

**THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**LE THUY DUONG**

**A STUDY ON MNEMONIC TECHNIQUES TO HELP STUDENTS OF  
GRADE 6 INCREASE THEIR VOCABULARY RETENTION  
AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**(Nghiên cứu các kỹ thuật Mnemonics để giúp học sinh lớp 6 tăng cường  
khả năng ghi nhớ từ vựng tại một trường THCS)**

**M.A THESIS**

**Field: English Linguistics**

**Code: 8220201**

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**(APPLICATION ORIENTATION)**

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**Supervisor: Dr. Bui Thi Huong Giang**

**THAI NGUYEN – 2019**

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby certify that the thesis entitled “**A study on Mnemonic techniques to help students of grade 6 increase their vocabulary retention at a secondary school**” is my own research and the substance of this research has not been submitted to any other universities or institutions.

**Submitted by:**

**Le Thuy Duong**

**Approved by**

**Supervisor,**

**Dr. Bui Thi Huong Giang**

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## ABSTRACT

This study was carried out with the aim to investigate the effects of Mnemonic techniques namely, using pictures, semantic mapping and making-up stories on the vocabulary retention of grade 6 students. The researcher conducted the study in 7 weeks with the participation of 40 students of grade 6. They have been learning English since grade 3, but many of them had difficulty in memorizing vocabulary. The data of the study was gathered through qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data was collected by analyzing result of students' questionnaire and the class observation. Quantitative data was obtained from the students' scores of pretest and posttest. After intervention with Mnemonic techniques, the result of the posttest was remarkably higher than that of the pretest. This indicated that most of students improved their vocabulary retention. Besides, the questionnaire given after the posttest showed that a large number of students appreciated the effectiveness of using Mnemonic techniques and had positive attitude toward learning vocabulary. Finally, further some implications, limitations and suggestions for further studies were included in this study.

*Key words: Mnemonic techniques, vocabulary retention*

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**MT:** Mnemonic techniques

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1. Rationale

Today, being a means of international communication, English has exerted its dominance over the world. Many countries including Vietnam are attempting to improve English ability of their citizens. Vietnamese government has implemented policies to improve quality of teaching and learning English. According to this, English was introduced as the compulsory subject from primary school to high school. Students are required to pass English exams in National high school graduation exam to win places in universities. Therefore, learning and teaching English is of great importance.

Vocabulary is the core of learning English. Without it, students fail to communicate with people and express their own ideas. It can be said that vocabulary is the foundation to build language skills. To emphasize the importance of vocabulary, Schmitt (2000) states that “lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language”. In addition, Wilkins (1972) once said, “Without grammar, little can be conveyed; without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed”. Hence, learning vocabulary is of crucial importance to all language learners and teaching vocabulary should be placed in the center of attention in language classes.

One of problems in learning vocabulary is that learners are struggling against the decline of memory retention in time. Forgetting Curve by Hermann Ebbinghaus (1885) shows that learners forget about 90% of what they learned within the first month. After a few hours of studying a language, most of them forget 50% of the content. Besides, students are constantly bombarded with new knowledge in subjects in which they may or may not be interested. As the result, most of students easily forget newly learned things, especially new words. All the reasons above makes teaching and learning English become more challenging than ever. To tackle the problems, teachers should provide students with vocabulary learning strategies in order for them to reduce pressures on their memory and remember vocabulary better.

One way to help students learn and recall vocabulary quickly is using Mnemonic techniques (memory strategies). They are not new techniques deriving from the Greek word “Mnemonikos” which means “aiding memory”. Mnemonic techniques have been mentioned as vocabulary learning strategies by many researchers such as Schmitt(1997), Gu and Johnson(1996)

At Phuc Triu Lower Secondary School, Thai Nguyen Province, a majority of students in grade 6 have difficulty in learning vocabulary. Most of them often complain that they have forgotten the vocabulary very quickly after English lessons. They cannot complete the reading and writing tasks where the meaning of words is necessary for comprehension. In a word, this lack of adequate vocabulary knowledge is an obvious and serious obstacle for many students in learning English and improving their language skills.

All the reasons above offered me an opportunity to carry out a study on Mnemonic techniques to help students of grade 6 increase their vocabulary retention at Phuc Triu Lower Secondary School. The study will be conducted to test the continuing applicability of these techniques in the certain context of Vietnamese rural areas where there are not enough facilities for the learners to learn a foreign language.

## **2. Aims of the study**

The study was carried out with the aim of investigating students’ improvement in vocabulary retention through using some Mnemonics techniques. Secondly, the researcher explores students’ attitudes towards using Mnemonics as learning vocabulary strategies. Then, based on the findings, recommendations are made to improve the implementation of these techniques.

## **3. Scope of the study**

The study was conducted in a class of 40 students in grade 6 at Phuc Triu Lower Secondary School in Thai Nguyen Province. There are various Mnemonic techniques; however, within limited time and the small scale of the 40 -student class,

I have decided to focus on the effects of three techniques proposed by Thompson (1987) namely: using pictures, semantic mapping and making-up stories.

Using pretest, posttest, questionnaire and peer class observation in this study is expected to help the researcher see positive aspects and strengths of using Mnemonic techniques in vocabulary teaching - learning process. However, the result of this study may not be generalized to all Vietnamese students in rural areas

#### **4. The Significance of the study**

The significance of this study was that via the results, the researcher could determine the effectiveness of using Mnemonic techniques on student's vocabulary retention. Then, the findings of the research could be a useful reference for other teachers who have made efforts enhancing students' vocabulary retention. Finally, it would pave the way for further studies on vocabulary learning in the future.

#### **5. Design of the thesis.**

This study is composed of five following chapters:

**Chapter 1: "Introduction"** presents the background, aims, research question, the significance, the scope and the design of the study.

**Chapter 2 "Literature review"** conceptualizes the framework of the study through the discussion of issues and ideas on theories of teaching and learning vocabulary and the implementation of Mnemonic techniques

**Chapter 3 "Methodology"** presents the context, the methodology used in this study including the context, the subject, the data collection instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis.

**Chapter 4 "Findings and Discussions"** consists of a comprehensive analysis of the data and a discussion on the findings of this study.

**Chapter 5 "Conclusion"** offers a summary of the findings, implications, limitations of the study and future directions for further study

In summary, this chapter provides the overview of the study including rationale of the study, aims of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study and design of the study. The following chapter will present the theoretical framework of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter consists of theoretical parts. The first part is related to teaching and learning vocabulary. The second one is mainly about learning styles and Memory capacities in learning. In the final part, Mnemonic techniques and previous studies are mentioned

### **1. Vocabulary and its importance in language learning**

Vocabulary is an unseparated part of any languages. There are various definitions of vocabulary proposed by linguists. According to Hatch and Brown (1995), vocabulary refers to a list or set of words for a particular language or a list or set of words that individual speakers of language might use. Hornby (1995) states a detailed definition of vocabulary, which includes the total number of the words which make up a language, all the words known to a person or used in a particular book, subject, etc.; and a list of words with their meaning. Linse (2005) defines that vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows. From the definitions above, it can be concluded that vocabulary is all words of a language that an individual can use in communication.

Vocabulary is of paramount importance in learning a second language. It is “the Everest of a language. There is no larger task than to look for order among the hundreds of thousand words which comprise lexicon” Crystal (2003). Learning vocabulary is believed to lay a firm foundation for learner to build up and master language skills. Thornbury (2002) stated that readers should have vocabulary knowledge of at least 2,000 high frequency words so as to comprehend 90% of everyday text. Therefore, the insufficient vocabulary can result in failures in communication and understanding written texts. In term of learning English, many researchers believe that vocabulary acquisition should be taken more priority than other aspects, especially grammar. The grammatical rules are fixed, but there is no boundary for learning vocabulary because it is enlarged day by day. According to Oxford Dictionaries, there are approximately 1,000 new entries added to Oxford Dictionaries Online every year. Vocabulary size is being enlarged day by day. It has



become one of the biggest challenges in language tests and exams which learners cope with. This is in line with Schmitt (2012) who stated that vocabulary has traditionally been one of the language components measured in language tests. For example, in the IELTS Academic test, a test taker will be given 3 passages to read and each of those passages contains around 900 words. This means they should read around 2,700 words in an hour. Hence, language learners should be encouraged to enlarge their vocabulary size and improve their vocabulary knowledge.

To sum up, vocabulary plays a fundamental role in learning English as a second language. This leads to the use of various Mnemonic techniques in the study to boost students' vocabulary retention. With good vocabulary knowledge, the students were expected to have firm basis for their development of all the other skills such as reading comprehension, listening comprehension, speaking and writing in the future.

## **2. Vocabulary learning in English language acquisition**

### **2.1 Aspects of knowing a word**

Vocabulary learning is the core language acquisition, whether the language is first, second, or foreign. When learning vocabulary, the learners should know about word knowledge. Word knowledge has been identified by many researchers. Richards (1976) stated that to understand a word should include following aspects called eight assumptions: the feature of native speakers' vocabulary knowledge, association, syntax, frequency, derivation, register, semantic features and polysemy. This theory seems complicated to be applied in the process of vocabulary teaching for students in grade 6, so Nation's classification of word knowledge (2001) was used for discussion in this study. According to Nation, teachers and learner should be aware of the three aspects of knowing: *form*, *meaning*, and *use*.

- **Form:** form of a word involves its pronunciation (spoken form), spelling (written form), and any word parts that make up this particular item (such as a prefix, root, and suffix)

- **Meaning:** knowing the meaning of a word includes connecting form and meaning, concept and referents, and word associations. Normally the word form and meaning are learned together. It means that when learners hear and see the word form, the meaning of this word will be retrieved and vice versa.
- **Use:** knowing how to use a word involves knowing grammatical functions, collocations, grammatical functions, collocations, constraints on use (register, frequency . . .)

In this study, within limited time the researcher only focused on measuring ability to remember meanings and collocation of words to assess the vocabulary retention of students before and after using Mnemonic techniques. For students in lower secondary schools, knowing meaning of words and collocations are essential. Meaning of words helps learners have basic understanding about texts and content of conversations while collocations which is defined as combination of words in a language, that happen very often and more frequently than would happen by chance (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary) allow learners to acquire proficiency in the target language.

## 2.2 Process of learning vocabulary

To have good vocabulary knowledge requires learners to accumulate words every day. Grauberg (1997) gave detailed explanation about the process of learning vocabulary by classifying it into four stages, namely discrimination; understanding meaning, remembering and consolidation and extension of meaning.

Discrimination was described as a basic step which has a link with the ability to distinguish sounds, letters from those next to them, and from the sounds and letters of similar words when listening and reading; to keep them distinct when speaking and writing. As will be seen later, failure to discriminate is a frequent source of error. Understanding meaning is next stage in which learners understand the concept of the foreign word or phrase. This is often straightforward because the word can be related to its referent by direct association or because there is equivalent word in English. Remembering comes after vocabulary items are introduced and explained to ensure

that learner can recall them. This is because when learners have acquired meaning of a word, it may be forgotten easily. The process of remembering words can be explained by the Working Memory Model of Baddeley and Hitch (1974), which includes sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory. The items of vocabulary we learn first enter the short-term memory (STM), but they just remain in STM for a few seconds. To remember them longer, learners should transfer them into their long-term memory through revision and recalling. Consolidation and extension of meaning is the final stage in which vocabulary should be revised regularly after being taught to prevent the forgetting process of our brains. Also, learners should be given more opportunities to use vocabulary in the context different from the one in which it is first used.

In brief, Grasberg's theory gives the researcher a better insight on how the process of learning vocabulary takes place. To help the memorizing vocabulary better, the researcher planned to make an intervention into the stage three "remembering" and stage four "consolidation and extension of meaning" with the Mnemonic techniques because meaning of a word is easily forgotten after being elicited and without revision.

### **2.3 Vocabulary learning strategies**

Process of learning vocabulary pose a problem to learners that they not only learn new words but also make efforts to remember them. To address this problem, many researchers provide various vocabulary learning strategies. Three common lists of vocabulary learning strategies are mentioned below.

Amed (1989) stated that learners need to employ a variety of strategies to practice and retain vocabulary which include information sources, practice, dictionary uses, memorization and note-taking. Gu and Johnson (1996) identified six types of strategy including metacognitive regulation, guessing strategies, note-taking strategies, dictionary use strategies, memory strategies for rehearsal and memory strategies for encoding. A relatively comprehensive list of these strategies is developed by Schmitt (2002). He categorized them into two groups: discovery

strategy and consolidation strategy. To make them more clearly, he further classified those strategies into sub aspects. Discover strategy includes determination strategy and social strategy while consolidation strategies consist of social strategy, cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy and memory strategy (traditionally known as mnemonics). According to him, Mnemonics involve relating new words to previously learned knowledge, using some form of imagery or grouping (using semantic mapping, pictures...).

To sum up, despite the different approach to vocabulary learning, most researchers mentioned memory strategies as a common way to aid learners' vocabulary acquisition and retention. This emphasizes the importance of using Mnemonic techniques in learning vocabulary and establishes the foundation for carrying out this study.

## **2.4 Learning styles**

Learning style is closely related to teaching and learning vocabulary. The term 'learning style' has been widely used in psychology and pedagogy since the 1930s. It has been described in many ways. Dornyei (2005) defined learning style as "the complex manner in which, and conditions under which, learners most effectively perceive". Della-Dora and Blanchard (1979) stated that learning style is a personally preferred way of dealing with information and experiences for learning that crosses content areas. Generally speaking, learning style describes the way a person can learn things best. There are different models of learning styles proposed by researchers. Kolb (1984) introduced Experiential Learning Style Model which consists of four distinct learning styles (or preferences) based on a four-stage learning cycle: Concrete Experience - CE (feeling), Abstract Conceptualization - AC (thinking), Active Experimentation - AE (doing), Reflective Observation - RO (watching). VARK Learning Styles Model of Fleming and Mills (1992) set out four main learning ways, including Visual (V), Auditory (A), Reading/ Writing (R) and Kinesthetic (K).

In this study, I will discuss Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983) because this model is more compressive than the rest and has close relation with the

Mnemonic techniques. According to Gardner, there are eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. These intelligences include linguistic intelligence (word smart), logical-mathematical intelligence (number/reasoning smart), spatial intelligence (picture smart), bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence (body smart), musical intelligence (music smart), interpersonal intelligence (people smart), intrapersonal intelligence (self-smart) and naturalist intelligence (nature smart). The model suggests that language teachers should present vocabulary in a wide variety of ways such as using music, cooperative learning and art activities role play to improve students' vocabulary learning.

To sum up, learning styles could partly explain for the phenomenon in which some people are good at learning and remembering vocabulary very quickly while others are not. Taking the analysis of learning styles in consideration might support for the study on using Mnemonic techniques in class.

### **3. Teaching vocabulary with Mnemonic techniques**

#### **3.1 Definitions of Mnemonics**

Mnemonic techniques or Mnemotechnics are the tools to support our memory. They were derived from the Greek word 'mnemonikos' which means 'aiding memory.' Solso (1995) defined that Mnemonics are techniques or devices, either verbal or visual in nature, that serve to improve the storage of new information, and the recall of information contained in memory. In plain words, mnemonic strategies allow teachers to relate new information to what students already have stored in their long-term memory.

Mnemonic techniques play a key role in improving learners' vocabulary retention, therefore many researchers have mentioned about the effectiveness of Mnemonics. Cohen (1990) claimed that the mnemonic link is one of the best ways to learn and retrieve the meaning of new words. Thompson (1987) also stated that mnemonics can be adopted voluntarily and once learned are difficult to forget. Hence,

the applicability of Mnemonic techniques in teaching and learning vocabulary should be taken into consideration.

### **3.2 Kinds of Mnemonics**

Mnemonic techniques are classified into different ways. Baddeley (1999) put Mnemonic tools into two main classes: visual imagery strategies and verbal strategies. On the other hand, Oxford (1990) claimed that there were four memory strategies, including creating mental linkage, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action. But in this section, the theory of Mnemonics strategies by Thompson (1987) will be discussed because it tend to be more comprehensive than the others and suitable for context of the study. According to her theory, Mnemotechnics are composed of following techniques

- **Linguistic Mnemonics:** peg word method, the key method
- **Spatial Mnemonics:** the loci method, spatial grouping, finger method
- **Visual Mnemonics:** using pictures, visualization or imaginary
- **The Verbal Method:** group in or semantic mapping, story –telling or narrative chain
- **Physical Responses Methods:** Physical response method, physical sensation method

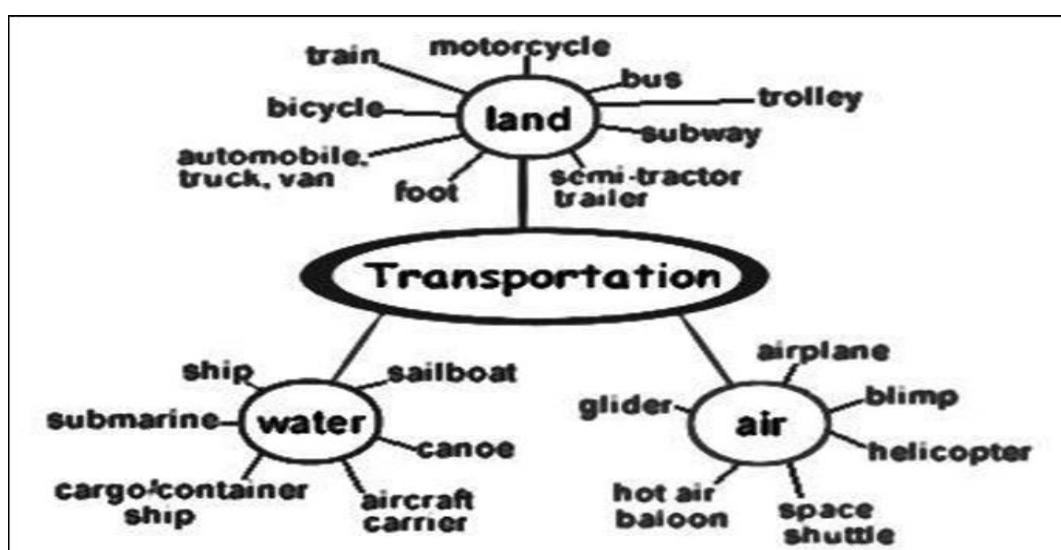
In my study, 3 techniques presented by Thompson (1987) will be adopted, namely: using pictures, semantic mapping and making-up stories. There are several reasons why I choose these techniques. First, these techniques are suitable for philological characteristics of my students. They are young learners, so most of them are active, imaginative and creative. Therefore, they tend to prefer learning with visual aids and stories. Second, time limit of a lesson (45 minutes) does not allow me to pilot all techniques. Finally, the use of these techniques does not require time and teaching aids such as projectors and pictures are available

#### **Using pictures**

Using pictures is not a new technique in teaching vocabulary in language classes. It can be used to show or exemplify the meaning of the lexical items as well as enable learners to learn, understand and utilize vocabulary in all aspects of their life. The practical effectiveness it brings to English learner cannot be denied. Allen (1983) stated that "for helping students to understand the meaning of a word, we often find that a picture is useful". Hill (1990) listed several advantages of pictures in term of availability (individual can get them on the internet, in any magazines, etc.); they are cheap, often free; they are personal (teacher selects them); easily kept - flexibility, worthwhile for different types of activities (drilling, comparing, and others), pictures are permanently various and stimulating, in other words they come in a variety of formats and styles and moreover the learner often wonders what comes next.

### **Semantic mapping**

There are various definitions about semantic mapping. Tateum (2007) defined it as the process for constructing visual displays of categories and their relationships. Avrianti (2015) stated that semantic mapping is one type of graphic organizers that relates with concept mapping. It is a visual strategy by graphic displaying words in categories and showing how they are related to one another. In simpler terms, it is a strategy visualizing meaning-based connections between words or concepts and other related words or concepts. It is very useful to help English as foreign language learners to identify and recall meanings of the target words.



### **Figure 2.1: An example of a sematic mapping**

The use of Semantic mapping in language class may offer many benefits such as: ensuring better vocabulary retention, increasing interaction and collaboration, boosting learners' independence and self-confidence and addressing learners' different learning styles

#### **Making-up stories**

One of the ways in creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere is by using stories to learn vocabulary. Learners can link target words together to make up their own stories. Stories are the products of imaginary and creativity, so they are likely to be kept in our brain longer. Cameron (2001) states “Stories offer a full imaginary world, created by the language, which allows learners to enter and enjoy as they learn language”. Making-up stories to recall vocabulary can offer an enjoyable learning environment for students to learn better because they are encouraged to use their imaginary and creativity to create a fantastic world which has a relation to their emotion and life experience. Moreover, using stories not only improves the students' vocabulary but also offer chances to practice language skills and grammar

#### **3.3 The models of teaching vocabulary with Mnemonic techniques.**

It is important for teachers to have effective vocabulary instructions to make a word from unknown to known and bring more depth and long-term retention into teaching. Related to vocabulary teaching strategies, Marzano, (2004) summarized six instructional steps to help students understand new vocabulary terms and remember what they have learned at a later date. The six steps are the followings. First, a student- friendly description, explanation, and example of the new term should be provided for learners. In this step, Marzano encouraged the use of stories, pictures and videos to exemplify the term. Second, students are asked to restate the description, explanation, or example in their own words. Third, students are requested to construct a picture, symbol, or graphic representation of the term. In the step 4, the instructor should engage students periodically in structured vocabulary discussions



that help them add to their knowledge of the terms in their vocabulary notebooks. In the step 5, he periodically asks students to return to their notebooks to discuss and refine entries. Lastly, students should be involved in games that allow them to play with terms. Garside (2017) mentioned 5 steps for teaching vocabulary which are similar to Marzano (2004). The first step is to contextualize new words to aid retention. He suggested inventing a story which includes the words one by one, and telling the story in class, pausing as the teachers reach the target words. In the second step, meaning should be presented before meaning. The presentation with gesture, mime and pictures could be used to further fix the target concepts of these words, next , the teacher create connection of newly taught words with similar words. Then word families should be built. Finally, recycling new vocabulary regularly for students retain what were taught is necessary. Although two frameworks above are different from the description and numbers of steps, they have some common points. Both researchers stimulated presenting vocabulary of pictures, maps and stories to exemplify the target words. Besides, consolidation is needed to recall newly- taught words and ensure the long- term vocabulary retention.

Some researchers adapted these frameworks on utilizing Mnemonics in vocabulary teaching. For example, Zarei (2013) implemented teaching vocabulary with Mnemonic Keyword Method with following steps: presented vocabulary, gave useful examples of the keyword method stages and made memorable mental images of the Persian keyword to the Persian definition of the English word, asked students to use the supplied keywords or created their own keywords and mental images and reviewed the vocabulary. Le (2016) taught vocabulary with acronyms (one of MT) with five steps: identifying the new words to be learned, showing teacher's acronyms, encouraging learners to create groups' acronyms in class, asking learners to create individual's acronyms and reviewing individual's acronyms before a new lesson.

In this study, procedures of teaching vocabulary with MT were built on the models for vocabulary teaching given by Marzano, (2004) and Garside (2017)

because the adaption of these steps has proved their effectiveness in previous research. Besides, they support vocabulary presentation with visual aids and stories, which are highly correlated with Mnemonic strategies in the study.

### **3.4. Previous studies on teaching vocabulary with Mnemonic techniques**

The effectiveness of using Mnemonic techniques was proven in many studies with subjects of different levels and backgrounds. The participants ranged from primary students to university students and various techniques were used to measure their effects on vocabulary retention. In this section, 5 relevant studies are mentioned.

The effects of environmental Mnemonic technique (EMT) on teaching vocabulary for young learners were examined in the study of Kusri (2011). 100 elementary students from 4 different classes in South Purwokerto Subdistrict participated in the study in 2 months. Most of them have found it difficult to memorize the newly-taught vocabularies. The study followed the procedure namely, pretest, teaching vocabulary with EMT and posttest. By analyzing the data, it could be seen that the result of posttest was higher than that of the pretest. Hence, the researcher came to the conclusion that EMT was effective to boost students' vocabulary memorization.

Siriganjanavong's study (2013) was carried out to investigate the use of techniques Mnemonic Keyword Method (MKM) to enhance students' retention of newly taught vocabulary in Thammasat University, Thailand. The study took place in 6 weeks with the participation of 44 first-year students with low English proficiency. Forty words chosen based on the syllable length and their frequency level were introduced to students, with half of them taught using MKM and the rest with mix method namely contextual clues, word structure analysis, and opposite word-pairs. Students' ability of memorizing vocabulary was measured by using pre-tests and post-tests for both methods. The findings revealed that compared to mixed methods, MKM could help students recall more words both in short-term and long-term memory, though its effectiveness reduced over time.

Le (2016) from Faculty of Foreign Languages, Dong Nai Technology University, Dong Nai, Viet Nam studied the use of acronyms (known as one most popular types of Mnemonic devices ) to increase English learners' vocabulary retention. 32 learners were chosen from in two elementary English classes at Dat Viet English Center to participate in the study during 5 weeks. The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative methods through using portfolios, sample tests and questionnaires to evaluate students' performance after learning English vocabulary with acronyms. The findings of his study revealed that by using acronyms, most learners learning vocabulary could remember vocabulary much better than they did in the previous course.

The study by Latiff (2016) was conducted with the participation of 33 primary students. The study took place during the two teaching and learning sessions .The vocabulary was introduced to the students with and without Mnemonics techniques. Then a set of questionnaires was administered to them. The data collected by questionnaire were coded and analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) Software. Besides, the researcher also made a class observation to record the reaction of the students while learning through mnemonics and during answering the questionnaire. Finally, he came to the conclusion that the learners were more interested in learning with vocabulary mnemonic technique compared to learning with traditional teaching techniques. They could also memorize more of English words with this technique.

Lestari (2017) investigated the use of MT to increase eighth grade students' vocabulary mastery in SMPN 2 Banyubiru, Indonesia. The subjects included 32 students who had difficulty in producing sentences and understanding the meaning of the words they wrote. The study was carried out in a month. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect data. Qualitative approach used in the research was observation. Quantitative approach consisted of pre-test and post-test. The result showed that the students achieved higher scores after the application of mnemonics technique in vocabulary teaching. In addition, mnemonics

technique could help the students become more creative and imaginative in learning vocabulary.

Although different Mnemonic techniques were applied, all of the studies draw the similar conclusions that they had good effects on students' vocabulary acquisition and retention. In term of methodology, most studies took common research steps. Pretest and posttest were used to find out whether students could retain vocabulary after the treatment or not. Questionnaire and observation were to determine their attitude and satisfaction to the use of Mnemonic techniques in vocabulary teaching and learning. However, most previous studies focus on the key word method while the effects of other Mnemonic techniques such as visualization, semantic mapping and stories have not been piloted. In addition, few researchers in Viet Nam have carried out studies on the use of Mnemonic techniques on vocabulary retention for lower secondary schools. All mentioned above help the researcher figure out the suitable methodology for the context research and have motivations to explore the various Mnemonic techniques in her study.

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

Chapter 2 reviewed the theoretical background of the study. This chapter presents a detailed discussion of methodological design of the study including: providing the characteristics of participants and discussing methods, research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis. The overall aim of the chapter is to show how the study was designed to answer the research questions.

#### **1. Participants**

The study involved 40 students of grade 6. Those students are studying at Phuc Triu Secondary School in Thai Nguyen City. All of them started learning English in grade 3 as a compulsory subject launched by National Foreign languages Project. Though they have been exposed to English for more than 3 years, learning vocabulary is one of their biggest challenges. From teacher' observation, most of them spend a lot of time on reading texts and asking teacher's about the meaning of familiar words.

The lack of vocabulary also makes them fail to express their idea in writing and speaking activities. The teacher often receives complaints about their difficulty in learning vocabulary such as forgetting words after learning, or having bad memory. Besides, the school is located far from the city center, so most of them could not have opportunities to access to sources of learning English on the Internet or courses in English Centers. Therefore, they are scared of learning English skills and vocabulary and suffer from a lot of pressure in English lessons. To deal with the problem, I find that necessary to apply different teaching vocabulary strategies, especially Mnemonic techniques to help them have more motivation in learning vocabulary and improve their vocabulary retention.

## **2. Research questions**

As discussed in chapter 1, the aims of the study were to find out students' improvement in vocabulary retention through using some Mnemonics techniques and explore students' attitudes towards using Mnemonics as learning vocabulary strategies. Three research questions were proposed below.

1. What is the students' vocabulary retention before and after the use of Mnemonic techniques in teaching vocabulary?
2. In what ways can Mnemonic techniques increase students' vocabulary retention?
3. What is the students' attitude toward the use of Mnemonic techniques?

## **3. Methods of the study**

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used collect data for the research. Quantitative methods include pretest and posttest which were used to figure out the difference of the pretest and the posttest as well as assess students' progress in vocabulary retention after the treatment. Qualitative methods include questionnaire and class observation to explore the attitude of learners toward Mnemonic techniques.

#### 4. Data collection instruments

In order to collect data for the study, the following instruments were employed, including pretest, posttest, questionnaires and class observation

##### 4.1. Pretest and posttest

A pretest and a posttest were designed in order to measure the vocabulary retention of students after they were exposed to MT in English lessons. The students' scores in the post- test were compared with that of students the pre-test with the same level to determine the effectiveness of the use of Mnemonic techniques in teaching vocabulary. Most of questions in both tests were taken from the book “Bai tap tieng Anh 6 “ by Luu Hoang Tri and “ Tieng Anh 6 thi diem” by Hoang Van Van. **The pretest** (see Appendix 1) was conducted before the treatment after students finished unit 6 and 7 in the textbook. No special techniques were applied in teaching vocabulary before. The teacher only made a list of new words in the lessons, then explained the meaning and asked students to note down. In the pretest, students were assigned to answer 20 questions to check their vocabulary retention. No grammar or language skills were mentioned in the tests. The pretest was divided into 2 parts. Each part was composed of 10 questions. In part one, students were required to write equivalent Vietnamese meanings of given words. This part was used to elicit students' ability to give meanings of words that they have learnt in the previous lessons. In part two, there were 10 multiple choice questions to check students' use of collocations. Each correct answer was given 0,5 point and the maximum score is therefore 10. The test duration was 20 minutes. **The posttest** (see Appendix 2) was conducted in the 6<sup>th</sup> week with the same design as the pretest. This test involved items of vocabulary of unit 8 and 9. The aim of this test was to measure students' capacity of memorizing vocabulary after intervention. The results of two tests were collected and entered SPSS software to analyze and compared. Then based on the statistical description, the researcher could find out whether there was the difference in vocabulary retention before and after the use of MT.

## 4.2. Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a useful tool for gathering information in research because it is efficient in terms of cost, effort, and time for researchers. In the study, the questionnaire was designed for students. It was composed of two parts (see Appendix 3). In part 1, there were 5 multiple choice questions. Students were required to determine their perception toward vocabulary learning through mnemonic techniques during the treatment. The information collected from this part was used to address the research question 2. Part 2 was constructed to assess the attitudes toward the using Mnemonic techniques. It has 5 ranked questions and 1 open-ended question. With the open-ended question, students could be free to show their opinions. They could provide anything as long as it related to the questions. The summary of the questionnaire for students is shown in the table below.

The purposes	Number of questions	Question types
Part 1: students' perception toward vocabulary learning through mnemonic techniques.	5	Multiple choice questions
Part 2: Students' attitudes toward the using Mnemonic techniques for vocabulary learning	5	ranked questions
	1	open-ended question

**Table 1: Summary of the questions in students' questionnaire**

The questionnaire was administered to 40 students, the researcher instructed participants how to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated

into Vietnamese to make it more accessible for the participants. Because the participants were 6 grade students, they might not understand all the questions in English clearly, so if the questionnaire was written in their mother tongue, it would help them complete the questionnaire more easily. During the questionnaire process, the researcher only gave instructions if students asked, she did not interfere anything to affect participants' selection. At last, the questionnaire was collected to analyse

### **4.3. Peer class observation**

The class peer observation was adapted from Seldin (2006) and designed in the open –ended form so that the observer could give more detailed feedback on the lessons. Feedback was given on the teacher's vocabulary teaching (material, explanation, class management attitude and feedback) and students' vocabulary learning (understanding, performance and attitudes). Due to time limit, only 4 lessons were under peer observation. By collecting and analyzing the information from the observation form, the researcher could figure out the weakness and strength of teaching and learning with Mnemonic techniques. Additionally, the attitude of students toward using MT was also revealed.

## **5. Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection was conducted within 7 weeks. The procedure of the study is shown in Table 2. On the first week, students took the pretest and were introduced about 3 Mnemonic techniques, namely using pictures, semantic mapping and making-up stories. Then the researcher used Mnemonic techniques in teaching vocabulary and related activities in the lesson to help students enhance their retention. The information about process of teaching and learning was noted down in the peer class observation forms. After 4 weeks, students took the posttest to check whether they improve their vocabulary retention or not. Then students were asked to fill in the questionnaire in week 7. Finally, data were collected to analyze and discuss before conclusions, implications and suggestions were made.



Time	Activities
Week 1	Subjects were administered the Pretest. Introduce about 3 Mnemonic techniques
Week 2	Intervention with MT
Week 3	Intervention with MT
Week 4	Intervention with MT
Week 5	Intervention with MT
Week 6	Subjects were administered the Posttest
Week 7	Subjects were asked to fill in the questionnaire
After week 7	Data were collected, scored and analyzed Conclusions, implications and suggestions were developed

**Table 2: The procedures of the study**

### 5.1 Teaching vocabulary procedures with Mnemonic techniques

From week 2 to week 5, students were taught the vocabulary in unit 8 and unit 9 of the book “Tieng Anh 6 tap 2” published by Vietnam Education Publishing House. Most of new words related to the topics *sports & games* and *cities in the world*. Steps of teaching vocabulary with MT were based on the models of vocabulary teaching of Marzano (2004) and Garside (2017) and shown clearly in the lesson plans (see Appendix 4). Lesson plans were chosen as the useful intervention instrument to find out the effectiveness of using MT to help students recall vocabulary and find out the student’s perception about the teaching activities using these techniques. A lesson plan with the use of MT in vocabulary teaching was presented below.

Stages	Activities

Warm- up	- Play games or review previous lessons through some activities
New lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the new words to be learned</li> <li>- Present vocabulary in the lessons with MT (using pictures or stories)</li> <li>- Teach pronunciation of new term and correct pronunciation mistakes if any</li> <li>- Check vocabulary through games or activities</li> <li>- Have students apply newly- learnt words to complete tasks in the textbook</li> </ul>
Consolidation & Homework	- Ask students to reconstruct a picture, stories, or semantic mapping of the at newly learnt words at home

**Table 3: A model lesson plan with the use of MT in vocabulary teaching adapted from Marzano (2004) and Garside (2017)**

## 6. Data analytical method

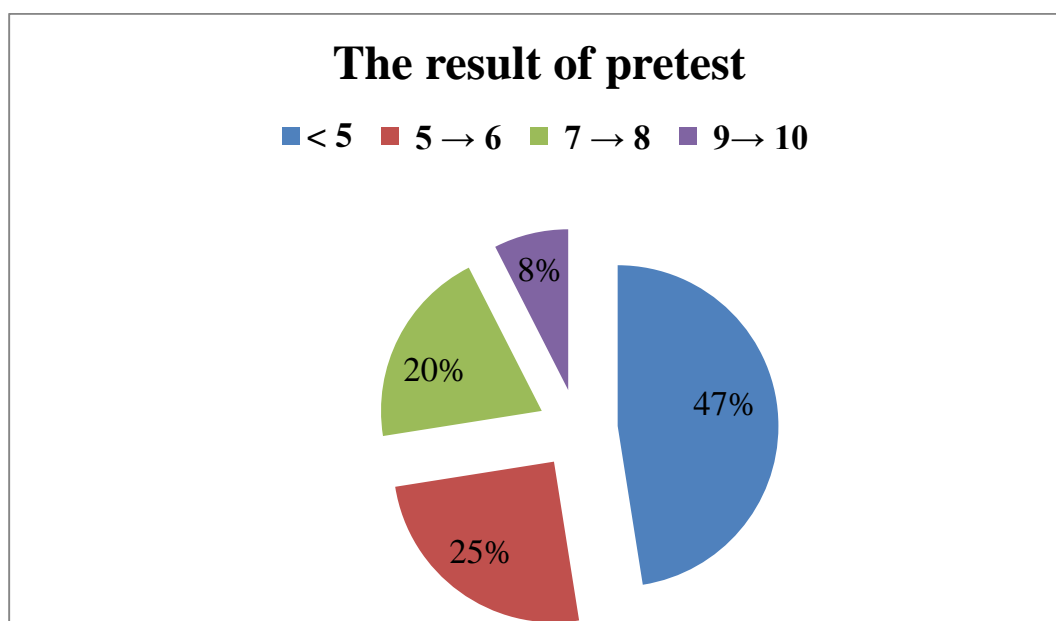
The data was collected from the tests and questionnaire during 7 weeks. Then, it were analyzed both quantitative and qualitative ways. To start with, the results of pretest and posttest were entered into the SPSS statistics software to see the difference between posttest and pretests. Base on the finding, the researcher could draw a conclusion on whether student’s vocabulary retention was enhanced or not. Besides, the data collected from the test and questionnaires was also presented in form of bars, charts and figures with the support of Excel program. Finally, the analyses of the classroom observation data were shown to provide information of what effects the Mnemonic techniques can bring to learners as well as learners’ attitude toward using MT in vocabulary teaching and learning.

In summary, this chapter presented the methodological issues of the study. It shows how the research was carried out to address the research questions. The data was collected via research instruments, namely pretest, posttest, questionnaire and class observation. The participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis were also presented in a descriptive way. The next chapter will analyse data collection from the research instruments.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Findings from pretest and posttest

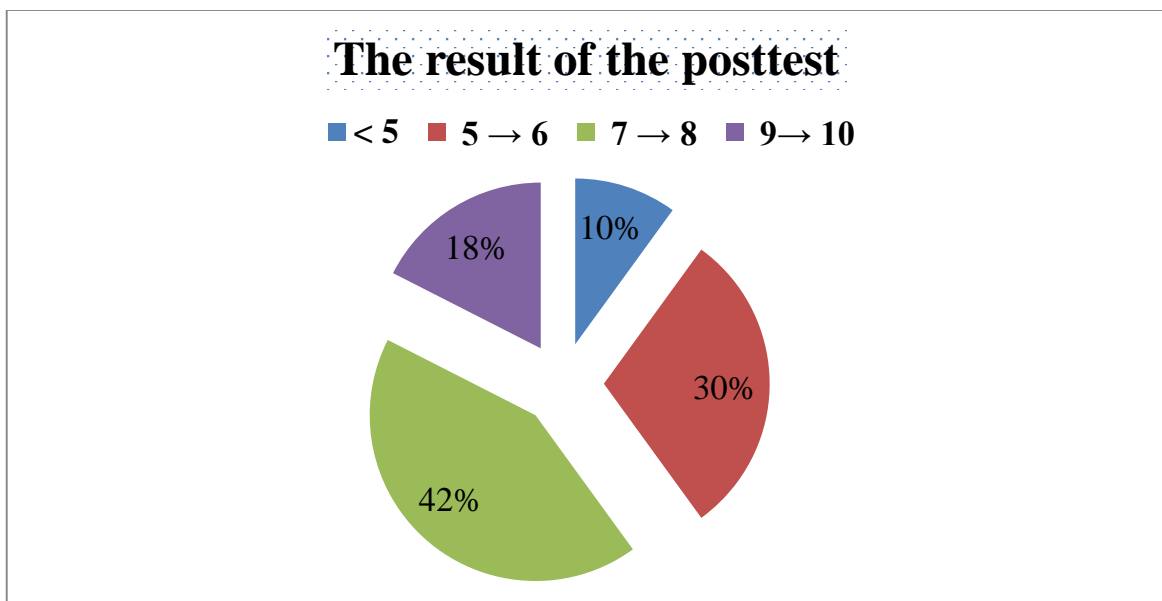
#### 1.1. The students' vocabulary retention before using Mnemonic techniques



**Figure 4.1: Result of the Pretest**

The pie chart shows 4 levels of scores that 40 students achieved in the pretest. Overall, first results of students were very poor. Nearly half (47%) of students got bad scores (below 5) for the pretest. The students whose scores were average (from 5 to 6) accounted for 25%. Whereas, only a fifth of students got quite good scores (from 7 to 8) and there was a very small percentage of students (8%) who got very good scores (from 9 to 10). It can be concluded that their vocabulary retention was not good when no special techniques were used in teaching vocabulary.

### 1.2. Students' vocabulary retention after using Mnemonic techniques



**Figure 4.2: Result of the posttest**

Figure 4.2 illustrates a positive change in the scores of students in the post test. The percentage of students with bad score (below 5) decreased considerably by 40% while the percentage of very good scores rose from 8% to 18%. Whereas, there was a slight increase on the numbers of students who obtained the average scores, (from 25% to 30%). The percentage of students whose scores were quite good (7-8) doubled with 42% in the post test. In general, many students got better scores on the posttest, which indicates that using Mnemonic techniques could help their vocabulary retention.

### 1.3. The difference in students' vocabulary retention before and after using Mnemonic techniques

	N	Total score	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Pretest	40	10	1	9	5.12
Post test	40	10	2	10	7.02

**Table 4: The overall descriptive data of the tests**

As observed in the table, the mean score of the posttest (7,02) is significantly higher than that of the pretest (5,12). In the post test, no students got 10, but they did in the posttest. The minimum score also increased from 1 to 2.

However, not all students made improvement in the posttest, shown the table 5. There were 2 students receiving lower scores in the post-test, which was accounted for 5% of the total test takers. Also, two students got the same scores in both tests, namely 7 and 9.

No	Pretest	Posttest
5	9	9
9	9	7
17	7	7
33	4	2

**Table 5: Students with lower scores and unchanged scores in the posttest**

Based on this evidence, the conclusion could be drawn that most students' vocabulary retention has been improved considerably by using Mnemonic techniques, but not all students benefited from these techniques.

### 3.1. Comparison of pre-test and post-test scores in term of ability to give meaning of words

	N	Total score	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Pre-test (giving meaning)	40	5	1	4	2.33
Post-test (giving meaning)	40	5	1	5	3.55

**Table 6: The overall descriptive data of ability to give meaning of words**

As can be seen from this table, for the first sections of the pretest and the posttest which were designed to check students' ability to give meaning of words in the previous units, the mean for the first part of the posttest (2,33) was higher 1,22 points than that of the pretest, The minimum score of this part in the pretest is 1 and the maximum is 4 whereas the minimum score of that for the posttest is 1 and the maximum score is 5. As a result, there is a considerable increase in student's capacity of giving meaning after treatment.

### 3.2 Comparison of pre-test and post-test scores in term of ability to remember collocations

	N	Total score	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Pretest (collocation)	40	5	1	4	2.79
Posttest (collocation)	40	5	1	5	3.47

**Table 7: The overall descriptive data of ability to remember collocations**

Relating to collocations, as shown in the table, the posttest mean score was 2.79, a bit higher than pretest mean score (3.47). The minimum score for both tests is 1. However, the maximum score rose from 4 for the pre- test to 5 for the post-test.

It can be concluded that there is a little improvement in ability of using collocations of students

### 1.3.3. Paired sample T-test

		Paired Differences					Sig.(2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
					Lower	Upper	
Pair 1	Pretest Post test	-1.900	1.236	.195	-2.295	-1.505	.000

**Table 8. Paired sample T-test**

In this part, paired sample T- test was used to test the assumption of whether there is a statistical difference between the pretest scores and posttest overall scores or not. The statistics was processed by SPSS software and shown in the table 3. After analyzing the data in the table, the assumption of the pre-test mean is equal to the post-test mean was rejected (Sig = .000 < 0,05 ). Thus, it can be concluded that there was a difference in the results of the pretest and the posttest.

In conclusion, posttest mean scores were 1.9 points higher than pretest mean scores. It suggests that using Mnemonic techniques could enable most students to enhance their vocabulary retention, especially ability to remember the meaning of words and collocations. In detail, the most considerable improvement came from ability to giving meaning of words with a positive increase of mean score 2,33 in the pretest to 3,55 in the posttest , up to 1,22 score. In contrast, students made a slower improvement in their abilities to remember collocations, only up to 0.68. However, the data also indicates that not all students benefit from Mnemonics techniques. Some of students got lower scores in the posttest, which shows that they did not improve their vocabulary retention. Some did well in the both test, which indicates that MT did not have effects on their vocabulary retention. The reasons for this might be related to the limitations of using Mnemonics techniques, which might be found in the questionnaire and class observation.

## 2. Findings from questionnaire

### 2.1 Students' perceptions toward vocabulary learning through the Mnemonic techniques used in the study.

Mnemonics techniques can .....	Using picture	Semantic mapping	Making-up stories
1. help you retain meaning of words better and longer	37.5%	32.5%	30.0%
2. help you remember collocations better	22.5%	45%	32.5%
3. help you improve at least a language skill	20.0%	37.5%	42.5%
4. help you improve grammar	17.5%	30%	52.5%
5. save you more time and effort to remember	30%	45%	25%

**Table 9: Students' perceptions toward vocabulary learning with MT**

The table reveals students' perception toward effectiveness of 3 Mnemonic techniques used in the lessons based on 5 criteria. In term of meaning of words, using pictures was as the most useful technique to help students remember meaning of words with the voting of 37.5 % students. Semantic mapping ranked second with 32.5% and making up stories came third with 30%. Relating to collocations, 45% students highly evaluated effects of semantic mapping while 32.5% of students opted for making –up stories. Of 3 techniques, using pictures seems to be the least effective in helping students remember collocations. Regarding the language skills and grammar, making up stories was chosen as the most effective with highest number of students (17 and 21, respectively). It was followed by Semantic mapping and using picture with the smallest voters (8 and 7, respectively). Probably, making up stories requires students to use more vocabulary and grammar to write stories. Therefore,



this technique is supposed to help boost language skills better than other techniques. The last criteria mentioned in the survey are time and efforts students spend on learning vocabulary with the help of these techniques. Semantic mapping seem to be the most time-saving for students with the highest voting of 45%. Using pictures got lower percentage with 30% and only 20% students thought that making up stories did not take them a lot of time and effort.

To sum up, 3 Mnemonic techniques above can be beneficial to students to a certain extent. Using pictures was evaluated as the best way to remember words. Most of students could learn more collocations and save time to learn vocabulary with Semantic mapping. Making up stories is believed to help students boost their language skills and grammar.

## 2.2. Students' attitude toward using Mnemonic techniques in English lessons

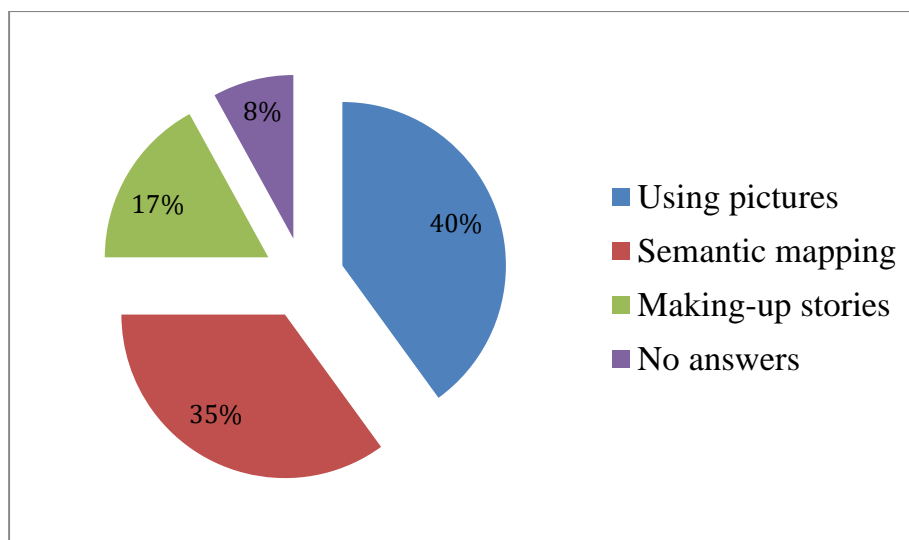
Items	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
6. You are interested in the Mnemonic techniques introduced by the teacher	10%	27.5%	62.5%
7 After using these Mnemonic techniques, learning vocabulary become more interesting and much easier	25%	25%	50%
8. You become more creative and self-motivated after learning vocabulary with MT	17.5%	27.5%	55%
9 .These techniques might help you learn other subjects like (history, geography..) better	45%	20%	35%
10. You are expecting to use Mnemonics techniques to recall vocabulary in next units	20%	25%	55%

**Table 10: Students' opinion on Mnemonic techniques in English lessons**

As presented, most students (62.5%) showed their interest in Mnemonic techniques introduced by the teacher while 10% responded that they were not fond of them. The rest (27.5%) considered these techniques normal. A majority of students

found learning vocabulary more interesting and much easier thanks to using Mnemonic techniques. The strong evidence was that these students accounted for 50% while groups with disagreement and neutral views had same number of students, making up for 25% for each. Many students thought that Mnemonic techniques gave them more creativity and more self-motivation in learning with the great supporting of 55 %. Only few students denied that benefit. When being asked about whether these techniques might help them learn other subjects or not, 45% thought these techniques couldn't help and 35% students were more optimistic about the effectiveness of these techniques on other subjects. Regarding to use Mnemonics techniques to recall vocabulary in next units, more than half of students believed they would continue to use these techniques to remember vocabulary while a fifth had no intention to do it.

In question 11, students were asked about their favorite techniques and the reasons for them. 92% students gave answers while the rest didn't express their opinions. The answer is illustrated in the pie chart below



**Figure 4.3: Result of question 11**

Using pictures and Semantic mapping were the techniques students like most, with the selection of 40% and 35% students while fewer students (17%) liked making up stories. Here were some reasons they gave for their choices.

*“I like using pictures because drawing pictures to learn new words is really fun. “. SS1*

*“Using pictures is my favourite one. Drawing pictures help me remember words longer than writing them again and again”. SS2*

*“I like semantic mapping most. New words seem to stay in my mind longer if I make a map of new words by myself”. SS3*

*“I like making up stories because making up a story is fun way to memorize words. I often have a lot of good ideas with new words”. SS 4*

The finding in question 11 shows that the Mnemonic techniques could correlate to Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983). Students who found using pictures and semantic mapping more effective may belong to group of picture smart while those who prefer to make up stories may be smart at words.

To sum up, the data illustrates that most of the students has positive attitude towards the using Mnemonic techniques in learning vocabulary. They became more creative and self- motivated in vocabulary learning. Besides, many of them were optimistic about the use of MT to enhance their memory capacity not only in English but also in other subjects which requires them to absorb a huge amount of information like History and Geography. One noticeable finding from the questionnaire is that the Mnemonic techniques (using pictures, semantic mapping and making-up stories) seemed to match with learning styles of many students. This is why they performed better in the posttest and increased their vocabulary retention. Nevertheless, there are some students who are not mindful of the use Mnemonic techniques.

### **3. Findings from class observation**

The information of class observation was gathered from peer class observation form. After collecting data from the observation, the strengths and the limitations of the lessons with MT were presented below

In term of teachers' teaching, teacher was well- prepared for most of the lessons. Here are some positive feedback on preparation and teaching “*With*

*handouts, projectors and pictures, teaching and learning process become more interesting and accessible for most learners” or “Teaching materials is appropriate for students’ levels and the aims of the lesson”*. The teacher gave a clear presentation vocabulary with the support of pictures and PowerPoint. The use of pictures, especially telling stories drew students’ attention and maintained their interest in vocabulary learning. Class management including pair- work and group- works was under teacher’s control. Teacher was friendly and supportive. *“She responds to student wrong answers and misunderstandings constructively and treats class members equitably and respectfully”*

Relating to student’s learning, most of students were attentive during the lessons and excited about the vocabulary techniques used by the teacher, especially in making-up stories because it could stimulate students’ creativity and imaginary. When working in pairs or groups, they were collaborative and brave to ask teacher for more explanation if any. Task performance became better when students got familiar with MT. *“Students completed the tasks more quickly than they did the previous lessons. Their work also showed more creativity”* More students were willing to show their answers in class than before.

However, there were some limitations in process of teaching and learning with MT which were noted down during observation. First, apart from students who were interested in the lessons, there were some who did not concentrate on the lessons. They sometimes made noise, which distracted other students from their studies. Besides, there were some slow learners who found it difficult to keep pace with their classmates. For example, when using the techniques making-up stories, many students complained that they were unable to finish the tasks in time because their lack of grammar and ideas. Second, the teacher should pay more attention to time control for each lesson because there were some unfinished tasks that students had to complete at home. Third, she needed to give more detailed correction and feedback to student’s task performance so that they could learn lesson from their mistakes.

To sum up, the findings from class observation were quite similar to the data collected in students' questionnaires. A majority of students were quite fond of the using Mnemonic techniques in teaching and learning vocabulary and the application of such techniques also creates more motivations for students to learn English better.

#### **4. Discussion**

In this part, both similarity and difference of the present study and previous studies would be discussed. Also, theoretical background and methodology are used to explain the findings.

There are some similarities between the present study and the previous ones. To begin with, like many previous studies, the data of this study was basically collected through pretest, posttest, peer class observation and questionnaire to explore the effects of MT on students who had difficulty in vocabulary learning and language skills. Second, after the treatment with Mnemonic techniques in vocabulary learning and teaching, the researcher came to the conclusion about students' considerable improvement in their vocabulary retention after using MT in learning vocabulary, which was similar to what Le (2016) and Azmi (2016) found out in their studies. In particular, this study was highly correlated to the study of Sirigajannavong (2013) in term of findings in posttest. Both studies show that although majority of students enhanced their vocabulary memorization, there were some exceptional cases in which some students performed well in both tests or they did not show any improvement after intervention. Third, most previous showed that students become more motivated in vocabulary learning after using MT. This positive change was in line with the finding of questionnaire and observation in the study.

However, there were some noticeable difference related to findings and methodology that needs to be taken into consideration. Only by using the result of pretest and posttest, Sirigajannavong (2013) failed to explain why students' vocabulary retention did not meet researcher's expectation. In accordance with Sirigajannavong (2013), other researcher only mentioned about limitations of MT,

but did not shed light on them. In this study, the addition of peer class observation, questionnaires, and the discussion about learning styles, especially Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence (1983) allowed the researcher to figure out that utilizing Mnemonic techniques might not match learning styles of all students in the same class. The bias toward using pictures and stories in this study seems to benefit more learners who are smart at pictures and words. Additionally, the observation shows that some students did not study attentively during the lessons. This might cause them to make slow progress in retaining vocabulary. For those who performed well in both tests, they are likely to have natural intelligence or linguistic intelligence as Gardner (1983) mentioned, so they can remember vocabulary very well regardless of their exposure to any vocabulary teaching techniques. Another difference between this study and others is related to methodology. In this study, three Mnemonic techniques were used at the same time to help students recall vocabulary while most of previous studies used only one technique. The utilizing various MT could be beneficial for many students in a same class than use one technique. Relating to research design, the researcher chose one-group pretest-posttest design like what Le (2016) did in his research while other studies like Latiff (2016) and Sirigajannavong (2013) used control group and experimental group design. Making the comparison between 2 groups with and without MT like some researchers had done before made the findings of their studies more convincing. Therefore, to deal with the limitations of one-group pretest - posttest design, the researcher added more instruments like questionnaire and peer class observation in open-ended form to value the effect of Mnemonic techniques more exactly.

In conclusion, from the findings of research instruments including pretest, posttest, observation and questionnaire, the researcher could draw the conclusion about the effectiveness of MT on students' vocabulary retention as well as their friendly attitude toward MT. Additionally, some comparisons between the present study and previous studies were made to see the similarities and differences in results and methodology.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The previous chapter analysed data from the tests, the students' questionnaire and class observation. This chapter will provide the conclusions. Then, the implications will be made for the English teaching and learning. Next, the limitations will draw some existing problems in the study and the suggestions will be made for further studies based on the limitations and research findings.

### **1. Conclusion**

This study aimed to investigate the effects of Mnemonic techniques on students' vocabulary retention and students' attitude toward the use of these techniques. Majority of students in the study had difficulty in vocabulary learning, which causes them to fail to acquire language skills. The study was conducted in 7 weeks. Data of the study was collected via the pretest, posttest, questionnaire and class observation. The major findings of the study were briefly discussed below:

Firstly, based on the finding that the mean score of the posttest was much higher than that of the pretest, it could be claimed that Mnemonic techniques can effectively enhance students' vocabulary retention after the exposure. With the help of MT, students made great progress in remembering both the meaning of words and collocations. Nevertheless, most students remembered the meaning of words better than collocations.

Secondly, from the questionnaire and class observation, it can be seen that a majority of students showed their positive attitude to the use of MT. Students became more creative and self-motivated in vocabulary learning. Many of them were expecting to use more various MT techniques in the next English lessons and they appreciated the application of MT in learning other subjects. In terms of students'

perception toward learning vocabulary with MT, using pictures was believed to be the an effective way to remember words. Most of students could learn more collocations and save time to learn vocabulary with Semantic mapping. Making up stories is thought to help students boost their language skills and grammar. Hence, the conclusion can be drawn that teaching vocabulary with MT has made a positive change in the way students learn and recall vocabulary.

During the teaching- learning process, most students were more attentive and enthusiastic to participate in the lesson than before. They became more confident in communication and had more interaction with the teacher than before. As the result, many of them could recall more words after the lessons. In particular, the findings of questionnaire also show that students appreciated using pictures as the best way to remember words while semantic mapping could help them learn more collocations and save time to learn vocabulary with. Making up stories is believed to help students boost language skill and grammar.

Thirdly, despite the teacher's efforts on improve students' vocabulary retention with MT, some students' results did not meet her expectation. They did not make any progress in vocabulary learning. This might result from their distraction in English lessons and the use of pictures and stories in teaching process which did not match their learning styles.

From the analyzing all findings, it can be concluded, the use of MT enhanced student's vocabulary retention, especially in ability of remembering meaning. Also, a large number of students showed satisfaction toward the utilizing and feel more motivated in learning vocabulary. However, the study pointed out that using MT for teaching and learning vocabulary had some drawbacks such as lack of feedback from teacher or the integrating MT with other language skills.

## **2. Pedagogical implications**

Based on the conclusion above, this section will provides some pedagogical suggestions for using Mnemonic techniques in teaching and learning vocabulary.



## **2.1 For English teachers**

Teachers are the language instructors. Therefore, they need to innovate as well as apply many new teaching techniques to meet the students' requirement in learning English. For vocabulary teaching, it is advisable for teachers to adopt various Mnemonic techniques in teaching vocabulary in language classes. By using different techniques, teachers could figure out the most suitable and effective ones to help students memorize vocabulary better. Also, it is necessary that the teachers should have knowledge of learning styles because learn styles can have great influence on the ways students learn vocabulary. If they will be able to arm students with vocabulary learning strategies which are suitable for their learning styles, their vocabulary acquisition may be improved

Mnemonic techniques utilized to teach vocabulary should be designed to boost student's language skills especially speaking and writing skills. Making the connection between teaching vocabulary and developing skills enables students to improve their English in use better.

Teachers should create a relaxing, pleasurable and friendly learning atmosphere to foster students' active engagement. A better atmosphere in English lessons could make their attitude toward learning vocabulary change for the better. Therefore, teaching- and learning vocabulary will be more effective.

## **2.2. For students**

It is better for the students to be active and creative in teaching and learning vocabulary process. They should be brave to ask for any explanation or support in English lessons as well as express their own opinion about teaching vocabulary. This is because their reactions and feedback toward the use of MT for teachers to make necessary adjustment to teaching process.

They should develop their own vocabulary learning strategies. Vocabulary learning strategies are necessary for self- studying at home without the instruction of

teachers. If the students have good strategies, they could improve their vocabulary acquisition and retention.

### **3. Limitations of the study**

Although many efforts were made to complete this study, drawbacks were inevitable. Limited time and knowledge did not allow the researcher to cover all aspects of this matter in her study. In addition, the study was carried out with a participation of a small number of students (40 students of grade 6), the findings might not represent all students at Phuc Triu Lower Secondary School.

The study used a one-group pretest-posttest design, so it might pose a question whether the improvement in vocabulary retention is actually due to the use of Mnemonic techniques or the nature of learning. Hence, the study should be replicated by using control and experimental groups to determine the effectiveness of MT

### **4. Suggestions for further studies**

Since there are many types of Mnemonic techniques, each type should be tested in order to empirically determine which type is more suitable for a particular group of learners in helping them memorize vocabulary.

The research was conducted at Phuc Triu Lower Secondary School with the small population of 40 students over a short period of time. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all lower secondary schools. It is advisable that a larger and further research should be undertaken with more participants.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**PRETEST**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** 6A

<b>Score</b>
--------------

**I. Give Vietnamese equivalent meanings of these word phrases**

<b>Word phrases</b>	<b>Vietnamese Equivalent meaning</b>
1. Celebration	
2. Family gathering	
3. Tradition	
4. First footer	
5. Local television	
6. Educational	
7. Entertaining	
8. Comedy	
9. Programme	

10. Channel	
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**II. Choose the correct answer A ,B, C or D to finish the sentences**

- VTV1 is a \_\_\_\_\_ television channel in VietNam  
A. educational      B. local      C. national      D. entertaining
- What is your \_\_\_\_\_ TV programme?- “ It’s cartoon”  
A. good      B. best      C. like      D. favourite
- Disney Chanel is one of the most \_\_\_\_\_ channels \_\_\_\_\_ children  
A. good- for      B. popular- with      C. exciting –for      D. boring - with
- That TV channel attracts millions of TV \_\_\_\_\_ because it offers many different interesting programme  
A. visitors      B. viewers      C. watchers      D. listeners
- My father likes watching sports \_\_\_\_\_ on VTV3  
A. match      B.channels      C.events      D. audience
- In London people cheer and sing when the clock \_\_\_\_\_ midnight on New Year’s Eve.  
A. gets      B.strikes      C.sees      D.goes
- On new year’s day, children \_\_\_\_\_ lucky money \_\_\_\_\_ red envelope.  
A. get – in      B.ask – on      C.take –at      D.have – with
- Children should help their parents \_\_\_\_\_ their house with flowers and pictures  
A. repaint      B make      C. decorate      D. do
- January 1<sup>st</sup> is a day when people in Europe and America \_\_\_\_\_ New Year  
A. see      B. remember      C. celebrate      D. spend
- I wish you a \_\_\_\_\_ life and \_\_\_\_\_ heath  
A. long- best      B. big- good      C. long- good      D happy- bad



**APPENDIX 2**  
**POSTTEST**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class: 6A**

<b>Score</b>
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**I. Give Vietnamese equivalent meanings of these word phrases**

<b>Word phrases</b>	<b>Vietnamese Equivalent meaning</b>
1. Profesional	
2. Racket	
3. Well-known	
4. Goggle	
5. Skis	
6. Continient	
7. Capiptal	
8. Popular	

9. Place of interest	
10. Symbol	

## II. Choose the correct answer A ,B, C or D to finish the sentences

- I \_\_\_\_\_ aerobics and weight training at the gym in my free time  
A. play                      B. go                      C. make                      D. do
- Football is \_\_\_\_\_ as the most popular sport in the world  
A. regarded              B. said                      C. played                      D. won
- When it is hot, I often \_\_\_\_\_ swimming with my uncle  
A. walk                      B. go                      C. do                      D. play
- Phong \_\_\_\_\_ three goals for our team and made it a hat trick.  
A. scored                      B. won                      C. lost                      D. played
- Pele began his \_\_\_\_\_ at the age of 15 when he started to played for Santos Football Club  
A. interest                      B. career                      C. dream                      D. work
- The air is getting more \_\_\_\_\_ because there is more smokes from factories and motorbike  
A. exciting                      B. polluted                      C. friendly                      D. noisy
- That city is famous \_\_\_\_\_ its fashion shops  
A. with                      B. about                      C. in                      D. for
- New York is an \_\_\_\_\_ city with many skyscrapers  
A. modern                      B. fast                      C. good                      D. old
- Pho is the most \_\_\_\_\_ food I've tasted  
A. interesting                      B. delicious                      C. favorite                      D. noisy
- Britain's most popular \_\_\_\_\_ is fish and chips  
A. drink                      B. food                      C. film                      D. place

**APPENDIX 3**  
**STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear students,

This survey questionnaire is designed for my research **on mnemonic techniques to students' vocabulary retention at Phuc Triu Lower Secondary School** . I would be grateful if you could spend some of your precious time completing this questionnaire. All the information provided by you is solely for the study purpose and you will not be identified in any discussion of the data. Please use either English or Vietnamese.

**Part 1. What is your perception toward vocabulary learning through the Mnemonic techniques used in the study? Put a tick on your opinion**

Mnemonics techniques can	Using picture	Semantic mapping	Making-up stories
1. help you retain meaning of words better and longer			
2. help you remember collocations better			
3. help you improve at least a language skill			

4. help you improve grammar			
5. save you more time and effort to remember			

**Part 2: What is your attitude toward using Mnemonic techniques in learning vocabulary? Put a tick on your opinion**

Items	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
6. You like the Mnemonic techniques introduced by the teacher			
7. After using these Mnemonic techniques, learning vocabulary become easier			
8. You become more creative and self-motivated			
9. These techniques might help you learn other subjects like (history, geography..) better			
10. You are expecting to use more Mnemonics techniques in the future			

11. Among Mnemonic techniques (using pictures, Semantic mapping and making-up stories) , which one do you like best? Why?

.....

**Thank you very much for your cooperation**

## **BẢNG CÂU HỎI DÀNH CHO HỌC SINH**

### **Gửi các em học sinh.**

Phiếu điều tra này được thực hiện nhằm mục đích nghiên cứu các kỹ thuật Mnemonic techniques đối với việc ghi nhớ từ vựng của học sinh lớp 6 trường THCS Phúc Trìu. Những thông tin mà em cung cấp rất cần thiết và quan trọng đối với khảo sát này. Những thông tin đó chỉ sử dụng cho nghiên cứu này chứ không dùng cho mục đích nào khác, và thông tin cá nhân của các em sẽ được bảo mật.

Chân thành cảm ơn các em !

**Câu hỏi 1-5 dùng để khảo sát về nhận thức của các em về hiệu quả các phương pháp Mnemonic trong việc học từ vựng. Em hãy đánh dấu tick vào sự lựa chọn của em**

Các kỹ thuật Mnemonic có thể:	Dùng tranh ảnh	Dùng sơ đồ ngữ nghĩa	Tạo ra các câu chuyện
1. Giúp em nhớ nghĩa của các từ tốt hơn và lâu hơn			
2. Giúp em nhớ các cách kết hợp từ (collocations) tốt hơn			
3. Giúp em cải thiện ít nhất một kỹ năng ngôn ngữ (nghe, nói, đọc, viết)			

4. Giúp em cải thiện ngữ pháp			
5. Tiết kiệm nhiều thời gian và công sức để ghi nhớ từ			

**Câu hỏi 6-11 dùng để khảo sát thái độ của các em đối với việc sử dụng kỹ thuật Mnemonic trong các giờ học Tiếng Anh**

	Không đồng ý	Bình thường	Đồng ý
6. Em cảm thấy thích các kỹ thuật Mnemonics mà giáo viên đã dùng trong giờ học Tiếng Anh			
7. Sau khi sử dụng các kỹ thuật này, em thấy việc học từ vựng trở nên dễ dàng và thú vị hơn			
8. Em trở nên sáng tạo và năng động hơn sau khi học từ vựng với các kỹ thuật này			
9. Những kỹ thuật này có thể giúp em học các môn khác như (lịch sử, địa lý) tốt hơn			
10. Em mong muốn tiếp tục sử dụng các kỹ thuật này để học từ vựng trong các giờ học Tiếng Anh tiếp theo			

11. Trong các kỹ thuật Mnemonics ( dùng tranh ảnh, sơ đồ ngữ nghĩa và tạo ra các câu chuyện), em thích kỹ thuật nào nhất?. Tại sao?

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#### APPENDIX 4

### Classroom Visit Observation Form (Open-Ended)

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Observer \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of students present \_\_\_\_\_

Date/time of observation \_\_\_\_\_ Class: 6A

**NOTE:**

*This form provides 2 areas for observation, and may be used by the observer to record feedback during the classroom visit. The observer is encouraged to provide feedback for each area of the instructor's teaching practices which was observed.*

<b>I. Teacher's vocabulary teaching</b>	<b>Observer's description/ feedback</b>
1. Preparation for teaching materials	
2. Class management	
3. Vocabulary instruction	
4. Interaction with students	
5. Attitudes toward students	
6. Feedback on students' work	
<b>II. Students' vocabulary learning</b>	
7. Involvement in tasks	
8. Attention	
9. Task performance	
10. Interaction with teachers	

11. Attitudes toward the use of Mnemonic techniques	
12. Feedback on students' work	

## APPENDIX 5

### LESSON PLAN

#### UNIT 9: CITIES OF THE WORLD

##### *Lesson 1: Getting started*

**1. Objectives.** By the end of the lesson, Ss will be able to:

- Use the lexical items related to the topic “Cities of the world”
- Use the vocabulary and structures to describe cities and landmarks

**1.1. Language focus:**

- Vocabulary: *continent, place of interest, capital, population, popular drink*
- Structure: The present perfect

**1.2. Anticipated problems:** Some Ss may lack vocabulary to communicate and complete the tasks

**1.3. Attitude:** Ss take part in the activities seriously and study attentively

**1.4. Skills:** speaking, reading, listening

**2. Teaching aids:** Textbooks, pictures, tape and handouts.



**3. Procedures:**

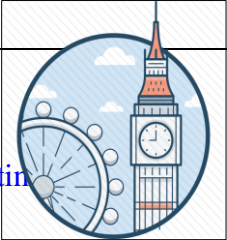
**3.1. Organization:** 6a: .....                      6b: .....

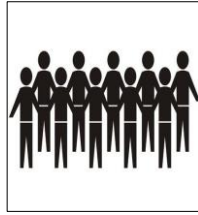
**3.2. New lesson:**

Stages/ Time	Interaction	Activities
Warm-up (2')	T- C	- T shows a picture of a city. Ask students to guess where it is



		 <p>Key : London( England)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- T asks more questions about England</li> <li>- <i>Do you know anything about London?</i></li> <li>- T introduces the topic of new lesson</li> </ul>
<p><b>New lesson</b> <b>(30)</b></p>	<p>T- C</p>	<p><b>Vocabulary teaching</b></p> <p>Before Ss read the dialogue, T presents the vocabulary to students through an imaginary flight to England and pictures (using Power Point)</p> <p><b>Target words:</b> <i>continent, place of interest, capital, population, popular drink</i></p> 





**Over 53 million Big Ben/ London Gherkin  
Tea**

*Guys, fasten your seatbelt the flight number 0000 is going to land England - the part of the United Kingdom on European **continent**. Let's me tell you something about this beautiful country. **The population** is over 53 million people. **The capital** is London. England has many **places of interest** such as Big Ben, The London Eye or London Gherkin – an unusual **egg- shaped building**. Tea is the most **popular drink** in England.*

T-S

- When tell a story , T pauses at the target words for students to guess the meaning
- T writes down words on the board and have students repeat
- T corrects the pronunciation mistakes if any
- Then T checks vocabulary by pointing at the pictures then call on students to say aloud the target words

**Task 1: Listen and read**

- Ask SS questions about the pictures:

*What are Mai and Tom doing?*

*What are they looking at?*

- Ss look at the picture and answer the questions.



	P-W	<p>3. <i>Africa</i>                      4. <i>North America</i></p> <p>5. <i>South America</i>      6. <i>Australia</i></p> <p>7. <i>Antarctica</i></p> <p>- T checks as the whole class</p> <p>- T elicits the Vietnamese meanings</p> <p>- T asks students some questions about countries and continents. For example:</p> <p><i>Which continent is England in?</i></p> <p><i>Which continent is Vietnam in?</i></p> <p><b>Task 4. Match the words in the blue box to the names of the places in the yellow box</b></p> <p>-T has students read aloud the words in the blue box and asks for recalling the meaning of words before doing the tasks.</p> <p>- Ss work in pairs and report the answer</p> <p>- T checks and feedback</p> <p>Key:</p> <p><i>a. Asia, Africa</i></p> <p><i>b. Sweden, the USA</i></p> <p><i>c. Ha Noi, Nha Trang, Amsterdam, Liverpool</i></p> <p><i>d. Ha Noi, Amsterdam</i></p> <p><i>e. Ben Thanh market, the Louvre</i></p>
<p><b>Consolidation &amp; homework (13)</b></p>	St	<p><b>Task 5: Base on the information in task 4, design an info graphic of any country in the world. Then introduce your info graphic to your classmate</b></p>

	T-C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- T shows a sample of info graphic of Vietnam to students, asks them to design their own info-graphic and introduce about their products.</li> <li>- T encourages Ss to use the target words (<i>continent, place of interest, capital, population, popular drink</i>) to build the info graphics</li> <li>- T goes around the class to give supports</li> <li>- T instructs SS to give an individual presentation about their info graphic</li> </ul> <p><i>Sample: Hello, everyone. I am going to show you an info graphic of our country. Vietnam is in Asia with the population of 97 million people. Ha Noi is the capital of Vietnam. Vietnam has many places of interest such as Ha Long Bay, Hue Citadel. The Vietnamese like drinking green tea and beer. Rice is the most popular food in Vietnam</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- T asks Ss to finish their info-graphics at home then check them in the next lesson</li> <li>- T reminds SS to do homework and be ready for <b>A CLOSER LOOK 1.</b></li> </ul>
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#### 4. Evaluation

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