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Mauritius: A case for Distance Education

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A Thesis

in

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ABSTRACT

Mauritius: A case for Distance Education

Liliane Yiptong

A distance education system for improving equality of educational opportunities in Mauritius will be proposed in this thesis. Focus will be placed on the secondary sector where the problem of inequity is more acute. Secondary schools differ widely in terms of the services they offer; i.e., infra-structure, laboratories, libraries, playground facilities and qualified staff. Therefore, Mauritian students are receiving different standards of educational services, depending on the school they attend.

In Mauritius, the language of formal education is English, although the language is not commonly used in the Mauritian environment. It is generally believed this is a reason why school children experience many difficulties with school subjects. The government has expressed the need to improve the teaching and use of English at the secondary level, and has identified distance education as an appropriate approach to help provide adequate education in Mauritius.

Mauritian students sit for the Cambridge (England) School Certificate examinations after five years of secondary schooling. A passing grade in the English Language subject is required for obtaining a School Certificate, but a large majority of students fail the subject, thereby failing to obtain their certification.

A scheme that could be developed into a distance education programme for the instruction of English as a second language in Mauritian secondary schools will be proposed in this thesis, keeping in mind the literature on second language development and distance education, as well as the feasibility of such a programme in Mauritius.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Charles Francis Leonard Yiptong, without whose strong belief in the value of education, as well as firm commitment to support me throughout many years, I would never have reached this stage in my life.

Thank you, Pa, forever.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A citizen of Mauritius, I intend to work within my country's educational setting in the near future. The experiences gained during my ten-year stay in Canada, studying in Early Childhood Education, Educational Technology, and Applied Linguistics, and working for seven years in the field of Second Language (L2) educational research and teaching, will be valuable assets towards my goal of working for the improvement of education in my country.

In this thesis, I will propose a system of Distance Education (DE) to help all Mauritian students receive the same educational opportunities, and to improve passing percentages in the O'level examinations, taken after 5 years of secondary level education. One of the factors responsible for the high number of failures at the O'level is the low level of proficiency in English, the official language of instruction. I have therefore chosen to design a plan for the development of a DE programme for the instruction of English as a Second Language (ESL).

Some general background information about Mauritius will clearly situate the context in which the proposed system would operate. The history of the educational system

of Mauritius will then be described. Language learning, and
the ways in which DE can be, and has been used, for L2
instruction will be explored. The Mauritius College of the
Air (MCA) has been offering DE courses since the 1970s, and
the organisation will be described in light of the
possibilities it holds for the development of the proposed
system.

THE NATIONAL SETTING

Mauritius is a pear-shaped, 1,865 square kilometre
island of volcanic soil, lying at latitude 20.15' south and
between 57.2' and 57.5' longitude east of Greenwich. It is
880 kilometres off the eastern coast of Madagascar, in the
Tropic of Capricorn.

In 1598, when the Dutch arrived in Mauritius, they
found the island to be uninhabited. However, it seems that
Arabs were the first to visit Mauritius, since the island is
illustrated as "Dina-e-Arabi" on a 7th century Arab map
(Bissoondoyal & Venkatasamy, 1989). In 1510 the Portuguese
visited the island they named "Cirne" on their way to India,
but they did not settle down. The Dutch named Mauritius
after Prince Maurice of Nassau and occupied the island in
two different periods (1598-1658; 1664-1710); nevertheless,
they "never succeeded in establishing anything meriting the
name of a colony" (Toussaint, 1973:14). Instead, they

feasted on the Dodo bird and denuded the island of its ebony.

The French colonised the "Isle de France" in 1715, neglecting it until Mahe de Labourdonnais took on the enormous task of developing the island, transforming it and enhancing its importance as a port of call on the spice trade route. Large contingents of slaves from Madagascar and some from Africa, as well as domestics, sailors and artisans from India were brought in during the French settlement (Baker & Corne, 1982).

Britain captured the "Isle de France" in December 1810 and renamed it Mauritius. Sugarcane was introduced on the island by the Dutch, the French continued its cultivation, and the British made sugar the basis of the Mauritian economy. Therefore, when the abolition of slavery took effect in 1835, and the emancipated slaves refused to work for their former masters, a new source of labour had to be found.

The colonists turned to India, where there was "an almost inexhaustible alternative supply of cheap labour" (Toussaint, 1973:83). Recruiting agencies in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay began to send indentured labourers to Mauritius. This "coolie trade" as it became known, soon grew to enormous proportions, and lasted till 1909. It did not differ much from the old slave trade, the Coolies suffering from abuse similar to that endured by slaves.

Traders from India (mostly Muslims) and China started to arrive towards the end of the 19th century.

Mauritius became a self-governing country within the British Commonwealth in 1968. The economy of Mauritius has always rested on imports and exports, importing large quantities of raw material and exporting sugarcane products. Sugar has played a major role in the economic growth of Mauritius, but the sugar industry has been overtaken by manufacturing as the island's main source of revenue. In 1987, 58% of the country's exports consisted of manufactured goods against 38% of sugarcane products (Bissoondoyal & Venkatasamy, 1989).

The expansion of the Export Processing Zone factories in the 1980s brought about an economic boom; this was due to the influx of foreign investment (mainly from Asia) that the government aggressively sought by slashing corporate taxes and removing duties on many items such as office equipment. Manufactured goods are exported to the EEC countries and are subject to quotas in the USA.

Tourism has also doubled since the early 1980s, and over the past few years, new hotels have sprung up all around the shoreline. In 1987, the number of tourists who visited Mauritius was equivalent to 20% of the island's population (Ramburuth, 1990).

Economic growth allows Mauritians to enjoy higher standards of living and lead a better life. The annual per capita income increased from $1,200 in 1982 to $2,400 in

1988, unemployment has declined to less than 4%, and in some sectors (mostly requiring skilled labour) there are more jobs available than workers (the Gazette, 1988).

As seen earlier, Mauritius had developed into a multicultural and multilingual society by the end of the last century. The Mauritian population hit the one million mark in 1987, with 67% of the population of Indian descent (25% of whom are Muslims), 28% Creoles (mixes of African and European/Asian descent), 3% Sino-Mauritians, and the remaining 2% descendants of French and other European nationalities.

The constitution is written in English, which is the country's official language (most people can understand it) as well as the official medium of formal instruction. French holds a semi-official status and is the preferred language of the media. The French language is also associated with good breeding and high social status. On a daily basis, the vast majority of the population use the French-based Creole language, which emerged as a pidgin amongst the slaves during colonial days. Creole is the first language (L1) of over 70% of Mauritians, and the second native language of those whose L1 is another language (Virahsawmy, 1991). The Asian settlers brought their own mother tongues with them, and these ancestral languages (Chinese and Indian Dialects) are still used nowadays, albeit mostly on official occasions, for religious purposes, and by the elders in the different communities. Air time is

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGES USUALLY SPOKEN AT HOME BY

MAURITIANS

LANGUAGE	POPULATION
Arabic	1,813
Bhojpuri	197,050
Chinese (Cantonese, Hakka, Mandarin)	6,156
Creole	521,950
English	2,028
French	36,048
Hindi	111,134
Other Indian dialects (Gujrati, Marathi, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil, Telegu)	64,074
Urdu	23,572
Other (*)	402
Not stated	2,636
TOTAL POPULATION	966,863

SOURCE: Digest of Statistics, 1983

(*) 30 languages, including German, Italian, Polish and Russian, spoken by fewer than 100 persons.

provided on radio and television (TV) for programmes in the ancestral languages.

The latest statistics (Table I) show the division of languages Mauritians report to speak most often at home. However, Stein (1986) states that these figures are not completely accurate, with an exaggeration of data for most languages and an underating for Bhojpuri and especially for Creole - for instance, Hindi is the mother tongue of a very small number of Hindus, but since it is considered as a language of great prestige and is perceived as "the cultural parapet against loss of Indianity" (Virahsawmy, 1991:6) among the Hindus, it is reported as being commonly used by a much higher number of them than in reality; in the same vein, Urdu has a low utilisation frequency apart from use in formal socio-religious functions, but is reported as the language most frequently used by a large number of Muslims to indicate a "non-Indian" identity.

THE MAURITIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Mauritius became established as an important port of call with trading and strategic facilities during the French settlement, and achieved this through the exploitation of Malagasy and African slaves. A rigid class structure evolved during this period and the free coloured population and the slaves were deprived of their basic rights. Education was provided only for the children of the 'colons', using the services of expatriate teachers. The

elite would send their children to France for further education.

When the British first took possession of the island, they did not challenge the French oligarchy, allowing the French settlers to preserve their religion, language, law, and customs (Toussaint, 1973). It was only in the 1830s that the British began to challenge the French domination, and with the help of Protestant missionaries, established primary schools for the free coloureds and slaves. The ensuing rivalry between the Roman Catholic and the Church of England authorities regarding the establishment of schools prompted the government to establish a grant-in-aid system, eventually bringing primary education under state control, although the religious bodies remained in charge of school administration. A century later, confessional secondary schools also benefitted from the grant-in-aid system, receiving a series of interest-free loans from the colonial government (Thancanamootoo, 1990).

The advent of the first general elections in 1948 and the proclamation of independence on March 12, 1968, effected a commitment to "education for all", to establish equality in the social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of the Mauritian society. This policy resulted in a huge increase in primary school enrolment, as well as a high demand for secondary education. The government could not immediately provide the number of secondary school places required, and this led to the establishment of private,

profit-making secondary schools. Those private schools were registered with an 'A' or 'B' status or even, strangely enough, with a 'non-recognised' status (C-schools) (The 1982-1983 commission of enquiry, known as the Glover commission, 1983).

The educational system, which still stands today, follows a pattern inherited from the British, with 6 years at the primary level (Standards I to VI), 5 years of secondary schooling (Forms I to V), and 2 years of upper secondary education (Forms VI Lower and VI Upper). Major examinations are taken at the end of each cycle.

Tertiary education is provided by the University of Mauritius, the Mauritius Institute of Education, and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute. The University of Mauritius offers degree courses in Law, Economics, the Pure Sciences, Accountancy, Computer Science, and Engineering. The Mauritius Institute of Education is responsible for curriculum development at the primary and secondary levels, and teacher education. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute concentrates on the cultural aspects of education, offering certificate and diploma courses in Indian music and dance, and in fine arts. In addition, it collaborates with the Mauritius Institute of Education in teacher education and curriculum development for Oriental Languages.

The Mauritius College of the Air (MCA) offers formal and non-formal courses using a multi-media Distance Education (DE) formula. Although it did not originate as a

tertiary education institution, it is categorised as such because the promotion of educational development at the tertiary level has recently been included in its mandate (Bissoondoyal & Venkatasamy, 1989).

Before the 1976 general elections, when the government won the population's votes by promising to make secondary education free and universal, the state and the confessional and private 'A' schools were offering the best educational opportunities to their students, and were employing the best teachers. The confessional schools achieved their high standards thanks to the "soft", interest-free loans mentioned above, as well as a sincere commitment to the education of young people. The private B- and C- schools, on the other hand, were usually managed by people who only had profit in mind, running their schools as businesses, with not much interest in the education their students were receiving (Glover commission, 1983). An excerpt from the report submitted to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture by the Glover commision (1983) is found in Appendix I, showing the sub-standard facilities offered by many private schools across the country.

In order to attend the State or A-schools, a student had to either rank amongst the top 300 boys or girls in the Junior Scholarship examinations, or pass the Primary School Leaving Certificate examinations plus the A-schools' entry examinations,... and of course have parents who could afford to pay the fees levied by these schools.

The students who did not make it to the top schools could attend the less expensive private B-and C-schools. These schools offered sub-standard educational opportunities. Pupils whose parents could not afford to keep them in school would simply terminate their formal education. Unfortunately, there was little for them to do until they reached the age of 15, when they became eligible for employment and apprenticeship. It is generally known, however, that a large number of primary school drop-outs have been working illegally in menial jobs as soon as they quit school. A Master Plan for a nine-year primary schooling system has recently been proposed by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture whereby children will stay in school until they reach 15 (l'Express, 1991).

Although education is now free, schools still differ in terms of the resources which they have available, i.e., infra-structure, laboratories, libraries, playground facilities, qualified staff, and quality of students recruited (Thancanamootoo, 1990). Table II reveals that the vast majority of students who began secondary school in 1988 were not going to receive adequate educational opportunities, since more than 80% of them were found in the sub-standard private schools.

TABLE II

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENTERING SECONDARY SCHOOL

(FORM I)   1988

State schools	Private A-schools	Private B- & C- schools
2,247	1,183	Above 15,000

SOURCE: Proposal for structural reform. Report of the High-level Committee on a Proposed Nine-year Schooling System, 1990. (*)

(*) In this paper, the report will be referred to as the PSR report.

Before secondary education became free, the B- and C- schools would admit the less academically-oriented students whose parents could afford to keep them in school. The situation has not changed much today; these schools still get the students with the lowest entry grades, since eligibility for entering the best schools now depends solely on one's performance in the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) examinations and not on financial considerations. Statistics show that children from urban, better-off families stand a better chance at passing the CPE with higher marks than do children from rural, poor families (White Paper on Education, 1984).

PRIVATE TUITION

The race for placement in good secondary schools has resulted in unhealthy competition amongst primary school children, and reinforces what has become a parallel system of education in Mauritius: Private Tuition. Parents and teachers put pressure on the children to perform well academically, and children as young as 5 years old are taking private tuition after school hours. Primary school teachers usually continue the school curriculum during the private lessons, and therefore, the children who do not take tuition with their school teacher can miss out on parts of the syllabus.

A study on "The private costs of education" (Joynathsing & al., 1988) reveals that:

1. In primary schools, 11% of Standard I children take private tuition, the proportion rising to 73% in Standard VI. At the secondary level, the proportion of students taking tuition rises from 73% in Form I to 88% in the upper forms.

2. There is a tendency for students from better-off families to take more tuition than students from poor families.

3. The principal reason for taking tuition is to do better in the examinations.

4. Over 75% of parents surveyed approve of private
   tuition; only 1 in 6 thought that it ought to be
   discouraged.

Private tuition is thus well-established in the
Mauritian way of life, and parents invest a lot in it.
Total government expenditure on education for 1988-1989
stood at 850 million rupees, and it is estimated that over
Rs 400 million more was privately spent, mostly on tuition
(Journal of the Mauritius Institute of Education, 1990).
Since children who take tuition generally come from better-
off families, the children whose families cannot afford to
pay for private tuition start their school lives at a
disadvantage (White Paper on Education, 1984). Children
from poor families tend to fare the worst at the Certificate
of Primary Education examinations, and are therefore placed
in B- and C- secondary schools, where the quality of
education offered cannot compare with that offered in State
and A-schools.

EXAMINATIONS

On average, the passing rate at the Certificate of
Primary Education examinations lies between 55-60%. Some
30-35% of all children taking the examinations still fail
after a second attempt, with 20% of them failing in all

subjects. These children have little to show for 6 or 7 years of schooling, and are virtually illiterate (PSR report, 1990).

Secondary institutions tend to focus their activities on scholastic matter, and ignore activities that are more practical in nature (e.g., the acquisition of skills needed to enter the job market). It could be said that the main goal of secondary education seems to be the preparation for the Cambridge School Certificate (SC or O'level) examinations, taken at the end of Form V, and ultimately for the Higher School Certificate (HSC or A'level) examinations, taken after 7 years of secondary schooling. Two years are devoted to prepare for the the SC (Forms IV and V) and HSC examinations (Forms VI Lower and VI Upper).

The O'levels, in particular, are very important in a student's life: Passing or failing them can determine one's whole future. Whether one wishes to advance to the A'level courses, or enter technical and secretarial schools, or work as a junior clerk, or as rumour has it, even to work in factories, it is essential to possess an O'level certificate. Normally, all students, whether or not they pass in any School Certificate subject, are eligible to enter vocational training courses at the Industrial and Technical Training Centres and the Lycee Polytechnique, but the competition for admission in these institutions is so fierce that it makes obtaining an O'level certificate a must.

Approximately 18,000 pupils enter secondary school each year. Of these, only about 6,000 are expected to pass the O'level examinations, and approximately 2,000 are expected to complete the A'level requirements. This means that a mere 10% of all those who start secondary education successfully complete the full cycle (Bissoondoyal & Venkatasamy, 1989). Moreover, the dropout rate rises from about 5% after Form I to 19% after Form IV, and 45% after Form V (PSR report, 1990). This high dropout rate represents a waste of resources, and indicates that the educational system is not providing Mauritian children with services which are relevant and appropriate to their needs and aspirations.

In an effort to make education more relevant to the Mauritian context, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate was established in 1984 with the long term objective of mauritianising the syllabus of school subjects for which it prepares examinations. The Mauritius Examinations Syndicate collaborates with the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) to organise and conduct examinations for courses that are developed by the MIE.

TEACHERS IN MAURITIUS

The emphasis put on academic performance can give the idea that the Mauritian teacher's role is to cram curriculum material into pupils' minds, and not much else. Primary level teachers are expected to teach not only the examination subjects, but also to teach Physical Education, Sewing, and Music, even though they might not have the aptitudes and skills for these tasks. Not surprisingly, these activities are frequently ignored.

The status of teachers, both economic and social, is extremely low as compared to the services they render.

> Une des ironies est que l'éducation est primée
> tandis que les enseignants sont sous-estimés.
>
> (Motah, 1990:16)

The little respect teachers hold in the public eye might be partly due to the fact that, as reported in Jeerooburkhan (1990), primary teacher trainees, recruited soon after completion of the School Certificate level or after working for a few years in other ministries, appear to be more tempted by the long vacations and the possibility of giving private tuition than by the desire to teach. Now that secondary teachers have the option to follow in-service training courses, the majority of them also seem to be more concerned about the improvement in salary and status that follows their graduation than about improvement in teaching

efficiency. One needs to follow two years of pre-service training to become a primary school teacher, but anybody who holds a SC can walk into a secondary school classroom and start teaching without any training whatsoever (Glover commission, 1983).

Moreover, teachers in the private sector are not placed on equal footing with those in the public sector. A private school teacher who has attained the same levels of qualifications, training, and teaching experience, as her/his counterpart in a State school, is paid less, and loses her/his seniority if s/he decides to change school (Glover commission, 1983). The best teachers are therefore lured to the Government schools.

Table III shows the qualifications of Mauritian secondary school teachers. The data imply that the teachers in State schools are trained or at least have attained degree level, whereas a high number of those working in private schools have had no professional training, and most of these teachers are in the Grade II and III categories. Although the figures show that the number of Grade I teachers is higher in the private schools, they also reveal that 64% of the teachers in State schools are in that category, as compared with 27% in the private sector. Thancanamootoo (1990) makes the point that the Grade III teachers are employed in the B- and C- schools.

TABLE III

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF SECONDARY LEVEL TEACHERS IN

MAURITIUS

	NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN THE 24 GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN THE 96 PRIVATE SCHOOLS (*)
Grade I (Degree and professional certificate)	610	721
Grade IB (A'level and Diploma)	342	342
Grade II (A'level)	0	630
Grade III (O'level)	0	931
TOTAL NUMBER OF TEACHERS	952	2624

SOURCE: Digest of Statistics, 1985

(*) Only 25 of these schools are 'A' schools.

In 1983, the Glover commission reported that not only the majority of the teachers in the B- and C- schools were in the Grade III category, many of those who did obtain some form of professional qualifications at the Mauritius Institute of Education were not up to standard, due in part to their poor command of the teaching language.

Teacher Education

Prior to the establishment of the Mauritius Institute of Education in 1975, secondary school teachers had to go abroad for their training. This required large sums of money, and consequently, only a small percentage of teachers were qualified and trained. The Mauritius Institute of Education has played a crucial role in the upgrading of the professional qualifications and competence of practising teachers. However, even though much has been achieved in terms of the number of qualified and trained teachers, there is still plenty to be done for the improvement of the quality of teacher education in Mauritius.

> Teacher training courses have retained their rigid structure; they are highly dominated by didactic teaching methods and evaluation procedures that value academic excellence at the expense of personality, sensitivity, commitment, skills, and professionalism.

> (Jeerooburkhan, 1990:10)

In 1983, the Mauritius Institute of Education also took on the task of training primary and pre-primary teachers. Prior to that year, primary teachers had been trained at the now defunct Teacher Training College, and there was no national provision for pre-primary teacher training. The types of teacher certificates offered by the Mauritius Institute of Education are listed in Table IV.

TABLE IV

LEVELS OF FORMAL TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND

CORRESPONDING ASSIGNMENTS IN SCHOOLS

QUALIFICATIONS	ASSIGNMENTS
Post-graduate Certificate in Education	Upper Secondary
Bachelor in Education	Upper Secondary
Diploma in Education	Secondary
Certificate in Education (Secondary)	Lower secondary (Forms I - III)
Certificate in Education (Primary)	Primary
Certificate in Proficiency	Pre-primary

SOURCE: Journal of the Mauritius Institute of
       Education, 1990.

The entry requirements for attending the various Mauritius Institute of Education courses can be found in Appendix II.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, Mauritians can be proud of the great progress that has been accomplished in the provision of formal education. The firm commitment to "Education for

all" is obvious in the fact that free education has been offered at the primary level since the 19th century, at the secondary level since 1977, and at the university level since 1988. The enrolment rate in the primary sector is approximately 95%, and about 70% of children of the relevant age group attend secondary schools. These rates indicate that a much higher proportion of children in Mauritius get access to some schooling than in most developing countries in Africa and Asia (White Paper on Education, 1984). However, the figures hide another face of the Mauritian educational system, when we consider that

> ...in spite of the remarkable innovations that have been brought to the system during the two preceding decades, Mauritian education continues to be highly selective, examination and competition ridden, elitist, with many of our more deprived children ignored, neglected, sacrificed in favour of those who are less deprived - and those who are more privileged.

>   (PSR report, 1990:9)

The primary and secondary sectors in Mauritius are characterised by a rush for certificates and academic qualifications. Rote learning is emphasised at the expense of problem-solving, and non-scholastic activities are neglected.

Instead of providing children with opportunities to develop to their maximum potential physically, socially, emotionally, and expressively, the Mauritian system hinders children from growing up in a healthy childhood atmosphere; a large number of Mauritian children spend an average of 9

hours daily on a school bench, bent over their books to prepare for examinations - 1 to 2 hours are devoted by many children to private tuition daily, even on weekends.

Thancanamootoo (1990) asserts that much has been achieved in terms of quantitative development; efforts must now concentrate on improving the quality of education. Virahsawmy (1984) maintains that although 50% of school children pass the Certificate of Primary Education examinations, half of them begin secondary school semi-illiterate. Educational reform is needed to help these children acquire basic learning skills, to improve standards in the low-achieving schools, to reduce the glaring disparities among schools, and above all, to extend adequate educational opportunities to every Mauritian child (PSR report, 1990). The unfortunate characteristics of the Mauritian educational system, e.g., private tuition and sub-standard schools, are not easily eradicated. It is important to work within the system whilst at the same time try to improve it so that eventually, all the ills will be cured, and Mauritian children will be given the education they deserve.

The situation in Mauritius reveals that equal opportunities should not only be provided to school children, but to teachers as well (Glover commision, 1983). In fact, Bissoondoyal & Venkatasamy (1989) argue that all policies related to upgrading the quality of education also involves the improvement of teacher education. Teachers

have to become aware that their role is to help pupils learn to observe, perceive and act, and not to make them learn by rote. Teachers also need to be allowed to participate in administrative matters and curriculum development. They are the ones who live with the syllabus, and they are the ones who are best able to indicate its weaknesses and to suggest ways of improving it (Glover commission, 1983). This implies that teachers have to be qualified and trained to teach the subject matter, to have knowledge of learning processes, and also to be good observers of student reactions to the curriculum.

The problems related to the Mauritian educational system exist at both the primary and secondary levels, but the problem of equality of education is more acute in the secondary sector (Thancanamootoo, 1990). More than 80% of the children entering Form I attend the B- and C- schools, where the quality of education they receive is far below standard. It is actually the disparity between the few 'Star' secondary colleges and the majority of the other secondary institutions that make primary school children cram for the Certificate of Primary Education - the better their Certificate of Primary Education grades, the better the choice of schools they can attend.

The purpose of this thesis is to propose a scheme that can developed to provide a solution to the problem of educational inequality in Mauritius. Focus will be placed on the secondary sector where the problem is more severe,

and one of the objectives is to raise the percentage of passes at the O'level examinations. Hawoldar (1981:4) points out that whether we approve or don't approve of the exam-oriented educational system presently in place in Mauritius, we are compelled to work within the system and prepare Mauritian students to "scale this barrier with some degree of competence".

Several developing countries have attempted to use Distance Education (DE) to eradicate educational problems similar to those encountered in Mauritius. One successful example is reported in Coldevin (1980); since the mid-1970s, Kenya has used DE on a large scale to alleviate the country's problems of untrained teachers, of inadequate and irrelevant classroom support materials, of inequality of educational opportunity between rural and urban areas. Educational radio broadcasts are aired to primary and secondary schools daily, the last hour being devoted to in-service teacher training. Extensive print support is also provided in the form of teacher guides for each broadcast, as well as pamphlets and posters for students. Schools that can afford to operate tape recorders can get copies of the programmes for later reference.

In Malaysia (Hawkridge, 1988), educational programmes are broadcasted through television to enrich classroom teaching in rural primary and secondary schools. However, less than 50% of teachers were incorporating the broadcasts

into their teaching. Other countries that are using DE in secondary institutions include Brazil, Malawi, and Korea.

The experiences from these countries reveal that the use of DE for the provision of nation-wide educational facilities can be successfully implemented, provided that teachers view DE as a helpful teaching approach, and are trained to use the media effectively.

The use of DE methods seems to be a plausible solution to the educational problems in Mauritius for the following reasons:

1. Although Mauritius covers a small area, moving from one point to another is not an easy task, as there are not a large number of privately-owned vehicles, and public transportation is quite inadequate. The case cited in the Glover commision (1983) about the school principal and teachers of a Bamboo Village school tells the whole story: These people have to take a taxi from the nearest town to go to work every day (a 20-minute drive) simply because there is no bus service in the area where the school is located.

2. The Mauritius College of the Air, the para-statal institute responsible for DE on the island, already offers a variety of educational programmes using a multi-media approach.

3. One out of every three Mauritian households owns
a TV set, and approximately 80% of homes have
radios. Moreover, TV sets located in most village
squares are available for viewing by the general
public.

4. Schools in Mauritius are already equipped with
radio-cassette recorders, and recently, the Ministry of
Education, Arts and Culture has started distributing
videotape recorders and TV sets to secondary
institutions.

I believe that a DE programme could be developed for
all school subjects in Mauritius. Because Cambridge
requires a passing grade in the English Language subject for
obtaining a School Certificate, and because a large number
of students in Mauritius fail the subject, I have chosen
this subject to illustrate the feasibility of DE as an
effective approach to improving education in Mauritius.

CHAPTER 2

SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

There are four areas that the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture of Mauritius has identified as needing reform: (a) the upgrading of teacher performance, (b) the provision of substantial audio-visual material to support teaching generally in secondary schools, (c) the improvement of the teaching and use of English in secondary schools, and (d) the improvement in the use of English in specific vocational groups (Radcliffe, 1988).

Distance Education (DE) can address all the above areas of concern, but this thesis will deal with the first three. A DE system will be proposed as a solution to the problem of educational inequality at the secondary level. A multi-media DE approach to English Language instruction will be designed to support classroom teaching. Teachers will receive help with their teaching skills and proficiency in English, and students will be offered a series of enrichment activities to improve their English language development.

Since English is not the mother tongue of most Mauritians, it is important to first discuss second language (L2) development, before exploring the possibilities of using DE methods for L2 instruction.

LANGUAGE LEARNING

It is said that language learning occurs because language is the means by which human beings communicate with one another. Mother tongue (L1) development takes place in a natural setting where interactions with other people lead one to learn and use language as a device to get meanings across. A child learning her/his L1 gets lots of opportunities to practice the language, to make guesses and hypotheses about the language, and to test it out. The home is an "acquisition-enriched environment" (Asher, 1981) in which the child receives lots of physical clues to clarify the meaning of language. Both internal and external information are used to accomplish the task of language learning (Cairns & Cairns, 1976).

MODELS OF SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The ativist view of language learning stipulates that the capacity to learn a language is species-specific and that we are born with the innate ability to learn languages. All natural languages are governed by the principles of Universal Grammar (UG),

> ...taken to be the set of properties, conditions, or
> whatever that constitute the 'initial state' of the
> language learner, hence the basis on which knowledge of
> a language develops.
>
> (Chomsky, 1980:69, cited in Flynn, 1987)

Since language faculty is biologically determined, the process of learning a L2 is also influenced by UG (Wode, 1981; McLaughlin, 1984; Flynn, 1987). It appears that L2 learners construct and test hypotheses in much the same way that L1 learners seem to do, but at the same time the process is different because the language (or languages) the L2 learner already knows partly determines the nature of these hypotheses (Gundel & Tarone, 1983). White (1984) also believes that L2 learners tend to rely on L1 knowledge when dealing with L2 data - something not difficult to explain, seeing that the L2 learner has already put UG to work during L1 development.

Krashen (1978, 1982) proposes a 'theory' of L2 development in which the most important aspect of language acquisition is comprehensible input (CI), i.e., language that is understood, but which at the same time contains structures a little beyond the current level of competence. It is primordial that the input is simple enough to be comprehensible to the learner, but at the same time complex enough to encourage progress in the language being learned.

Others argue that input is important as long as it is understood in terms of interaction and negotiation. Long & Porter (1985) state that learners must be able to negotiate

any new input they receive to ensure that language is modified to exactly the level of comprehensibility they can manage.

There is little pressure for the child learning a L1 to produce language right from the start, since s/he learns the language first through the reception of speech before making any attempts at speech production (Slobin, 1971, reported in Cairns & Cairns, 1976; Fry, 1977). A similar process has been proposed by Burt & Dulay (1981) for L2 development. They stipulate that, as long as the L2 learning occurs in a natural language environment in which the focus of the speakers is on the content of the communication, learners appear to pass through three kinds of communicative phases:

1. One-way communication towards the learner;

2. Partial two-way communication when the learner responds, but not in the target language; and

3. Full two-way communication when the learner speaks the target language, acting as both recipient and sender of verbal messages.

THE SECOND LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

The social context in which language learning takes place has to be considered. Factors such as the home situation, the school environment, and the attitudes of society at large affect L2 learning; these factors influence the learner's attitudes towards the L2 and the L2 community, as well as his motivation to learn the L2 (McLaughlin, 1985).

One of the social factors that affects language learning is situated in the learning opportunities made available to the learner. The interactions between the person providing the target language data and the learner determines to a large degree the amounts and kinds of learning opportunities the learner would receive. As McDonough (1981) states, it doesn't suffice to say that because Learner A is highly motivated s/he will learn Language X well - what matters here is HOW the learner and the social factors interact with each other.

Role of instruction

Krashen (1982) believes the setting in which the L2 learning takes place is not important in itself as long as lots of natural CI is provided to the learner, and focus is put on the communication of meaning. However, others

(Bialystok, 1978; White, 1984; Yalden, 1987) suggest that formal instruction can help in the process of L2 learning. It can be argued that formal knowledge of a target language does help in its development, since a person who learns a L2 already knows what a language is, and knows that during the L2 development s/he will have to learn a new set of words, sounds, grammatical and syntactic units, and so on, to fit into the L2 framework (Fry, 1977).

Role of the teacher

The teacher in a L2 learning situation has the responsibility of attending to the needs of the learner by providing appropriate linguistic data 'on request' (d'Anglejan, 1978) and of assisting the learner

> ... develop a natural capacity to communicate in another language.

(Yalden, 1987:51)

The teacher should not be threatening, and cannot make learning happen. Rather, the teacher's role is that of a facilitator who offers moral support in the learning task and provides motivating activities to promote L2 learning.

It is very important for the teacher to acknowledge that there is more than one way to learn, and different learners require different kinds and amounts of learning:

> Given the complexity of the circumstances under
> which language learning takes place, it is a mistake to
> assume that any one method, approach or technique would
> suit all learners, all circumstances, all goals.

> (Spolsky, 1987:39)

Characteristics of language learners

Littlejohn (1983) points out that all learners cannot

be expected to learn in the same way and at the same rate,

nor to have the same interests and abilities. If one

assumes there is a sequence of acquisitional stages for all

language structures, one cannot assume that two learners who

are at the same level for structure A at a given point in

time will be at the same level for structure B at the same

time (Long, 1985).

> Different learners in different situations learn a
> L2 in different ways.

> (Ellis, 1986:4)

The opportunities for language learning should then be

geared to the characteristics of the learner. One

suggestion is to change instruction from a teacher-centred

to a learner-centred approach. Long & Porter (1985)

surveyed studies of classroom organisation and concluded

that there are more interactive activities among

participants and more opportunities to use the target

language in learner-centred classrooms. A study concerned

with the direct involvement of learners in their course
management showed that

> ...learner-centred approaches can offer significant
> gains among otherwise passive, teacher-dependent
> students.
>
> (Littlejohn, 1983:607)

Although language learners follow different paths in
their L2 development, there are some study strategies that
seem to be more helpful than others towards successful L2
learning. Investigations about the learning strategies
employed by good language learners (Rubin, 1975; Naiman et
al., 1978; Ellis, 1986) reveal that, in general, good
language learners are

(1) willing and accurate guessers, using all the
clues available in the setting to make guesses
about meaning;

(2) strongly driven to communicate, seeking out
opportunities to use the target language and
using whatever means available to get a message
across;

(3) willing to practice, making maximum use of
opportunities to listen to, and respond to,
speech in the L2 by attending to meaning;

(4) not inhibited, prepared to experiment by taking risks, and not afraid to make mistakes in order to learn and communicate;

(5) prepared to attend to form, using study techniques to find schemes for classifying information, and using analytical skills to perceive, categorise, synthesise, and store linguistic features of the target language, as well as to monitor all speech sources; and

(6) capable of adapting to different learning conditions.

Some general conclusions about L2 language development can be drawn from the investigations discussed above. It seems that all languages have some characteristics in common. Thus, a L2 progresses along similar paths of development as those of a L1, although prior knowledge of a language (or languages) influences the L2 learning process. Individuals vary in the rate and manner in which they learn a L2, and seem to learn best when allowed to negotiate the kind of input that is provided; the provider of L2 data facilitates learning when acting upon the input needs of learners. Good language learners seek opportunities to learn the target language by using the clues available to them in both formal learning, and natural situations.

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN MAURITIUS

The language of instruction in Mauritius is officially English, and students write the School Certificate (SC or O'level) and Higher School Certificate examinations prepared by Cambridge University (England), after five and seven years of secondary schooling respectively. The Cambridge O'level Certificate requires not only that a student pass in 6 subjects, but also that one of these subjects be English Language. The percentage of failures at the SC level stands around 45% each year, and failing marks in English Language accounts for a considerable proportion of these failures. Varma & Varma (1990) present figures from a private secondary school that are quite alarming: The percentage of failure in O'level English Language rose from 17% in 1984 to almost 36% in 1987.

Table I (p 6) clearly shows that English is not a language normally used by Mauritians. In fact, English is a second, third, or even fourth language for Mauritians, but they are studying to be tested in that language, and are expected to have writing skills in English equivalent to that of native English speakers.

My personal experience as a student in Mauritius consisted of studying from textbooks in English, writing essays and examinations in English, listening to teachers give explanations in French or Creole, conversing with my peers in Creole, and in French or Creole with my teachers.

The language situation in schools seems even more
complicated if we consider the situation at the primary
level. Starting in Standard I, at 5 years old, Mauritian
children start learning two L2s (English and French)
simultaneously, and those who elect to study an ancestral
language add a third language: A large majority of the
children have not had any previous encounter with at least
one of these languages. Virahsawmy (1984) blames the high
percentage of Certificate of Primary Education examination
failures on the language policies for education:

> Ignorer la réalité linguistique de l'enfant est une
> invitation à la catastrophe. Peut-on apprendre
> l'inconnu par le biais de l'inconnu? [Il est]
> fondamental que l'éducation de l'enfant doit, tout
> au moins, commencer dans sa langue première.

> (Virahsawmy, 1984:118)

Ferocious debates amongst educators and legislators
alike have been going on for some time as to whether Creole
and Bhojpuri should be used for instruction, but no
consensus has yet been reached. Mauritius is a pluralist
country in which the various communities are trying to
preserve ties with, and protect, their culture of origin,
and

> ...educational reforms [including changes in language
> policy] inevitably generate strong controversies and
> pressures from diverse education interest groups.

> (PSR report, 1990:4)

Whilst awaiting further developments in the language debate, English remains the language of instruction, although it is nobody's mother tongue. Virahsawmy (1991) remarks that it is precisely because it is considered ethnically neutral that its position cannot be challenged. Other considerations such as the increasing international prestige of English also play in its favour.

Investigations of L2 development discussed above report that formal L2 learning can be helpful since the L2 learner has already learned a L1, and therefore, the knowledge of the L1 grammar, syntax and so on, assist in the L2 development. In societies where the L1 has a written form, young children usually start school with some literacy experiences in their mother tongue; Mauritian children start school without such experiences in Creole, since Creole is still very much an oral language: Apart from some poets and writers, few people have used it in the written form. Varma & Varma (1990) suggest that since Creole is mainly used orally, no effort is made to emphasise its grammatical aspects. In consequence, students cannot rely on a Creole L1 framework to aid their L2 learning, and this makes the study of the formal English expected in school difficult for Mauritian students.

Until recently, Mauritian Creole had not been considered a language by its users, but rather as a French "patois". I can still recall hearing a friend, when a· ¡ed

to explain what Creole was all about, reply that Creole is "badly-spoken French".

Research on L2 development also suggest that students learn a L2 best when their teachers act as facilitators in their learning. In Mauritius, many teachers are untrained and are not proficient in English. It is important to help these teachers improve their skills in English before expecting them to be of any assistance to their pupils.

English is the official language of instruction in Mauritius, but Creole is widely used by teachers as the language of support to facilitate understanding of new concepts. Furthermore, a high percentage of teachers (though they would never admit it) actually use Creole as the medium of instruction in their lessons.

It must also be added that despite the fact that English is the official language of Mauritius, English Language instruction has always been quite artificial. A passing mark in English Language is essential in all major examinations (Certificate of Primary Education, School Certificate, Higher School Certificate), but once one has entered the work force, knowledge of English becomes of little significance - except for reading official papers and filling out forms. A sound knowledge of English remains important for the small number of people who elect to further their studies at the University of Mauritius or at institutions in English-speaking countries. It is only with the recent influx of foreign investments and the need to be

able to communicate effectively in English with foreign investors that English is gaining importance outside the academic fields.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

One of the aftermaths of World War II was an increased concern for greater equality of educational opportunities. This in turn led to the rapid expansion of access to educational services at all levels in western countries, shortly followed by the rest of the world (Rumble & Keegan, 1982). As a result, the demand for school places began to outstrip the available capacity (Perraton, 1982), thus creating a dilemma: Just promoting and supporting a philosophy of "education for all" became insufficient; solutions had to be sought to put this philosophy into practice. Non-traditional ways of providing education such as Distance Education (DE) were introduced to fill the existing gaps between the traditional formal educational systems and society's needs (Siquiera de Freitas & al., 1986).

DE is defined as an educational process whereby the educator is removed in space and/or time from the learner. The learning activities do not occur under the continuous and immediate supervision of teachers present on the same premises as their students, but usually by means of a

combination of media and under the planning and guidance of a tutorial organisation (Holmberg, 1977; Wedemeyer, 1981).

Instructional media

Correspondence teaching was the first form of DE (born with the first postal systems) and was the means of DE communication used almost exclusively until the 1960s (Lefranc, 1983). Today, the mechanisms for DE can be as simple as mailing a letter, or as complex as transmitting a TV programme via satellite.

The media chosen determine the type of learning that takes place: A textbook, a computer, or television broadcasts do not offer the same didactic and interactive possibilities.

Various authors (Bates, 1981; Chang & al., 1983; Hudspeth & Brey, 1986) describe a number of media that have been used in DE institutions, and provide the following picture.

Print, in conjunction with images to provide some sort of representation of reality, is the most commonly used medium in DE. The problem remains the passivity of the student, but, on the other hand, this medium offers the best possibility for a student to randomly scan a message, ponder meaning, and so on.

While it can be said that the regular timing of radio and TV broadcasts may force students to work to schedule, students often do not bother to tune in if the broadcasts do not coincide with assignment schedules. Transmission difficulties (e.g., the time slot allotted to the programme) can be dealt with by providing recordings of lessons together with their related assignments to students. Video-cassettes have the advantage over TV of offering control to the student.

Audio-cassettes have strong pedagogic features as they can be stopped and replayed as many times as needed. They are easy to produce, copy, and distribute, and each student can have a permanent copy.

Both audio- and video- taping allow materials to be distributed to students whenever they are ready, instead of relying on Broadcasting companies to schedule the materials into their programming.

It must be noted that these forms of media tend to be one-way and non-communicative: hence the introduction of the telephone in DE systems. The telephone, although not easily used and accessible everywhere, allows students to feel less isolated. Students and teachers can interact in pairs or in groups through tele-conferencing More recent technological innovations such as computer networks and interactive videodisc offer other possibilities for interaction in DE.

Decisions for media choices rest on several factors:

(a) Cognitive considerations;

(b) Familiarity of students with the technology;

(c) Possible effects on student motivation;

(d) Availability (eg., radios might be more accessible than audio-cassettes in some countries);

(e) cost/benefit ratio - the cost that is engendered with each level of benefit the student receives; and

(f) The economy of scale - the cost of course production per student and the decline in cost if more students are enrolled.

Ideally, the instructional media chosen must be as accessible as possible to students, must offer enough possibilities for orientation, should not (or as little as possible) require students to study at fixed times and places, should offer experiences at both the conceptual and practical levels, should promote study motivation, and should not consume too high a proportion of the available budget.

Support system

An important aspect of good DE is the provision of a system of feedback to build dialogue between educator and learner and to connect the student to the institution. In fact, the essence of success in DE

> ...is mainly a matter of getting the right balance
> between elements of independent study and
> opportunities for direct personal interaction
> between staff and students.

> (Smith, 1979:49)

Possibilities for personal interactions (face-to-face, telephone, the written form, etc.) between staff and students and amongst studen.s are important, not only for the intellectual aspects of learning, but also for emotional support. Perraton (1982) argues that no matter how carefully educational materials are prepared, they cannot meet the needs or answer the problems of each individual student using them. Therefore, beyond the provision of the self-contained package lies a requirement to provide individualised advice, support, and tutorial capable of meeting the diverse needs of students (Stewart, 1982).

Having personally studied in DE institutions over a span of 30 years, Gardiner (1985) emphasises that no student can survive easily without prompt feedback about assignments: The learner needs to be guided in the learning process, needs to know where errors have been made, and needs to be offered encouragement to keep studying. He also

stresses contact with fellow students is essential. The learning process should also be a social experience, whereby students are offered opportunities to meet together to motivate each other, to share problems, to develop in their studies, as well as to make friends (Smith, 1979; Perraton, 1982; Price, 1985).

DE students should also be offered the services of an administrative support staff who would deal with any questions regarding basic information about each course, such as deadlines for exams and papers, the schedule and location of all support activities (testing centres, resource centres, tutorials, etc.), instructors' office hours and telephone numbers, information about courses to be offered during the next registration period, and so on (Hudspeth & Brey, 1986).

The British Open University

The British Open University (BOU) has been successfully using DE teaching since the 1960s, and is said to be a pioneer in the field of DE as it is known today (Innes, 1982; Chang et al., 1983). The BOU has no entrance requirements. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis and students can construct their own degree programmes according to their aptitudes, interests, or career requirements.

Postal services are used both for sending curricular material to students and for receiving their written assignments. Material is broadcast over TV and radio, or distributed in specially produced textbooks, audio- and video- cassettes.

James (1991) reports that the strength of the BOU lies in its widespread network of study centres and numerous part-time tutors. In addition to specialised tutors for each course, a tutor-counselor is appointed to each student to act as the personal link with the BOU.

DISTANCE EDUCATION FOR SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

The literature and personal experience confirm that there are different paths to, and rates of L2 learning. In DE, provision can be made to accommodate the various needs of students who are at different stages in their learning. One of its characteristics is the provision of different means of presenting the same material to attain the highest possible effectiveness for the individual learner:

> The variety of structure and style of presentation and communication, appropriate use of media available, adaptation to students' conditions of life.
>
> (Holmberg, 1985a:134).

More interactive activities are present in learner-centred L2 situations where students participate more actively in their course management. Indeed, Wedemeyer (1981:7) stipulates that, if it is an accepted fact that different learners have different needs, then all learners should have "some degree of direction over the education they obtain for themselves, some right of autonomy of choice". Student involvement in course management is constantly sought in DE courses by means of on-going programme evaluations; the results are then used to improve the instruction and make it more appropriate and relevant to students.

Educational materials can be used as remedial strategies, special activities being assigned to learners for aspects of the task for which they are weak. This is made possible through a two-way communication support system which gives students and tutors the possibility of contacting one another about the problems the student encounters, and to negotiate consequent action. Thus, since opportunities to negotiate input helps L2 learning, DE should be appropriate for L2 instruction.

If it can be assumed that L1 and L2 learning follow similar paths, then L2 learners will speak the new language only when they feel ready to do so. In fact, two different surveys of university students learning a L2 at a distance, one in Canada (Stringer, 1982), and one in Australia (Williams & Sharma, 1988), reveal that the beginner level

students who had "very little command of the spoken word"
(Stringer, 1982:238) felt intimidated and reluctant to
converse over the phone with tutors and peers. Talking by
telephone seemed less threatening and more useful to
students with a higher level of competence. This suggests
that the formal inclusion of this type of activity should be
written in more advanced courses, after ample provision of
productive activities have been provided.

DE methodologies appear to be effective tools for L2
instruction. It is clear that

> ...the technology used to TRANSMIT language over
> distances can be effectively adapted to TEACH
> languages at a distance.

> (Karpiak, 1982:662)

However, Wong-Fillmore (1985) mentions two elements
that are considered important for L2 development : (i) the
environment should allow learners to be in close and
continuous contact with speakers of the target language; and
(ii) learners have to be in the position to engage in
interactions with speakers of the target language in a
variety of situations. This is pertinent to the use of DE
for L2 instruction, since the settings in which DE take
place are very often not natural, and the learner might have
very little chance to meet speakers of the target language.
Consequently, the student learning a L2 at a distance might
have very few, if any, chances of interacting and
communicating 'naturally' in the target language. The

greatest difficulty encountered in language teaching at a distance is the skill of talking (Holmberg, 1985b); the students surveyed by Stringer (1982) reported that the greatest deficiency they found in their L2 distance courses was lack of conversational practice.

The provision of a support component in a L2 distance system is therefore essential: It is the means by which L2 learners receive opportunities to interact in the target language. In a DE system for L2 instruction, language practice can be made possible through a two-way communication network in a variety of ways, including one-to-one telephone calls, tele-conferencing, and audio-tapes. Karpiak (1982) remarks that student support in L2 instruction not only serves the purpose of monitoring and evaluating students' progress or of providing remedial and tutoring materials, it also allows for interactive communication links designed for the acquisition of conversational skills.

Several institutions have used DE for language teaching effectively. In fact, a survey on language teaching at a Canadian university revealed that the majority of instructors observed a higher level of student performance and higher average grades in the DE courses than in the equivalent on-campus courses (Karpiak, 1982).

The British have shown that educational broadcasts can be appealing enough to be shown in prime-time slots: Such a TV-based L2 course in Russian developed by the British

Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) claimed a viewership of an estimated 1.25 million (Innes, 1982). The BBC works in close collaboration with the British Open University (BOU) to develop its educational programmes. The BBC programmes are not only appealing to the British, they have also been used with good results elsewhere. For example, Athabasca University in Canada successfully adapted an existing BBC course for French as L2 (Abrioux, 1982), and their off-campus students can now register in a BA programme with Major in French.

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) has been involved in the development of several multi-media packages that can be used for distance L2 instruction. For instance, a French Language teaching Kit for grades 9 and 10 contains a filmstrip, an audiotape, evaluation forms and reply envelopes, maps, quizzes, and a teacher's guide (Ullman, 1974). Bell & al. (1984), also from OISE, have developed professional development modules for teachers of ESL consisting of sound recordings, worksheets and guides on different aspects of L2 instruction.

With a Spanish population of 15 million in the USA, Spanish is a major L2 in the educational system there, and is available through about 150 university level distance courses (Stephens, 1982). On the other side of the world, Maori industrial workers in New Zealand have improved their English language skills through DE projects arranged by the New Zealand Technical Correspondence Institute (Howell,

1982), and in 1985, seven Australian higher education institutions were offering, overall, distance courses in more than ten languages (Williams & Sharma, 1988).

Students following courses from the above DE institutions have manifested visible gains in their L2 learning, thus showing that DE can be an effective tool for teaching a L2.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND SECOND LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN MAURITIUS

There is general agreement that upgrading the teaching and use of English in Mauritian secondary schools is a high priority. Radcliffe (1988) notes that, with a high population in the secondary sector (over 60,000 students and more than 3,000 teachers), and limited training resources, it would be very difficult and expensive to try to make a large impact on the problem by means of conventional courses. A further advantage of using a DE approach is the uniformity and standardisation in content it can offer, together with the diversity in kinds of instructional activities utilised. DE can therefore help fulfil the need to provide equity in the Mauritian educational system.

The Mauritius College of the Air (MCA) is already established as the country's DE organisation. In that capacity, it offers services for audio-visual and print

production, it collaborates on different projects with other para-statal bodies, and it has access to the services of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation. The system proposed in this thesis intends to use the infra-structure already in place to provide DE services to Mauritian secondary schools. As an example of how the system can work, the elements of a proposed ESL programme using distance teaching in Mauritius will be described.

CHAPTER 3

DISTANCE EDUCATION IN MAURITIUS

Mauritius is presently undergoing a period of economic diversification and development. The country needs skilled industrial labour. However, the educational system has not been adapted to the demands imposed by this vigorous economic growth on the Mauritian society. As reported in l'Express (1991), the government has the intention to encourage secondary pupils to study science and technical subjects, in order to make education more relevant to life in Mauritius. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture sees DE as an important technique to help achieve educational improvements swiftly and economically (Radcliffe, 1988; PSR report, 1990).

The history of DE in Mauritius dates back half a century, when the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture launched the Audio-Visual Centre in 1947 to offer educational radio broadcasts to primary students, with the goals of increasing access to education and of improving the quality of educational opportunities received by Mauritian children.

The idea of offering education through radio was commendable, but unfortunately, in some instances the results were poor. Sometimes the quality of the hardware

could be blamed; receivers were broken down or were not powerful enough to receive the broadcasts over the waves. In other instances, the wires had been eaten by rats (Glover commission, 1983). A move started in 1979 to replace the radio system with radio-cassette players, purchased at duty-free prices in lieu of government subsidy. Subsequently, pre-recorded programmes began to be offered by the Audio-Visual Centre.

In 1964, The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation was established to operate the national radio and TV services, and the mass appeal of TV made it an important tool for the transmission not only of entertainment shows, but also for informative and educational purposes (Ramburuth, 1990). The Audio-Visual Centre embarked on educational TV programming, and educational television was launched in 1969.

The initial programmes were imported from the BBC, but subsequently, more and more programmes were produced locally. They consisted of lectures in English, French, Geography, as well as Music lessons. Since the 1970s, when the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation started to collaborate with the Mauritius College of the Air, programmes geared to secondary students have included such themes as health and environmental studies and Oriental music.

The educational TV programmes were geared mainly to secondary institutions, and in 1983, the Audio-Visual Centre introduced video recordings of the various programmes it was

offering. Students and teachers alike were given the possibility either of viewing the material at the centre, or of taping them on their own recorders for home use.

The Audio-Visual Centre became a centre for media support to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, offering audio-visual support to primary and secondary institutions, as well as a documentation centre where films, slides, and scripts, were made available for use by the general public.

Over the years, the work load of the Audio-Visual Centre increased considerably, but the centre was not re-organised to accommodate the influx of projects. The Audio-Visual Centre had "functioned merely as a decorative frill and sometimes not so complementary appendage of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture" (Hawoldar, 1981:7); its financial limitations and inadequate staff and equipment put constraints on the organisation, and it has never been able to establish the credibility necessary for its success. The Audio-Visual Centre was eventually merged with the Mauritius College of the Air in 1985.

THE MAURITIUS COLLEGE OF THE AIR

After Mauritius gained its independence in 1968, one of the dilemmas facing the new government was to find ways of improving the educational system. A large number of

Mauritians were not receiving an adequate education, either because they were attending sub-standard schools, or because they had dropped out of the system. The government recognised that they could only offer limited help to that part of the population by traditional means and the services of the Audio-Visual Centre, and non-traditional systems of educational provision were explored. The International Extension College (IEC) was approached for assistance.

The main purpose of the IEC, based in Britain, is to provide advice and support on distance teaching in the Third World. Three basic views have guided the work of the IEC:

(1) Traditional methods of education, with a single teacher in the classroom, offer an inadequate solution to educational problems.

(2) The resources and the know-how of the world need to be shared, in terms of teaching experiences, methods and materials.

(3) The western system of education is out of gear with the needs of many developing countries that have inherited it; for instance, in many African countries, an emphasis on academic subjects imported from Europe is linked to a reverence for academic qualifications, which have limited

relevance to the lives that most students are

going to live.

(Young & al., 1980)

Upon examination of the Mauritian problem, the IEC
agreed to set up the Mauritius College of the Air (MCA) for
the government in 1971. The objectives of this new para-
statal body were to cater for the educational needs of
private secondary schools, as well as to provide continuing
education opportunities for out-of-school youths and adults,
using a multi-media DE approach.

Ramburuth (1990) reports that the government of
Mauritius contributed to the project by providing locales
and equipment, the services of a few government officers,
and subsidies such as duty-free import facilities and free
postage. The International Extension College provided a
grant to cover the initial costs of establishing the system,
a five-year support grant, and the services of a small
number of expatriate staff.

Two main departments were established within the
Mauritius College of the Air (MCA): The Administration and
Production Department, and the Teaching and Evaluation
Department. The latter department had the responsibility
for course development as well as the supervision of the
manner in which the programmes were being used in the
schools. The production of the various educational packages
rested in the hands of a production team consisting of

graphics, broadcasting, and editorial officers. A liaison officer was responsible for maintaining contact between the 'clientele' and the MCA in order to provide feedback from the users. A documentation centre was set up to cater mainly for the informational needs of the staff.

From the outset, the MCA swam in a pool of uncertainty about its future, once the overseas funding had stopped. Ramburuth (1990) reports that consequently, the organisation remained under-staffed for a very long time, and its employees had to carry double loads of duties; for instance, at one point the Director was doing much of the work of the Senior Broadcasting Officer, and the head of the Administration and Production Department and the Senior Tutor in Languages shared the editor's job.

Under-staffing led the organisation to concentrate mainly on the upgrading of education within the walls of private secondary schools. Correspondence courses backed by radio and TV programmes were provided to schools, and in 1974, the MCA courses were reaching about 23% of the target secondary level population, mainly in the rural and poorer institutions. Table V gives a list of the programmes that were being offered in 1974.

These programmes consisted of correspondence packages which relied heavily on the support of radio and TV broadcasts (mainly lectures). Teachers were supported through a series of orientation seminars and visits by MCA supervisors.

TABLE V

MCA CORRESPONDENCE COURSES OFFERED TO PRIVATE SECONDARY

SCHOOLS IN 1974

SUBJECT	LEVEL	NO. OF SCHOOLS	NO. OF STUDENTS
English, including Careers in Mauritius	Form V	55	4,200
Biology	Form V	33	1,650
Biology	Form IV	36	2,100
Woodwork	Form I	12	1,000
Agricultural Science	Form I	12	900
Modern Maths	Form I	50	5,150

SOURCE: The 1974 MCA Annual Report, Mauritius.

When the International Extension College grants expired
in 1978, the MCA was taken over by the Ministry of
Education, Arts and Culture. The Glover Commission (1983)
and Ramburuth (1990) report that the desire of the Ministry
to re-organise the provision of audio-visual education led
to the enactment of the Mauritius Educational Broadcasting
Authorithy (MEBA) in 1981. If passed by parliament, the
MEBA was to take over all the assets, rights, and
liabilities of the MCA, guaranteeing to keep all MCA
employees under the same conditions of employment. The

objective was to combine all existing audio-visual equipment and personnel under one organisation, in order to avoid duplication of services between the MCA and the Audio-Visual Centre. However, the MEBA Act was never proclaimed in parliament, and the MCA and the Audio-Visual Centre remained separate. The MCA suffered the humiliation of being swept out of existence a second time: In 1982, the MCA Act was repealed again to give way to the National University of Mauritius (NUM). The assets, rights, and liabilities of the University of Mauritius, the Mauritius Institute of Education, and the MCA were to be placed under one umbrella. However, like the MEBA Act, the NUM Act was voted down in Parliament (Glover commission, 1983; Ramburuth, 1990).

All through these crises, the MCA continued its activities, which by then consisted not only of developing courses for schools but for other organisations as well. Many of the MCA projects were informational and geared to the general public, not requiring the audience to have attained specific levels of education.

The MCA survived financially thanks to the fees paid by organisations for which the MCA developed courses. The staff also accepted a cut in salary in order to keep the organisation on its feet.

In 1983, the Glover commission stated that the MCA had to be given precise directives about what its objectives were to be. After ten years of existence, the organisation was doing work in too many areas, and should concentrate

instead on one area of expertise. The Glover commission recommended that the MCA be given sole responsibility for continuing and distance education, and that the Audio-Visual Centre should cease its separate operations of providing DE programmes, and hence put a stop to duplication of services.

Following these recommendations, the White Paper on Education (1984) submitted a plan of action to the government that led to the establishment of the new Mauritius College of the Air in 1985.

THE NEW MAURITIUS COLLEGE OF THE AIR

The new MCA has emerged out of the pooling of resources from the old MCA and the Audio-Visual Centre of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. Before the merger came into effect in 1986, the MCA was physically spread in different locales, but now it is located in a new building with better facilities for both sound and video recordings. The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation then ceased to provide access to its recording studios.

The MCA is administered by a board consisting of nine members, including the representative of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the representative of the Director General of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, and the director of the MCA.

FIGURE 1. Organisation chart of the new Mauritius College of the Air

SOURCE: Ramburuth, 1990.

The overall organisation of the MCA is represented in Figure 1. Osborne (1990) and the pamphlet put out by the MCA in 1990 both give a concise summary of the services provided by the para-statal body which will be listed in the following paragraphs. The aim of the MCA is to promote education, arts, science and culture generally through mass-media and DE methods. More specifically, the objectives are

    (a) to provide equity in education;

    (b) to support and upgrade the standard of teaching
        and learning;

    (c) to bring opportunities in continuing education;
        and

    (d) to improve non-formal education.

The main activities of the MCA lie in media production for education, culture and development, school broadcasting, and publications for social development. In order to fulfil these duties, the MCA uses multi-media methods including audio-tape and radio; video-tape and TV; displays, flyers and posters; brochures, courses and books; workshops, seminars and face-to-face sessions.

With the services of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, TV and radio programmes are provided to primary and secondary school students. Programmes are offered for both classroom and home use daily for several hours. The various broadcasts provided by the MCA are listed in Tables VI and VII.

TABLE VI

MCA TELEVISION BROADCASTS FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS
1991 SCHEDULE

DAY	MORNING BROADCAST 10:00 - 11:00	EVENING BROADCAST 17:30 - 18:00
Monday	Science	English Language
Tuesday	English Language	Science
Wednesday	Science	Literature - English & French
Thursday	Social Studies	English Language
Friday	Science	General Knowledge

SOURCE: MCA Secondary Educational Television Grid, 1991

NOTE: The General Knowledge broadcasts are also geared to the general public.

Many of the TV and radio broadcasts are produced locally, but pre-recorded media-based educational materials from overseas are also acquired and made available to schools across the island. Apart from syllabus-centred enrichment programmes, some MCA projects are geared for use by the general public. The production of local materials according to felt needs of the Mauritian people is a priority of the MCA. It uses mass media for social development and organises non-formal education such as the "Mother and child" project for UNICEF/Mauritius, consisting of awareness campaigns on health issues. Other productions

include multi-media packages about topics such as marine environment, road safety, non-communicable diseases.

TABLE VII

MCA RADIO BROADCASTS FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS
1991 SCHEDULE

DAY	BROADCASTS	TARGET AUDIENCE
Monday	General Knowledge	All public
	English literature	SC/HSC
	Oriental Studies	SC/HSC
	English Language	Lower Secondary
Tuesday	Music Appreciation	All public
	Development Studies	All public
	French Literature	SC/HSC
	English Language	Lower Secondary
Wednesday	General Knowledge	All public
	English Literature	SC/HSC
	Oriental Studies	SC
	English Language	Secondary
Thursday	Science	All public
	French Literature	SC/HSC
	Economics	SC
	French Language	Secondary
Friday	General Knowledge	All public
	English Literature	SC/HSC
	English Language	SC/HSC
	Population & family life education	SC/HSC

SOURCE: MCA Secondary Radio Broadcast Grid, 1991

In-house services in graphics work are available to complement the production of printed material. An audio studio of modest proportions can accommodate up to six persons for audio recordings; some basic studio video equipment and a small portable unit allow for recordings in the studio and outside. The organisation also provides a dubbing service for the copying of its various programmes. A documentation section carries all the materials the MCA has produced or acquired, and a reference collection of books on media production is being built up.

A small team of dedicated and competent staff (approximately 100 in all) man the MCA. The number of productions so far have been of adequate calibre, but it is said that the MCA is stretching its resources too thinly and inconsistently in its endeavour to meet every need (Ramburuth, 1990). In his report to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Radcliffe (1988) recommends that the organisation has to be more selective in the projects it undertakes in the future - the MCA and its services will be more effective if it generally makes fewer productions, but makes them to a higher standard.

The system I am proposing fits the primary mandate of the MCA: Provision for equity in secondary education. More specifically, the system aims at upgrading the teaching and use of English in secondary schools. Many existing products and services can be integrated into the proposed scheme for ESL instruction. In that sense, development of an ESL

programme will not require too much additional funding and will not overstretch MCA's limited financial, mechanical, and human resources.

I agree with Radcliffe (1988) that systematic feedback on the use of MCA materials from its users has to be gathered. A feedback component will be set up in my system to obtain data from the 'clientele', both formally and informally, so as to bring improvements to the system where necessary. User feedback on materials is needed to establish where they are making the biggest impact, and what steps have to be taken to make the materials more relevant and effective.

MAURITIUS COLLEGE OF THE AIR AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

The radio broadcasts for English Language consist of three series obtained from the BBC (English examined, Pedagogical Pop, and Business Communication). English Language TV broadcasts are made up of both local and foreign materials, and they include topics such as "sentence building", "use of prepositions", "Discovering the library - how to read a book".

So far, the MCA has developed separate, unrelated TV and radio broadcasts for ESL instruction at the secondary level. There is no evidence of a specific programme to be

followed throughout the school year; every trimester, the
MCA librarian provides the English Language Co-ordinator
with an updated list of available materials, and the Co-
ordinator then decides which materials will be used in the
broadcasts. It seems that content of the broadcasts is
decided upon informally, depending on the availability of
materials (MCA Documentation Librarian, 1991; personal
contact).

I believe that a DE programme for L2 instruction has to
be constructed systematically, in a way that would result in
a coherent flow within the programme. The learning
activities from one level to the next should increase in
difficulty, but they also need to be linked together (by
aspects of language structures, themes, etc.). Kaye (1981)
specifies that the design of DE programmes, including choice
of instructional materials and selection of media, has to be
planned on a systematic basis. Success of a DE programme
depends on good co-ordination amongst programme designers,
producers, dispatchers, evaluators, administrators, and the
support staff.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANISATION OF THE PROPOSED DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The need for the provision of high-quality instruction

demands the production of high-quality courses. DE courses

are capable of being versatile and adaptable enough to be

used by different groups of students who are separated by

distance, by entry level skills, and/or aptitudes - the

support system offers a variety of activities for students

who want/need additional practice, through different means

(print, audio, video, 'hands-on'). In fact, DE is

especially valuable for its

> ...high quality presentation through the reliance on
> [didactic materials] by the best subject specialists
> and educators available, [and the possibility of]
> teaching large groups of students with the one and the
> same course.

> (Holmberg, 1985a:36)

The proposed DE system will require co-ordination among

several departments, each of which will have different

responsibilities, such as deciding on the programme content,

overseeing the distribution of materials, conceiving

programme evaluation schemes, etc.

Programme design should be carried out by teams of

subject matter specialists, materials writers, instructional

designers, and teachers. Teams differ in size and format

depending on the nature of the course. Mackenzie & al. (1975) suggest that while an Arts course might require the work of a team of six for just over two years, a Science course might call for twice that number. Therefore, the development of an ESL programme for the Mauritian secondary sector would require a design team of approximately six persons.

Using a team for programme development results in the pooling of the expertise members hold about course content and course production, as well as in the synergism that occurs when a group of people work together to generate a solution to a problem (Wright, 1988). Materials that are then produced are of much higher quality than if developed by one person only. Actually, it is impossible for one person alone to fulfil all the tasks required in the development of a multi-media DE programme.

Programme organisation

Effective and efficient instruction can be produced by course development teams, provided a systematic, planned process of production is implemented (Smith, 1987; reported in Wright, 1988); a course design team should consist of members who have specific roles and responsibilities. The list of the roles and responsibilities of various team members given by Wright (1988), and models of organisation

FIGURE 2. Structural organisation of the proposed Distance Education system

BOARD

DIRECTOR

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR

PROGRAMME EVALUATOR

PROGRAMME DESIGN

COURSE WRITING

CONTENT OF MATERIALS

RESOURCE SERVICES

REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTRES

TUTORIALS

LIBRARY FACILITIES

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

MANAGEMENT SERVICES

PUBLICATION SECTION

DISTRIBUTION SECTION

MAINTENANCE SECTION
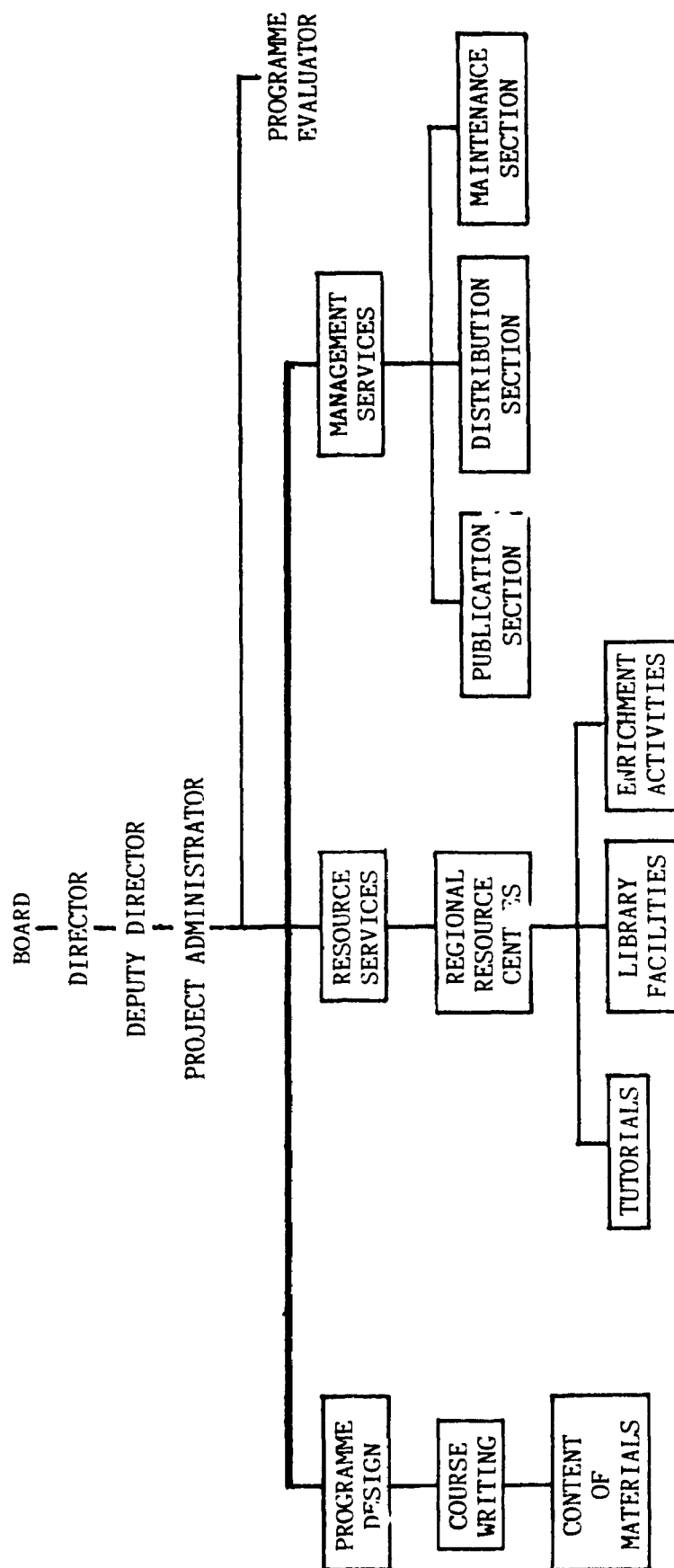
design (Galbraith, 1977; Francis & Young, 1979) will be used towards the establishment of a distance ESL course design team in Mauritius.

Figure 2 represents the structural organisation of the proposed system for the design of a distance ESL programme for Mauritian secondary schools. The intricate nature of such a programme demands tight co-operation within the design team. The proposed system will be organised into the following departments:

1. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION. A Project Administrator will oversee the work of the whole team, will be responsible for defining an acceptable standard for all work to be completed, for identifying the content to be covered, for describing the parameters of the project, as well as for verifying that every step is kept within schedule and budget limits. This role will be filled by a Co-ordinator from the Educational Services Section of the MCA.

2. PROGRAMME DESIGN. Together with examination results, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture receives a summary sheet from Cambridge, listing common errors made by Mauritian School Certificate examinees on the different examination papers. Using these, as well as problems with English identified by teachers and students in Mauritius (on survey questionnaires) as a frame of reference, the Programme Design Department decides on the

content of materials, prepares the course manual, and divides the course content into cycles, modules, and units. All lessons, activities, assignments, and supplemental activities are planned by this department.

The nature of the programme demands a pooling of human resources from the different para-statal bodies, since the MCA specialises in overall DE course development, the Mauritius Institute of Education is in charge of curriculum development and teacher education, and the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate sets criteria for, and determines the content of local examinations. An English Language Course Developer from the Mauritius Institute of Education will head this department.

3. RESOURCES SERVICES. This department will provide support to students in their learning. The Head of this department will supervise the work carried out at Regional Resource Centres, and will arrange for the training of Tutors and Resource Persons. The Head Librarian from the MCA Documentation Section will be given this job.

4. MANAGEMENT SERVICES. This department will be divided into three sections: a Publication Section, a Distribution Section, and a Maintenance Section.

Once the content of materials has been determined, the Publication section will be responsible for their production. This section will have to investigate whether

existing MCA materials can be integrated into the activities, whether or not there are possibilities for obtaining materials from other sources (e.g., the Mauritius Institute of Education, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, overseas), in order to determine what new materials need to be produced.

Success of DE projects depend not only on the quality of materials, but on the efficiency of the administrative systems needed for delivery as well (Perraton, 1982; Radcliffe, 1988; Carrier, 1991)). The Distribution Section will be responsible for handling and distributing all materials to participants, disseminating information regarding administrative procedures, broadcast schedules, date, time and location of tutorials/seminars/examinations, and so on.

The upkeep of materials and hardware in the Regional Resource Centres will rest upon the Maintenance Section.

5. PROGRAMME EVALUATION. A Programme Evaluator will be responsible for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme, both in terms of student gains and programme management. This person oversees the administration of needs assessments, the provision of audience analysis data, the design of formative and summative evaluations for programme implementation, and if possible conducts of graduate follow-up surveys. This role will be given to an

English Language Programme Evaluator from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture.

In his report to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture "The potential contribution of distance learning and audio-visual resources to educational development in Mauritius", Radcliffe (1988), head of the BBC Open University Production Centre, suggested a timescale of between 9 to 12 months would be needed for the production of materials, as well as for the implementation of a distance ESL programme at the secondary level in Mauritius, including piloting. It is suggested that the first DE package be designed for Form I students, considered as the beginner level of ESL, and that that amount of time be devoted to the development and implementation of the system at the Form I level. It is therefore recommended that the information seminar take place in January when schools open for the school year. The first students would then be able to start the programme at the beginning of the following school year.

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

A multitude of activities within the different departments of the DE system are needed for the actual development of the programme, and a support staff is required to carry out these activities.

Books, charts, checklists and flow diagrams dealing with the development of educational programmes abound on the market. For the purpose of this thesis, the recommendations presented by various authors on the development of instructional packages (Mackenzie & al., 1975; Jones & Lewis, 1980; Romiszowski, 1981; Dick & Carey, 1985; Moller, 1991) will be adapted according to the particularities of the Mauritian environment.

The features of the proposed DE programme for ESL instruction include:

- The mandate of the programme
- The target population
- The content of the programme
- The support system
- The development of materials
- The role of teachers

THE MANDATE OF THE PROGRAMME

The objectives of the proposed system are two-fold: Not only will it offer a programme in English Language to help students succeed in obtaining their O'level certificate, it will also provide the opportunity for secondary level teachers to upgrade their teaching skills and improve their English language proficiency through activities designed especially for them.

The distance multi-media package to be developed will address a need identified by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, that of improving the teaching and use of English in secondary schools, especially in institutions where the majority of teachers are untrained and where the students who start their secondary schooling at the lowest entry levels get placed (B- and C- schools). The State and A-schools could also use the activities to complement their English Language syllabus.

Information Seminar

At the developmental stage of the programme, a major information seminar will be given by the programme administration to all English Language teachers and school principals. This seminar will cover general information about the objectives of the system, and the ways to achieve them.

Questionnaires will also be distributed to the audience to identify the areas of the English language with which they are having trouble, as well as to seek information about the concerns and interests of the target population. Teachers will also be asked to take copies of the questionnaires for their students to fill out and return to the MCA.

Schools that are interested in participating in the programme should have all questionnaires returned to the MCA within a month after the information seminar; they should also register their classes at that time. Information is needed on the anticipated number of classrooms, teachers and students that would be involved, to help the MCA determine the approximate number of copies of the programme materials that would be required for a given year.

The activities in the programme will follow themes that are generated from theses survey questionnaires. It is important to design activities based on the interests of learners, to provide them with relevant materials. Research shows that systematically identifying learner interests and actively incorporating them into the instructional task actually helps motivate learners to continue with the activity (Herndon, 1987).

THE TARGET POPULATION

The characteristics of DE explored in Chapter 2 refer to adult learners in isolation from teacher and peers. In the proposed ESL programme for Mauritius, DE will be used to help students and teachers in a classroom setting. Therefore, instead of being completely alone, as is usually the case for DE students, the target students are in direct

contact with teachers and peers, with the advantage of enjoying real classroom dynamics and personal interactions. Nevertheless, the educational services to be provided in the system make it an instance of DE in the sense that the REAL educator is not present on the same premises as the students: The teaching task is performed by the DE package that is developed by the Course Design Team. DE is developed for classroom use for two purposes (Perraton,1982; Hawkridge, 1988):

  (i) to complement face-to-face teaching by offering enrichment activities to the students; and

  (ii) to take over the class for a few hours weekly, teaching content beyond the teacher's capabilities.

The purpose for which DE will be used in Mauritius resembles more the pattern set in (i), although it resembles the situation described in (ii) in some instances; e.g., for oral exercises, where teachers do not have facility in English, the DE package will take over the class and perform the actual teaching task.

It can be assumed from the situation in Mauritian schools that a large majority of students entering Form I have a very poor knowledge of the English language. Form I students can therefore be categorised as beginner-level ESL learners, and the DE programme should start with the basics of the English language.

THE CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME

Only a short description of the School Certificate (SC) English Language papers is sent to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture by Cambridge University. It contains the types of set tasks, together with the allocation of marks and time limit for each task (Appendix III). Sample SC English Language examination papers from past years can also be found in Appendix IV. The Ministry does not receive a Cambridge SC syllabus for English Language, and after several enquiries at the Ministry, it could not be determined whether an O'level English Language Cambridge syllabus for Mauritius does exist. Schools are given the responsibility to decide on the textbooks and activities to be included in their English Language curriculum (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 1991; personal contact).

Chang & al. (1983) state that the selection of materials to include in a distance L2 instructional package for beginner-level adult learners can expressly start with the interpretation of the rules of grammar, analysing pronunciation, building up vocabulary, shifting attention over time toward the practical aspects of the L2. Kennedy (1978) says it seems that the most suitable pedagogical progression for L2 learning is to move from grammatical and conceptual acceptability, to stylistic appropriateness. My opinion is that all aspects of language can be integrated

in L2 instruction at all stages, even if not in the same proportions and at the same levels. If it is an accepted fact that beginner L2 learners start with a silent period, and that language learning requires ample provision of L2 data, then it seems that beginner-level activities should focus primarily on listening and comprehension skills. However, within a very short time, L2 learners should be encouraged to use the language they hear and comprehend, and production activities are therefore also necessary to help L2 learners develop in the target language.

> Language must first be in the head, but practice is required to enable the person who understands the language to be able to speak it. Speaking may not teach students language, but it helps them activate the language they know.
>
> (Chastain, 1988:272)

Second language instruction should then consist of activities that focus on both the formal and communicative aspects of a language. Comprehension comes before production, but at the same time plenty of practice is needed for oral development. Research also shows that teachers need to respond to student needs. Oral practice drills seem to go counter to that belief, but in the case of Mauritius where the classroom teachers cannot offer correct oral input, practice drills are needed to provide students with exposure to correct pronunciation - in fact, including practice drills into the lessons is a response to Mauritian students' needs.

Research on L2 development shows that the L2 learning environment has to offer many opportunities of contact with the L2 so that the learner can integrate new linguistic information into her/his own language, therefore expanding target language proficiency. Innes (1982) suggests that plenty of revision and overlap should be built into DE materials at all stages, so that the student can master a bit at a time. A spiral curriculum, offering reviews of old structures at the same time as new ones are introduced in an interesting context, will provide the language component so that students may develop a solid framework for their L2 development. The main goal is for students to attain a level of mastery in English high enough for them to pass the O'level examinations.

Virahsawmy (1991) and Varma & Varma (1990) have identified several aspects of Creole that seem to interfere with the study of English language structures by Mauritians. According to Virahsawmy (1991), an important way to help students master the basics of English and avoid the problem of interference from Creole is to make learners become aware of the differences between English and Creole. Since the literature shows that having a L1 framework helps L2 learning, having Mauritian students identify the grammatical structures of Creole can provide them with such a framework. These considerations will also be used to overcome such difficulties when materials are prepared.

Provision for oral tasks must be included in the programme since language development involves both receptive and productive skills, in both written and oral forms. The Cambridge requirements do not contain an oral section, but fluent spoken English is becoming essential in Mauritius. The Mauritian economy is largely based on foreign investments, and those Mauritians who possess a good level of oral proficiency in English will be at an advantage in the hiring process; English is the common language between locals and many foreigners, e.g., investors from Asian countries and tourists from South Africa, Australia, and most European countries.

THE SUPPORT SYSTEM

An integral component of DE, the support system complements the instructional content of a DE programme, and has to be considered at the same planning stage as curricular content.

To teach, in person, a classroom of thirty pupils is a considerable challenge, but to teach hundreds of students at a distance demands that the effect of distance and delayed feedback be minimised. The support services allow students, tutors, and administrators, to keep in touch, to help students avoid a feeling of isolation from the other

members of the organisation. It also acts as a motivating factor to keep students on task.

Tutors

Tutors will play a major role in the proposed distance teaching system. Tutors will be appointed to different groups (by school or by region), they will correct special assignments such as reports on surveys carried out by groups cf students in the school or the community, will provide help to students with the academic aspects of DE programmes, and will act as personal links between students and the DE organisation.

Tutors might have to be trained for their duties, and it is recommended that a Head Tutor be appointed for that task. The training and supervision of Tutors can fall under the responsibility of a lecturer of the Mauritius Institute of Education.

Support services for second language learning

The most common type of support given to DE students is feedback on assignments. It is important to give prompt feedback on assignments to minimise the effect of distance. In the proposed system, the classroom teachers will correct most of their pupils' assignments according to lists of

correct answers. Tutors will mark some assignments (e.g., survey reports).

It is recommended that tutor-corrected assignments be marked within a week of their reception, and a feedback list be prepared for each classroom about the general progress of the group, the mistakes that have been made, a review of structures that do not seem to have been understood, plus suggestions for remedial activities that can be carried out in class or as homework. This information will be useful to teachers in their lesson planning, and to students in their revision of lesson contents. Students who desire extra help can contact Tutors at resource centres. Mauritian pupils are accustomed to spending time outside school for private tuition, and it is expected that they would make good use of the services offered at resource centres.

Specifically for L2 learning at a distance, care must be taken to help students relate their language experience to the real world. Stephens (1982) suggests there are several ways of achieving this through the feedback mechanism (Tutors, resource staff):

-periodic phone calls, an occasional greeting card, newspaper clippings;

-audiotaped comments on student progress or on general topics.

Unless the government installs special telephone linkups between resource centres and schools, telephone

interactions would probably not be feasible, since telephone services are quite costly and not available everywhere on the island. Moreover, it would be difficult to offer these services to each individual student in Mauritius, but there should not be any problem to provide them to classrooms as a group. Circulation of periodical ESL Programme Newsletters can be organised to include additional information about the programme, articles, short stories, poems, etc.; students and teachers will be encouraged to contribute to this project.

Enrichment materials to support the DE programme will be provided in terms of documentation (books, magazines, reference manuals), oral tasks on audiotapes, videotapes and slides related to the themes being exploited. These materials can be made available in resource centres.

Resource Centres

Regional Resource Centres should be set up to function as libraries, as well as meeting points for students and teachers. Moreover, Tutors will be assigned to the centres to help with assignments, and give suggestions for further studies/activities.

A Resource Person would be assigned to each Regional Resource Centre to perform duties such as offering library assistance, help with the manipulation of equipment, handle

FIGURE 3. Distribution of primary schools in Mauritius, 1990
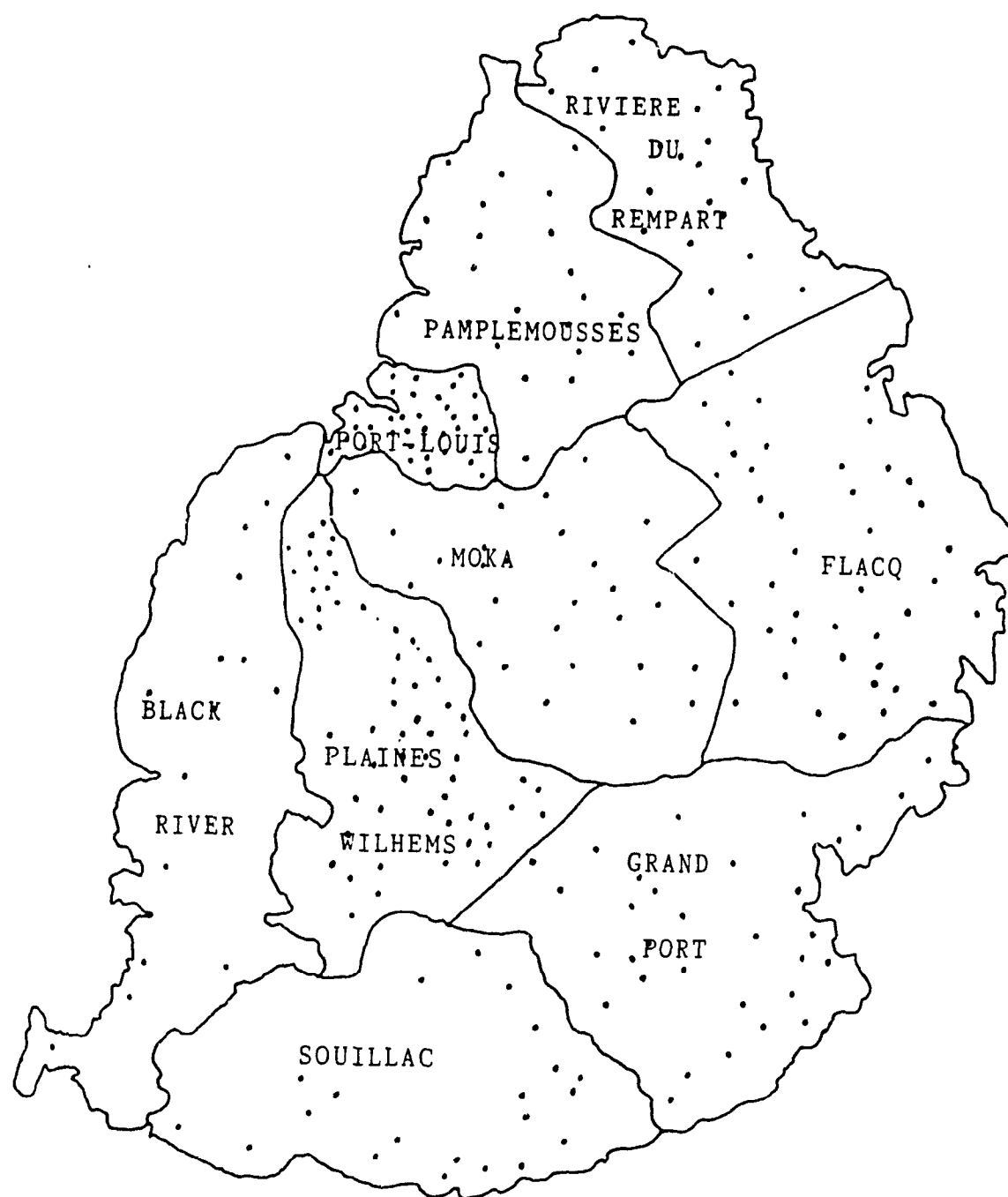
Note:

One dot represents one school.

SOURCE: PSR Report, 1990.

enquiries about general information regarding the programme (e.g., tutor hours and location of other resource centres). The Resource Persons would have to be trained for their duties, and this is seen as a worthwhile investment, for the Resource Persons represent the DE organisation, and if they do not show professionalism, efficiency, and humane characteristics, the image of the organisation suffers.

Figure 3 represents the nine districts into which Mauritius is divided, as well as the distribution of primary schools across the island. It can be assumed that the location of secondary schools follows a similar pattern, but in fewer numbers. Generally speaking, it takes approximately 30 minutes by car to cross one district from one end to the other. It is recommended that one Regional Resource Centre be set up in each district. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture will be encouraged to provide locales for the centres, possibly in State school libraries, open to the DE students and teachers after school hours and during weekends. Great care must be taken in choosing the location of Regional Resource Centres, keeping accessibility in mind – it would be futile to set up a centre where the bus stops only on the hour, or which it would take three buses to reach, especially on weekends.

However, in some districts (e.g., Black River), the schools are spread out thinly, and it might be inconvenient for many students and teachers to travel to a resource

centre in the north if they are located in the south. In this case, it is recommended that a Mobile Resource Centre be provided: The district's Resource Person could travel to a particular centre on given days, taking along various support materials pertaining to the lessons being currently followed. The students/teachers who need any special material could contact the Resource Person before s/he is scheduled to their area (*). However, provision of hardware must be made available in the individual locales that are used as meeting points between the participants and the Resource Persons.

In more densely populated areas, a suggestion by the Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (1981) could also be used, whereby several Study Centres are set up in each district under the supervision of one Regional Resource Centre; Tutors could be available at different centres during specific hours on specific days. In this way, the students/teachers can benefit from tutorial services and peer interaction on a regular basis. They will only have to travel to the Regional Resource

---

(*) NOTE: Although many people in rural areas do not have telephone services yet, school phones could be made accessible to students/teachers. For a small fee, shopkeepers usually allow people to use their store telephones.

Centres when they want to use extra support materials needing hardware and provided only for use at the centres would be kept at the district Regional Resource Centres.

Decisions regarding the location of Regional Resource Centres can only be finalised upon examination of the needs of each district; different set ups might be decided for different districts. Regional Resource Centres must also be equipped with the hardware necessary for using the materials. If resources only allow for the provision of one or two machines, a time-limit loan schedule (maybe on 30-minute loans) has to be drawn to allow as many people as possible to get acccess to the materials.

Students can gather at the centres to discuss problems with assignments and to practice oral skills, and teachers can meet to discuss teaching problems and techniques, share ideas for activities, and so on.

The Regional Resource Centres w' also be used as drop-in and pick-up points of assignments and study materials. Arrangements must be made between the schools and the Resource Persons for the transportation of the materials to and from the schools. A teacher could take on this responsibility. In the eventuality that the distribution of materials cannot be done by teachers, Resource Persons or Tutors, the postal services can be used: it takes only overnight for a mailed parcel to reach its destination anywhere on the island.

Hudspeth & Brey (1986) suggest that field trips represent an added dimension to content covered in a DE programme. In Mauritius, the Resource Persons could be responsible for planning trips according to the different themes of the project (e.g., participation in TV Guest Forums, a visit to a musuem, etc.), and make use of broadcasts to announce upcoming trips. Teachers/School Principals would then be responsible for signing up their students for these trips. Such activities involve costs (transportation, admission fees) that could be the responsility of individual students or schools; parents can be asked to help collect funds through bake sales, bazaars, and so on. If such activities are incorporated in the programme, the government might help with some funding.

DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIALS

Once the content of the programmme (themes, types of activities, and language level) has been determined, the development and production of materials can start. Special care must be taken in the preparation of distance instructional materials, since they represent the primary source for learning and teaching. DE materials are designed to be self-instructional, and should therefore be particularly interesting to their users in order to sustain their motivation and keep them at task.

[Le matériel didactique] génère l'intérêt, soutient la motivation, suscite les questions et y répond.

(Carrier, 1991:220)

Printed Materials

The general principles that guide clear writing of instructions that accompany study materials (Holmes, 1982) include

-using words familiar to students

-using only one complex idea in a sentence

-using shorter over longer sentences

-putting action into verbs

-avoiding the use of passive verbs

-avoiding too many prepositions and adverbs

-avoiding clauses that start with "which" and "that"

-checking the need for three or more syllable words (apart from technical terms)

-eliminating unecessary words and jargon

Another important consideration is the recognition that

...full understanding and internalising of abstract concepts is preceded by some form of direct experience, some manipulation or exploration by the learners.

(Bates, 1988:216)

Therefore, materials should be written in clear and simple language, should contain concrete examples that are relevant to the students, should focus on the 'Here and Now', and should provide activities that demand active student participation (e.g., role-playing). Oral materials for L2 instruction should offer a personal tone with phrases such as "Isn't that right?" and "Do you agree?" - not only are key phrases reinforced, the student will get the feel of a two-way communication (Stephens, 1982).

Stewart & al (1983) say that the main concerns of DE course writing consist of finding ways to divide the study materials into small units, because students need to be offered a suitable quantity of learning material at a time so that (i) they can regard the study of each unit as a separate task; and (ii) they can survey the material to be learnt. In this way, students see the result of their work with each finished unit of work.

It is important to arrange printed study materials into cycles, modules, and units to ensure the breakdown of instruction into self-contained, independent and manageable units. The Asiar Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (1981) describes a cycle as a collection of modules which takes the student to a higher level of the programme; a module is a major topic within a subject area, and it comprises units; a unit is an item that can be roughly equated to a one-hour lesson; and a series of activities is found in one unit. With language, however,

the mass of the content to be covered makes it more difficult for the application of "this small-step drip-feed method" (McDonough, 1981:17).

For the proposed programme, one possible cycle could be arranged under the theme "Families across the World", which could be sub-divided into modules (e.g., Families in fishing villages). Separate units could be organised along the different aspects of the modules (e.g., Let's go fishing with Wally in P.E.I., Canada), with natural language appropriate to the level of study.

Media selection

When determining which media to include in a DE course, one rule of thumb is : Keep it SIMPLE but FLEXIBLE; the most effective multi-media programme is not necessarily the one with the highest number of components (Innes, 1982).

In Mauritius, the Glover commission (1983) reports that very few students were watching the TV programmes intended for them because broadcast times were inappropriate, and the in-school radio broadcasts were often missed due to bad reception or broken receivers. In his recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Radcliffe (1988) suggests that delivery on cassettes may well prove to be more flexible and convenient

for schools in Mauritius, enabling them to schedule the use of the material as seen appropriate, as well as making it easier for teachers to preview the material and become familiar with it before using it in the classroom.

Live programming can however be used to enhance the instructional content of pre-recorded programme; Hudspeth & Brey (1986) list ways in which live TV can be used in this fashion. Some of their suggestions can also be used through radio broadcasts, and those that are applicable in Mauritius are as follows:

1. At scheduled times during a school term, a live presentation can be used to update the curriculum, provide local examples and respond to class interests and needs. The teacher and student enquiries (gathered in suggestion boxes placed in resource centres) can be answered by experts.

2. Live broadcasts can be used to review coursework before examinations (to deal with problems students have had with materials covered over the course period), thereby helping students prepare themselves.

3. Guest Forums. Guest speakers can be invited to interact with a studio audience made up of students and teachers.

Such services reinforce the two-way communication between participants and the DE organisation, and provide diversity and support in the learning process.

Media for second language instruction

For language learning, Stephens (1982) states that audio and video delivery can be particularly effective, because students can be presented with a variety of native voices and real-life situations.

Lightbown (1989) conducted an evaluation of a ESL programme for aural-oral development. It involved the use of individual tape recorders which children use to listen to a wide variety of English material while following the written text. Even though the children did not receive oral practice in class, they expressed themselves with facility; Lightbown (1989) notes this might be related to their numerous experience with sustained text on which to model their responses. This is pertinent to the development of the proposed programme; similar audio-tapes can be developed for use in Mauritian classrooms and in resource centres. However, the study was carried out where the students could get exposure to the L2 if they so wished. In Mauritius, exposure to English outside the classroom is practically non-existent; oral practice (both communicative activities and drills) in class is needed to

provide students with lots of contact with the L2. Audiotapes will therefore be required both for listening and oral activities.

Videotapes can be used in the L2 secondary school classroom in two ways: as supplementary activities, or as complete lessons (Berdahl & Willetts, 1990). If chosen carefully, Rock videos and advertisements can be used to provide lots of repetition, Game Shows can be used to practice question formations, weather reports can reinforce geographical and numeral concepts, etc.: These types of recordings are also entertaining and interesting.

Video recordings as supplementary activities provide repetition of vocabulary and structures in a natural way, helping students focus on meaning while they are practising the same or similar materials. A video can also be used as a lesson for general comprehension, for making hypotheses, making classifications, and for drawing conclusions. If chosen to be used as a lesson, extensive pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities are necessary in order to exploit the medium effectively (Berdahl & Willetts, 1990).

PRE-VIEWING activities provide students with background information about the contents of the tape, and set the stage for Viewing activities. Preparatory texts, maps, charts, etc., can help students situate the context of, as well as clearly understand, the tape contents.

VIEWING activities can be used in different ways. For instance, students can be asked to (a) listen for main ideas and check them on a provided list; (b) answer basic true/false questions; or (c) carry out exercises such as Fill-in-the-blank (with names, numbers, etc.).

POST-VIEWING activities allow for follow-up on the themes of the tape, with students carrying out activities such as conducting interviews and participating in debates.

Berdahl & Willetts (1990) also recommend that only three to six minutes worth of video should be used in any one class lesson of L2 instruction, especially where the use of authentic material is concerned, since the information load is very dense. The video evaluation guide drawn by Berdahl & Willetts (1990) (Appendix V) will be provided to the Programme Design Team as a general guide towards the choice of videotapes to be included in the programme.

The proposed programme intends to use videos as both classroom lessons and supplementary activities in resource centres.

Materials for students

The classroom materials for individual student use will consist of printed materials. Audio- and video- tapes

for classroom lessons will also be made available to
students at the Regional Resource Centres.

Each student will receive a series of modules that are
divided into lesson units. The activities in each unit
will be divided into two categories: Comprehension and
Production.

COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES:

- -Listening to audiotapes and following
  texts in module

- -Playing games for vocabulary recognition,
  pairing pictures/objects with the
  corresponding words

- -Reading texts and questions in module

- -Watching videos with supplementary
  activities such as suggested by Berdahl &
  Willetts (see above)

PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES:

- -Answering comprehension questions

- -Practising oral drills

- -Participating in activities such as
  role-playing

- -Writing sentences using different
  patterns

- -Writing essays, reports, surveys

- -Playing board games (e.g.,
  Pictionary), 'party' games

Explanation of grammar points and vocabulary lists, as well as visuals and enrichment materials such as verb charts and crossword puzzles for vocabulary building and spelling skills, will be included in the modules. Suggestions will also be made for special projects, for both individual and group work, to be carried out in both oral and written forms.

Group Work

Many of the classroom activities will be carried out in groups/pairs (oral drills, role-playing, games, etc.). Group work is especially useful for oral practice, negotiation for input and meaning, natural language interactions, and as important, for promoting co-operation skills.

Pica & Doughty (1985) note that students engaged in small-group activities get far more opportunities for L2 practice than in teacher-directed activities. Moreover, students working in small co-operative groups develop more skill in critical thinking and become better decision-makers (Pardo & Raphael, 1991). Studies on Interlanguage Talk and group work reported by Long & Porter (1985:221-222) reveal the following about the benefits of group work:

- Quantity of practice. Students receive significantly more individual language practice opportunities in group work;

- Variety of practice. The range of language functions (rhetorical, pedagogic, and interpersonal) practised by individual students is wider in group work;

- Accuracy of student production. Students perform at the same level of grammatical accuracy in their L2 output and the level of accuracy is the same whether the interlocutor in a dyad is a native or non-native speaker;

-Correction. The frequency of other-correction and completions by students is higher in group work, and during group work learners almost never miscorrect;

- Negotiation. Students engage in more negotiation of meaning in small group work, and they negotiate more with other learners who are at a different level of L2 proficiency; and

- Task. Two-way tasks significantly increase the amount of talk and negotiation work, and the level of

input comprehended by students, as measured by their task achievement.

The characteristics of group work will be used towards the planning of group activities. In the beginning, students and teachers might need to receive some information about the manner in which to participate in group activities, since classroom instruction in Mauritius consists generally of individual work.

Students will report their group language experiences (amount of target language use, new vocabulary, means of negotiation, etc.) on record sheets. Teachers will circulate and observe the students during group activities, offering suggestions and recording the language used in their log books.

Study Guides

Provision of a Study Guide can assist students in their studies and help them use appropriate learning techniques for the tasks at hand. Students will each be given a copy of the study guide to help them with their L2 learning. The content of the guides will be determined by the following considerations.

Since strategies used by good language learners have been identified, students learning a second language can be

exposed to different strategies that have been successful with others. L2 learners can assess their own learning preferences and map them against the list of good L2 learning strategies to identify which strategies they could incorporate into their L2 learning; they could also come up with strategies of their own. The purpose of exposing students to study techniques is to help them become aware of the processes behind their learning, and therefore to help them become more responsible for their own learning, instead of being spoon-fed by teachers who tell students WHAT to learn but not HOW to learn, as is usually the case in Mauritius.

Self-assessment

It is also indispensable to offer students the chance to assess their own learning. Exercises for such purposes can be included at the end of each unit and the answers can be listed in the study guides. In this way, students will be able to see without delay the areas in which they are having difficulty, allowing them to request help before attempting the next set of materials.

ROLE OF TEACHERS

The novelty in the proposed system lies in the intention of using school teachers as a significant part of the support system. So far, information seminars for teachers from schools that follow MCA courses have only been used to provide descriptions of the components of the MCA courses. I believe teachers should be more involved to make them feel part of the teaching process. Teachers should be allowed to participate and do more than just distribute materials, switch on/off the TV and radio, and follow the activities along with their students. Teachers have to be informed as to exactly what role they will play within the system, what materials will be used and how they will be used, and they should have the opportunity to offer suggestions in the choice of subject matter to be covered.

Audio-visual materials in the classroom are meant to be used as aids to support the work of teachers, not as teacher substitutes. Materials may be very well designed and creative, but their actual presentation and interpretation remains in the hands of the teachers (Hawoldar, 1981); the effectiveness of educational materials depends on how motivated the teacher is about using them, as well as how s/he engages the interest and curiosity of students. If teachers do not see the material as helping them handle the curriculum, they will be reluctant to use it (Radcliffe, 1988). In the Malaysian

experience described in chapter 1, less than 50% of teachers were using the TV broadcasts in their lessons. This shows that it is important to familiarise teachers with the materials before they start using them in the classroom.

Workshops

Two workshops will be organised during the month of October for teachers participating in the programme, before they get caught up in the preparation and grading of end-of-year tests, and before school closes for the year in mid-November.

The first workshop session will start with a reiteration of the goals of the programme. Then, sample activities will be discussed in light of the different media that would be utilised. Radcliffe (1988) remarks that there is little experience of using audio-visual materials in Mauritian classrooms: It is essential to inform teachers about the ways to exploit the media effectively. Teachers will also receive information about how to benefit from the teaching guides, the services of Tutors and Resource Persons, and the provision of Regional Resource Centres.

The teachers will be divided into groups during the second session. Each group will be given a set of sample

activities and asked to simulate the dynamics of a classroom where the activities will be used. The teachers will be encouraged to come up with ideas and techniques they think would be most effective with the activities. In so doing, teachers will develop in their teaching abilities. The work accomplished on that day can be collected and bound together in a binder, and copies placed in the Regional Resource Centres for all to benefit: Teachers can consult the binder for ideas of activities, and so on.

A log book will also be distributed for teachers to note any difficulty they and/or their students have with any area of the programme, common errors made by their students, any progress their students seem to be making, etc. When they visit the classrooms, the supervisors from the Mauritius Institute of Education can take note of such comments and submit them to the course writers. This information will be of great value towards the evaluation of materials.

Seminars and workshops will be organised during the school year, perhaps once every trimester, for teacher, tutors and administrators to meet and share ideas and concerns about the DE programme. Guests (e.g., State school teachers, experts from the Mauritius Institute of Education, the University of Mauritius, etc.) could be invited to conduct workshops and discussions on various

teaching techniques, interactive L2 classroom activities, and so on.

In this manner, the teachers in the proposed system really become part of a teaching team, not isolated within the four walls of the classroom. In addition to being helped with improving their teaching skills, they also form part of the support system that is offered to students.

Materials for teachers

The information found in the materials for teachers must be clear and detailed, for curriculum materials are not effective unless used by teachers who understand their purpose, believe in their purpose, understand and know how they are to use the materials, are trained in using the materials, and feel confident that they can use them effectively (Sobeih, 1984).

The teachers will not participate in the proposed programme only to supervise student activities; they will also participate to improve their teaching skills and their English language skills. In fact, the oral exercises for students also apply to teachers in Mauritius; they will receive special audiotapes containing oral exercises for improving their own pronunciation, together with explanations of the rules governing the formation of English pronunciation and stress patterns.

Each teacher will also dispose of a curriculum package containing lesson outlines and related special materials. Information regarding the following will be included in a teaching/learning guide:

(a) the explanation of grammar points;

(b) examples of sentence structures;

(c) lists of additional vocabulary related to the activities;

(d) lists of frequently occurring problems, errors, misunderstandings, and ways of coping with them;

(e) lists of answers to student assignments;

(f) examples of follow-up activities.

The information provided to teachers is uniquely designed for them; this will enable them to help their students in the L2 learning, and serve as part of their teacher training. The teaching guides need to contain clear and detailed guidelines for lesson planning and implementation, to help teachers improve their teaching skills. This will help them feel that they are in charge of the instruction, and they will eventually become better teachers; students will also perceive them as confident and knowledgeable teachers. Providing teachers with a teaching guide promotes both self-image and projected image.

Teacher Education

The teacher-training component of the programme will be supervised by the Mauritius Institute of Education. Supervisors from that organisation will be responsible for visiting the classrooms regularly and monitoring the manner in which lessons are being carried out. They will provide the Course Design Team with information they collect during these visits, as part of the programme evaluation scheme.

Special field assignments suggested by the Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (1981) for teacher education can be incorporated in the materials for teachers in Mauritius, to help them apply theoretical knowledge (gained in teacher-training courses at the Mauritius Institute of Education) to resolve practical problems. For the ESL programme, teachers can conduct action research related to aspects of English instruction in their classrooms, prepare objective-type tests, and together with their students, they can perform tasks such as preparing reports on extra-curricular activities and conducting a survey on their school/community.

EVALUATION OF THE SYSTEM

Provision for both formative and summative evaluations of DE programmes has to be integrated into the whole system: Programme evaluation enables producers of DE materials to assess how far they have been successful in what they were trying to achieve (Perraton, 1982), and to use the results towards the improvement of the instructional package, thus leading to a greater and more effective use of the activities provided.

Formative programme evaluation consists of assessing a programme during its developmental stage, in order to identify areas where it needs improvement, as well as areas of potential problems. Sample groups of students are also tested periodically at this stage to monitor their progress in achieving the programme's performance goals. It is essential to pretest the materials, while they are being developed, with small groups of sample students, so that their effectiveness can be evaluated, and improvements made before launching them on a large scale. Results from formative evaluations are used towards the revision and improvement of programme materials and activities so that they enable students to learn what they are expected to learn within the anticipated time frame; the expectations about what a programme can accomplish during the time limit previously set for its completion can also be altered in response to the results (Morris & al., 1981).

Summative programme evaluation is used after a programme has been developed to determine whether it has achieved what it set out to achieve. The purpose is to determine the effectiveness of a programme through an assessment of whether the programme has achieved its overall goals; e.g., whether students perform as they are expected to on final examinations. Summative evaluations can also be used to provide data on

> ...the effectiveness as well as the management and
> costs of a practice compared with those of other
> programmes and products.
>
>   (McMillan & Schumacher, 1984:338)

Information should be sought from both teachers and students regarding the relevance of study materials, the importance and effectiveness of Regional Resource Centres, Resource Personss, and Tutors, as well as the efficiency of programme management. The programme evaluation schemes found in the models for programme development will act as frames of reference for the design of the evaluation procedures.

On a more personal level, it is primordial that student and teacher opinion be incorporated to improve the programme. Student/teacher involvement can be sought through on-going programme evaluations; e.g., questionnaires sent to the schools after a few lessons, with a complete survey at the end of the year to elicit specific responses about all aspects of the programme, as

well as on students' and teachers' perception of learning gains (Hotzclaw, 1986).

More casual evaluations can be made during the two-way communication periods with Tutors, and by having participants commmunicate their opinions through suggestion boxes found in the Regional Resource Centres.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis is a response to some problems of education in Mauritius: inequality in educational opportunities, lack of preparation of many teachers, inadequate knowledge of the language of instruction.

Because of the present lack in universal provision of high standard educational opportunities in Mauritius, a large majority of Mauritian children are denied the opportunity to develop their potential and to contribute fully to the social, cultural, and economic life of their nation. The future of Mauritius as an economically thriving society rests on a well-educated population and people who can interact effectively with others; improvements in the educational system are therefore badly needed.

An important aim of the system is to upgrade the calibre of Mauritian teachers, often unqualified and untrained, so they can be real facilitators and motivators in the promotion of learning. It is believed that the best way to improve education is not by depending on newly-trained and inexperienced teachers, but by working with and through those who are already in place (Thompson, 1982) by helping them with their teaching skills.

The debate surrounding the choice of language to be used for formal instruction in Mauritius will continue for a while yet, but in the meantime, English remains the official medium of instruction. Virahsawmy (1991) states that the average student in Mauritius is having difficulties with school subjects because s/he has to overcome the problem of studying in a L2 which is not normally found in the environment. Since the students have difficulties in coping with the language of instruction and because passing the English Language subject is essential for obtaining an C'level certificate, it is thought necessary to help improve the general proficiency in English.

The student population is not the only one encountering problems with English. Lots of teachers in Mauritius do not have a sufficient knowledge of the language to teach adequately through that medium. Mauritian teachers need to be helped both in the mastery of English and in the acquisition of a variety of pedagogical strategies.

The feasibility of providing a solution to these problems through DE methods was investigated. Mauritius is a small country with limited resources, and as much as possible, solutions to any of its problems should consider the availability of services and equipment needed for their implementation. The proposed system relies to a great extent on infra-structure already in place for its

realisation. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
has expressed the need to improve the teaching and use of
English at the secondary level and has identified DE as an
appropriate means to fulfil this need. This means that the
Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture must be willing to
attribute some funds for the achievement of this goal. The
Mauritius College of the Air, the Mauritius Institute of
Education, and the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate are
para-statal bodies already in operation which carry out the
same duties as they have been assigned here. The only
additional resources required would be in the setting up of
Regional Resource Centres and the appointment of Resource
Persons and Tutors. Funds have to be invested in the
provision of support services to the students and teachers,
since these services in a DE system determine its success
to a large degree. The Administration of DE organisations
cannot tend to the needs of each individual who uses their
programmes, especially if they offer a wide variety of
programmes. A two-way communication network allows (i)
programme users to seek personal attention from Tutors and
Resource Persons, as well as to keep in contact with peers;
(ii) the administration to receive feedback on presently
provided services from their users through Tutors and
Resource Persons.

In this thesis, a scheme that can be developed into a
DE programme was designed for the instruction of ESL to be
used in Mauritian secondary schools. An investigation of

language development and distance teaching methods provided
a framework for the determination of the components to be
included in the programme.

A DE system can be used to offer a variety of
materials and activities adaptable to individual needs, and
this is important for L2 instruction, since there is more
than one way to learn a language, and different learners
require different kinds and amounts of language.

Language learning occurs best when it takes place in a
natural environment which provides a variety of interesting
and relevant materials, lots of interactions in the target
language, and lots of practice and repetition. Although
the classroom is a setting for formal instruction, it can
be adapted to provide a quite natural environment. This is
possible through the use of multi-media DE activities and
materials.

The Regional Resource Centres will provide a wide
variety of enrichments materials for language interactions,
practice, repetition, and revision. These will include
authentic language videos, audiotapes of books, audiotapes
for oral practice, games, suggestions for group work to be
carried out at the Regional Resource Centres, and so on.

Moreover, L2 learners have to be able to negotiate the
types of input they receive. By seeking help on
assignments from Tutors, by using the suggestion boxes
placed in the resource centres and by participating in
group discussions, students will be able to not only

negotiate input, but at the same time, will receive practice in the language.

When learner interests are incorporated in study materials, they become more motivated to pursue their learning. The support services in the proposed system will allow students to make suggestions about materials, as well as to express their opinion about the programme in general - information that will be used by the DE organisation to make materials more relevant, interesting, and motivating.

Language learners should also be allowed to have some control over the direction of their own learning. The DE system intends to provide students with a study guide which, in the beginning, will lead them through their learning by encouraging them to become more aware of the processes behind their learning experiences and to explore learning techniques that work best for them. This will lead to improvements in study techniques and eventually, to scholastic success. A choice of enrichment activities will also encourage students to become more independent in their learning.

Since L2 learning requires lots of repetition, revision and overlap, the methods used have to bring learning within the students' grasp. By dividing study materials into small chunks that seem complete in themselves (modules, units, lessons, etc.), learning appears to be easier to achieve. This in turn would

promote greater motivation for students to keep at their studies.

One defect in the Mauritian educational system comes from the fact that it does not prepare students for the job market. Group activities promote skills that can be very useful in the workplace; e.g., co-operation skills, negotiation skills, problem-solving skills, and so on.

Many of the materials offered to students are also appropriate to help teachers improve their English language proficiency. However, the teachers will also participate in the programme as part of their in-service teacher training, and will therefore be provided with pedagogic materials. In collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Education, a scheme has to be designed whereby the teachers who participate in the system would receive accreditation toward their teaching certificate/diploma. The Mauritius Institute of Education is the organisation responsible for teacher education, and will have to be responsible for teacher supervision.

Importance has also been given to the role of the teacher in the proposed system, by making them more responsible for their teaching. For teachers to be effective, they must understand what they are doing, must believe in the importance of what they are doing (Sobelh, 1984). To facilitate this, teachers must be given the chance to collaborate in the whole educational process. The system proposes to involve teachers in many aspects of

the organisation by seeking their opinion about programme content and by taking into account their observations about teaching and learning.

Teachers participating in the programme will be considered as collaborators and will be involved in the teaching process; they will become more confident as their skills in English and pedagogy improve. Their new role as facilitators of learning will make them more interested in their pupils' learning.

Considering the appalling picture about the sub-standard services offered in many private secondary schools (Appendix I), the system proposed in this thesis might seem utopic. However, given that a problem of equity in education exists, and given that a high percentage of the secondary school population need help with the teaching/learning of English, an economic means of reaching large numbers of people effectively must be sought. The proposed system can work, since the infra-structure and services related to distance instruction are already in place in Mauritius; therefore, the implementation of the proposed system will not require too much additional funding.

The problems with the existing Mauritian educational system are too broad to be solved overnight, but this thesis can be used as a guideline for the production of DE instructional packages that could help solve some of them.

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APPENDIX I

THE SUB-STANDARD FACILITIES OFFERED IN SOME PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MAURITIUS: EXCERPTS FROM THE GLOVER COMMISSION REPORT (1983)

The standard of buildings, grounds, and amenities is generally good in State schools. With regard to private secondary schools, an unduly large number of buildings are in appalling condition; some of them, we have no doubt, would on a proper inspection be condemned as unfit for habitation. In many buildings the lighting is such that the children literally cannot read what is printed on their books. The staffroom, if it exists, is one in which at most five people can squeeze at any given time. Ventilation is also a subject of grave concern.

In some of these institutions there is supposed to be a laboratory for the teaching of Integrated Science or some kind of workshop for the teaching of, e.g., Home Economics. Sometimes the laboratory, or what passes for one, is in what used to be the garage of the private house which has been converted into a school. It takes about 10 minutes to find the key to the place and, when you go inside, it is quite obvious from the layer of dust on the bottles containing chemicals and even on the table that no one has been inside the place for a long time. In the workshop where Home Economics is supposed to be taught, you find that there is a gas heater carefully put away in a locked cupboard and it is obvious that the thing is still brand new and has never been used.

In a number of institutions there is no library at all. In others there is a room in which are stacked dozens and dozens of old textbooks which are no longer in use. Sometimes there are a few other books but again it is obvious that they are hardly used. Many institutions boasted of having a librarian. But it was obvious that the person concerned had no qualifications and no manifest aptitude for the job s/he was supposed to be performing.

The school yard is very often non-existent and, where it does exist, consists of a bare patch of ground, sometimes uneven, often dangerous to tread upon. In some school yards there are two posts fixed into the ground supposedly for playing volley-ball, but when we asked why there was no net between the posts, the answer would be: "Volley-ball is played on Fridays". In another institution we enquired whether there was any provision for games and were told that volley-ball was played until the posts had recently been stolen.

APPENDIX II

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR MIE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

COURSES	MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	DURATION
Certificate in Education	5 O'level passes including English Language	2 yrs F-time (pre-service Primary)
	PLUS teaching experience for in-service teachers	2 yrs P-time (in-service Secondary)
Diploma in Education	5 O'level passes including English Language	3 years Part-time
	2 passes at A'level, at least 1 relevant to course	
	PLUS 5 yrs teaching experience	
Bachelor in Education	Holder of Teacher Diploma	3 years Part-time
	PLUS 5 yrs post Teacher Diploma experience	
	PLUS satisfactory general university entrance requirements	
PostGraduate Certificate in Education	A degree relevant to the main field of study	2 years Part-time
	PLUS teaching experience	

SOURCE: Journal of the Mauritius Institute of Education, 1990.

APPENDIX III

O'LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEW SYLLABUS
(1981 ONWARDS)

Two compulsory papers will be set as follows:

PAPER 1. (1 1/2 hrs - 50 marks)
This Paper will consist of Parts 1 and 2 (Imaginative Composition and Structural Composition).
Candidates should allocate their time so that they spend approximately 1 hour on Part 1 and 1/2 hour on Part 2. The marks will be allocated in the same ratio.

PAPER 2. (1 1/2 hrs - 50 marks) Comprehension.
Paper 2 will consist of a passage or passages of prose upon which questions will be set to test the candidates' ability to understand the content and argument of the given text and to infer information and meanings from it. The passages selected will be drawn from 20th century writing, and our intention is to avoid passages whose content appears culturally slanted. In particular, we undertake not to set passages that may seem essentially rooted in UK culture.
Candidates need not write complete sentences where not required, only to select a word from the passage, offer a synonym, etc.
The final question will consist of a summary. Candidates will be given clear indications as to what they are to summarise, where the relevant material can be found and how they should begin their answer. Candidates will be given clear indication of the length of the summary and must state the number of words used. Candidates who exceed the stated limit will penalise themselves.
What the examiners reward in the summary is precise detailed material, a mark being given for each relevant point, the maximum number of points available being greater than the total mark for this section (i.e., a candidate can score full marks for the section without mentioning all the points). About a quarter of the marks in this question is allocated for correct writing, a 1/2 mark being deducted from that allocation for each error.

APPENDIX IV

SCHOOL CERTIFICATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SAMPLE PAPERS

JUNE (1986)
PAPER 1

Part One

Write a composition on one one of the following topics

You are advised to spend about 60 minutes on this part of the paper

1 The effects of water shortage

You may write about your own country or about any part of the world

2 What event have you celebrated in the past year?

3 Write a description of the character and background of one of the following

Either *(a)* your teacher

Or *(b)* your best friend

Or *(c)* the person marking this paper

4 If you had the choice between living in a large town and living in the countryside, which would you choose and why?

5 Write a story about the discovery of a theft and the detection of the guilty person.

Part 2

Begin your answer on a fresh page

Write a composition based on the situations shown in the sequence of pictures below

You are advice to spend about 30 minutes on this part of the paper

English Language Paper 1 June (1986)
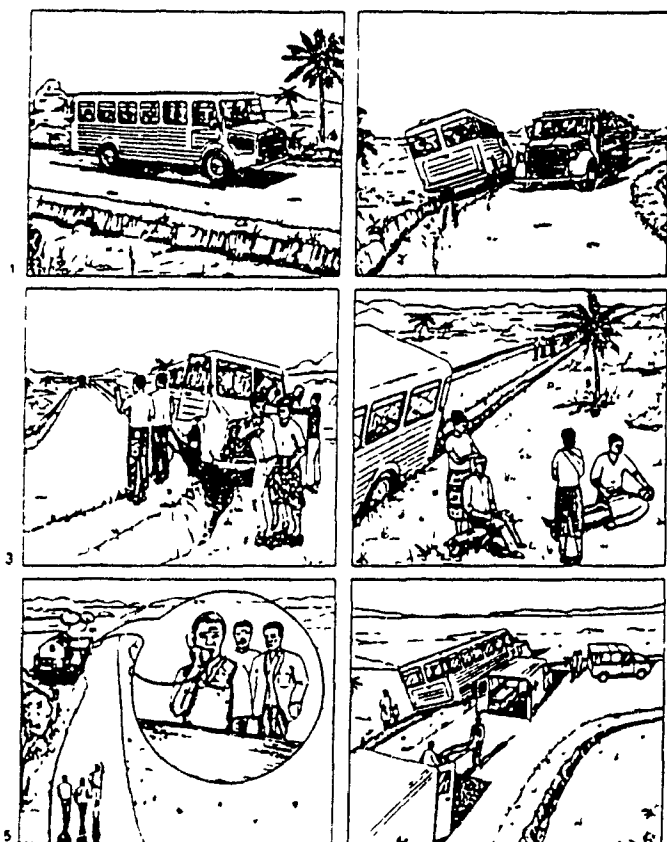
APPENDIX IV (continued)

DECEMBER (1988)
PAPER 1

Answer both **Part One** *and* **Part Two**

Part One

Write a composition on one of the following subjects

You are advised to spend about 60 minutes on this part, and to write not more than 600 words. Longer compositions often lose marks through carelessness. Compositions shorter than 350 words will lose marks

1 A family argument

2 Describe the sights, sounds and activities at the end of a day's work

3 Write a short story based on *one* of the following

Either *(a)* "But you promised!" she cried "I will never trust you again."

Or *(b)* In a famous Science Fiction story, the characters live in a world where they will stay at their present ages for ever They will never grow older, they will never die Imagine that you are living in such a world

4 Describe an incident in which you felt you were treated unfairly

5 What dangers should young people guard against when they leave school?

Part Two

Begin your answer on a fresh page

You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this part of the paper

After a bus journey, you arrive at a relative's home to stay for a few days You find that you have the wrong travelling bag

Write an account of what happened, using some or all of the points below, and adding other ideas of your own

How and when you discovered the mistake

What you did

What was in the bag(s)

What your feelings were

Who else was involved

How your stay was affected

What finally happened

You should **arrange** and **expand** the above notes to make your account detailed and interesting

PAPER 2

Answer all the questions

Read the following passage carefully before you attempt any questions

Answer all the questions You are recommended to answer them in the order set

Mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be penalised in any part of the paper

(Arjan Singh has established a wildlife reserve in Northern India. In the course of his book *Tiger Haven* he describes how he changed from being a hunter of animals to a wildlife photographer.)

The Shutter and the Trigger

1 The days of the hunter are almost over in India This is partly because there is practically nothing left to kill, and partly because some steps have been taken, principally by banning tiger-shooting, to protect those animals which still survive   5

2 Some people say that Man is naturally a hunter, with a primitive urge to set out in pursuit of his prey with a heavy club — or its modern equivalent   on his shoulder I disagree with this view Surely our earliest ancestors, who at first possessed no weapons, spent their time scratching 10 for roots and were no doubt themselves often hunted by carnivorous animals?

3 I believe the main reason why the modern hunter kills is because he is conceited, and thinks people will admire his courage in conquering dangerous beasts Of course, there is are some who genuinely believe that the killing is not really 15 the important thing, and that the chief pleasure lies in the joy of the hunt and the beauties of the wild countryside There are also those for whom hunting in fact offers a chance to prove themselves and deliberately risk death. 20

APPENDIX IV (continued)

these men go out after rogue elephants or man-eating
tigers, even if they claim they only do it to rid the
countryside of a menace I can respect reasons like these
Appreciating the wonders of nature and setting out
purposely to test yourself against the dangers of the 25
unknown are admirable motives These are clearly different
from the need to boost your high opinion of yourself

4 The greatest big-game hunters expressed in their writings
something of these finer motives One of them wrote

' You must properly respect what you are after and   30
shoot it cleanly and on the animal's own territory
You must fix for ever in your mind all the wonder of
that particular day — the blue of the sky, the smells,
the feel of the breeze, the scent of the flowers Then
you will not merely have killed an animal, you will   35
have given a kind of immortality to a beast because
you loved him and wanted him for ever, so that you
could always recapture that moment This is better
than letting him grow a few years older to be
attacked and crippled by his own son and eventually 40
eaten, half alive, by hyenas Hunting is not a cruel
and senseless slaughter - not if you respect the
thing you kill, not if you kill to enrich your
memories, not if you kill to feed your people "

5 I can understand such beliefs, and can compare these 45
hunters with earlier warriors who hunted lions with spears
and boldly seized them by the tail But this is in sharp
contrast to many tiger-shoots I have seen in which modern
rifles with telescopic sights were used The so-called hunters
fired from tall trees or from the backs of trained elephants 50
Such tactics made tigers seem no more dangerous than
rabbits

6 Yet once I took up photography I found that I demanded
more skill than hunting, involved more danger, but in the
end brought more satisfying rewards No one can deny 55
there is a certain skill in shooting a charging rhino or an
alert wildebeeste at a range of 200 metres Filming such
animals, however, is far more difficult The photographer
must possess a considerable degree of jungle craft to get
very close to his subject and remain constantly downwind 60
of it so that it is unaware of his presence He must have a
thorough knowledge of the animal's habits so that he will
know where to find it and which way it will move He must
be gifted with powers of endurance and patience because
often, after a long exhausting wait in the blazing sun, he will 65
in the end be outwitted by the animal's keener senses, or
deceived by his false expectation of what it will do

7 Hunters often say there is no risk involved in filming They
claim, rightly, that a tiger is at its most dangerous when
wounded and that a photographer does not have to follow 70
up a wounded animal as they often have to do They say
that therefore close-up photography is a much less
hazardous business Yet the hunter is superbly equipped to
deal with every dangerous situation If, however, a
photographer suddenly encounters a tigress with cubs, an 75
elephant with a toothache or a bear with a sore head he has
no such safeguard, he would find it impossible to take
pictures if he burdened himself with a powerful rifle 'at the

ready' The only weapon I have when I film tigers is a small
revolver in my belt, which is for my own personal 80
protection Moreover, though I do not disagree with the
hunters' claim, a healthy tiger at 5 metres' range can seem
just as menacing as a wounded one at 50!

8 Hunters enjoy the communal nature of their activity. They
drive out to the forest in a group, stop every so often for a 85
shoot and then continue on their way, competing to see
which of them can get the biggest kill of the day. The
photographer, by contrast, usually works alone. If this is
seen as a disadvantage by some, it is recommended to
others He can in any case satisfy his need to compete by 90
comparing his efforts to the work of others — or even work
with others, though his pictures will seldom be as good as
when he is filming on his own

9 As for the rewards involved, those a photographer gains are
infinitely superior to those of a hunter The skin of an 95
animal or a pair of antlers on the wall of the hunter's home
are scarcely works of art They are merely personal trophies
to remind him of the successful hunt, and are decaying ones
at that, which will soon lose their initial freshness, whiskers
fall out, the coat's shine disappears and the antlers soon 100
resemble burnt twigs But a good photograph can capture
an animal in a typical movement and catch its expression,
both made more striking by the combination of light and
shadows In this way the essential quality of the animal is
permanently preserved in a work of art for all to enjoy   105

10 Once a person has tried to film an animal rather than shoot
it, the idea of killing seems a cruel and childish sport, like
tearing off the wings of a butterfly For every creature is of
interest to the photographer The deer with its young, the
nesting kingfisher and the brightly-coloured insect are fair 110
game for him, just as much as the tiger, the leopard and
other more impressive inhabitants of the forest If hunters
could only forget their need to compete for trophies they
would realise there is a greater pleasure, a greater challenge
and a greater humanity in preserving a record of our 115
wildlife than in destroying it That at least is what I found
when I laid aside my rifle and took up a camera

(Adapted from *Tiger Haven* by Arjan Singh)

From paragraph 1

1 (a) (i) Suggest one word or a short phrase which could
replace 'practically' without changing the
meaning

    (ii) Suggest one word or a short phrase which could
replace 'principally' without changing the
meaning

    (iii) Say why there was a ban on tiger-shooting

(3 marks)

From paragraph 2

1 (b) (i) What would be the modern equivalent of the
hunter's club?

    (ii) Why did our earliest ancestors have to *scratch*
for roots for their food?   (2 marks)

APPENDIX IV (continued)

From paragraph 3

1 (c) What main reason for hunting does the writer dis-
approve of?   (1 mark)

From paragraph 4

1 (d) (i) 'shoot it *cleanly*' What does this mean?

(ii) What advantage does an animal have if it is
hunted in its 'own territory'?   (2 marks)

(e) (i) What is 'immortality'?

(ii) How, according to the author, can killing an
animal give it 'a kind of immortality'?(2 marks)

2 (a) (i) What reason for hunting is given by the men
who go after 'man-eating tigers' (line 21)?

(ii) State the two actual reasons they hunt the man-
eating tigers.   (3 marks)

(b) (i) 'earlier warriors .. hunted lions with spears and
boldly seized them by the tail' (lines 46–47)
What quality of these warriors, which the author
admired, is illustrated here?

(ii) The author refers to the 'so-called hunters' (line
49) What does this tell us about his opinion of
them?

(iii) What two aspects of the 'many tiger-shoots'
(line 48) that he has seen explain this opinion?
(4 marks)

'(c) Why is skill necessary

(i) to shoot a 'charging rhino' (line 56)?

(ii) to shoot a 'wildebeeste at a range of 200 metres'
(line 57)?   (2 marks)

(d) (i) Why should being 'downwind' of the animal
ensure it was 'unaware of his presence' (lines
60 - 61)?

(ii) His wait in the *blazing* sun is often *exhausting*
Which one of his 'powers' (line 64) is being tested?

(iii) What evidence is there in the paragraph that his
knowledge of an animal's habits is not always
'thorough' (line 62)?   (3 marks)

(e) Why does a hunter 'have to follow up a wounded
animal' (line 70)?   (1 mark)

3 (a) Choose FIVE of the following words For each of
them, give one word or short phrase (of not more than
seven words) which has the same meaning as it has in
the passage

1 carnivorous (line 12)   5. clearly (line 26)
2 genuinely (line 16)   6 merely (line 35)
3 chief (line 17)   7. eventually (line 40)
4 appreciating (line 24)   8 senseless (line 42)
(5 marks)

(b) This passage has the title 'The Shutter and the Trigger'
Why? Answer briefly   (2 marks)

4 The author claims that photography involves more skill
and danger than hunting, but brings greater rewards (lines
51-54)

Write a summary of the reasons he gives to support this
claim

USE ONLY THE MATERIAL FROM LINE 53 TO
LINE 105

Your account, which should be in continuous writing, must
not be longer than 160 words, including the 10 opening
words given below

Begin your summary as follows

Photographing wild animals demands more skill than
hunting them because   (20 marks)

English Language I Paper 2 Dec (1988)

SOURCE: O-level English Language I - - Paper 1 & 2,
1981-1989. Singapore: Dyna Publisher Pte.

APPENDIX V

VIDEO EVALUATION GUIDE

	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
	4	3	2	1

Technical quality of the video:

• clear sound	4	3	2	1
• distinct picture	4	3	2	1
• picture focused on the person speaking	4	3	2	1
• voice-over narration	4	3	2	1
• acting, directing, and editing well done	4	3	2	1

Pedagogical quality of the video:
Content:

• interesting subject matter Will it attract and hold the attention of students?	4	3	2	1
• characters or situations presented which students are likely to encounter in the host country	4	3	2	1
• free from cultural stereotyping. Does it accurately represent the culture of the country where the target language being studied is spoken?	4	3	2	1

Language:

• standard variety	4	3	2	1
• regional variety	4	3	2	1
• dialect variety	4	3	2	1
• characters speak clearly and naturally	4	3	2	1
• "authentic" language — similar to that used by native speakers	4	3	2	1
• contextualized language, i.e. language used in situations which will assist students in understanding	4	3	2	1
• the language used in the video transferable to real life situations students could encounter	4	3	2	1
• language level is familiar	4	3	2	1
• language level is formal	4	3	2	1
• oral language used based on:				
- conversation	4	3	2	1
- interview	4	3	2	1
- discussion	4	3	2	1
- newscast	4	3	2	1
- commentary	4	3	2	1
- play	4	3	2	1
• the language used emphasizes:				
- communicative functions	4	3	2	1
- vocabulary	4	3	2	1
- grammar points	4	3	2	1
- cultural points	4	3	2	1

SOURCE: Berdahl & Willetts, 1990.