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ELT and Globalization:

Education and language for national development in the global knowledge economy

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[1] ELT and Globalization

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. It is wonderful to share with you about globalization, national development and English Language Teaching (ELT) in Vietnam. Let me say also, it is a deep honour to be here. Like many Australians, I remember the war in which Vietnam achieved its unification, its self-determination, against the mighty United States of America. I remember the great words of Ho Chi Minh, which sound down the years, like a mighty bell ringing out in the world:: '*nothing is more precious than independence and freedom'*. Nothing is more precious. I say to you here today, most of whom remember those times, that this is one of the greatest of all the achievements in the long human story. There is no people in the world today with more courage and determination, no people with more face, no people more worthy to be admired, than the people of Vietnam.

A great price was paid. But I believe that Vietnam, which is still recovering from that terrible time, will one day take its place among the great nations of the world. And when it does, the victory will be won not so much by the army of the nation, as in 1975, but by its school and university teachers. And that is my essential message today.

In a letter to school students, Bac Ho once said ‘whether Vietnam can stand alongside powerful nations in the world largely depends on your academic performance’. Bac Ho’s words are now more true today than they were then. We now live in the age of economic and cultural globalization and the knowledge economy. Nations are competing, and cooperating, through their investments and performance in education and innovation. Nation’s will safeguard their independence and freedom in future, less on the battlefield and more in the classroom. So this is your challenge. Your destiny, the ELTs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

My paper today will explain *why* education and language are keys to the future. I begin by talking about global convergence, the closer coming together of the different parts of our world. I go on to discuss key aspects of globalization, the nation and ELT. First, the paper looks at knowledge and communications, and how globalization has brought the ‘knowledge economy’ and English Language Teaching to the forefront. Second, the rise of the global knowledge economy in some nations in Asia, such as China, which are becoming ‘education and innovation tigers’. This is changing the balance of power on a world scale. Third, the paper looks at cross-border international education. Fourth the paper reflects on the future for global language and national language. Then I draw together the threads of the paper. I list the elements that nations need to be successful in the global knowledge economy, including ELT, and list the ways in which globalization is changing the work of schools, colleges, universities and teachers. Finally I summarise the paper in images.

[2] Globalization
What do I mean by globalization? Globalization is about the convergence and partial integration of the different parts of the world. The English political scientist David held calls it ‘the widening, deepening and speeding up of interconnectedness on a worldwide scale’.

[3] Increasingly, in education, we think with a global mentality 1
One aspect of globalization is the ‘global mentality’. When thinking globally, we think of the world as one world, in which all people and all nations are interdependent.

[4] Increasingly, in education, we think with a global mentality 2
The global mentality was powerfully boosted by the first pictures of the earth from space. This is also the ecological mentality. We all depend on the same eco-system, which makes it possible to live. Damage to the

eco-system, changes to the climate, reductions in water and agricultural land, affect not just the people of one locality or one nation. In the end these changes affect all nations. To a growing extent the same is also true of education and knowledge. We all draw on a common store of information, and we all gain when new knowledge is discovered. Though knowledge is also expressed in many languages, and not all knowledge becomes part of the global store. Some of it remains national and local.

[5] In a global world the nation remains central to human identity
In a globalizing world, in which all people are moving closer together, the nation still remains important to our identity. Just as important. The differences is that to some extent, the nations themselves have been pushed closer together, and more aware of each other.

[6] All three dimensions of life are now shaping the work of teaching and student learning: global, national and local
The outcome is that the site of teaching and learning is affected by all three dimensions, at one and the same time. And we need to be aware of all three dimensions, and understand what each requires of us. Our jobs are more complicated than they were, but I think they are also more exciting, and there are more learning resources available for our students. Teaching is affected by changes at the global level, which I will talk about more in a moment. Teaching is also shaped by the national dimension which provides education systems and financing, educational administration and policies, and professional life and cooperation such as this conference. And of course the local dimension, the level of families and local workplaces and communities that join to schools themselves.

[7] What is driving global convergence?
What then is driving globalization in our time? Globalization combines economic and behavioural integration, with growing cultural commonality. It increases our encounters with foreign cultures, making life more complicated, but also makes it easier for us to manage such encounters. Global convergence is taking place through the mediums of global communications; and the cheapening of travel which has facilitated the greater mobility of people across borders for the purposes of migration, business, work, education, tourism and family life. Global convergence is also sustained by the global networking of research, research universities and the publication and exchange of research, much of which is available free. It has been encouraged by economic globalization, sustained by the partial integration of world financial markets and the growth of trade and

the mobility of economic production across national borders. Those of us who study education policy and comparative international education are also aware of the growing similarities between countries in government policies, institutions such as schools, and community organizations. And there is global language. English has become the one global language of business, knowledge, education and policy. At the same time there is a danger that knowledge in languages other than English is being ignored because such knowledge falls outside the main global 'conversation'.

[8] PICTURE computers

But above all globalization is about communications, information, knowledge, research and the medium that allows all of these activities to happen on the global scale: the English language. The great change was the arrival of the Internet in the early 1990s. The Internet sustains a global system of communications and data transfer, it constitutes a one world 'library' of information of almost endless width and depth (though most of it is in just a small number of languages), and brings us into continuous and closer encounters with people from other cultures.

[9] What is the knowledge economy'?

What then is the knowledge economy? Its institutional heart is the global system of communications and data transfer, the worldwide 'library' of information and the global networking of research and knowledge through the medium of English. The last decade has seen an accelerated growth of research knowledge, and the spread of advanced levels of scientific research to more and more countries, especially in Asia. At the same time the process of research, the process of systematic and critical inquiry, has spread well beyond high cost science. In many countries school children are taught research skills and accessing of knowledge via the Internet, which needs English language competence. We see the growing role of science and knowledge in production; the growing need for educated people in all kinds of work in the professions, government and business; and the growing trade in cultural goods. The knowledge economy is becoming the cutting edge of the economy in the most developed economies. We see an international 'arms rise in innovation'. Increasingly, national governments around the world, whether developed or emerging economies, are competing with each other by growing their investments in education and research.

[10] Why do nations 'invest in innovation'?

'Investing in innovation' means not just improving vocational skills (though such skills are needed for more advanced forms of production, that make greater use of technology. Investing in innovation also means building the capacity to respond to global challenges and to modernize the nation. It means developing the creativity, imagination and critical thinking powers of students, and not just in the national language but also in the global language. It means a high level of education across the nation, and the ability to access and apply knowledge from anywhere in the world. So advanced language skills are essential to innovation.

[11] Knowledge, language and innovation are the steps to national prosperity

Increasingly, knowledge, language and innovation are seen as essential to future national survival and economic prosperity. Science, social science and technology provide the trained people and research programs that enable the nation to create new ideas and develop new products, to use global language skills and research training to access the worldwide stock of knowledge, so as to respond to worldwide developments and shape new solutions to pressing problems. It is a new era in state policy and economic life. Not all governments have joined the knowledge economy yet. North America was the first. Now Western Europe, and East Asia and Singapore, are leading the way. Others will follow. It is becoming mainstream economic policy everywhere.

[12] Some Asia-Pacific nations are growing investment in education, research and communications

It is often said that the 21st century will be the 'Asian century'. That is partly true. I don't think the knowledge economies of other parts of the world are in decline, except for Russia. Certainly, education and research are getting stronger in Europe and Latin America, and the USA and Canada will stay strong. But it is true the knowledge economies of the People's Republic of China, China Taiwan, Singapore and Korea are rapidly moving up. And Asia is returning to its historic position, that of producer of half of the world's GDP.

[13] Shares of world output 1700

In 1700 world product was mostly agricultural. India and China between them produced 47 per cent of world GDP because of their large peasant populations.

[14] Shares of world output 1978

Europe and the USA led the industrial revolution and the process of modernisation. In 1978, just after the war was won in Vietnam, the only Asian nation with them was Japan. The combined share of world GDP in China and India had fallen to 8 per cent.

[15] Shares of world output 2030
But by 2030 China will be the largest single economy in the world, producing almost one quarter of world GDP. India and China together will be up to 33 per cent. When Japan and the rest of Asia are added, the Asian share will be close to half of world GDP. It will keep increasing, not because of the size of the peasantry in the countryside as in 1700, but because of the size of the knowledge economy, and because of the English Language Teachers who are crucial to the knowledge economy.

[16] Average annual growth of spending on research 1995-2005
The growth of education and research in China have been remarkable. Between 1998 and 2005 the number of students in tertiary education in China multiplied by 4.1 times. Between 1990 and 2005, the rate of school leaver participation in tertiary education rose from 4 per cent of the school leaver age group, to 20 per cent. No other nation has grown tertiary education as rapidly as this. Because of China's scale, the effects will be felt across the whole world. China has also increased its spending on research and development faster than any other nation. In the first half of this decade, R&D spending grew by nearly 20 per cent a year – again, an incredible growth rate. China is now the second largest investor research in the world, after the United States. It has passed Japan. China is rapidly changing a low wage manufacturing economy into a tertiary educated knowledge economy. Greatly strengthening China's long term position.

[17] Average annual growth of science papers in English, 1995-2005
Just as China has increased the investment in research, so its scientific output is expanding at an almost equal rate. The investment is paying off. Between 1995 and 2005, the number of English language research papers in science, technology and social science, that China produced, grew by an average of 16.5 per cent per year. From 11,000 papers a year to 41,000 papers per year in ten years. The rate of growth of scientific papers in South Korea, Taiwan China and Singapore was almost as remarkable.

[18] Network development in China

China's global communications capacity is also growing rapidly, including mobile phone coverage, the spread of personal computers, and the use of the Internet.

[19] Science papers in English in 2005, selected Asia-Pacific nations
Let's look at a larger list of Asian nations, in terms of the output of scientific papers in 2005. Thailand has also exhibited rapid growth, but from a low starting point. Japan has a strong research system but it is a mature system like that of the USA or UK and it is now growing slowly. No other Asian nation has joined the 'innovation tigers'. Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia are all at modest levels. Bangladesh, Philippines and Sri Lanka have even less scientific output. This is a sign of low capacity in research, intellectual creativity and innovation. Research capacity, including research universities able to train researchers to PhD level in most fields of study, able to network effectively with the world's leading research groups, is essential to a national knowledge economy. The knowledge economy has yet to really take root in Vietnam. It will.

[20] Economic production and education spending, Asia-Pacific nations, 2007
Education and research generate wealth. But they do so only in the future. The full benefits of such investments take a generation or more to come through. The paradox for a nation is that to establish modern systems of education and research, needs a certain level of wealth to begin with. When we look at the international pattern, it is clear that a nation's capacity to invest in education and research is partly determined by its national economic wealth. This table compares Vietnam and Cambodia with the larger East and Southeast nations, in terms of the size and wealth of the economy, noting also the pattern of connection, between national wealth and investment in education. The strong nations in education and innovation here are Japan and Korea, which have almost 100 per cent literacy and very high participation in tertiary education, and also China with its last decade of investment. Vietnam cannot fund education on the scale of Japan and Korea at this time. Vietnam is not yet wealthy enough to do so, because the nation is still recovering from the effort of the war, and from its terrible destruction and loss of life. China is not yet wealthy on the basis of income per person. But China has some advantage because of its size, it has not suffered a war on the scale of Vietnam, and it has a political system that has allowed it to change policy on education and research and concentrate resources to achieve a rapid improvement in national capacity. Indonesia

has size, and a higher income per person than Vietnam, but it lacks political will and effective state machinery and is a very low investor in education and innovation. In the 1950s the Philippines created a relatively strong set of institutions and what was then a high rate of educational participation for a Southeast Asian nation. It has under-funded those institutions since and education is not improving much.

Even in the absence of major economic growth, Vietnam could create a stronger education system than those of the Philippines and Indonesia. Like China Vietnam has the capability for focused national effort, led by the government. The experience of the war years shows this. But to develop a fully modern system of education and innovation in Vietnam, that is world class and able to stand alongside Korea or the education systems of Europe, will require the kind of resources that are created in a sustained period of high economic growth. That is again what the example of China has shown other countries. I talked about the paradox before. A nation gains wealth from investments in education, but it needs wealth to make such investments. The paradox can be overcome in a period of strong economic growth, joined together with wise decisions and a certain boldness in the national government.

[21] Global knowledge economy power, Asia-Pacific nations, 2007
The next table compares information technology and communications networking in the same countries. Again Japan and Korea have established modern communications across society and economy. China has a way to go, but is making progress in fast Internet, broadband. Vietnam and Thailand are not globally networked on a wide basis, but the rate of Internet use is good for emerging economies, though as yet little of it is Broadband Internet. I do not have data on the take-up of English language skills in these countries, but if I did I think we would find that English language skills are developing in China, at the same rate that research is growing, and global networking of computers and phones is growing. What the table does provide, in the last column, is the number of high citation researchers in each nation, which is a sign of advanced research capacity. Japan is strong on this indicator, a sign of a mature innovation system. Korea and China are not yet as strong in research.

[22] Globalization has generated the rapid growth of cross-border education
Another aspect of globalization is the growth of cross-border international education. The number of cross-border students doubled between 1995

and 2005. This number is growing at twice the rate of students as a whole. Globalization has fed the growth of forms of professional work where tertiary graduates can work in many countries, especially if they have good English – such as business, information technology, research, and ELT. To become a globally mobile worker it helps to study abroad and become immersed in the European language environment. French and German can be useful languages to have, though mobility is greatest for English speaking workers. Another reason why many students study abroad is that a foreign degree and language learning can make them more employable at home and advance their careers. This is not always the case, but it can be the case. A third reason is migration. One third to one half of all international students who study in the English language countries end up migrating to the country of education.

[23] Where cross-border students come from (Asia-Pacific nations only)

Most Asian nations provide large numbers of students to the pool of globally mobile students. About half of all these students are from Asia with the largest groups coming from China, Korea, Japan and India. Vietnam is a significant 'importer' of education. About 15,000-20,000 Vietnamese students go abroad to study each year.

[24] Where cross-border students go

The largest 'exporters of education', that is the main receivers of foreign students, are the USA, UK, Germany, France, China, Australia and Japan. China is both the largest importer of foreign education, and the fifth largest exporter. The largest number of foreign students in China come from Japan. Malaysia and Singapore have also become export nations, with 5 per cent of the world market between them – same as Japan. At this stage Vietnam is not an important exporter. The most distinctive feature of international education in Vietnam is the significant presence of foreign tertiary institutions inside the country, a feature also of the national education systems of Singapore, Malaysia and China.

[25] Being an international student can be challenging, difficult and lonely

As I am sure you will agree, being an international student, outside the setting of your own national language, can be tough. As you know also, good language preparation improves international student confidence, success and of course the capacity to interact with locals. Student confidence, and the capacity to communicate, tend to feed each other.

[26] When they go abroad, international students learn, share and change

Then when international students return, there is the problem of re-entry into the nation, which brings with it a 'little culture shock'. A key policy issue for nations that send their students abroad is to ensure that they are encouraged to return and to make full use of what they have learned, including the more advanced foreign language skills they have acquired.

[27] English will remain a global language. There may be others.

What will be the longer term consequences of globalization for languages: for English as a global language, other global languages and national languages? We can be sure that English will remain a global language. But other global languages may emerge; for example Chinese national language; because of the growing worldwide authority of China and the size of the national market in China. Also Spanish, because of the size of Latin America, and the growth of Spanish speaking in the USA. And perhaps Arabic, which is already an international language of religion and scholarship. I expect that some national languages will also continue to flourish in the more globalized world, but not all.

[28] Language is the medium of cultural tradition, and sustains both national identity and human diversity

For a nation with a long tradition and deep culture, national language is also vital, not just global language. National language is the medium through which the culture, and its distinctive understanding of the world, are reproduced. So an educational language policy needs to reconcile national and global language. From the global viewpoint, it is important to support the continuation of a diverse set of languages and cultures, all of which add something different to the common store of knowledge, just as it is important to safeguard biological diversity in the natural world. But there is always some danger that globalization will tend to suppress diversity, because it emphatically empowers the global role of English.

[29] In sum, what do nations need for their education and innovation systems to be effective in the global setting?

I will move now to sum up the main argument made in this paper, concerning globalization, national development and ELT. In summary, what then do nations need for their education and innovation systems to be effective in the global setting?

- *One,* nations need a vibrant system of education and training. A system in which there is visibly growing rates of educational participation at all levels; elementary, secondary and tertiary; supported by increasing national investment at all levels.
- *Two*, the nation needs a modern system of research and innovation, including universities that have the research resources, especially the skilled people, to participate effectively in the main global flows of knowledge.
- *Three*, the nation requires an education system that trains tertiary students for a future of continuous adaptation, innovation and modernisation.
- *Four*, it is important to secure good ongoing cooperation between education institutions, government and industry.
- *Five*, the nation needs a wide spread of people with the capacity to communicate globally: to access global information; to conduct business, professional and governmental activity in offshore settings; and to work effectively with foreign visitors. This has made universal good quality English language skills a matter of priority in all nations. This also means increasingly important roles and ever growing work and responsibilities for ELT and EL teachers.
- *Six*, the nation needs global standard information and communications infrastructure and a high level of connectivity (e.g. computer and Internet use, mobile phones, broadband capacity*).*
- *Seven*, a sign of global effectiveness is when the nation has strong flows of students moving in and out of the country, including doctoral students, frequent international training and exchange among education staff.
- *Eight*, some educational institutions, though not all institutions, should have strong ongoing global connections. One favourable sign of this global connectedness is participation in global networks and alliances, especially in the university sector.
- *Nine* and finally, there is attitude. The most globally effective nations in education, like Singapore, exhibit two different qualities joined together. The first is openness, openness to other cultures, other ideas, willingness to learn. The second is a strong sense of own national identity.

[30] How is globalization changing schools, vocational and higher education?

In summary, how is globalization changing schools, vocational and higher education, and what does this mean for ELT? Globalization means that

education institutions are now required to prepare students for work in international as well as national and local settings. Globalization increases the importance of learning the skills of global communication, including information and communications systems. Globalization means learning about other cultures, and learning about inter-cultural relations. Globalization means programs for sister-school and sister-college links to institutions in other countries. It might mean student exchange and periods of study abroad for home students. But above all globalization means good English language skills are essential. Globalization makes ELT more important. It means everyone who is in professional work and everyone who uses technologies needs English, and ever higher levels of English are needed. All else being equal, globalization should mean increased national investments in ELT, as in all education. In many nations globalization also means government schemes for holding (and attracting back) the ELT workforce in schools, vocational and higher education where they are needed. But globalization also means that it is important to sustain national identity and language.

[31] Globalization and the knowledge economy are facts…
Let me move to close this paper. Globalization and the knowledge economy are here to stay. All national governments, all education systems and institutions and all ELT teachers will need to develop the skills and strategies needed to respond effectively. The knowledge economy calls up the need for more education and research and at a higher level.

[32] The nation is a fact too … and not everything in it is changing
Globalization does not sweep away everything. It exists alongside the local and national dimensions of life, rather than replacing them. It does not abolish or weaken the nation. But it changes the setting in which the nation exists, changes its tasks. Increasingly governments around the world are focused on competing effectively within the global setting. Some political theorists argue that the nation is becoming a ‘global competition state’. And nations also cooperate with each other. In an interdependent world both competition and cooperation are global.

[33] But globalization will not go away. Sometimes it seems like a huge wave
All the same globalization will not go away. Sometimes, especially when looking at research, innovation or the role of English, globalization seems like a huge wave swamping everything in its path.

[34] Nations that ride the wave will succeed
Nations that ride the wave of globalization, that learn its rhythms and use its motive power effectively, that get the timing right, will succeed. Vietnam does not yet have the economic conditions to invest in the knowledge economy on the scale of Korea or Singapore. But two decades ago we would have said the same about China. After a decade of accelerated economic growth China took the opportunity to create a modern knowledge economy and allocated the funding that made it possible. In one more decade the knowledge economy was in place.

[35] And one thing is certain … When the time comes
And one thing is certain. When the time comes for Vietnam to become an 'innovation tiger' … ELT will be crucial to the success of the nation. You will be crucial! The future of the nation will be in your hands.

[36] Thank you kindly for listening
Thank you kindly for listening. I wish you very well for the future. Xin cam on!