**Handout #6**

**Practice Text: Communication-- Times have changed!**

I would like to speak to you today on the subject of communication. I met up yesterday with some old friends and while I was having dinner with them, they were 5 in number, and at least 2 of them were interrupted during the course of the dinner to answer their mobile phones.

Now, I took this for granted. It didn’t upset me particularly and the friends concerned apologized and kept the phone calls to the minimum but I said to myself what on earth we did before we have mobile phones. And it is not that long ago.

I remember in the old days, especially in Italy, a country much given to telephoning that you had to get tokens which you then put into the slot in the public telephone booth and you had to have a collection of tokens sufficiently large to keep your phone call going for the duration you wished. Very often the line broke down too, and the sometimes the token didn’t fall through.

I remember in England we had a similar system where we would put pennies in the slot and then pressed Button ‘A’ or Button ‘B’. It was all very different and the communication of course was probably more complicated that we tended to keep telephoning to a minimum. And it was also very expensive, but not at all nowadays.

I wonder to myself also is this really progress. Are we making progress in communication because we all communicate nonstop by phone, by email, by texting? I began to wonder if we haven’t actually become slaves to these devices. It means that you can no longer get away from anyone. As long as you have your mobile phone on people will find you wherever you are.

The other point about mobile phones which I would like to mention is that they are very probably quite dangerous to our health as well. I don’t know if you have heard about some recent court cases, one particularly in the United States. I believe the case was against Nokia for brain damage possibly caused by the use of, or excessive use of mobile phone. So that is another aspect to bear in mind as you plough on telephoning each other days & nights.

And then when I think to myself that now when communication is made easy by the use of the mobile phone, I also found myself coming home in the evening, having switched off the phone because I was giving speeches or at the meetings, finding myself with 10 news messages. My heart sinks, I must say. Yet I admit, having the ability to stay connected anywhere anytime seems to outweigh any of the negatives. Times have changed!

**This text is an excerpt taken from a presentation on notetaking given by NGUYEN QUY TAM, Faculty member in the Translators and Interpreters Training Division, English Department at Hanoi University.**