

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and Communication Skills of University EFL Students in Vietnam Toward a Vocabulary Building Guide

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) proficiency and the communication skills of university students in Vietnam, with a particular focus on vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language learning, and limited lexical resources often hinder students' ability to express ideas fluently and comprehend meaning effectively. The objectives of this research were to examine the vocabulary learning strategies of EFL students, identify challenges encountered in vocabulary acquisition, determine their preferences for learning materials and methods, assess the extent of their communication skills, and develop a practical vocabulary building guide tailored to their needs. Using a quantitative-descriptive design, the study involved 60 purposively selected university EFL students in Vietnam. Data were collected through a self-made survey questionnaire and short assessments and analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests to establish relationships between vocabulary acquisition and communication competence. Results revealed that students employ a variety of vocabulary learning strategies, with digital tools, repetition, and contextual reading being the most favored. However, challenges such as limited exposure to English outside the classroom, difficulties in retaining words, and uncertainties in word usage persisted. Findings also indicated that while students demonstrated strong oral, written, and listening skills, fluency in academic contexts required further support. The study concludes that vocabulary acquisition significantly influences communication skills and recommends the adoption of a structured Vocabulary Building Guide integrating multimedia resources, interactive strategies, and context-based practice. This guide is expected to enhance both lexical knowledge and communicative competence of EFL learners in Vietnam.

Keywords: Education, Vocabulary acquisition and communication skills, Quantitative-descriptive method, survey and assessment, Vietnam