnaire 3 indicate that most of the students feel it is appropriate to be reserved rather than extraverted. Teachers of psychology at HFLTC

QUESTIONNAIRE 3 Say whether you agree or disagree with the following :

	A	D
1. I like speaking English in the classroom.	55	41
2. I like doing whatever the teacher asks me to.	90	6
3. To speak English in classroom is to show off.	25	71
4. I like to keep quiet in the classroom.	60	36
5. I like asking my friends questions in English.	50	46
6. I obtain most of what I have learnt from books and recordings	7	89
7. I'm afraid to be asked questions in class.	61	35
8. I enjoy talking English with my teachers more than with friends	14	82
9. I like speaking English with more advanced students	20	76
10. I like speaking English with students of my ability	65	31

A = Agree

D = Disagree

also confirm that most of their students tend to avoid attracting attention to themselves. Few of them enjoy being the centre of attention. For these students, talking in front of the whole class is a challenge, and if they fail to perform successfully, they feel they have lost face and can be upset. Item 2 in Questionnaire 3 is a typical example of the obedient nature of Vietnamese students. Ever since primary school, the teacher has been an authority figure, an instructor for the students

instead of being a manager of learning and a language source as well as an instructor. For most school children whatever the teacher says must be done. The issue of teacher-student relationships will be discussed again in 3.2.6. Items 4,6 and 7 reveal that HFLTC students are not very socially extraverted in the classroom. The personal experience of Vietnamese teachers who have visited a number of schools in England and Australia suggests that Vietnamese extraverted students and English or Australian extraverts behave differently. In other words, there is no objective measurement of such things as extraversion, it varies from culture to culture. Thus an extraverted Vietnamese might be considered an introvert by the standards of people who come from an African country.

3.2.5 HELTC Students' Learning Style

A child's learning style is not innate; his early experience and learning environment may well affect his way of learning as Brown (1980:90) pointed out:

A person's cognitive style is determined by the way he internalizes his total environment, and since that internalization process is not strictly cognition we find that physical, affective and cognitive domains merge in cognitive style

For Vietnamese college students, their learning environment and learning experience are a very important condition in forming their learning style, though there must be differences within the group.

Like other college students, HFLTC students and teachers as well are used to deductive method and systematic teaching as defined in Chapter 2. Most students are in favour of being given rules, say of grammar directly rather than working out rules from given data. Memorization of facts is given much more emphasis than open discussion and critical study. Rote learning is quite common. Students are often required to recite their lessons without making any changes and in class the teacher dictates notes for the students to take home and learn. Without anything written down in their books, students tend to feel that they have not learnt anything or been taught properly. While teachers sometimes ask students questions in class to check their knowledge, either calling for volunteers or asking students by name, students rarely ask the teacher questions. They usually prefer to ask their classmates outside of class if there is something they did not understand. Students do not expect to be called on to give opinions in class. To express opinion contrary to that of the teacher is usually regarded as showing a lack of respect.

Things are, however, beginning to change especially at college and university level. HFLTC students sometimes appreciate informal teaching, they like the teacher to tell jokes in class, and they can learn a lot from playing games and thus prefer a less rigid seating arrangement in class, but still want to maintain the discipline.

In spite of its long history in Vietnamese teaching, rote learning is beginning to be disfavoured by HFLTC students because it is widely agreed to be boring and tedious. Instead of arousing the students' interest in learning, it often makes them feel that learning is a burden for them. In spite of what has been mentioned at this point, Vietnamese students are basically trained to learn deductively from the time they enter primary school. Thus, a number of teaching techniques do not seem to suit them, as will be discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

So far no survey concerning tolerance/intolerance of ambiguity has been carried out but most teachers of English at HFLTC agree that their students, especially beginners, are discouraged very soon because they are often annoyed with exceptions in English, for example the lack of congruence between the spelling of a word and its pronunciation. At an intermediate level they begin to get frustrated with English grammar, which contain a great number of exceptions. This is one of the reasons which lead to the dropping out of 3%-4% of students every year. This disadvantages of intolerance ambiguity has been pointed out by Brown :

But clearly intolerance can close the mind too soon, especially if ambiguity is perceived as a threat; the result is a rigid, dogmatic brittle mind that is too narrow to be creative. This may be particularly harmful in second language learning

(1980:95)

There are, of course, students who are tolerant of ambiguity but many, no doubt, find the grammar of English confusing and frustrating.

3.2.6 Teacher-Student Relationship

In addition to the intra-personal characteristics of the HFLTC students mentioned in the previous sections, there is an interpersonal relationship between teacher and student in the Vietnamese context which is worth discussing before we investigate the question of methodological appropriateness.

The Vietnamese teacher-student relationship, considered by Westerners as rigid, distant and very formal has a history of hundreds of years. The earliest students in Vietnam received most of their education from the Buddhist clergy. However, with the Chinese domination of the country, Vietnam absorbed much of their educational system and the later part of the eleventh century marked the beginning of Confucian education in Vietnam. For this reason the teacher-student relationship is undeniably influenced by Confucianism which emphasized the virtues of filial submission and loyalty of the young people, and glorified the ideal nobleman as being always correct, reserved, placid and self-controlled (Fitzgerdd, 1976) Due to the influence of Confucianism, Vietnamese teachers are accorded great respect, reflecting the traditional reverence for learning and knowledge. While the parent

gave the child its body the teacher is considered to give it its mind. Teachers are expected to set a good example in their own lives and conduct. The way the teacher dresses and behaves is considered important because of his influence on the student. In class the teacher always has a complete control. In all secondary schools and a great number of colleges good discipline in the classroom is synonymous with absolute quiet. As a result, the staid, stilted atmosphere of a Latin grammar school often prevails. Although the teacher may not be interfering with the process of the class, a quiet student may not be learning anything. In fact the quiet student may be mentally miles away from the classroom.

Today, the relationship has become less rigid and less formal, as will be seen later, but the influence is still there. Teachers from other countries (France, Russia, Australia etc) who have taught in a much more democratic educational environment find it hard to understand. Visitors to HFLTC can notice that school life there is just like that in the old-fashioned Western primary school, where teachers treated pupils like children and asked them to obey rules. A few items in questionnaire 4 were designed to see what the HFLTC students attitude was towards their teachers. Item 1 shows that very rarely do HFLTC students argue with their teachers, which would often be regarded as conceited and arrogant. Yet, unlike former times,

QUESTIONNAIRE 4 (Administered to 172 year-one and year-two students. The instruction and the statements were in English)

Say whether you agree or disagree with the following	YES	NO
1. I often argue with my teacher about things I'm learning.	12%	98%
2. I like to be taught by older teachers.	45%	55%
3. I believe whatever the teacher says is right.	77%	23%
4. I don't like talking about my mistakes in exercises and exams.	70%	30%
5. When the teacher correct me in class, I tend to remember the point firmly later.	92%	8%

students now seem to have the ability and courage to tell whether their teacher is right or not, as it is shown by item 3. Items 4 and 5 show the students' attitude towards error correction i.e as shown by the result, their attitude is positive. Most students do not mind talking about their mistakes in class. Item 5 shows that they seldom resent their teacher's correction, instead, they feel it helpful. This does not imply that the Vietnamese students are modest, but rather seems to be a sign of their respect for the teacher.

In summary, we can say that the majority of students at HFLTC tend to be shy and withdrawn in

comparison with Australian students. They have become more extraverted than they used to be. Obviously they prefer a moderate amount of pressure. As a tradition they favour deductive and systematic teaching, like informal teaching but still wish to retain discipline. Like every Vietnamese they respect teachers highly and accept error correction readily.

3.3 English Learning and Cultural Problems Faced by HFLTC Students

The previous section dealt with one facet of the affective domain of second language acquisition of HFLTC students i.e the intrinsic side of affectivity, personality factors within a person that contribute in some way to the success or failure of their English learning. This section will treat another facet encompassing an extrinsic factor - a sociocultural variable that emerges as students at HFLTC bring not just two languages into contact, but two cultures and in some sense must learn English culture along with the English language. It was pointed out in section 3.1.2.2 that anyone who decides to learn a certain language properly, culture is something he cannot avoid in the process and especially for Vietnamese learners of English cultural problems are too big to be ignored because, as shown in 3.1.2.2

Vietnam is culturally relatively dissimilar to America or Britain. The discussion in this section will help to point out the appropriateness of methodologies, in terms of culture, to HFLTC students, which will be examined in more detail in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

3.3.1 Historical Background

The culture and civilization of Vietnam has been greatly influenced by China. Direct Chinese rule ended in AD 938 after a thousand of years of control, and repeated Chinese efforts to reimpose domination were fiercely resisted. The Vietnamese elite, however, continued to look to China for cultural inspiration. From China, Vietnam acquired Buddhism and the Confucian concepts of filial piety and respect for age. Important as the Chinese influence was, all borrowings passed through the prism of Vietnamese culture. Vietnamese culture has also been influenced by the West as well because of the eighty-five years of the French domination and the American in the South for twenty years. As a result, many Vietnamese having extensive contact with the French or Americans began to understand French and American ways and even adopted some of them for their own use.

At the present, the Vietnamese culture is being influenced by cultures of other peoples of the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, as is pointed

by Phong Hien :

"In its present cause of the building of the country and the development of new-type men Vietnam is benefiting from scientific, philosophical and cultural achievements gained by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Thanks to culture, the so-called 'Russian soul' have become familiar to the Vietnamese since a long time ago. Through literature and films the Vietnamese have had chances to get themselves acquainted with "the Soviet man". Deep in their heart Red Square, the Volga, Leningrad etc. always sound sweet and lovely just like Ba Dinh Square, Cuu Long River, Dien Bien Phu etc.

(1982:90)

In spite of what has been said so far about the influences from other socialist countries, it will be a long time before these influences are of comparable significance to those from China which once dominated Vietnam for a thousand years. There are thousands of ordinary folk whose customs and culture have not changed in generation. This tendency to follow traditional ways of course, contributes to the problem of social distance in the process of foreign language learning.

3.3.2 Vietnamese Speakers of English and Their Problems in Learning British Culture

3.3.2.1 General Considerations

As language teachers we need to be aware that in the classroom, we are presenting the students with at least three tasks. The students have to acquire a new syntax, a new lexis, and a new set of cultural concepts.

there is no lack of teachers who think what they do in the classroom is to teach the students some fundamental language structures but not to teach another culture. Such an incorrect viewpoint is criticized by Rivers:

Some teachers will object that they do not consider their task to be the development of understanding of the attitudes and ways of life of another people, that their sole purpose in the classroom is to teach their students the fundamental structure of another language and develop skills of comprehension and language use both in speech and writing. Such teachers prefer to ignore the fact that a language cannot be separated completely from the culture in which it is deeply embedded. Any authentic use of the language, any reading of original texts (as apposed to those fabricated for classroom use) any listening to the utterances of native speakers will introduce cultural concomitants into classroom whether the teacher is conscious of them or not

(1968:262)

Frequently it is the cultural concept that presents the most difficulty. Concepts students meet in English may not be expressed at all in their own language or they may be expressed in a quite different way. For example, the English 'Mr.', 'Hello', 'Goodbye', 'brother' have no equivalents in Vietnamese. Similarly concepts common in their own language may have no equivalent in English. Greetings in English for example, do not contain the subtleties of address found in Vietnamese that convey formality, intimacy or respect. So if the teacher does not understand the difficulty of the tasks that confronts students and the cultural confusion that can arise, students may retreat into

passivity, unable to articulate their frustration. It sometimes happens that some HFLTC students have to give up English after the very first few lessons, saying poignantly "I don't understand English. For me, it's like a duck trying to talk to chicken".

Owing to social distance, HFLTC students often find that it is the cultural concepts that present the biggest trouble in their learning. It is necessary to repeat that half the students at HFLTC are from the countryside, which means that before going to college, they were out of contact with civilization of the modern world. Some of them for example, did not know what television was before coming to the city. These people, as has been discussed in the previous section, are often shy and withdrawn and feel inferior. For this reason, simple texts for teaching may sound odd from the point of view of teaching English as communication, but for many HFLTC students they may be still relevant. The following example may seem strange to a native speaker :

This is Mr. Smith's sitting-room. This is the television and that is the fireplace. This is the sofa.....

It must be realized, however, that the Vietnamese notions of a 'sitting-room', a 'sofa' or a 'fireplace' are not the same as those in English. Looking at a sitting-room in an English home many of them may not be able to identify the object or furniture. This question

of the relevance of methodology will be studied in Chapter 4.

For students at HFLTC, the very first and very difficult cultural problems they meet with the moment they enter the classroom is how to address their teacher how to greet each other and to do introductions. They often hesitate to address their teacher as Mr/Miss or Mrs as Vietnamese teachers are called 'thầy' (father) for a male and 'cô' for a female. To address each other by the given name is also a problem for them because in their culture, friends, not very close, call each other 'ban' (friend) or 'đồng chí' (comrade), which has some political flavour. So the choice of language functions or communicative acts for teaching has to take the cultural aspect into consideration. The use of Western textbooks at HFLTC sometimes can be a failure as much of the traditional instruction ignores students' identities. For example, in most of textbooks used at the college, students are always taught to be polite (giving a polite request, expressing apologies, greeting people formally etc) but the trouble is that it is more appropriate to talk about respect than politeness in Vietnamese, since the choice of language depends more on whom is being spoken to than the situation itself. This contrasts with English, where the choice of language is determined more by the degree of disruption caused to the other person

than by their age or status. Respect in Vietnamese culture is indicated in a number of ways, one of the most important being by the correct choice of titles used by a speaker to refer to both himself and others. Indeed, the use of an inappropriate title can be taken as an insult. Functions like enquiries, apologies and request can also be made more polite by adding extra words but only when speaking to other people or people of higher status. These include words and phrases that translate as 'please', 'ask', 'please ask', 'beg' etc. Respect is also conveyed by intonation and general bearing. It is disrespectful to be assertive when speaking to someone older or of higher status or to disagree openly with them. These kinds of consideration affect classroom interaction to such a degree that HFLTC students always feel uncomfortable speaking English and sometimes they tend to add a Vietnamese word or phrase to show respect. This is also one of the many barriers to their perception of English culture.

In addition to the problem of politeness and respect there are other barriers like harmony and avoidance of conflict or display of feeling which cannot be ignored. Harmony and avoidance of conflict in Vietnamese culture are valued. People try to avoid argument to the extent that they may verbally express agreement while privately disagreeing. Public criticism or disagreement can cause a loss of face, especially if it is made in a loud and impatient tone of voice. When

someone feels that he has been ashamed and lost face, he may react passionately and withdrawn from the situation or relationship. That is why Westerners or Europeans teaching English to Vietnamese students do not often get feedback from them.

As language is now treated not only as a system for the coding of cognitive and propositional meaning in the individual but also as a mechanism for the creation of social interaction between two or more speakers (Richards, 1980) it is essential to have more investigation of the Vietnamese and Australian different ways of behaviours in certain social interactions, which is determined by each culture.

One of the most striking differences between the two cultures is the way people express thanks. The Vietnamese for 'Thank you' is 'Cám ơn' which is much less frequently used in everyday life. In the first place, among close friends or relatives and especially among family members, verbally expressing thanks for such things as serving a cup of tea or passing the dishes on the table where little debt is involved, is not always desirable in Vietnam, because expressing thanks to someone indicates a distance or a gap in the relationship. Secondly, for a similar reason, even if there is a big debt involved, for instance when a friend gives a present, the recipient is obliged to express thanks, and 'cám ơn' is only one of the many alternatives one of which is

"Việc gì cậu phải thế, khách khí quá". (You shouldn't have done that. Why are you so polite?). In contrast Australians are heard saying "Thank you" whenever a debt, no matter how small, is involved. For example, in Australia when a librarian hands back a student his ID card both the student and the librarian say 'Thank you' to each other. In the same situation, in Vietnamese culture, the librarian and the student do not normally say anything. In addition to "Thank you" other polite expressions such as "Excuse me", "Sorry", "Please" etc. are constantly used in everyday life of the English native speakers and they are markers of a polite society. The Vietnamese have their own ways of performing polite functions(by general bearing, or just a smile or by expressions showing politeness like "Cháu xin bác" = Can I have it, Uncle (Uttered by a child when given a gift by an adult)). So the difficulties of adjusting another pattern of behaviour takes time and effort.

Giving advice is also worth mentioning here. As has been pointed out at an earlier point, Australians value privacy, so when it comes to giving advice they are likely to be tentative. "I think you should....", "It might be a good idea to...", "What I think you should do is ..." etc. are among those very common ways of giving advice in English. In this way the speaker wishes to give the listener more freedom of choice and he does not think it is a good idea to impose one's own

will upon another and normally it is up to the listener to take the advice seriously or not. By contrast the way the Vietnamese give advice sometimes is like the way the Australians give orders or warnings : "Do this and don't do that"; "You must do this", "You'd better do that" etc. It is relevant to give an example at this point. Once an American professor came to the Australian National University to give a lecture on "Psycholinguistics and Second Language Acquisition", which was related to the writer's field study report, but although the supervisor knew that it was relevant, she did not give me a piece of advice. In a similar context, in the Vietnamese situation, the supervisor would come to her student and say something like "You musn't miss the lecture" and the student would take it very seriously.

Another possible explanation for the difference is that giving advice in Vietnamese culture is often associated with respect i.e age and status. Generally older people or people of higher status would be reluctant to seek advice from younger people or people of lower status. Younger and subordinate people would usually also be reluctant to advise their elders or superiors.

Another problem that Vietnamese speakers of English often have in learning and in engaging in social interaction with English native speakers is offering food and drinks. In Vietnamese culture, when a visitor comes the host often shows his hospitality by offering

a drink which can be anything like a drink of water or tea without asking him whether he likes tea or coffee and often insists on the visitor taking it, the more the better. At a dinner table, the host always insists on the guests drinking and eating even if they say that they have had enough. When someone else happens to come in he is asked to join the meal or sit down just for a drink. In such situations the guests usually have to refuse several times before the host stops insisting. The assumption behind it is that the host knows the guests are often being polite and do not eat or drink enough.

However, usually Australians or English people may find such gestures strange. Personal experience and observation show that in an Australian or Scottish family whenever a visitor comes, be it a friend or even the host's father or mother, the host is likely to ask: "Would you like anything to drink? Tea, or coffee?" and if the visitor says "No, thanks" the host never insists. Being unaccustomed to Australian and English norms of behaviour, many of the Vietnamese students at CCAE, when invited to dinner, may not drink or eat enough. By the same token, when dining with Vietnamese students, Australians often find themselves overeating and sometimes feel uncomfortable.

Offering food and drinks, giving advice and expressing thanks are just a few of the many examples of great differences between the two cultures which can

cause trouble for Vietnamese students in learning English. They also show that not to know how to behave in such social interaction can sometimes cause communication conflict, communication breakdown or misunderstanding.

In addition to spoken language non-verbal language can easily cause a lot of misunderstanding. Unlike English culture, in Vietnamese culture the open display of feelings is discouraged and Vietnamese people's smiling, for example is used to mask a variety of reactions. It can be used to cover anger embarrassment, lack of understanding, disappointment or even unhappiness. For the Vietnamese an open display of feeling is often regarded as a sign of lack of self-control and discipline. For boys and girls to walk arm in arm is regarded as strange. In Vietnamese culture facial expressions indicating negative emotions are usually controlled and so too are strong expressions of positive emotions. Students sometimes nod yes to the teacher's questions whether they understand them or not, and the teacher may not realize that the nod could be out of politeness and not out of understanding.

As language teachers, we must be sensitive to our students' cultural distinctions and values. In class as we teach the appropriate manner to get round in a another culture, we (and our students) can learn the appropriate ways to react in other cultures. But the trouble is :

Human beings have a psychological need to categorize, classify and to order their thinking. They tend to describe and classify new experiences into old categories based on already learned and perceived knowledge. Even though we can consider open-mindedness to be a virtue in our culture, and it is a virtue in many cultures. It is indeed very difficult for us to be open-minded because our filters or perception of the world of reality vary from culture to culture, even from individual to individual. We generalize and categorize, we prejudice and predetermine in order to make sense of, or give reason to our way of doing things and seeing things

(G.J. Trifonovitch, 1973:553)

3.3.2.2 Differences Between English and Vietnamese Cultures in Doing Certain Speech Acts

The previous part of this discussion already gave some insight into Vietnamese culture and how it influences Vietnamese students' learning English. It is essential at this point to show some differences between English and Vietnamese cultures in doing certain speech acts and in some social interactions so that later we can tackle the problem of choosing an appropriate methodology to HFLTC students.

There is a big contrast in the way the Vietnamese people and Australian or English people look at life. The Vietnamese people treasure harmony and unity. As a result commonality and representativeness are considered important, personal attributes and uniqueness and individuality are regarded as eccentric. In contrast, individuality is much more cherished in many English speaking countries like Australia. Many people in Vietnam always

want to know what others are doing and often offer to help others when they are in trouble. But Americans or Australians value privacy highly. Inevitably those differences in personal relations influence the way people behave or do certain speech acts in social interaction. The following list summarizes communicative acts, that the Vietnamese may consider to involve more threat to face than the Australian or British in similar contexts. That is they perceive weightiness of threat in doing these acts, thus they may either refrain from doing them or appear hesitant and over apologetic in doing them:

1. Declining friendly offers, invitations even though accepting them would be contrary to one's own wish, or would involve much trouble.

2. Accepting compliments from others about one's accomplishment, personality etc.

3. Expressing one's opinions on such occasions as when being offered a choice, eg. being offered a choice of selecting from different kinds of drinks at parties.

4. Asking for what one wants or needs at friend's house such as more drinks from the host.

5. Attracting attention when many people are present in order to join the conversation.

Following is a list of speech acts that may involve less threat to face in Vietnamese culture, but may be quite face threatening to the English native speakers :

1. Giving advice or suggestions when they have not been asked for. E.g advising somebody to put on some more clothes etc.,

2. Insisting on guests having more food, drink when they have indicated that they have had enough.

3. Not offering guests, or friends etc. a choice, that is making decisions for them without first consulting them e.g offering drinks without asking what they would like.

4. Commenting negatively on the choice somebody has made e.g. colour of a shirt, the hairstyle etc.

5. Talking about money matters e.g. asking how much somebody earns.

6. Talking about other personal matters (asking somebody's job, age. Interested in knowing somebody's scores for exams etc.)

7. Treating children, people of lower status, with too much assumed authority e.g not apologizing for the wrong done to children, using children's things without asking for permission which would otherwise have been done with adults.

8. Accepting or requesting a service (even of very small, with close friends. E.g for giving a cup of tea, passing a book) without expressing thanks.

Clearly, the face threatening nature of various acts differs a great deal in the two cultures, Vietnamese and English or Australian. The above lists are not, of course, exhaustive. There are hundred of other speech acts Vietnamese people do differently from the Australians. So as language teachers, we should always bear in mind that any authentic use of the language will introduce cultural

concomittants into the classroom whether the teacher is conscious of them or not, and whenever the teacher enters the classroom, culture arrives .

This section has discussed the subtlety and complexity of the Vietnamese culture and also has pointed out some of HFLTC students' problems caused by differences in culture. The section has also anticipated many of the cultural factors to be taken into consideration when it comes to discussing the question of appropriateness of methodologies to HFLTC students. In summary, Chapter 3 has dealt with some major psychological and cultural factors which cannot be avoided in deciding appropriateness of methodologies to HFLTC students to be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

APPROPRIATENESS OF METHODOLOGIES

TO HFLTC STUDENTS

The previous chapter focused on a number of social and psychological and cultural factors in second language acquisition and how they influence the process of learning English of speakers of Vietnamese in general and of HFLTC students in specific. This chapter will concentrate on the cultural and psychological appropriateness of methodologies mentioned in Chapter 2 to the characteristics of HFLTC students, in relation to the information presented in Chapter 3. But before we actually study each method or approach in turn it is necessary at this point to discuss briefly the distinction between the three expressions which have gained wide acceptance: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) ; Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) because many of the features of TEFL, TESL and TESOL are closely related to the five-year course of English at HFLTC which will be discussed in later sections.

4.1 TEFL, TESL and TESOL

As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the majority of

colleges and universities in Vietnam have been using commercially produced English textbooks, often without modification. The simple explanation is that they are best books available. But teachers should be reminded that there is no method immutable, universal or eternal and it is their responsibility to make the necessary modification of textbooks and make their work more effective. One of the clearest and most significant examples of the necessity of such modification stems from the differences between the objectives of teaching English as a second or teaching English as a foreign language.

According to Prator (1966), the first phrase to gain currency in the USA was "teachers of English as a foreign language", but it was soon realized that people like those from the Philippines or Nigeria, who receive most of their education through the medium of English and use it extensively in their everyday life even though it is not their mother tongue, do not like to think of the language as something foreign or alien to their culture. Also according to Prator (ibid) the term "Teachers of English as a Second Language" was proposed to meet this objection and soon became very widely used.

In the UK, TEFL and TESL are very clearly differentiated. By TESOL is meant English teaching in systems where English is the partial or universal medium of instruction of other subjects in the curriculum. On the other hand, TEFL refers to systems where instruction in

other subjects is not normally given in English. In this sense English is typically taught as a second language to Africans in Kenya or to Spanish-speaking children in the American Southwest. This distinction is thus based on the uses to which the language is to be put ultimately. The British distinction between TEFL and TESL is very familiar to Vietnamese teachers of English. However, in the USA, TEFL usually refers to teaching English overseas to foreigners who are more or less temporary residents in the USA and TESL, on the other hand, is the teaching of English to non-native speakers who are more or less permanent residents in the USA. In Australia all the three terms, TEFL, TESL and TESOL are commonly known .

Though the two names have gained relatively permanent acceptance another name, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) was suggested and has been used for more than twenty years. As the expression implies, TESOL encompasses both TESL and TEFL. Although according to Croft (1980) the two terms TESL and TEFL seem to be on decline as TESOL was found to be more satisfactory, sometimes it is still necessary to make a distinction between TEFL and TESL because as has been pointed out earlier, the aims and objectives of learning English as a foreign language or a second language are often greatly different. These objectives affect the teaching method as well as teaching materials.

4.2 The Grammar-Translation Method

When the Audio-Lingual Method proved to be a failure after five years of trial at HFLTC (1958-1963), the Grammar-Translation Method was the only method used from 1963 to 1980. If one looks back into the history of English teaching and learning at HFLTC one will find that this method, which was dominant for seventeen years, was deemed to best and the most appropriate for these reasons : Firstly, this method satisfied the students' need to read English literature and placed primary emphasis on the belles lettres of the country. Secondly, foreign language teachers strongly believe, and they still do now that students' mental faculties should be developed and one of the ways to do this was to learn another culture through a foreign language. During this long period of time the highest purpose in English teaching and learning at HFLTC was considered to be the access to the best thought of a foreign nation, its literature and culture.

As this method aims at enabling students to read literary classics, general knowledge is needed. In this method the teacher is often dominant and the students often occupy a passive role, which seems to suit many of HFLTC students, who as the previous study showed, sometimes depend entirely on the teacher who provides all of the leadership in learning. Another reason for this method to suit, in some degree, many of HFLTC students is that its systematic way of teaching grammar enables the

students to observe their progress in learning, which is encouraging and will often keep their motivation high.

So far this section has concentrated on the 'How' and 'Why' of appropriateness of the Grammar-Translation Method in the Vietnamese situation. But this method is beginning to cause problems for both teachers and students. First because translation has at times been misused in teaching. When it comes to translation, many teachers and most students have the habit of word for word translation. Let us take the following simple conversational exchange for an example :

LECTURER : Hi, Paul.
STUDENT : Hello, Rob.

When translated into Vietnamese this would sound totally ridiculous as in the Vietnamese culture, lecturers and teachers are never addressed by students by their given name, no matter how well they are known to their students. This is obviously due to differences in the two cultures, which was mentioned in the previous chapter. Another reason that makes the Grammar-Translation Method no longer appropriate in many ways to HFLTC students is that since 1980 those students, as described in Chapter 1, are now familiar with textbooks like Mainline Skills, Kernel Lessons and Strategies where translation is of little help in many cases. How can the student translate the following reminder, for example :



which are obviously 'sorta' advertising language which is very common in British popular papers like 'The Sun'

4.3 The Direct Method

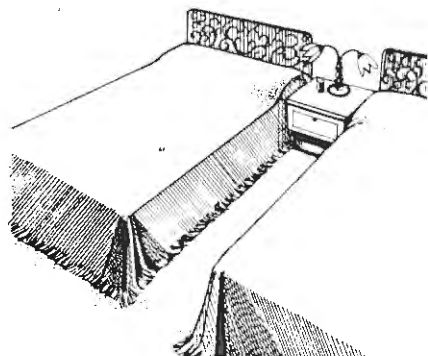
This method aims at developing students' ability to think in the target language while talking, reading and writing and in comparison with the Grammar-Translation Method, it provides an exciting and interesting way of learning the foreign language through activity. Rivers (1966) states that the Direct Method proves to be successful in releasing students from the inhibitions all too often associated with speaking in the foreign language particularly at the early stages. But thinking in the target language does not occur until a certain level of language has been reached, usually a fairly advanced one. If the learner thinks in the target language without translating the given signals into his mother tongue, then he must be quite competent in the receptive

skills. Many language teachers and psychologists like Gouin or Nietor (1972) agree that receptive skills (listening and reading) often go before the productive skills (speaking and writing) thus, listening cannot be ignored if speaking is to be achieved.

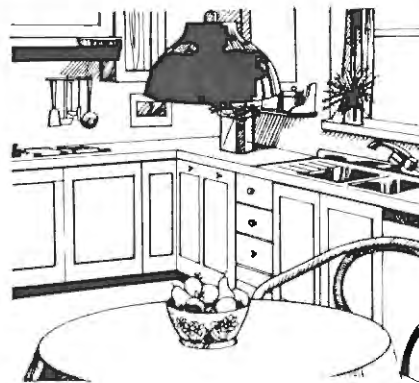
Since the students are exposed to the target language only, there is a risk of causing tension and anxiety, especially at the beginning stage. As shown in Chapter 3, most students feel that they gain little when they are worried. Take, for example, the drill on page 96, which is employed not only by Direct Method textbooks but also by textbooks based on other methods or approaches as well. In these drills the students are given six illustrations for a use of the Past Perfect Passive in English. For Vietnamese learners these are of little help as in their mother tongue the verb does not have a category of tense. In addition to drills and illustration they need deductive explanation of grammar.

As was pointed out in Chapter 3, in the Direct Method the preferred exercise type is a series of questions in the target language based on a dialogue, and answered in the target language. This means that students are encouraged to speak and perform in front of their peers. Inhibition will be a barrier and to have an extraverted personality is an advantage. As was pointed out in Chapter 3, HFLTC students do not enjoy being the centre of attention and for many of them

Last week Doris Broughton went to visit her sister. When she got back home she thought she would have to do a lot of housework, but she found that . . .



the beds had been made.



the kitchen . . . cleaned.



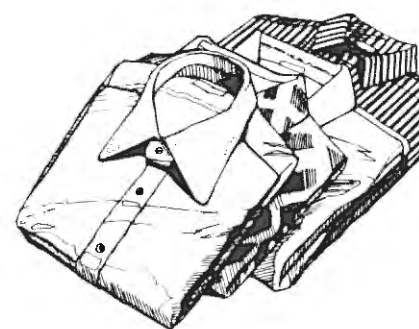
the washing-up



the flowers



the shopping



even Jim's shirts

talking in front of the class is a challenge. This means that the Direct Method does not always work well with this type of students. A combination of the Audio-Lingual and the Direct Methods was applied at HFLTC for five years and proved to be unsuitable.

As the Direct Method aims at developing the learners' ability to think in the target language, the culture of the target language is emphasized i.e the learners have to learn two things at the same time: the language itself and the culture. As was pointed out in Chapter 3, for HFLTC students, culture is such a big problem that it is not easy for them to learn both the language and the culture without the help of their mother tongue. Learning, at least in part, through the medium of the mother tongue thus seems more likely to encourage students because their introduction to the target culture can be related to their existing knowledge.

Taught by the Direct Method, learners' high tolerance of ambiguity is desirable, especially at the beginning stage because it is not easy for adults, and sometimes impossible, to link the new symbols to the correct concepts without the help of their native language. In this they differ from infants whose task in first language acquisition is establishing new concepts together with the language. In second language learning, adults often have to abandon their old-established concept-symbol links when they are using the foreign language.

4.4 The Audio-Lingual Method

The Audio-Lingual Method was heavily influenced by the ideas of experimental psychologists like Pavlov

and Skinner and is closely linked with two schools : Structural Linguistics and Behaviourable Psychology. Linguists like Kenneth, Pike, Charles and Fries and others experienced in working with American Indian languages and Bible translation helped to develop an Audio-Lingual Method to language teaching. According to Heskell (1978) this methodology was the result of resurrection of the Direct Method.

As discussed in Chapter 2, this method makes considerable demands on both the teacher and the students. Typical pattern drills like the following :

TEACHER : John has written the letter.

STUDENT : He wrote it yesterday.

TEACHER : John has seen the film.

STUDENT : He saw it yesterday

require quick responses. The dialogue becomes the main form of practice in the classroom and is chosen as the principal means of introducing new content because the Audio-Lingual theorists place primary emphasis in elementary courses on the oral aspect of language. This means that students must constantly perform in front of the class. Such a learning situation challenges the students' self-esteem, which is quite high among HFLTC students as shown by questionnaires in Chapter 3. Those HFLTC students who are city born and city bred, are confident and tend to be less inhibited and can perform much better than those from the countryside.

With the mechanical way of drilling, students' personality also counts a great deal. In spite of drilling in chorus, those Vietnamese students who are extraverted usually seize more opportunities to speak, which of course cuts down the chances for introverted students. Like the Direct Method, in the Audio-Lingual Method, there is little or no grammatical explanation. Grammar is taught by inductive analogy rather than deductive explanation, which requires tolerance of ambiguity as well as considerable analytical ability. It is obviously an advantage to be field-independent but Vietnam, an authoritarian society, produces more field-dependent people and by contrast industrialized countries like Australia produce more field-independent persons, as was pointed out by Brown (1980:81) :

Cross culturally, the extent of development of a field-independent style as children mature is a factor of the type of society and home in which the child is reared. Authoritarian or agrarian societies, which are usually highly socialized and utilize strict rearing practices, tend to produce more field-dependence. A democratic, industrialized, competitive society with freer rearing norms tends to produce more field-independent persons

As was shown in 3.2.6 HFLTC students favour deductive teaching. For this reason, this method does not suit a number of them.

Another characteristic of the Audio-Lingual Method is that the dialogue is often linguistically and culturally authentic. Linguistic authenticity means

that utterances in the dialogue are to be true to native speech patterns. Cultural authenticity means that the conversation is to take place in the second language culture and be appropriate to the dialogue situation. As has been discussed in Chapter 3, cultural authenticity will of course cause many difficulties for HFLTC students. A question and answer in a very simple conversational exchange like the following :

TEACHER : How are you today ?
STUDENT : I'm fine. Thanks. And you?
TEACHER : Not too bad, thanks.

often take HFLTC students a long time to use in appropriate situations as in their culture it is not necessary to enquire after someone's health in normal everyday conversation. To thank someone in such situations is less necessary. Owing to social distance, the more culturally authentic the dialogue or pattern drills are, the more difficult it is for HFLTC students to learn English, especially at the beginning stage.

4.5 The Communicative Approach

The previous sections have concentrated on methods and approaches influenced by two extremely influential theories of language - Structural Linguistics and Transformational-Generative Linguistics which are considered to be formalist in their attitude to the nature of language. This section will be studying the

the notional or communicative approach to language teaching, the outgrowth of which came from the influence of a functionalist view of language which considers that just as a single linguistic form can express a number of functions, so also can a communicative function be expressed by a number of linguistic forms. For example a straightforward sentence such as "Why don't you close the door?" can be a question, a suggestion, or an order. By the same token, the speaker who wants somebody to close the door has many linguistic options including 'Close the door, please', 'Would you mind closing the door?' and 'You left the door open'.

The Communicative Approach differs from the previously discussed methods in that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining these into a more fully communicative view. With the Grammar-Translation Method or the Direct Method, the teacher is an instructor and the learners depend entirely on him for leadership, but with the Communicative Approach, the teacher is expected to be an instructor, a class manager, and an advisor as well. As this approach involves a lot of pair work and group work, the teacher's function seems less dominant. He can offer the kind of stimulus and experience that the processes inside the learner seem to require but exerts no direct control over him. In other words, in this approach the learner controls what he is learning

with the help of his teacher. As described in Chapter 2, such a way of learning often requires inductive thinking, since the students may not be given deductive explanation of grammatical rules. Also an extremely high tolerance of ambiguity would be essential as at early stages students may be told only how certain sentences are said in the target language, but it is almost impossible for them to fully understand the meaning. Taught by this approach the students are often involved in pair or group work, which means that the teacher can observe any given pair or group only very briefly in order to give feedback and he thus has little chance of correcting all his students' errors. But for most Vietnamese students who are used to a formal way of learning everything this aspect of the Communicative Approach does not seem to suit them in that when they follow the method with their teacher as a consultant they can be worried to see their errors pass unnoticed.

Taught by this approach, the learners sometimes are required to speak in front of the class or to play a role or to act in response to immediate stimuli from their peers. Role-playing, which will be discussed in Chapter 5, can create a natural and relaxing atmosphere of learning, but many students, especially those who are timid, often fear whatever they say or do is being scrutinized in detail and every shortcoming is made the focus of comment. As a result, the learners, especially

the type of learners like HFLTC students, who are shy and reserved often occupy a permanent position of inferiority before a critical audience and of course many of them will prefer to keep a 'low profile' in the hope that they will not be called upon to participate openly.

When the learners are learning to communicate, classes can be conducted in a way quite similar to real life with people talking to each other in free chats, but the development of communication skills can only take place if the learners have motivation and opportunity to express their own identity and to relate with people around them. It therefore requires a learning atmosphere which gives them a sense of security and value as an individual. In turn, this atmosphere depends, to a large extent, on the existence of interpersonal relationships which do not create inhibition and are supportive and accepting.

As the social function of language figures prominently in this approach, an extraverted personality seems to be preferable. Again as in the Audio-Lingual Method, or the Direct Method, extravert students may have more opportunities to speak than the quiet ones. In this approach students who are confident are likely to see what they already know and learn from their mistakes while cautious students tend to avoid using the knowledge they are not sure about and so have fewer

chances to check themselves but may be more confident when they finally speak.

As this approach lays emphasis on the learner's needs, the choice of speech acts, of notions and topics is crucial and this is not linguistic difficulty but cultural problems come in for Vietnamese learners of English. The choice of topics is not as simple as it might seem to be. Australians like to talk about the weather, but Vietnamese are interested in money. English people like to talk about sports; Vietnamese people are interested in talking politics and so on. To do certain speech acts is not easy for HFLTC students, and in a similar social interaction a Vietnamese person and an Australian behaves differently, as was described in Chapter 3.

Another trouble with this approach is the strong preference for the use of authentic material, which may seem to be attractive and interesting to those who are familiar with the target culture but may present problems to those who are not. The reminders on the next page are examples of authentic materials which do not mean very much to Vietnamese learners. For this reason to make them understand the reminders takes much longer than to help them do the exercises given underneath. That is why modification of this kind of teaching material is of great importance.



2. Match the reminders with the pictures.

- 1 Don't forget to lock your car doors!
- 2 Remember to cancel your newspapers when you go away on holiday!
- 3 Remember to look both ways when you cross the road!
- 4 Don't forget to fasten your seat belt!
- 5 Don't forget to check your passport before you go on holiday!

3. How would you remind a friend who is:

- going on a long car journey?
(check.....take.....)
- going to leave his house for 3 months?
(lock.....tell.....turn off.....)
- going for an interview for a job?
(be.....wear.....answer.....ask.....)
- going to take some children on a long train journey? (take.....wear.....buy.....)

Practise short conversations in pairs.

But the distinction should be made between the use of 'authentic materials' and 'authentic use' of materials in teaching. For the type of learners who are learning English because they will go to England say as tourists, the use of these reminders can be considered as 'authentic use' of materials and the reminders themselves are authentic materials. But for HFLTC students these reminders are authentic materials but the use of them serving no communicative purpose, is not authentic use .

So far this chapter has concentrated on the cultural and psychological appropriateness of different methodologies to HFLTC students, and the whole discussion seems to suggest that there is no single method that can be regarded as perfect in any learning situation. The foreign language learning process is so complicated by many separate but interrelated factors that it is impossible to sequence the whole process of satisfaction of everybody involved. The essential criteria of a good method, however, is that it works in a real teaching-learning situation. Another one, which is especially essential for HFLTC students of English is how to teach the learners two things at the same time; the language and the culture. Based on this discussion, the next chapter will point out some practical implications for teaching English to HFLTC students.

Chapter 5SUGGESTIONS FOR A VIETNAMESE METHOD
OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

So far the paper has been addressing the appropriateness and inappropriateness of methodologies to HFLTC students. At this point, it seems necessary to point out some characteristics of HFLTC students related to choice of methods and also some implications for teaching, though very tentative, either as reference for the improvement of EFL teaching in HFLTC or for the adoption of another method in the near future.

5.1 Psychological Characteristics of HFLTC Students
Related to Choice of Methods.

1. Systematic, formal and deductive teachings suit the learning style of most HFLTC students, especially in teaching grammar. This is due to the students' previous learning experience and the fact that such learning experience and teaching enables the students to see their own progress, thus maintaining high motivation. Given this, the Grammar-Translation Method certainly has some relevance to HFLTC students.

Systematic, formal and deductive teaching is appropriate to HFLTC students also because the relationship

between the teacher and the students is that of an information-giver and information-seeker, which is also the view of Vietnamese education. This view of education, as the acquisition of knowledge is still dominant, though it is being objected to by a number of teachers.

2. The discussion has shown that the majority of HFLTC students possess certain psychological traits which are widely regarded as advantages for language learning such as high self-esteem and a small number of them have tolerance of ambiguity. These traits are likely to be useful no matter what kind of teaching method is used.

3. HFLTC students are still basically shy and withdrawn, but methods which involve a lot of pair work, group work and role-play, and are said to be better for shy students than the teacher-student questions and answers, should be adopted with care and considerable modification because role playing or group work often creates a learning atmosphere which is relaxing but considered to be informal. Informal teaching and learning does not suit a number of HFLTC students as mentioned in Chapter 3. Also Vietnamese students, especially those from the countryside, do not like to play a role of say a policeman or a shopkeeper as they think that you have to be an actor or actress or to be brave to play a role in front of the class. The younger generation of teachers at HFLTC have been trying informal teaching

instead of the deep-rooted formal and rigid one, and have found that their students, though not all of them, may be encouraged to gradually get used to informal teaching,

4. One favourable characteristic of HFLTC students is that they are interested in the cultures of other countries especially those where English is spoken which means that many of them are moving from instrumental motivation to integrative motivation as described in Chapter 3. For these students any method is workable and for them the way of introducing the culture of the target language is very important. Too little of the culture discourages and bores them, but too much of it may puzzle them .

5. Another important characteristic of HFLTC students is that they prefer some pressure when learning i.e if the learning is challenging to them, they may work more efficiently. With this advantage, some principles of the Direct Method and the Audio-Lingual Method and the Communicative Approach can be applied with modification. For instance, the use of drills, tapes, language labs, visual aids, or students may be encouraged to read literature for pleasure or comprehension. In such contexts, the use of Vietnamese should be allowed when necessary e.g., for explanation of either grammatical rules or cultural problems.

5.2 Teaching the Target Culture to HFLTC Students

Learning target language cultures is so important that it has been stressed by a number of writers like Mcleod (1980) who suggests that not only should foreign language teachers become anthropologists, but they should also encourage students to become amateur anthropologists, with the new culture as their field of research.

But learning about the cultures of the Australians or the British is such a big problem that many of the HFLTC leaders are cautious. This occurs for two reasons. Firstly, some leaders do not want their students to absorb too much of the Western way of life. Secondly, when the Americans pulled out of South Vietnam they left a bad impression of what American culture is. According to Ha Huy Giap (1978:20) American neocolonialist capitalism had very serious effects on economic, cultural and social life and there was an Americanized culture in South Vietnam. This has made many Vietnamese think wrongly of the culture of the Americans, Australians or the British, who also have fine traditions and have many good things of a civilized nation for the Vietnamese to learn from.

Teachers and authorities should bear in mind that learning about other cultures does not mean changing one's own values and world outlook. On the

contrary, by comparing some aspects of cultures in different societies, students may better appreciate their own culture and tradition and avoid false stereotyping which may result in either prejudice against other cultures or the blind belief that other cultures are superior. However, how to teach a foreign culture remains a controversy at HFLTC which, influenced by Soviet methodology, still persists in the teaching of 'Country Study' to foreign language students. Such lessons generally focus on facts of geography, history or economics. It is almost obvious that to know what Cornwall is or what the capital of Australia is does not help the learners speak English the way native speakers do, nor does it help solve many of the problems raised in Chapter 3. As was pointed out earlier, any authentic use of language will introduce cultural concomitants into the classroom, so the teacher's responsibility is to bring an awareness of cultural meaning into every aspect of his teaching and his students will absorb it in many small ways. According to Rivers (1968) :

This awareness becomes a part of every language act in the classroom, as teacher and student alike ask themselves : How do we say it as a native speaker says it? How do we do it as they do it in the foreign country? What is its underlying significance? Through language use, students become conscious of correct levels of discourse and behaviour, formulas of politeness and their relation to the temperament and social attitudes of the people, appropriateness of response in specific situations

(p.273)

Living in a developing country, HFLTC students are curious about differences between their own culture and the cultures of civilized nations like the Australian, British or French and are observant as they listen and read. Many fine aspects of the life-style of the Americans or British are attractive to them. Armed with some knowledge of the target culture, these students can better understand why certain behaviour, polite in Vietnam is not appreciated by native speakers of English. For instance, the understanding of the emphasis on individuality in the Western countries may help students understand why many English native speakers may react negatively to being given advice which Vietnamese people would regard as evidence of friendship or concern. It is clear that to help Vietnamese learners of English to give simple responses like "I'm well, thank you. And you?" to simple questions like "How are you today?" is not a matter of the teacher drilling the students but making them aware of the importance of showing one's concern about other's health in the Australian culture.

5.3 The Search for an Eclectic Method

As was stated in Chapter 1, the history of foreign language teaching at HFLTC has undergone a lot of changes. During these twenty years teachers have always found fault with different methods they are familiar with, which is understandable. As this discussion has shown, there is

not any single method which is perfectly suitable to Vietnamese learners of English. So it is the teacher's responsibility to use an eclectic methodology which utilizes the best part of existing methods. To this area teachers at HFLTC have been making some sensible contribution. The first eclectic applied at the college was labelled 'Conscious Practice' method as it was argued that the Direct Method involves a lot of mechanical drills and the Grammar-Translation Method was the reverse. 'Conscious' implies that the learner is expected to be able to apply rules consciously rather than mechanically, in his production of speech acts. Actually this method was basically a combination of the Grammar-Translation and the Direct methods and it was widely used until relatively recently when it gave way to another eclectic method with a new label, the 'Communicative Conscious Practice' Method (Hence forward CCP), which is sometimes known as the the Practical Conscious Approach, a term initiated by the Russian methodologist Rogova (1983:44). This method, according to Do Ca Son (1983:37) i.e the CCP, was confirmed to be correct and scientific at the fifth congress of the International Organization of Teachers of Russian and Teachers of Russian Literature held in Prague in August 1982. ("Hội nghị này đã đi sâu và khẳng định mạnh mẽ tính chất khoa học và đúng đắn của phương pháp giao tiếp có ý thức..."). The Conscious Practice gave way to CCP as it was found that Conscious Practice

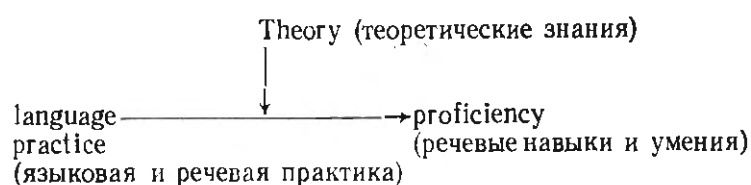
did not help very much the learners communicate in the target language in spite of 'practice'. However, CCP is based on the principle of teaching a foreign language as a system. Advocates of CCP are mainly Russian teachers who are influenced by Soviet methodologists like Rogova, Belyaev, Artemov etc. Rogova (1983) and a number of teachers at HFLTC base their approaches on the principle of "Conscious and Practical Approach" (*созна-тельно - прагматический*) in language teaching, which was initiated by the Russian psychologist Belyaev (1959). By 'practical' Rogova (1983:44) also means 'Communicative'. 'Conscious' in 'Conscious and Practical Approach' refers to the learners' mastery of grammatical rules in their communication in the target language. Belyaev (1969), Artemov (1969) and later Rogova (1983) argue that the learner should learn a foreign language consciously, not mechanically i.e, the teacher has to explain rules to his students :

In teaching a foreign language, therefore, it is more reasonable to help pupils in assimilating language rules which function in this language rather than to wait until the learners deduce these rules through speech activity

(Rogova, 1983:48)

Artemov (1969) also advises language teachers not to be afraid of 'rules', but instead, to explain rules and speech acts in the process of second language learning. Artemov thinks that explanation of rules at

any time, by any means and saves time and brings about more effective language learning. Belyaev also insists on a similar conscious approach to language teaching as does Artemov . Belyaev presents the learning process as follows :



(Cited in Rogova, 1983:49)

Belyaev argues that the acquisition of theoretical knowledge (*теоретические знания*) cannot provide the mastery of the language. Nor can habits ensure this . Only language practice supported by theory can develop language habits and skills. A 'Conscious Approach' to foreign language teaching, according to Rogova, (1983:50) implies :

1. the use of the learner's native language.

"As to the mother tongue we cannot eliminate it. We should use it as a means of teaching whenever it helps pupils in acquiring knowledge necessary for developing habits and skills"

2. that the pupils should understand the material they are to learn to be able to transform it in communication in the target language.

But at some points Rogova does not seem to draw a sharp-line distinction between 'consciousness' and

'communication', as she also mentions that conscious approach in foreign language teaching implies pupils' comprehension of the material they study. For example, they can single out topic sentences while reading, main idea while listening (Rogova 1983:52-53).

Dr. Hoang Lai, another advocate of CCP, also insists on the teaching of language as a system, by which he means both the system of language and the system of speech acts. According to Hoang Lai

In a non-target language environment, without a conscious knowledge of the structure of language, the learner can never have the language habits or skills which can help him to manipulate his own speech pattern in a creative way. This is specially applicable to adult learners whose second language learning is not a matter of an association of new concepts with new symbols but instead a matter of the formation of a specific speech pattern

(Hoang Lai, 1983:19)

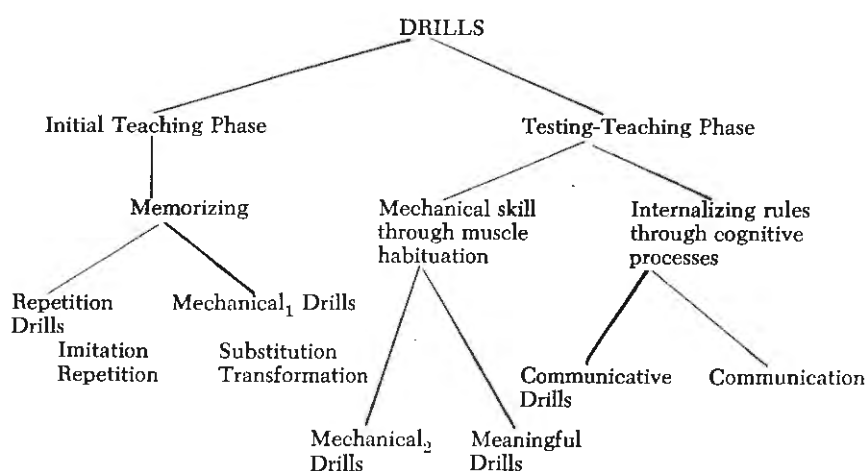
In supporting CCP, Do Ca Son and Hoang Lai seem to severely criticize all sorts of mechanical drills and appear to believe that they are totally useless:

Mechanical drills such as substitution, transformation, expansion, distraction etc. can but only produce utterances which are meaningless and of no communicative value

(Do Ca Son, 1983:39)

Do Ca Son is correct in a sense that if a lesson or unit contains only mechanical drills, the learners will end up parroting a number of utterances, but he fails to see that mechanical drills are still of some

use especially when the learner wishes to have some fluency practice. Mechanical drills are particularly necessary for phonetic drills and intonation drills. For this reason, mechanical drills are still employed together with meaningful and communicative drills, as shown in the following design by Poulton (1971:305)



In supporting CCP, Do Ca Son and other advocates seem to be too extreme in accusing the whole West of being influenced by behaviourism in language teaching. In his speech (June, 1983) he states : "We should severely criticize the Grammar-Translation Method and at the same time we are strongly against Western behaviourism in language teaching". While behaviourism has obviously been an important influence in language teaching in many Western countries, it is rare today to find a teacher who fully accepts all the principles involved. Do Ca Son seems to be overgeneralizing here .

Teachers at HFLTC often feel that Russian methodologists and teachers of Russian tend to lay too much emphasis on the element of 'consciousness' in foreign language teaching because Russian itself, being an inflectional language, is greatly different from, say English or French or Vietnamese. To utter a simple Russian sentence or phrase learners have to recall a number of rules. For example, endings of a Russian noun are decided by the preceding preposition as in the following examples :

Example 1

<i>школа</i>	(stem word)	school
<i>в школе</i>		at school
<i>о школе</i>		about school
<i>в школу</i>		to school
			etc.

Example 2

<i>Я</i>	<i>иду</i>	<i>в</i>	<i>школу</i>
I	go	to	school
<i>Она</i>	}	<i>идёт</i>	<i>в школу</i>
<i>Он</i>			
He / .she	goes	to	school
<i>Мы</i>	<i>идём</i>	<i>в</i>	<i>школу</i>
We	go	to	school
			etc.

Thus, awareness of rules (consciousness) may well reflect the demands of a particular language or may depend on the type of learners or a particular stage

of learning. The above examples show that a Vietnamese learner of English can utter a phrase like 'at school', or a simple sentence such as 'I go to school', or 'They go to school' fairly easily, provided he remembers the required vocabulary items, but when he is learning Russian to utter those simple phrases or sentences, he has to remember not only vocabulary items but also the rules for word endings in Russian. This means that at an early stage of learning a Vietnamese learning English has some advantages over another Vietnamese learning Russian, and in many cases, a Vietnamese pupil learning English can induce rules through mechanical drills.

In supporting the principles of 'Practical' or 'Communicative Approach' Rogova (1983:44) seems to ignore the cultural aspect as part of the learning process, although she thinks that one of the eventual aims of foreign language learning is to acquaint the pupils with life, customs and tradition of the target language people through visual materials (such as postcards and film strips) to increase the learner knowledge about foreign countries. However, learning about the target culture, as described in Chapter 4 is of very little help to learners who want to speak the target language idiomatically.

To summarize, those who support CCP insist that the learners' focus should be both on language forms to be learned and on meanings to be conveyed. Obviously CCP has its roots in the Grammar-Translation Method

and the Communicative Approach, To suit the Vietnamese situation, it is only a matter of the varying degree to which the different activities encourage learners to focus on linguistic forms to be practised or meanings to be conveyed. The principles of CCP sound promising but specific teaching techniques and practical applications differ greatly from department to department at HFLTC.

5.4 Practical Suggestions for Classroom Teachers

5.4.1. 'Communication' as Understood by Many HFLTC Teachers

Though the CCP Approach is believed to be a correct and scientific way of language teaching at HFLTC 'communication' is understood by many people at the college in very different ways from the way in which the term was discussed in Chapter 2. The Russian methodologist Rogova, who is wellknown to the majority of teachers at HFLTC does not seem to make a distinction between communicative drills and drills in oral speech. According to her :

"Since pupils only observe the new grammar items, the situation should be communicative and natural. For example :

Listen to the sentences and raise your hand whenever you hear the verbs in the Past Indefinite
'Mike lives in Pushkin Street. I lived there last year. Ann comes home at 2.30. She came home at 4 o'clock yesterday. etc."

(1983:159)

The examples she gives here do not have communicative value, and are not examples of natural language

as they are claimed to be. The way Rogova looks at 'communication', namely as the ability to produce correct utterances, is also the way many teachers at HFLTC understand what 'communication' is which is very different from the description of 'communication' as discussed in Chapter 2. Probably this is because Rogova and advocates of CCP lay too much emphasis on consciousness in communicating ideas. So it is advisable to reach an agreement on the meaning of communication before methods or classroom techniques are discussed.

5.4.2 Mechanical Drills vs Conscious Practice

As was pointed out in 5.3 many teachers at HFLTC are so strongly against mechanical drills that they are inclined to think that such drills are of no use. But actually mechanical drills cannot be avoided and thrown away as good for nothing especially at an early stage when the learners have to reach certain level of fluency.

Mechanical drills are still helpful for HFLTC students who learn language in a non target language environment in a sense that through mechanical drills they sometimes can induce rules for themselves even though they are used to a systematic and formal way of learning and most of them are field-dependent. But this depends very much on the proportion of mechanical, meaningful and communicative drills contained in a

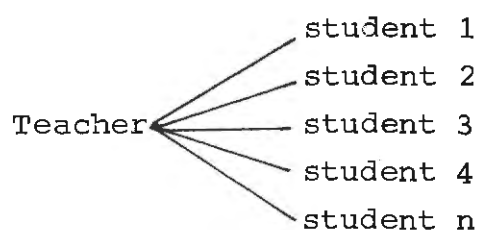
lesson or unit, which was shown in the diagram on page 117.

Moreover, learning pronunciation is at least in part a matter of training muscles to move in particular ways when needed. Good pronunciation is as much based on physical coordination as sporting proficiency.

Strongly against mechanical drills are those who attach so much importance of consciousness in learning that their deductive explanation of grammar is sometimes seen as a big waste of time. Take for example, a lesson (See the Appendix on page 130) for year-four students at HFLTC. The learner who is able enough to appreciate the passage by Maugham probably does not need to spend so much time on such easy patterns as those given at the beginning of the lesson.

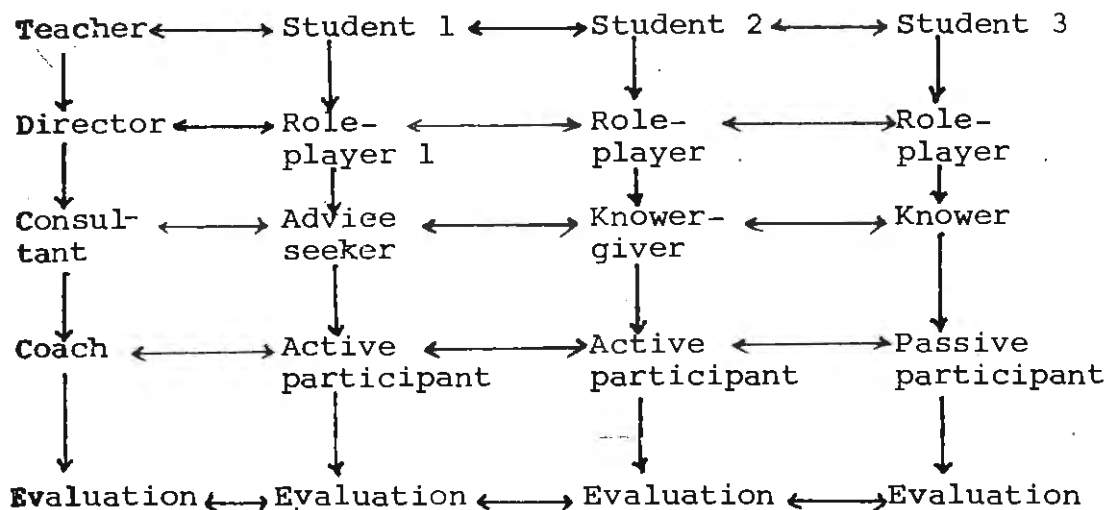
5.4.3 The Teachers' and Students' Responsibility in the Classroom

The majority of teachers at HFLTC are traditional types of teachers, as described in Chapter 3 and the interaction in the classroom at the college is often a one-to-one interaction i.e the teacher asks and each student in turn answers. This can be presented as follows:



This type of teaching and learning can hardly create a communicative situation and therefore students are usually passive. The atmosphere in the classroom is tense and students' inhibition increases. To make learning enjoyable and relaxing, to create communicative situation, the teacher's responsibility is not only to tell the students or to teach them but it is more important to involve them in different activities, to give them different roles to play. The responsibility of a classroom teacher and the students can be shown by the following strategic interaction network suggested by professor R. di Pietro (Lecture CCAE, Sept. 18, 1985)

STRATEGIC INTERACTION NETWORK



According to di Pietro the learners should learn language in a natural and relaxing way, which means that they should be involved rather than taught or told. Di Pietro also points out that in a teacher dominant classroom the strategic interaction network is often

simple, but when the teacher can manage to involve his students, the network becomes more complex. The complex strategic network Pietro gives here shows that both the teacher and the students are involved in playing a variety of roles. Role playing, a dramatization of a real life situation, is one technique which affords much opportunity to practise new structures in the context of natural communicative stage. Newmark (1966), a proponent of role play thinks :

By creating a dramatic situation in a classroom in part simply by acting out dialogues but also in part by relabelling objects and people in the room (supplemented by realia if desired) to prepare for imaginative role-playing the teacher can expand the classroom indefinitely and provide imaginatively natural contexts for the language being used

(Cited by Mockridge-Fong:96)

In this learning situation the teacher has to be tolerant of mistakes, otherwise the students, especially Vietnamese students will lose interest and confidence. Naturally it is necessary to correct students but this should be done after the role-play in what di Pietro refers to as the debriefing. Moreover, in the preparation stage, before the role-play is staged the teacher can help students to avoid errors by suggesting sensible forms to them to use. In a learning situation like this the learners do most of the talking in the target language which is desirable in a language class.

In supporting CCP, Do Ca Son (1983) also emphasizes the importance of the active participation of the learners and he thinks that in a class of thirty students, each student should be allowed a chance to speak for one minute in a forty-five minute lesson but he does not say what he means by 'speak' and how to get the students to speak.

5.4.4 Use of Authentic Materials

For many years teachers at HFLTC, though only a small number of them, have been familiar with the use of authentic materials, both linguistically and culturally. But few of them are aware of the danger that authentic materials may confuse the students a great deal. For example a realistic dialogue presented on tape may be terribly difficult for students to understand let alone act out. Realistic dialogues sometimes are good only in the sense that the students can improve their listening comprehension but they can be bad if the teacher insists on the students imitating intonation patterns or hedge words like 'well', 'y'know' etc. which are typical of dialogues. The use of the advertisements on page 126, for example, is good for practising speech acts like : 'Ask how much things cost', 'Say what one wants', or for introducing cultural aspect of the language, but it is useless for people like HFLTC students who do

MEAT Roasting Beef Pieces \$4.99 kg Lamb Loin Chops \$3.99 kg		FRUIT & VEG. Mandarins \$1.09 kg Cucumbers 29c ea.	
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Specials available until close of trading Saturday

not know what those things are and many of them will never use or see such things.

In summary, the Vietnamese situation requires modification of classroom techniques employed by

different methods especially the Communicative Approach and the Communicative Conscious Practice Approach. The Communicative Approach, which has been in fashion during these few years, is particularly suitable for ESP students. For HFLTC students, who learn foreign languages in non target language environment the CCP has to be applied with care and consideration. Since HFLTC students, who are trained to be language teachers in a non target language environment, it is necessary to teach the target language as a system (systematic introduction of both language forms and speech acts) and these students have to be always conscious of grammar rules of the target language. Uses of authentic materials can make language learning more successful and motivate the learners provided that those materials are chosen with care otherwise they can present great difficulty to the students because of social distance and also because students' needs may not be the same as those for whom the authentic materials were originally written.

The principle of consciousness in second language learning is sensible for HFLTC students only when not too much emphasis is laid on deductive explanation of grammar. This chapter has also been trying to draw attention to the concept of 'communication' which is understood by a number of teachers at HFLTC as the ability to produce orally correct sentences in the target language. Mechanical drills which have

come under attack by advocates of CCP, are still useful and necessary and cannot be thrown away as good for nothing. It is also the intention of this chapter to suggest that the language teacher should be aware of the importance of what roles he should play in the classroom, he can be an instructor, a consultant and can also be a manager. To create communicative situation and to make learning relaxing and natural, role playing in strategic interaction is of great use and value. The teacher should bear in mind what the student expect of him 'Tell me and I forget, teach me and I learn and involve me I remember'. Chapter 5 also reminds the reader that second culture in language learning should be understood as defined in Chapter 3 and it cannot be avoided in the process of second language learning.

CONCLUSION

With increasing emphasis on education in Vietnam, English teaching and learning in the country is flourishing and more and more serious attention has been paid to teaching methods, both traditional and new. At Hanoi Foreign Languages Teachers' College for example, an eclectic method, the Communicative Conscious Practice Approach has been started. The college is also seriously considering the problem of how to teach its students the target culture in order to bring about more effective language learning. Obviously, foreign language teaching and learning in Vietnam requires constant study and

practice and the modification of different teaching methods, which are main Western products, is necessary and has to take psychological and cultural factors into consideration.

Lesson Eight

SPEECH PATTERNS

1. *I have always hesitated to give advice.*

You might have hesitated to let him do it.
I hesitated to ask him for help.
He didn't hesitate to take such a big risk.
Don't hesitate to refuse the offer if you don't like it.

2. *How can one advise another unless one knows that other as one knows himself.*

They won't accept your plan unless you alter it.
You'll fail unless you work hard.
Unless I'm mistaken, he's an artist.
Unless he's done the work properly, I shan't accept it.

3. *He had some difficulty in lighting it.*

I have some difficulty in understanding spoken German.
She had some difficulty in finding the house.
We had some difficulty in selecting a present for her.

4. *He gave an apologetic laugh.
I had not given him more than a cursory glance.*

The girl gave a deep sigh.
Jim gave a loud cry (groan).
The man gave her a hasty look.
She gave me a critical look.

5. *It's precisely what they are going to do.
That's what I've got to look forward to.
That's all I've got to look forward to.*

This is precisely what I object to.
That's what they've got to expect.
That's all they've got to hope for.

6. He was dressed in a blue suit *a good deal the worse for wear*.
This is an old coat, but it is *none the worse for wear*.

The road is a good deal the worse for the rain.
We are none the happier for learning the truth.
I like you none the worse for being frank.

7. He looked to me as though *he knew a good bottle of wine when he saw it*.

He knows a good book when he sees it.
The man knew a good painting when he saw it.
I know a good play when I see it.

8. You could not *have imagined a more delightful person to drink a glass of wine with*.

I can't imagine a better place to have a rest in.
I don't know a worse place to go for holidays to.
He never saw a more interesting person to speak with.

EXERCISES

I. Complete the following sentences using the speech patterns:

1. Caution made Jim hesitate to
2. He did not hesitate to
3. I shan't touch upon the subject unless
4. No use discussing the matter with me unless
5. We thought we knew Italian having studied it from books, but we had some difficulty
6. It's not always easy to teach children to read. Some children have special
7. The door was so narrow that we had some
8. With so many other things to occupy my mind, I had not given Wilson
9. The two old gentlemen were obviously displeased with the interruption. They gave us a
10. I'm not astonished at his refusal to help us at all. That is precisely
11. Now it's quite evident that we shan't be able to finish the work on time. That's
12. I know that he's sorry about what happened, but I am none
13. The boy is naughty, but I like him none
14. I think it only fair to tell you that that's all
15. He's a connoisseur of art and he surely knows a good painting when
16. This young actress has got real talent. I assure you I know a good actress when
17. You cannot imagine a more delightful person to
18. If you're in need of advice, you cannot find a better person to

II. Suggest the beginning matching up the end;

1. . . . to go further because he was afraid.
2. . . . to refuse if you think the plan is unwise.
3. . . . we ought to have a good trip there.
4. . . . we shan't get home before dark.
5. . . . in getting the information. So don't

fret. 6. ... in understanding what she said because of her bad French. 7. ..., seemed to hesitate and then walked on. 8. "... a ring, it's urgent." 9. ... what it's going to be if we can't find some better explanation. 10. ... what you expected a teacher to be. 11. ... for knowing the truth. 12. ... for being frank and straightforward. 13. ... to hope for. 14. ... when he heard it. 15. ... to have a chat with. 16. ... to work with.

III. Paraphrase the following sentences using the speech patterns:

1. He seemed unwilling to give advice, afraid of responsibility, I think. 2. Don't be shy of calling if you need me. 3. If I'm not mistaken, this is but a temporary job. 4. Don't do anything if you don't hear from me. 5. We're going on a hike next Saturday, if the weather does not turn out nasty. 6. I always find it difficult to remember dates, they just slip my memory. 7. It was rather difficult for me to understand the article. 8. He laughed apologetically and said, "So that's it. How on earth did you guess the truth?" 9. Tom shrugged his shoulders. "What next, I wonder?" 10. The landlady looked critically at the three young men and closed the door in their faces. 11. At seeing me Jovella sighed with relief. 12. It's just the thing I was afraid of. 13. If I had my time over again, I should act exactly in the same way. 14. I did not like the boy less for being a bit naughty. 15. Wealth did not make him happier in the least. 16. "I'm aware that that's my only hope," said the man. 17. "Is there nothing else for me to look forward to?" asked Cora. Allan made no comment. 18. Soames was a good judge of paintings. 19. He is a well-read person and a real connoisseur of French poetry. 20. I'm fond of the South-West of Moscow. I don't think there is a better district to live in. 21. He thinks there is no better place to have a rest in than North Caucasus.

IV. Respond to the following statements and questions using the patterns:

1. Why on earth didn't you turn to me for help at once? 2. Do you think it's absolutely necessary for me to come? 3. Do you think there's anyone else who knows about it? 4. You're an hour late. I thought you would never come. 5. How did you manage to get the book? It's no longer on sale. 6. Did the girl scream when she was given an injection? 7. I hear he's had a bad fall. 8. Will you let him know of the change in our plans? 9. I think I must have the matter out with her. 10. Whatever makes you go to this village every summer? 11. I'm only asking you to dust the flat. 12. Are you sure the painting is worth buying? 13. Is this young poet really a promising one? 14. Would you advise me to wait a little?

TEXT EIGHT

THE HAPPY MAN

By Somerset Maugham

William Somerset Maugham (1874-1966), a well-known English novelist, short-story writer, playwright and essayist, was the son of a British diplomat. He was educated at King's School in Canterbury, studied painting in Paris, went to Heidelberg University in Germany and studied to be a doctor at St. Thomas Hospital in England. Although Somerset Maugham did not denounce the contemporary social order, he was critical of the morals, the narrow-mindedness and hypocrisy of bourgeois society. It was his autobiographical novel "Of Human Bondage" (1915) and the novel "The Moon and Sixpence" (1919) based on the life of the French artist Paul Gauguin, that won him fame. Somerset Maugham was also a master of the short story.

Somerset Maugham's style of writing is clear and precise. He does not impose his views on the reader. He puts a question and leaves it to the reader to answer it. When criticizing something he sounds rather amused than otherwise.

It is a dangerous thing to order the lives of others and I have often wondered at the self-confidence of the politicians, reformers and such-like who are prepared to force upon their fellows measures that must alter their manners, habits, and points of view. I have always hesitated to give advice, for how can one advise another how to act unless one knows that other as well as one knows himself? Heaven knows, I know little enough of myself: I know nothing of others. We can only guess at the thoughts and emotions of our neighbours. Each one of us is a prisoner in a solitary tower and he communicates with the other prisoners, who form mankind, by conventional signs that have not quite the same meaning for them as for himself. And life, unfortunately, is something that you can lead but once; mistakes are often irreparable, and who am I that I should tell this one and that how he should lead it? Life is a dif-

difficult business and I have found it hard enough to make my own a complete and rounded thing; I have not been tempted to teach my neighbour what he should do with his. But there are men who flounder at the journey's start, the way before them is confused and hazardous, and on occasion, however unwillingly, I have been forced to point the finger of fate. Sometimes men have said to me, what shall I do with my life? and I have seen myself for a moment wrapped in the dark cloak of Destiny.

Once I know that I advised well.

I was a young man, and I lived in a modest apartment in London near Victoria Station. Late one afternoon, when I was beginning to think that I had worked enough for that day, I heard a ring at the bell. I opened the door to a total stranger. He asked me my name; I told him. He asked if he might come in.

"Certainly."

I led him into my sitting-room and begged him to sit down. He seemed a trifle embarrassed. I offered him a cigarette and he had some difficulty in lighting it without letting go of his hat. When he had satisfactorily achieved this feat I asked him if I should not put it on a chair for him. He quickly did this and while doing it dropped his umbrella.

"I hope you don't mind my coming to see you like this," he said. "My name is Stephens and I am a doctor. You're in the medical, I believe?"

"Yes, but I don't practise."

"No, I know. I've just read a book of yours about Spain and I wanted to ask you about it."

"It's not a very good book, I'm afraid."

"The fact remains that you know something about Spain and there's no one else I know who does. And I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind giving me some information."

"I shall be very glad."

He was silent for a moment. He reached out for his hat and holding it in one hand absent-mindedly stroked it with the other. I surmised that it gave him confidence.

"I hope you won't think it very odd for a perfect stranger to talk to you like this." He gave an apologetic laugh. "I'm not going to tell you the story of my life."

When people say this to me I always know that it is precisely what they are going to do. I do not mind. In fact I rather like it.

"I was brought up by two old aunts. I've never been anywhere. I've never done anything. I've been married for six years. I have no children. I'm a medical officer at the Camberwell Infirmary. I can't stick it any more."

There was something very striking in the short, sharp sentences he used. They had a forcible ring. I had not given him more than a cursory glance, but now I looked at him with curiosity. He was a little man, thick-set and stout, of thirty perhaps, with a round red face from which shone small, dark and very bright eyes. His black hair was cropped close

to a bullet-shaped head. He was dressed in a blue suit a good deal the worse for wear. It was baggy at the knees and the pockets bulged untidily.

"You know what the duties are of a medical officer in an infirmary. One day is pretty much like another. And that's all I've got to look forward to for the rest of my life. Do you think it's worth it?"

"It's a means of livelihood," I answered.

"Yes. I know. The money's pretty good."

"I don't exactly know why you've come to me."

"Well, I wanted to know whether you thought there would be any chance for an English doctor in Spain?"

"Why Spain?"

"I don't know, I just have a fancy for it."

"It's not like *Carmen*, you know."

"But there's sunshine there, and there's good wine, and there's colour, and there's air you can breathe. Let me say what I have to say straight out. I heard by accident that there was no English doctor in Seville.³ Do you think I could earn a living there? Is it madness to give up a good safe job for an uncertainty?"

"What does your wife think about it?"

"She's willing."

"It's a great risk."

"I know. But if you say take it, I will: if you say stay where you are, I'll stay."

He was looking at me intently with those bright dark eyes of his and I knew that he meant what he said. I reflected for a moment.

"Your whole future is concerned: you must decide for yourself. But this I can tell you: if you don't want money but are content to earn just enough to keep body and soul together, then go. For you will lead a wonderful life."

He left me, I thought about him for a day or two, and then forgot. The episode passed completely from my memory.

Many years later, fifteen at least, I happened to be in Seville and having some trifling indisposition asked the hotel porter whether there was an English doctor in the town. He said there was and gave me the address. I took a cab and as I drove up to the house a little fat man came out of it. He hesitated when he caught sight of me.

"Have you come to see me?" he said. "I'm the English doctor."

I explained my errand and he asked me to come in. He lived in an ordinary Spanish house, with a patio,⁴ and his consulting room which led out of it was littered with papers, books, medical appliances, and lumber. The sight of it would have startled a squeamish patient. We did our business and then I asked the doctor what his fee was. He shook his head and smiled.

"There's no fee."

"Why on earth not?"

"Don't you remember me? Why, I'm here because of something you said to me. You changed my whole life for me. I'm Stephens."

I had not the least notion what he was talking about. He reminded

me of our interview, he repeated to me what we had said, and gradually, out of the night, a dim recollection of the incident came back to me.

"I was wondering if I'd ever see you again," he said, "I was wondering if ever I'd have a chance of thanking you for all you've done for me." "It's been a success then?"

I looked at him. He was very fat now and bald, but his eyes twinkled gaily and his fleshy, red face bore an expression of perfect good-humour. The clothes he wore, terribly shabby they were, had been made obviously by a Spanish tailor and his hat was the wide-brimmed sombrero of the Spaniard. He looked to me as though he knew a good bottle of wine when he saw it. He had a dissipated, though entirely sympathetic, appearance. You might have hesitated to let him remove your appendix, but you could not have imagined a more delightful creature to drink a glass of wine with.

"Surely you were married?" I asked.

"Yes. My wife didn't like Spain, she went back to Camberwell, she was more at home there."

"Oh, I'm sorry for that."

His black eyes flashed a bacchanalian smile. He really had somewhat the look of a young Silenus.

"Life is full of compensations," he murmured.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a Spanish woman, no longer in her first youth, but still boldly and voluptuously beautiful, appeared at the door. She spoke to him in Spanish, and I could not fail to perceive that she was the mistress of the house.

As he stood at the door to let me out he said to me:

"You told me when last I saw you that if I came here I should earn just enough money to keep body and soul together, but that I should lead a wonderful life. Well, I want to tell you that you were right. Poor I have been and poor I shall always be, but by heaven I've enjoyed myself. I wouldn't exchange the life I've had with that of any king in the world."

Commentary

1. **Victoria Station:** a railway terminus in the Southern part of London
2. **Infirmary:** a hospital; sick quarters at school
3. **Seville** ['sevil]: a town in the province of Andalusia [ændə-'lu:zjə] in the south of Spain
4. **patio** ['pætiou]: an open courtyard within the walls of a Spanish house
5. **sombrero** [səm'brærou]: a broad-brimmed hat worn in Spain

Essential Vocabulary

Vocabulary Notes

1. **confide** *vi/t* 1) to feel trust in smb., *e.g.* I can confide in him. 2) to tell secrets to, *e.g.* He confided his troubles (secrets, plans, fears) to me.
- confidence** *n* 1) strong trust, *e.g.* I have no confidence in such people

PH-KH. Itan̄.

One copy.

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