

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

**IN SEARCH OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE INCREASE
OF ELT EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY FOR JUNIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RURAL VIET NAM**



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INCREASE OF ELT EFFECTIVENESS AND
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SCHOOLS IN RURAL VIET NAM***

By Nguyen Xuan Thom

A Field Study Report Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Art (TESOL) at
the University of Canberra

**FOR ALL MY FRIENDS WHO WENT TO THE VILLAGE
SCHOOL WITH ME IN MY CHILDHOOD
TANG TAT CA CAC BAN HOC CU DA TUNG CUNG CAP
SACH DEN TRUONG LANG CUNG VOI TOI TRONG THOI
THO AU**

Nguyen Xuan Thom

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NGUYEN XUAN THOM

ABSTRACT

Vietnam is a country with more than 80 percent of the population living in the countryside. Rural education is, therefore, of vital importance to Vietnamese education; and ELT effectiveness and efficiency in junior secondary schools in rural Vietnam is a problem of worthwhile attention.

This study, being a pilot one, limits itself to seeking solutions to the increase of ELT effectiveness and efficiency in terms of syllabus design, textbook revision and teacher development. The study contains 5 chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter 1 deals with the general background of the study, schooling and educational philosophies in Vietnam. In this chapter, special attention is given to the role of foreign language teaching and learning in Vietnamese schools. In addition, educational philosophies in Vietnam are discussed as the philosophical and legal basis for any implementation of FLT and ELT innovations in junior secondary schools in rural Vietnam.

Chapter 2 deals with input studies and some models of language teaching and learning that appeared in the last two decades. In this chapter, special emphasis is laid on studies which explain how input is transformed into intake and on the models of teaching and learning that may be applied to the teaching and learning of English in the context of rural Vietnam.

Chapter 3 deals with language teaching methods as the never-ending search for teaching effectiveness and efficiency. In this chapter, based on the understanding of such concepts as effectiveness and efficiency, language teaching methods are presented as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. Thus, the selection and use of a method depends completely on the goal set for the process of language teaching and learning. When the goal changes, the method will change accordingly.

Chapter 4 deals with the actual FLT and ELT situation in rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam. This chapter includes the results of surveys on teacher quality and a critical look at the implementation of the communicative approach in language teaching in the current textbooks in use in junior secondary schools. The background of rural students is discussed to clarify the context of the learners in question.

In chapter 5, based on the theoretical findings in chapters 2 and 3 and on the actual ELT situation mentioned in chapter 4, possible solutions to the increase of ELT effectiveness and efficiency are proposed. These solutions are concerned with syllabus design, textbook revision and teacher development.

The study closes with a conclusion which relates solutions to ELT effectiveness and efficiency to the general solutions to teaching effectiveness and efficiency mentioned at a number of workshops held in Vietnam recently.

CHAPTER 1

SCHOOLING AND EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES IN VIETNAM

An ignorant nation is a weak nation

(Ho Chi Minh)

1.1 A RETROSPECT

For reasons which can be explained historically, schooling in Vietnam has inseparable links with the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Throughout the centuries when Vietnam was a kingdom, schooling was carried out through the medium of Chinese. The first recorded examinations, for a junior Bachelor's degree in Chinese language and literature, were held in the 11th Century. In the 13th century, a bachelor's degree was introduced and from the 14th century on, a Doctorate was available in Chinese language and culture. The purpose of these examinations was to choose the 'talented people' for different positions at the feudal court. The methodology used in the teaching of Chinese was undoubtedly what would now be known as Grammar-Translation. The instructional materials were the set of four Confucian classics (Higher Education, The Happy Medium, Confucian analects, and Mencius) and the five Confucian classical books (The Book of Poetry, the Book of Military Strategies, The Book of Ancient Philosophies, The Book of Rites and the Book of Chinese History)

The teaching and learning of Chinese flourished until the second half of the 19th century when Vietnam became a French colony.

Under French domination, there was initially what may be called a 'mixed' education system. Confucian schools, where Chinese continued to be taught as a foreign language existed side-by-side with French-Vietnamese schools, where French was the medium of instruction and Vietnamese was taught as a subject .

Over time, the mixed system faded, until by the beginning of this century, all Confucian schools had ceased to exist and Franco-Vietnamese curricula had gone into effect in all schools throughout the country. In spite of these changes, however, the school network in Vietnam was very small. Up to 1941-42, there were, in the whole country, only three secondary schools, 65 junior secondary schools and 737 primary schools enrolling 2.6% of the population. More than 90% of the population was illiterate.

When Vietnam regained her independence in 1945, nation-wide literacy was one of the first concerns of the Vietnamese government and the Vietnamese language became the medium of instruction at all levels of the educational system. The number of schools increased rapidly. (see the Appendix A)

After 1954, with the division of Vietnam into two zones, North and South, the United States replaced the position formerly held by France. English as a Foreign Language was introduced in South Vietnam. In contrast, in North Vietnam, English was not a school subject.

Vietnam was reunified in 1975 and with this event, the educational systems in the North and South became one. English as a Foreign Language was acknowledged as a school subject throughout the country.

1.2 SCHOOL REFORMS

In order to better the country intellectually, a number of school reforms were proposed and implemented, the latest being the 1979 School Reform. The 1979 School Reform originated from an evaluation made on two decades of educational development, which showed that the quality of education was still poor. "Education could not keep pace with technical, scientific and social development; neither could it answer the new demands of the new rehabilitation period after many years of war." (Hac PM 1991 : 32)

1.2.1 School Structure

Since this reform, the school system in Vietnam now consists of three levels outlined as follows:

a) The Primary School level:

The objectives of this level, which embraces 5 grades, are to shape in children good skills in using the mother tongue and in handling basic arithmetic, to provide them with initial knowledge of nature, society and man, and at the same time to train the formation of good study habits, scientific thinking etc. At this level at the moment, no foreign languages are taught, although in recent years there have been heated arguments on whether foreign languages should be introduced at the primary level.

b) The Junior Secondary School level:

This level covers the next four grades, 6 to 9. Its objectives are to form in the students a relatively complete system of knowledge of

natural sciences and general technology from a practical, modern, relevant point of view. At this level, great stress is laid on civil education, career orientation and vocational preparation and training.

For the purposes of training future specialists from this level upwards, provinces, cities or districts within Vietnam are given the legal right to organise schools or classes specialising in disciplines such as mathematics, literature or foreign languages etc. Some localities are also experimenting with various forms of private or semi-public schools. Foreign languages are taught in all of these schools, with an initial emphasis in Year 6 (132 periods per year) and a continuing high profile in all subsequent years (99 periods per year). (Table 1 below)

However, it is necessary to note that the number of teaching periods as shown in Table 1 is fixed by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam. In the process of implementing the ministerial curriculum, certain localities, in the hope of increasing teaching and learning effectiveness and efficiency have altered it. Tan N. T. (1991), in an article on the teaching of foreign languages in provincial specialised language schools for gifted students, notes that in these schools, the number of teaching periods for foreign languages varies a great deal from one locality to another. In one locality, this number is 297 periods per year (9 periods per week) and in another, 264 periods per year (8 periods per week) and in still another, 198 periods per year (6 periods per week)

In spite of the increased number of foreign language teaching periods in specialised language schools, the teaching and learning effectiveness and efficiency, as reported by Tan (1991), is not high.

School year	Primary					Junior Secondary				Senior Secondary		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Subject												
Literature/Language (Vietnamese)	396	330	330	264	264	198	165	132	132	99	99	66
History						33	33	33	66	33	33	66
Geography						66	66	33	33	33	66	33
Civil Education						33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Foreign Languages						132	99	99	99	99	99	99
Mathematics	396	330	330	264	264	198	165	132	132	99	99	66
Physics							66	66	60	99	99	99
Chemistry								33	66	66	66	99
Biology						66	66	66	99	33	33	66
Technology						99	66	66	132	66	66	66
Physical Training	66	66	66	66	66					66	66	66
Music/Painting	66	66	66	66	66							
Labour	33	66	66	99	99					99	99	99
Ethical Education	33	33	33	33	33							
Vocational Training										33	33	33
Other Activities	33	33	33	66	99							

Table 1: The place of Foreign Languages in the general curriculum. The figures show the number of periods per year to be spent on each subject

c) The Senior Secondary level:

Grades 10 - 12 constitute the last stage in the 1979 reformed curriculum for general education. The objectives at this level are

to perfect general knowledge with the aim of developing a new type of active, creative worker, to prepare a group of school leavers for further education, to create a potential source of specialists, technical workers and intellectuals; and to bring into full effect the influence of general education on local development.

In order to respond to the demand for diversifying the utilisation and employment of school leavers, at this level the mechanism of school organisation and management is diversified. There are conventional schools for ordinary students and specialised schools for gifted students. At this level, private and semi-public schools are also being tried out. Foreign Languages continue to be given a high profile. (Table 1 above)

1.2.2 Evaluation of Reforms

The reform has now been under way for 12 years and is currently being reviewed and evaluated. Hac PM (1991 : 37) points out:

- a) The quality of education and training is, in general terms, very low, well below the demands of socio-economic development.
- b) The contents of education and training, as compared with the demands of personality development and socio-economic development are over-loaded but still deficient in what is necessary for everyday life. Curricula and textbooks have, in part, not yet reflected to a necessary extent the advances of the present-day scientifico-technological revolution.

Informatics has not yet been included into teaching at general school level.

- c) The most conservative factor, the least positively changed, is that of teaching methodology. Principally, teaching methods take the traditional form with teachers reading, students writing, dependent more on memory than on thinking. The way students study is still characterised by passivity.
- d) In many places, schools are run on a 3-shift system. They are badly equipped, with physical facilities and teaching aids in miserably poor supply. Poor use is made of the few laboratory instruments supplied and these are badly maintained. Few schools have attained the school hygiene standard, with poor light and desks unsuitable in dimension being the norm.
- e) Poorly paid teachers find difficulty in making ends meet and must eke out their living by doing extra work. Every year, thousands of teachers leave their jobs, creating a serious teacher shortage. A number of teachers have not undergone formal training and little has been done about in-service training. As a result many teachers are not qualified to handle the demands of the new textbooks.
- f) The budget for education is very poor. Other sources of finance e. g. non-government organisations and local community bodies are limited in their ability to contribute. In some years, even the budget for education adopted by the National Assembly and the Ministerial Council was not sufficiently forthcoming.

- g) There is much to do in educational management as far as planning, the school network, the machinery, the inspection examination and the financial management mechanism are concerned.
- h) To obtain the desired results at the turn of the century in the literacy and universalisation of elementary education calls for great efforts. The percentage of students in the junior and secondary school age group is still low while the rate of school dropouts has been increasing, especially in the rural areas.

1.3 EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES IN VIETNAM

Having looked at the structure of the educational system and the powerful challenges facing it, we must look briefly at the educational philosophies in Vietnam, without which any discussion on solutions to educational development in general and to an increase in ELT efficiency and effectiveness in particular would be groundless, both theoretically and practically.

1.3.1 Child - based Philosophy

There is a move, throughout the world, and especially in rural education, to ensure the existence of child-based philosophies. Many United Nations and other international bodies have called for the right of all children to be educated. Many countries have already incorporated the right of the child to be educated into their institutional provisions or their laws.

In Vietnam, the rights of the child are clearly expressed in the law on Universalisation of Elementary Education (1991) and the law on Education, Protection and Care for the Child (1991).

Both of these laws recognise that children are the future of the nation and the source of family happiness. (Children as defined by these laws are all Vietnamese citizens under 16 years of age.)

The law on Universalisation of Elementary Education (1991) stipulates that Elementary education is compulsory and free of charge and outlines the concrete responsibilities and undertakings of the Government, the Ministry of Education and Training and the People's Councils at different levels to guarantee the right of children to elementary education. It further stipulates the responsibilities of students, families and the society and the awards and punishments in the implementation of the law.

The law on Education, Protection and Care for the Child (1991) stipulates the right for the child to be educated, protected and cared for by the family, the State and the society, defines the rights of the child in terms of birth certificate, parentage or patronage, to be brought up and cared for in terms of health, body, honour, education and training, entertainment, inheritance, etc. and fixes the responsibilities of the parents or guardians, the State, society and the schools for education, protection and care for the child.

1.3.2 Context - based Philosophy

A context-based philosophy distinguishes between urban education and rural education. Concerning the term 'rural education', a distinction is made between 'education in the rural areas' and

'education for the rural areas". Education in the rural areas is based on a general model of education applicable to all students living in all areas and includes a component, the size and extent of which depends on the demand of the concrete local situations, to meet the local community needs. Education for the rural areas, by contrast, is aimed at preparing the students for life in the local community.

The implication for this lies basically in syllabus design. In Vietnam, at the primary level of education, there are three types of syllabus:

- a) the syllabus for the 'already developed regions' (including the urban areas and the plains areas) (165 school weeks per annum)
- b) the shortened syllabus for the distant and isolated regions and the minority peoples' region (120 weeks)
- c) the intensive syllabus for students from 10 - 15 years of age who have not been afforded the opportunity to learn. (100 weeks)

1.3.3 Philosophy of Learning

The philosophy of learning holds that education is not a geographically defined concept. In other words, that the significance of education is the same in all parts of the country. Learning is a means that enables students to participate more usefully in the communities and the society in which they live. It is a liberating force in terms of escaping from poverty and illiteracy, including illiteracy of a foreign language. It is an empowering

force in enabling communities and individuals to identify the needs and goals in life and making them aware of the mechanism for satisfying these needs and achieving these goals.

Learning in Rural Vietnam exists in a context where individual rights and expectations meet. Vietnam is an agricultural country with more than 80% of the population living in the rural areas. Education in Vietnam, to a certain extent, means rural education. And the slogan of the Vietnamese government is to advance the rural areas in Vietnam to the level of development in urban areas. As a result, there is a philosophical concern for equity rather than equality in education in and for the rural areas. In terms of equity, learning in the rural context requires greater resources, particular teacher training and particular government and community support.

1.4 THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Vietnam is changing economically, culturally, socially and educationally. In terms of education, the country is making great efforts towards improvement in educational quality, because like other South-East Asian countries, Vietnam understands that the way to development and economic prosperity is through education. In recent years, many workshops, both national and regional, have been held in order to find the solutions to the problem of how to increase educational quality at all levels and at the elementary level in particular. Teaching effectiveness and efficiency are the concerns, both immediate and long-term for all parents, teachers and students.

This study is a pilot attempt towards seeking a solution to the complex problems in Junior Secondary Schools in rural Vietnam. It is hoped that, in the future, further research will be carried out in this field.

1.5 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The effective and efficient teaching of English at any level and in any context is the result of many different interacting factors. Within the framework of a study of the nature of the present one, I have limited the scope of my study to the search for ELT efficiency and effectiveness in terms of possible syllabus design, materials input and teacher development. For other solutions, if there are other solutions, I look forward to learning from further research.

1.6 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- a) to examine aspects of language acquisition theory which are relevant in a foreign as opposed to a second language context and to review current relevant research;
- b) to review recent major language teaching methods with the Vietnamese rural school situation in mind;
- c) to examine the actual FLT situation in rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam on the basis of data available;

- d) in the light of the above, to suggest a possible basis for syllabus design, aspects of textbook revision and future teacher development for greater ELT effectiveness and efficiency;
- e) by doing so, to contribute my part, as a teacher trainer, to the future of English Language Teaching in Vietnam in general and to the improvement of ELT materials and teacher quality in particular.

1.7 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 1

It is obvious that foreign language teaching is a long standing tradition in Vietnam. In Vietnamese culture, a man or woman with a good command of one or more foreign languages is always respected as a person of erudition. This tradition helps to create a favourable atmosphere for foreign language learning and teaching in Vietnam.

It is also obvious that foreign languages as a school subject play a very important role in the general school curriculum of Vietnam. Table 1 shows that the importance placed on the subject of Foreign Languages ranks third after Vietnamese and Mathematics. As a result, the success or failure of foreign language teaching in Vietnamese general schools will have a great effect on the education system as a whole. Any effort to better the teaching of foreign languages is always worthwhile academically as well as economically.

The majority of Vietnamese junior secondary school children go to rural schools. And education in Vietnam, as has been mentioned

earlier in this chapter, means, to some extent, rural education. Accordingly, ELT in Vietnamese junior secondary schools, means to some extent, ELT in rural junior secondary schools. To successfully solve the problem of ELT effectiveness and efficiency in junior secondary schools in rural Vietnam is assuredly a great contribution from the view point of the Vietnamese educational philosophy.

This study, within the limit of the objectives set for it, is but an initial step towards the solution of this great and complicated problem.

CHAPTER 2

LANGUAGE LEARNING

THE STATE OF THE ART LITERATURE

Learning about thinking is labour lost

Thinking about learning is perilous

(Confucius)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

On the basis of the objectives mentioned in chapter 1, it seems logical for this study to start with learning. The underlying assumption is that learning is central to teaching. And therefore considerations of teaching effectiveness and efficiency would be groundless theoretically and practically without considerations of learning, both as a product and a process.

2.1.1 Clarification of Terms

To begin with, it should be noted that some of the key terms used in this chapter are borrowed from informatics. To avoid potential misunderstanding, it is, therefore, necessary to clarify these terms at the start.

In this chapter, **input** is understood as being the linguistic data to which the learner is exposed. Connected with this is the term **blackbox**, which refers to the learner's mind, where the process of rejecting or accepting and transforming input occurs. Because the blackbox is the learner's mind, where there is the possibility of the

rejection of input, where it is impossible to predict that what ever goes in will come out, there arises the necessity of introducing another term: **intake**. Intake refers to the input which is actually incorporated by the learner. Krashen (1981, 1983) has likened the process of input incorporation to the 'casting of a net' into the sea of input. Anything the learner draws in becomes intake. The process of input incorporation ends with **output**. Output refers to the interlanguage data produced by the learner, the product of the language learning process.

2.2 THE INPUT CONTROVERSY IN THE 1970s

2.2.1 A New Perspective

According to Larsen-Freeman (1985), research focussing on input in second language acquisition was born in the early part of the 1970s. Before that time, research in second and foreign language learning was mainly product-oriented. Researchers were interested in describing syntactic form in learner's speech and debating whether the product was the result of mother-tongue interference or not. However, by looking into learner-speech as the product of language learning, researchers began to see that a major piece of the puzzle, the process of language learning, seemed to have been neglected. Hatch and Wagner-Gough (1976) were among the pioneer researchers who awakened the interest in input-focussed research when they said that if we wanted to say anything interesting about learner-output, we would have to look at the target language input with which the learner had to work. The left-most box of the following schema



became acknowledged as an essential domain for research in second and foreign language acquisition.

The change of direction from product-oriented to process-oriented research was, also according to Larsen-Freeman (1985), signalled by the discussions on the question of whether first and second language acquisition are identical, or at least similar, not necessarily in their product, but in the way they are brought about. As a by-product of this question, another major branch of research emerged, centring on the question of differential success in language acquisition: Why did it seem impossible for the vast majority of non-native speakers to reach the level of native-like proficiency regardless of their efforts in language learning? What might account for differences in the levels of success among second and foreign language learners? These questions were addressed by Hatch (1977), Stern (1980) and others. The first question was obviously process-oriented and the second question learner-oriented. At first, these two questions were approached separately as independent research areas, but, in the late 1970s, these two streams of research came together. In other words, both LEARNING and LEARNER were now considered of prime importance in target language input studies. The incorporation of learning and learner into one and the same set of variables in studies on second and foreign language acquisition has brought about the belief that the more we know about the learner, not only his or her mother-tongue but also his or her age, socio-economic status, gender, opportunities for interactions with target language speakers, conditions under which the learning process occurs etc -

the more we will know about the nature of the input which the learner is likely to receive.

2.2.2 Review of Studies in Input

The coming together of the two research streams into one does not mean that studies on input are uniform in nature. Larsen-Freeman (1985), in her review of literature on input studies, categorise studies on input in the 1970s into three major groups:

Group 1. Studies which explore some aspect of the link between input and output.

Group 2. Studies which characterize native-speaker/non-native speaker (NS-NNS) interactions

Group 3: Studies which characterise NNS-NNS interactions.

2.2.2.1 Group 1: Studies which explore aspects of the link between input and output.

Studies in this group can be subdivided into studies on input quantity and studies on input quality. By input quantity is meant the opportunity to use the target language the most or to receive the most target language input. Researchers interested in input quantity such as Rubin ("What the 'good language learner' can teach us" : 1975), Seliger ("Does practice make perfect?" : 1977), Bialystok ("Language skills and the learners: the classroom perspective." : 1978) and others are in agreement that the more linguistic data the learner is exposed to the greater language proficiency he or she will be likely to achieve. In other words, researchers emphasised the fact that we cannot begin to understand

acquisition if we limit our research to the consideration of acquisition as a syntactic process internal to the learner. Rather, they showed that acquisition is a process which relies on conversational interactions. Thus, syntax is viewed, not as the source of interactions, but developing from the learner's actual involvement in interaction.

Input quantity and input quality, though subdivided into two different research areas, are closely linked in that an increase of input quantity must go hand in hand with the increase of input quality. Input quality as implied by studies such as those below, refers to ideas such as perceptual salience, frequency of occurrence of elements in native speaker speech, syntactic complexity, semantic complexity, instructional sequence of the input data. Valuable insights into this have been put forward by Perkins and Larsen-Freeman ("The effect of formal language instruction on the order of morpheme acquisition" : 1975), Wagner-Gough and Hatch ("The importance of input data in second language acquisition studies" : 1975), Gaskill, Campbell and Vander Brook ("Some aspects of foreigner talk" : 1977), Krashen ("The theoretical and practical relevance of simple code in second language acquisition" : 1980) and Freed ("Talking to foreigners versus talking to children: similarities and differences" : 1980). Research into input quantity and input quality has been directed to the finding of whether or not input quantity and quality would account for learners' output, or to put it differently, to the finding of the link between input and output.

2.2.2.2 Group 2: Studies which characterize native-speaker / non-native-speaker (NS-NNS) interactions

Long (1980 : 81) divides this area into:

- a. Studies on foreigner talk (FT), i.e., on modifications NSs make to linguistic input to NNSs.
- b. Studies on foreigner talk discourse (FTD), i.e., on modifications NSs make to interactional structures to NNSs.
- c. Studies on teacher talk, i. e., on FT and FTD conducted in the classroom.

Researchers interested in this research area are Hatch, Shapira, Wagner-Gough (1978), Peck (1978), Long (1980), Clyne (1981) and others. Hatch (1978) and an number of others show that the main characteristics of FT are slower rate of speech, louder speech, longer pauses, common vocabulary, few idioms, greater use of gestures, more repetition, more summaries of preceding utterances, shorter utterances, and more deliberate articulation. Long (1980) and Clyne (1981) argue that in addition to this modified input, one also witnesses modified interaction in conversations with NNSs. Modified interaction refers to the interactional structures of the conversation, not just the language addressed to the learner. There are more instances of comprehension checks, confirmation checks, expansions, requests for clarification and self and other repetitions in discourse involving NNSs than in discourse only involving NSs. It is necessary to point out that these studies are mentioned here for the sake of the comprehensiveness of the literature survey. In the context of the Vietnamese rural schools, NS-NNS

spoken interactions are non-existent. Input modification in textbooks will be returned to in more detail later, as findings suggest that it is elaborative rather than the more normal syntactic modification which provides a richer and more target language type of input. (Parker and Chaudron : 1987)

Studies on NS teacher talk (Gaies : 1977; Long and Sato : 1983) have shown that, while there is a degree of similarity to FT, interactions in the majority of classes, being predominantly one way (i.e. Teacher--->Student), are different from natural interaction both in the limited range of functions used and in the limited opportunities provided for negotiation of meaning. D'Anglejan (1978) suggests that input is thus reduced and does not provide enough opportunity for hypothesis formation and testing. Little research has yet been carried out into the modifications made by NNS teachers towards their students or the amount of spoken input that is available in such a context.

2. 2. 2. 3 Group 3: Studies which characterise non-native speaker / non-native speaker (NNS / NNS) interactions.

Researches into NNS/NNS interactions by Plann (1976), Long, Adams, McClean and Castanos (1976), Harley and Swain (1977) and others, focus their attention on the benefits for NNSs derived from the process of engaging in target language conversation with their peers. Findings from these studies, and particularly work done by Porter (1883) and Varonis and Gass (1985), seem to suggest that communication breakdowns, which frequently occur in the process of NNS-NNS interactions, may have a positive value in pushing

NNSs to gain practice in negotiating meaning. Larsen-Freeman (1985) claims that peer input is valuable since it is often more accessible to other NNSs than NS speech. This claim is problematic and raises much discussion later on.

2.3 THE INPUT CONTROVERSY IN THE 1980s

The controversy in the 1980s, briefly summarised, rejects the notion that we can account for second and foreign language acquisition with the linear model of **input-----> blackbox-----> output**.

2.3.1 Input as a blackbox-related element

As far as input is concerned, it has been shown that learners do not assimilate all the NS input introduced to them (Liceras, Sharwood-Smith, Chaudron (1985)). The concept of 'intake' as defined at the beginning of this chapter now arises. The discussion on the relationship between input and intake in the input studies of the 1980s is, as a matter of fact, not new. It was Corder (1967 : 165) who was the first to make a distinction between input and intake when he noted that the human mind (the blackbox in the input theory) was quite different from the computer blackbox in that what goes in is not necessarily what comes out.

Other researchers (e.g. Wagner-Gough and Hatch (1975) Larsen-Freeman (1976), Long (1981) argued in the 1970s that the structure and variability of forms and functions in target language input to the learner is related to the acquisition of these forms through modifications of those forms that render the input meaningful to

the learner (see: foreigner talk, foreigner talk discourse and teacher talk above). What is new, perhaps, is the reaffirmation of the importance of modification of input through simplification, negotiation of meaning or redundancy, and the argument that input should consist of L2 data and data from L1 and other languages that may be brought in through translation, comparison, etc. (Liceras 1985 : 359). Of these two, the latter is of vital significance for the acceptance of the input theory in non-English speaking countries. Input theory in the 1980s does not exclude the role of L1 from its considerations and even regards the knowledge acquired in the L1 process, or knowledge of any other L2 language previously learned, as an element that helps process L2 input into intake (Liceras, 1985 : 354 - 376).

The problem is: what exactly is the intake in SLA and its relation to the input? Brown, basing himself on Krashen's concept of 'casting the net' in SLA, argues:

"This fishing analogy, if extended, can help us understand the worth of studying specific requests for input. A specific request for input - that is, a question about so particular an aspect of the language or communication - is tantamount not to the learner 'casting a net' but to the learner letting down a carefully baited and lured hook with the hope of catching some particular thing. What the learner finds important to 'catch' is of interest (emphasis added by the author). This is especially true of requests for input made in the classroom because there we can assume that the learners at least recognize that the purpose of the expedition is to 'fish'. The learners know they are 'in the boat' (1985 : 272-273)

To put Brown's argument the other way, the condition for turning input into intake is that the sort of input provided must conform to the learners' interest. When that condition is met, the next problem to consider is the way in which the phonological, lexical,

syntactic, and pragmatic features of the target language are perceived, understood, and subsequently assimilated into the learner's developing grammar. In other words, the process of the intake of input forms a process which Chaudron (1985 : 285) believes to be "dependent both on characteristics of the input and on aspects of the learner's competence". Thus, input, in order to become intake, must have in itself characteristics conformable to the learner's interest and linguistic competence.

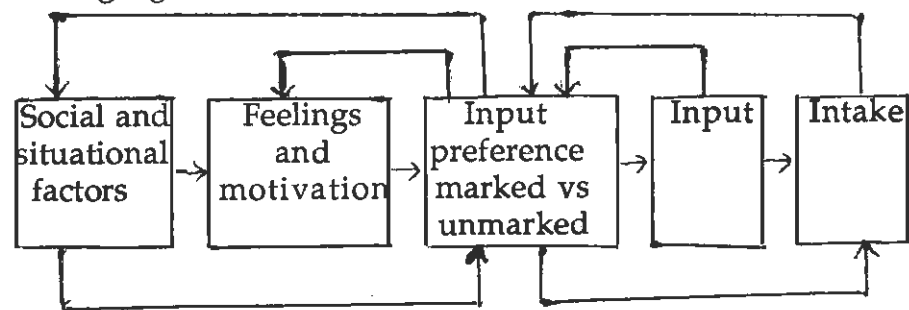
In addition to that, the concept of input preference is introduced by Beebe (1985). By input preference, Beebe means those target language models which learners consciously or unconsciously choose to attend to more than others. The foundation stone for Beebe's argument on input preference is that NNSs should not be viewed simply as passive recipients of comprehensible or incomprehensible input from NSs, but as active participants in the process of language learning. As a result, they are likely to choose only the preferred language models as the right stuff to be acquired depending on their values. In the light of this argument, Beebe (1985 : 404) proposes:

1. Input studies should report the complex of socio-psychological variables that shape NNSs' preference for acquiring and using certain models over others in addition to reporting on traditional aspects of input such as form, frequency, content, saliency or comprehensibility.
2. Input studies should interpret apparent model preferences in terms of existing or new socio-psychological theories.

Input preferences, in Beebe's opinion, are categorised into marked or unmarked choices. The unmarked category is "the more

frequent, basic or expected situation which tends to be the norm" (1985 : 405) and the marked category is "the secondary type of preference which is most likely to exist as an additional category but not so likely to stand alone as the norm" (1985 : 405). And the marked category is "the secondary type of preference which is most likely to exist as an additional category but not so likely to stand alone as the norm in a society at large or in an interpersonal communication." (1985 : 405)

Input preference is the key element that guarantees the transformation of the provided input into intake as schematized in the following figure:



(Beebe : 1985 : 411)

Figure 2. 1: Input preferences

The figure also shows that the feelings or motivations behind preference for or rejection of various target models, the situational and social factors that shape preferences and the interaction among them are the starting points for the process of turning input into intake. The interpretation of this figure changes the simplistic belief that the relation between **input - blackbox - output** is a linear one. In this tripartite schema the middle ground - the blackbox or the mind of the learner - does not operate in a predictable fashion. To use Larsen-Freeman's words, "Clearly the learner does receive

dynamic, customized input, but equally clearly, the learner cannot be seen to be a passive recipient of such - not merely a blackbox waiting to be spoon-fed NS input" (1985 : 443). The validity of this statement is enhanced by research findings of such researchers as Kellerman and Zoble (1985), Gass and Varonis (1985) and others.

2.3.2 Swain's comprehensible output hypothesis

In parallel with the changed interpretation of the first two elements of the schema: input - blackbox - output, the final element, output, is also considered in a new light, Swain (1985), dealing with the relationship between input and output, makes a distinction between comprehensible input and negative input. By comprehensible input, she means the language data directed to the learner that contains some new element in it but that is nevertheless understood by the learner because of its linguistic, paralinguistic or situational cues or world knowledge back-up. Comprehensible input is different from negative input in that negative input refers to feedback to the learner which indicates that his/her output has been unsuccessful in some way. Krashen (1981) suggests that the role of output is only to generate comprehensible input. Swain (1985), however, argues that there are other roles for output which are not related to comprehensible input. One function of output is that it provides the opportunity for meaningful use of one's linguistic knowledge. This function of output is apparent in interactions when, in a communication breakdown, the learner receives some negative input and is pushed to use alternate means to get across his or her message. Being 'pushed' in output is a concept which Swain (1985 : 248) believes to be parallel to that of the $i + 1$, of comprehensible input.

As such, the 'pushed' output might serve as the basis of a new hypothesis: "Comprehensible output hypothesis" (Swain : 1985 : 249).

The other function of output, apart from generating 'pushed' language use, is, by using the language rather than simply comprehending the language, the learner may be "forced from semantic processing to syntactic processing" (Swain : 1985 : 249) The discovery of this function is based on Krashen's argument that learners acquire structure by understanding messages, by "going for meaning" (1982 : 54). In other words, it is possible, Swain interprets, "to comprehend input - to get the message without a syntactic analysis of the input" (1985 : 249). Clearly, by using the language, the learner is given the opportunity to pay attention to and to try out means of expression and see if they work. The functions of output, understood this way, are undoubtedly a means to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the learning process.

2.4 INPUT THEORY AND MODELS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

2.4.1 Introduction

The review of literature on language learning theory would be incomplete without mentioning a number of models of language learning and teaching proposed by researchers in the last decade. The three models mentioned have one thing in common: they are all learner focussed. The models selected for discussion are ones which have some relevance to the context in which this study is set. Thus Schumann's Acculturation Model (1978 ,1990), which is

primarily related to language acquisition in a second language environment, is not considered appropriate nor are the recent interactionist models, such as Givon's Functional-Typological Theory (1981), as they have not yet been sufficiently widely developed to apply to the Vietnamese context.

2.4.2 Krashen's Monitor Model

The best known model of language acquisition is Krashen Monitor Model, which was developed with the emergence of research in the natural order of language development. Krashen's model is basically the product of what has been called the distinction between acquisition and learning

By acquisition, Krashen means the process of obtaining the ability to use language automatically, without any conscious effort. Learning, on the other hand, is the process of consciously making an effort to achieve language proficiency. The following table summarises the distinction (Krashen and Terrell : 1983 : 33).

Acquisition - Learning Distinction

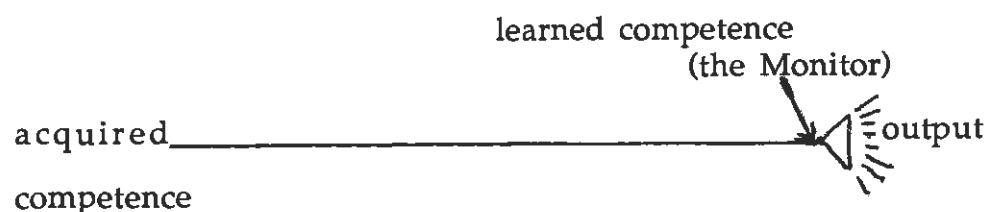
Acquisition	Learning
similar to child 1st language acquisition	formal knowledge of language
'picking up' a language	'knowing about' a language
subconscious	conscious
implicit knowledge	explicit knowledge
formal teaching does not help	formal teaching helps

Figure 2. 2: Krashen's Distinction between Acquisition and Learning

The understanding of Krashen's distinction between acquisition and learning is crucial to the understanding of his 'Monitor Hypothesis'. The hypothesis says that

"when we produce utterances in a second language, the utterance is 'initiated' by the acquired system and our conscious learning only comes into play later. We can use the Monitor to make changes in our utterances only after the utterance has been generated by the acquired system" (1983 : 30).

In other words, fluency is a product of unconscious knowledge and the role of conscious learning is nothing more than the role of a monitor, available to the learner as a quality control agency to check the output of the acquired system.



(Krashen : 1981 : 2)

Figure 2. 3: Krashen's Monitor Model

The acquired competence is developed through a process where, to use Krashen's word, the acquirer 'moves' from a stage i (i = the acquirer's interlanguage stage, or existing level of competence) to a stage $i + 1$ ($i + 1$ = the next stage, the acquirer's heightened level of competence). This process is accomplished with the help of context and background knowledge already possessed by the acquirer. Krashen, naming this process an acquisition process, says that $i + 1$ is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for acquisition but

assures us that "if there is enough input, $i + 1$ will usually be covered automatically." He further distinguishes between finely-tuned and roughly-tuned input. By finely-tuned input he means "input that aims specifically at one structure at a time". Roughly-tuned input (also referred to as the net) is "the result of a speaker using a language so that the acquirer understands what is said" (1983 : 33). The difference between finely-tuned input and roughly-tuned input is illustrated in the figure below. (Krashen and Terrell : 1983 : 33)

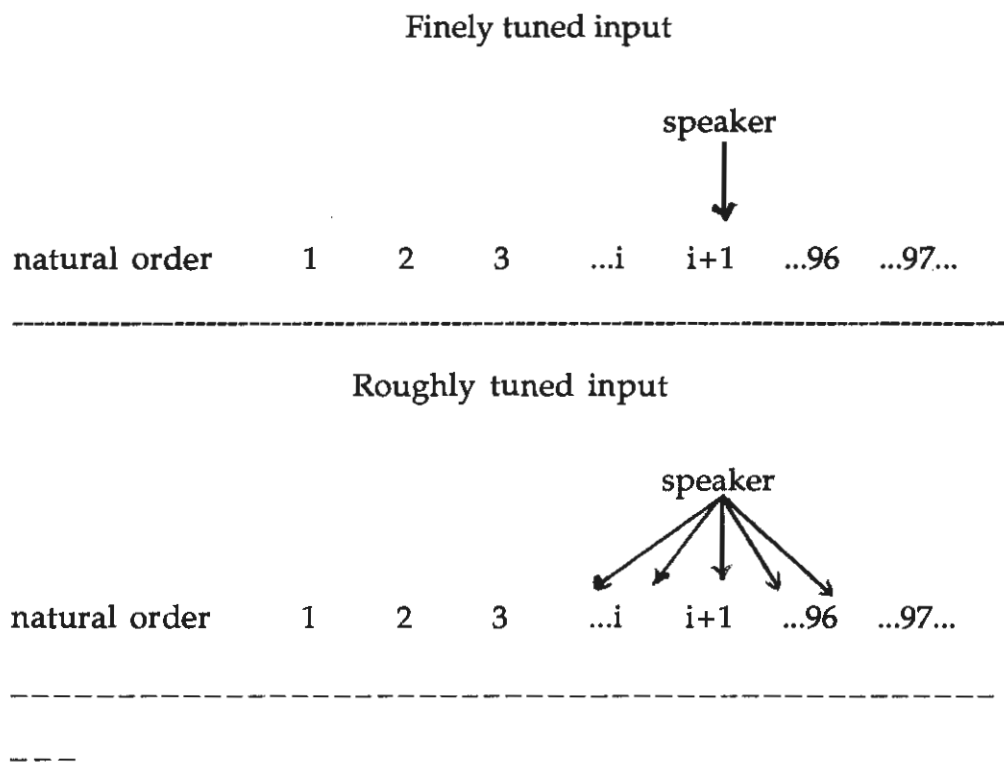
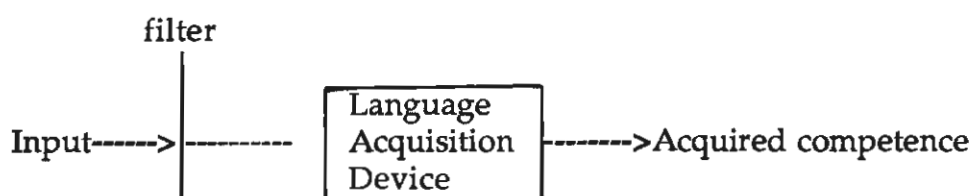


Figure 2. 4: Krashen's Distinction between Finely-tuned Input and Roughly-tuned Input

The concept of the net has been mentioned above in this chapter as an argument for the choice of the right kind of input for the learner given by Brown (1985). Here, the 'net' is used, in Krashen's sense, as a distinction from finely-tuned input. However, the

distinction between the two concepts is somewhat ambiguous. If finely-tuned input really is "input that aims specifically at one structure at a time" (as cited above), and the speaker "deliberately tries to include many examples of the student's $i + q$ " (1983 : 33) then, if there is finely-tuned input, comprehension will inevitably occur. With the modifications that are made in foreigner talk interactions which are normally 1:1, finely-tuned input is what the NS tries to achieve. In the classroom situation, where the ratio of one to many is the case and where learners' competence levels will inevitably vary, it is impossible to provide finely-tuned input. Accordingly, there is no need to make a distinction between the two. Maybe, the concept of the net should be interpreted in the way proposed by Brown (ibid 1985) as a fishing analogy. The learner casts a net into the sea of input and whatever is inside the net when it is pulled up is the learner's comprehension. Whatever is outside the net becomes waste.

This interpretation of the concept of the net goes very well with the affective filter hypothesis proposed by Krashen himself. This hypothesis states that not all input becomes intake because there is a filter which stands between them:



(Krashen and Terrell : 1983 : 39)

Figure 2. 5: Operation of the 'Affective Filter'

The introduction of the filter into this schema reminds us of the concept of input preference introduced by Beebe above. The filter relates to factors such as motivation, interest cultural attitudes etc.

Criticisms of Krashen's model (McLaughlin (1978, 1987), Gregg, (1984), Faerch & Kasper (1986), White (1987), Long (1990) and others) have focussed mainly on his fundamental claim that there is not only a distinction but also a complete independence between acquisition and learning. Practising teachers also would wonder: Why should there be this distinction? What is the value of distinguishing between acquired competence and learned competence? The separation of acquisition and learning into isolated systems sounds unreasonable and counter-intuitive, in that in the argument given by Krashen himself, acquired competence and learned competence seem to closely 'cooperate' with each other in producing utterances. Learned competence as presented by Krashen in his Monitor theory seems to work more reliably than acquired competence.

"In general, utterances are initiated by the acquired system. Our fluency in production is based on what we have 'picked up' through active communication. Our formal knowledge of the second language, our conscious learning may be used to alter the output of the acquired system sometimes before and sometimes after the utterance is produced. We make these changes to improve accuracy and the use of the monitor often has this effect."

(Krashen : 1981 : 2)

This argument has in itself the implication that acquired competence and learned competence are elements on one and the same continuum. They are inter-related elements working

interchangeably in the process of producing utterances. Seen as such, they should be regarded, if not as belonging to one system, certainly as interacting to a much greater degree than Krashen would allow.

Ellis (1990 : 106), in referring to Krashen's Monitor Model, states that it is 'a bucket full of holes'. However, Krashen's Monitor Model is not without value for language pedagogy. The Monitor Model and its application to language teaching ,according to Ellis (1990: 61),"represented a complete break with Audio-lingualism." It provides a statement of important principle, namely that for successful classroom acquisition, learners require access to message-oriented communication that they can understand, not mechanical drills in language forms.

2.4.3 Brumfit's Accuracy and Fluency Model

Brumfit while claiming that Krashen's model cannot be used as it stands as a model for language teaching methodology, seems to accept that a weak version of it may have some value. He recognises "the existence of self-monitoring and correction in the fluent speech of many proficient language users" (1986 : 52) and takes the position that acquisition and learning are closely related. He prefers however, to look at the distinction, not as a psychological or linguistic one of the process of language learning but rather as a methodological one related to language teaching. His model suits the Vietnamese context, in that it takes no account of exposure to the language outside the classroom.

Accuracy and Fluency, the basis of Brumfit's model, are not concepts that appear for the first time in his Model. In earlier studies, accuracy and fluency are defined as interrelated concepts. The European Threshold Level (Van Ek : 1977; Van Ek and Alexander : 1980) refers to oral fluency as "reasonable speech, with sufficient precision, with reasonable correctness (grammatically, lexically, phonologically)". Fillmore (1979 : 93) refers to fluency as "the ability to fill time with talk...the ability to talk in coherent, reasoned and 'semantically dense' sentences....the ability to have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts...and the ability to be creative and imaginative in language use." Hieke (1985 : 140) refers to fluency as "the cumulative results of dozens of different kinds of processes" with both quantitative and qualitative dimensions (cited in Richards : 1990 : 75). Accuracy, as explained by Richards (1990 : 76) is a component rather than an independent dimension of fluency.

In Brumfit's Model, a clear distinction is made between accuracy and fluency. In plain language, what Brumfit refers to as accuracy is, in fact, the output of the learned competence. And what he refers to as fluency is the output of the acquired competence. Krashen's distinction between acquisition and learning presented above may serve as the background for the understanding of this difference. New to Brumfit's Model is the introduction of the concept of time into the Model. With time as an element working in parallel with other elements of the Model as a system, Brumfit divides the process into stages. Brumfit suggests that with time, the learned competence (which produces accuracy as the output)

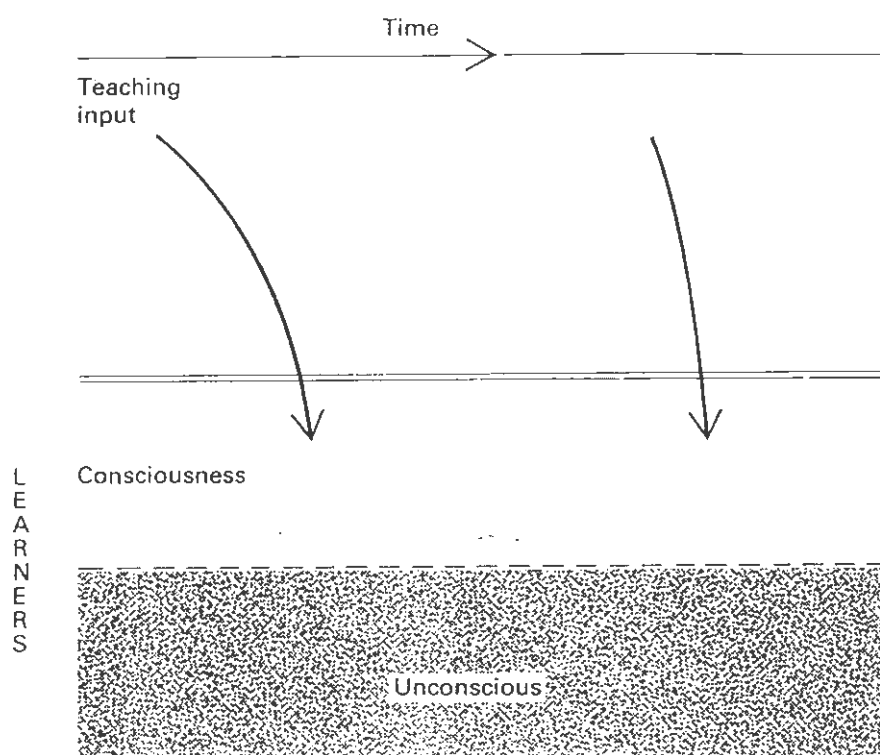
will be transferred into the acquired competence (which produces fluency as the output).

Applied to classroom teaching, Brumfit's accuracy and fluency model of language teaching is advantageous in that

"it is possible to ask a teacher for the objective of any classroom activity in terms of the distinction, and to argue about the appropriateness of the activity in relation to a view of the nature of language learning and of the requirements of pedagogy. Furthermore, the distinction is neutral with respect to the type of syllabus specified, but insists that the syllabus can influence only one part of the language work. Accuracy will tend to be closely related to the syllabus, will tend to be teacher dominated and will tend to be form based. Fluency must be student dominated, meaning based and relatively unpredictable towards the syllabus. By giving the latter prominence, without completely rejecting the former, motivation is provided for the selection of process activities" (Brumfit : 1986.a :131)

Brumfit's divides his model into four stages as follows.

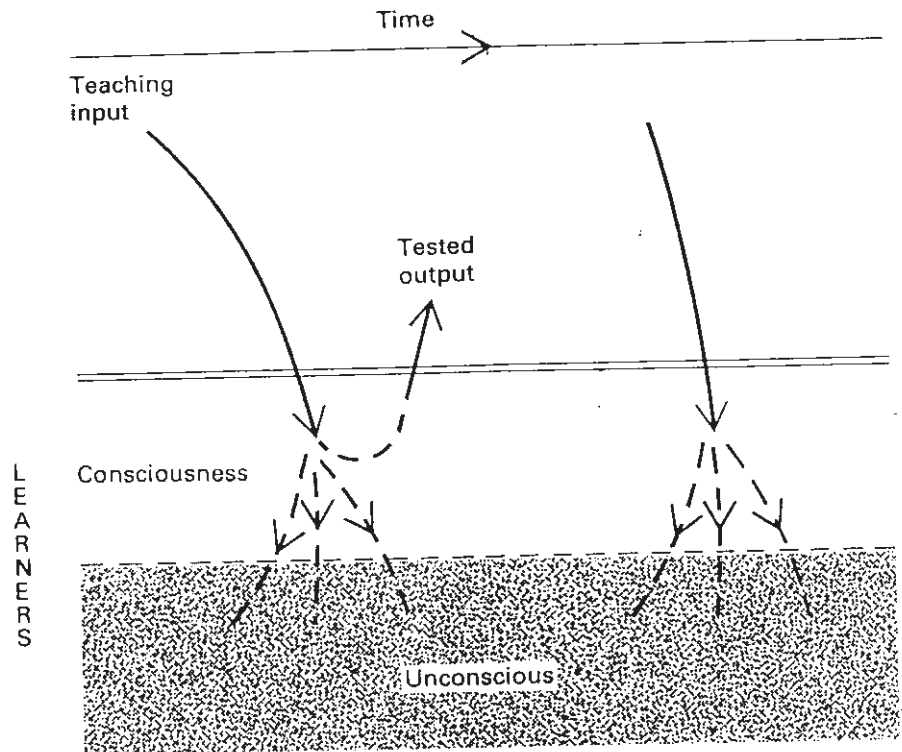
Figure 2. 6: Phase I in Brumfit's Model - Formal, Accuracy-based Teaching



(1986.a : 63)

In this phase, teaching input (the arrows) consists of new items of language forms presented in class through the teacher, textbook and others aids. This input can only reach the learners' conscious mind where it is processed into learned competence. Brumfit (1986.a:63) explains "we cannot legitimately assume that such teaching will necessarily have any immediate impact below the level of consciousness". No acquisition, in Krashen's terms, has occurred yet in this phase in Brumfit's Model.

Figure 2. 7: Phase II in Brumfit's Model - Conventional Testing

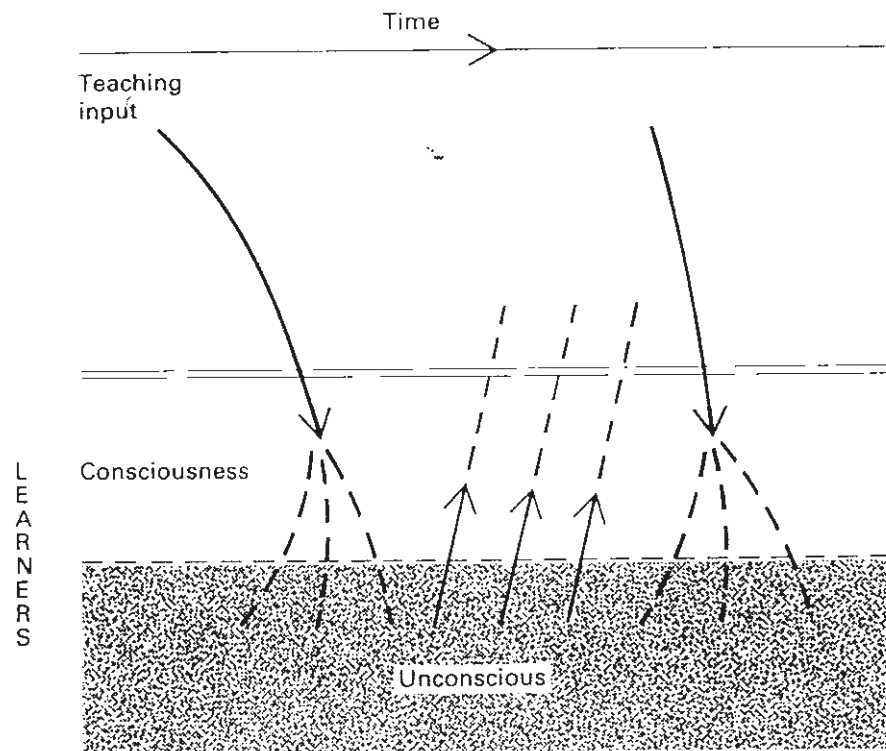


(1986.a : 64)

In this phase, due to the teaching input that has been exposed to the language learner, the ability to produce language begins to appear on the learner's part. But obviously, the production of language originates from the learned competence which, in Krashen's distinction, is independent of the acquired competence. The learned competence, Brumfit believes, will be turned into acquired competence (see the arrows approaching and breaking through into the unconscious mind). Brumfit himself explains that this points out the difference between his Model and Krashen's. Brumfit regards conscious and unconscious knowledge

as interconnected, as elements which can filter across into the unconscious, while Krashen thinks of conscious and unconscious knowledge as two unconnected systems working alternately with each other in producing linguistic output.

Figure 2. 8: Phase III in Brumfit's Model -The Process of Language Use



(1986.a: 65)

In this phase, the teaching input has reached the learner's unconscious mind and, through language use, becomes acquired competence. In Brumfit's opinion, the learner's conscious mind is the medium for transmitting linguistic input from 'the outside', the public operations with language done by various sources: teachers, textbooks, teaching aids, etc to 'the inside', the unconscious mind. In Krashen's opinion, the learner's conscious mind is nothing more than a 'commodity quality control' laboratory from where signals are sent to the 'manufacturer' of the

product, informing him/her if the product is up to the standard or below the standard so that immediate actions should be taken to 'remedy' it. The 'manufacturer' is the conscious mind. The incorporation of the unconscious mind into the process of conscious language control makes the argument on the relation between the conscious and the unconscious sound loose and even somewhat absurd. One is easily tempted to ask if the unconscious mind works like a tool to the conscious mind or vice versa. And if so, the border line between the two would become blurred and even non-existent.

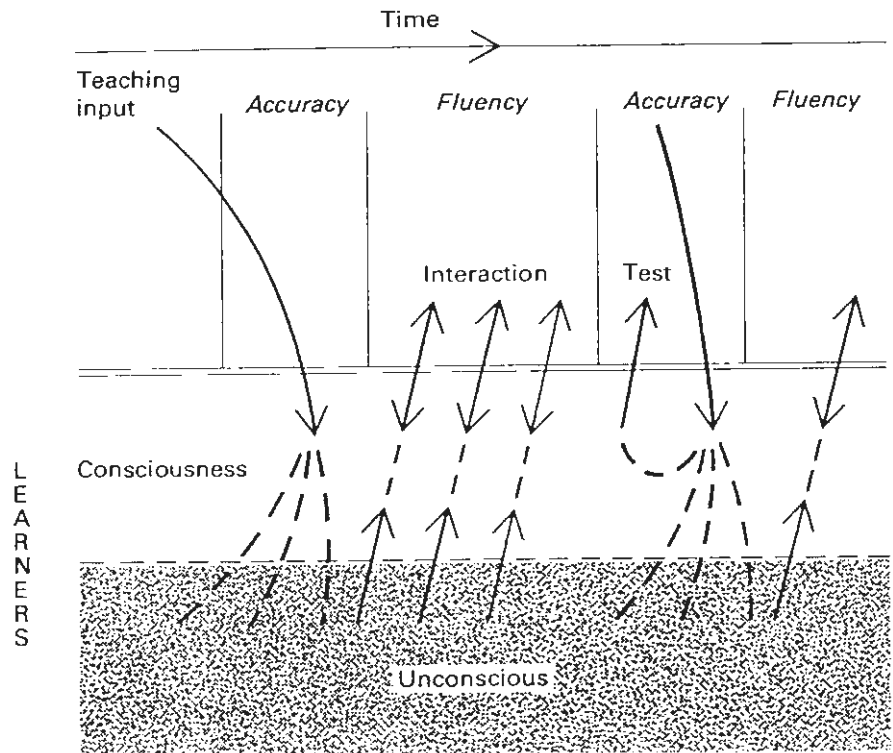
In Brumfit's argument, accuracy is conscious-made, while fluency is unconscious-made. And the emphasis in making the accuracy/fluency distinction, Brumfit (1986.a: 51) declares, "is on the mental set of the learner".

The implication of this distinction between accuracy and fluency for classroom teaching is that it is possible to facilitate language acquisition through classroom teaching. This idea is shared by Long (1983). Basing himself on a review of a total of eleven studies that examined the effect of formal instruction on the rate/success of L2 acquisition, Long (1983) claimed that instruction was beneficial (1) for children as well as adults, (2) for intermediate and advanced students (3) irrespective of whether acquisition was measured by means of an integrative or discrete point test and (4) in acquisition rich as well as acquisition poor environments.

Ellis (1990 : 131) also claimed that instruction was "more effective than exposure in promoting L2 acquisition."

These claims by researchers on language acquisition serve as the basis for our claim that Brumfit's Model suits the Vietnamese context.

Figure 2. 9: Phase IV in Brumfit's Model - Accuracy/Fluency Distinction



(1986.a : 65)

In this phase, the conversion of conscious knowledge into unconscious knowledge is facilitated through the placement of heavy emphasis on fluency activities. In Brumfit's opinion, fluency-oriented language teaching at this stage is more likely to be successful than any other form of language teaching. The aim of fluency activities is "to develop a pattern of language interaction within the classroom which is as close as possible to that used by competent performers in mother tongue in normal life" (Brumfit, 1986.a:69). In other words, the aim of fluency activity is to achieve

near native speaker-like comprehension and production or native speaker-like communicative competence.

In Vietnam, communicative competence has been defined as the ultimate goal for the process of foreign language teaching and learning at all levels (from the junior secondary school level to the university level). The application of Brumfit's Accuracy and Fluency Model of Language Teaching is therefore desirable. Brumfit's Accuracy and Fluency Model of Language Teaching will serve as the theoretical basis for the choice of the ELT syllabus type mentioned in chapter 5 of this study, although at the same time it raises a number of practical problems.

2.4.4 Wang's Optimal Learning Model

Unlike Brumfit's Model which, as has been shown above, originates from the accuracy/fluency distinction, Wang's Model is built on another basis, the comprehension/production distinction. To get a clear insight into Wang's Model, it seems necessary to look into what he means to be comprehension and production. By comprehension, Wang refers to a process of searching for meaning on the basis of form. "Comprehension is a from-form-to-meaning activity, in which form, normally appropriate form, is given" (1986 :111). As "a from-form-to-meaning" process, comprehension is available to any listener/reader with knowledge of meanings of words, phrases and grammar rules. The problem of inappropriacy is non-existent in the comprehension process, Wang argues, because the form given is already appropriate. This makes the comprehension process easier than the production process and

allows us to believe that our comprehension ability is always greater than our production ability:

"We can always understand what we ourselves have said, but can not always produce what we have comprehended. If we can read Dickens, that does not mean we can write like him. In fact, many advanced language learners can read Dickens, but very, very few of them can ever produce flawless writings comparable to the simplified materials written by native speakers"

(1986 : 99)

The production process is always a more difficult process because it is the reverse process of searching for form to produce meaning. Wang defines it as "a from--meaning-to-form activity", in which meaning is first given and then one has to create the form" (1986 : 104). Wang holds the belief that:

"Creating form is more laborious than decoding form. Sometimes even native speakers have to consciously search for the right forms, and often are at a loss for words for the moment or simply find something beyond description. Foreign learners have even more difficulty in creating forms. While it is relatively easy for learners to have subconscious focus on meaning in comprehension activity, it is less easy for them to have focus on meaning alone in production activity. Hence there is more fossilization in production than in comprehension"

(1986 : 104)

What is fossilization? Wang takes the classical definition of this concept from Selinker and Lamendella (1980). and defines it as the liability to "stop short of native proficiency, to different degrees in different aspects of learning" (1986 : 102). And Wang makes the hypothesis that fossilization is, roughly, in inverse proportion to meaning. Learners are likely to fossilize more in meaning-scarce areas (production of pronunciation, morphology, etc) and less in

meaning-copious areas (comprehension, production of vocabulary and larger unit of form).

In the light of the above-mentioned factors, Wang proposes to reject the following acquisition process.

Figure 2. 10: (1986 : 110)

His reason is the simple one that there is no room for comprehension and production in this schema. Instead, he proposes the following process, as it describes more accurately what really occurs in language learning:

Figure 2. 11: (1986 :110)

This schema shows that in the process of language learning, comprehension occurs before production and only part of what has been comprehended can be turned into production. This schema can be rearranged to make this idea clear and we can have

Figure 2. 12: (1986 : 111)

meaning-copious areas (comprehension, production of vocabulary and larger unit of form).

In the light of the above-mentioned factors, Wang proposes to reject the following acquisition process.

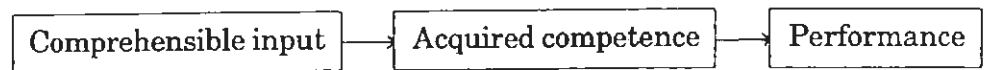


Figure 2. 10: (1986 : 110)

His reason is the simple one that there is no room for comprehension and production in this schema. Instead, he proposes the following process, as it describes more accurately what really occurs in language learning:

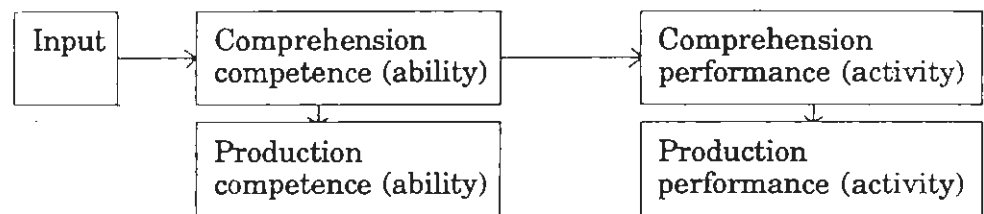


Figure 2. 11: (1986 :110)

This schema shows that in the process of language learning, comprehension occurs before production and only part of what has been comprehended can be turned into production. This schema can be rearranged to make this idea clear and we can have

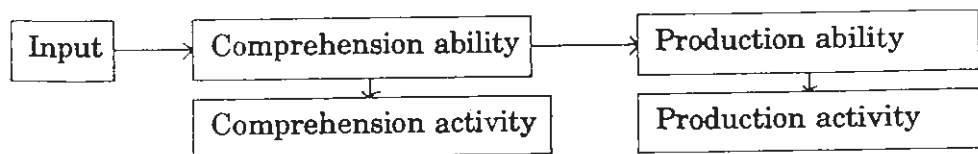


Figure 2. 12: (1986 : 111)

Or a simplified schema:

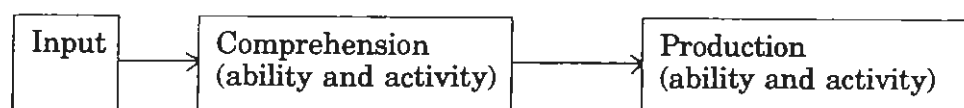


Figure 2. 13: (1986 :111)

This simplified schema covers both comprehension and production, the two different processes of reverse nature as presented above, but still, it fails to explain why certain input is rejected from the process of input transformation and why certain comprehended input cannot be transferred into production. Here fossilization is referred to as Input Filter and Output Filter:

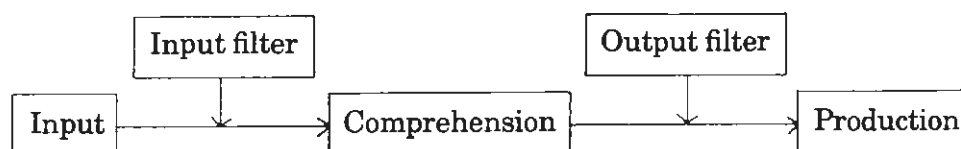


Figure 2. 14: (1986 :111)

The separation of one and the same process into two sub-processes of language learning, according to Wang, does not imply that between comprehension and production there is no interaction. In fact, these are two inter-dependent processes. The grammar rules used for decoding processes in comprehension are indispensable for encoding processes in production. What is really implied by this separation is that it is an effort to look for effectiveness and efficiency of the language learning process in non-English speaking environment where there is a big gap between the learner's comprehension ability. In the case where the learner aims high at

production ability and the gap between them the comprehension and production processes is narrow, the advantage of the separation will be outweighed by the interaction of the two processes. And furthermore, where is no gap between the comprehension and production processes, the need for separation will disappear.

On the basis of the division of the learning process into the two different processes, Wang proposes two sets of learning procedures which both start from pronunciation training:

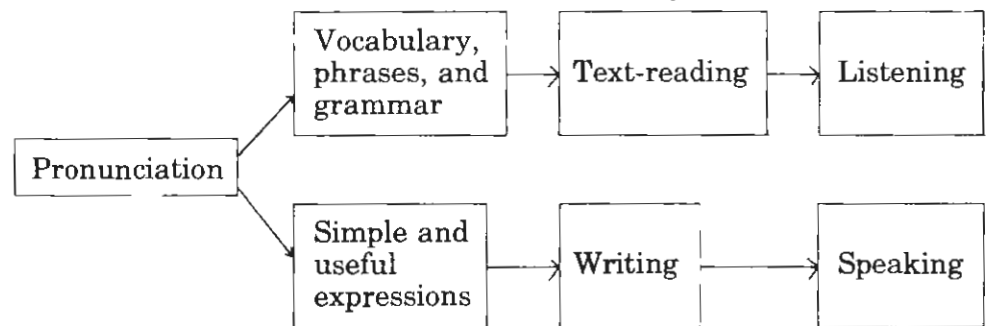


Figure 2. 15.

(1986 :122)

Wang (1986 : 122) explains that the learning approach he proposes is not meant to reject any existing teaching approach. His approach is but a reflection of practising language teachers' common effort towards the incorporation of whatever is useful and valuable in each approach into the practice of language teaching.

2.5 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2

In the last two decades, there seems to have been a revolution in language teaching. People, in their zeal for effectiveness and efficiency in teaching languages for communication, placed Communicative Language Teaching on the throne of the language teaching kingdom and turned their attention to language learning as the number one citizen of the Kingdom. The Input controversy

was, as a matter of fact, the reflection of 'the-focus-on-the - language-learner' attitude. Empirical input research has suggested ways in which input is turned into intake, and what the variables are that interfere in this process. The relationship between the elements of the tripartite schema: Input-Blackbox-Output has been proved to very complicated and the literature mentioned in this chapter has reflected this.

In parallel with Input studies, various teaching and learning models have been proposed. In this chapter, only three models are mentioned, Krashen's Model, a pro-Krashen Model, Brumfit's Model and an anti-Krashen Model - Wang's Model. Krashen's Model is problematic both theoretically and practically in that it is very difficult to test this model. Wang (1986 : 100-101) criticises Krashen's Model as basically production oriented though its starting point is 'comprehensible input'. Krashen's Monitor model obviously applies to output only. The acquisition/learning distinction and the natural order studies are also based on output. Comprehension (to use Wang's term) is not adequately dealt with in Krashen's model "Krashen seems to be more interested in how to turn comprehensible input into output (production) than how to turn input into comprehension" (Wang, 1986 : 101). However, Krashen's Monitor Model is, as has been mentioned above, the best known theory of second language acquisition.

"For a while, the theory dominated the field of L2 acquisition to such an extent that researchers felt compelled to measure their results and theoretical positions against those covered by the Monitor Model. This is a testimony to the lucidity, simplicity and explanatory power of Krashen's theory." (Ellis, 1990:57)

Brumfit's Model is, in fact, a modification of Krashen's Model repudiating the independence of the two knowledge systems. According to Brumfit, practice and time are the basic elements that turns accuracy into fluency. As a modification of Krashen's Model, Brumfit's Accuracy and Fluency Model of Language Teaching seems to be applicable to the context where English is taught as a foreign language.

Wang's Optimal Learning Model, considered from the view point of foreign language learning, is also a valuable contribution in terms of teaching and learning effectiveness and efficiency. Both Brumfit's and Wang's Models will serve as possible theoretical solutions to ELT effectiveness and efficiency upon which the search for practical solutions to ELT effectiveness and efficiency for junior secondary schools in rural Vietnam is founded.

CHAPTER 3

LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS:

THE NEVER-ENDING SEARCH FOR TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

Ends and means vary from age to age. Education is in constant movement to suit its milieu

(Kelly, 1969 :396)

3.1 EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

Having looked at the complicated problems of input theory and a number of learning and teaching models, I now turn to an examination of the main language teaching methods as a means to realise teaching effectiveness and efficiency.

In this chapter and throughout this study, 'effectiveness' means the degree of goal achievement and 'efficiency' means the ratio of output to input. Effectiveness and efficiency constitute the most important dimensions of the language teaching 'performance', which in this context means the actual language teaching/learning process.

Effectiveness, as defined above, depends on the comparison between the goals achieved and the goals wanted. If the goals achieved are synonymous with the goals wanted, then the method is said to be effective. Similarly, efficiency, being the ratio of output to input, depends on the comparison between the output and the input, output being understood as the product of the language teaching and learning process, whether it is production or

comprehension ability. Input involves two variables: input quantity and input quality. Accordingly, we have: (Production or Comprehension Ability) = (Input quantity) x (Input Quality) x (the Output Filter) (Note: the concept of the output filter is here understood as the failure to process the input into intake (comprehensible input). If any of these three variables is zero, production or comprehension ability is zero, because production and comprehension ability is the product, not the sum of the three, (Wang : 1986). Turning to our conception of efficiency presented above, it can be argued that if

$$\frac{\text{(Production / Comprehension Ability)}}{\text{(Input Quality) x (Input Quantity) x (output filter)}} = 1$$

the method is said to be efficient. The concept of the output filter is introduced as effectiveness and efficiency are not products in themselves but product of other variables which might be demonstrated in the following diagram:

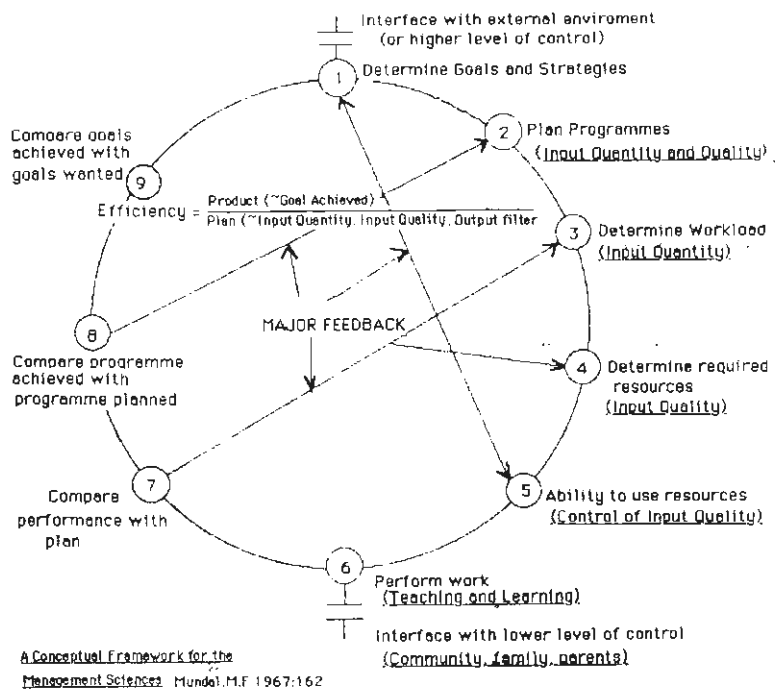


Figure 3: Teaching efficiency

The diagram shows that when the output (or product) is equivalent to the goal achieved and the goals achieved coincide with the plan the distinction between effectiveness and efficiency is none. However, in this chapter and throughout this study, effectiveness and efficiency are used as two distinct concepts.

Effectiveness and efficiency are two dynamic concepts depending on the one hand on the goals wanted and on the other, the input. Effectiveness and efficiency are then historically conditioned concepts. When the goals of the language teaching and learning process change, as required by the concrete demands at certain points in history, the effectiveness and/or efficient value of a method will change accordingly. Thus a teaching method which may be effective at one point of time in history may still be ineffective at the other point. This dynamic character of the language teaching goals makes the history of foreign language teaching ever-changing, ever-adapting. And the history of language teaching methods becomes a history of a never-ending search for teaching effectiveness and efficiency. When one method is replaced by another it does not mean that the former is worse than the latter and will be thrown into the wastebasket of history. It only means that the replaced method fails to correspond to a certain need at a certain time in history. As a result of this, the history of foreign language teaching methods is not the history of replacement of one method by another. Rather, it would be the history of adding one new method to the treasury of existing methods.

This is quite profitable for the language practitioners, as a method is nothing but the human stand before an object, a means to an

end, a tool to carry out the goal. In this sense, a collection of methods is, at least, as good as a collection of stamps, the value of which is to provide the collector with the opportunity to see how people before and in his time reflect their thinking on paper. Or, a collection of methods would be as useful as a collection of tools, providing language practitioners with a wide range of selection, so that they can choose the tool that suits their situation and provide the most appropriate aims

Methods are different from each other because they were evolved to serve different purposes. The presentation of different methods in this chapter is aimed not to discuss their differences as "a catalogue of unrelated and apparently unsuccessful teaching methods" (Diller : 1978 : 3), but to show, it should be stressed again, the human efforts throughout centuries of language teaching.

In the discussion of the history of language teaching methods in this chapter, two approaches, the Oral Approach - Situational Language Teaching and the Natural Approach - will not be discussed in detail. The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching, the product of British structuralism, will find its representative in Audio-Lingualism, for they are similar in their views about the nature of language and language learning although they developed from different traditions, Audio-Lingualism from the combination of American descriptive linguistics and Behaviourism, Situational Language Teaching from British structuralism and the Direct Method. The Natural Approach, which was developed by Krashen and Terrell in the early 1980s, will find its representative in Communicative Language Teaching, because Krashen and Terrell refer to their

Natural Approach as an example of a Communicative approach, and as "similar to other communicative approaches being developed today" (Krashen and Terrell : 1983 : 17).

The group of humanistic methods (which includes: Total Physical Response, the Silent Way, Communicative Language Learning, Suggestopedia), are not dealt with in this chapter for another reason. They function not on specified syllabuses or on syllabuses that aim to deliver advanced conversational proficiency quickly. This makes the discussion of their effectiveness and efficiency as language teaching methods in the context of rural junior secondary schools irrelevant.

3. 2. THE GRAMMAR - TRANSLATION METHOD

3. 2. 1 Introduction

The Grammar-Translation method, as its name suggests, is a way of teaching and learning a foreign language on the basis of detailed analysis of grammar rules and application of these rules to the translation of sentences and texts into and out of the target language.

The Grammar-Translation method evolved a long time ago to meet the social need for study of literary works and for mind-training through logic and language learning. This method was characterized by

1. Priority given to reading and writing and neglect of speaking and listening;
2. Memorization of vocabulary items and grammar rules with the help of the mother tongue;
3. Focus on accuracy;

4. Deductive teaching of grammar;
5. The use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction and communication in the classroom.

3.2.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Grammar-Translation Method

The advantages of the Grammar-Translation method are as follows:

1. This method can be argued as the easiest method for the teacher to teach since it does not require a high level of proficiency nor an imaginative approach to techniques;
2. The atmosphere of the classroom seems stress-free because the mother tongue is used all the time;
3. The teaching of grammar rules and translation puts the learner into a problem solving process;
4. Other advantages as noted by Stevick (1991 : 32-36) are "freedom from the limitation of one's own local and contemporary culture"... "direct contact with the words and ideas of great thinkers".

The disadvantages of the Grammar-Translation method can be summarised as follows

1. This method produces students who are unable to speak the language as communication skills are neglected.
2. The excessive use of the mother tongue in the classroom instruction is the cause for negative transfer in the process of language teaching and learning.

3. 2. 3 Implications for Classroom Teaching in Vietnam

Larsen-Freeman (1986) in her discussion of the Grammar-Translation method, mentions the following techniques as essential to this method; translation of a literary passage, reading comprehension questions, exercises on antonyms-synonyms, fill-in-the-blanks exercises, memorisation, composition. In carrying out these techniques, the demands upon the teacher and the students are not great. The teacher gives detailed explanations of the grammar rules in the mother tongue and then asks the students to make sentences according to the newly learned rules or asks them to apply these rules to their translations. The use of the Grammar-Translation method is very popular in Vietnam, especially in the teaching of foreign languages in rural schools (see chapter 4 of this study), because of its low level of demand on the teacher.

The use of the Grammar-Translation method is justifiable, both theoretically and practically, when the goal for the teaching and learning process is grammatical and lexical knowledge. But when this goal changes (for example, to the acquisition of communicative competence, as it is defined by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam and expressed in textbooks on methodology for student teachers in Vietnam), Grammar-Translation as a method fails to be a good means to carry out that goal. Accordingly, for the sake of teaching effectiveness, the use of the Grammar - Translation method should not be encouraged in foreign language teaching in general and in English language teaching in particular. However, it must be admitted that, due to the proficiency and quality level of foreign language teachers

(which will be dealt with in chapter 4 of this study), the replacement of the Grammar-Translation method by another method demands a great deal of investment of time and money in organisation of refresher training courses for language teachers, especially those working in the rural areas.

3.3 THE DIRECT METHOD

3.3.1 Introduction

The dissatisfaction with the Grammar-Translation method brought about the Reform Movement in the second half of the 19th century. The focus of attention of the Reform Movement was laid on

1. The study of spoken language;
2. Phonetic training in order to establish good pronunciation habits;
3. The use of conversation texts and dialogues to introduce conversational phrases and idioms;
4. An inductive approach to the teaching of grammar;
5. Teaching new meanings through establishing associations within the target language rather than by establishing associations with the mother tongue.

(Richard and Rodgers : 1990 : 7)

The proposed reforms were known under a variety of names: 'reform method', 'natural method', 'psychological method', 'phonetic method' etc. (Stern : 1983 : 457), but the most persistent term for labelling this new approach was the term 'Direct Method'. Introduced as the direct result of the revolt against Grammar-Translation, the Direct Method was characterised by the

replacement of the mother tongue by the target language as a means of instruction and communication in the language classroom and by the ban on translation as a technique.

The emphasis on the use of the target language as an instruction and communication tool brought along with it the emphasis on correct pronunciation and a shift from the silent study of literary language to the vivid atmosphere of spoken language practice, from the explicit and deductive to the implicit and inductive teaching of grammar. "Grammatical observations are derived from the text read and students are encouraged to discover for themselves the grammatical principle involved" (Stern : 1983 : 459). In other words, if at one end of the axis is placed the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method will stand at the opposite end. The introduction of the Direct Method into the field of language teaching in the second half of the 19th century may, thus, be understood as a language teaching revolution intended to dethrone the Grammar Translation Method completely, in the hope of achieving more effectiveness for the language teaching and learning process, to satisfy the socio-economic demand for increased communication in a new world of industry, international trade and travel which had emerged after the Age of Invention and the Industrial Revolution.

3.3.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Direct Method

The advantages of the direct method, as pointed out by a number of researchers in language teaching methodology, lie mainly in its focus on the exclusive use of the target language in the classroom and its innovative teaching techniques (the use of a text as a basis

of language learning, reading aloud, question and answer exercises, self-correction, conversation practice, dictation, demonstration of pictures and objectives, etc as listed by Larsen-Freeman (1986 : 26 - 27 - 28).

However, the disadvantages of the Direct Method lie in its very advantage. The exclusion of the mother tongue from the classroom created the problem of how to convey meaning and prevent misunderstanding of meanings on the part of the learners without reference to the mother tongue. Another problem confronted by the followers of the Direct Method was how to apply the method at the advanced level of language learning where description and analysis of abstract problems were needed for the progression of learning and teaching. With these disadvantages, the role of the Direct Method as an effectiveness-directed teaching method began to decline in the 1920s.

"Critics pointed out that strict adherence to Direct Method principles was often counterproductive, since teachers were required to go to great lengths to avoid using the native language, when sometimes a simple brief explanation in the student's native tongue would have been a more efficient route to comprehension." (Richards and Rodgers : 1990 : 11)

To save the Direct Method from complete downfall, efforts were made to modify it by accepting "a brief explanation in the native language" and "occasional translation of words and phrases as a check on comprehension" (Rivers : 1981 : 35). This modification was, in fact, a compromise with the ancient Grammar-Translation method in the matter of principles. In other words, the Direct Method was 'Grammar-Translationalized' to a certain degree. The 'Direct Method' revolution in language teaching which had lasted for nearly a century, now looked more like an evolution, by which

it is meant that the Direct Method could not replace the Grammar-Translation Method, but was forced to coexist with it, at least in the form of symbiosis. Rivers regarded this phenomenon as the first sign of eclecticism in language teaching (1981 : 35).

3.3.3 Implications for Classroom Teaching in Vietnam

Richards (1990 : 10) in discussing the popularity of the Direct Method, makes the comment that

"the Direct Method was quite successful in private language schools, where paying clients had high motivation and the use of native speaking teachers was the norm. But despite the pressure from the proponents of the method, it was difficult to implement in public secondary school education."

In Vietnam, the Direct Method was once used at the university level, with teachers as native speakers of the language they taught. At the secondary school level, the Direct Method never had its place. For Vietnamese teachers of foreign languages, the demands made by the Direct Method on them are obviously too high, since the teachers of the Direct Method were expected to be of native-speaker level. Not allowed to use their mother tongue in the classroom, non-native teachers find it hard to make their students understand what is being taught. To demonstrate the content of teaching by using gestures and other teaching aids would be unnecessarily time consuming and quite possibly ineffective. Considered from the angle of teaching effectiveness, the exclusion of the mother tongue from the classroom, as has been mentioned above, is completely undesirable. Applied to the actual ELT context in rural schools in Vietnam, the use of the Direct Method would be an impossibility.

3.4 THE READING METHOD

3.4.1 Introduction

Unlike the case of the Direct Method, the Reading Method was not the product of the dissatisfaction with preceding methods but of the practical educational considerations which were presented in the writings of West (1926) and in the Coleman Report as part of the Modern Foreign Language Study in the United States (1929). These documents put forth the problem of restricting the goal of language teaching to training in reading comprehension (Stern : 1983 : 460), hence the name of the method. Stern said that West recommended an emphasis on reading not only because he regarded it as the most useful skill to acquire in a foreign language but also because it was the easiest skill to attain, a skill with the greatest surrender value for students in the early stages of language learning.

3.4.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Reading Method.

The greatest advantage of the Reading Method is obvious from its name. It is the reflection of an effort toward the most effective way of developing the reading skill. Stern (1983 : 462), in his assessment of the Reading Method, pointed out some new elements which the Reading Method had introduced into language teaching, namely:

- a) the possibility of devising techniques of language teaching geared to specific purposes, in this case, the reading objectives;
- b) the application of vocabulary control to second language texts, as a means of better grading of texts (into intensive reading and extensive reading);
- c) the creation of graded readers;

- d) the introduction of rapid reading to the foreign language classroom.

And at the same time, the disadvantage of the Reading Method is also obvious from its name. To know a language does not merely mean to be able to read in a language. Rather, it would mean to be able to hear, to speak and to read and to write it. In other words, the objective of the Reading Method is too restricted.

3.4.3 Implications for Classroom Teaching in Vietnam

Language teaching, done within the framework of the Reading Method, included techniques mainly taken from the so-called 'modified Direct Method' mentioned above. That is to say, classroom activities included reading aloud, question and answer exercises, getting students to self-correct, conversation practice, fill-in-the-blank exercises, dictation, map-drawing and paragraph writing (Larsen-Freeman : 1986 : 26-28), which are techniques from the Direct Method, plus brief explanations of grammar rules in the mother tongue and use of translation as a comprehension check, which are techniques from the Grammar-Translation Method. The acceptance of these teaching techniques according to Rivers (1981) made the reading courses more agreeable to the followers of the Direct Method. However, Stern (1983) noted that criticism on the Reading Method arose right at its inception and reached climax at the time of World War II when speaking became the national priority in language teaching in the USA.

Applied to the ELT context in Vietnam where the goal for the language teaching and learning process has been prescribed as communicative competence (FLT Curriculum, Ministry of

Education and Training of Vietnam, 1985), the Reading Method would suffer the same criticism it had in the USA. However, if the goal of the teaching and learning process is reduced to reading comprehension, the use of the Reading Method as a means to achieve that goal is desirable, from a practical point of view. This idea is implied in the channel of receptive skills in Wang 's Model presented in chapter 2 of this study. In this channel, Wang proposes that the course should start from training in pronunciation, then go through the stage of vocabulary and grammar development to text reading and listening

3.5 THE AUDIO - LINGUAL METHOD

3.5.1 Introduction

Like the Reading Method, the home of the Audio-Lingual Method was the United States. It was developed during World War II to meet the urgent demand of rapid language learning, since the entry of the United States into World War II asked for personnel with spoken proficiency in a variety of languages. The Grammar-Translation method failed to prepare people to use the target language. The Direct Method, being different from its predecessor only in the mind-training objective, represented "more a change in means than in the ends of language teaching" (Stern : 1983 : 458-459). And the Reading Method produced "students who were unable to comprehend and speak the language beyond the very simplest of exchanges" (Rivers : 1981 : 38). This situation made it apparent that a radical change and rethinking of foreign language teaching methodology was needed.

The Audio-Lingual method was developed in that context and, according to Larsen-Freeman (1986 : 31) and Richards and Rodgers (1990 : 47), was the product of the combination of structural linguistic theory, contrastive analysis, aural-oral procedures and behaviourist psychology. On the birth certificate of the method was written the declaration to turn "language teaching from an art to a science, which would enable learners to achieve mastery of a foreign language effectively and efficiently" (Richards and Rodgers et al : 1990 : 48). The scientific base of this method can be summarised in the following 'five slogans' (raised by the American linguist William Moulton, in a report prepared for the 9th International Congress of Linguists, 1961) (cited in Diller : 1978 :10)

- 1 Language is speech, not writing;
- 2 A language is a set of habits;
- 3 Teach the language, not about the language;
- 4 A language is what its native speakers say not what some one thinks they ought to say;
- 5 Languages are different.

In explaining the first slogan (Language is speech, not writing), Rivers (1990 : 49) and others agree that this was the reflection of an important tenet of structural linguistics which held that the primary medium of language is oral. People learn to hear and to speak before they learn to read and to write. In other words, the slogan was meant to emphasise the priority of the spoken form of language over its written form. This should not be understood as neglect of the written form of the language being learned. Rather, it should be understood as an arrangement, in priority order, of the

four language skills distinguished by Audio-Lingualism in the process of language teaching and learning: Listening-Speaking-Reading-Writing.

The second tenet was based on behaviourist psychology's view of learning and learning theory. To the behaviourist, learning is a process of habit-formation and is dependent on reward or reinforcement which immediately follow the occurrence of an act. Learning a language was regarded as learning any other skill. Applied to the language classroom, this concept was translated into scientific memorisation and structural pattern drilling etc., techniques which were believed to form 'a set of habits'. It was, according to Rivers (1981 : 42), the reflection of the revolt against the excessive classroom discussion of grammar rules of the Grammar-Translation method. It reflected a goal which "people both in the 'empiricist' and 'rationalist' camps could accept" (Diller : 1987 : 115).

The third slogan (Teach the language; not about the language) related to the second in that a language could only be learned by active participation.

With the fourth slogan, students of Audio-Lingualism were asked to copy 'what the native speaker says' and to memorize the authentic sentences spoken by native speakers. Teachers of Audio-Lingualism thought of memorization of authentic sentences as a powerful means to prevent mistakes and pattern drills were designed so that students would never make mistakes. Mistakes were, for the followers of Audio-Lingualism, a disaster, for mistakes were seen as the first step in forming bad habits.

Turning to the fifth slogan (Languages are different), it should be remembered that this slogan was understood by the proponents and followers of Audio-Lingualism as "different sets of habits are different". It was held that the chief obstacle to foreign language learning was the interference of the learner's old set of habits with the new one.

3.5.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of the Audio-Lingual Method.

Audio-Lingualism had its heyday in the 1960s and was extremely influential not only in the United States, its home, but also in other parts of the world. It had, obviously, advantages. It was the first teaching method to have a linguistic and psychological basis (Stern : 1983 : 465; Richards and Rodgers : 1990 : 49-53). In Audio-Lingualism, teaching was organized in favour of the mechanistic aspects of language use, thus, making the process of learning less challenging intellectually and, as a result, accessible to the majority of people (Rivers : 1981 : 46) Lessons were entirely predictable and heavily teacher-controlled. Thus teachers with less than complete mastery of the language could, with careful preparation, conduct lessons adequately and confidently.

However, the theoretical base held by Audio-Lingualism was found to be ill-founded both in terms of language theory and learning theory. Theoretically, "language is not a habit structure. Ordinary linguistic behaviour characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy" (Chomsky : 1966 : 153). Accordingly, to know a language means to be able to

comprehend and produce sentences and utterances never heard or produced before. Applied to language learning, this concept would mean that the model of language learning, proposed by behaviourists on the basis of its conformity to the laws of stimulus, response and reinforcement, turns out to be invalid since much of human language use is not ready-made but created anew from an underlying knowledge of abstract rules. Memorization of what a native speaker says does not help much in language learning as sentences and utterances are not learned by repetition but 'generated' from a learner's underlying competence.

Practically, the products of Audio-Lingualism were found to be 'well-trained parrots' (Rivers : 1981 : 47), by which she meant that they were unable to function communicatively in real world situations. In addition, the atmosphere of the Audio-Lingual classroom was found to be 'tedious' and 'boring' (Rivers : 1981 : 47) because of too much memorization and drilling and repetition.

3.5.3 Implications for Classroom Teaching in Vietnam

Applied to the ELT context in rural schools in Vietnam, Audio-Lingualism as a language teaching method seems to be feasible because teachers working at rural schools are well acquainted with the techniques of Audio-Lingualism. But the problem is whether Audio-Lingualism is the proper tool for the acquisition of communicative competence or not. The answer to this question has been referred to in the section on the disadvantages of Audio-Lingualism in this chapter.

3.6 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

3.6.1 Introduction

The term communicative language teaching (CLT) identifies new pedagogical orientations which have resulted from the dissatisfaction with the failure of the Audio-Lingual method to achieve its promised effectiveness and efficiency. As an inevitable outcome of increased attention to the learner's effective and appropriate use of the language they are learning, CLT is closely related to a proliferation of terminology to refer to notions and concepts not addressed in previous form-oriented approaches. Thus the examination of CLT undertaken in this chapter will begin with a review of terms associated with it.

3.6.2 Chomsky's Formulation of Competence vs Performance

The notions of competence and performance, as acknowledged by a number of researchers in applied linguistics, are not new. But competence, as formulated by Chomsky (1965 : 4), is "the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language". For Chomsky, the speaker-hearer is ideal - an autonomous individual

"in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attentions and applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance."

Chomsky held competence to be the proper domain of linguistic inquiry and competence was separated from performance which, in his conception, was outside the domain of linguistic theory and investigation (Chomsky : 1967 : 397-398). Performance was not the area of investigation though he did mention it as "the actual use of

language in concrete situation" (Chomsky : 1965 : 4) To Chomsky, competence meant linguistic competence.

3. 6. 3 Hymes' Reformulation of the Notion of Competence

Chomsky's conceptualizations of competence and performance were taken to task, in 1971 and 1972, by Dell Hymes who criticised the formulation of competence as inadequate. Chomsky's formulation lacked considerations of the relevance of social/cultural factors to a speaker's knowledge of language. For Hymes, competence was "what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent". Based on this idea, Hymes (1985 : 19) reformulated the notion of competence which includes both knowledge and ability for language use with respect to:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed and what its doing entails.

3. 6. 4 Canale and Swain's Communicative Competence

The notion of communicative competence was further developed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1981) to include four areas of knowledge and skills.

1. Grammatical competence: mastery of the language code (verbal or non-verbal), thus concerned with such features as

lexical items and rules of sentence formation, pronunciation, and literal meaning;

2. Socio-linguistic competence: mastery of appropriate language use in different socio-linguistic contexts, with emphasis on appropriateness of meanings (e.g. attitudes, speech acts, and propositions) and appropriateness of form (e.g. register, non-verbal expression, and intonation);
3. Discourse competence: mastery of how to combine and interpret forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres by using (a) cohesion devices to relate utterance forms (e.g. pronouns, transition words, and parallel structures) and (b) coherence rules to organise meanings (e.g., repetition, progression, consistency and relevance of ideas);
4. Strategic competence: mastery of verbal and non-verbal strategies (a) to compensate for breakdown in communication due to insufficient competence or to performance limitations (e.g. strategies such as use of dictionaries, paraphrase, and gestures) and (b) to enhance the effectiveness of communication (e.g. deliberately slow and soft speech for rhetorical effect).

According to Canale (1981) and Canale and Swain (1980), communication:

1. is interaction-based in that communication skills are normally both acquired and used in social interaction;
2. involves unpredictability and creativity in both form and message;
3. takes place in discourse and socio-cultural contexts which provide constraints to appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretation of utterances;
4. is carried out under limiting psychological and other conditions such as memory constraints, fatigue and distractions;
5. always has a purpose (for example, to establish social relations, to persuade, to promise);
6. involves authentic as opposed to textbooks contrived language, and

7. is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes for example communication could be judged successful in the case of a non-native English speaker trying to find the way to Belconnen Mall, uttered the ungrammatical sentence "How to go the Mall?" to a passer-by and was shown the way to the Mall).

The notion of communicative competence and communication characteristics is of great significance in specifying instructional materials and teaching procedures for Communicative Language Teaching.

However, though two decades have passed since the dissatisfaction with the Audio-Lingual method was first put into question and the term 'Communicative Language Teaching' came into being, the problem of how to define this term still remains unsolved.

3.6.5 Towards a Definition of Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching, to some people, means the combination of structural teaching and functional teaching into a communicative competence oriented form of teaching. Littlewood (1981 : 1) states: "One of the most characteristic features of Communicative Language Teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language". To others, Communicative Language Teaching may mean the use of procedures that develop the four language skills through working in pairs or groups in problem-solving tasks. Richards and Rodgers (ibid : 1990) illustrate this by a quotation from a national primary English syllabus based on a communicative approach, which says,

"Communicative purposes may be of many different kinds. What is essential in all of them is that at least two parties are involved in an interaction or transaction of some kind where one party has an intention and the other party expands and reacts to the intention."

Wilkins (1983 : 24) also acknowledges that

"there are many people in the field of language teaching especially in Britain and continental Europe who feel that their ideas and their work contribute to the general aim of making language 'more communicative'. This feeling is not based on any precise definition of what constitutes CLT and, as a result, the range of more or less practical proposals which authors claim to reflect a communicative orientation is very wide. Thus, communicativeness may be seen to lie in the priority of conversational interaction over other modes of language behaviour, in a syllabus of 'notions and functions' as opposed to 'structures' in the basing of learning on individual and group needs rather than on generalised language content, in the use of 'authentic' as opposed to 'non-authentic' materials, in an emphasis on 'process' rather than 'product' or in the desire to base learning on genuine communication rather than on participation in pedagogically motivated and structured activities. All of us working in these areas probably see the general aim of language teaching as being to create a capacity to communicate in a second or foreign language we probably also feel that our particular proposals succeed in capturing the essence of our understanding of the nature of the process of communication and in exploiting it in the form of materials, methods, or language teaching organization. Perhaps, for the present, we shall have to be satisfied that this is as close as we can get to a definition of CLT"

Howatt (1984 : 279) distinguishes between 'strong' and 'weak' version of CLT.

"There is, in a sense, a 'strong' version of the communicative approach and a 'weak' version. The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and activities into a wider programme of language teaching... the 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language but stimulating the

development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it'".

Finocchiaro and Brumfit, making a comparison between the Audio-lingual method and the Communicative Approach, pointed out the following major distinctive features according to their interpretation:

AUDIO-LINGUAL

COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Attends to structure and form more than meaning | Meaning is paramount |
| 2. Demands memorization of structure -based dialogues normally | Dialogues,if used, centre around communicative functions and are not memorised |
| 3. Language items are not necessarily contextualized | Contextualization is a basic premise |
| 4. Language learning is learning structures, sounds, words | Language learning is learning to communicate |
| 5. Mastery, or 'over-learning' is sought. | Effective communication is sought. |
| 6. Drilling is a central technique | Drilling may occur but peripherally. |
| 7. Native-like pronunciation is sought | Comprehensible pronunciation is sought |
| 8. Grammatical explanation is avoided | Any device which helps the learners is accepted - varying with their age, interest etc |
| 9. Communicative activities and exercises only after the very long process of rigid drills | Attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the beginning |
| 10. The use of the student's native language is forbidden | Judicious use of native language is accepted when feasible |
| 11. Translation is forbidden at early levels | Translation may be used where early level students need or benefit from it |
| 12. Reading and writing are deferred till speech is mastered | Reading and writing can start from the first day, if desired. |

13. The target linguistic system will be learned through the overt teaching of the patterns of the system	The target linguistic system will be learned best through the process of struggling to communicate
14. Linguistic competence is the desired goal	Communicative competence is the desired goal (i.e.,the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately
15. Varieties of language are recognised but not emphasised	Linguistic variation is a central concept in materials and methodology
16. The sequence of units is determined solely by principles of linguistic complexity.	Sequencing is determined by any consideration of content, function, or meaning which maintains interest.
17. The teacher controls the learners and prevents them from doing anything that conflicts with the theory.	Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language
18. 'Language is habit' so errors must be prevented at all costs	Language is created by the individual often through trial and error
19. Accuracy, in terms of formal correctness, is a primary goal	Fluency and acceptable language is the primary goal: accuracy is judged as not in the abstract but in the context.
20. Students are expected to interact with the language system, embodied in machines or controlled materials	Students are expected to interact with other people either in the flesh, through pair or group work, or in their writings
21. The teacher is expected to specify the language that students are to use.	The teacher can not know exactly what language the student will use.
22. Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in the structure of the language	Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated by the language.

(Finocchiaro and Brumfit : 1983 : 91-3)

The comparison helps to clarify the contrasts between them in terms of linguistic and psychological theories and classroom practice.

3.6.6 Advantages and Disadvantages of Communicative Language Teaching

The advantages of CLT may be summarised as follows:

1. CLT is more likely to produce the four kinds of competence outlined in the framework of communicative competence above. (Savignon , (1983), Parkinson and Maher (1987), Tarvin and Arashi (1991) and others)
2. Learners of CLT are offered the opportunity to use the language for their own purposes, to take part in communication in at least the seven categories mentioned above. (Prabhu, (1983) ; Canale , (1984) ;Norman &Hedequist (1986) ; Marton (1988) and others)
3. CLT is more motivating; therefore, students are likely to put more effort into learning. (Stevick (1980), Blaire (1982) ; Hutchinson (1987) and others .)
4. As CLT intends to teach what is relevant and necessary only, it is less wasteful of time and effort than approaches which attempt to teach the whole language. (Allright (1979) ; Breen and Candlin (1987) and others)
5. In the long term, it should equip the learners with appropriate skills for tackling the language in a real world, since CLT is based on a close approximation to such uses (Maley (!986); Murphy (1991) and others .)

CLT, however, also has a number of potential disadvantages:

1. It makes greater demands upon the professional training and linguistic and professional competence of teachers. (Andrews (1983); Richards and Nunan (1991), Stern (1992) and others)
2. It may perplex students used to other approaches at least in the initial stage. (James (1983) ; Berns (1990) and others
3. It is more difficult to evaluate than the other approaches referred to.(Wilkins (1983); Porter (1983) and others)
4. Because it appears to go against traditional practice, it tends to meet with opposition especially from older teachers and learners. (Robinson (1983) , Hien (1991) and others)

3. 6. 7 Implications for Classroom Teaching in Vietnam

CLT requires the teacher to be a facilitator of his students' learning (Brumfit, 1981) and in order to fulfil this role, the teacher has to work both as a manager of the classroom activities and as a co-communicator with his students. The role of the students in CLT is changed from the role of passive listeners (as in Audio-Lingualism) to that of active communicators. The techniques characteristic of CLT, as listed by Larsen-Freeman (1986), are as follows : language games, role-play and simulation, problem solving tasks, use of authentic materials and group-work. The mere mentioning of these techniques suggests that the demands made by CLT upon the teacher and the students are unquestionably great. As a consequence, it is impossible to think of CLT without well-trained language teachers

Applied to the ELT context in rural schools in Vietnam, CLT poses many problems to be solved such as input selection and gradation, teacher development, minimum material conditions, all problems which will be referred to in chapter 4 of this study. CLT, it is assumed, is the shortest way possible to communicative competence. However, there is no empirical evidence of its superiority over the other methods (Berns : 1981; Krashen and Terrell : 1983)

3.7 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 3

Throughout this chapter, methods have been considered as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. As a means to an end, the relevance of a method to a teaching and learning situation depends completely on the established goal set for that teaching and learning situation. When the goal changes, the method to carry out that goal will change accordingly. Therefore, it is difficult to say whether the history of language teaching methods is the history of evolution or revolution. But there is one thing completely certain: the history of language teaching methods is the history of a never-ending search for teaching effectiveness and efficiency. When the goal for the process of language teaching and learning is grammar and translation, the choice of the Grammar-Translation method as the tool to carry out that goal is the right choice, considered from the viewpoint of teaching effectiveness and efficiency. But when the goal changes to become communicative competence, for example, for the sake of teaching effectiveness and efficiency, a new tool must be created as a means to achieve that newly established goal.

The implications of these theoretical findings for classroom teaching in Vietnam are that, if communicative competence is the goal, it is impossible to use Grammar-translation as a means to achieve this end. Audio-Lingualism, although easier for the teacher to handle, does not fulfil the need for the quantity and quality of input as mentioned, nor does it take into account learners' needs. If the goal is communicative competence, then some effort should be made to accept Communicative Language Teaching, although the difficulties of implementation of this method may cause a number of problems to be considered, for example: teacher training, syllabus design, materials input etc. Solutions to the achievement of this goal will be discussed in chapter 5 of this study. But before solutions can be suggested, it is necessary to define more closely the actual situation that prevails in the rural schools.

CHAPTER 4

THE ACTUAL ELT SITUATION IN THE RURAL JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN VIETNAM

When we mean to build , we first survey the
plot, then draw the model

(William Shakespeare)

4.1 Introduction

In chapter 1 of this study, a general picture of schooling in Vietnam was given as the background of which foreign language teaching forms an important part. Foreign language teaching, being an element in the system of school activities, is dependent on that background in many aspects. Any solutions to the increase of ELT effectiveness and efficiency for rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam must be based on the particular requirements of foreign language learning and teaching on the one hand, as presented in Chapters 2 and 3, and on the actual situation of foreign language teaching and learning in these schools on the other.

In examining the actual situation of foreign language teaching and learning in the rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam, we will look at two recent surveys on teaching quality and methodology in Vietnam and at the factors of rurality and poverty and their influence on teaching effectiveness and efficiency.

4.2 SURVEYS OF RURAL SCHOOL TEACHERS

4.2.1 Survey 1: On the Quality of the EFL Contingent in Rural Schools In Vietnam

In 1991, the Hanoi University of Foreign Language Teachers, the best known foreign language teacher training institution in Vietnam, carried out a survey on the quality of foreign language teachers presently working in rural junior secondary schools in North Vietnam.

The purpose of this survey was to examine the quality of foreign language teachers in order to reconsider the training quality of the Hanoi University of Foreign Language Teachers, and to devise strategies for teacher education and development in the future.

The area chosen for the research included such provinces as the suburb of Hanoi, Haiphong, Hanamnhinh, Habac, Haihung, Vinh Phu. The number of teachers chosen as research subjects was 760 (English: 281; Russian: 363; French: 116; among them 171 were educational managers, including 90 headmaster, 76 vice headmasters, 5 provincial specialists in foreign language education). The number of pupils involved in the research was 1631 (English: 721, Russian: 728; French: 180).

The methods used to collect data, as reported by the investigation group, included class observations, interviews, questionnaires, norm-referenced and criterion-referenced testing, i.e., a variety of measurement tools. The data was analysed by researchers from the Hanoi University of Foreign Language Teachers.

The areas of investigation covered by the survey were:

1. The teachers' knowledge of the language they are teaching and their level of language skills.
2. The teachers' background knowledge and knowledge of aspects of ELT.
3. The teachers' attitude towards the language they are teaching and towards teaching as a profession.

4.2.2 Results of Survey 1

The overall results of this survey revealed that in the contingent of foreign language teachers presently working in rural junior secondary schools in North Vietnam, there are no extremely good or extremely bad teachers. According to the statistics presented in the analysis of the survey results, out of 760 teachers chosen as the research subjects, there were only 6 teachers regarded as having 'above-the-average' level of quality. The rest were regarded as average teachers.

1 Knowledge of language and skill level

From the following results it can be seen that the quality of teachers in specific aspects is generally judged as being inconsistent.

	Knowledge of grammar	Language Skills
Good	10.3	1.2
Fairly good	51.9	26.9
Average	32.2	56.1
Bad	5.2	15.5
Very bad	0.4	0.3

Table 4. 1: Rural junior secondary school teachers' quality level in knowledge of grammar and language skills (in %)

a. Their knowledge of grammar is better than their language skills (listening - speaking - reading and writing). Observation of the percentage of teachers with good knowledge of grammar and good language skills reveals that there is a big gap between their grammatical competence and their communicative competence.

2. General knowledge and knowledge of LT pedagogy

The teachers' background knowledge (i.e., their knowledge of psychology in language teaching, country studies, political economics etc.) is better than their specific knowledge of trends in syllabus design, in language teaching methodology, in curriculum design and development etc).

Quality level	Background Knowledge	Specific knowledge
Good	5.7	10.3
Fairly good	81.4	51.9
Average	12.9	32.2
Bad	0	5.2
Very bad	0	0.4

Table 4. 2: Rural junior secondary school teachers' quality level in knowledge (in %)

From the table, we can understand that about 88% of the teachers chosen as research subjects are regarded as average in the quality of

their general background knowledge, while only 62% are regarded as above average level in the quality in their specific knowledge of the language they are teaching.

3. Attitudes towards teaching

a) The attitude of the teachers towards teaching as a profession is more positive than their attitudes towards their teaching of foreign languages.

	Attitude to FL teaching	Attitude to teaching as a profession
Good	0.5	20.1
Fairly good	16.6	63.2
Average	40.5	15.9
Bad	32.9	0.8
Very bad	9.5	0

Table 4. 3: Rural junior secondary school. Teachers' attitude towards teaching as a profession and foreign language teaching (in %)

The above results would appear to be contradictory. However, this difference can only be explained from a cultural point of view. In Vietnamese society, the position of teaching as a profession is high; teaching is regarded as one of the loftiest professions. Thus no one has a 'very bad' attitude to the teaching of foreign languages. The unfavourable attitude towards foreign language teaching may be due to the teachers' lack of knowledge and skills necessary for the teaching of a foreign language and lack of necessary encouragement for the teaching and learning of foreign language in the difficult context of the rural areas from the outside world.

b) Their sense of responsibility towards teaching as a profession is better than their feeling of responsibility towards the specific subject they are teaching.

	Attitude to teaching as a profession	Responsibility
Good	20.1	0
Fairly good	63.2	0
Average	15.9	1.8
Bad	0.8	14.9
Very bad	0	83.6

Table 4. 4: Rural junior secondary school teachers' attitude to teaching as a profession and their feeling of responsibility to teaching (in %)

There seems to be a paradox here. The teachers' attitude towards teaching as a profession is good while their feeling of responsibility towards the specific subject (English, Russian, French) they are teaching is not. In this study, we again interpret this phenomenon as the consequence of the lack of motivation for foreign language teaching in the context of rural areas. This problem will be referred to again in chapter 5.

4.2.2 Conclusions from Survey 1

The following conclusion can be drawn from the data collected through the survey on the quality of the contingent of rural junior secondary school teachers.

1. The teachers' quality is low in terms of their communicative competence, their language skills and their enthusiasm for foreign language teaching.
2. Any overgeneralisation of the quality of foreign language teachers working at rural junior secondary schools should be

avoided. Though their communicative competence is bad, their grammatical competence is not so. The problem is to find out which aspects they are bad at so that appropriate in-service or refresher training course intended for them could be designed according to their needs. To be more concrete, if training courses are to be designed for them, attention should be focused not on their grammar but on the improvement of their language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), their communicative competence (especially their sociolinguistic competence and their discourse competence).

3. The difference in their attitude towards teaching as a profession and foreign language teaching suggests that motivation for foreign language teaching and learning in rural schools should be created through provision of spiritual and material conditions for teachers working in ill-equipped and isolated rural schools to have a better and more positive attitude towards foreign language teaching and learning. The discussion of this problem will be further developed in chapter 5, in our proposals of possible solutions to ELT effectiveness and efficiency for junior secondary schools in the rural areas of Vietnam.

4. The quality of foreign language learning in rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam is related to the quality of the language teachers working in these schools. However, there are other elements (syllabus, teaching material, methodology) that contribute to the attainment of the established goal for the process of language teaching and learning. Those elements are, to some extent, referred to in this chapter, in the results of the survey on ELT methodology in junior secondary schools.

4.3 REPORT ON SURVEY II: ON ELT METHODOLOGY IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

This survey was carried out by the National Institute of Education Science of Vietnam in 1991. The purpose of this survey was to examine the situation of implementing the active communication approach in language teaching, according to the Ministerial Reformed Foreign Language Curriculum in junior secondary schools in order to :

a- find out the principal causes for the state of low FLT effectiveness and efficiency in junior secondary schools both in the urban and the rural areas.

b- to provide educational authorities from the ministerial to the school level with suggestions for bettering the existing situation of foreign language teaching in these schools .

And its general findings can be interpreted as follows:

1. The Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam has accepted Communicative Language Teaching (or to use the Vietnamese term to refer to it: the Active Communication Approach) as the leading FLT Methodology in Vietnamese general schools, colleges and universities (the Reformed Foreign Language Teaching Curricula, Ministry of Education and Training, 1985). However, foreign language textbooks for junior secondary schools, declared to be compiled along communicative lines, fail to be communication-oriented.

2. Professional guidance from the Ministry to the grassroots levels is not in keeping with the newly accepted methodology. CLT remains a matter of verbal declaration.

3. Pre-service and in-service teacher training have not paid due attention to the newly accepted methodology and its relation to syllabus design and instructional materials.

4. Lack of minimum material conditions creates an obstacle for the success of the process of foreign language teaching and learning.

Specific conclusions from the survey will be dealt with under the headings of Textbooks, Professional Guidance, Pre-service and In-service Teacher Training and Minimum Material Conditions.

4.3.1 Textbooks:

4.3.1.1 Considerations of the Unit Content Organisation

The set of EFL textbooks being used now in junior secondary schools contains 4 books with 90 units (see the tables of contents of these textbooks - Appendix B). This set of textbooks is acknowledged as:

"having the advantage of being compiled on the basis of the Active Communication Approach which means that all the four language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing are paid due attention to through the provision of systemized language drills and communicative practice exercises. Grammar rules are introduced in a reasonable amount enough to aid the development of communicative skills. Theoretical explanations about language use are limited to the minimum" (Hien, B. 1992 : 2).

The merits of the set of EFL textbooks for junior secondary schools may be more multiformed than the above condensed comments.

Nevertheless, there are shortcomings which must be noted. In order to have a clearer view of the textbooks, a unit has been chosen at random for comment. The unit chosen is Unit 12, entitled 'Rubber Trees', from the EFL textbook for grade 8 (see the sample - Appendix C).

This unit, like all other units in the set, begins with a text

a) The text

RUBBER TREES

It was a fine summer day and the boys were playing football on the village common. Jack was chasing the ball and then had it. He kicked it hard into the goal. But there was a hissing sound and the ball collapsed into a shapeless mass. The boys had to stop playing and Jack ran home with his burst ball. He met his father at the front gate and asked him to fix the ball for him.

(Textbook for Grade 8, 1991 :96)

(It is interesting to note that there is nothing about 'rubber trees' in the text.)

b) The Dialogue The text is followed by a related dialogue. The dialogue is often a continuation or an extension of the content of the text. In the present unit, it consists of a dialogue between Jack and his father about the production and use of rubber, carried on while father mends the ball. The authenticity of some of the dialogues in the textbooks can be questioned both on the unlikelihood of this type of dialogue occurring in natural speech

and also that on a number of occasions, the expressions used are inappropriate to their contexts.

Furthermore, there are no indications of whether the texts and dialogues are intended for reading or listening practice or for any particular purpose. Possibly, the text is for reading comprehension and practice and the dialogue for reading and speaking practice. If so, there is no attempt to aid comprehension or skills acquisition with pre-reading or post-reading questions.

In the part on further practice, there is an exercise on reading comprehension (exercise 2, part A) which suggests the intended use of the text. And possibly, the dialogue is intended for listening, but there is no indication of how listening is to be handled.

c) Practice The part that follows the text and the dialogue is 'practice' of an unspecified nature which is done at the sentence level and although mostly related to the text also introduces other material e.g.

Do we *grow rubber trees in our country ?*
make this toy from steel?
etc.

- a. Oh, yes.
- b. I am afraid not.

What is *rubber* most useful for?
- People make *soft and elastic* thing from it.

Rubber is not only *soft* but also *elastic*.
She *beautiful* *intelligent*.
He *clever* *careful*.

d Further Practice Observation of this part shows that language forms are practised (exercises 1,2,3,4, 5 in the sample unit) and these forms do not seem to relate to each other except that they appeared in the passage/the dialogue. e.g.

3 Complete the sentences with the appropriate prepositions.

Steel is most useful_____ building (in,for, at)

4 Complete the sentences with the appropriate forms of the verbs)

They asked their father (repair) the toys for them.

5 Make new sentences, using 'not only' 'but also'.

He is both clever and smart.

As in the earlier practice part, manipulation of forms is carried out only at the sentence level. And there is little indication in the unit as to why the sentences should be manipulated in the indicated way, (see exercises 1,2,3,4,5, part B, in Further Practice) since no exercises are at the text level.

There is no communicative practice of functions. There is some pair work at the level of dialogue practice, but no allowance is made for students to contribute their own ideas or to put the practiced forms into the learners' own context (see exercise 1, part A, Further Practice: Complete these open dialogues. Then practise them with one of your classmates, etc.)

e) Summary In this part, a summary of the new vocabulary and grammar rules is given (see the Appendix B)

4.3.1.2 Overall considerations of the content of the whole set

Some questions have been raised about the authenticity of the texts, both as samples of natural speech and of use of appropriate form. As far as validity as related to the aims of the course is concerned, it seems that the organisation of content in the textbooks can be seen as basically situational and structural. To be more concrete, the number of substitution exercises which aim at the apprehension of language rules still prevail over creativity-based exercises which encourage school children to increase their communicative ability.

By saying so, it is not meant that the provision of grammar exercises is unnecessary (Richards : 1985; Stern : 1992) nor that communicative practice exercises should outnumber grammar exercises (Yalden : 1987). The problem of the proportion of each kind of exercise is not dealt with in the survey report and consequently remains unsolved but will be raised again in chapter 5 of this study. The problem raised here is the insufficient provision of exercises aimed at practising communicative skills, which has led to a misunderstanding among teachers and speciality supervisors resulting in focussing their attention on the mastery of grammar knowledge rather than on the development of communicative skills. Hien B (1991 : 2) reports that in some localities, junior secondary foreign language teachers, having found that the system of revision exercises is incomplete grammatically, even add new grammar materials to the textbooks. This probably originates from the emphasis in the textbooks on grammar drills which has helped to mislead both junior secondary foreign language teachers and speciality supervisors from the basic

objective of the subject: communicative practice. There are no teachers' guides available which might help with methodological problems, or as an ideas source or as insights into the rationale for the exercises.

In addition to the above, the relationship between language skills themselves, first and foremost, between listening-speaking and reading-writing, is not adequately dealt with in the textbooks for grade 8 and grade 9. These textbooks, according to the curriculum, are required to be well-proportioned between 'oral skills' (listening-speaking) and 'written skills' (reading-writing). In fact, they lay emphasis on reading and make light of listening and speaking. No indication of the practicing of skills which are as different in nature as listening and reading is given. This phenomenon is not in keeping with the promulgated objectives for teaching English to junior secondary school children. At the same time it is challenging to the linguistic competence and performance level of junior secondary school children who are 11-15 years old.

The second weakness of all foreign language textbooks in use at the junior secondary school level (and the set of the English language textbooks is not an exception) is that the textbooks cause "a heavy feeling on the part of the learners about the amount of teaching and learning materials" (Hien, B 1991 :5). Two basic principles of modern foreign language teaching methodology are learnability and individualization. To implement the combination of these two principles, textbooks should provide the maximum amount of materials so that foreign language teachers could select the

minimum amount of materials conformable to junior secondary school children as the objects for their teaching.

The third weakness of the textbooks lies in the fact that the teaching units presented in the textbooks are not divided into comparatively concrete teaching hours. As a result, without guidance, teachers feel unsure of how to select the teaching materials to achieve the goals and objectives of each teaching hour in a teaching session. One of the highlights in foreign language teaching methodology mentioned in the reformed education curriculum is to take communicative acts as basic units for foreign language teaching and learning in our junior secondary schools. But the amount and content of the materials presented in the textbooks fail to correspond to the division of teaching hours within a teaching unit. This inconsistency between the teaching content and time schedule is most evident in the reading texts and exercises on the reading texts which sometimes exceed the objectives and tasks for one or two teaching hours. Teachers are driven into a dilemma about the selection and manipulation of the teaching content.

The fourth weakness of the textbooks is the teaching and learning content presented in the textbooks. Nobody denies that a foreign language is not a content subject and the teaching of foreign language is more a skill-oriented activity than a concept-oriented one. However, the problem of foreign language teaching content, if properly solved, will contribute a great deal to the improvement of our school children's learning motivation and accordingly to the success of the teaching and learning process. Unfortunately, the content of the textbooks for grade 8 and grade 9 is rather boring

from a learner's point of view because it concentrates not on the problems which junior secondary school children (who are, at the last two years of the junior secondary school level, 14-15 years of age) take great interest in, but on things that sound monotonous and alien to them, and sometimes on stale sports news that has been long forgotten by adults. The neglect of teaching content in EFL teaching makes the teaching process look really foreign. Considered from the socio-psychological viewpoint, neglect of junior secondary school children's needs and interests in the choice and selection of teaching content is not sound either theoretically or practically. Junior secondary school children should not be thought of as objects for teaching but as individuals who, like the horse, can be led to the spring but cannot be forced to drink.

4.3.2 Professional Guidance

Professional guidance is mentioned here for, in a centralised mechanism of educational management characterised by orders given from the top, every directive or speech by the professional management officials means an ordinance to the teachers. These become the criteria for evaluating teaching responsibility and the professional standards of the teachers and accordingly have a direct influence on teachers' spiritual and material welfare. Consequently, teachers are forced to follow exactly the directions given to them by educational officials of higher rank. Hien (1991 : 3) comments:

"Looking at the existing situation of FLT methodology, a vitally important question in our general schools, we cannot feel safe. Generally speaking, in FL teaching and learning,

methodological guidebooks are lacking, creating a difficulty for foreign language teachers at general schools to teach in accordance with the requirements of communicative methodology reflected in the reformed foreign language curriculum and textbooks for junior secondary schools. In cases where there are methodological guides, they often go against communicative methodology. There are educational supervisors from the Ministerial Department for General Education, who reject all the basic points of Communicative Methodology and want to return to Grammar-Translation Method which is outdated but extremely familiar to a great number of foreign language teachers. This situation is really an obstacle to the effective implementation of the reformed foreign language curriculum textbooks, because, teachers, instead of being given directions and in-service training in how to teach according to the new methodology, are given sympathy and encouragement to teach according to the old one".

4.3.3 Training in the New Methodology

"It is a unfortunate that the whole contingent of junior secondary foreign language teachers (as analysed above) are not ready for their entry into reformed language teaching yet. Both in-class teachers and FL teacher-trainees at teacher training colleges are not introduced to the basics of the reformed FLT curriculum; they are not armed with knowledge and professional skills for teaching foreign language in accordance with communicative FLT methodology. A great number of FL teachers are not well acquainted with the necessary knowledge and skills required by the textbooks." (Hien, B. 1991 : 6)

This conclusion might go against the conclusion drawn from the survey on the contingent of FL teachers that junior secondary

foreign language teachers are generally good at the knowledge of the language they are teaching. However, there may be truth in it, for the subjects of the above-said survey are Hanoi Foreign Language Teachers Training College graduates only. Junior secondary foreign language teachers are graduates from different teacher training institutions.

The methodological inadequacies of the contingent of junior secondary foreign language teachers are reflected in their management of such ideas as the interaction between teaching and learning, linguistic knowledge and communicative skills, between listening-speaking and reading-writing etc. Communicative methodology, first and foremost, regards learners as human individuals. The role of learners as human individuals and the contributions they bring to the process of foreign language learning is gaining in importance and becoming the focus of the process. The role of the teacher is changing, too. The teacher is expected to act as the guide, the organizer, the manager etc. who encourages the learner to operate and achieve concrete objectives of the FLT process. However, the majority of FL teachers, due to their traditional views of the role of the teacher and their lack of thorough understanding of this principle, often divide their class time into two equal parts, one half on explanation and the other on exercises. Consequently, the learner acquires the habit of passiveness in language learning, which means that s/he is not willing to participate in the formation of communicative language skills during class time.

Here, the problem of the inter-relationship between linguistic knowledge and communicative language skills according to the

demands of the Active Communicative Approach is raised. This takes linguistic knowledge as the basis for the formation of communicative skills and practice of communicative language skills both as an end in itself and as means to that end. Unfortunately, most junior secondary FL teachers still look to linguistic knowledge as an end to FLT process. As a result, they spend only a little time on communicative language skills and only once they are sure that their pupils have really mastered the new language rules. Some teachers, as mentioned before, even add more language rules and drills to the textbooks to expand their pupils' linguistic knowledge and at the same time, cut down or pass quickly through exercises on communicative language skills.

A number of teachers, though they lay stress on communicative language skills, are not able to manipulate the relationship between speaking-listening and reading-writing. Many teachers hold that it is impossible to teach listening and speaking in a large class, so right at the beginning, they focus their attention on reading and writing. Needless to say, they go against the requirements of advanced FLT methodology and accordingly their teaching efficiency is inevitably low.

The essential weakness of the junior secondary FL teachers mentioned above are the direct product of a long period of putting a slight on pre-service and in-service teacher training.

"During the last 4 years, junior secondary FL teachers have not been able to attend any in-service training courses either at the provincial level or at the ministerial level." (Hien : 1991 : 4)

If no active measures are taken to improve the job-skills of the junior secondary FL teachers, the future of the reformed foreign language education will be no brighter than it is now.

4.3.4 Minimum Material Conditions.

The low efficiency of FL teaching and learning in the last few years is also the direct product of the lack of such minimum material conditions as teachers' books and also of textbooks. The survey results show that in the rural area, it is quite common for every three or four school children to share one textbook; there are even localities where the whole class have to share a few textbooks. Every methodology is vain in such a foreign language teaching context. Without textbooks, any teacher, even a qualified one, has to go back to ancient, out-dated, inefficient methods, such as the purely oral method or the grammar/note-taking method. To learn by word of mouth, within 3 teaching periods (135 minutes) a week is an impossibility. There is no miracle that might help 50-60 school children in a class to develop their listening and speaking skills within that amount of time. And when they are required to learn by note-taking, that amount of time might be barely enough to copy down some basic grammatical rules. To mention the formation of communicative language skills in such a context is utopian.

Teachers' books are one indispensable means that could enable junior secondary FL teachers to grasp the intention of the textbooks and the basic principles of communicative language teaching methodology expressed in the textbooks. And more importantly, teachers' books help FL teachers to understand how to teach each

unit, each exercise as required by the curriculum and the textbooks. Unfortunately, these books are not available yet. Without in-service training courses, without teachers' books, junior secondary school teachers can hardly be expected to implement their teaching on the basis of the newly accepted communicative language teaching methodology.

4.4 OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

Other factors that influence ELT effectiveness and efficiency for rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam are not typically Vietnamese but internationally acknowledged as common factors that characterise the educational context of any developing country. They are rurality and poverty.

Internationally, the concept of rurality is difficult to define. According to Clark (1990) some researchers define rurality in terms of population statistics, others in terms of relationship between people and between people and the land, the difficulty in defining what is meant by rurality has led researchers in highly industrialized countries to conclude that rurality, like beauty, lies in the eyes of the beholder.

Applied to the Vietnamese context and the general context of developing countries, such a difficulty immediately disappears. The term 'rurality' (nong thon) in the Vietnamese language can be etymologically understood as open countryside with communities of people living in hamlets and villages and on agriculture. And rural schools, in that economic, socio-cultural context, are poor brothers of urban schools. The 'Think Tank on Research into

Rural Education' (1990 : 21) in referring to the concept of rurality, suggests that rurality is synonymous with poverty (limited services, poor communication, lack of telephone, lack of transport etc.).

The Asia and the Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) seems to share the same viewpoint and interprets the term rurality in relation to teaching effectiveness and efficiency as follows:

Due to poverty, the support of the local people may be at a low ebb. There may be even problems of getting the people to realise the need of general education itself.

Due to the location of the school (in the rural areas) resource inputs such as reference materials, supervision, in-service education participation in teacher centres are not usually available to the teaching staff.

Due to lack of accommodation and transport, the teacher has to travel a long distance every day and s/he will have little time to make lesson plans and to upgrade himself/herself professionally.

The general atmosphere of socio-economic depression in the community sometimes lowers the self concept of the teacher which in turn results in his/her inefficient performance.

(extract from 'Methodological Guide Book' : APEID: 1988)

In the context of rural education, the background of rural children in many countries has been described by UNESCO (Asia and the Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), UNESCO, Bangkok : 1988) as follows:

Living in rural isolated areas, the learners have little or no exposure to modernity. As they are not reached by mass media of communication, their experience of the world at large is very limited.

Most of the learners come from comparatively poor families. In some places, facilities of electricity, piped water, medical services, etc, are lacking. Parents in general can not afford to pay even small expenses required for their children's schooling.

Lack of awareness and of means result in poor living condition and neglect of the rules of hygiene and sanitation. So the incidence of disease is high especially among young children who are also mostly undernourished.

The learners are often required to work at home, taking care of their younger siblings or taking the animals to graze, or helping their parents during the busy agricultural seasons. In some places, parents expect children to carry their baby brothers and sisters to school to save themselves from the need to look after the young ones.

Because of ignorance and illiteracy, in general, parents can not or do not care to give necessary support for their children's education

In a number of rural societies, girls and women are discriminated against. People belonging to disadvantaged communities, hill tribes, and scheduled castes are often not treated on an equitable basis by the other privileged class in the society. This makes some learners feel inferior to others

Most rural people are victims of superstitions and have several fixtures and prejudices. Because of their limited human relations, the learners lack the feelings of competitiveness, independence and positiveness. Some of their attitudes and habits are deep rooted and not amenable to change easily

It is for children who share many of the elements of this background that solutions to teaching problems must be met. It is to these possible solutions that we turn next.

CHAPTER 5

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AT THE PRACTICAL LEVEL

Theory and practice must go hand in hand

(1979 Educational Reform)

5.1 Introduction

Having looked at the major influences of input theory, the outline of the major language teaching methods and the real ELT situation in rural schools, I now turn to possible solutions to the increase of ELT effectiveness and efficiency based on applications that might be made from the theoretical findings presented in the previous chapters.

As sources of input, Richards (1990) regards instructional materials and the teacher as the most important. Solutions will be suggested with these in view. However, neither of these can be considered in isolation from the general framework of the FL curriculum. It has already been noted, (Chapter 4) that there is a lack of congruence between the active communication methodology and the ELT instructional materials for junior secondary schools in Vietnam. The advantages and shortcomings of the set of textbooks for grades 6, 7, 8, 9, which have been brought into use since 1990 have been thoroughly considered in chapter 4. But one question should be asked: Why are there such shortcomings in the textbooks? The answer to this question would lead to consideration of other

questions which determine the compilation of instructional materials and the major one must be syllabus design.

5.2 SYLLABUS INPUT

Syllabus design, according to Richards (1985), is concerned with the general objectives of a method (e. g the choice of language skills to be taught), the specific objectives of a method (e.g. the target vocabulary or level to be taught in a conversation method), the criteria for selection, sequencing and organization of linguistic and subject matter content (e.g. frequency, learnability, complexity, personal utility) and the form in which content is presented in the syllabus (e.g. grammatical structures, situations, topics, functions, exchanges). On the basis of syllabus design emerges the syllabus, the embodiment of a plan. Instructional materials in general or a set of textbooks as in our case, considered in relation to syllabus, are only devices for expression of the content specified in the syllabus. Accordingly, from one established syllabus, there can be many sets of textbooks compiled. Consideration of teaching effectiveness and efficiency, should be based, first and foremost, on the choice of the syllabus type to be used.

Krahnke (1989), in a comprehensive survey of language syllabuses, arranges them on the following continuum:

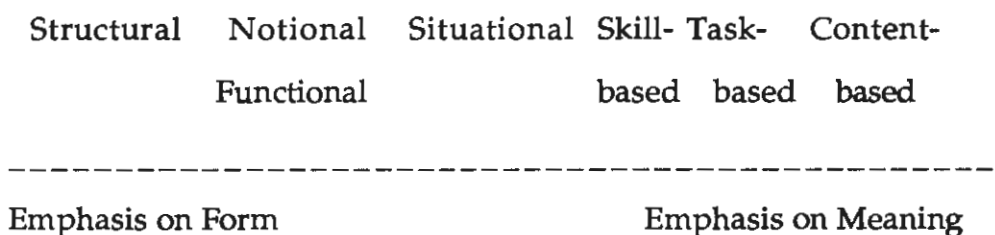


Figure 5. 1: Krahnke's Continuum of Syllabus Types

The continuum begins with the structural syllabus, the type of syllabus which lays emphasis on language forms, and ends with content-based syllabus, the type of syllabus based most on language use. All of these syllabus types have advantages and disadvantages inherent in them. As a consequence, it is impossible to say that, for example, a content based syllabus is better than a structural syllabus or vice versa. As a solution to the choice of syllabus types, Carter and McCarthy (1988) propose the idea of a mixed syllabus. Krahnke (1989) argues for a combination or integration of syllabuses. Eclecticism in language syllabus design is now a prevailing trend (Nixon : 1987).

One of the moves towards eclecticism in language syllabus design has been made by Yalden (1983, 1986, 1987) who introduces the proportional approach to language syllabus design. According to this approach, "as a learner progresses, the proportion of grammatical input is gradually decreased and the proportion of functional input is gradually increased." (Nunan : 1985 : 22). Yalden (1986 : 26), in referring to this approach, explains:

"Let me illustrate.....One might begin with grammar and pronunciation only, but introduce work in the language functions and discourse skills fairly early and in time increase emphasis on this component. The study of grammar would nonetheless remain in sharper focus through out the first level than would the study of functions and discourse skills. At the next level of teaching, the interpersonal and textual area gains increasing prominence as the course progresses, but the teaching of grammar also occupies an important place. In the third level of a hypothetical course sequence of this sort, the balance might shift again. At this point in the sequence, work on communicative functions of language and on discourse skills predominates and one would expect linguistic form to be considered only as the need arises".

She presents the developed model in the following diagram:

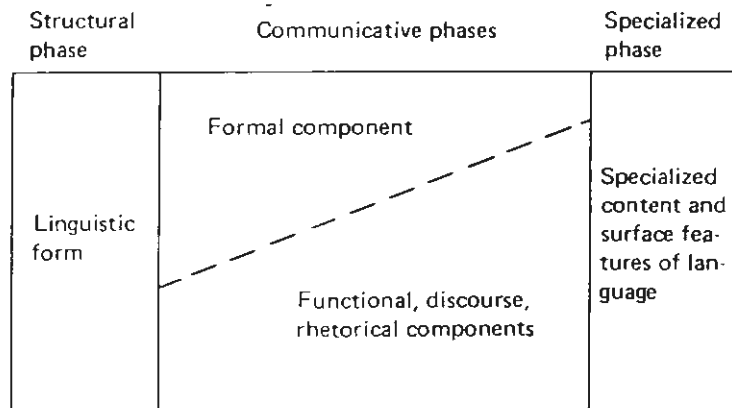


Figure 5. 2: Yalden's Proportional Approach

The course starts with a purely structural phase. This phase, in Yalden's words, is for complete beginners and need not last long. It provides some basic knowledge of the systematic or categorial side of language, going on to a more integrative mode of learning. "Absolute beginners cannot be expected to solve communicative problems." (1980 : 27)

Yalden's proportional approach is, thus, built on the distinction between structural input and functional input. The division into the two areas: linguistic form and communicative function only indicates the amount of time allotted to the emphasis on each component. Nunan (1985) interprets this time allotment as follows: for phase I, eighty percent of the amount of time will be spent on the rudiments of the grammatical system but at the advanced level (phase III), only twenty percent of the class time will be devoted to grammar, the other eighty percent of the time left will be reserved for communicative function. This reflects Brumfit's Accuracy/Fluency Model mentioned earlier.

For foreign language syllabus designers, Yalden's approach (1983, 1986, 1987) creates an excellent opportunity to enjoy the freedom of

taking the learners' changing needs into consideration. The provision of this opportunity allows this approach an extremely broad space to operate: in areas where teachers are well trained as well as in areas where teachers are not willing or not able to 'go communicative'. The inclusion of a purely structural phase implies that "it is possible to teach grammatical competence *before* teaching sociolinguistic and discourse competence" (Yalden : 1986 : 28). This position in language syllabus design, if proved to be valuable, is of great significance to the process of organization and selection of instructional materials.

Referring back to the input-based model for optimal language learning advocated by Wang (1986), presented in chapter 2 of this study, it will be found that there is a great deal of similarity between the proportional approach and Wang's input-based model. In both cases, pronunciation and grammar are proposed as the starting point of the course. After the initial phase of training in grammar and pronunciation, the process of the course develops along two parallel lines; in Wang's input-based model, the comprehension stream and the production stream; in Yalden's approach, the stream of linguistic form and the stream of communicative function. The difference between the two is that in the former, the two streams are regarded as separate from each other and in the latter the two streams are mixed. However, it is necessary to add that the separation of the learning course into two areas - comprehension and production - is for practical purposes only. Theoretically, Wang acknowledges the validity of Krashen's input hypothesis which states that "we acquire by understanding language that contains structure a bit beyond our current level of

competence $i+1$ " and then "production ability emerges.... on its own" (Krashen : 1982 : 21-22). In other words, Wang (1986) acknowledges the existence of the link between comprehension ability and the ability to produce speech. But in an EFL context, where the needs of the learners are confined to comprehension ability only, investment of time and effort in providing the learners with production ability would be unnecessary. Yalden (1987 : 86) also admits that "the setting of instruction has to be planned. Not all learners will be given the same treatment, and syllabuses differ according to the practical constraints present in any given situation." Observation of this position, according to Yalden would lead to what she calls pragmatic efficiency (economy of time and money) and pedagogical efficiency (economy in the management of the learning process).

In an ELT context such as Vietnam's or China's, where English is taught as a foreign language, the application of the proportional approach to ELT syllabus design is desirable.

On the basis of what has been presented and analysed above, I would like to make the following recommendations:

1. To begin with, syllabus, being the specifications of what is to be taught and learned in the process of language teaching, plays a very important part in deciding the effectiveness and efficiency of the process itself either in the rural or in the urban areas. The latest theoretical findings in the field of syllabus design, input selection and gradation should, therefore, be introduced not only to curriculum planners and developers at the national and provincial levels of educational management in Vietnam but also to teachers

working at the grassroots levels, at village schools and district schools

2. The transfer of knowledge and skills in syllabus design should be carried out through a system which incorporates national and local contributions and efforts with international support. Based on the network of cooperation in educational research presented in the draft report of the Perth Conference on education in elementary schools (Sept. 1989), the following system of syllabus design transfer is suggested:

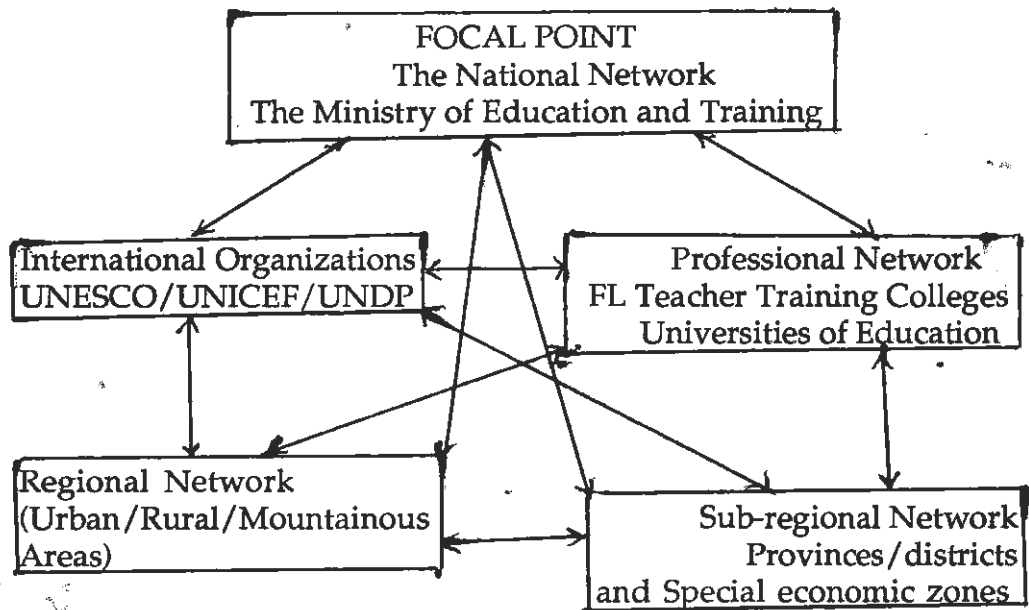


Figure 5. 3: Proposed network of cooperation in syllabus transfer

In this system, the ministry of education and training of Vietnam is the focal point responsible for organising the working of the system through its relationship with international organisations and with universities, college, provinces and districts in Vietnam. Besides this, other relationships such as relationships between

international organisations and other elements of the system are also proposed.

3. Syllabus, being an element of the curriculum, should be considered from the angle of its relationships with other elements of the curriculum (Goals/Objectives, Methods and Evaluation). Concerning its relationships with goals/objectives a moderate viewpoint explicit in the proportional approach by Yalden (1983) should be encouraged.

We may declare to teach for communicative competence and to adopt communicative language teaching as the means to reach that 'ultimate goal' (Yalden : 1987), but complete beginners should not necessarily be forced to carry out communicative acts right from the start. In other words, we should not take an extremist stance on untried hypotheses which may be a waste of our time, money and effort.

"The theories which periodically grip our profession cannot, therefore, regarded as 'true'. They partake more of the nature of myths, which require an act of faith than an intellectual proof. We have, in other words, to behave 'as if they were true while realising that they can not be'." (Maley : 1986).

This sceptical attitude is very necessary not only for theorists but also for practitioners in applying the newly-born, untried theories to solutions of effectiveness and efficiency related problems.

5.3 MATERIALS INPUT

Instructional materials are a major the source of input. Instructional materials include

"any device with instructional content or function that is used for teaching purposes, including books, textbooks, supplementary reading materials, audio-visual and other sensory materials, scripts for radio and television instruction, instruction sheets and packaged sets of materials for construction and manipulation" (Good : 1976 : 19).

This definition of instructional materials seems to be a luxury to the ELT context in rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam where everything is lacking. What is generally understood as instructional materials in these schools is the set of textbooks ranging from grade 6 to grade 9. As a consequence, my consideration of input from instructional materials will be confined only to this set of textbooks.

Instructional materials, being the major source of input as indicated earlier in the previous section of this chapter, is related to evaluation in terms of teaching and learning efficiency. The demand for teaching and learning efficiency requires instructional materials to be selected and organised according to certain criteria. These criteria are referred to by Nicholls and Nicholls (1978) as validity, significance, interest and learnability. Brady (1987) accepts this set of criteria and broadens it to include such criteria as:

- 1 Validity; whether the content is authentic and whether it can achieve stated objectives.
- 2 Significance; whether the content is fundamental to the subject or field in question, whether the content selected allows for breath and depth of treatment, and whether its pursuit conveys the spirit and method of inquiry,
- 3 Interest: whether the content is of interest to students.
- 4 Learnability: whether the content is easily learnable.
- 5 Consistency: with social realities, whether the content represent the most useful orientation in the world.

- 6 Utility; whether content is useful to students in coping with his/her life.

In this chapter of my study, special emphasis is laid on the criteria of validity, interest and learnability. The other criteria are not mentioned in the discussion that follows for they relate more to content subjects, than to foreign languages, a skill-oriented subject.

The emphasis on validity, interest and learnability has its theoretical basis in what has been referred to in chapter 2 of this study as input preferences which determine the transformation of input into intake and guarantees teaching and learning efficiency.

5.3.1 Validity

The criterion of validity requires the content of teaching materials to possess authenticity as its primary quality. Richards, Platt, and Webber (1990) define authenticity as the degree to which language teaching materials have the qualities of natural speech or writing. Thus, authenticity, according to this definition is synonymous with the naturalness of verbal and written discourse presented to the language learners.

The value of authentic materials, according to Widdowson (1978 : 83) lies in the fact that it provides "genuine instances of language use" and creates the desirable relationship between the teaching materials as a source of input and the learners' appropriate response as output. This idea is shared by Maley (1986), Little and Singleton (1991) who urge the use of authentic over simplified materials for language teaching and learning. Obviously, theorists on materials design and production are unanimous in emphasising the importance of authenticity as a prerequisite for

the success of the language teaching and learning process. We cannot expect a genuine product out of the false materials. Our language learners cannot be expected to obtain ability to use their knowledge of linguistic rules for effective communication while the linguistic data they work with lacks the very quality of communicativeness.

Having examined the set of textbooks for grades 6, 7, 8, 9, we can see that authenticity is a problem. The naturalness of the written discourse presented in this set of textbooks is highly questionable. Many of the texts in this set are specially constructed to illustrate grammatical categories such as tenses, sentence structures etc. They are not pieces of discourse taken from real life interpersonal communication. The artificiality of the constructed texts is apparent even when the situation chosen as the leading theme for a unit seems to be related to real life.

The criterion of validity may also apply to the relationship between the content of the teaching materials and the outcomes stated in the objectives. If the objectives specify one thing while the content selected teaches the other, then that sort of content should be regarded as invalid. In language teaching, the criterion of validity requires consistency among objectives, materials content and methods to be established. According to Johnson (1984) and Littlewood (1984), the acquisition of communicative competence in language is an example of skill development. Concerning the development of language skills, Smith (1978, 1982) argues that one learns to read by reading and to write by writing. Similarly, it can be argued that one learns to listen by listening, and to speak by speaking. And instructional materials should be designed in such

a way that it may help to speed up these processes of skill development

In the analysis of the merits and the short comings of the set of textbooks for grades 6, 7, 8, 9 in terms of its relation to methodology Hien (1991), to repeat his arguments, points out that the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) have been paid due attention to, in the selection and organization of content for the set of textbooks. Thus, Hien (1991) regards the four language skills as components of methodology rather than components of the established goal for the process of language teaching and learning. In this chapter, I hold a different viewpoint based on the skill learning model by Johnson (1984) and Littlewood (1984) which states that the process of acquiring communicative competence goes through the channels of skills development. Language skills are, therefore, regarded as objectives either general or specific. General objectives refers to a translation of the established goal into more specific directions for actions. Specific objectives refers to a translation of the general objectives into precise statements representing the teacher's attempt to place those objectives into specific classroom teaching in a small amount of manageable time.

Instructional material, in order to be regarded as valid, must be closely related to the intended outcomes specified in both general and/or specific objectives. The set of textbooks for grades 6, 7, 8, 9, should, therefore, be considered in the light of their relationship to the stated objectives. The prevalence of language drill exercises over the communicative practice exercises apparent in these textbooks is up to a point theoretically justifiable from the

viewpoint underlying the proportional approach (Yalden, 1983). However, in this study, following Maley (1986), I hold the viewpoint that communicative tasks are superior to linguistic exercises in promoting learning. This viewpoint coincides with Hien's (1991) viewpoint underlying his criticism on the solution of the relations between language drill exercises and communicative practice exercises in the textbooks under discussion. (see chapter 4)

On the basis of what has been discussed, I would like to make the following comments and recommendations:

1 Learners are more likely to acquire the language if they are exposed to authentic materials. As a result, input should be truly authentic or at least 'modified authentic' (that is, preserving the linguistic properties of authentic texts). For later publications of the set of textbooks, all the texts in the set should be reconsidered from the viewpoint of authenticity both in text and in use. Authentic use of authentic materials of a wider variety of genre with exercises designed not just to check comprehension but also to aid comprehension should be considered.

2 Learners learn to communicate by communicating. If the purpose of the teaching and learning process is to acquire communicative competence, the instructional materials should contain a greater amount of communicative tasks/communicative practice exercises. For later publications of the set of textbooks, all the exercises in the set should be reconsidered from the viewpoint of objectives-related validity. These must be carefully selected and constructed, bearing in mind possible class size, inexperience of teachers in this method and expectations of students. Well-

thought out and clearly explained teachers guides must be written so that teachers are given every support possible.

3 To mirror real communication, the four language skills should not be taught as separate elements. Instead, they should be integral to any given task. The proportion of each would vary with the nature of the task. Accordingly, the system of skill development exercises in the set of textbooks under discussion should be reconsidered also from the viewpoint of objectives related validity.

5.3.2 Interest

Researchers on input theory, as has been mentioned in chapter 2 of this study, hold the viewpoint that not all input available to the learners has the same impact on them. The appropriateness of language input to the personal interests of the learners is the condition for input to become intake. Breen and Candlin (1987 : 19), in constructing a guide for selection of language teaching materials ask the following questions:

Which subject matter (topics, themes, ideas) in the materials is likely to be interesting and relevant to your learners ?

In what way do the materials involve your learners' values, attitudes, and feelings ?

Thus, in the opinion of Breen and Candlin, (1987), the learners' values, attitudes and feelings should be considered as the basis for selection of topics, themes and ideas to be presented in the materials. The search for the learners' values, attitudes and feelings leads theorists on materials design and development to

consideration of the general background of the learners (see Beebe's explanation on input preferences presented in chapter 2)

On the basis of the students background outlined in Chapter 4, learning motivation is generally low. At this level and in this context, motivation of neither integrative nor instrumental nature are present. Motivation from interest or success must be created; and one of the ways to do this is through the production of appropriate instructional materials where the learners' attitudes, values and feelings are reflected. Accordingly, the choice of topics, themes and ideas for the textbooks should be context-based, i.e., they must be familiar to the school children in the rural areas.

The textbooks under discussion, being prescribed for both urban and rural areas, seems to be lacking in this direction. Throughout the set which contains 90 units, there are only 5 units which deal with the theme of farming. The multiform country life, familiar and comfortable to the rural school children, with its beautiful scenery, uncountable species of animals, plants and trees, vivid traditions, habits and customs etc has not found its way into the instructional content presented in the textbooks

This is not a call for a return to the countryside (as the one heard in sentimental and romantic literature at the beginning of the 19th century), but a proposal to take the rural school children's interests into consideration in order to lower what Krashen and Terrell (1983) refer to as 'affective factor' and to enable the learners to be more receptive to the input source. The result would be an increase of ELT effectiveness and efficiency in rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam.

5.3.3. Learnability

The criterion of learnability demands that the instructional content should conform to the learners' existing level of competence. In order to realise this criterion, the content of instructional materials should be sequenced in such a way that the learners, basing themselves on what they have already acquired, can progress to the level of competence and skills specified in the objectives.

In language learning, the criterion of learnability is related to the input hypothesis which states that language learners can progress from their level of competence (stage *i*) to a higher level of competence (stage *i+1*), the stage that immediately follows stage *i* in the natural order. Krashen and Terrell (1983 : 33) explain that

"In practice, providing optimal input may be surprisingly easy. It may be that all the teacher need to do is to make sure the student *understand* what is said or what they are reading. When this happens if there is enough input, *i+1* will usually be automatic. Other structures will of course be present in the input as well, but there will be plenty of exposure to the *i+1* as well as a review of previously acquired structures."

Thus, in language teaching, the criterion of learnability applies mainly to the teaching of receptive skills (listening and reading). Considered from the angle of instructional materials for the teaching of these skills, the criterion of learnability is basically related to the ordering of grammatical and lexical input. But it must not be forgotten that linguistic processing is both a 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' process (Richards : 1990). Background knowledge such as previous knowledge of the themes, topics or situations or knowledge in the forms of 'schemata' and 'scripts' (i.e., knowledge about the progression of events and their

relationships) must be tapped as a source for comprehension. Accordingly, in designing instructional materials for effective teaching of listening comprehension, attention should be focussed both on the complexity of lexical, phonological and grammatical items and the familiarity of themes, topics, situations, the knowledge of which serves as the situational, contextual cues for comprehending input at the $i+1$ level.

In chapter 4 of this study, it was suggested that the textbooks did not pay due attention to the teaching of listening comprehension. For the teaching of listening comprehension to be effective, there should be more materials specially designed for listening comprehension activities and these materials should take into account the learners' lexical, phonological and grammatical competence and background knowledge. The background knowledge of junior secondary school children in the rural areas is not easy to define but, in general, it is related to the background of the rural school children mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Considered from the angle of instructional materials for the teaching of reading comprehension skills, the criterion of learnability also finds its expression in what has been referred to in the discussion on instructional materials for the teaching of listening comprehension. The main difference in the process of decoding language in listening and reading is that in listening the message is given in the spoken form and in reading, in the written form. But these are two very different genre. This difference results in the difference in the level of input complexity specified for the teaching of each skill. Normally, texts for reading comprehension are expected to contain more $i+1$ input than texts

for listening comprehension (Wang, 1986). This means that texts which are designed to be read must not be used as listening training. Listening materials must be designed to help not to hinder the learner. If authentic materials are not available, then materials must be designed which reflect natural listening (not reading) and authentic use must be the criterion.

The level of input complexity in reading texts, according to Krashen and Terrell (1983) should be decided on the basis of taking the principle of appropriateness into account. A reading text is regarded as appropriate, if

- 1 considered from the angle of vocabulary, it does not contain too many unfamiliar words;
- 2 considered from the angle of syntax, it does not contain too much unfamiliar syntax;
- 3 considered from the angle of semantics, it refers to the themes, topics, ideas, familiar to the readers.

Thus, lexical, grammatical and contextual familiarity is one basis upon which appropriateness (or learnability) of a reading text is judged. But care will need to be taken so that linguistic simplification does not mean there is insufficient exposure to new language. The greater the exposure to language, the more input is available which may eventually be converted into intake. Texts can also be made simpler not by linguistic modification but by elaborative modification. With authentic texts as a base, paraphrase, repetition, more use of synonyms etc. can be built in to aid comprehension and learning. The introduction of input at the $i+1$ level should, therefore, be in a reasonable amount for each particular skill.

5.4 TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

5.4.1 Introduction

In parallel with instructional materials as the main source of input another source of input is the teacher. Strevens (1978 : 189) defines 'the teacher' in relation to instructional materials, stating that "the teacher is the human agency responsible for presenting foreign language materials to the learners". In this sense, the teacher is seen as the medium for transforming what is embedded in the instructional materials into the learners' knowledge and skills. From this understanding of the teacher as a concept, there arises the technical and the professional sense of the word 'the teacher'. There are good teachers and there are bad teachers, or to use Strevens's phrases, there are teachers whose capacities 'merit the label' and 'those who do not' (1978 : 189).

In chapter 4 of this study, the problem of the quality of teachers presently working in the junior secondary schools in the rural areas in Vietnam has been outlined. To solve the problem of teaching effectiveness and efficiency, the problem of teacher quality emerges as a decisive factor. The discussion on teacher quality raises the problem of teacher education.

Richards and Nunan (1990) distinguish between 'teacher training', and 'teacher education' as ways of increasing teacher quality. By teacher training, they mean approaches that view teacher preparation as familiarising student teachers with techniques and skills to apply in the classroom. By teacher education, they mean

approaches that involve teachers in developing theories of teaching, understanding the nature of teacher decision making and strategies for critical self awareness and self-evaluation and examine afresh the assumptions underlying their own programmes and practices. Thus, the product of teacher training is a practising teacher and the product of teacher education is a researcher-teacher. In this chapter, we would like to use the term teacher preparation to refer to both teacher training and teacher education and the term teacher development to refer to what Strevens (1978) refers to as further education. Teacher development is the process that follows teacher preparation and some practical experience and which aims at continual intellectual, experiential and attitudinal growth of teachers. Lange (1990 : 250) explains the term as follows:

"In using the term 'teacher development', the intent here is to suggest that teachers continue to evolve in the use, adaptation and application of their art and craft. It is the continuance of that evolution that teacher education programmes seek, but rarely establish."

Thus, if a distinction between teacher preparation and teacher development is to be made, it should be that, teacher preparation is concerned with pre-service training courses at different levels while teacher development is concerned with in-service or refresher training courses. Looking at the actual situation of English language teaching at junior secondary schools in the rural areas in Vietnam, one of our primary concerns is obviously with teacher development.

What areas should the process of teacher development focus on? Strevens (1978) talks about teacher development in terms of

considerations on approach, syllabus, methodology, materials, testing, and constraints on teaching/learning effectiveness Richards (1990) approaches the problem from the angle of teacher strategies (classroom management, structuring, tasks, grouping) and learner strategies. These cover an extremely wide area and it is necessary to be realistic when dealing with a real situation.

Problem areas concerning teacher development are great and require a complete study project for its solutions. In this chapter, within the framework of rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam, where the level of English to be taught is elementary and the quality of teachers, as has been presented in chapter 4 of this study, needs to be improved in terms of language knowledge, skills and methodology, my attention will be concentrated on these problems only.

5.4.2 Enrichment of Methodology

Enrichment of methodology is generally seen as one of the channels for teacher development (Andrews (1983); Maley (1986); Richards (1990)). Enrichment of methodologies for English language teachers working at rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam can be carried out in a number of ways.

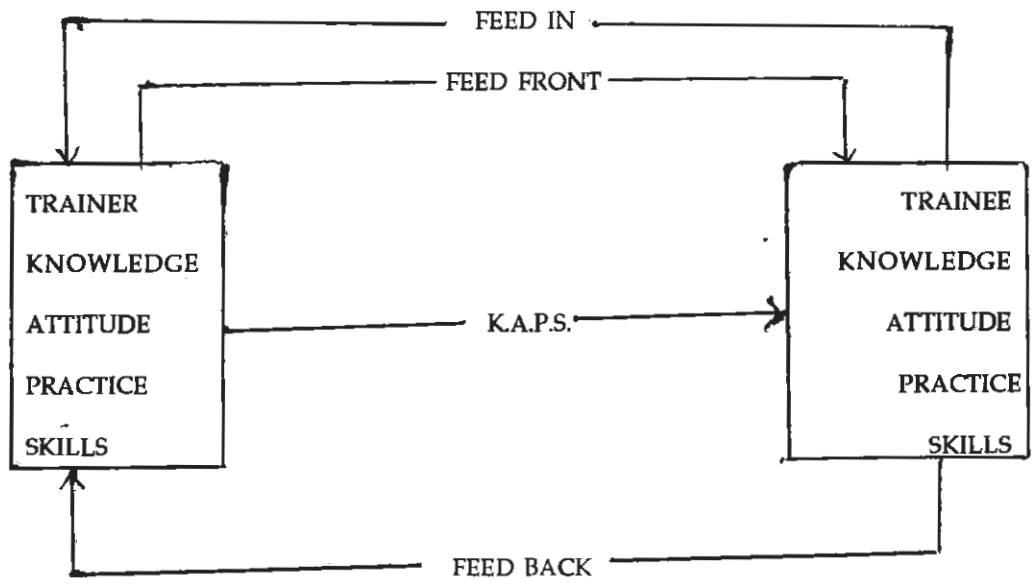
5.4.2.1 Organization of Training Workshops

A training workshop may be defined as the confluence, the sharing, the upgrading of knowledge, attitude, practice and skills (KAPS) between the trainers and the trainees as it is implied in the following diagram:

- 2 Pilot projects on transfer of educational services to the rural and remote rural areas should be expanded to include ELT programmes for rural school children and teachers.
- 3 Further research should be done into how to organise refresher training courses for language teachers working in the rural areas. The content of these courses should include theories of language and language learning, the nature of the learning process in general and the nature of the language learning process in particular. etc.
- 4 Further research should be done into how to mobilize the combined efforts by the State, social organizations, communities and students' parents into the increase of educational effectiveness and efficiency in general and ELT effectiveness and efficiency in particular.

Efforts into these research areas are always worthwhile. "For the sake of ten years, let us plant trees, for the interests of a hundred years, let us cultivate men" (Ho Chi Minh). Investment in education is investment for the future.

The 90s will be a new stage of socio-economic development in Vietnam. According to Vietnam's Strategy for Economic Stabilization and Development, and perhaps if a few of the recommendations in this paper are noted we can look forward hopefully to a better future, for FLT in general and ELT in particular in junior secondary schools in rural Vietnam.



(Asia and the Pacific Programme for Development Training and Communication Planning UNDP : 9/1989)

Figure 5. 4: Conceptual framework of training transfer.

Here, in this diagram, 'knowledge' is meant to refer to knowledge of the theories of language teaching. Teachers need to be made familiar with such language teaching methods as the Grammar-Translation method, the Audio-lingual method, and Communicative Language Teaching presented in chapter 3 of this study. But it is dangerous to give teachers a collection of unfamiliar techniques, without an understanding of the rationale behind them. Teachers also need to be made aware of how learners learn a language so that selection of techniques and methods can be done on an informed basis.

Trainees should be given the opportunity to practise their methods and skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and be taught to be more aware of what exactly it is that contributes to the success

or otherwise of their own teaching so that they develop the confidence to tailor their teaching to the context in which they find themselves and to the developing needs of their learners.

Although training workshops cannot improve knowledge of the language to a great extent, they are invaluable for providing teachers who have little contact with other speakers of the language with opportunities to use the language and increase confidence in their own ability.

5.4.2.2 Teachers' Centres

Teachers' centres are another source of methodological and personal enrichment and can provide a variety of services to teachers. These services can be classified under three headings:

- a Resources Centres
- b Curriculum Development Centres
- c Social Centres

a Resource Centres: The teachers' resources centres are places where every sort of language teaching materials is available. By materials, we mean materials in their widest sense: copies of course books, books on language teaching and learning theories and practices, tapes, film strips, and slides, etc. These materials may be borrowed by local teachers. Teachers guides to materials must be made readily available to all who wish them.

b Curriculum Development Centres Curriculum centres are places for organising different courses for teacher development, liaison between junior and senior secondary language teachers, meetings with language advisers to exchange ideas and experiences in language teaching.

c Social Centres The teachers' social centres are places for organising entertainment activities concerning the use of foreign languages, such as 'English Evenings' or 'Week of American Films' etc.

If these centres are to be established, first and foremost, at the provincial and district levels, they will certainly serve as a driving force for increasing teacher self- training and teacher quality and accordingly, teaching effectiveness and efficiency in the broad rural areas of Vietnam.

5. 4. 2. 3 Language Advisers

Stevens (1978) mentions the role of those who hold Master's degrees in Applied Linguistics and related areas as language advisers, inspectors, syllabus designers and team leaders. The contingent of holders of higher degrees in Vietnam is still limited in number. However, this contingent should be made full use of in teacher development projects aiming at enhancing teacher quality and teaching effectiveness and efficiency.

5. 4. 2. 4 International Cooperation in Teacher Development

International cooperation has played a very important part in the development of Vietnamese education. According to UNESCO statistical figures, the former Soviet Union trained for Vietnam 3500 Ph.Ds and MAs, 6000 Graduate Diploma students, 20,000 B.As and tens of thousands of technicians (Education in Vietnam : 1945 - 1991 : UNESCO : 1991). Recently, Vietnam has broadened her relations of cooperations with many other countries in Asia, Europe, the Americas and Australia. Many workshops,

symposiums and study tours for professors and students have taken place. In the time to come, plans should be made for English language teachers working in the rural areas of Vietnam to attend training courses in TESOL abroad.

The quality level of rural junior secondary school teachers in communicative competence has been referred to in chapter 4 of this study. If teachers are expected to teach for communicative competence, they themselves should be trained to be communicatively competent. They must be encouraged to develop a confidence in their spoken and written abilities. While short workshops can do an immense amount to develop this confidence and competence, as many teachers as possible should be encouraged to spend a period of time in a NS environment.

5.5 CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 5

The search for possible solutions to ELT effectiveness and efficiency for rural junior secondary schools in Vietnam, as has been presented in this chapter, starts with syllabus input, goes through material input to teacher development. I have concentrated on these elements, because, my viewpoint, as has been shown in the introduction to chapter 3, is based on the concept of effectiveness as the degree of goal achievement and efficiency as the ratio of output per input. Methods are regarded as a means to carry out an end specified generally in the goal and specifically in the objectives of the process of language teaching and learning.

It would be unwise to close my discussion on possible solutions to effective teaching by opening up new problems that have not been properly solved in the literature on effective teaching, but the

neglect of these problems would be unwise too. One of these problems is the very definition of what effective teaching is. Richards (1990 : 38) thinks of effective teaching as "teaching that produces higher than predicted gains on standardised achievement tests." What are predicted gains? Are they based on the objectives as an end or on the methods as a means? There is, obviously, a great deal of ambiguity in such a definition of effective teaching. By raising Richard's (1990) definition, I would like to highlight the fact that the controversy on solutions to effective teaching is still going on. The problem of effective teaching can be approached from different directions and from different viewpoints. The solutions presented here are, by no means the only solutions nor are they the final ones.

CHAPTER 6

HIGHER LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day

Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a life

(Chinese Proverb)

6.1 Introduction

In little less than a decade, the 21st century will begin and the children presently in school will be the backbone of society. In this context, schools, including rural schools, must serve the purpose of equipping today's children with the necessary knowledge and skills for life in the coming century. This is both an international and a national concern. Internationally, the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child has been in effect since 1991. Nationally, the Law on Universalisation of Elementary Education and the Law on Education, Protection and Care for Children guarantee the legal right of Vietnamese citizens under 16 years of age to be adequately educated, protected and cared for. These two laws also provide the legal bases for any research work which aims to increase educational effectiveness and efficiency in general and ELT effectiveness and efficiency in particular.

In this study, solutions to the increase of ELT effectiveness and efficiency have been approached from three angles: syllabus

design, textbook revision and teacher development and have been based on the theoretical findings in input studies and in the examination of language teaching as the never-ending search for effectiveness and efficiency. These solutions are part and parcel of general solutions to the increase of educational effectiveness and efficiency in Vietnam. The relation of these solutions to the general solutions is the relation of the particular to the general. Due to the position of Foreign Languages in the school curriculum, the increase of the ELT effectiveness and efficiency will contribute to the general increase of educational effectiveness and efficiency. At the same time, however, as a school subject, Foreign Languages Teaching cannot go beyond the limits imposed on it by the school context, the local community context nor the general context of rural education in Vietnam. The context of language teaching and learning can play a decisive role in the failure or success of efforts to increase teaching and learning effectiveness and efficiency. (Prabhu : 1990). It is, therefore, necessary to refer to a number of solutions to the increase of teaching/learning effectiveness and efficiency proposed by educational managers and researchers at the national conferences on teaching and learning at the general school level in Vietnam.

6.2 HIGHER LEVEL SOLUTIONS

In Vietnam, in recent years, a number of national conferences have been held on such problems as the learning quality of general school children, supervision, management and inspection in education, the right of the child and the law on

universalisation of elementary education etc. Some basic and urgent proposals raised at these conferences were as follows;

6.2.1 Investment

Educational realities in Vietnam and in the world show that without adequate material investment, it is impossible to hope for adequate quality in education. As the Vietnamese saying goes "Like money; like goods". The minimum material conditions in Vietnamese general schools in general, and especially in the rural schools are lacking, as we have seen. For the solution of this problem, there should be an active mechanism of investment by the State, active contributions by society, the localities, the communities and the students' parents. In other words, there should be combined efforts by the State, social organisations, local authorities and the students' parents, in terms of their material and financial support, to better the school facilities, to guarantee the minimum material conditions for teachers to teach well and for students to learn well. For the time being, investment is the key factor in educational development in Vietnam.

For foreign language teaching and learning, investment in terms of teaching and learning equipment (cassette recorders, tapes, language labs, magazines, pictures, books, textbooks and other publications etc.) is extremely desirable when we think of teaching not "as 'producing' learning, but as 'facilitating' it" (Brumfit : 1981 : 23). Without these, it will be difficult to achieve communicative competence, the goal for the process of foreign language teaching and learning in general schools in Vietnam, as defined by the

Reformed FLT Curriculum (1985). To some extent, it is possible to say that "it all depends on the teaching context" (Prabhu : 1990)

6.2.2 Methodology

Teaching methodology, as mentioned in chapter 1 of this study, is the most conservative element in the school curriculum. As a solution, teaching methodology should be improved to make it possible for students, especially in secondary schools, to take some initiative in and responsibility for their own learning, i.e., to become aware of how to learn and how to develop individual aptitudes, free from the external restraints. "To lead the learners from an initially dependent to a finally independent position should be one of the built-in educational objectives of a learning programme" (Trim : 1980 : 14). It has been proposed that the Ministry of Education and Training should call together researchers and specialists in education to draw up "a national research programme" on "students' learning methods as a means to the preparation of useful citizens for the country in the XXI Century". (Proposals from the National Conference on Secondary School Students' Learning Quality : 1990).

At the same time, international cooperation in this field should be accelerated. As mentioned earlier, Vietnam is rather backward in teaching and learning methodology, so backward that, in a 1989 publication on foreign language teaching methodology, there is no mention of CLT (Vien Quan : 1989). In this field, Vietnam can learn much from other countries. Before embracing all the latest techniques advocated in CLT, however, research should be done

into finding which techniques can be successfully adapted to suit the students in the rural schools, in a context in which the role of the teacher and society's attitude to and expectations of the teacher are traditionally seen as very different from those in the West; and where students' learning habits and strategies and pedagogical expectations may also differ to a large extent.

6. 2. 3 Democratisation of School Management

By democratisation of school management, it is meant that students, parents, localities (hamlets, villages, districts) be given the right to self-determination in choosing what to learn and how to learn in accordance with the ministerial curriculum. On the basis of this choice, there will appear three types of student, namely:

- a) the promising type: those with ability to get promotion to higher education;
- b) the ordinary type: those without ability to get promotion to higher education;
- c) the special type: those with special conditions, psychological, economic etc., that enable them to reach certain grades only.

These three types will be classified for enrolment into specialised schools for gifted students, conventional schools for ordinary students and 'work and study' (self-reliance) schools.

For foreign language teaching and learning, there are specialised foreign language schools for gifted students, very often at the provincial level, and sometimes at the district level. Students in

these schools follow the same curriculum as students in conventional schools except that the time allotment on foreign language teaching and learning is increased (see chapter 1). In some specialised foreign language schools in the urban areas, students learn two foreign languages (Lan : 1991).

Democratisation of school management also would mean that teachers would have responsibility for their own self-assessment and for the evaluation of their teaching. Non-qualified teachers will be given jobs other than teaching.

This solution should lead initially to the improvement of student learning motivation; (students would become more interested in learning as their learning becomes fruitful and is paid due attention to by their teacher in charge; as they are free to express their individual expectations; as their teachers are qualified). With this solution, teacher teaching motivation should also improve, since teachers would be able to enjoy the atmosphere of those who are fond of them, to witness the results of their teaching and to obtain adequate remuneration for their labour etc.)

Democratisation of school management should prove to be a good solution to the increase of teaching and learning effectiveness and efficiency. Motivated teachers are willing to teach and motivated students are willing to learn. When both the input filter and the output filter are low, input has the necessary condition to become intake. Unfortunately, this phenomenon at the moment can be seen only in model schools.

Democratisation of school management would also have a positive backwash on teacher education and development by creating a desire in a teacher to be well qualified, in order to have a comfortable life with good income and high respect.

6.2.4 Activization of the Teaching-Learning Process and School Management.

Activization of the teaching learning process and school management carries the following implications.

Rural secondary schools should set up a network with a view to guaranteeing the quality of the teaching and learning process. Teachers from different schools within the network could exchange teaching materials, equipment, experiences and have cross-fertilization of each other's work. This experiment has already been begun in An Giang Province (South Vietnam)

For foreign language teaching and learning, the working of such a school network (or school clusters) creates conditions for inter-school activities such as English Evenings, Performance of Songs, Music and Dance etc which in turn help to increase students' motivation for foreign language learning.

A body of school assistants should be set up, responsible for the maintenance of order and discipline in everyday school activities, leaving time for school managers and teachers to concentrate their capacities and enthusiasm on the implementation of their specialty work.

Extra-curricula activities should be well organised to give support to the improvement of the in-class teaching and learning quality.

Assessment should be a means to gain insight into the real performance level of each student and to plan remedial teaching, to ensure that each student has acquired the desired performance level for each stage in the teaching-learning process. The purpose of assessment should not be just to fail a student or to frighten him/her academically. Assessment should be a means to an end, namely learning quality.

6.2.5 Implementation of Differentiated Teaching

Differentiated teaching demands that there should be flexible elements in curricula, textbooks, training programmes and evaluation procedures that ensure students with different aspirations can learn as they wish. It is not necessary to force all students to follow one single curriculum, one single training mode, one single set of evaluation procedures (based as they are at the moment on 4 or 5 writing tests!)

Only by doing this can the teaching-learning process be made actually efficient.

6.2.6 Rearrangement of School Managers and Teachers

Experience shows that a contingent of qualified teachers can, within the context of a school, create an upsurge in students' learning quality. Accordingly, incompetent school managers and teachers should be excluded from the teaching mechanism. At the

same time, adequate care should be taken of those who remain up to standard in their job to ensure that their efforts gain due financial recognition.

6.2.7 Selection of College and University Students

The mechanism for selection of college and university students should be radically changed. Public opinion is greatly concerned with the use of the ready made university entry exam papers and with the widespread practice of 'over-time teaching' (i.e., teaching how to score high at the university entrance exams, based on the set of ready made exam papers). For a change, university students should be selected on the basis of their real capacity and exam papers should not be made known to examinees beforehand as now. In turn, this would lead to great beneficial backwash that would filter back down through the school system.

The priority system, currently applied to difficult context students (i.e., students from the remote rural areas, mountainous areas, island areas) should be implemented in material support only. To lower standards for recruitment to universities and colleges of difficult context students would result in non-qualified teachers, doctors, engineers. In terms of teacher education, a non-qualified teacher cannot be expected to carry out effective and efficient teaching.

6.2.8 Self - supporting School Fund

Teachers' material life in general is difficult (see chapter 1). The material life of those teachers working in the rural area is all the

more difficult. Through various sources of income, a self-supporting school fund should be built up, creating favourable conditions for schools to care for teachers' financial lives, so that teachers, especially those who are highly qualified, can have the minimum material conditions to work well and to improve students' learning quality.

6.2.9 Job Training and Employment for Secondary School Leavers

This is the last mentioned, but one of the most significant solutions to restoring students' motivation to learn. Briggs and Telfer (1986) recognise one of the functions of schools as to prepare people for the labour market. There should be such a labour market for secondary school leavers. The demands for knowledge and skills for work in the labour market will serve as the basis upon which learning motivation emerges. For students in the rural areas, to do simple work in the field (ploughing and harrowing the field, for example), just like their parents and grandparents, does not require much knowledge as it is presented in the school textbooks

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The Australian 'think tank' on research into rural education (McShane and Walton , 1990 : 49) introduces 23 research questions concerning education in and for the rural areas with priorities for future research on:

- 1 Rural Definition
- 2 Teacher Preparation
- 3 Curriculum Design

- 4 Community Participation
- 5 Access to Services
- 6 Secondary education to Isolated Students
- 7 Educational Provision to Facilitate Gender and Cultural Equity

Applied to the Vietnamese educational context, these recommendations for future research priorities are of great value. It is hoped that with the increased cooperation between the two countries, the research results in the above-mentioned fields will reach Vietnam and will be analysed for their appropriateness to the Vietnamese situation.

6.4 CONCLUSION TO THE STUDY

In this study, I would like to offer the following suggestions:

- 1 If the importance of rural education in Vietnam, a country with more than 80 percent of the population living in the countryside, is acknowledged, there should be investment of time and money in research work on educational effectiveness and efficiency in the rural areas in general and ELT effectiveness and efficiency in particular. The aims of these studies should be to find out the appropriate ELT methods, appropriate ELT syllabuses, appropriate ELT materials, for different forms of schools in rural Vietnam: specialised language schools for gifted students, conventional schools, 'work and study' schools and provincial boarding schools. In this field of research, international cooperation should be encouraged

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APPENDIX

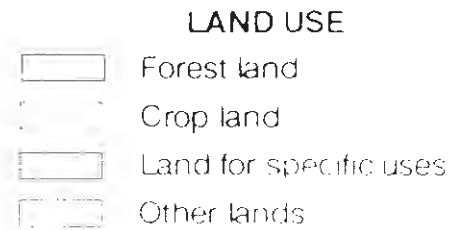
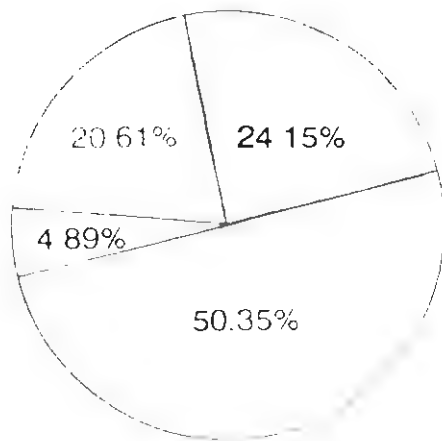
APPENDIX A

SOME STATISTIC FIGURES ABOUT EDUCATION IN VIET NAM

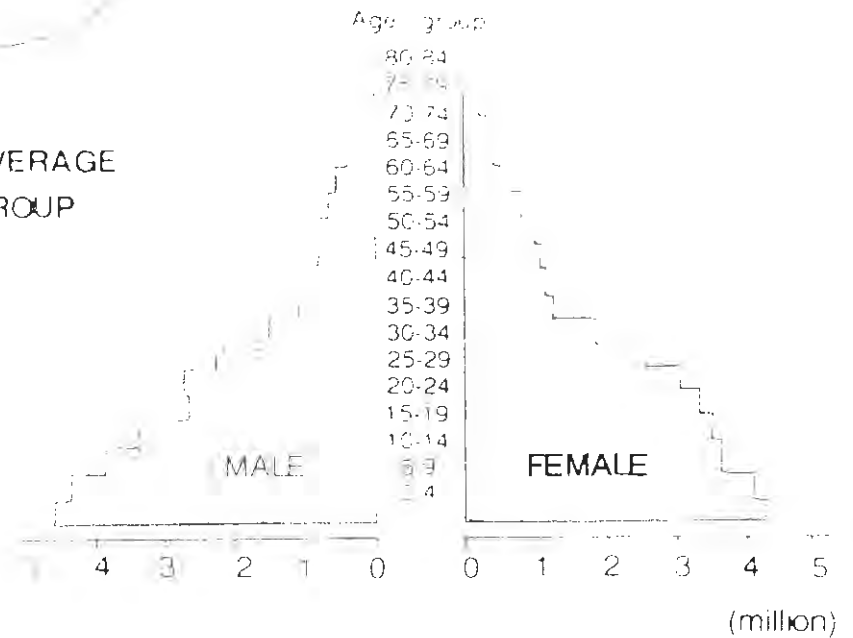
VIETNAM ON THE GLOBE



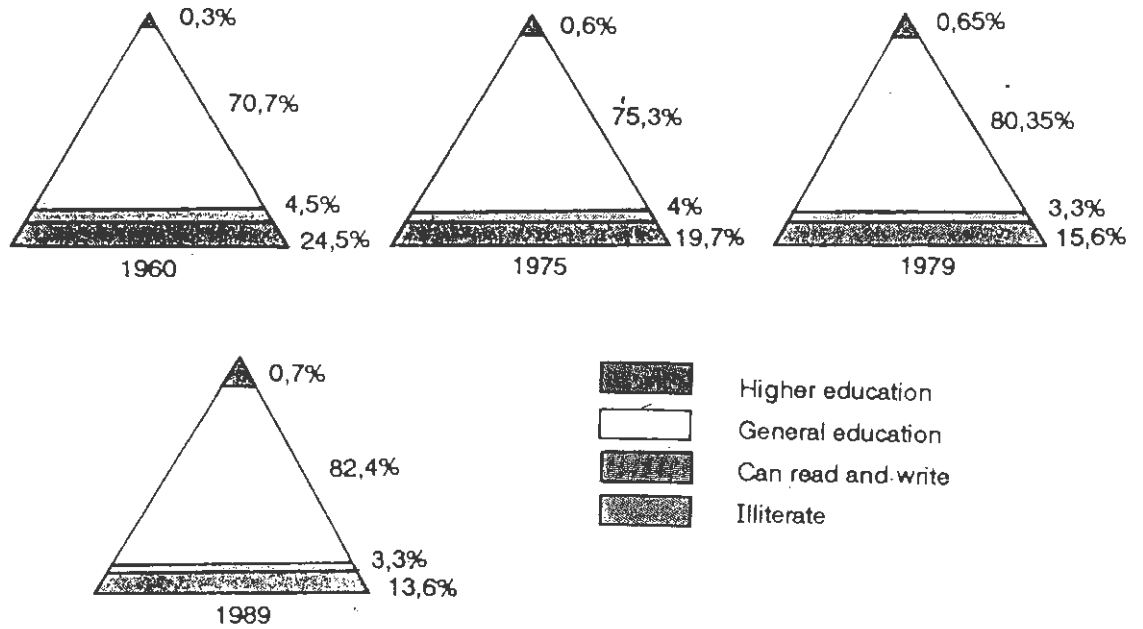
CAPITAL HANOI
 AREA 329600 sqkm
 (main land)
 POPULATION 64412000



POPULATION AVERAGE
 PER AGE - GROUP



CULTURAL STANDARD OF POPULATION FROM 6-YEAR - OLD UPWARD (Percentage)



WORKING IN ECONOMIC BRANCHES (Percentage)

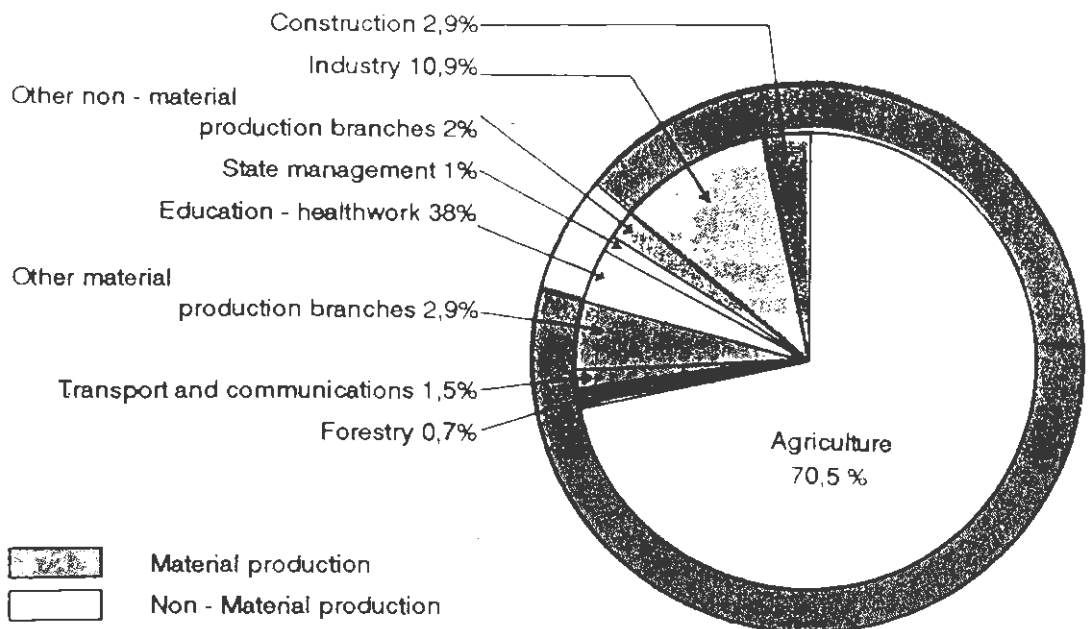
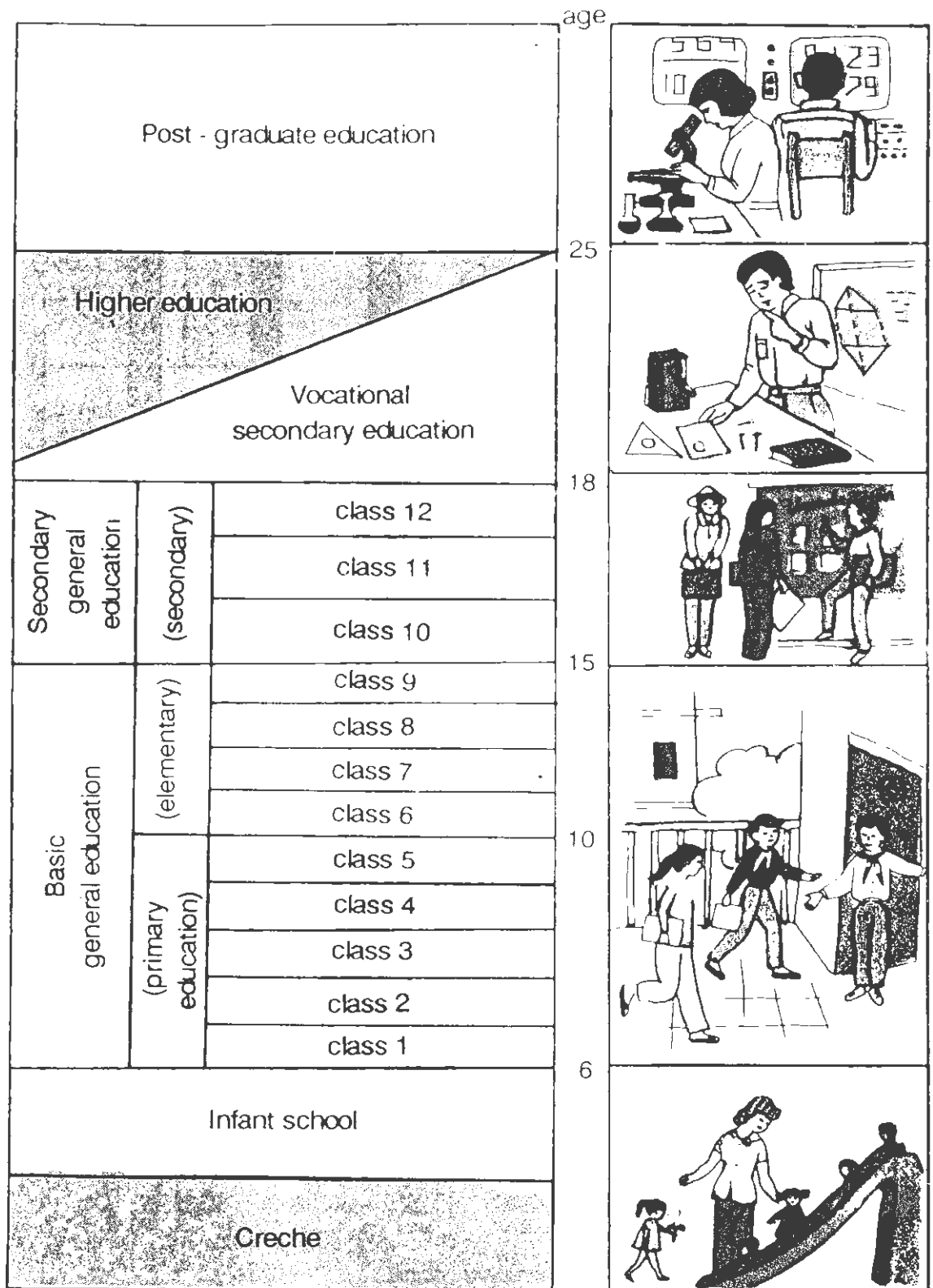
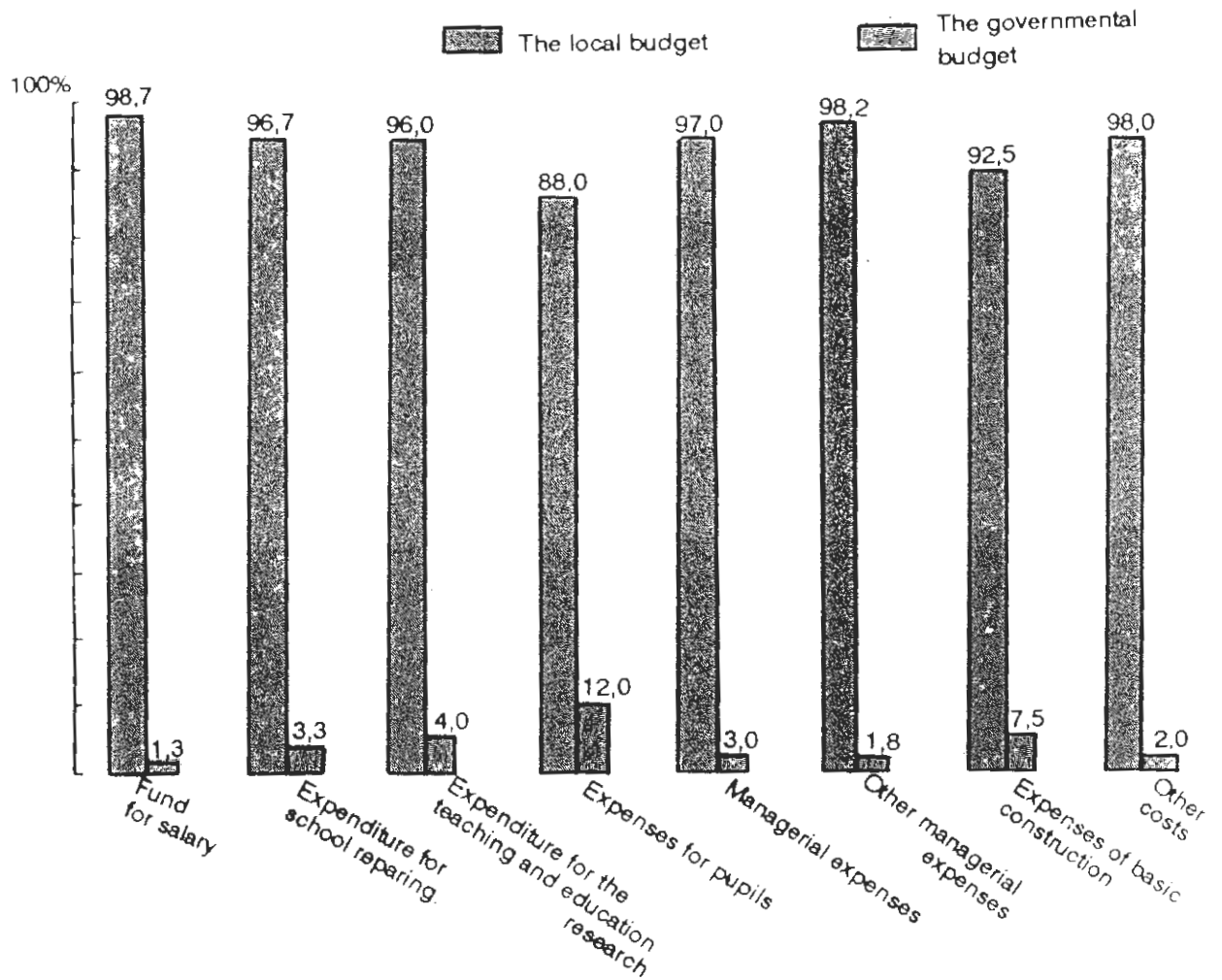


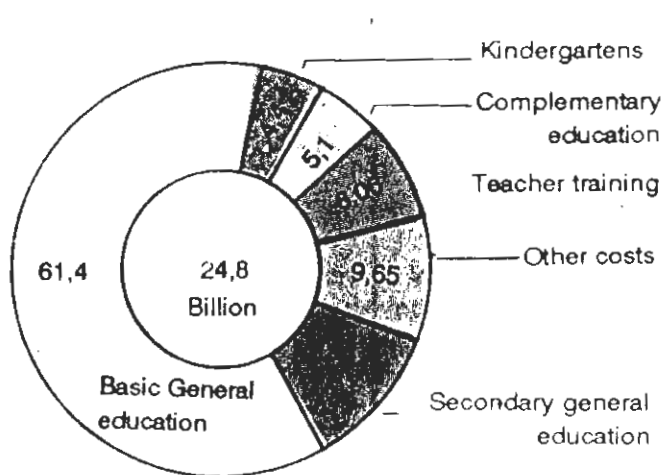
DIAGRAM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM














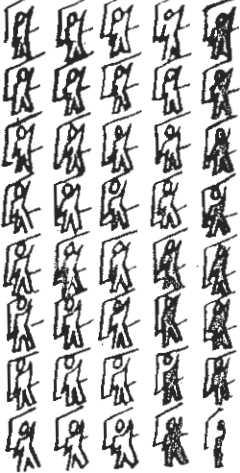








EDUCATION BUDGET (1987)



EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE 1987 (Percentage)

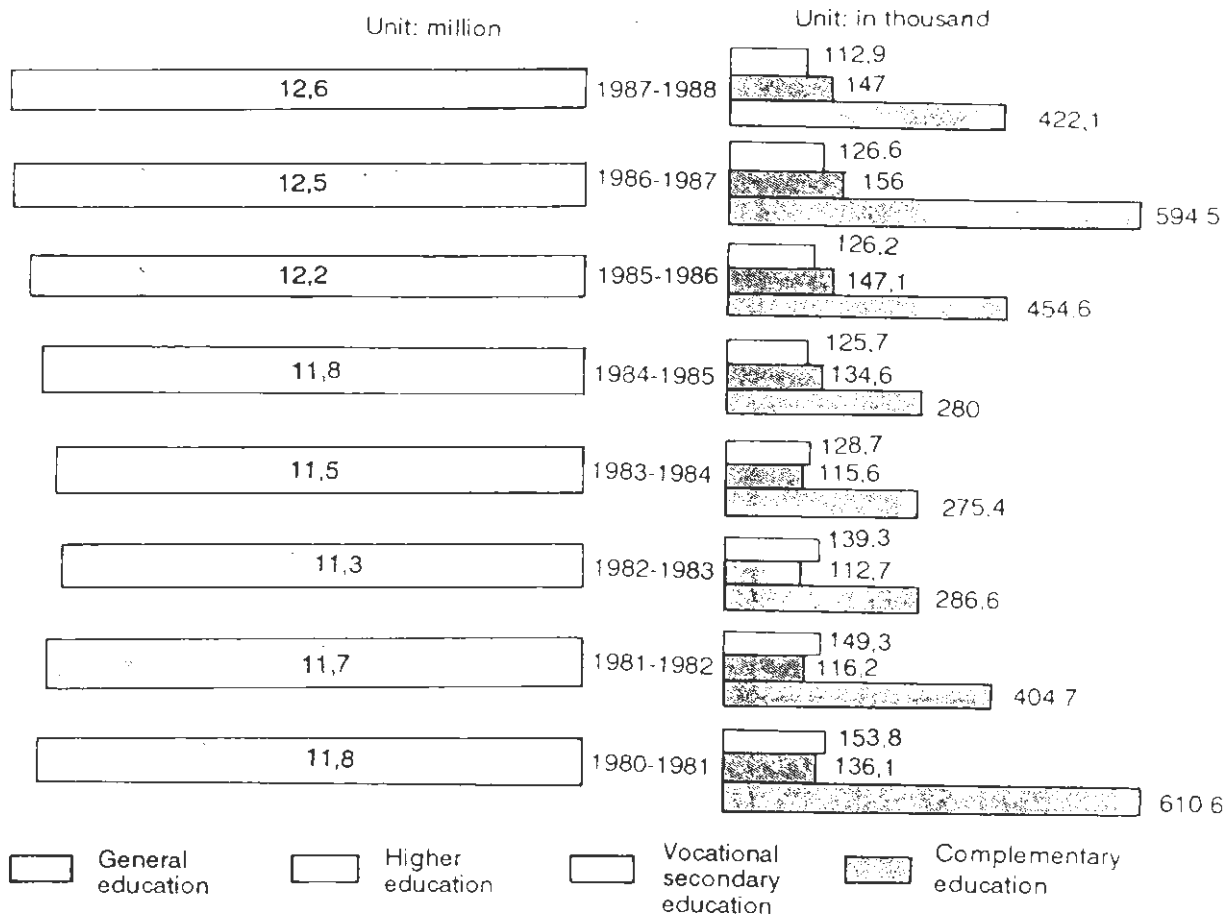


NUMBER OF SCHOOLS (CLASSES), STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN 1987

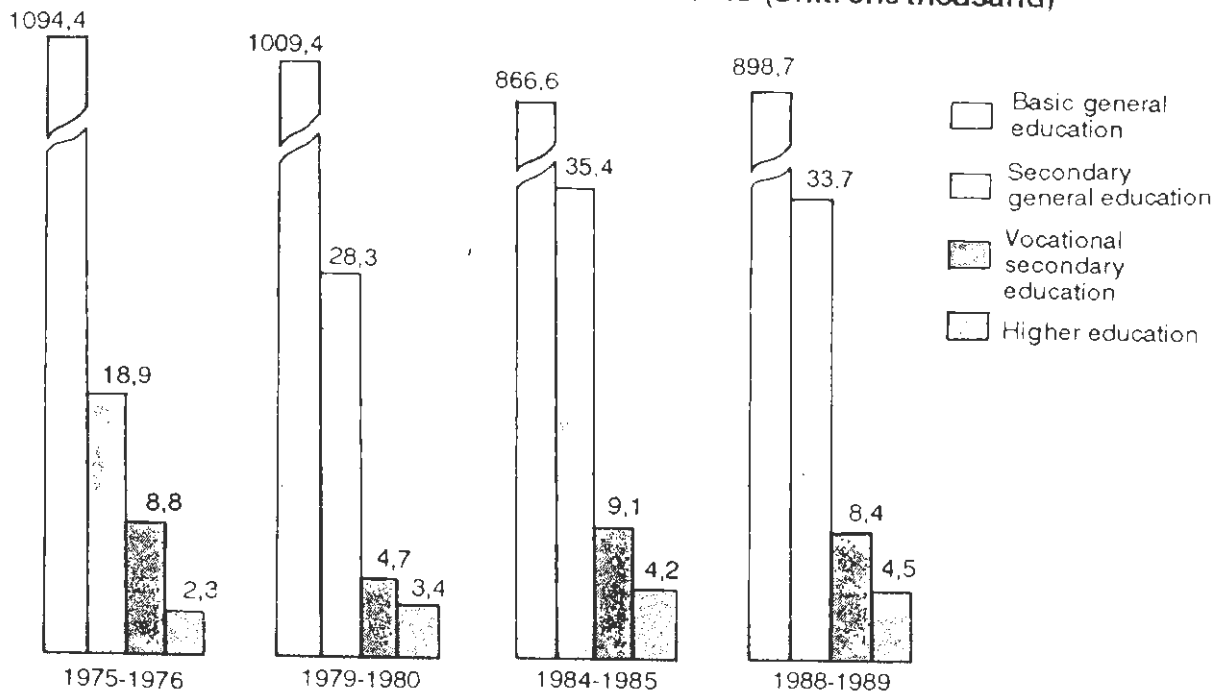
HIGHER EDUCATION	 100	 1167000	 198000
VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION	 293	 147000	 14809
SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION	 1025	 911800	 40900
BASIC GENERAL EDUCATION	 12994	 11711300	 398800
INFANT SCHOOL	 64700	 1896700	 74700
<input type="checkbox"/> female <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> male	 500 Schools  10000 Classes	 50000 each  200000 each	 10000
	Number of schools and classes	Number of students	Number of teachers

(1) Total: male and female

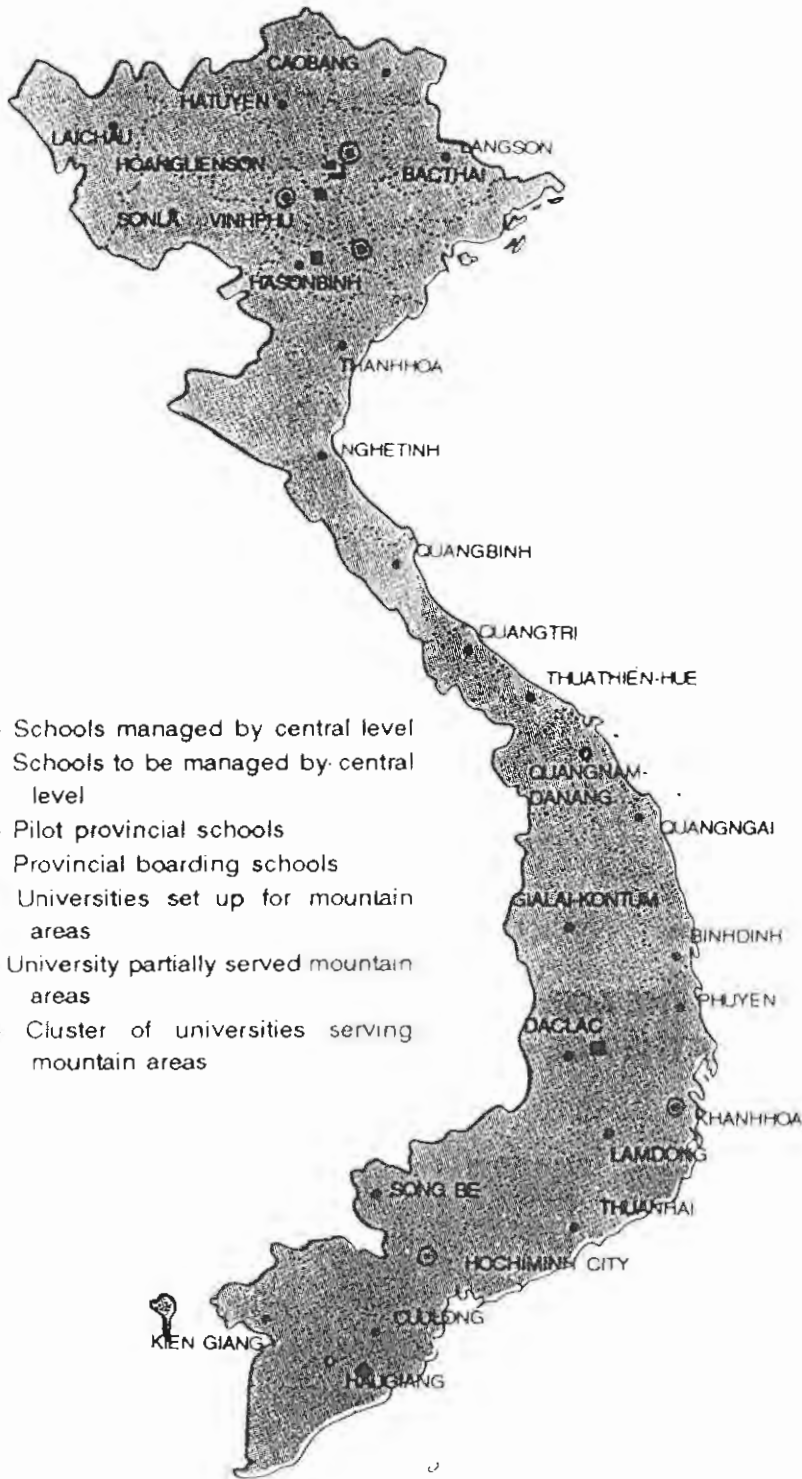
ENROLLMENTS IN EACH YEAR



STUDENTS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES (Unit: one thousand)



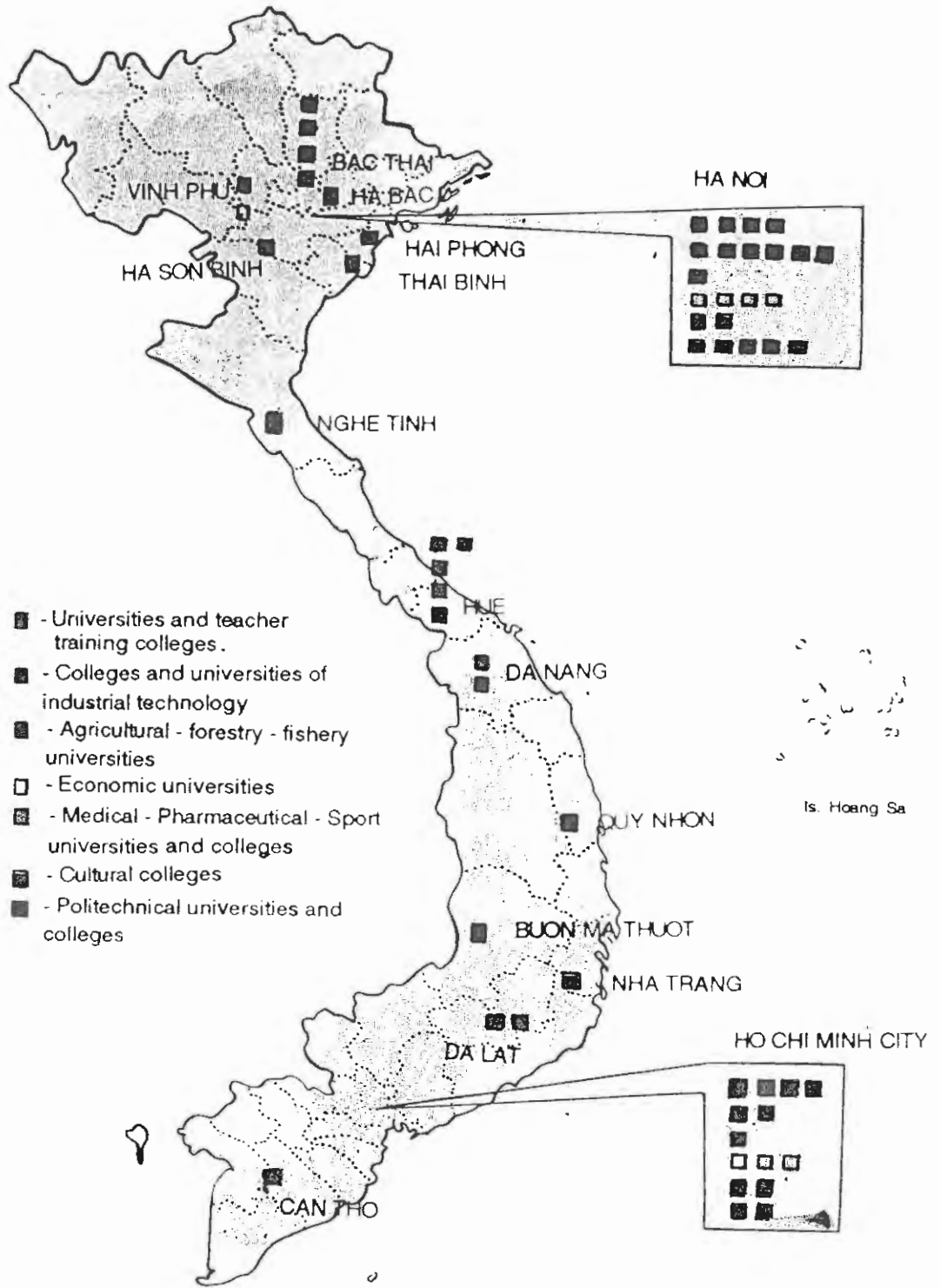
NETWORK OF BOARDING SCHOOLS MANAGED BY CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL LEVELS



- Schools managed by central level
- Schools to be managed by central level
- Pilot provincial schools
- Provincial boarding schools
- - Universities set up for mountain areas
- ▤ - University partially served mountain areas
- ⊠ - Cluster of universities serving mountain areas



NETWORK OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (1991)



Is. Hoang Sa

Is. Trung Sa

CHART OF THE STRUCTURE OF 7 TYPE OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES UP TO 1991

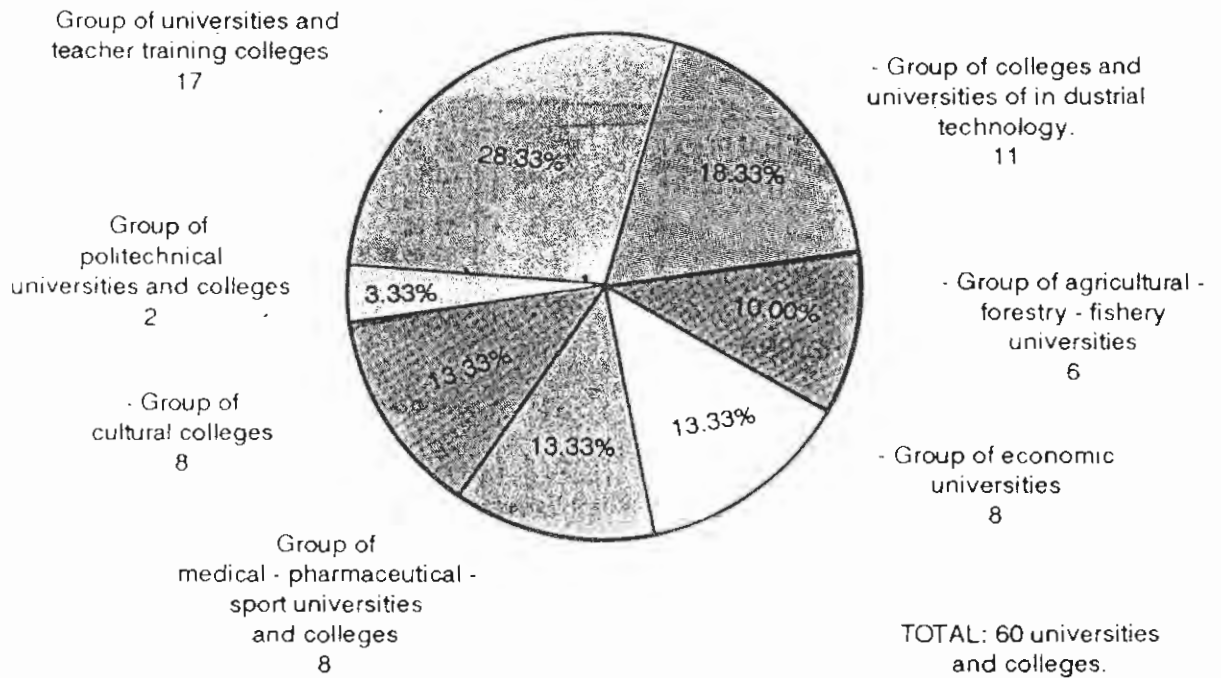
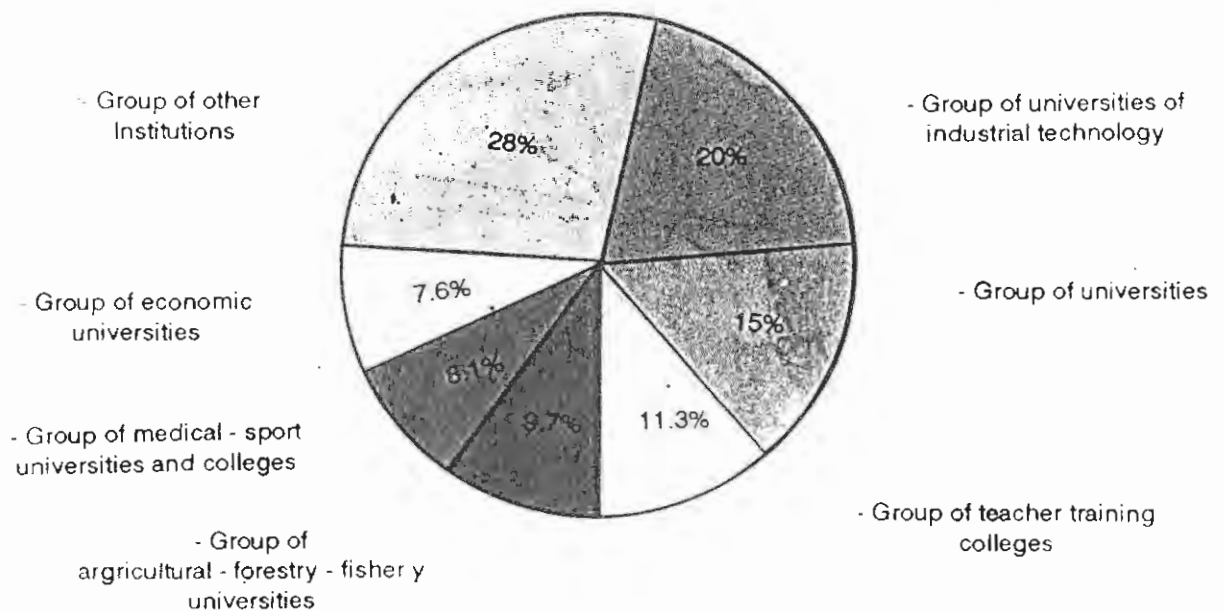


CHART ON THE PERCENTAGE OF THE TEACHING STAFF HOLDING PHD DEGREE



TEACHERS' SCHOOLS SYSTEM

STUDENTS OF TEACHERS' SCHOOLS (In thousand)

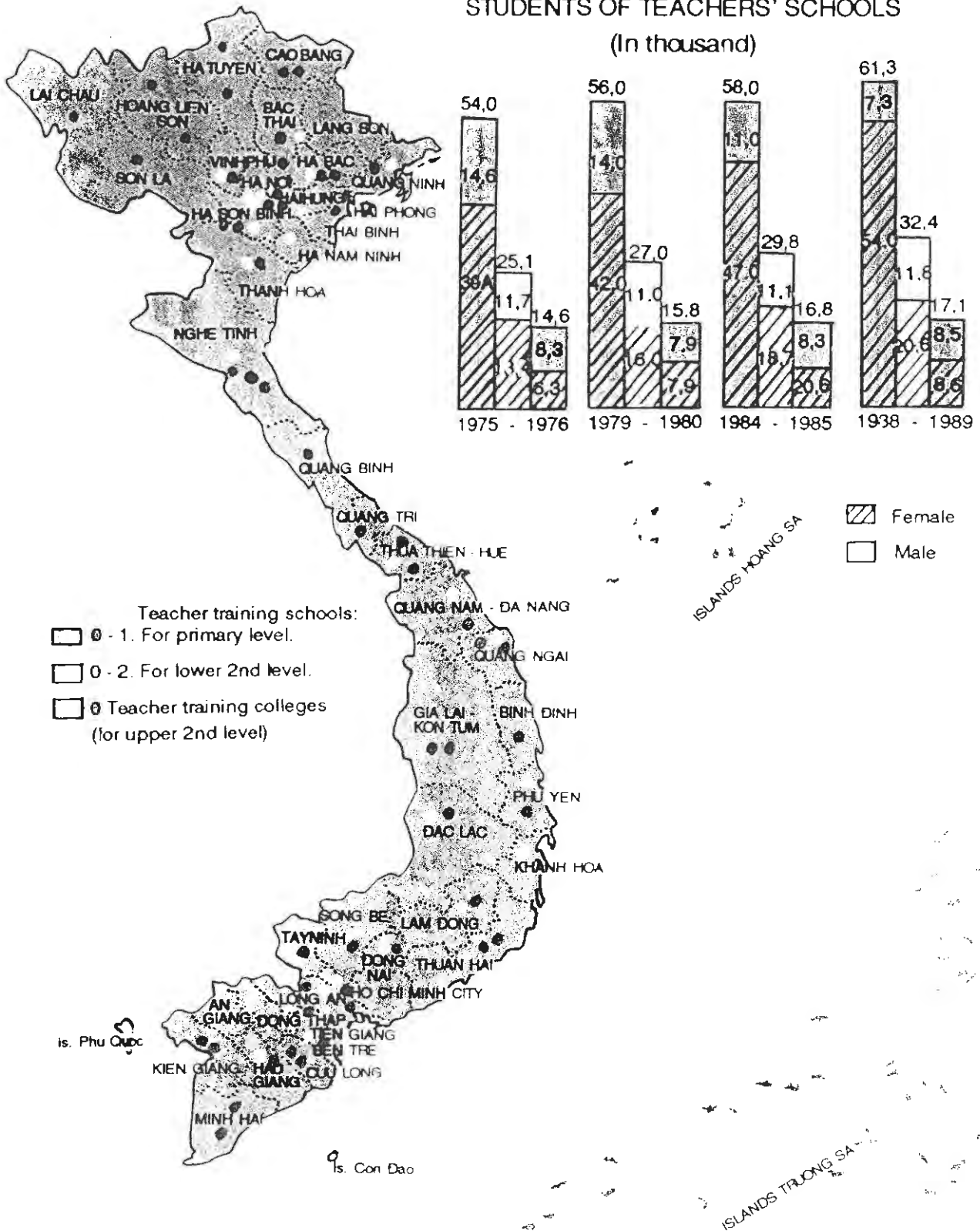
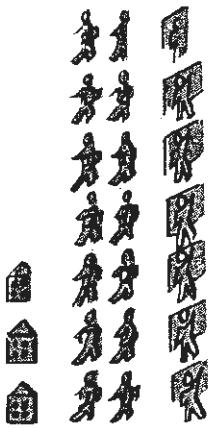
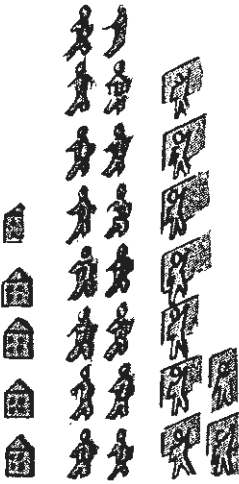
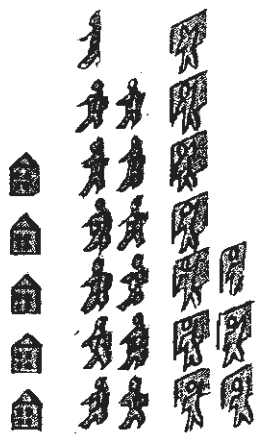
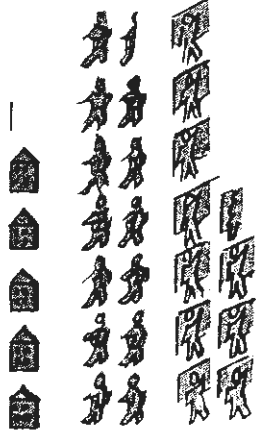
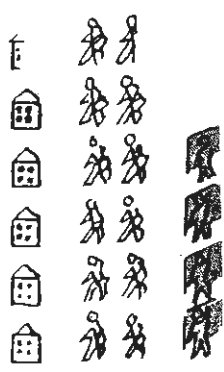
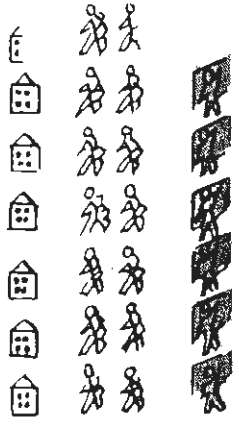
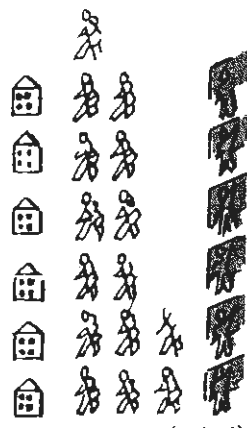
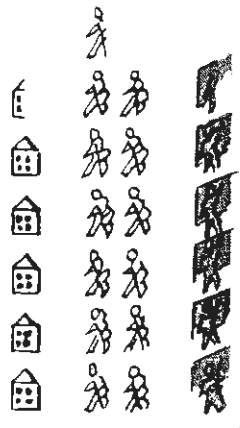









CHART ON THE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR SCIENCE, TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGY IN VIET NAM FROM 1975 - 1990

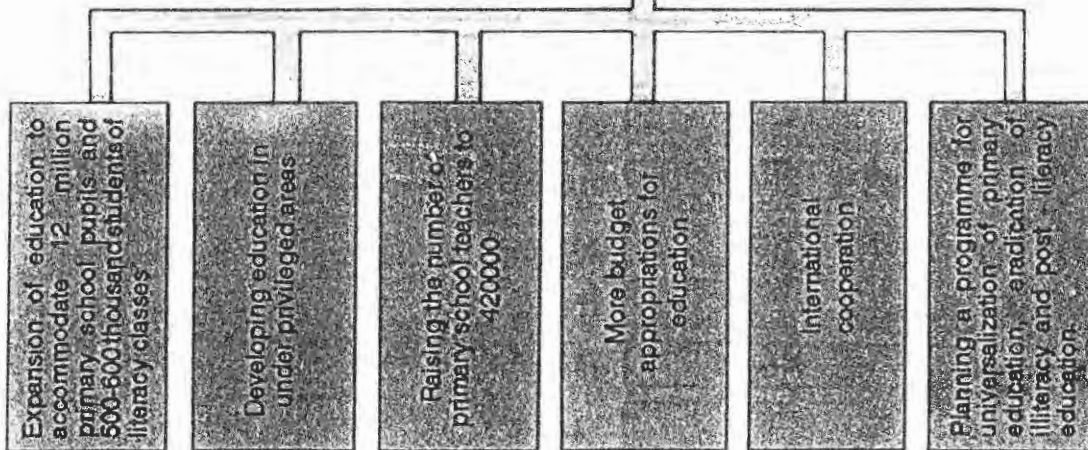
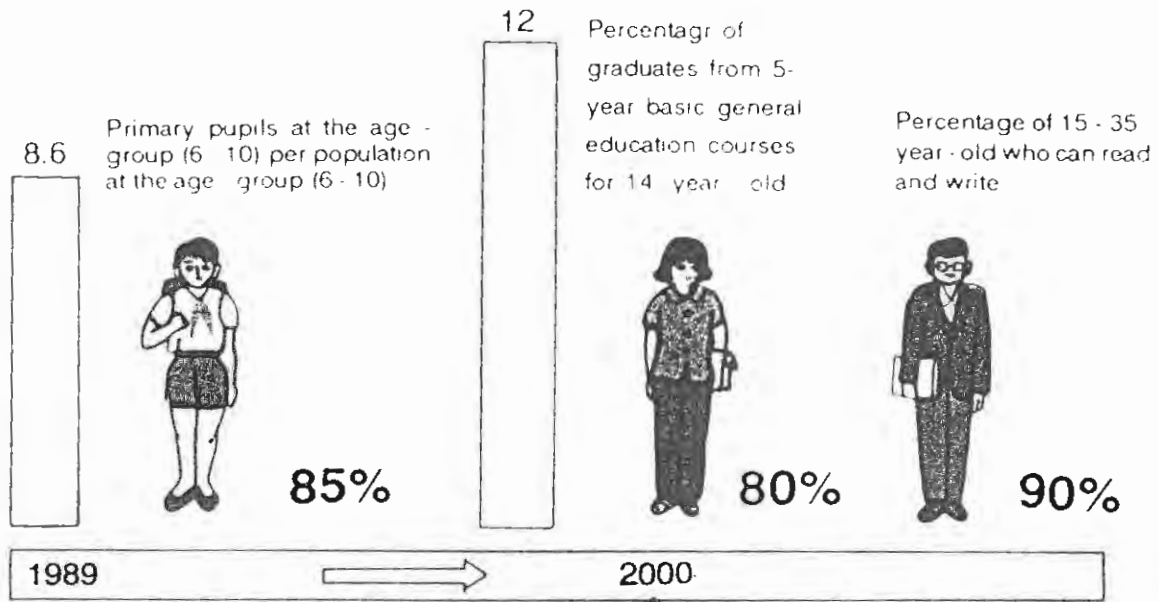
	1975	1980	1985	1990
HIGHER EDUCATION	 55 (135) (12.2)	 87 (154) (17.6)	 97 (126) (18.8)	 103 (135) (20.7)
VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION	 260 (117) (7.8)	 314 (136) (12.0)	 298 (147) (11.4)	 270 (125) (10.5)
VOCATIONAL TRAINING	 (245) (8.3)	 (154) (7.3)	 (92) (6.6)	

 20 colleges, universities
 50 schools
 10000 students each
 2000 of the teaching staff

55: number of universities, colleges, schools.
 (135) (12.2): number (in 1000) of students and of the teaching staff.

TARGETS OF BASIC GENERAL EDUCATION IN VIETNAM UP TO THE YEAR 2000

□ Primary school pupils
(in million)



APPENDIX B

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**FROM THE SET OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS FOR JUNIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN VIETNAM**

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APPENDIX C

A SAMPLE UNIT TAKEN FROM THE SET OF ENGLISH
TEXTBOOKS FOR THE JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
VIETNAM

UNIT 12



RUBBER TREES

It was a fine summer day and the boys were playing football on the village common. Jack was chasing the ball and then had it. He kicked it hard into the goal. But there was a hissing sound and the ball collapsed into a shapeless mass. The boys had to stop playing and Jack ran home with his burst ball. He met his father at the front gate and asked him to fix the ball for him.

Mr Crane : Now if you can unlace the ball and pull out its rubber bladder, I'll mend it for you with this glue.

Jack : What is the glue made of, Dad?

Mr Crane : A kind of milky liquid from rubber trees. We call it latex.

Jack : How can people get it? Do they chop down the tree?

Mr Crane : Good gracious, no. Plantation workers make cuts in the bark of the trees and fix little cups below those cuts to catch the latex as it drips down.

Jack : I've seen a lot of things made from rubber. Then rubber trees are very useful, aren't they? Do we grow them in our country?

Mr Crane : I'm afraid not. Rubber trees can grow easily in tropical countries such as Brazil, Peru, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Jack : What is rubber most useful for, Dad?

Mr Crane : Rubber is not only soft but also elastic. It's very useful in industry and many things are made from it, especially tyres for bicycles, motor-cycles, cars, etc. Well, your ball bladder is all right now.

Jack : Oh, thanks a lot, Dad. You're great.



PRACTICE

Practise the following sentences.

1. He asked his father to *fix the ball for him.*
mend the rubber bladder.
repair the toys.
replace the tyre.

2. What is the *glue* made of?

toy
bladder
knife
shirt

- It is made of *latex.*
wood.
rubber.
steel.
cotton.

3. I've seen a lot of things made of *rubber.*
wood.

steel.

cotton.

latex.

4. Do we *grow rubber trees in our country?*
make this toy from steel?
chop down the tree?
ask him to replace the tyre?

- a. Oh, yes.
b. I'm afraid not.

5. What is *rubber* most useful for?
latex

– People make *soft and elastic* things from it.

6. *Rubber* is not only *soft* but also *elastic*.
She *beautiful* *intelligent*.
He *clever* *careful*.

PRONUNCIATION

Practise the following words. Notice the pronunciation of the sound clusters / -əʊst / and / -3st /.

/ -əʊst / *most, toast, coast*

/ -3st / *burst, first, thirsty, worst*

Practise these sentences.

Most of the ships are sailing along the *coast*.

First you'll have *toast* and milk.

She *burst* into tears when she saw her mother.

Most of them are *thirsty*.

This is the *worst* thing of all.

FURTHER PRACTICE

- A. 1. Complete these open-dialogues. Then practise them with one of your classmates.

a. *Mai* : What is this glue _____, Nam?

Nam : It comes from _____. People call the milky liquid _____.

Mai : How can people _____?

Nam : Well, they make cuts in the bark of _____ and fix little cups _____ to catch the latex.

b. *Lan* : Do you know where there are many rubber trees?

Hoa : In _____ such as Indonesia, Malaysia and our country. Can you know why rubber is most _____?

Lan : Well, because it is not only _____ but also _____.

2. Practise asking and answering the questions below.

a. Where was the football game played?

b. Who had the ball?

c. What did he do when he had the ball?

d. What happened to the ball?

e. Who did he ask to fix the bladder for him?

f. What is the glue made of?

g. What kind of tree do people get latex from?

h. Why is rubber useful?

What is it useful for?

j. Have you ever seen rubber trees?

k. In what part of our country can we find many rubber plantations?

B. 1. Complete the following sentences with the words provided.

mended	toys	burst	elastic
rubber	goals	collapsed	chasing
pull out	tyres	fragile	clever

Those are _____ oranges because they have a lot of juice. (juice, juicy)

- e. This kind of material is _____ because you can make many things from it. That is a _____ machine. It does not work any more. You can make _____ of this fertile land in farming.
(use, useful, useless)

3. Complete these sentences with the appropriate prepositions in parentheses.

- a. Steel is most useful _____ building. (in, for, at).
b. These toys are made _____ our country and those _____ Japan. (from, of, in)
c. His children are proud _____ their father. (in, of, at)
d. My son is good _____ Mathematics and English. (at, in, for)
e. Are you familiar _____ farm life? (on, with, in)

4. Complete these sentences with the appropriate form of the verbs in parentheses. Follow the example.

Example: He (run) towards his mother when he saw her.

He ran towards his mother when he saw her.

- a. They asked their father (repair) the toys for them.
b. Look at the naughty boy. He (shout) at our calves.
c. Do you enjoy (watch) the cattle in the pasture?
d. The mechanic told his boy (change) the tyres of the tractor.
e. You may (get) as much hay as you like in the barn.
f. Should I (pull out) the bladder?

Those are _____ oranges because they have a lot of juice. (juice, juicy)

- e. This kind of material is _____ because you can make many things from it. That is a _____ machine. It does not work any more. You can make _____ of this fertile land in farming.
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c. Do you enjoy (watch) the cattle in the pasture?
d. The mechanic told his boy (change) the tyres of the tractor.
e. You may (get) as much hay as you like in the barn.
f. Should I (pull out) the bladder?

5. Make new sentences, using "not only... but also". Follow the example.

Example: She is both intelligent and beautiful.

She is not only intelligent but also beautiful.

- a. He is both clever and smart.
- b. The worker is both tired and hungry.
- c. The milkmaid is both healthy and cheerful.
- d. The story is both exciting and amusing.
- e. He is both fat and short.
- f. This student is both smart and careful.

SUMMARY

1. Vocabulary

(n) bladder, cotton, cut, common, glue, goal, industry, latex, liquid, mass, rubber, sound, steel, tyre, wood

(a) clever, elastic, fragile, hissing, milky, shapeless, solid, useful

(prep) below

(v) chase, chop, collapse, fix, grow, kick, drip, repair, change, unlace

Expressions: Good gracious

2. Grammar

He	asked	his father	to	fix the ball for him.
	told			mend the rubber bladder.

What	is	the glue	made of?	It	is	made of	latex.
		toy					wood.

- a. Jack was kicking the ball hard into the _____
- b. He ran home with his _____ ball.
- c. His father _____ the ball for him.
- d. _____ the bladder of the tyre and I will help you to mend it.
- e. They built the house many years ago and now it has _____.
- f. You can make the string longer because it is _____.
- g. Be careful! There are _____ things.
- h. He has _____ hands and he can make many beautiful toys.
- i. Stop the dog! It is _____ the chickens in the yard.
- j. Children are always fond of _____ and pets.
- k. Have you any spare _____ for your bicycle.
- l. _____ is much used in industry.

2. Complete these sentences with the appropriate words given in parentheses. Follow the example.

Example: He always helps his father with farming.

He is _____ to his father. (help, helpless, helpful)

He is helpful to his father.

- a. Water has no _____. It is a _____ liquid.
(colour, colourful, colourless)
- b. There's still _____ that our orchards will grow well.
She always feels _____ about the future because she has a rich father. (hope, hopeful, hopeless)
- c. This girl has no _____. She is a _____ girl.
This _____ woman is very nice to children.
(mother, motherly, motherless)
- d. Oh, it is very hot. I like a glass of orange _____.

I've seen	a lot of things	made of	rubber. wood.
-----------	-----------------	---------	------------------

Do	we	grow rubber in our country ? make this toy from steel ?
----	----	--

Oh, yes.
I'm afraid not.

What	is	rubber	most useful for ?
------	----	--------	-------------------

Many	soft	and	elastic	things	are made	from	it.
------	------	-----	---------	--------	----------	------	-----

Rubber	is	not only	soft	but also	elastic.
--------	----	----------	------	----------	----------