EST Students and Vocabulary Learning Strategies: A Preliminary Investigation

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May 2004

ABSTRACT

Vocabulary learning strategies for the present investigation have been defined as "any set of techniques or learning behaviours, which EST students reported using in order to discover the meaning of a new word, to retain the knowledge of newly-learned words, or to expand their knowledge of English vocabulary".

The present investigation is a preliminary study of vocabulary learning strategy use of students learning English for Science and Technology at Suranaree University of Technology. It has been designed to explore vocabulary learning strategies reported being employed by EST students. No variables have been taken into consideration. The data provided by 133 students learning English at Suranaree University of Technology, Nakhon Ratchasima in term 3/2002. The subjects of the study were sampled on the basis of convenience and availability. An open-ended strategy questionnaire was used as the main instrument for the data collection. The data obtained were analysed qualitatively in response to the purpose of the investigation.

The findings of the research show that three different emergent categories have been reported which include 1) the strategies to discover the meaning of a new word; 2) the strategies to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items; and 3) to expand their knowledge of vocabulary. The first category comprise 10 individual strategies, the second category comprises 11 individual strategies, and the third one 10 strategies respectively.