

**THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

HOANG THI HONG HANH

**AN INVESTIGATION ON VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES OF
NON-MAJOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AT UNIVERSITY
OF EDUCATION – THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY**

**(Nghiên cứu các chiến lược học từ vựng của sinh viên năm thứ nhất không
chuyên tiếng Anh tại Trường Đại học Sư phạm – Đại học Thái Nguyên)**

M.A. THESIS

Field: English Linguistics

Code: 8220201

THAI NGUYEN – 2019

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Supervisor: Dr. Ngo Van Giang

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DECLARATION

I hereby certify that the thesis entitled “**An investigation on vocabulary learning strategies of non-major first year students of English at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University**” is the result of my own research for the Degree of Master of Arts. It has not been submitted to any other university or institution wholly or partially.

Researcher’s signature

Hoang Thi Hong Hanh

Approved September, 2019

Supervisor’s signature

Dr. Ngo Van Giang

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the frequently-used vocabulary learning strategies acquired by non-major first year students of English at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University (TNU) and effective strategies employed by these students. A survey was conducted with the participation of 252 students and five teachers from University of Education - TNU. Questionnaire and face to face interviews were used as research instruments for data collection. The outcomes of the study indicate an overall medium use of vocabulary learning strategies of students at TNU. Although data from the questionnaire indicates that learners use all most every strategy given, the frequency is not really high. Besides, a number of limitations can be discerned in the study due to the time constraints and the researchers' limited ability and experience. Although Schmitt's taxonomy is the most comprehensive available, it cannot embrace all the existing vocabulary learning strategies.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This small scale study is initiated in order to investigate the frequently-used vocabulary learning strategies acquired by non-major first year students of English at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University (TNU) and effective strategies employed by these students. This introductory chapter will first present the rationale and context of the study, and then the aims of the study and research questions, the scope of the study and the significance of the study are highlighted, followed by a brief description of the structural organization of the whole paper.

1.1 Rationale of the study

“Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (Wilkins, 1972, p. 111). Vocabulary plays an important role in learning foreign languages. It's the essential think about communication with people (Krashen & Terrel, 1983). Each reading and listening comprehension are also powerfully associated with vocabulary information. Laufer (1991) found vital correlations between vocabulary tests and reading success of second language learners. Although several variables have an effect on reading, the performance associated with the variable of vocabulary is considered the most important prediction of reading comprehension (Anderson & Freebody, 1981). Hu (1999) conjointly found that students with textual vocabulary or background information perform higher on listening comprehension than those without such knowledge.

In the second language or foreign acquisition, it is widely acknowledged that vocabulary is vital and important a part of the four language skills. For second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) learners, vocabulary is one in every of the vital language components that supports the abilities of speaking, listening, reading and writing. According to McCarthy (1990), although the learners can produce sounds perfectly, if there is no word to precise a wider vary of meanings, communication simply cannot happen in any significant way. Several researchers realize the variations between smart language learners and bad language learners and look for the reason why good learners have better achievement than bad learners.

Thornburry (2002) believed that good learners savvy to be told, reach a live of autonomy and develop their own techniques or methods.

However, in Asian countries, vocabulary appears to be very little stress within the university program (Fan, 2003). Being attentive to vocabulary learning has been indicated as important. Doczi (2001) believed that vocabulary learning strategies will help the students in finding out the meaning of new words and consolidating them once it has been understood. Therefore, it is very crucial to understand the strategies that consciously or unconsciously applied by good language learners. Many common strategies such as mnemonic devices, vocabulary notebooks, guessing meaning from context, and verbal and written repetition are applied in learning vocabulary. The awareness of vocabulary learning methods can facilitate second language learners to enhance vocabulary learning and enhance lexical competency. Moreover, knowing the factors that square measure influencing the employment of vocabulary learning methods will facilitate learners and researchers to style applicable materials and activities (Thornburry, 2002).

In the Vietnamese context, English is a foreign language, and is used for various purposes, ranging from academic advancement, career advancement, traveling abroad to international integration (Viet, 2016). To cope with the growing local and international demand, a number of efforts have been made to boost Vietnamese learners' English competence. One of the noticeable efforts is evidenced by the National Foreign Project 2020 project which aims at improving the English language competences of average Vietnamese nationwide. Although many studies have revealed that Vietnamese students' levels of English proficiency in writing, reading, listening and speaking are still low and need improving, fewer researches really focus on vocabulary teaching and learning, especially the vocabulary learning of students. In University of Education – Thai Nguyen University (TNU), the National Foreign Project 2020 which requires students to achieve the level A2 of English competence as (Common European Framework of Reference - CEFR) upon graduation. In an A2 test as the format of KET (Key English Test), students' level of English proficiencies

are evaluated according to all the four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. To achieve this test, students have to master an amount of vocabulary that require them to have strategies to learn (Bac, 2015). However, many students have difficulties and do not know useful learning strategies.

For those reasons, the author conducted an investigation on vocabulary learning strategies of first year students of non-major English at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University.

1.2 Aims of the study and research questions

This research aims to investigate vocabulary learning strategies of non-major first year students of English at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University.

Specifically, this research aimed to obtain two objectives. The first objective is to identify frequently-used vocabulary learning strategies in English acquired by first year students at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University. The second one is to identify what are effective strategies employed by these students.

This study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the frequently-used vocabulary learning strategies acquired by first year students at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University (TNU)?
2. What are effective vocabulary learning strategies employed by these students?

1.3 Scope of the study

This research examines vocabulary learning strategies by non-major students of English. The research only explores first year students at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University.

The research participants in this study are students and teachers who are the key stakeholders and role players in English learning and teaching classrooms. First year non-English major students were selected because they were observed by the researcher and her colleagues to experience most difficulties for not having been introduced any learning strategy before. English major students were not chosen to participate in this study because they are familiar with the types of vocabulary

learning strategies and there have been many researches targeting at English major students. University of Education students were chosen to participate in this study because a majority of University of Education students are non-English major students whose English proficiency levels are not as good as those studying at universities in Hanoi or other big cities (Bac, 2015). It is important to note that University of Education students mostly come from mountainous or countryside areas so their autonomy of English learning is limited.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study aimed to survey vocabulary learning strategies of non-major first year students of English at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University. It is believed that an awareness of individual differences in learning can make all those people involved in English as a foreign language teaching profession and learning more sensitive to their roles, respectively. Furthermore, it may promote competitive teaching and learning as well as develop students' potential life and assist students to become cognizant of the ways for more effective learning. It may also help students to develop strategies, and ways to become more motivated and autonomous learners. Understanding of students' vocabulary learning strategy use will enable teachers and researchers to design appropriate materials and activities to help students enhance their lexical competence.

1.5 Structure of the study

The thesis consists of five chapters and is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction provides the background to the study, the aims, the scope, and the structural outline of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review discusses relevant theoretical points of view concerning vocabulary learning strategies.

Chapter 3: Methodology describes the research method, the data analysis in the study as well as the research procedure to conduct the study.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion reports the results from data analysis and discusses the relevant topics.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations summarizes the major findings of the study and discusses the limitations of the study and suggestions for further studies.

1.6 Summary of Chapter one

In Chapter one, the researcher reviewed the context of English teaching and learning, especially the English teaching and learning in Vietnam and the rationale of the study. This chapter also presented the overall aims of the study and the two research questions to identify frequently-used vocabulary learning strategies in English acquired by first year students at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University and what are effective strategies employed by these students. This is followed by a discussion of the significance of the present investigation. Lastly, the chapter concludes the structure of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the literature related to this study, laying the foundations for the subsequent development of the paper. Beside some basic concepts like vocabulary level, language learning strategies, vocabulary learning strategies and critical background information about these key terms are presented to ensure a thorough understanding of the research matter. Learning strategies and learning strategy classification systems are also reviewed to set up the theoretical framework for the examination in the next chapter. This review will reveal the research gap, thus rationalizing the need to carry out the study.

2.1 Learning strategies

2.1.1 Definition

Learning can be defined as the process by which the external and unfamiliar becomes internal, familiar and usable. Learning is more accurately depicted as an active process and that to learn, the learners will employ a number of specific means. The word “strategy” refers to those means. However, there is no agreement regarding the definition of the term “language learning strategies”.

Learning strategies are defined by O’Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 1) as “special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to comprehend, learn, or retain new information”. Bialystock (1985) defined learning strategies as the ordinary processes of learning that occur whether or not the learner is attending to and deliberately manipulating them. Thus, learning strategies are the same to learning process.

Learning strategies, defined by Weinstein and Mayer (1986, p. 43) (in O’Malley and Chamot, 1990) have learning facilitation as a goal and are intentional on the part of the learner. The goal of strategy use is to “affect the learner’s motivational or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge”

Although the terminology is not always uniform, some writers used the terms “learner strategies” (Wenden & Rubin, 1987), others “learning strategies” (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Chamot & O’Malley, 1994), and still others “language learning

strategies” (Oxford, 1990a, 1996), there are a number of basic characteristics in the generally accepted view of language learning strategies.

Oxford (1990) summarizes her view of language learning strategies by listing twelve key features. They are i) the contribution to the main goal, communicative competence; ii) learners’ allowance to become more self-directed; iii) the expand of the roles of teachers; iv) being problem-oriented; v) specific action taken by the learner; vi) the involvement of many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive; vii) direct and indirect learning support; viii) being not always observable; ix) being often conscious; x) being taught; xi) being flexible; xii) being influenced by a variety of factors. These twelve features reflect almost fully the characteristics of language learning strategies.

Each researcher defines learning strategies from different perspectives. In this study the researcher adopted the definition by Oxford in the account that it covers the essential aspects of language learning strategies.

2.1.2 The important of learning strategies

Side by side with the development of language skills in English, considered as content, it is important also that learners “learn how to learn”. The primary benefit to learners would be in the long term. Good learning strategies would enable learners to go on improving their English on their own in the very long, complex process of language learning.

“The main benefit gained from all learning strategies... is the fact that they enable learners to take note control of their own learning so that students can take more responsibility for their studies”. (Nation, 2001)

The strategies, consequently, help learners create their independence, autonomy and, self-direction in study. When students are equipped with a range of different learning strategies, they can decide upon how exactly they would like to deal with difficulties. A good knowledge of learning strategies and the ability to apply them in suitable situations might considerably simplify the problems in the learning process.

2.2 Vocabulary

2.2.1 Vocabulary learning

Vocabulary is central to language and is of great significance to language learners. According to Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary Sixth Edition (2000, p. 1707), vocabulary is "all the words a person knows or uses". In Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary (Flexner, 2003, p. 1864), word is "a unit of language, consisting of one or more spoken sounds or their written representation, that functions as a principle carrier of meaning". Word knowledge is an essential component of communicative competence (Seal, 1991), and it is important for both production and comprehension in a foreign language.

Richard (1976 as cited in Read, 2000) produced the list of seven characteristics related to word knowledge. Knowing a words means knowing i) the degree of probability of encountering that word in speech or print; ii) the limitations on the use of the word according to variations of function and situation; iii) the syntactic behavior associated with the word; iv) the knowledge of the underlying form of a word and the derivations that can be made from it; v) knowledge of the network of associations between that word and other words in the language; vi) the semantic value of a word; and vii) many of the different meanings associated with a word (Richard, 1976 as cited in Read, 2000). These characteristics have a deep relationship with the learning strategies students choose. Learners who catch these features can master the words.

According to Nation (1990), "knowing a word" means that learners have to master "its spelling, pronunciation, collocations" (i.e. words it co-occurs with), and appropriateness".

Some aspects of words can be examined in detailed as follows:

- Word form: Form means the sound, shape and appearance of something, e.g. two forms of the word *please*, are *please* and *pleased*. When learning vocabulary, students should be introduced what a word sounds like (its pronunciation) and how it looks

like (its spelling). The complex relationship between sound and spelling in English seems to cause plenty of problems for students.

- Grammar: Grammar is the set of rules that tells how words can be put into a sequence and a form that allows their meaning to become unambiguous in a sentence. A new word may have an unpredictable change of form in certain context, thus it is necessary for learners to have information about grammatical function of word at the same time the base form is learnt. For example: when a noun such as *a child* is learnt, it should be noticed that its plural form is *children*, or when teaching a verb *know*, its irregular form in the past *knew* and in the past participle *known* should be given as well.

- Collocation: Many words are habitually put together – or collocated. A collocation is any habitually linked group of words – a kind of lexical partnership, e.g. “fish and chips”, “salt and pepper”, “don’t mention it”, “it’s nothing...”, “Oh well!”, “bangers and mash”... and so on. Thus, this is another piece of information about new words which may be worth paying attention to.

- Aspects of meaning: Aspects of word meaning include denotation, connotation, appropriateness.

Denotation is what a word refers to or designates. The denotational meaning gives us the basic meaning of a word on conceptual level (this is a dictionary definition).

Connotation is what a word evokes. Connotation includes stylistic, affective, evaluative, intensifying value, pragmatic communicative values, the words acquires by virtue of where, when, how and by whom, for what purpose and in what context it is or it may be used.

For instance, the word *December* denotes the twelfth month of the calendar while it means cold, short days and Christmas for inhabitants of the United Kingdom,.

Appropriateness is the quality of being especially suitable. Appropriateness of words is the subtle aspect of meaning which indicates whether a particular item is appropriate one to use in a certain context or not. It is therefore useful for learners to

know whether a certain word is common, relatively rare or taboo in polite conversations or in articles.

- Word formation: It is sometimes referred to all processes connected with changing the form of the word by, for example, affixation. In its wider sense word formation denotes the processes of creation of new lexical units.

There are, of course, numerous word formation processes as follows:

Compounding is a process in which two different words are joined together to denote one thing. For example flower-pot is a compound made of two words: flower and pot, but it does not denote two things, it refers to one object.

Blending is very similar to compounding, but it is characterized by taking only parts of words and joining them. Famous English examples include: smog which combines smoke and fog, motel made of motor and hotel.

Clipping is shortening or reducing long words. It is very common in English which can be seen on the following examples: information is clipped to info, advertising to advert or ad, influenza to flu, telephone to phone.

Coinage is creation of a totally new word. This information process is not frequent; however large corporations attempt to outdo one another to invent short eye-catching names for their products.

Borrowing is taking a word from language and incorporating it into another. For example: biology, boxer, ozone – form German; jackal, kiosk, yogurt – from Turkey; pistol, robot – from Czech.

2.2.2 Factors affecting learners in learning English vocabulary

According to Brustall (1975, p. 14) in language learning as in other forms of learning, “nothing succeeds like success”. He pointed out that successful learners developed favorable attitude as the course progressed, thus these attitudes encouraged more successful. Learners’ motivation is likely to benefit and determine partly the effectiveness of learners’ vocabulary learning.

Some other researchers also found that gender differences have influences on vocabulary learning. Female students get better results in general proficiency (Boyle, 1987); however, male ones show better qualities in listening vocabulary. Females also use more new vocabulary learning strategies than males (Oxford, Lavine, Hollaway, Felkins, and Saleh, 1996). A study by Heyde (1979) found that a high level of self-esteem was associated with second language proficiency.

For Nation (1990; 2001), the most important way to learn vocabulary is learners using strategies independently of a teacher. In his recent publication, strategy training is suggested to be part of a vocabulary development program. According to Schmitt (1995), the best teaching plan may be to introduce a variety of learning strategies to students so that they can decide for themselves the ones they prefer. Learning strategies in fact affect strongly learners' vocabulary learning.

It is clear that many factors can have influences on learners in learning English in general and in learning English vocabulary in particular. These explain why some second language learners are more successful than others. However, learning strategy can be considered as one of the most decisive factors.

2.3 Vocabulary learning strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies are one part of language learning strategies which in turn are part of general learning strategies (Nation, 2001). Language learning strategies encourage greater overall self-direction for learners. Self-directed learners are independent learners who are capable of assuming responsibility for their own learning and gradually gaining confidence, involvement and proficiency (Oxford, 1990). So is the case with vocabulary learning strategies.

2.3.1 Classification of vocabulary learning strategies

Language learners generally learn new words in two stages. At the first stage, when language learners hear or read a new word, they usually know and recognize it, but might be unable to use it in their speaking or writing. Later, when they are ready to use the word, it becomes their active vocabulary (Baker and Westrup 2000, p. 38). However, to be able to use new words is not easy or simple. Rather, it is a long and

time-consuming process. Language learners need to learn and know how to record, store, and practice new words by using different types of vocabulary learning strategies (Miller and Gildea, 1987; Nation, 1990). This may be because one strategy may not be better than another, or no single strategy has been proved the best of all (Intaraprasert 2005, p. 169). Rather, each strategy for vocabulary learning may be appropriate for its purpose (Oxford, 1990; Schmitt, 2000). Vocabulary learning strategies are a part of language learning strategies which in turn are a part of general learning strategies (Nation 2001, p. 217). Therefore, the definition of vocabulary learning strategy stems from that for language learning strategies (Catalan 2003, p. 55). Cameron (2001, p. 92) defines vocabulary learning strategies as “the actions that learners take to help themselves understand and remember vocabulary items”. Catalan (2003, p. 56) adopts the definition of vocabulary learning strategies from Rubin (1987); Wenden (1987); Oxford (1990); and Schmitt (1997) as the working definition in her study as “knowledge about the mechanisms (processes, strategies) used in order to learn vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by students (a) to find out the meaning of unknown words, (b) to retain them in long-term memory, (c) to recall them at will, and (d) to use them in oral or written mode”. Similarly, Intaraprasert (2004, p. 9) has defined vocabulary learning strategies as “any set of techniques or learning behaviours, which language learners reported using in order to discover the meaning of a new word, to retain the knowledge of newly-learned words, and to expand their knowledge of vocabulary.” In order to learn and acquire vocabulary and enlarge vocabulary size, that is, knowing a large number of words with their meanings, or how to pronounce and use them correctly, language learners need to deal with a wide range of vocabulary learning strategies and every language learner has their own way for learning vocabulary. Vocabulary learning strategies will also be very different depending on whether language learners’ primary goal is to understand the language, either in reading or listening, or to produce it, either in speaking or writing. Schmitt (2000, p. 133) states, “active learning management is important. Good language learners do many things such as use a variety of strategies, structure their vocabulary learning, review and practise target words and so on”.

Besides, Gu and Johnson (1996) indicate that successful strategy users need a strategy for controlling their strategy use. This involves choosing the most appropriate strategy from a range of known options and deciding how to pursue the strategy and when to switch to another strategy. In classifying learning strategies, scholars have different ways of classifying language learning strategies (Intaraprasert 2004, p. 10). These classification systems give a crucial contribution to the knowledge of vocabulary strategies. Below is a summary, brief discussion as well as consideration of the classification systems of vocabulary learning strategies which have been identified in different contexts by different scholars, such as Cohen (1987; 1990); Rubin and Thompson (1994); Stöffer 46 (1995); Gu and Johnson (1996); Lawson and Hogben (1996); Schmitt (1997); Weaver and Cohen (1997); Cook (2001); Decarrico (2001); Nation (2001, 2005); Hedge (2000); Pemberton (2003); and Intaraprasert (2004).

Nation (2001) believes that a large amount of vocabulary could be acquired with the help of vocabulary learning strategies and that the strategies prove useful for students of different language levels. As learning strategies are “readily teachable”, the time teachers spend introducing different ways of vocabulary learning and practicing to students cannot be considered as wasted (Oxford & Nykios, 1989, p. 291). Hence, to help students navigate through the maze of strategies, second and foreign language researchers have made various attempts to classify vocabulary learning strategies employed by foreign and second language learners. Following are the two most prominent vocabulary learning taxonomies by Nation (2001), and Schmitt (1997).

In a more recent attempt, Nation (2001) proposes a taxonomy of various vocabulary learning strategies. The strategies in the taxonomy are divided into three general classes of “planning”, “source” and “processes”, each of which is divided into a subset of key strategies. The taxonomy separates different aspects of vocabulary knowledge (i.e., what is involved in knowing a word). The first category (i.e. planning) involves deciding on where, how and how often to focus attention on the vocabulary item. The strategies in this category are choosing words, choosing aspects of word knowledge and choosing strategies as well as planning repetition. The second

category in Nation's taxonomy involves getting information about the word. This information may include all the aspects involved in knowing a word. It can come from the word form itself, from the context, from a reference source like dictionaries or glossaries and from analogies and connections with other languages. Process is the last category in Nation's (2001) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. It includes establishing word knowledge through noticing, retrieving and generating strategies.

The whole taxonomy is illustrated in table 1.

Table 1. *Nation's (2001) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies*

General class of strategies	Types of strategies
Planning: choosing what to focus on and when to focus on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choosing words - Choosing the aspects of word knowledge - Choosing the strategies - Planning repetition
Sources: finding information about the words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze the word - Using context - Consulting a reference source in L1 or L2 - Using parallels in L1 and L2
Processes: establishing knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noticing - Retrieving - Generating

2.3.2 Schmitt's vocabulary learning strategies

One of the most recent and comprehensive classifications of vocabulary learning strategies is Schmitt's taxonomy, which consists of 58 strategies divided into five groups. Schmitt's taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies were based on Oxford's classification system and Mayer & Nation's Discovery/Consolidation distinction.

In research by Schmitt (1997), he distinguishes the strategies into two groups: One to determine the meaning of new words when encountered for the first time, and the other to consolidate meaning when encountered again. The former contains determination (DET) and social strategies (SOC) and the latter contains cognitive (COG), metacognitive (MET), memory (MEM) and social strategies (SOC).

Schmitt (1997) made use of a vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire in his study in order to survey strategy language learners' reported employing, and how useful they rated each strategy. The list of strategies is divided into two major classes: 1) strategies that are useful for the initial discover of a word's meaning, and 2) those useful for consolidating a word once it has been encountered. Based on strategies for discovering meaning, bilingual dictionaries, asking teacher for paraphrase/synonym, and analysing pictures or gestures were the strong preferences. In terms of strategies for consolidating meaning, say new word aloud, written repetition, connect word with synonyms/antonyms, continue overtime, study spelling, take notes in class, and verbal repetition were preferred. The least helpful strategy of discover meaning is to skip or pass new word. The least helpful strategies of consolidate meaning consisted of image word's meaning, use cognates in study, keyword method, and image word form.

*Metacognitive strategies (MET)

Metacognitive strategies allow students to plan, control, and evaluate their learning. Metacognitive strategies in Schmitt's taxonomy are defined as strategies used by learners to control and evaluate their own learning, by having an overview of the learning process in general. Testing oneself is an instance of metacognitive strategies which provides "input to the effectiveness of one's choice of learning strategies, providing positive reinforcement if progress is being made or a signal to switch strategies if it is not" (Schmitt, p.216).

* Determination strategies (DET)

Determination strategies refer to the strategies an individual can use to find out the meaning of one word without another person's help. Determination strategies are

used when learners have problems with discovering a new word's meaning without resource to another person's experience. Hence, learners try to discover the meaning of a new word by guessing it with help of context, structural knowledge of language, reference materials.

* Cognitive strategies (COG)

Cognitive strategies in this taxonomy are similar to memory strategies but are not focused on manipulative mental processing. They include repetition and using mechanical means such as word lists, flash cards and vocabulary notebooks to study words.

* Social strategies (SOC)

The other way to discover a new meaning is through employing the social strategies of asking someone for help with the unknown words. Teachers seem to be often in this position. They can give L1 translation, give a synonym, check learners' work for accuracy or combine any of these. Learners also get help from their classmates or benefit from interactions with others as group work activities or interaction with native speakers.

* Memory strategies (MEM)

Memory strategies are a large number of strategies that learners apply to recall the vocabulary. In other words, Memory strategies help learners to acquire the new words via mental processing by connecting their background knowledge to the new words (Schmitt, 2000). As an example, when the learner encounters the word "dog", he groups the word "dog" under the category of a four-legged animal since the learner is aware of the image of these four-legged animals from its background knowledge. Memory strategies are composed of three groups: a) using images to create a strong connection with the word and its meaning. These images can be shaped in the mind or drawn in notebooks, b) using strategies to link words together to help retrieval of vocabulary. For example, using words in the sentences make retrieval easier, and c) using vocabulary knowledge aspects to stabilize the meaning of the words. Specific examples include giving attention to the word's phonological or orthographical form,

memorizing affixes and roots, matching some words to their corresponding physical action, and learning the word class.

The detail can be seen on the table below:

Table 2. *Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies*

Strategy group	Strategy
Strategies for the discovery of a new word's meaning	
DET	Analyze part of speech
DET	Analyze suffixes and roots
DET	Check for L1 cognate
DET	Analyze any available pictures or gestures
DET	Guess from textual context
DET	Bilingual dictionary
DET	Monolingual dictionary
DET	Word lists
DET	Flash cards
SOC	Ask teacher for 1 L1 translation
SOC	Ask teacher for a paraphrase or synonym of new word
SOC	Ask teacher for a sentence including the new word
SOC	Ask classmates for meaning
SOC	Discover new meaning through group work activity
Strategies for consolidation a word once it has been encountered	
SOC	Study and practice meaning in a group

SOC	Teacher checks students' flash cards or word lists for accuracy
SOC	Interact with native speakers
MEM	Study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning
MEM	Image word's meaning
MEM	Connect word to a personal experience
MEM	Associate the word with its coordinates
MEM	Associate the word with its synonyms and antonyms
MEM	Use semantics maps
MEM	Use "scales" for gradable adjectives
MEM	Peg method
MEM	Loci method
MEM	Group words together to study them
MEM	Group words together spatially on a page
MEM	Use new word in sentences
MEM	Group words together within a storyline
MEM	Studying the spelling of a word
MEM	Study the pronunciation of a word
MEM	Say new word aloud when studying
MEM	Image word form
MEM	Underline initial letter of the word

MEM	Configuration
MEM	Use keyword method
MEM	Affixes and roots
MEM	Parts of speech
MEM	Paraphrase of the word's meaning
MEM	Use cognates in study
MEM	Learn the words of an idiom together
MEM	Use physical action when learning a word
MEM	Use semantic feature grids
COG	Verbal repetition
COG	Written repetition
COG	Word lists
COG	Flash cards
COG	Take notes in class
COG	Use the vocabulary section in your textbook
COG	Listen to tape of word lists
COG	Put English labels on physical objects
COG	Keep a vocabulary notebook
MET	Use English – language media
MET	Testing oneself with word practice
MET	Use spaced word practice
MET	Skip or pass new word
MET	Continue to study word over time

2.3.3 An overview of vocabulary learning strategies researches

Guessing strategies belongs to determination strategies. A study of EFL students was conducted by Day, Omura, and Hiramatsu (1991). They divided 181 high school and 397 university EFL students in Japan into an experimental group and a control group respectively, and asked the experimental groups to read silently a short story in class for roughly 30 minutes. A multiple-choice vocabulary test of 17 items was administered immediately following the reading. Both the high school and the university experimental groups significantly outperformed their control group counterparts. Day *et al.* (p.545) concluded that “exposure to previously unknown or difficult words through sustained silent reading for entertainment by Japanese EFL students has a positive effect on their ability to recognize these words in a vocabulary test”.

Another research which studied the effects of the teaching of cognitive and metacognitive strategies on reading comprehension in the classroom was conducted by Tang and Moore (1992). It was concluded that while cognitive strategy instruction improves comprehension scores, the performance gains were not maintained upon the withdrawal of the treatment. Metacognitive strategy appeared to lead to improvement in comprehension ability which was maintained beyond the end of the treatment. This finding accords with that of O’Malley et al (1985) who discovered that high level students are more able than lower level students to exercise metacognitive control over their learning.

Erten (1998) analyzes his qualitative data and revealed that the participants often tended to use more than one strategy together on the same vocabulary item. Learners tend to use several strategies at one. The participants used an average of 2.1 strategies on each word they were supposed to study. For example, some students used sound associations and repetition together.

Ehrman and Oxford (1989) discovered distinct gender differences in strategy use. The study of Green and Oxford (1995) came to the same conclusion.

In other study by Oxford and Nykios (1989), 1,200 students studying various languages in a Midwestern American university were surveyed in order to examine the kinds of language learning strategies the students reported using. The result shows that the degree of expressed motivation to be the most influential of the variables affecting choice examined.

Griffiths and Parr (2000) reported finding that European students used language learning strategies significantly more frequently than students of other nationalities, especially strategies relating to vocabulary, to reading, to interaction with others and to the tolerance of ambiguity.

Some studies related to academic vocabulary learning strategies have been conducted. Lessard-Clouston (2008), for example, explored what kinds of academic vocabulary learning strategies were used by native and non-native English students of Christian Graduate School of Theology in Canada. The findings pointed out that the participants used such vocabulary learning strategies such as consulting to dictionary and glossary, practicing new words in paper, taking written notes in class, writing word lists, listing words in computer files, and making index and flashcards. They also listened to recordings or teachers, repeated the words orally and written, quizzing, and asked the new words to others.

Lessard-Clouston (1980) found that the participants used such vocabulary learning strategies as writing, using the lexical items, contextual associations to learn academic words (technical words in this case). The author also pointed out that linguistic associations were present in the study but immediate or spaced repetition and imagery, were absent from the present results. Lessard-Clouston (2008) concluded that these learners need structured approaches in order to gain greater depth knowledge of the academic vocabulary in their field.

The study by Akbari and Tahririan (2009) identified the vocabulary learning strategies used by the students in learning specialized (academic words) and non-specialized vocabulary. It involved 137 participants from paramedical undergraduates of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences in Iran. Data collection

tools included observation, interview and questionnaire. Similar to the findings of the study by Lessard-Clouston (2008), this study found that the participants mostly used consolidating, dictionaries and repeating the words orally and written in learning both academic and general words. Nagy and Townsend (2012) pointed out that words are tools in the learning process. Strategies for learning academic vocabulary must use words as means for communicating and thinking about disciplinary contents. Therefore, learners must be provided with opportunities to use the instructed words for these purposes as they are learning them. Another study was carried out by Tran Huynh Thu Huong (2012) who examined the current situation of using strategies to broaden academic vocabulary and develop language skills of college student. The study found that the learners had a tendency in using less thinking strategies in learning academic vocabulary, and they did not use the right strategies on the process of learning academic vocabulary.

2.4 Summary of Chapter two

In this chapter, by supplying information about such concepts as learning strategies, vocabulary, vocabulary learning strategies, a theoretical framework has been prepared for the examination in the next chapter.

The reviewed literature has also made immense contribution to the teaching and learning of vocabulary in the world. A number of researchers have attempted to study about the different aspects of vocabulary learning strategies so as to find out the effective methods of teaching and learning for both teachers and learners. However, in Vietnam, vocabulary learning was still a rather unexplored research area. At University of Education – TNU, learning vocabulary was one important requirement. Nevertheless, there has been no research conducted to find out students' method of getting and revising new words. To address this major gap, the writer of this thesis carried out an examination on first year students at University of Education – TNU about their vocabulary learning strategies.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the theoretical framework of the research with some general principles of research designs which the researcher will apply to the present investigation. The starting point is the discussion of research methods in vocabulary learning strategies, and the theoretical framework for the present investigation. Next, the chapter will discuss on the participants of the study. Then, the framework of data collection methods as well as methods for data collection and data generation will be presented. The chapter ends with an explanation of how the data are obtained, analyzed, interpreted and reported.

3.1 Research design

In order to achieve the aims mentioned above, the study was conducted using a questionnaire survey for students and interviews for English teachers at the University of Education - TNU. It is believed that the survey is the most commonly used descriptive method in educational research. After collecting, analyzing and discussing data, some conclusions were drawn.

Furthermore, information from the interviews about the vocabulary learning strategies that students apply supported further findings for in-depth discussion and conclusions.

3.2 Participants

A total of 252 Vietnamese first year students from University of Education – Thai Nguyen University, participated in the study. Students come from different faculties: literature, mathematics, history, biology... The age of the students, who were all sophomores, ranged from 18 to 20. The participants have been studying English between 0 or 12 years. Students come from different province, towns and cities. Most of them come from the countryside and mountainous areas. Some of them studied French or Chinese before entering the university. Almost students do not have chances to learn English in language centers. The only way they learn English is at their high schools. However, such variables as age, gender, place of living, years of learning English are not considered in this investigation.

The researcher also invited five English teachers who directly took charge of training first year students. Some teachers have much experience in teaching freshmen students for more than ten years in this university and others have been teaching for two years.

3.3 Instrument for data collection

The data for this study were collected through a questionnaire and an interview, representing the quantitative and qualitative methods respectively.

A questionnaire was designed and used to measure the frequency of the vocabulary learning strategies. The strategies were based on the study by Schmitt (1997). The questionnaire consisted of two parts: questions to gain personal information about the participants and questions relating to the strategies which participants may have used. These strategies contained 36 items in which 34 items pertaining to students' approaches to vocabulary learning, which were divided into five categories: determination strategies (DET), social strategies (SOC), metacognitive strategies (MET), memory strategies (MEM) and cognitive strategies (COG) (Schmitt, 1997). The two last questions are opened-ended questions to which answer depends on individual students. The respondents were asked to rate each strategy statement on a 5 point interval Likert scale in terms of their frequency of use in ascending order ranging from 1 (never), 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (usually) to 5 (always).

Face to face interviews schedule were designed as the framework for semi-structured interviews. It has three stages. To begin with, a semi structured interview gives the interview a degree of power and control over the course of the interview thus he/she is less likely to digress from the main issues than in an unstructured interview. Furthermore, it still allows the interviewer far greater flexibility than a structured interview or a questionnaire. Finally, this form of interview “gives one privileged access to other peoples live” that help the researcher to get more information from lecturers' experience. Moreover, the interviewees are English teachers who have much experience. They have been observing students for a long time, thus their answers can give more information about students' vocabulary learning strategies.

The interview included open-ended and broad questions serving as a reminder to keep the interview on track while still giving the interviewer and interviewee plenty of freedom to further discuss important issues and patterns should they arise. To be more specific, the schedule is comprised of two parts. The first part, including three first interview questions, is to answer the first research question (What are the most and least frequently used vocabulary learning strategies by non-major first year students of English in University of Education – TNU?). The second part is to address the second research question (What are effective vocabulary learning strategies employed by students at University of Education – TNU?)

3.4 Data collection procedures

For questionnaire survey, it took about 15 minutes for completion and was administered in the students' regular English class. Before filling out the questionnaire, students were told that their participation was voluntary and their responses would remain confidential. Students were also asked to give their opinions as honestly as possible, which was crucial to the success of this investigation. As all students are Vietnamese, the questionnaire is written in Vietnamese so that they can fully understand the questions and to avoid confusion.

Each interview took around ten minutes. Teachers were asked to share their experience about their students' vocabulary learning and the strategies used in classes.

3.5 Data analysis procedures

The data gathered through the questionnaire were coded for statistical analysis to answer the research questions indicated above. The Microsoft Excel 2010 was used for statistical analysis. Descriptive analysis was applied to obtain patterns of demographic information from the background questionnaire and strategy use.

Interviews were analyzed using Nvivo Software and based on themes to offer insights for discussion and conclusion.

3.6 Summary of Chapter three

To sum up, this chapter has briefly presented the research method, the data collection instrument, the research participants, the data collection procedures and data analyses procedures. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in this research to answer the research questions formulated in Chapter 1. Survey and teacher interviews were used as the research methods for the thesis. The data collection instruments of the thesis were questionnaire and semi-structured interviews in which both students and teachers were invited to participate. There were totally 257 participants taking part in this study: 252 non- major first year students of English and 5 teachers of Department of English at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, all collected data from the test papers and interviews will be analyzed and discussed to provide the answers to the two research questions. Furthermore, the findings of this study will be thoroughly discussed and related to the relevant literature so that not only the detected patterns themselves but also the underlying causes could be found.

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 The use of DET strategies in vocabulary learning

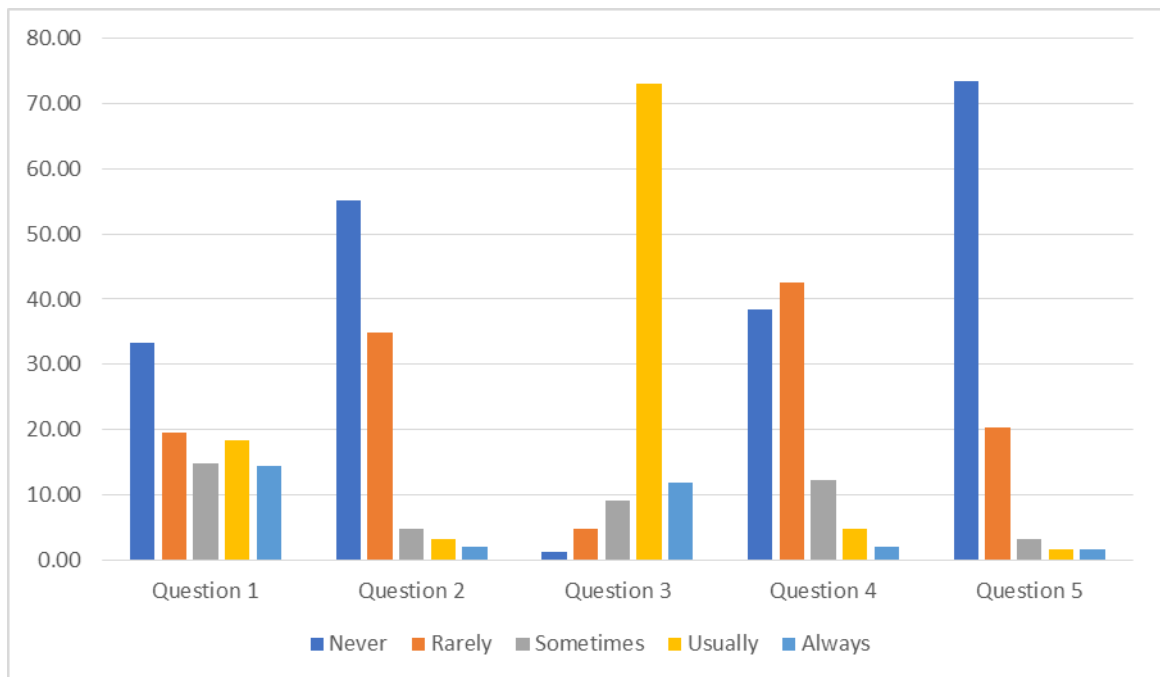


Figure 1. *Students' use of DET strategies in vocabulary learning*

As can be seen from the chart above, among five questions of DET strategies, the third question (using monolingual dictionary strategy) is at the highest frequency of using (73.02% usually and 11.90% always).

The answer to question 1, on the contrary, shows that students rarely used flashcard to remember new words. 33.33% of participants never carry flashcard in which they write new words and 19.44% of them rarely do so. However, the strategy which is used least is using English – English dictionary or bilingual dictionary (Question 2). 90.08% of learners rarely or never use this type of dictionary.

The strategy of guessing the meaning of words based on the structure of words (Question 4) is not preferred employing by almost 80% of students. Especially in question 5, the strategy of guessing meaning of words based on contextual clues, there is over 70% of participants that never used this one.

4.1.2 The use of SOC strategies in vocabulary learning

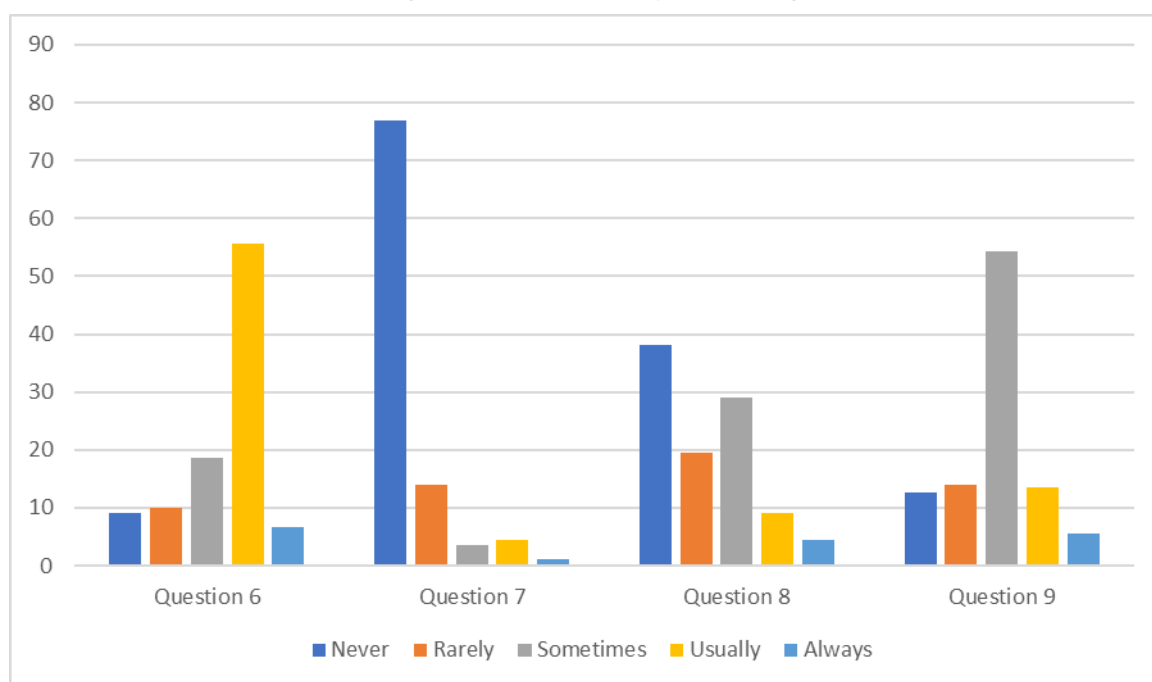


Figure 2. *Students' use of SOC strategies in vocabulary learning*

Data from the figure 2 indicates that in group of SOC strategies students like asking teachers for help of translation most. Nearly 55.56% of students admitted that they usually ask their teacher to translate new words into Vietnamese and 18.65% sometimes do so (Question 6). However, the strategy participants sometimes apply in learning vocabulary with highest frequency (54.37%) is studying and practicing with learners' friends (Question 9).

Seeking opportunities to use new words such as interacting with native speakers (Question 7) and asking teachers to correct when they use the wrong words (Question 8) are not information's preferable strategies. They are applied with low frequency. There is only about 40% of learners that used the strategy in question 8; even nearly 80% of them never apply strategy in question 7 in studying.

4.1.3 The use of MEM strategies in vocabulary learning

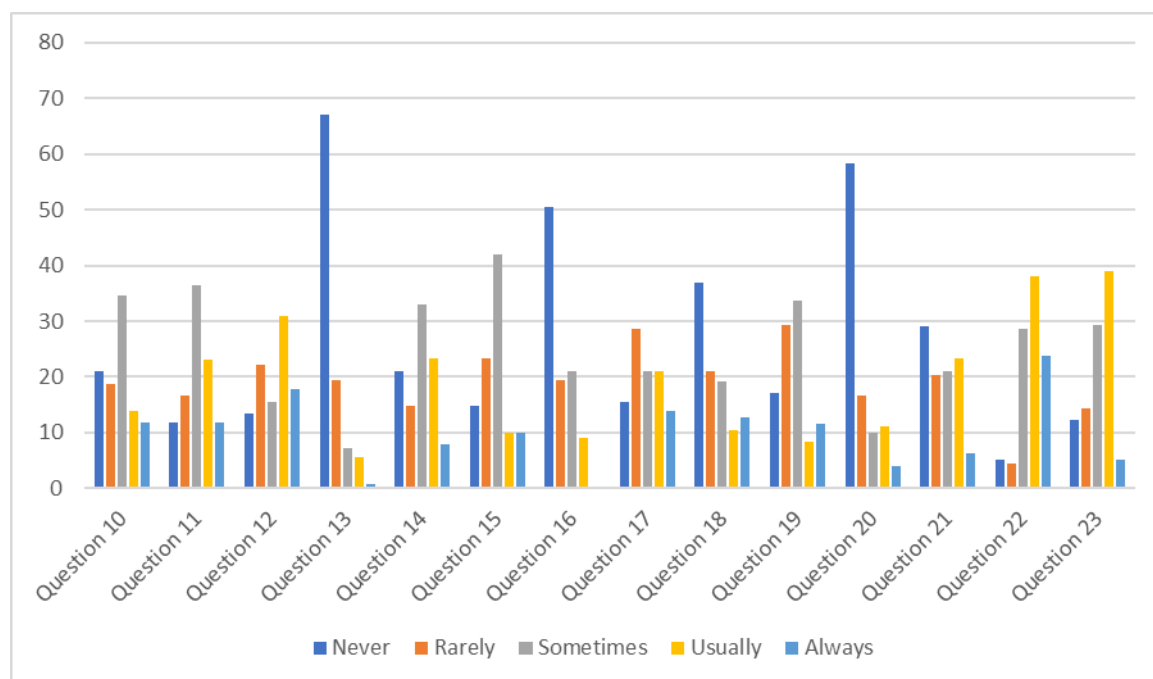


Figure 3. *Students' use of MEM strategies in vocabulary learning*

MEM strategies seem to be frequent choices of almost all learners. 36.51% of learners sometimes make connection of new words to other words they have learnt before (Question 11) and 23.02% students usually use this strategy. Furthermore, 38.10% admitted that they usually write words down and repeat them orally to learn by heart (Question 22).

Information of question 23 in which learners choose to stick the word lists around points out the highest frequency of using (38.89% participants usually do it).

Data also imply that some MEM strategies such as remembering new words based on related words (Question 13), creating communicative situations to use new words (Question 18), creating general rules for the vocabulary and revising it all the time (Question 16), or making question in which using new words (Question 20) are rarely or even never employed by students. More than 50% of learners rarely or never use these strategies. It is clear that these strategies are used at low level.

4.1.4 The use of COG strategies in vocabulary learning

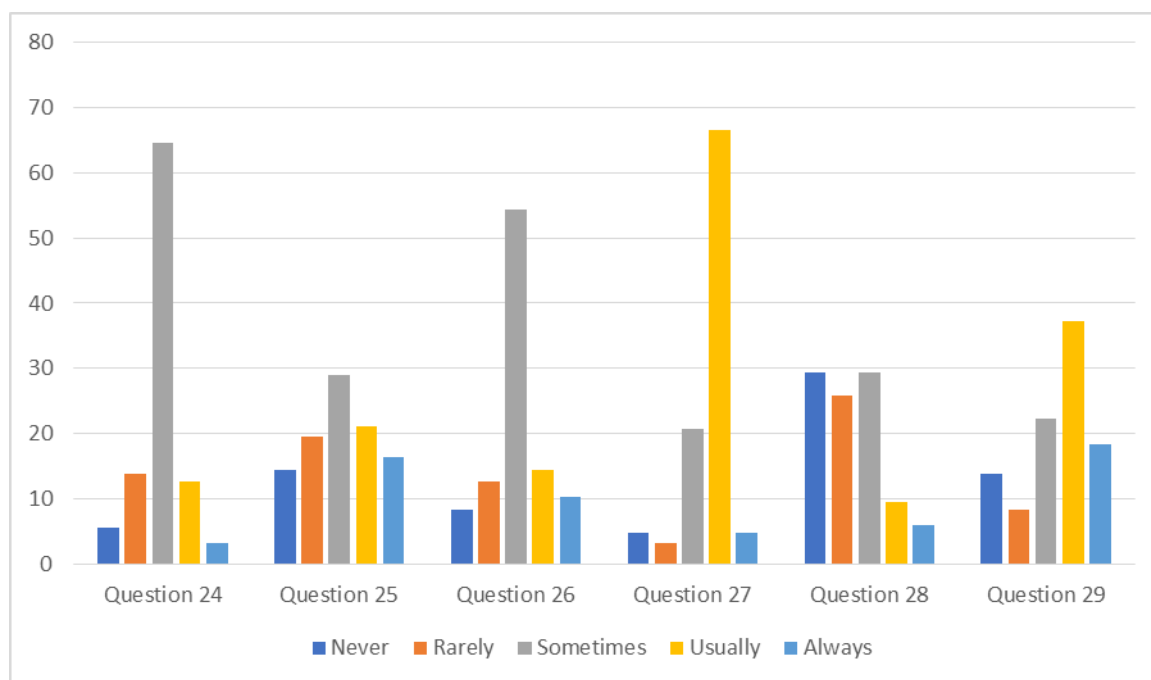


Figure 4. *Students' use of COG strategies in vocabulary learning*

Among these 6 questions about COG strategies, written repetition (Question 27) is a very common strategy. 66.67% informants usually preferred written repetition when learning words, only 4.76% never did so.

Another useful way which is writing new words in a notebook (Question 29) is also usually applied with 37.30% of informants.

Strategy in question 28 (Preview the vocabulary of each lesson and underline the important words) is estimated as the lowest of frequency of applying in COG group with 55.16% of students' answers is "never" and "rarely".

In question 26, students use a new word to replace for the word they do not know how to pronounce and how to write for example use "paper holder" to replace for "notebook" is also used at low level with 21.03% answers "usually" and 16.27% answers "always".

There is a high percentage of learners (64.68%) who admitted that they sometimes avoid using the words they do not know how to write and how to pronounce.

4.1.5 The use of MET strategies in vocabulary learning

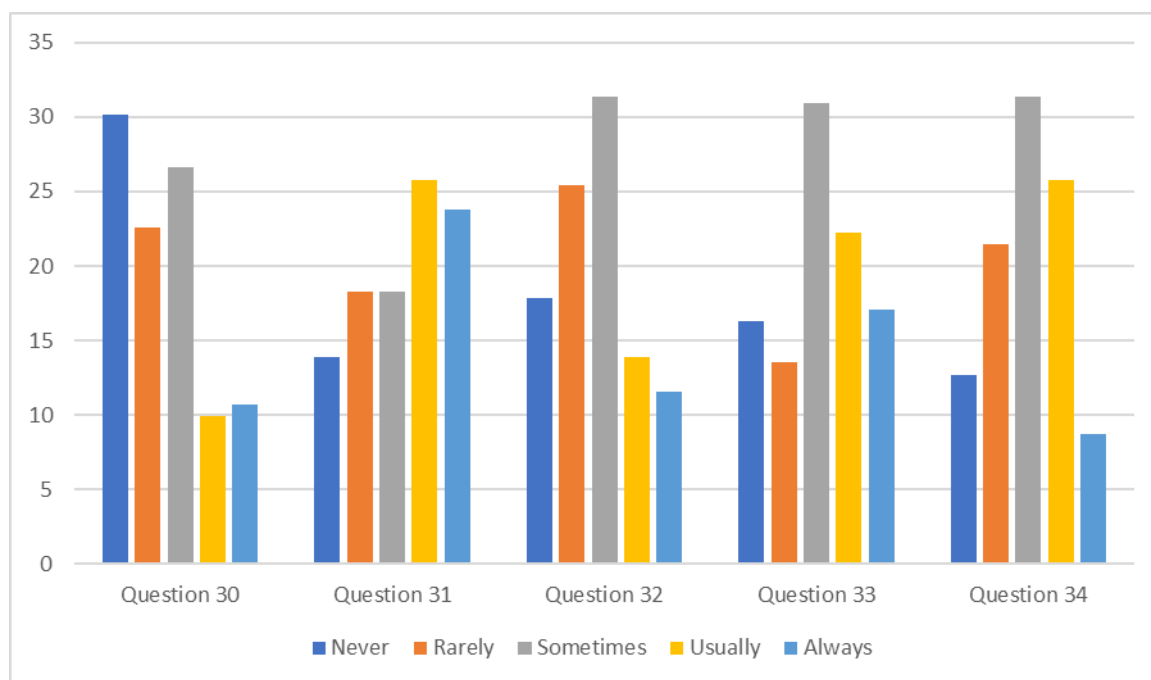


Figure 5. *Students' use of MET strategies in vocabulary learning*

The last group is group of MET strategies. In general, students seem to dislike the strategies in this group. They use these methods at very low frequency, the highest percentage of usually use is only 25.79% in question 31 (do not learn vocabulary outside the teacher's part) and question 34 (set goals for learning words for yourself (how many words/day)).

4.1.6 Interviews

After the data from the informants has been analyzed, it is found that “extensive reading” is believed to be one of the most effective vocabulary learning strategies. They seemed to express in a complete agreement that reading can effectively improve students' vocabulary because through reading can the students be exposed to a lot of new words as well as repeated encounter with those words. One of them, for example, put it: “For students, in order to improve their vocabulary, they have to read a lot. Because when we read a lot, we meet a lot of words.” (Teacher E) Besides extensive reading, the teacher informants also believed in the usefulness of putting the words into practice. They asserted that one of the most effective strategies to learn English vocabulary is to use the words that we have learned as much as

possible. We can create example sentences by using those new words, or we can use those words in our speaking and writing. As one of the teachers commented: “They should try to make examples by using the vocabulary that they have learned. They should try to practice vocabulary often, they can speak, they can use vocabulary with their friends or teachers or someone that they can.” (Teacher E) The data from the study also indicated that memory strategies (e.g. memorization and repetition) were considered to be the most frequently used by their students to learn English vocabulary. It seems that memorization still manages to be in the list of the effective vocabulary learning strategies among the teacher informants. As one of them mentioned: “The students often try to remember the spelling of the words and also the meaning of the words because if they don’t remember the meaning of the words, they cannot use it.” (Teacher D). Apart from what has been mentioned above, there are a number of other strategies the participants perceived to be effective for learning vocabulary such as note taking, dictionary use, making our own dictionary (i.e. making wordlist alphabetically or by themes), and review. The following are some of the comments which reflect their perceptions: “They make their own dictionary, they kind of put all those new words together, arrange it in alphabetical order so it helps them.” (Teacher B). “So when we meet new words, we note it in our notebook. After we note those new words, we check their meaning. After we check the meaning, we start to learn and figure out how to remember those words.” (Teacher E).

Besides what students viewed as effective vocabulary learning strategies, the interview data also revealed teacher informants’ view on effective vocabulary teaching strategies. When asked what vocabulary learning strategies they use to supply to their students, all participants stated that they paid least attention to introduce learning strategies for students because of the limited time at classroom. They also claimed that they usually pay attention to the teaching strategies that they used to introduce vocabulary at classroom such as group work or words hunting or words matching.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Research question 1: What are the frequently-used vocabulary learning strategies acquired by first year students at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University (TNU)?

Among those of the most frequently used strategies, the strategy of using monolingual dictionary (English – Vietnamese dictionary) (Question 3) has reached at the highest level of use. This might be because using monolingual dictionary is the easiest way to find the meaning of a new word. Although it was found in Hulstijn's (1993) study that good learners are more likely to consult a bilingual dictionary to confirm their guesses about the meaning of words, it was not quite clear in this study of the high vocabulary size students used these strategies for the same purposes. However, correlation analysis revealed that using English - Vietnamese dictionary in order to discover the words' meaning did not contribute to increase the students' vocabulary size. In contrast, the strategy of using English- English contributed to increase the vocabulary size of the students with high vocabulary size. This might be that English-English dictionary provides more functions of word and gives more explanations than does the English-Vietnamese dictionary which gives only the translation of the word meaning or simple sample sentences. This implies that Vietnamese learners are not used to think in the target language. They are more inclined to run to L1 for semantization.

Furthermore, according to information of the interview, four out of five English teachers agreed that their students most frequently try to translate the meaning of words into mother-tongue. This might be an explanation why learners enjoyed using English – Vietnamese dictionary. The other previous researches (Prince, 1996; Grace, 2000) show that excessive dependence on first language is not beneficial. In addition, the unbalanced attention paid to word form as compared to word usage also exacerbate the disadvantage of limited exposure to a genuine target language situation.

Thus, this strategy of using bilingual dictionary might enable the students to encounter, comprehend and, internalize the unknown words more effectively and lead them to retain more vocabulary. Regarding this finding, teachers should train the students on how to use an English- English dictionary more appropriately rather than let them used an English-Vietnamese dictionary just for getting word meaning in Vietnamese.

The second top rated strategies is repetition of words' written form (question 27). This seems to be no exception to students in University of Education – TNU. This might be affected by a number of English courses at both high schools and universities in which students are required to memorize English vocabulary via word list repetition during class hours.

However, the interview information reveals that English teachers (all 5 teachers) agree that their students use written repetition strategy at the highest frequency. They said that because most non-major English students are at low level of English, therefore their studying habit is writing new words down again and again. Moreover interviewees added one more strategy which is highly employed that is guessing the meaning of words based on words' structure and contextual clues, but in the fact that students only rarely or never use this way to find out the meaning of words (42.46%). In term of the least frequent use of vocabulary learning strategies, question 2 (using bilingual dictionary) and question 7 (seeking opportunities to use new words such as interacting with native speakers) are used at very low frequency. The second strategy seems to be rather strange to learners and the seventh one is quite difficult to apply because most of the students come from the countryside. They are therefore quite shy when communicating with strangers especially foreigners. In fact, many of them never talk to native speakers. The Interviewees said their students often complain that their vocabulary is not large enough to express their ideas. This leads to the fact that students are lack confidence when they talk to foreigners.

On average, most of strategies introduced in questionnaire received the means at medium level. That means despite the fact that students are aware of employing

strategies in learning vocabulary, they do not make use of them. Plenty of useful strategies were underutilized such as using bilingual dictionary, remembering a word with its affixes and suffixed and so on.

Question 35, an open-ended question, give further interesting information about the other strategies students usually apply to broaden their knowledge. Although most of students have no ideas about other different vocabulary learning strategies, some of the common ones can be found are discovering and consolidating new words by playing games, writing diary or letter in English or translating reading texts, poems, lyrics into Vietnamese and remembering words. These strategies do not belong to the same group of vocabulary learning strategies such as playing games is in MEM, writing letters is in COG, and translating texts is in DET.

4.2.2 Research question 2: What are effective vocabulary learning strategies employed by students at University of Education - TNU?

The results of question 36 are used to answer the second research question. It can be seen that the most effective strategies are used very often. This result cannot accurately assess the effectiveness of each strategy, but it is also valuable information for teachers when guiding students to use vocabulary learning strategies, especially with first-year students at universities.

Using dictionary is one of the most effective strategies found in this study. Although there are 73.02% of learners usually use the strategy of using monolingual dictionary, there are still more than 38% (98 students) of the respondents answered that the most effective strategy for themselves is using monolingual dictionaries (English – Vietnamese dictionary). This result is consistent with the results of the third survey question, the most used strategy in vocabulary learning strategies for first year non-English students at the University of Education - Thai Nguyen University.

The second effective strategy is to rewrite new words many times. Seventy three people (28.97%) of 252 respondents answered that this is the most effective strategy. Besides those two strategies, learners also listed some other strategy that considered as the effective vocabulary learning strategies such as: set goals for learning words

for yourself (how many words/day; stick the word lists around the room; read aloud the words again and again; or guessing words based on contextual clues...

Not surprisingly, the vocabulary learning strategies in question 2 (using bilingual dictionary) and question 7 (seeking opportunities to use new words such as interacting with native speakers) are not answered by any students in question 36. These are the least frequently used strategies in the questionnaire.

4.3 Summary of Chapter four

The study was conducted on English classes for first year non-English major students and teachers of Department of English at University of Education – TNU. With the use of student questionnaire and teacher interviews as instruments, the researcher found out the answer for both research questions as mentioned in chapter one.

For the first research question, both teachers and students confirmed that the strategy of using monolingual dictionary (English – Vietnamese dictionary) (Question 3) has reached at the highest level of use. Besides, repetition of words' written form is also used frequently by non-major first year students of English at University of Education – TNU. For the second research question, the researcher found that the most effective strategies are used very often. This result cannot accurately assess the effectiveness of each strategy, but it is also valuable information for teachers when guiding students to use vocabulary learning strategies, especially with first-year students at universities.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter concludes that study with a summary of major findings, its significance, limitations and implications of the study. The chapter confirmed vocabulary learning strategies frequently used by non-major first year students of English at University of Education – Thai Nguyen University. The chapter also made suggestions for the teaching and learning of English language skills in general as well as the teaching and learning English vocabulary in particular. However, due to the limited time and scope, the study was conducted on a small scale with a small number of participants. It is hoped that the findings of this study can be more powerful with further studies using quantitative research approach or mixed research approach to provide more insights into the vocabulary learning strategies in Vietnamese universities in general as well as at University of Education - TNU in particular.

5.1 Conclusions

In the present study, vocabulary is seen as an important ingredient of language and vocabulary learning is an essential part of second or foreign language learning. Language learners need a wide variety of target language words to be able to tackle successfully both production and comprehension activities in the second or foreign language. One way to help learners to enhance their knowledge of L2 vocabulary is through equipping learners with a variety of vocabulary learning strategies.

The results of the study indicate an overall medium use of vocabulary learning strategies of students in University of Education – TNU. Although data from the questionnaire indicates that learners use all most every strategy given, the frequency is not really high. Some strategies are reported to be applied frequently such as “using monolingual dictionary”, “written repetition”, “choosing the important words by themselves and remembering them”, “ask their teacher to translate new words into Vietnamese”, “stick word lists on objects around”. The other strategies are used with low frequency or even rarely used.

In reality, students are usually expected to learn vocabulary on their own, mostly by mechanical memorization, without much guidance from teachers. One out of 5

teachers said that because of limited time in each period, little effort has been made to teach students strategies to improve their vocabulary learning. However, merely giving students lists of words to learn does not result in effective learning, despite the growing awareness on the part of learners of the important of enhancing their communicative competence of the target language and the recognition that a much larger vocabulary is needed to this end.

Based on these findings of the study, two following options which might be helpful for EFL teachers and learners are recommended. Firstly, teachers should choose some typical vocabulary learning strategies such as using English – English dictionary, using notebook which are highly beneficial and could be introduced as early as possible. Learners can write the words they encounter on their notebook and add translation or other knowledge they gradually acquire about the words such as collocation, synonyms and antonyms. Learners can be reminded to go through their notebooks regularly in order to add more information. The vocabulary notebook could then serve as a valuable resource. Secondly, learners should be given opportunities to examine the effectiveness of their vocabulary learning strategies. Teachers can provide learners with different vocabulary exercises so that students' vocabulary learning strategies will be exposed. Hence, learners will discover which strategies are suitable for them.

In general, teachers play an important role in making students aware of vocabulary learning strategies' value. Moreover, teachers need to decide what framework and strategies they should choose based on their students' needs and requirements. Vocabulary learning strategy training, therefore, is necessary for both learners and teachers. Learners should be trained to realize which strategies they lack and teachers should be trained to think of the most appropriate method to introduce the strategies.

5.2 Recommendations

Firstly, teachers should introduce first year students to a variety of vocabulary learning strategies. This finding provides evidence that the use of vocabulary learning strategies might contribute to vocabulary learning. However, the results in the study

also show that students did not use vocabulary learning strategies very often. It is possible that students are not aware of these strategies very well. It seems that vocabulary learning strategies have not been overtly taught by teachers. Most teachers leave vocabulary learning to students themselves. Therefore, it is important for teachers to help students become familiar with various vocabulary learning strategies and encourage them to try these strategies.

Secondly, teachers should pay more attention to deep strategies. There has been little guidance to the learners who ask questions such as: How do I memorize vocabulary better? However, the results in the present study indicate that first year students favor shallow strategies, which process words at a superficial level and mostly focus only on the form of a word. This might be due to the fact that deep strategies are more complex or not familiar to non-major first year students of English. Therefore, teachers should teach some deep strategies in order to help students to remember vocabulary better.

Thirdly, teachers should encourage students to use more verbal repetition than written repetition. In addition, research has provided evidence that verbal repetition, as opposed to written repetition, could contribute more efficiently to the retention of words. Hence, teachers should place more emphasis on verbal repetition, which could be more effective in vocabulary learning than written repetition.

Finally, teachers should present new words in context when teaching vocabulary. With vocabulary, the meaning of a word occurs in context, namely, context determines the meaning of a word. In addition to making a word - meaningful context provides more information about a word and thus contributes to the retention of a word. This argument is supported by the findings of the present study.

5.3 Limitation and suggestions for further research

5.3.1 Limitation

A number of limitations can be discerned in the study due to the time constraints and the researchers' limited ability and experience. Firstly, mistakes could take place when researcher translated questionnaires into Vietnamese according to Schmitt's

taxonomy. Misinterpretation of strategies was highly probable. Secondly, although Schmitt's taxonomy is the most comprehensive available, it cannot embrace all the existing vocabulary learning strategies. Thirdly, when interviewing, interviewer can be confused because interviewee could not make their ideas clear.

5.3.2 Suggestion for further studies

This study investigates vocabulary learning strategies as a whole. Future researches can investigate other variables; for example, learners' cultural background, traditional schooling, the demands of the vocabulary learning strategies. Furthermore, this study only focuses on the use of vocabulary learning strategy among Vietnamese college students; therefore, in the future, studies investigating the frequency of vocabulary strategy can be done with junior or senior Vietnamese high schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE

BẢNG CÂU HỎI VỀ CHIẾN LƯỢC HỌC TỪ VỰNG

Bản câu hỏi này được thiết kế để điều tra về chiến lược học từ vựng của sinh viên năm thứ nhất không chuyên tiếng Anh trường Đại học Sư phạm – Đại học Thái Nguyên. Tôi rất mong các bạn dành chút thời gian trả lời các câu hỏi dưới đây một cách trung thực nhất. Mọi thông tin các bạn đưa ra đều được giữ bí mật hoàn toàn và chỉ phục vụ cho mục đích nghiên cứu. Chân thành cảm ơn sự giúp đỡ của các bạn.

Trước khi trả lời những câu hỏi sau, xin các bạn vui lòng cho biết các thông tin cá nhân bằng cách khoanh tròn những thông tin đúng hoặc trả lời các câu hỏi dưới đây:

1. Giới tính: Nam / Nữ
2. Quê quán của bạn:
3. Nơi bạn học tiếng Anh trước khi vào trường Đại học Sư phạm – ĐHTN:

4. Hiện bạn đang là sinh viên khoa:
5. Tuổi của bạn:
6. Bạn đã từng học tiếng Anh hoặc sống ở nước nói tiếng Anh bao giờ chưa: Có/ Không
7. Ngoài tiếng Anh, bạn có học thêm ngôn ngữ nào khác không? Có/ Không (Nếu Có, xin liệt kê ngôn ngữ: _____).

Ngoại ngữ có thể học theo nhiều cách khác nhau. Mục đích của phiếu điều tra này là xem phương pháp học từ vựng của bạn như thế nào. Vậy bạn hãy tích (✓) vào những lựa chọn cho các câu hỏi phía dưới. Hãy nhớ rằng chọn phương pháp bạn thực sự **đang sử dụng để học và ghi nhớ từ mới**, không phải là chọn phương pháp những người bạn của bạn đang dùng hoặc phương pháp bạn nghĩ là tốt cho người học ngoại ngữ.

STT	Phương pháp	Không bao giờ (1)	Hiếm khi (2)	Thỉnh thoảng (3)	Thường xuyên (4)	Luôn luôn (5)
1.	Ghi từ mới vào các tấm card nhỏ và mang theo để học khi cần					
2.	Sử dụng từ điển Anh – Anh					
3.	Sử dụng từ điển Anh – Việt					
4.	Đoán nghĩa từ dựa vào cấu trúc từ					
5.	Đoán từ dựa vào ngữ cảnh cụ thể					
6.	Nhờ giáo viên dịch từ mới sang tiếng Việt					
7.	Tận dụng mọi cơ hội để thực hành sử dụng từ như giao tiếp với người nước ngoài					
8.	Nhờ giáo viên kiểm tra xem liệu mình dùng từ đó có đúng văn phong không					
9.	Học từ và thực hành với bạn bè					

10.	Phân loại và xếp từ theo các nhóm từ theo chủ đề hoặc từ loại					
11.	Liên tưởng đến những từ đã học trước đây					
12.	Liên tưởng đến âm thanh của từ với hình ảnh của nó					
13.	Nhớ từ dựa trên các từ loại liên quan (ví dụ từ đồng nghĩa, trái nghĩa...)					
14.	Học từ theo những cụm cố định					
15.	Ghi nhớ nghĩa của tiền tố, hậu tố					
16.	Tự tạo ra các quy tắc riêng cho từ và ôn tập nhiều lần					
17.	Nhớ vị trí của từ trong giáo trình, trên bảng hoặc trong vở					
18.	Tạo ra tình huống giao tiếp trong đó có sử dụng từ mới					

19.	Tự chọn cho bản thân những từ quan trọng và ghi nhớ					
20.	Đặt câu hỏi có sử dụng từ mới					
21.	Gạch chân chữ cái đầu tiên của mỗi từ mới					
22.	Đọc to, đọc đi đọc lại từ mới					
23.	Dán từ lên các đồ vật xung quanh					
24.	Tránh dùng những từ không biết cách đọc, cách viết					
25.	Tạo ra từ mới thay thế cho từ không biết cách đọc, cách viết (ví dụ dung paper holder thay cho notebook)					
26.	Nếu lần này dùng từ thấy không hiệu quả, không tự nhiên thì lần sau sẽ dùng từ khác					
27.	Viết đi viết lại từ mới					
28.	Xem trước phần từ vựng của mỗi bài và gạch chân từ quan trọng					

29.	Ghi chép từ mới ra một cuốn sổ riêng					
30.	Tự kiểm tra trình độ bằng việc làm thêm bài tập liên quan đến từ vựng					
31.	Không học từ vựng ngoài phần giáo viên dạy					
32.	Học từ mới từ những nguồn khác ngoài giáo trình (nghe nhạc, đọc báo, xem phim...)					
33.	Không quan tâm đến những từ mới mà giáo viên không giải thích trên lớp					
34.	Đặt ra mục tiêu học từ cho bản thân (bao nhiêu từ/ ngày)					
35.	Cách khác mà em đã áp dụng:					

36. Trong các chiến lược học từ mới mà em đã từng dùng, em thấy cách nào là hiệu quả nhất với bản thân em (chỉ liệt kê một chiến lược)?

APPENDIX 2. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Thank you for participating in this interview, which will be centered on your students' vocabulary learning strategies. The interview will last about 10 minutes. We will first find out the strategies commonly employed by students in learning new words.

First, please describe the way in which your students usually learn a new word.

Follow-up question: Among these strategies which are used by learners, which is applied most and least?

Follow-up question: When your students learn new words, what aspects of words do they often pay most attention? (For example word form, grammar, collocation or other aspects of meaning?)

Next question: Do you pay much attention to supply strategies for students when you teach vocabulary? If yes, which strategies you often teach them?

Last question: Have you seen your students' improvement when they apply vocabulary learning strategies? If yes, which strategies do you think that is the most effective?

APPENDIX 3. A SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW SCRIPT (Teacher A)

I = interviewer

ET = teacher of English

- I Good morning. First of all, let me introduce you to my project, err my project aims at investigating vocabulary learning strategies frequently used by non-major first year of English at University of Education. And this project is hoped to generate teachers and students' awareness of the importance of vocabulary learning strategies and it can enable students to select some strategies which may be useful for them, and it may also provide teachers with some suggestions in order to better teach their students vocabulary learning strategies. And I'd like to assure you that the information that you will give to me will be kept confidential and your identity will not be revealed and it will be anonymous. So let's go straight to the questions. Err first, please describe the ways in which your students usually learn a new word.
- TE Thank you, I'm glad to be a participant in your study. Err... actually, when I teach vocabulary, I often ask my students to take note in a notebook and ask them to learn by heart or at least they have to remember the meanings. At home, my students often write the words again and again... Or some students like making a list of new words and stick them around; some others like reading words aloud when they have free times or even before sleeping... err I know some hard working students, they usually bring a list of words they need to learn and read them anytime they are free.
- I Yes, I see. But if your students don't know the meaning of words, what will they do?
- TE If in the classroom, they ask me, immediately. If they are not in the classroom, they use a dictionary or their phone to check the meanings.
- I Among these strategies which are used by learners, which is applied most and least?

- TE It is quite dependable on the skills they are learning; however, I can see that they often make a long list of the new words they encounter and then they will learn them by heart later. Some of my students even categorize into some topics or themes which is a scientific way to do. Some say that they can learn new words from news on TV or films, but the things that they meet on the test is often different from that on TV.
- I When your students learn new words, what aspects of words do they often pay most attention? (For example word form, grammar, collocation or other aspects of meaning?)
- TE They almost focus on the word meaning and then the word form.
- I Do you pay much attention to supply strategies for students when you teach vocabulary? If yes, which strategies you often teach them?
- TE Strategies are important in learning new words. Depending on the learning style of the students to provide them with suitable way to learn. Some maybe by pictures, some may just make a list and learn it by heart, some may draw a tree of the related words.
- I Have you seen your students' improvement when they apply vocabulary learning strategies? If yes, which strategies do you think that is the most effective?
- TE I can see it clearly in the reading tests by looking at the speed and the scores. I think just make a long list and try to guess the meaning from the context
- I Thank you so much for your time and participation. Thanks for your idea, advice and suggestion as well. I'd like to promise you that what you have shared to me will be kept confidential. Thank you.