

**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**

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**Supervisor: Dr. Ngo Van Giang**

**THAI NGUYEN – 2019**

## **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