USING TASKS ON THP E-LEARNING SYSTEM AS AN E- PORTFOLIO TO NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' VOCABULARY LEARNING AT HAI PHONG UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT: Studying vocabulary is significant in language learning process because vocabulary plays a key role in developing other skills. Nowadays, in the learning trend of digital transformation, the combination of academic learning and digital applications brings a lot of benefits for students and teachers. Therefore, using designed tasks on THP e -learning system as an e-portfolio to support students and improve their vocabulary learning is expected to create a positive change in students' learning. The study was conducted on some non-English major students at Hai Phong university in the first term to evaluate the efficiency of students' vocabulary learning through this system. The findings of the study show that the tasks on THP e- learning system partly create students' motivation and contribute to improving their vocabulary.

Keywords: E-learning; Tasks; Portfolio; English vocabulary learning; Non-English majors

VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CÁC BÀI TẬP TRÊN HỆ THỐNG HỌC TẬP ĐIỆN TỬ CỦA TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC HẢI PHÒNG NHƯ MỘT HỒ SƠ HỌC TẬP ĐIỆN TỬ ĐỂ CẢI THIỆN VIỆC HỌC TỪ VỰNG CHO SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN TIẾNG ANH TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC HẢI PHÒNG

TÓM TẮT: Việc học từ vựng đóng vai trò quan trọng trong quá trình học ngôn ngữ vì từ vựng đóng vai trò then chốt trong việc phát triển các kỹ năng khác. Ngày nay, trong xu hướng học tập của chuyển đổi số, việc kết hợp giữa học tập hàn lâm và ứng dụng số mang lại rất nhiều lợi ích cho sinh viên và giáo viên. Vì vậy, việc sử dụng các nhiệm vụ được thiết kế trên hệ thống học tập điện tử của trường Đại học Hải Phòng như một hồ sơ học tập điện tử để hỗ trợ sinh viên và nâng cao khả năng học từ vựng của họ được kì vọng để tạo ra một sự thay đổi tích cực trong việc học của sinh viên. Nghiên cứu được thực hiện trên một số sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh tại trường Đại học Hải Phòng trong học kỳ I nhằm đánh giá hiệu quả việc học từ vựng của sinh viên thông qua hệ thống này. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy các bài tập trên hệ thống học tập điện tử của trường Đại học Hải Phòng phần nào tạo động lực học tập cho sinh viên và góp phần nâng cao vốn từ vựng của họ.

Từ khóa: Hệ thống học tập điện tử; Nhiệm vụ; Hồ sơ học tập; Học từ vựng tiếng Anh; Sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh

I. INTRODUCTION

With the speed of development of modern society, globalization and industrialization taking place all over the world requires students to be active in their learning as well as flexible in applying technology in their own learning. English is considered as one of the principal subjects in the curriculum of students at university. At Hai Phong University, it is also not an exception; students are required to master academic knowledge in English to apply it in their future jobs as well as daily life. Students are required to have a firm vocabulary foundation, develop all four skills such as listening, reading, writing and speaking. However, with a lot of students, especially non-English major students at Hai Phong university, English is not easy and English vocabulary seems to be a big barrier in their learning process. They have trouble remembering as well as using vocabulary in different contexts. The large number of vocabulary items prevents them from listening, reading comprehension, as well as communicating with others. Some students do not have enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, they normally feel nervous and get stuck in exercises. Other students are not active in self-study, they do not spend much time on English as well as practice English exercises. These cause students to lose the motivation in studying the subjects and frequently get bad marks or even fail in English tests.

With a view to bringing a change in English learning methods at Hai Phong university, the staff of lecturers have developed an e-learning system which provides students more opportunities to have excess to English, develop students' self- study and improve their language skills. THP e-learning system is a website developed by the dedicated staff of Hai Phong university to cater for teaching and learning activities. By using this system, lecturers are convenient to design the assignments or tasks which require students to complete and hand in according to deadlines. English tasks on the e-learning system are used as an e-portfolio for students to practice as well as a tool to reinforce and improve students' knowledge frequently. Teachers can easily take control of students' learning process as well as collect their results throughout the course. A lot of research has been carried out to identify the effectiveness of using tasks as a portfolio to improve students' learning activities. Therefore, the author decided to implement this study to examine the efficiency of using tasks on the e-learning system as an e-portfolio to enhance students' vocabulary learning. There are 2 questions discussed in this paper.

1. How does the tasks used as an e-portfolio on THP e-learning system improve students' vocabulary learning?

2. What is the students' attitude to using tasks as an e-portfolioon THP e-learning system in learning process?

II. DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Vocabulary learning

In language learning, vocabulary plays a crucial part in language fluency development and knowledge building because it's the base to develop other skills, constitutes a vital aspect of every single

language. Vocabulary is considered as the raw building blocks that we can use to express our thoughts and ideas, share information, understand others and grow personal relationships. When you have a wider vocabulary in your target language, it also helps support all four language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. As Paul Nation (2015) notes in his paper on vocabulary learning "vocabulary is not an end in itself. A rich vocabulary makes the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing easier to perform." Harley (1996) thinks that vocabulary knowledge is "a disarmingly simple term for a complex multidimensional phenomenon". The components of word knowledge can be regarded as form, word structure, syntactic patterns, meaning, lexical relations with other words and collocations. Therefore, creating the space and opportunity for students to have access to vocabulary frequently makes their language learning better. Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) also mention that when students are exposed to the same words many times, the result will be a higher degree of learning, an increased ability to remember and use the word. Besides, Hutchinson & Waters (1992) says that if learners, sponsors, and teachers understand why learners need English, that awareness will have an influence on what will be accepted as reasonable content in the language course and what potential can be exploited. Vocabulary learning is concerned with intentional learning through the exposure to words in meaningful contexts. Therefore, having a trustworthy source and the space for students to study and practice vocabulary frequently is

essential because they can create the conditions to enhance students' knowledge. At Hai Phong university, non-English majors are normally at a basic English level, they get a lot of trouble in English learning due to the lack of vocabulary which prevents them from developing other skills. Moreover, in the first term at university, non-English majors are still unfamiliar to new learning methods, these difficulties in learning process seem to be more pronounced. Therefore, students really hope to get more assistance and orientation for their learning to gain the good achievement and success.

2.2 Using porfolios as a tool to support students

A portfolio is the student's collection which reflects student's individual studies, effort process. Kemp and Toperoff (1998) define a portfolio as "purposively collection of the student's effort, progress and success in one or more fields". Kan (2007) gives the definition of the portfolio as "purposive and chronological accumulation of student's studies that reflect his or her progress in one or a few fields during certain process or student's results indicated in one or a few fields". A portfolio is the collection of students' studies that display their efforts, progress and successes within the educational programs accordingly certain aims. Bahar (2006) also mentions that a portfolio which can be used easily in all fields at elementary and secondary level may be entitled as personal progress file, portfolio or student's portfolio in Turkish literature. In general, the portfolio is the purposive collection of students' studies which are materials of learning process are

collected in a systematic and organized way rather than randomly. Students prepare them before or after the learning process to have a firm base for their learning process. A Portfolio is proved to bring a lot of benefits for students, especially elementary and pre-intermediate level. According to Bahar (2006), a portfolio supports students to see their strengths and weaknesses, find out their new knowledge as well as practice the things they have learned. Besides, a portfolio provides students the method to evaluate their learning because it helps students to develop their self- studying. A portfolio not only shows the students their achievement but also their learning process because students are required to spend time to study, evaluate and practice the knowledge. Student's studies collected in various periods constitute the student's learning process and a document of the progresses in this process. Moreover, portfolio shows the time spent within the learning process, student's studies, performance, deficiencies and corrections in a detailed way. Students need to identify which language learning contents they should study more, the systematic information which they create help them determine the effective language learning strategies and create a good opportunity for teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of learning curriculum. Delett et al. (2001) also points out that 'portfolios provide a portrait of what students know and what they can do, offer a multi-dimensional perspective of student progress over time, encourage student self-reflection and participation, and link instruction and assessment.' Murphy and Camp (1996) emphasize the fact that keeping a portfolio

offers students the opportunity 'to learn to exercise judgment about their own work, monitor their own progress, set goals for themselves, and present themselves and their work to others.' Bahar (2006) gives comment that a portfolio provides more information about student's progress, it increases the feeling of responsibility in the student and strengthen the feeling in taking more role in their learning-evaluation process. Because of these, the staff of foreign language department developed tasks on THP e-learning system which are used as an e-portfolio to take advantage of them. Students are required to implement tasks over a long period of time. The results illustrate their learning process during the 12 weeks of the course, which are collected and marked to calculate their final achievement.

2.3 Using tasks as a portfolio on THP e-learning system

With the development of digital transformation, instead of preparing portfolios on paper, students have more choices for their studying without the limitation of time and space. They can make e-portfolios as well as study every time everywhere thanks to the benefits of technology. Using an e-porfolio creates a larger space for students to learn only with having internet connection. An e-portfolio creates the change in the role of teachers and students, students become the centre of the learning process instead of depending on teachers. The space of studying is not limited in the class, but opened for a larger environment to self- study and self-evaluate. The tasks are designed in the various forms which can stimulate students'

motivation and encourage their self-study. About using THP e-learning system, both teachers and students have access to it through a given account. This system is accumulated with a lot of functions which are convenient for students and teachers to use only with a digital device and internet connection. THP e-learning system is developed by the staff of lecturers at Hai Phong university in 2020 which allows teachers to design tasks or assignments as well as students implement their tasks and look up e -learning materials. Students only log in and have access to their classroom to study and complete tasks. Teachers take control of the system by creating different lessons for students, they can keep track of students' learning process easily by distributing tasks purposefully and collecting data to examine or evaluate. Moreover, the integration of automatic marking system which provides the exact results for students to examine and assess by themselves. In general, THP e-learning system bring a lot of benefits for teachers and students in the learning process.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

The study was conducted at Hai Phong university with the participation of 105 non-English majors. They are the non - English majors in Business administration and Primary education major. They are in the first term at university and have to study General English to accumulate four credits for their course. This subject is the base for them to develop other English skills as well as study other English subjects. The participants include both male and female students. All of them have never used this system before, they are also in different levels both elementary and pre-intermediate level of English proficiency. Before the beginning of the course, the students are all introduced about the purpose of the study and they are trained about the way to conduct the study as well as do the survey. Students have twelve weeks to work on the e-learning system with six units. All the participants own at least one of digital devices such as a smartphone, a lap top or a computer connected with the internet to cater for their study.

3.2 Instruments

In this study, the author decided to use questionnaires to gather feedback on student's response to using tasks on THP e-learning system as a portfolio to consolidate their vocabulary. The questionnaires were designed on Google form and distributed in the final week, students completed the survey in about 15 minutes. The range of answers for each question was ordered by strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The students were required to tick their answers on the available columns to select. Besides, the author also collected the results of task on THP e-learning system to evaluate students' achievement. The students had 12 weeks to take part in the study and complete tasks of 6 units. The results of the study were collected and analyzed to identify the change in students' vocabulary achievement when doing tasks as a portfolio.

3.3 Research design

The study was conducted in 12 weeks of the first semester at Hai Phong university. Students were instructed to sign

up and log in with their personal account. They were required to complete the tasks weekly under the control of teachers. The tasks were assigned according to the curriculum and students need to do in turn. The author summarized the final result to evaluate their achievement in the final week. The result was also used to mark grades for a half of the middle term test. In the final week, students also answered the survey on Google form about their assessment to using tasks on THP e-learning system to practice and consolidate their vocabulary.

IV. FINDINGS

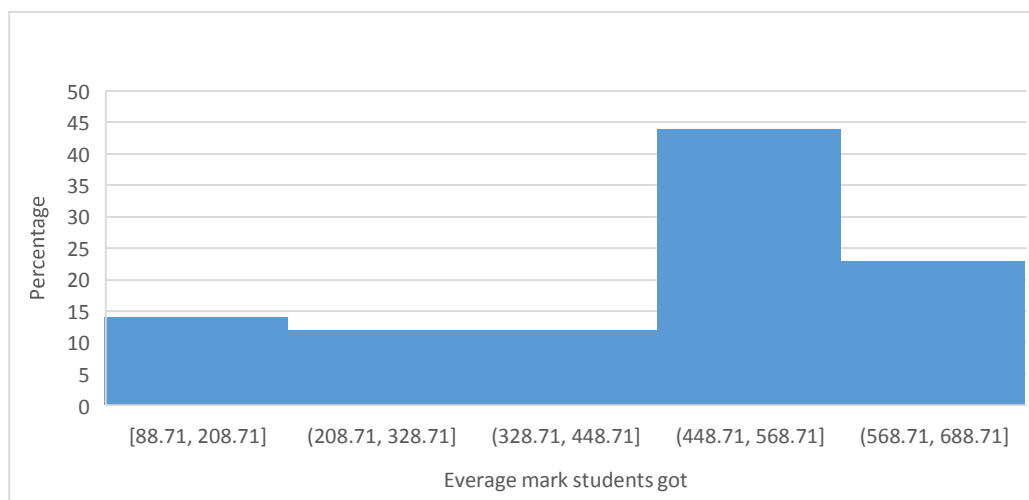### 4.1 Average results of tasks on THP e-learning system

Chart 1: Average grades for course

This chart shows the average grades of students during the studying time. Looking at the chart, we can see that the result of students who gain from 448 to 568 accounts for nearly 45% while the percentage of students who get from 568 to 688 is nearly 25%. The total percentage for two levels of grade is more than two third of all. Besides, the total grades for all course are 700, thus looking at the chart we can see a positive result from using tasks as a portfolio for studying English. It also means that students' vocabulary retention is quite good because they are required to complete a chain of tasks for each unit which repeats vocabulary constantly. Students are forced to remember and understand the vocabulary in units to be able complete the tasks with the flying color. Although there were students who achieved low results throughout the course, the percentage is small, which may depend on students' attitudes and their studying needs.

4.2 Results of the survey

The findings about students' assessment to using tasks on THP e-learning system as a portfolio to consolidate their vocabulary are showed in the following table:

Questions	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
1.The interface of THP e-learning system is interesting, easy to use and have access.	5.7	63.8	29.5	1.1	0
2. The content of vocabulary in THP e-learning system is adhere to your curriculum	10.5	64.8	23.8	0	1
3. Tasks given as an e-portfolio provides you with open and trustworthy material resource for vocabulary learning.	7.6	63.8	28.6	0	0
4. Studying vocabulary with the integration of sound and pronunciation makes your studying better and more convenient.	14.3	59	24.8	1.9	0
5. Doing the multi-tasks on THP E-learning system helps consolidate your vocabulary better.	7.6	66.7	23.8	1	1
6. The repetition of words in tasks makes you remember vocabulary better.	8.6	68.6	21.9	1	0
7. The flexibility in accessing at any time and in anywhere makes your vocabulary learning interesting.	5.7	69.5	21.9	2.9	0
8. Your vocabulary is partly enhanced thanks to doing tasks on THP e-learning system weekly.	5.7	60	30.5	2.9	1
9. Do you want to continue to use e-portfolios in other subjects.	8.6	58.1	23.8	9.5	0

As we can see from the table, most of students agree that the interface of THP E-learning system is interesting and convenient for them to use and study, which accounts for more than two thirds of the result. Most of them also agree that the content of vocabulary in THP e-learning system is adhere to their curriculum. Besides, when asked about whether tasks given as an e-portfolio provides students with an open and trustworthy studying material resource for vocabulary learning, more than half of students show the agreement with this idea. The next question abouts studying vocabulary with the integration of sound and pronunciation makes their studying better

and more convenient, nearly all of the students agreed but still 1.9% students do not agree. When students are asked about doing the multi-tasks on THP e-learning system helps consolidate their vocabulary better, almost all students select to agree but 1% student disagrees. Moreover, the repetition of words in tasks makes students remember vocabulary better is also a statement receiving a lot of approval. On assessing about the flexibility in accessing at any time and in anywhere makes their vocabulary learning interesting, almost every student agrees with this statement. In the final question, students are asked about the expectation and their wish to continue to implement e-portfolios in other subjects, students express the agreement. Although there is a little disagreement in some questions, the rate of approval is still the main selection.

4.3 Discussions

From the results of the study, we can see that practicing tasks on THP e-learning system weekly creates an e-portfolio for students during the whole course. Students have more chances to have access to vocabulary officially, they do multi-tasks with the same vocabulary topic in a long period of time which make them remember vocabulary better. As the result, the grade of tasks is also improved gradually over the weeks. The average grade which students gain during 12 weeks shows the positive effect on English learning in the first term. More than half of the students participating in the study *receive* high marks, which proves the effectiveness of doing tasks repeatedly and the improvement in vocabulary retention. Besides, the answers

collected from the survey also illustrated that doing vocabulary tasks frequently makes students have a firm portfolio for their English learning which help them identify their ability and their level, promote students to try their best more. Moreover, practicing tasks as a portfolio increases students self-studying, they are compulsory to review and consolidate to complete the requirements. The integration of vocabulary learning in tasks on THP e-learning system which marks the grade immediately after completing also promotes students' learning motivation. The new learning method which changes the traditional learning method on paper create an open learning environment at any time in any place. In general, using designed tasks as a portfolio for learning process brings a lot of benefits for both students and teachers. Learners can have more learning environment outside classroom, they can develop their self-studying better as well as consolidate their vocabulary of the subject more. The repetition of vocabulary as well as the frequently repetitive usage gradually makes student remember words better. From that, their language knowledge is also partly enhanced. Although a small number of students dislike or do not corporate in learning process which cause the result is not good enough, students' improvement is pronounced. Besides, the limitation of time and scale of the study, the article only focuses on doing researches on a small number of students at Hai Phong university which has not given the comprehensive result. Therefore, the author hopes to implement the next study in a longer period of time with more participants to get the

correct overview to using tasks on THP e-learning system to enhance students' vocabulary knowledge.

V. CONCLUSION

In the society of digital transformation, almost every activity is adhered to technology, learning language is also not an exception. With the expectation for developing students' self-studying and English learning for non-English majors at Hai Phong university, teachers developed a supplementary program for General English subject. Because teachers see that non-English major students' knowledge is not good enough and the students do not have materials to study more after class, teachers hope to develop a program to observe and assess students' learning process. Thus, using tasks on the e-learning system as a portfolio for the learning process can help students have more space to study vocabulary and practice skills. When using portfolios, students give the positive attitude in learning process because they have chance to have access to new learning method as well as take advantage of the benefits of technology. The repetition of vocabulary makes students remember more words as well as have a wide range vocabulary to develop other skills. Obviously, the system of tasks on THP e-learning system helps consolidate students' vocabulary and stimulate their learning motivation. The author hopes that applying digital transformation more in learning process for students at Hai Phong university should be encouraged and multiplied.

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