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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedeníých zdrojů.

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Content

Abstract	6
Introduction	7
I Theoretical part	
1 Vocabulary	9
1.1 Definition.....	9
1.2 The importance of vocabulary.....	10
2 Lexical system of English	12
2.1 Denotation and connotation.....	12
2.2 Meaning relations among words.....	13
2.3 Style, register and dialect.....	14
3 What needs to be taught when presenting vocabulary	16
3.1 Meaning.....	16
3.2 The use of words.....	16
3.3 Word formation, spelling and pronunciation.....	17
3.4 Grammar.....	18
4 Selecting vocabulary	19
4.1 Frequency.....	19
4.2 Coverage.....	20
4.3 Need and level.....	20
4.4 How many items to teach.....	21
4.5 Active and passive vocabulary.....	22
5 Teaching vocabulary	24
5.1 Presentation techniques.....	24
5.1.1 Visual techniques.....	25
5.1.2 Verbal techniques.....	27
5.2 Vocabulary in context.....	30
6 Dictionaries	33
6.1 Monolingual dictionaries.....	34
6.2 Bilingual dictionaries.....	34
7 Student-centred learning	36
7.1 Strategies for dealing with skill activities.....	36
8 Learning vocabulary	39
8.1 Learning strategies.....	39
8.2 Remembering vocabulary.....	41
8.3 Recording vocabulary.....	44
9 Vocabulary games and activities	47

II Practical part

Description of the research studies	51
Questionnaires for teachers	52
Questionnaires for learners	62
Conclusion	73
Bibliography	75
Appendices	78

Abstract

My diploma thesis is focused on teaching and learning English vocabulary. It is divided into two parts.

The first part is a theoretical part and gives basic information about the lexical system of English and different aspects of vocabulary that need to be introduced when presenting new lexis. Furthermore, various criteria for selecting vocabulary, number of presentation techniques used by teachers in English lessons, the role of dictionaries, as well as effective methods of learning and remembering vocabulary are discussed in this thesis. Finally, the importance of student-centred learning and the role of vocabulary games and activities in the classroom are mentioned, too.

The second part of my diploma thesis is practical and it is based on two research studies. The main aim of these studies is to analyse two different questionnaires that were distributed and filled in by English language teachers and learners. In addition to this, the analysis of these questionnaires should answer several questions that were asked at the beginning of the research.

Introduction

Generally speaking, learning a foreign language includes many aspects that need to be introduced and known to learners. So, when learning a second language, its vocabulary, grammar, composition, pronunciation, culture, and even body language should be taught and learned (Folse, 2004, p. 2). However, he thinks that there are some aspects that have not received the same attention as the other. Nowadays, unfortunately, more emphasis is placed on grammar than on vocabulary teaching and learning, he states. Although, he is convinced that “vocabulary is perhaps the most important component” when learning a foreign language. Additionally, according to Bowen and Marks (1994, p. 91), even if the learner knows grammar and communicative rules properly, without the knowledge of vocabulary he or she “will not be able to express” himself/herself clearly.

During my teaching practices, I noticed that many teachers did not lay enough stress on presenting and practising vocabulary. What was more, most of them did not present new lexis appropriately or they tended to use improper presentation techniques. Then, it happened many times that learners did not understand the new vocabulary thoroughly. Additionally, when practising new words, there were situations in which common mistakes occurred quite frequently, and, unfortunately, these mistakes were not corrected immediately. So, the result was that common mistakes kept occurring. Moreover, many teachers got used to introduce single lexical items instead of mentioning words in contexts. Furthermore, as I observed, the majority of learners did not record new vocabulary items properly or they even did not use any vocabulary notebooks. Therefore, in this diploma thesis I would like to stress the importance and necessity of vocabulary teaching and learning. Furthermore, the main aim is to find out the most effective methods for presenting, learning, practising and remembering new vocabulary.

My diploma thesis includes two parts. In the theoretical part, there are nine chapters. Chapter 1 gives brief information about the definition and importance of vocabulary. Chapter 2 presents the lexical system of English, where the meanings of words, relations among words, style, register and dialect are discussed. The basic aspects of new lexis that need to be taught when presenting new words are summarized in chapter

3. Chapter 4 deals with various criteria for selecting vocabulary, whereas chapter 5 reports different presentation techniques used by teachers. In chapter 6, bilingual and monolingual dictionaries are compared. Chapter 7 informs about student-centred learning and strategies for dealing with skill activities. Strategies for vocabulary learning and the most effective ways for recording and remembering vocabulary are mentioned in chapter 8. Finally, the last chapter focuses on vocabulary games and activities used in the classroom when practising lexis.

The practical part is the second part of my diploma thesis and is based on the analysis of two research studies. Moreover, the analysis of questionnaires should answer these **research questions**:

1. What are the most effective techniques and methods for presenting and practising new vocabulary?
2. What aspects of new vocabulary need to be introduced?
3. What role can dictionaries play in learning English vocabulary?
4. What are the most effective techniques of learning and remembering new vocabulary?

I THEORETICAL PART

1 Vocabulary

Generally speaking, learning a second language means learning several aspects of that language, write Folse (2004, p. 22). These aspects involve “vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, composition, reading, culture and even body language” (Folse, 2004, p. 22). There is no doubt that all these aspects are important and necessary for the ESL learner. However, some of them may be more valuable than the others. When starting to learn a foreign language, vocabulary is taught at first. For many English learners, a greeting “hello” may be considered as the first word they picked up and at the same time, this word can help them to have (even a short and simple) conversation in a foreign language. Thus, without basic vocabulary knowledge you cannot lead any communication and as Harmer (1991, p. 153) points out, in learning a foreign language it is vocabulary that “provides the vital organs and the flesh.”

1.1 Definition

Vocabulary is the words that are learned when learning a foreign language (Ur, 1991, p. 60). Diamond and Gutlohn (online, 2006) define vocabulary as “the knowledge of words and word meanings.” For Scrivener (1994, p. 73), “vocabulary is a powerful carrier of meaning.” According to Lewis and Hill (1985, p. 98) and Folse (2004, p. 2), a lexical item can be represented by more than one single unit. As Folse (2004, p. 2) describes, vocabulary can be:

- single words (cat, happy)
- set phrases (up and down, it’s up to you)
- variable phrases
- phrasal verbs (put away)
- idioms (it’s raining cats and dogs)

1.2 The importance of vocabulary

“No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of a foreign language are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in a foreign language just cannot happen in any meaningful way.”

McCarthy, 1990

“Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.”

Wilkins, 1972, p. 111 (taken from Folse, 2004, p. 23)

For many years, there were different opinions on “the role of lexis” (Herbertson, online, 2010) and this led to omitting vocabulary from the main centre of learning a foreign language in the past, puts it Harmer (1991, p. 154). Folse (2004, p. 22) adds that less attention was paid on learning vocabulary in methodology than any of the aspects mentioned above, especially grammar. What was more, vocabulary has been modified or even deleted from many textbooks and curricula, he states. Nowadays, fortunately, many linguists have changed their opinion on teaching and learning vocabulary and they have realized that the knowledge of vocabulary is as important as the knowledge of grammar (Harmer, 1991, p. 154). In addition, as Folse (2004, p. 22) says, “vocabulary is the most important component” in learning a foreign language. So, recently, more importance is put on “teaching, learning, acquiring, storing, memorizing and recalling” lexis (Bowen and Marks, 1994, p. 91).

From the ESL learners’ point of view, the acquisition of vocabulary is maybe the most frequent procedure when learning a new language, points out Folse (2004, p. 160). Bowen and Marks (1994, p. 91) believe that it is “their basic need.” Although, learning vocabulary can be very “frustrating”, too, Folse (2004, p. 160) admits. Additionally, it is clear that knowing vocabulary enables the ESL learners to communicate in L2. As Herbertson (online, 2010) quotes Nation and Waring (1993), “vocabulary knowledge enables language use and thus communication.” Therefore, the more vocabulary they know, the more they can express themselves in L2. Furthermore, she explains that it is impossible to read or listen without vocabulary knowledge. She also claims that even for many native speakers there is always something new to acquire with vocabulary and it

is necessary for the ESL learners to go on with learning lexis in order to better understand the foreign language as well.

Another point that is worth mentioning here is that “lexis is important at every level”, as Herbertson (online, 2010) describes. What is more, according to Lee (1967) who mentions Morris (1947), at higher levels the learners are supposed to learn vocabulary “for more subtle purposes, such as for greater precision, to convey or evoke emotions, to suggest attitudes, to invoke interest or to appeal to the aesthetic sense.”

Summary

In conclusion, when learning a foreign language, acquiring vocabulary should be as important as other components such as grammar and pronunciation. Thus, it is necessary for the teacher not to underestimate teaching lexis. In addition to this, he or she should help learners to become familiar with the new vocabulary items because for some of them learning vocabulary can be more challenging than acquiring grammar or pronunciation.

2 Lexical system of English

It may be quite a hard work for ESL learners to learn even one vocabulary item in a foreign language, points out Fox (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 308). Furthermore, he clarifies that one of the reasons for this statement is that it is common that one word has more than one meaning.

In order to understand English vocabulary properly, we need to know the two aspects of meaning. The first is called denotative and connotative meaning and it is connected to the link between the meaning and the world. With the second aspect we understand sense relations which appear among words, writes Hedge (2000, p. 112).

2.1 Denotation and connotation

Denotation (also *referential* or *denotative meaning*) is the primary (main) meaning of a word, which refers to an object, action, or event in reality, states Hedge (2000, p. 112). It is the definition that appears in a dictionary (e.g. *dog* is a kind of animal or a common, domestic carnivorous mammal), explains Ur (1991, p. 61). However, denotative meaning can be a bit complicated for some beginners or elementary ESL learners because they may have some problems with various significations of words, thinks Hedge (2000, p. 112). She also adds that there are many words in our mother tongue which do not mean the same in a foreign language, e.g. the word *gymnasium*, in Czech it is a type of school, whereas in English it is a special place for doing exercises. So, this can often lead to learners' misunderstanding, she explains further.

The term **connotation** (also *connotative meaning*) relates to the attitudes and emotions of the learner, says Hedge (2000, p. 112). Ur (1991, p. 61) also points out that connotation is "a less obvious component of the meaning of an item" and that this meaning deals with the associations or it can cause positive or negative feelings, which may or may not be included in a dictionary definition. For example, the word *bachelor* has positive connotation in English (= a single man). However, in Czech its connotation is rather negative (= *starý mládenec*). Moreover, Hedge (2000, p. 113) claims that "connotative meaning derives from a mix of cultural, political, social, and historical sources." Therefore, the learner should be careful and decide correctly, which word has positive and which negative associations. Hedge (2000, p. 113) also believes that for learner's better understanding, there is the teacher who should help and give the proper

explanation of a word. Furthermore, according to McCarthy and O'Dell (2002, p. 18), it is good, especially for advanced learners, to mention connotations when teaching a new word, too.

2.2 Meaning relations among words

When speaking about sense (or meaning) relations, there are two dimensions (also called *axes*), which linguists distinguish, writes Hedge (2000, p. 113). These are syntagmatic relations and paradigmatic relations.

Syntagmatic relations are relations between words in the sentence and are represented by horizontal axis. Whereas the vertical axis symbolizes **paradigmatic relations**, which are relations between words in the language itself, considers Hedge (2000, p. 113).

To the **syntagmatic relations** Hedge (2000, p. 114) classifies:

- **Collocations** (words which are often used together, e.g. *a long road*)
- **Idiomatic expressions** (e.g. binominal idioms such as *cloak and dagger*)
- **Phrasal verbs** (e.g. *get over*)
- **Metaphors** (e.g. *donkey's years*)
- **Similes** (e.g. *as thick as two short planks*)

According to Hedge (2000, p. 115), the most common relationships in **paradigmatic relations** are:

- **Synonymy** (synonyms are words with the same or nearly the same meaning, e.g. *politely* and *courteously*)
- **Antonymy** (antonyms are words with the opposite meaning)
 - Complementarity (e.g. *male/female*)
 - Converseness (e.g. *parent/child*)
 - Gradable antonymy (a scale of words, e.g. *boiling, hot, warm, lukewarm, tepid, cool, cold, icy*)
 - Multiple incompatibles (also "multiple taxonomy", e.g. *spring, summer, autumn, winter*)

Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 24) mention further:

- **Hyponymy** (e.g. *fruit* is a superordinate term and words such as *apple*, *orange*, *pear* and *plum* are hyponyms of fruit)
- **Polysemy** (one single word has several but closely related meanings, e.g. *head*: of a person, of a pin, of an organisation)
- **Homonymy** (one single word which has various meanings without a close relationship, e.g. *a file*: used for putting papers in it or a tool)

2.3 Style, register and dialect

Another important point I would like to discuss here is the appropriate usage of lexical items. In most cases, it often happens to the ESL learner that he or she uses an inappropriate word when speaking or writing. For instance, a male student can be wrong when saying to his female teacher: “Hi, baby.” instead of formal “Good morning, Miss.” (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 20). In order to avoid these humorous and even embarrassing errors, the learner has to be informed about style, register and dialect.

The term **style** is explained by Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 20) as “a level of formality (i.e. slang, colloquial or informal, neutral, formal, frozen) as well as styles such as humorous, ironic, poetic, literary, etc.”. They suggest some examples: *children* (neutral), *kids* (colloquial).

The term **register** is understood as different kinds of language characterized by their topic and context (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 21). It can be, for example, the language of medicine (*cardiac arrest* as the term for *heart attack*), education, law and computers, they add.

Dialect is the term that describes differences in geographical and social class variation, e.g. *sidewalk* (American English) = *pavement* (British English), write Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 21).

Summary

This chapter dealt with different aspects of meaning. Of course, there are more things to be worth mentioning here, e.g. false friends and multi-word verbs.

For the ESL learner, it is very important and useful to be able to distinguish and choose the appropriate vocabulary item when using a foreign language. In order to help with the understanding and the correct usage of the word, the teacher should mention these sense relations during the presentation of a new word. As Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 31) state, this will give a coherent lesson in the classroom. Moreover, they are sure that it is worth presenting and testing these relationships because it can be extremely good for the learner to make sense of “semantic boundaries”. Another positive thing about dealing with sense relations in the classroom is that they can help learners to guess the unknown word better (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 32). They also think that the inclusion of visual aids, diagrams and word trees in the lesson makes the understanding of these relations clearer.

It is also good to know that learners at the low level need to learn vocabulary with “wide coverage”, state Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 22). However, the knowledge of style, register and dialect appropriate to their recent and future needs can be introduced to learners at the higher level, they explain. Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 22) sum up that the teacher should be careful on the selection of vocabulary and emphasize any important features of the word.

3 What needs to be taught when presenting new vocabulary

Every time, when the learners meet new words in the classroom, there is no doubt that the teacher should explain the meaning of the word in detail. The teacher should be able to give the learners more information about the word than its translation. The translation of a lexical item into learners' mother is often not enough. Gower and Walters (1983, p. 65) describe presentation of vocabulary items as a process that "consists basically of helping students to understand what they mean, what rules of form they obey (grammar, pronunciation) and, if appropriate, who uses them in what context."

3.1 Meaning

As Harmer (1991, p. 156) points out, the main thing we should be aware of vocabulary items is that a new vocabulary item may be more than just one single word. For instance, the word *book* can have numerous meanings, he informs. Therefore, it is important for learners to understand the meaning of a word from context in which it is used.

Furthermore, there are words which can have "meanings in relation to other words" (so called *sense relations*), states Harmer (1991, p. 156). So, when coming across a new word, the teacher should mention sense relations, such as **synonyms** and **antonyms**, too.

3.2 The use of words

The ESL learners should also remember that when learning a new word, it is good to know "how it is used," writes Harmer (1991, p. 156). Consequently, when presenting a new word, the teacher can add some information about **metaphors** and **idioms** he thinks. Harmer gives an example of the English word *hiss*, which can be understood as "the noise that snakes make, "and this same word can have its metaphorical meaning in the sentence "Don't move or you're dead, "she *hissed*. In addition to this, there are words that can collocate together (so called **collocations**). So, according to Ur (1991, p. 61), this is another piece of information which is worth mentioning. For example, when presenting the word *mistake*, the teacher should note its collocation like *make a mistake*. Next useful thing the learner need to know about the word is its social and topical contexts (also known as **style and register**), says Harmer (1991, p. 157).

Therefore, the learner should be informed that *I'm angry* is a natural expression, whereas the expression *I'm pissed off* is informal and can be impolite in case we use it in some formal situation, he discussed.

3.3 Word formation

Besides knowing the meaning and the word use of words, it is also necessary to know some basic facts about word formation. Thus, teachers should explain that the verb *run* can change its form as in participles *running* and *ran*, and that *running* can be used as an adjective and *run* as a noun as well, claims Harmer (1991, p. 157). The use of **suffixes** and **prefixes** is also worth noticing when presenting a new item, he adds. So, the learner can learn that the word *polite* can be formed into *impolite* (prefix *im-*) or we can create a noun by adding suffix *ness-* like *politeness* etc.

Another useful and important information about a new word besides **spelling** is its spoken form. As Harmer (1991, p. 162) believes, teachers should introduce words with making sure that learners know how they are pronounced. He also stresses that presenting the sounds of words help learners to “remember the words.” According to Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 52), “the degree of attention paid to the pronunciation of a lexical item will depend on the importance of the item in spoken English and the extent to which it poses problems for the students in question.” In order to avoid sound and stress difficulties, the teacher should present and practice the pronunciation properly, writes Ur (1991, p. 60). Hadfield and Hadfield (1999, p. 6) advise teachers to practise the *sound* in isolation at first, and after that the learners can continue with producing it in a word. Finally, the learners can tell the word in a whole sentence. As far as the *word stress* is concerned, they believe that one good technique for practising it is to “get the learners to clap out the rhythm” before they say the word or sentence, or to “tap out the rhythm on their desks” as they say the sentence again. Furthermore, when it comes to *intonation* training, the teacher can use hand movements for falling (hand down) and rising (hand up) intonation or he or she can write the intonation arrows (up and down) on the board, think Hadfield and Hadfield (1999, p. 6). Harmer (1991, p. 162) mentions other ways how to present **pronunciation** of the new words:

- Through visuals (writing up new words on the board and highlight the main stress by underlining, stress squares, stress marks or stress patterns next to the word)
- Through phonetic symbols (especially when teaching advanced students)

3.4 Grammar

When introducing a new vocabulary item, it is also worth talking about its grammatical rules. Ur (1991, p. 60) advises teachers to “provide learners with this information at the same time as teaching the base form.” So, when teaching a **noun**, the teacher should inform the learners about its plural form: regular (*cars*), irregular (*mice*) or without plural (*information*) and countable (*chair*) and uncountable (*milk*) nouns, present Ur (1991, p. 60) and Harmer (1991, p. 157). Similarly, when presenting a **verb**, we should note its past form: regular (*worked*) and irregular (*took*) and we can say if it is transitive or intransitive (Ur, 1991, p. 60). In Harmer’s (1991, p. 158) opinion, the teacher can also draw learner’s attention to modal verbs (*can, must* etc.), phrasal verbs (*look up*) and their behaviour. What is more, he suggests that learners should be aware of how **adjectives** and **adverbs** are ordered.

Summary

In conclusion, in this section I discussed the importance of presenting new vocabulary items and I suggest some basic information that should be mentioned when introducing new lexis to learners. From Harmer’s (1991, p. 158) point of view, “knowing a word means far more than understanding (one of) its meaning(s).” Therefore, the teacher must explain not only the meaning of new words, but also he or she should be able to say few words about their usage, written and spoken form and their grammatical rules. It is also good for ESL learners to be aware of some possible metaphors, idioms, collocations or even the appropriate style and register connected to the word.

4 Selecting vocabulary

As a language teacher, we have to deal with the problem of selecting words as well. When teaching grammar, “there is a consensus what grammatical structures should be taught and at what levels”, states Harmer (1991, p. 154). However, there exist no such rules about which words should be taught at first and which later in the classroom, he writes. As Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 57) point out, the teacher cannot be able to decide which words are more useful to teach than the others. What is more, we have to take into consideration that “every teaching situation is different and so essential items in one context may be quite useless in another”, they say.

Generally speaking, there was a ‘rule’ that at lower levels, more concrete words should be presented and more abstract words should be learned later, explains Harmer (1991, p. 154). So, vocabulary items such as *table*, *chair*, *chalk* etc. were included in beginners’ syllabuses because their explanation seems to be easier, he claims. On the other hand, he thinks that words like *charity* has an abstract meaning, is difficult to explain and cannot be directly shown in the classroom.

However, there are better criteria for selecting vocabulary. I would like to discuss the most important ones: **frequency**, **coverage**, and **need and level**. Of course, these criteria can vary and “depend” on the teacher’s own teaching situation, believe Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 58).

4.1 Frequency

In Honeyfield’s (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 318) opinion, word frequency is important for vocabulary selection. Furthermore, for Harmer (1991, p. 154), it is “a general principle” of selecting vocabulary. With the term frequency we understand that the teacher should teach the words which occur most frequently among speakers of the language (Harmer, 1991, p. 154). In order to find out which words are highly used, we can have a look at English newspapers, magazines, books or listen to the English radio or television. Many researches were led to discover which words are the most frequent ones. An early research was done by Michael West (1953), writes Harmer (1991, p. 155). Another one that he mentions is done by Hindmarsh (1980) whose list of most frequent words was used by exam and books designers. However, nowadays, thanks to the computer, we can get much more information about word frequency. The computer

offers a wide range of computer-based corpuses and there are universities and research projects that also created computer-based corpuses, points out Harmer (1991, p. 155). As McCarten (2007, p. 4) conveys, e.g. a list from *the Cambridge International Corpus* gives the learner a lot of information about the most frequent words used in the spoken language. For instance, according to *the Cambridge International Corpus*, the most common word is *I*, the most common verbs (apart from *be* and *have*) are *know*, *think*, *get*, *go* and *mean*, the most common nouns are *people*, *time* and *things* and the most used adjective is *good*, she describes. Additionally, she says that “frequency lists” can be very helpful in making choices about “what to teach and in what order.” McCarten (2007, p. 26) is also convinced that it is important that teachers should start with “the most frequent, useful and learnable” vocabulary items and introduce “more difficult” words and “less frequent” items later. Nevertheless, it may be impossible to use all the items in the list because some words may be cultural inappropriate or “not suitable for the class”, she claims. Furthermore, there can still exist many words whose meaning can be unknown for some learners, describes Honeyfield (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 318). For him, even a hard-working student who learned 3000 selected words in a course could later find some “not-so-frequent words” after reading a text. Therefore, he sums up that even if the learner learns “most of the frequent and less-frequent words”, there will still be a large number of unknown words for him. So, Honeyfield (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 319) suggests Twaddel’s (1972) solution that the learner should try to guess the unknown meaning from context. Finally, McCarten (2007, p. 4) sums up that “frequency information, while important, is only a guide.”

4.2 Coverage

Another criterion that should be used when selecting vocabulary is coverage. From Harmer’s (1991, p. 154) point of view, we should teach words which have more than one meaning. For example, the word *book* should be taught at the very beginning, he states. This vocabulary item has not only higher frequency, but also “greater coverage” than words like *notebook*, *exercise book* or *textbook*, he discusses.

4.3 Need and level

It is generally known that ESL learners have different lexical needs (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 59). Some learners are interested in learning words connected to travelling, others prefer learning lexical items related to their job. At the same time, it is

obvious that beginners have different demands on their selection of lexis than advanced learners, they claim. This conflict can be more serious “when the lexical needs of the learner would seem to be incongruous with his general language level”, they think. According to Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 60), all these problems have something to do with student’s motivation. They are convinced that if the learner considers that some vocabulary item is not important for him or her to learn, it will be difficult to raise his interest in learning it. Therefore, the teacher should also think of students’ individual needs and interests when teaching lexis in the classroom.

4.4 How many items to teach

There is no doubt that every teacher’s responsibility is to think over how many words he or she wants to include in one lesson and what is the optimum “number of items that should be covered over the duration of the course” (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 66). Although the final number can vary, they suggest that on average, eight (at lower levels) to twelve (at higher levels) vocabulary items should be presented in one lesson. So, they guess that the learners at lower levels are able to learn about “1,000 items over 125 hours of study.” As McCarten (2007, p. 1) mentions, researchers have tried to calculate the number of items learners need to learn by interviewing native speakers. They found out that the number of words used by native speakers vary between 12,000 and 20,000 depending on their education, she writes. So, it is obvious that for most ESL learners it would be impossible to learn so many words. However, she explains that “it is possible to get along in English with fewer than 20,000 words.” Further, McCarten (2007, p. 1) points out that another possibility how to discover the number of lexical items the learner needs is to enumerate the number of words which “are used in an average spoken or written text.” She speaks about Francis and Kucera (1982) who say that “learners who know the most frequent 2,000 words should be able to understand almost 80 percent of the words in an average text, and knowledge of 5,000 words increases learner’s understanding to 88, 7 percent.” As far as the spoken language is concerned, she mentions McCarthy (2004) and O’Keeffe et al. (2007), who state that there are approximately 1,800 vocabulary items which “make up over 80 percent of the spoken corpus.” Therefore, in conclusion, it is necessary to specify what words (2,000 to 5,000) are most frequent and to focus on them in teaching (McCarten, 2007, p. 2). What is more, teachers should help learners not only with “how to learn vocabulary”, but also with “what to learn”, she adds.

4.5 Active and passive vocabulary

When teaching vocabulary, it is also worth stating at this point that in teaching and learning we should distinguish *productive* and *receptive* vocabulary (also called *active* and *passive* vocabulary). So, it is important to decide which words the learner should learn “for productive use” and which words are worth learning “for the purpose of recognition” (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 65). *Active* or *productive* vocabulary is vocabulary that students are able to use when speaking and writing, says McCarten (2007, p. 19). On the other hand, *passive* or *receptive* vocabulary are lexical items that the learner recognize and comprehend but do not need to produce, describes Melka (1997) in McCarten (2007, p. 19). Therefore, the teacher is responsible to choose vocabulary items that will be useful and important for the learner. Nevertheless, it is mostly the learner who decides whether a word is worth learning productively or just receptively (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 65). Additionally, they write that if the learner is not interested in some vocabulary items, he or she could pay less attention on the items which the teacher wants to teach him or her. It is quite common that “learners know some words better than others”, informs Harmer (1991, p. 159). In his opinion, it is not clear whether these are really the words being taught to them by their teacher. He explains further that learner’s active vocabulary could also include “other words” which he or she looks up and finds interesting for using and remembering them. Both Harmer (1991, p. 159) and Scrivener (1994, p. 74) agree that at beginner and elementary levels, the words that the learners learn and practise become immediately their active vocabulary because of their everyday usage. However, later, at higher levels, learners find out that a lot of words are not as useful as they thought and that the only occasion when they can meet them is “within the context of reading and listening material,” conveys Scrivener (1994, p. 74). Harmer (1991, p. 159) assumes that we do not exactly know which words students use as the active vocabulary and which are used passively only. Moreover, Harmer (1991, p. 159) believes that it happens to the learners that their active vocabulary may change into the passive usage because they do not use it so regularly. Similarly, learners’ passive vocabulary may move to the active store, he mentions. Therefore, according to Harmer (1991, p. 159), the storage of vocabulary items is not “a permanent state of affairs.” As Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 65) also think, the transformation of one vocabulary item from a learner’s passive vocabulary to his or her active one is “a gradual process.” For them, the reason of this transformation is clear: “repeatedly hearing or reading the item over a period of time.” Finally, they

advise teachers to explain the meanings and forms of vocabulary items and to include “controlled and freer practice” in the classroom.

Summary

The aim of this chapter was to inform teachers about some general rules how to select vocabulary. To sum up, when teaching vocabulary, they should consider their frequency and coverage, learner’s need and level as well as how many items to teach. Furthermore, not only teachers, but also learners should be able to distinguish productive from receptive vocabulary. According to Honeyfield (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 319), it does not matter what principles in vocabulary selection we choose or how good teachers we are. They claim that “a school or university course cannot provide students with anywhere near the vocabulary they will need when encountering unsimplified reading materials in a second or foreign language.”

5 Teaching vocabulary

5.1 Presentation techniques

As well as on selecting vocabulary, the teacher should place special emphasis on presenting and practising vocabulary in the classroom. The main aim when teaching vocabulary is to introduce each new word in the way so that the learners will be able to understand its meaning properly, memorize it, become familiar with it as soon as possible and use it appropriately. Therefore, as a language teacher, it is necessary to have and use a number of presentation techniques and to combine them if possible (Hedge, 2000, p. 126). Additionally, I firmly believe that the teacher should apply such presentation techniques in lessons that are most suitable for the ESL learners. For instance, when introducing the word *dog*, there are various techniques we could use for its demonstration. As far as I am concerned, the clearest and quickest presentation technique would probably be a simple drawing on the board or showing a picture of a dog.

Of course, there are other techniques which can be used in this occasion as well, for instance description or acting (with the help of sounds). However, some of them could be ineffective or difficult for understanding, because, for example, there are teachers who are not good at acting or miming. So, the guessing of the word may cause some problems for the learner. Therefore, it is important for the teacher not only to decide which technique or presentation is the best for his or her learners, but also to choose the most effective one.

Ur (1991, p. 63) suggests several ways how to bring new lexical items into the classroom:

- Concise definition
- Detailed description
- Examples (hyponyms)
- Illustration (picture, object)
- Demonstration (acting, mime)
- Context
- Synonyms
- Opposites (antonyms)

- Translation
- Associated ideas, collocations

In this chapter I would like to mention some basic and commonly used presentation techniques.

5.1.1 Visual techniques

Visuals

„*A picture is worth a thousand words.*“ (a well-known proverb)

Visuals include flashcards, photographs, blackboard drawings, wall charts and realia (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 73). Furthermore, there are not only videos, DVDs and OHP transparencies that are widely used by teachers, but also, the most recent high-techniques, such as data projectors, computers and presentation softwares like Microsoft PowerPoint, are very helpful and most favourite visual aids among students, too (Crockett and Foster, online, 2005).

There are many benefits why to use visuals in the classroom. Firstly, “visual presentation is easier than verbal” (Hadfield and Hadfield, 1999, p. 4). Secondly, visuals can serve as a good tool because all students can be involved when practising new items, Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 73) explain. At the same time, when using visuals, learners’ interests in learning a foreign language can increase and a discussion in the class can be stimulated (Gower and Walters (1983, p. 157). Moreover, Crockett and Foster (online, 2005) are convinced that visuals “help to break monotony and reinforce what the learners are hearing.” However, in order to have an effective lesson, the teacher needs to be skilled enough in using these techniques. Thus, I think it is good to prepare videos, DVDs, OHPs or computers in advanced and check if they are working. Gower and Walters (1983, p. 157) also believe that before bringing visuals into the classroom, the teacher should be careful whether the size of a picture or a flashcard is acceptable. In addition to this, they advise teachers to have “unambiguous and presentable” materials.

(a) Pictures

With pictures we understand photographs, flashcards, blackboard drawings, posters, pictures from magazines etc. Thanks to the pictures it is very easy to demonstrate the meaning of new words. Moreover, I think that when teaching small children, these are necessary and should be used in every lesson. For Ur (1991, p. 64), younger learners tend to react positively to “concrete illustration.” On the other hand, she claims that older learners prefer “more abstract explanation or definition.” Hadfield and Hadfield (1999, p. 3) write that vocabulary items, such as *food* and *clothes*, need to be drawn on big flashcards and “more complex pictures on the board or on a poster.”

(b) Realia

Another good way of presenting words is bringing “real objects” into the classroom (Hadfield and Hadfield, 1999, p. 4). So, when teaching new words like *pen*, *ball*, *postcard* or *ruler*, it is good to present them by showing or pointing to the objects themselves (Harmer, 1991, p. 161). He describes that the teacher holds or points to the object, says the word and the learners repeat it. Later, when practising the new words, I would try a guessing game in which the learners should touch the objects and try to guess what objects are they. Again, this activity would be most appropriate for younger learners and I am sure they would find it funny and interesting as well.

(c) Mime and gesture

When explaining actions, e.g. *running* or *smoking*, it is better and easier to use mime than to draw a picture, points out Harmer (1991, p. 161). He also puts it that by mime we can present different ways of walking, expressions, prepositions and even times. According to Hadfield and Hadfield (1999, p. 4), simple everyday actions can be mimed as well (e.g. *brushing your teeth*). In Hedge’s (2000, p. 126) opinion, this technique may be the most cost effective because “a visual memory for the word” is created.

However, using mimes and gestures is not always as easy as it seems. There is no doubt that the teacher should be a good ‘actor’, too, so he or she needs to practise the mimes, they write. Sometimes, to have our presentation more precise, the mimes can be accompanied by blackboard drawings or showing pictures (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 74).

5.1.2 Verbal techniques

Generally speaking, verbal techniques are techniques that are presented orally or that have a written form. Ur (1991, p. 64) finds out that “on the whole, definition, synonym and description tend to be most popular, perhaps because they are most obvious and conventional.” In this section, I would like to discuss using opposites (antonyms or contrasts), synonyms, definitions, semantic sets, collocations and translation as common verbal presentation techniques.

Opposites

There are words whose meanings can be expressed by telling their opposite meanings. For example, when demonstrating the word *empty*, we can contrast it simply with its opposite *full* (Harmer, 1991, p. 161). However, some words need to be explained in contexts, think Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 74). They show an example of the word *sour* and its opposite *sweet*. The teacher may teach that *sugar is sweet*, whereas *lemons are sour*, but he or she should add that the antonym of *sweet wine* is not *sour wine* and the antonym of *sweet tea* is not *sour tea*, they describe.

Synonyms

Teachers tend to use synonyms with students either at lower or at higher levels (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 74). At lower levels, the explanation should not be so long and complicated for the learners, they state. On the other hand, they clarify that students at higher levels need to know that e.g. *bloke* is a synonym for *man*, but it is informal.

Definitions

According to Harmer (1991, p. 162), giving definitions when introducing new words may be very challenging for students at lower levels, whereas it can be very useful for more intermediate learners. As Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 74) advise, by using definitions the teacher should present a new word in context in order to avoid possible misunderstanding. They give an example of a phrase *a fire broke out* (to break out = to start), but we cannot say *the lesson broke out*.

As far as I am concerned, when explaining unknown words, the teacher should remember the learners the usage of relative pronouns (*who, that, which, where...*), too. In general, these are very helpful when giving an explanation. For example, we can

explain that the word *school* is ‘a building where pupils go to in order to learn something’.

Semantic sets

McCarthy and O’Dell (2002, p. 7) write about researches which have shown that presenting new vocabulary in semantic sets is “very useful”. So, for instance, when speaking about *family members*, we should teach all words related to this topic (*mother, father, sister, brother...*). Additionally, Scrivener (1994, p. 80) puts it that if we teach words which are connected together (e.g. *household objects*) then the lesson is “more unified” than if we present a random list of vocabulary. It is also common that in many textbooks for foreign language learners, vocabulary items are usually organized in semantic sets. However, Folse (2004, p. 47-56) argues and he claims that this technique is not appropriate for the ESL learners. He mentions Tinkhan (1993, 1997) and Waring (1997) who write that according to researches, “semantic sets hinder and impede learning.” Furthermore, he adds Tinkhan (1993) who states that another research has shown that “the learners learned semantically unrelated target items much more quickly” than the items being presented in semantic sets. Folse (2004, p. 52) sums up that it is more difficult for learners to learn lexical items being introduced in groups.

Collocations

Another technique which is often used when demonstrating new vocabulary is teaching words with their collocations. Broadly speaking, we should not teach individual words in the classroom. As Hoey (1991) in Lewis (2000, p. 224) informs, “learning individual words is relatively inefficient”. Thus, for instance, when presenting the word *smoker*, the teacher should teach a common collocation *heavy smoker*. What is more, Lewis (Lewis, 2004, p. 14) believes that it is good for students to show them “how words are actually used and how they collocate”, rather than explain their meaning.

Translation

For many years, methodologists have been arguing about the use of translation in the classroom. There are still questions whether this technique is suitable for students or not. Some people think that translation is the quickest and easiest way for presenting vocabulary. Folse (2004, p. 61) says that “it is the simplest of all.” Moreover, it provides the learners “instant information about the basic meaning of the foreign language word.” Bowen and Marks (1994, p. 93) also inform that this method can be very effective for some learners. Another advantage of translation is that it can avoid possible mistakes the learners often make when learning vocabulary, so called *false friends* (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 75). Furthermore, Tudor (Duff, 1989, p. 5) claims that translation is “a natural and necessary activity.” According to Duff (1989, p. 3), “translation develops three qualities: accuracy, clarity and flexibility”, too.

However, using translation can cause some problems not only for teachers, but also for learners. Firstly, translating words into learner’s mother tongue can sometimes be difficult because for some English words it is not always easy to find their exact mother tongue equivalents (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p 75). Secondly, Folse (2004, p. 64) writes that learners often “mistranslate” the lexical item when looking it up in their bilingual dictionary. Moreover, for Folse (2004, p. 64), there are words that can have more than one meaning (e.g. *state*), so it could be a problem for the ESL learners to find the right translation. Another disadvantage is that many learners can become “over-reliant” on this technique and this “prevent them from experiencing the cognitive stage of discovering the meaning for themselves with the help of various clues” (Bowen and Marks, 1994, p. 93). In addition to this, this method can be “too easy” for the learners (Harmer, 1991, p. 162) and so they can become less motivated and less interested in the vocabulary learning (Bowen and Marks, 1994, p. 93).

In conclusion, using translation is not as bad for the learners as it seems. In fact, researches have shown that this is “a good and helpful” technique for learning new vocabulary (Folse, 2004, p. 66-68). He also points out that this is “a natural part of learning new words” so we should not forbid the learners to use translation. However, teachers need to consider that translation should not prevail over other presentation techniques when teaching vocabulary in the classroom.

5.2 Vocabulary in context

As I have already mentioned before, the teacher should not present new vocabulary items without context. Hoey (Lewis, 2000, p. 224) explains that learning words without context has almost no effect. He also adds that learning words in context is easier than without using it. Nevertheless, according to Kruse (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 313), who speaks about Rivers (1968), whose opinion is that presenting vocabulary in context allows the learner to make a deduction about the meaning of the word. So, the result is that the teacher should train the learner to guess the word meaning from the context and not let him or her immediately ask for a definition, Rivers (1968) states. Moreover, he points out that the teacher's role is to accept possible mistakes the learners can do when guessing the meaning from the context.

As Bowen and Marks (1994, p. 93) also mention, presenting vocabulary in context is very important for ESL learners because the context itself can act as a connection that may help him or her to "trigger the recall of lexical items linked with this context." They add that there are many ESL learners who can remember lexical items "by making mental associations with situational or contextual images." This statement is proved by one research which has found out that for many people, remembering words "by association with a topic area" is more helpful (Bowen and Marks, 1994, p. 94). Another advantage of learning vocabulary in context is that it provides the learner a range of words that are physically stored "under a topic category", not in incidental or alphabetical order, they claim. However, Folse (2004, p. 39) writes about Carter (1987), who believes that learning vocabulary in context can be more suitable for advanced learners than for the beginners, who prefer words that are shown "in lists of translation pairs."

McCarthy and O'Dell (1994, p. 2) advise learners not only to remember the meaning of a word, but also to know its associations, grammar and pronunciation. Furthermore, they write that learners should: learn new words in phrases, write down adjectives together with nouns and verbs with nouns, as well as nouns in phrases and words with their prepositions.

They are also convinced that when reading or listening to an unknown word, at first, the learner should identify its part of speech and then find some clues in context. But, as McCarthy and O'Dell (1994, p. 3) say, there are words which are impossible to guess

from context or the structure. In these situations, the learner should ask somebody for help or look up the word in a dictionary, they describe.

For ESL learners, there are many useful contextual aids in vocabulary development which can help them with better recognition of words from the context. According to Kruse (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 313), Norris (1971) suggests several types of contextual aids which can be helpful when reading an unknown text:

1. *Word elements, e.g. prefixes, suffixes and roots* (He claims that recognizing individual component parts of words seems to be “the single most important vocabulary skill a student of reading in EFL can have.”)
2. *Pictures, diagrams and charts* (learners should be taught to match the illustration with the word which is difficult for them, as well as read charts and graphs in English)
3. *Clues of definition* (e.g. synonyms, antonyms)
4. *Inference clues from discourse* (the meaning of the word can be guessed from physical, summary and experience clues)
5. *General aids* (recognizing nouns, adjectives etc. which can help to narrow the meaning of the word)

Scrivener (1994, p. 78) has some more useful ideas for teachers how to help learners better understand meanings of words in context:

- point out collocations when they occur
- design activities that focus on the collocations of particular lexical items (e.g. collocations with the word *traffic* such as *traffic lights*, *traffic jam*, *heavy traffic*)
- set text gap-filling exercise
- ask learners to guess the meaning from clues in the context etc.

Finally, I would like to stress some experiments which were led by Kruse. Her researches has shown (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 314) that learners who were taught how to guess the word meaning from the context with no previous knowledge of words were at the same level or even more successful in quiz performance than those, who have already known the vocabulary.

Summary

To sum up, when teaching vocabulary, we should bear in mind that there are various presentation techniques available. However, the teacher should “vary” the techniques (Lewis and Hill, 1985, p. 101) and choose the techniques which are most effective and appropriate for the learners. What is more, the teacher’s role is to “help, advise, motivate, encourage and inspire” his or her learners when learning new words (Bowen and Marks, 1994, p. 106). Similarly, teachers need to present vocabulary in the way that it will be easier for learners to memorize and store new words in their minds.

6 Dictionaries

When we are speaking about effective learning strategies and learner independence, it is worth mentioning dictionaries, which play a very important role in the classroom. Moreover, Hedge (2000, p. 130) claims that a good dictionary can serve as “a personal resource.” According to Honeyfield, “a good dictionary can generally confirm or disconfirm a learner’s inference” (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 319). He also writes that for the learner, looking up means “an active searching and thinking process”, which involves “consideration of possible meaning dimensions of the word” (e.g. its denotation, connotation, etc.). Another advantage of using a dictionary described by Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 79-80) is that the learner who uses a dictionary can go on with the learning outside the classroom and “this will give him considerable autonomy about the decisions he makes about his own learning”. What is more, the dictionary is “an important resource to clarify the uncertainty”, they claim. However, Honeyfield (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 19) states that it is a long-lasting procedure which serves as a benefit to learning vocabulary. Furthermore, Honeyfield mentions Brown (1972), who compares looking up words in a dictionary to “rote learning”. On the other hand, Brown says that guessing the meaning of the word provides more meaningful and efficient learning. Finally, Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 81) compare dictionaries to learner’s classmates or even teachers.

Therefore, teachers should integrate dictionary training into their lessons, as Gairn and Redman (1986, p. 81) suggest.

There are different types of dictionaries. McCarthy and O’Dell (2002, p. 10) talk about alphabetical dictionaries, dictionaries of synonyms, dictionaries of false friends, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, and most recent ones, CD-ROM and online dictionaries.

They also write that in a good dictionary the learner can find some information about the word (its regional alternatives), spelling and pronunciation, meaning of the word (its definition, a picture or a diagram), senses, its grammatical and word class, various collocations, register, connotations and some cultural information, related words and examples of a sentence or a phrase as well.

6.1 Monolingual dictionaries

In the classroom, the learners usually work with monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. Nowadays, there are many textbooks for ESL learners which introduce good monolingual dictionaries and the right manipulation with them. They help them with its structure and “to find their way around the information a dictionary offers,” says Hedge (2000, p. 130). She explains that monolingual dictionaries “provide examples of contextual use and stress patterns”. Scrivener (1994, p. 73) writes that the teacher should encourage and train students in the use of monolingual (English-English) dictionaries rather than bilingual (translation) dictionaries. He points out that monolingual dictionaries offer sentences with typical usage, notes on common sentence patterns, pronunciation, relationships with other words, etc. What is more, Scrivener adds that the effective usage of a monolingual dictionary is an important skill for learners which they can apply either inside or outside the classroom.

Finally, Hedge (2000, p. 130) gives advice that the teachers should “introduce students to a range of monolingual dictionaries at the beginning of the course and give them a searching task so that they can compare features such as accessibility and amount of information given before purchasing their own.”

6.2 Bilingual dictionaries

Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 79) state that “bilingual dictionaries were frowned upon, in the 1960s and early 1970s, when methodology swung away from translation as an approach to language learning.” Further, in the late 1970s, many teachers did not like using dictionaries and they even thought that the learners, who look up words in dictionaries, are “lazy”, say also Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 79).

Among beginners and elementary ESL learners, the usage of tiny bilingual dictionaries is popular. It is easier for them to look up the word in such dictionaries. However, it is known that there are many English words with more than one meaning. And without a good explanation or an example of the word in a context, it is impossible for the learner to find the right meaning of the word. Moreover, “many bilingual dictionaries tend to be unreliable and inaccurate,” explain Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 79). On the other hand, they claim that at the low learning level, a poor bilingual dictionary in a foreign

country could be more helpful than no dictionary. As well as, it can serve as a reliable assistance and a good tool for finding information as quick as possible, they add.

Summary

To sum up, the usage of dictionaries in the English lesson is very useful and meaningful. As Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 79) point out, dictionaries are valuable supports and deal as “backups to contextual guesswork.” It is also the teacher’s responsibility to help the learners with the right choice of dictionaries and to show them how to use these dictionaries properly. Furthermore, according to Hedge (2000, p. 130), the teacher should ensure that the learners are aware of the problems connected with using small bilingual dictionaries.

7 Student - centred learning

In recent years, the teacher's and learners' roles in the classroom and the style of learning have rapidly changed. The result of this change is that the learner has become a subject in the process of learning and the most important person in the classroom as well. The main goal of student-centred learning, according to Chowdhry (online, 2007), is to "get the students fully involved in their learning through responsibility and activity." In comparison to traditional learning, in which the learners are passive, in student-centred learning the learners "have responsible and active role in learning", explains Chowdhry (online, 2007). In addition to this, students have an opportunity to choose the topic and the style of learning, he claims. As far as the teacher's role in traditional learning is concerned, he or she acts as "an expert of knowledge and a controller", whereas in student-centred learning, teachers are "guides, mentors and facilitators of learning", Chowdhry (online, 2007) writes. Furthermore, in Chowdhry's (online, 2007) opinion, this new learning trend concentrates on students' cooperation during their learning and their motivation in learning a foreign language can be higher than when using traditional learning styles. He also adds that "self and peer assessment" are more typical of student-centred learning. To sum up, the main theory of student-centred learning is that it focuses on the learning itself, not the teaching.

7.1 Strategies for dealing with skills activities

Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 77) present in their book a list of strategies which are needed for dealing with skills activities when learning vocabulary: asking others, using dictionary and contextual guesswork.

Asking others

They explain that the learner can ask the teacher or classmates for help when he or she does not know the meaning of the lexical item. On the other hand, it can happen that the learner wants to use a unique word but does not know the English translation, they found. So, Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 77) suggest: "The best strategy for the student is to make the context sufficiently clear so that the listener can then provide the student with the word he or she is looking for." Further, they add that it would help the learners to describe the concrete word they want to say in English. Then, it would be easier for

the listener to guess the word. For this procedure, the teacher can provide some useful expressions which would help them, e.g. it's where you..., it's when you..., it's a thing... etc., state Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 77).

Using a dictionary

Generally speaking, dictionaries are the main tool for ESL learners in situations when they do not know the exact meaning of the word. Moreover, they are aids which substitute the teacher or classmates. On the one hand, there are teachers who say that using dictionaries is not good for learners. On the other hand, dictionaries can serve as a "valuable learning tool", point out Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 81). In a good dictionary the learner can find phonemic transcription and stress marking of a lexical item, they believe. In Moras' (online, 2001) opinion, in a dictionary students can check not only the grammar of the word, different spelling, style and register, but also examples that clarify the meaning of the word. Furthermore, Moras (online, 2001) found out that learners should start working with ESL dictionaries as soon as possible. Moreover, if the learner uses a "well-designed dictionary" regularly, he or she becomes more independent, Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 81) write. (the usage of dictionaries and their advantages and disadvantages is described in the previous chapter)

Contextual guesswork

According to Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 83), contextual guesswork means "making use of the context in which the word appears to derive an idea of its meaning or in some cases to guess from the word itself." For them, Romance languages and Germanic languages speakers have a great advantage, because many words in their language are similar. However, in Gairns and Redman's (1986, p. 83) opinion, this could also be disadvantage for them as so "this similarity is very misleading". Nevertheless, the understanding of word formation (e.g. prefixes and suffixes) can be very helpful for students to discover the meaning of the word, mentions Moras (online, 2001). It is also important for teachers to include classroom activities to help students with the guessing from context, claim Gairns and Richards (1986, p. 83). Honeyfield (Long and Richards, 1987, p. 319) offers a range of exercises which are suitable for this purpose, e.g. cloze exercises, words-in-context exercises and content enrichment exercises. It is also clear that students do not need to guess the exact meaning of the word and this should be accepted by the teacher, Kruse cites Rivers (1968) in Long and Richards (1987, p. 313).

Moreover, contextual guessing should not be included in the lesson while other skills are being evolved, warn Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 84). They are also convinced that the teacher should not ask students to guess the meaning from context when the context is fully inappropriate to the task.

To sum up, Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 84) point out that “the ability to guess from context is clearly a valuable skill”. It is also good to know that there are students who use contextual guessing quite often and those who do not use this strategy a lot and have some problems with it, they add. Therefore, the other students need some help from their teacher who should practise this skill step by step, describe Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 84).

Summary

This chapter dealt with the importance of the learner as a subject in the process of teaching. The teacher should give the learner the place for his or her individual needs and requests. Furthermore, it is necessary to use various student-centred techniques which could be helpful and useful for learners when learning lexis. It is also important to teach learners how to be more independent in the learning and give them an opportunity to express themselves.

8 Learning vocabulary

“For learning to be effective, attention must be paid to the student’s own process of learning.”

(Morgan and Rinvoluceri, 1986, p. 5)

On the whole, learning vocabulary can be a long procedure. The learner has to pass through many stages until each new vocabulary item will be perfectly stored in his or her memory. As Herbertson (online, 2009) thinks, a new word has to be mentioned at least seven times before it is permanently stored. At the same time, pure “understanding a word is seldom enough” (Morgan and Rinvoluceri, 1986, p. 4). Thus, I am convinced that every new lexical item should be practised many times before it will be set in learner’s long-term memory. Furthermore, according to Morgan and Rinvoluceri (1986, p. 3), “the acquisition of vocabulary is a branching, intensely personal, social and an experiential process, too.”

8.1 Learning strategies

The term learning strategy is best explained by Gu (2003) in Folse (2004, p. 88). For him, “a learning strategy is a series of actions a learner takes to facilitate the completion of a learning task.”

There are various kinds of strategies that help learners to acquire their new vocabulary. However, there are both “good and bad ones, too”, states Folse (2004, p. 87). Generally speaking, every ESL learner is different and prefers different learning strategies. Similarly, one vocabulary learning strategy do not need to be effective and comfortable for everybody, describes Folse (2004, p. 90). He also claims that a research shows that the better learning strategy the learner uses, the more he or she can improve “proficiency and self-confidence.” Moreover, he writes that some learners develop “individualistic strategies” that are appropriate to their needs and characters. In addition to this, Bouchard and Spaventa (1973-78) mention Moulton, who believes that teachers should create exercises to prosper the learners with “increasing their word power” in the foreign language learning. He also points out that teachers need to include vocabulary exercises in every lesson as a natural, “important and purposeful” aid and not to use them only as a time-filler.

When speaking about learning strategies, I would like to make a mention of some useful and interesting strategies that can help students with their vocabulary learning.

Beare (online, 2010) gives some good suggestions for learners:

- Use vocabulary trees
- Learn collocations
- Do not make a random list of new words
- Group words in themes
- Keep a vocabulary notepad at hand
- Add context
- Use vocabulary methods which are effective for you

As well as Beare, Pemberton (online, 1997 and 2000) advise learners:

- Try to reduce the vocabulary you learn (some words keep occurring)
- Focus on the words you find most difficult to learn
- Have the words you want to learn with you whenever you go
- Set aside a regular time for vocabulary learning

McCarthy and O'Dell (2002, p. 7) discuss that the learner can improve his or her vocabulary knowledge by:

- Reading magazines, newspapers, books
- Exploring websites
- Reading things in English
- Watching films or videos
- Listening to the radio, songs, audio books

Finally, McCarten (2007, p. 36) emphasizes that the learners should learn “the most frequent, useful and learnable” words at first and “more difficult and less frequent uses

of previously learned items” should be taught at a later time. Furthermore, in her opinion, the ESL learners need to repeat every new word or phrase several times before it is remembered and the teacher must alternate the types of exercises as well.

In conclusion, as far as I am concerned, every learner should try different learning methods until he or she realizes which one is the best. Or, the learners may adapt some of the methods according to their personality and individual needs. Additionally, if possible, they should try to expand their vocabulary knowledge by reading articles or books, watching films and listening to the radio broadcasts, songs or audio books in English. Moreover, the teacher’s role is to encourage learning vocabulary outside the school and to inform the learner about various learning strategies. To sum it all up, let me add one of the Folse’s (2004, p. 100) quotations: “There is no one strategy or training that is better than another.”

8.2 Remembering vocabulary

“There is no point in studying new words if they are not remembered.”

(Scrivener, 1994, p. 88)

The ESL learners often ask for an effective strategy in learning new vocabulary. At the same time, they want to know how they can *remember* new items. Of course, there are many useful ideas which can enable learners memorizing them. In general, it is said that people remember things that influenced them deeply or things which they have associated with either a good or a bad experience. So it is in the vocabulary world. According to some studies, learners recall words easily if something is done with them, e.g. making from a noun an adjective, learning their opposites etc. (Harmer, 1991, p. 160). Another research shows that students help to fix new lexical items in their minds if they are related to their own experience or used in a context that is significant for them, write McCarthy and O’Dell (2002, p. 6). Additionally, for Pemberton (online, 2000), learning words in context is a natural way of remembering words without studying them with difficulty. He also suggests some methods that can help learners with memorizing new words:

- Say or write the words you are learning
- Record the words or phrases on tape or CD

- Ask a native or fluent speaker to record target words for you
- Play audio-video tapes repeatedly
- Write the words on pieces of paper and put them round your room or home
- Write the words on cards and their meanings on separate cards, then try to match the words with their meanings
- Put the words into sentences

Similarly, Moras (online, 2001) speaks about Oxford (1990) who adds that good memory strategies could be *grouping words, using imagery, semantic mapping, using keywords and sounds, physical response or sensation and using mechanical techniques*. She also points out that if the learner knows his or her learning style preferences (visual, aural, kinaesthetic or tactile), it may be a great advantage for his or her vocabulary learning. Therefore, I think that the teacher should be informed about learners' learning styles and use the styles which are most helpful for their learning.

Bowen and Marks (1994, p. 103) point out a research that found out another useful methods which help students with remembering new words. The research says that the ESL learners best fix new vocabulary items in their minds by association with:

- a mental image or picture (because "visual element is clearly important in vocabulary teaching")
- a situation, topic or story (e.g. fairy tales)
- another word (e.g. *sestra* – *sister*)
- a positive or negative feeling (e.g. *delicious* × *disgusting*)
- a smell, sound or movement (e.g. saying a poem together with a physical movement)
- or some words are simply memorable in themselves (e.g. *hanky-panky*)

When mentioning memory, I would like to speak about two different types of memory as well. These are **short-term** and **long-term memory**. Moras (online, 2001) cited Gairns (1986), who claims that new learned items are firstly stored in our short-term memory

and later in long-term memory. Naturally, there are some differences between these two. The first significant difference is in duration. Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 87) points out that words kept in short-term memory are easily forgettable whereas words stored in long-term memory can be remembered for many years after their initial input. The second difference is in capacity. As they believe, short-term memory is very limited in capacity, but long-term memory can keep any number of information. It is also true that we must do our best to get a piece of information into long-term memory, they add. Therefore, repetition is very needful when you want to transfer information into long term memory (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 87). Moreover, Bowen and Marks (1994, p. 102) are convinced that it is very effective if new lexical items are practised right after they have been introduced to the learner in order not to be immediately forget. At the same time, Pemberton (online, 2000) advises learners that they should “learn repeatedly.” He mentions a study which shows that people “do not forget things gradually.” In addition to this, he conveys that we tend to forget mostly in twenty minutes after having learned something. Then, we forget more and more, but after eight hours, the rate of forgetting stops, he puts it. What is more, Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 94) agree that eighty per cent of information people forget is lost within a day. So, they both argue whether it is good to revise new items one day after the original input. Finally, Bowen and Marks (1994, p. 102) also describe that when a new word transfers to the long-term memory, it is possible that “the learner has been able to retain the word not only as a result of repetition, but also through some kind of association.”

To bring it together, learners should be aware of various methods that enable them easy memorizing of new lexical items. Additionally, teachers need to be able to use methods that help learners to remember new words without difficulty. Similarly, they have to be careful about how many items they would like to present in one lesson in order not to overload learners with too much information (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 93). They also emphasize the importance of recycling new vocabulary. Therefore, they suggest including “regular use of warm up activities to aid recall and develop retrieval systems.” Moreover, they advise teachers to revise lexis “one or two days after initial input.”

8.3 Recording vocabulary

It is a common and natural habit that learners store all new vocabulary they have been introduced to during their foreign language learning. Thus, these new words “need to be organized in some way”, says Lewis (2000, p. 43). However, the way of recording vocabulary items by the learner may vary. There are learners who prefer keeping small notebooks with chronologically ordered English words and their mother-tongue equivalents written down next to them, e.g. *house* = *dům* (Lewis, 2000, p. 43). This is a very traditional and most used way by learners. According to Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 95), it is a simple storage system that gives the learner basic information about the item. Janíková (2005, p. 137) also points out that with this system the learner’s recording and memorizing of foreign words may be easier. However, this organisation of words can do more harm than good to the learner (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 95). It is obvious that an arrangement like this is unsatisfactory and more comments on the word are demanding (e.g. pronunciation, typical collocations, word phrases and the use of the word in a sentence). What is more, they state that “it is not a flexible system” of storing words because there is no place for other important information which could be added later. Furthermore, the words are isolated and without context, so they cannot be kept in the long-term memory, thinks Janíková (2005, p. 137). Therefore, I believe it is necessary for the teacher to emphasize the learners the importance of a good way of recording lexical items. Herbertson (online, 2009) mentions Lewis (1997), who writes that it is important for the learner to note down words “in context and in ways that are easily retrievable.” At the same time, in my opinion, the teacher should advise learners a range of suitable methods how to organise their vocabulary.

Lewis (2000, p. 43) suggests a good example how to improve the vocabulary recording:

CRITICISM

(pronunciation and translation)

to express disapproval of sth. or sb.

E.g. The government has received a lot of criticism for increasing taxes.

V: receive, come in for

A: heavy, severe, fierce

However, Bowen and Marks (1994, p. 96) speak about other effective and practical methods of keeping lexis: word pools, mind maps, labelled pictures, random notes, word cards, mnemonics, charts, diagrams, word tables, synonyms etc.

As far as using **visuals**, such as diagrams and word trees, is concerned, Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 96) claim that “visuals are an extremely useful framework for storage lexis.” Additionally, if some lexical items are omitted, we can use word trees and word field diagrams as an interesting activity for practising vocabulary, they explain. The learner can also put individual items (hyponyms) under their superordinate term (e.g. *fruit: peach, strawberry, cherry, pear, pineapple*), they inform.

Generally speaking, still more and more learners use **word cards** as the best way of organizing and learning vocabulary. For Lewis (2000, p. 43), vocabulary learning is “an ongoing and organic process.” Thus, the ESL learners need to realize that the words in their notebooks are not only “listed and left”, but they are also “revisited and extended.” So, from my point of view, keeping word cards could be a good method for recording, as well as practising vocabulary. Janíková (2005, p. 137) writes about Rampillon (1995), who describes the proper usage of word cards: The learner notes down the new word on the one side of the card together with its grammatical features, pronunciation, word phrase and sentence, whereas its translation is written on the other side of the card. Then he or she learns and practise the words step by step. Later, the already known words are put aside and the difficult ones are still practised. He also points out that you can put aside those words you already know very well and add other vocabulary items.

Another popular way of organizing words is **labelling**. Labelling objects presents “a great deal of inbuilt revision” (Gairns and Redman (1986, p. 99). Furthermore, this storage system can be very amusing for some learners, they add. Learners record the word on small labels and stick them to the designated places in their homes, e.g. fridge, wardrobe, door, window or bed, they convey. So, then they can clearly see the English word for the object. Similarly, we can use this method with some objects in the classroom, they claim.

Summary

To sum it up, the learners should realize that there are various suitable methods how to arrange their vocabulary notebooks. Moreover, they need to know that the translation of a word is not enough for its proper understanding, so more additional and important pieces of information (e.g. pronunciation, a common phrase or sentence) need to be mentioned as well. Therefore, teachers should help and inform about the role of vocabulary notebooks in the classroom. In McCarten's (2007, 25) opinion, students need to be encouraged to go on with learning vocabulary at home and teachers can add some vocabulary notebook activities to show which things are worth recording, too. Although, there are methods that might not suit to every learner and that seem to be "time-consuming" (Moras, online, 2001). So, the teacher can advise some more complete definitions of words, but the learner should decide about his or her final arrangement (Gairns and Redman, 1986, p. 100). Still, every learner should not forget that "a lexical notebook mirrors an individual's uniquely developing mental lexicon", emphasizes Lewis (2000, p. 43).

9 Vocabulary games and activities

After each presenting of vocabulary, some activities or games should follow in order to practise it and become more familiar with it. As Scrivener (1994, p. 83) states, in the stage of familiarization, learners should practise “recognizing, manipulating and using” the word. Furthermore, games can be used as a good possibility for student’s reviewing and revision of vocabulary (McCallum, 1980, p. 9). Generally speaking, learners remember more when using senses. Therefore, some creative activities and amusing games are very useful and needed and this should be done at every age and language level. However, there are some aspects of using games in English lessons, which need to be considered carefully. Hrušková (online, 2010) believes that when preparing games or game-like activities, the teacher ought to think of learner’s age, number learners in the class and how much time will be spent on the game. In addition to this, she claims that every game or activity should have its aim (or aims).

We also have to take into consideration that even playing games can cause problems. Hrušková (online, 2010) speaks about noise, as the most disturbing element, which can be made by learners (especially small children). Hence, the teacher should be able to calm down learners if necessary.

However, there are many benefits of using games and interesting activities when learning a foreign language. Firstly, I would like to mention motivation. Every teacher knows that it is very important to motivate learners for learning. Without motivation, the learner can get bored easily and lose his or her interest for learning. I must agree with McCallum (1980, p. 9) who says: “Games stimulate student interest” and with Wright et al. (1983, p. 1), who add that games “help and encourage learners to sustain their interest and work.” Secondly, McCallum (1980, p. 9) claims that games could not only be very enjoyable and provide great enrichment in the lesson, but they are also a kind of a medicine for creating “relaxed atmosphere” in the classroom. So, when using games, students are not under pressure and stressed. Thirdly, when speaking, learners can use “natural language” and improve their communicative skills (McCallum, 1980, p. 9). What is more, their reaction is spontaneous and they use the foreign language in a creative way, he writes. Hrušková (online, 2010) adds that during games learners can show their emotions. Next, in McCallum’s (1980, p. 9) opinion, thanks to games, learners are less shy, free for experiments and participation in using a foreign language.

It is worth mentioning that games also improve cooperation among learners, as Wright et al. (1983, p. 1) point out. Another advantage of using games in the classroom is that all students can take part in playing, either slower or faster ones, describes McCallum (1980, p. 9). Further, for some learners it could be a “healthy competition”, he mentions. Wright et al. (1983, p. 1) sum up that if the learners are “amused and challenged, they can better remember the words.” Finally, I must remember Hrušková (online, 2010), who stresses that with using games, all key competences are being developed.

But games have positive influence not only on the learner, but also on the teacher. According to McCallum (1980, p. 9), they can serve as a good feedback, can be used with all learning skills and the preparation of materials is often easy.

There are numerous vocabulary practice games and activities. Some of them are recommended by Scrivener (1994, p. 8):

- discussions
- role plays
- matching pictures to words/parts of the words to other parts/words to other words (e.g. collocations, synonyms, opposites etc.)
- word formation activities
- classifying items into lists
- filling crosswords, grids or diagrams
- filling gaps in sentences
- memory games

Now, I would like to mention and describe the importance of some common vocabulary games and activities that I chose from different authors.

Among most common and favourite vocabulary games and activities certainly belong **vocabulary crosswords**, **vocabulary puzzles**, **hangman** and **bingo**. These typical and widely used games and activities became popular among learners of all ages and language levels. With **vocabulary crosswords** and **puzzles**, the learners can practise already acquired vocabulary or various groups of words, such as names of animals, fruits, parts of the body etc. (McCallum, 1980, p. 11). Moreover, I think that thanks to these types of exercises, the learner can practise the spelling and the pronunciation of

given words and his or her memory, too. Additionally, as a trainer teacher, I have experienced that young learners are very keen on preparing crosswords on their own. So, I believe that this could also raise their motivation and enthusiasm when learning a foreign language.

Other enjoyable vocabulary games are **word dominoes**. The teacher prepares a set of cards with different pictures on them. Then, learners place one card next to the other and they have to explain and justify the reason why they link the two words together, says Scrivener (1994, p. 87). This kind of activity encourages learner's creativity, he states. What is more, I believe that this game is suitable for all age groups and levels.

When speaking about vocabulary activities, I would like to remember some of them that, in my opinion, should not be forgotten. These are for example **word jumbles**. When doing this activity, students are supposed to put together single letters arranged in a random order, in order to get a word or a phrase. For instance, from the given letters *ywretsrabr* we get the word *strawberry*. Similarly, we can create learners' imagination by using an amusing activity called **words from words** (Phillips, 1994). She points out that the main aim is to think of as many words as possible from one word given, e.g. *grandmother* (*man, the, modern, great...*). Of course, it can happen that students think up some nonexistent words. Therefore, as far as I am concerned, dictionaries need to be used as a helpful tool for this activity in order to check the correctness of words.

Other effective and creative vocabulary activity mentioned by Scrivener (1994, p. 87) is called **words seeds**. In my opinion, this activity is appropriate for learners at higher levels. The teacher gives each group of learners a list of some words and their task is to prepare a story that includes all the words given. Finally, each group presents its story to the whole class. He also claims that this type of exercise could be done either orally or as a writing task. On one hand, I believe that this could be more challenging for some learners. On the other hand, students could cooperate and use their imagination as well. Finally, I would suggest rewriting the stories and showing them off in the classroom, so that the learners could compare their works. I also think that this activity could be done as a small project or a competition.

A good and a well-known activity, especially for revising vocabulary sets (e.g. animals, colours, furniture...), is **odd man out**. Wright et al. (1983, p. 122) explains that thanks to this exercise, learners practise "giving reasons, using *because* and agreeing and

disagreeing". The aim of this activity is to mark a word which should not be in a line among others, e.g. Monday, Saturday, Thursday, *August*, Wednesday. From my point of view, this exercise could be adapted for intermediate or advanced learners, where the difference would be not so clear, e.g. crazy, *tall*, honest, sensitive.

In addition to this, guessing word games and activities seem to be popular as well. I would like to put into this category activities like **observe and remember** (written by McCallum, 1980, p. 6), **guess the word** and **acting** (Herbertson, online, 2009). During the first activity called **observe and remember**, the student is tested in observing and remembering things, as McCallum (1980, p. 6) puts it. The teacher shows learners different kinds of objects (realia), such as chalk, scissors, envelope etc. After one minute, the objects are covered and then they have to write the names of as many objects as they can remember, he describes. I would say that this type of exercise is good for training student's memory, too. However, to make it more interesting and amusing, especially for young learners, I would cover learners' eyes with a scarf or a napkin and then they would touch the objects and guess them. Similarly, a game that I know under the name **guess the word**, is a guessing game but is suitable for more advanced learners. Students get pieces of paper with a word or a phrase on it and they have to describe the word in English, using phrases like *it's a thing that...*, *it's a place where...* etc. The rest of the class try to guess the word or phrase. The last guessing activity I would like to mention here is **acting** or **drawing** words. This time, learners have to act or draw on a blackboard a word or a phrase and the others guess the word. Again, this word game is very enjoyable and it makes students laugh. Moreover, I think that students are not stressed and it could "refresh" an ordinary lesson, too. However, when doing this activity with my learners during my teaching practice, some of them were too shy to perform in front of the whole class. So, in my opinion, teachers need to encourage them and if it would not help, he or she should not force them to do this activity.

In conclusion, as far as I am concerned, teachers should include vocabulary games and activities into every lesson in order not only to raise student's interest and enthusiasm in learning a foreign language, but also to keep them "fresh", active and relaxed. (For examples of word games and activities see Appendix 5.)

II PRACTICAL PART

Description of the research studies

The practical part of my diploma project has been based on two research studies in order to find out answers connected to my research questions about teaching and learning English vocabulary. The research studies were focused on various techniques and methods used when teaching and learning English vocabulary, the usage of different kinds of dictionaries and how great emphasis is placed on teaching and learning vocabulary at present elementary and language schools.

Research questions

1. What are the most effective techniques and methods for presenting and practising new vocabulary?
2. What aspects of new vocabulary need to be introduced?
3. What role can dictionaries play in learning English vocabulary?
4. What are the most effective techniques of learning and remembering new vocabulary?

The first research was designed for English language teachers, whereas the second research was distributed to English language learners at elementary and language schools. Both researches were delivered to different schools in Zlín region. The method of questionnaire was chosen and used. The number of returned questionnaires was 20 (questionnaires for teachers) and 65 (questionnaires for learners). The majority of pupils attended 6th – 9th classes.

The questionnaire for English language teachers consists of ten questions and is written in Czech. The questionnaire for English language learners consists of eleven questions and is written in Czech, too. Both types of questionnaires contain open and close-ended questions. In the first part, there is some basic information about my diploma thesis and about myself. Then, general questions (about age, class...) were added. The second part included the questions themselves. I would like to mention that all questionnaires were anonymous and it was possible to choose more than one answer, or to add some comments. For the original and translated questionnaires see Appendix 1, for examples of completed questionnaires see Appendix 4.

Questionnaires: data presentation and evaluation

Questionnaire for English language teachers

Question 1(Figure 1):

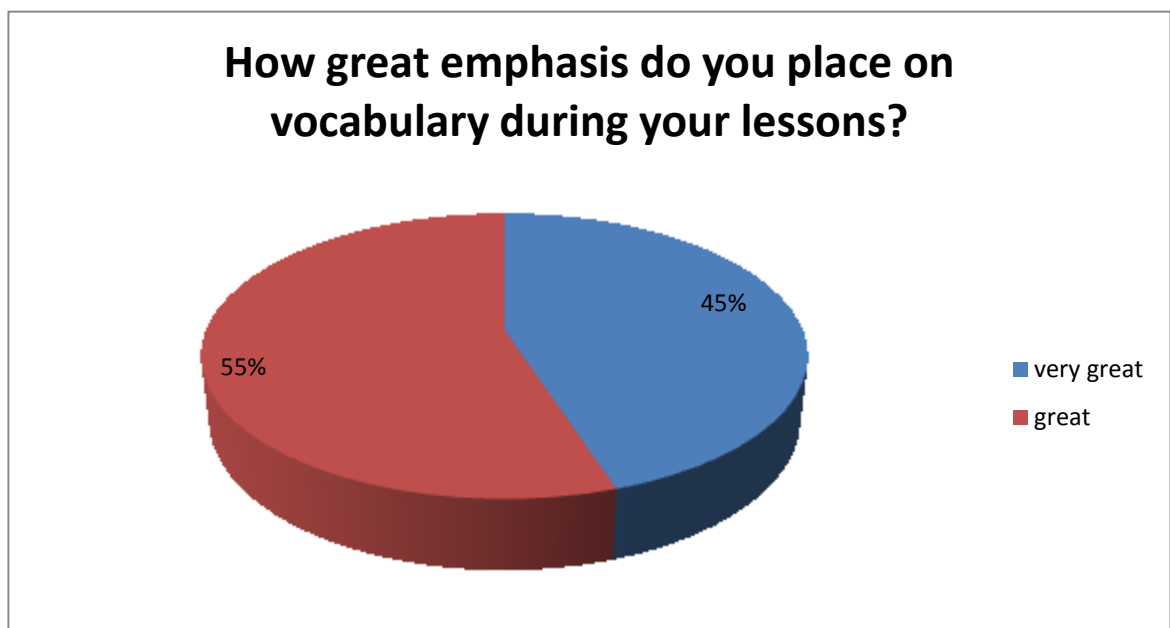
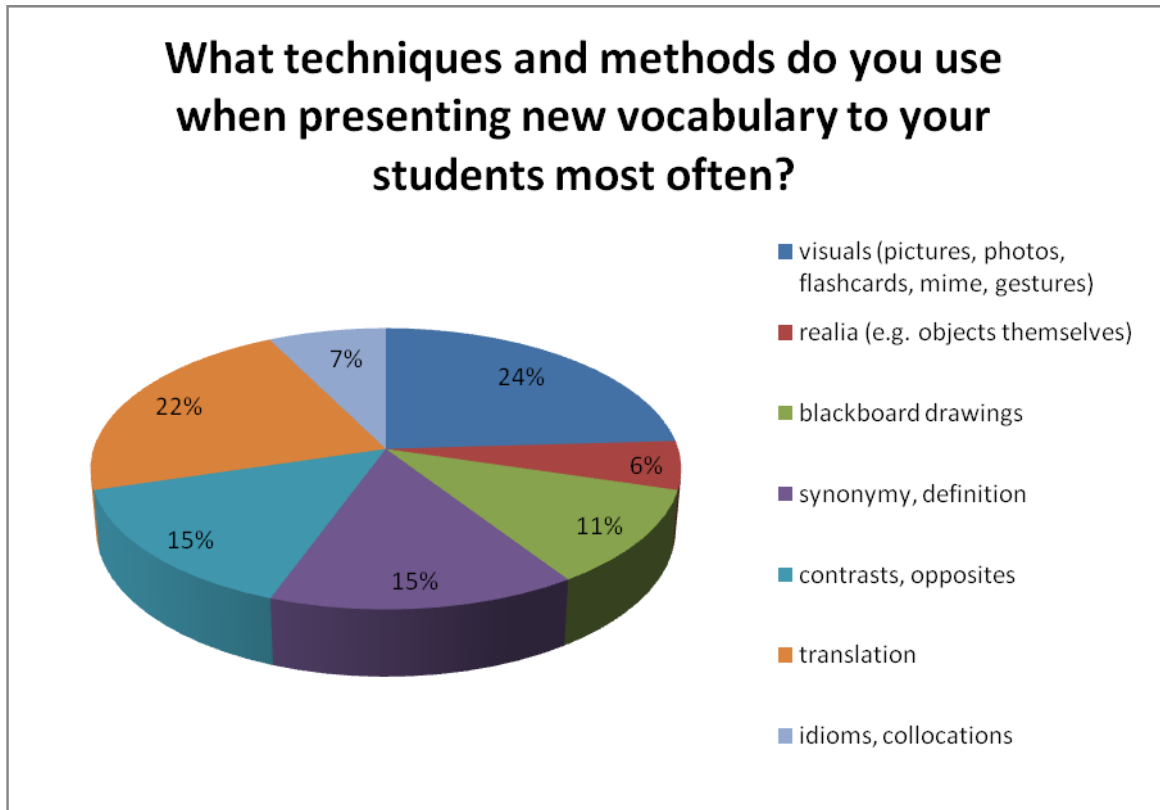


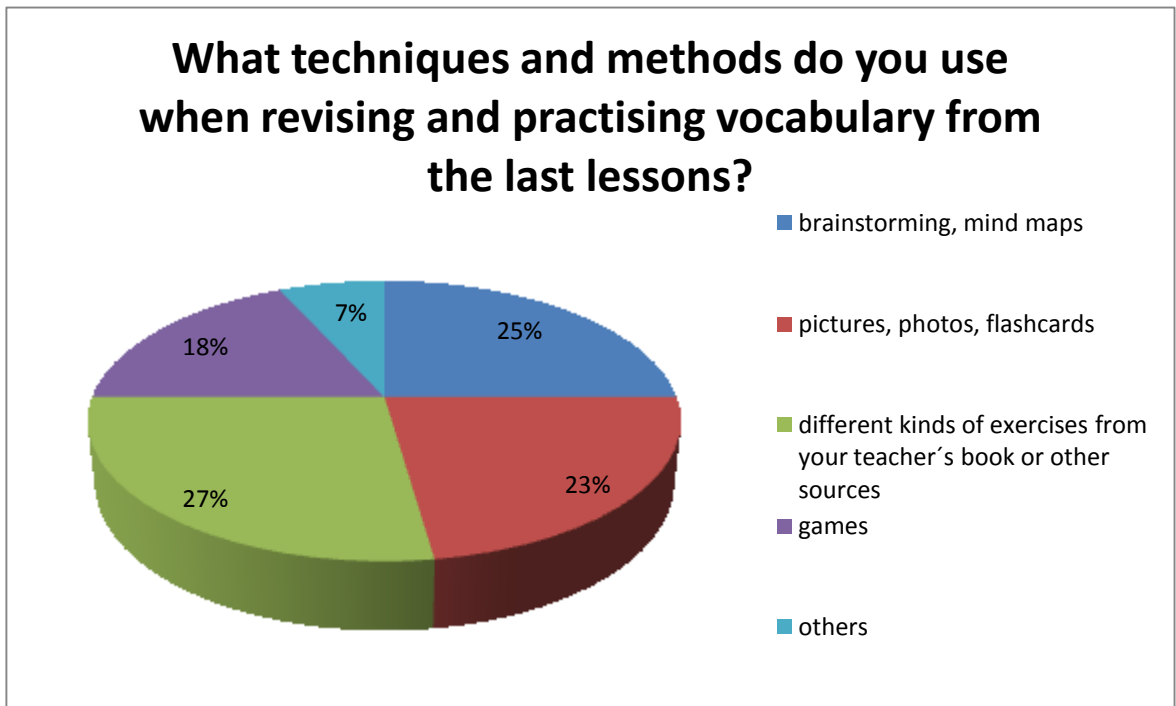
Figure 1 shows that including vocabulary during English lessons is for most teachers very important. There are no teachers who state that they place little or even no emphasis on vocabulary when teaching English. See also Table 1 in Appendix 2.

Question 2 (Figure 2):



As I expected, Figure 2 shows that most used techniques for presenting new vocabulary to learners are visual aids, such as pictures, photos, flashcards, mime and gestures. However, it also proved my hypothesis that translation of words into learners' mother tongue is very often used by teachers when demonstrating new words, too. On the other hand, surprisingly, not many teachers use realia and blackboard drawings. In my opinion, one of the reasons of these findings might be that, in general, it is not comfortable for teachers to bring real objects into the classroom. Additionally, I also think that realia and blackboard drawings are used mostly when teaching very young pupils, whereas for more advanced learners, more challenging techniques and methods are appropriate. See also Table 2 in Appendix 2.

Question 3 (Figure 3):



As can be seen from Figure 3, teachers prefer using different kinds of exercises from their teacher's books or from other sources when revising and practising vocabulary. It also shows that visuals are good for practising vocabulary as well as mind maps. However, I thought that teachers include vocabulary games more often than it was found out. As they added, their favourite vocabulary games are bingo, "pexeso", dominoes and mime games. This survey has also proved my opinion that the younger students are, the more games are used when practising vocabulary. Moreover, seven per cent of English language teachers write that they use IWB (interactive white board) as a good tool for revising and practising words from last lessons. See also Table 3 in Appendix 2.

Question 4 (Figure 4):

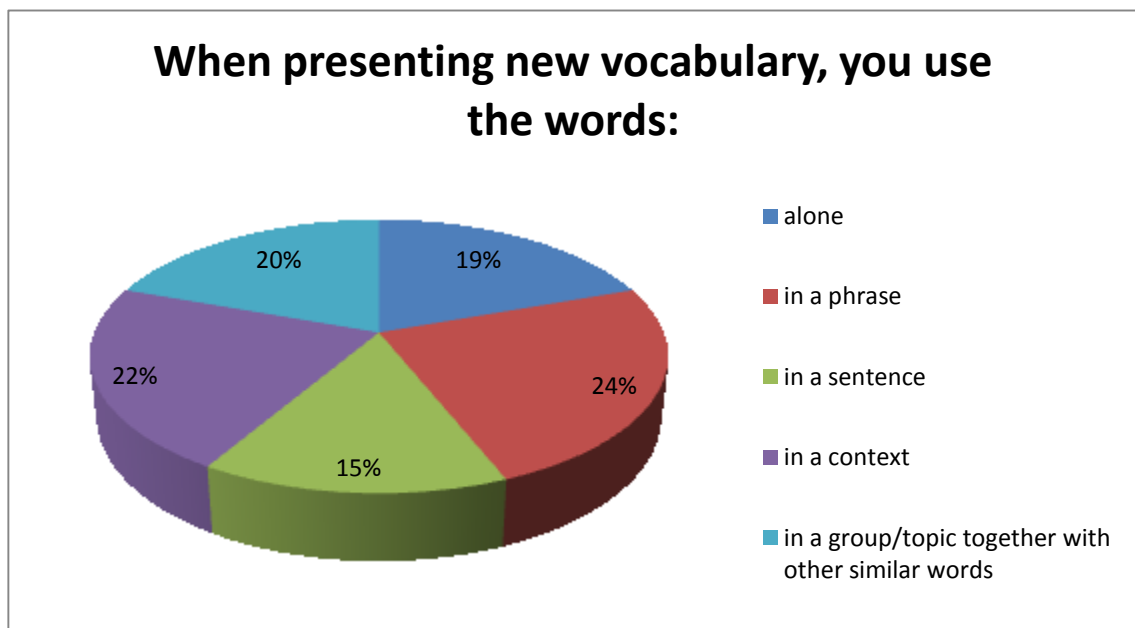
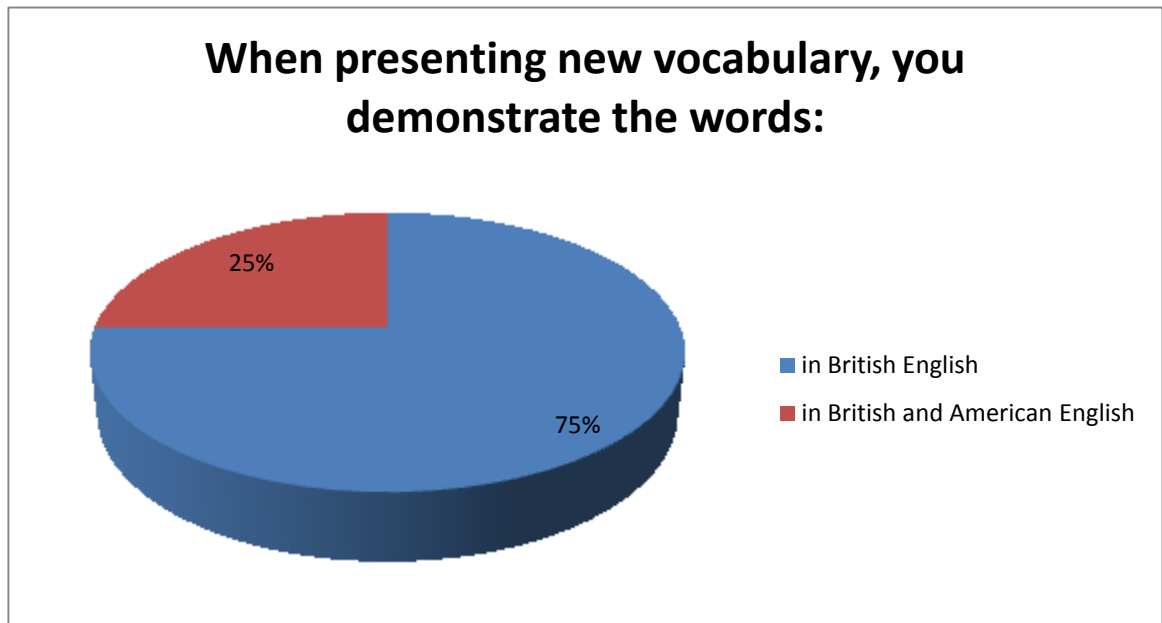


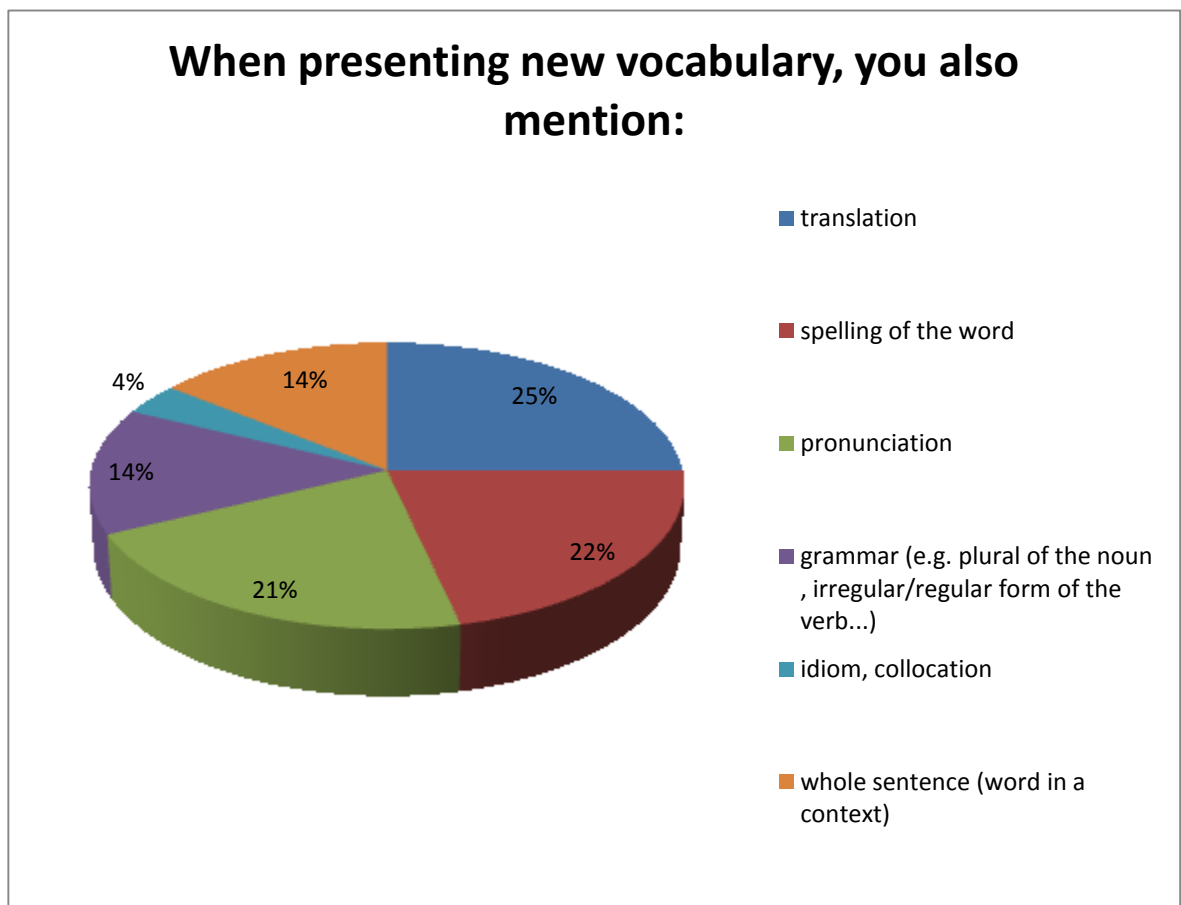
Figure 4 shows that teachers present new words mostly in a phrase or in a context, which surprised me a lot. However, as I expected, there are still many teachers who present single words. Furthermore, my hypothesis about grouping words or presenting words in topics has been proved, too. The main reason of this is that there are a lot of textbooks that present new words in various topics, e.g. family members, animals etc. See also Table 4 in Appendix 2.

Question 5 (Figure 5):



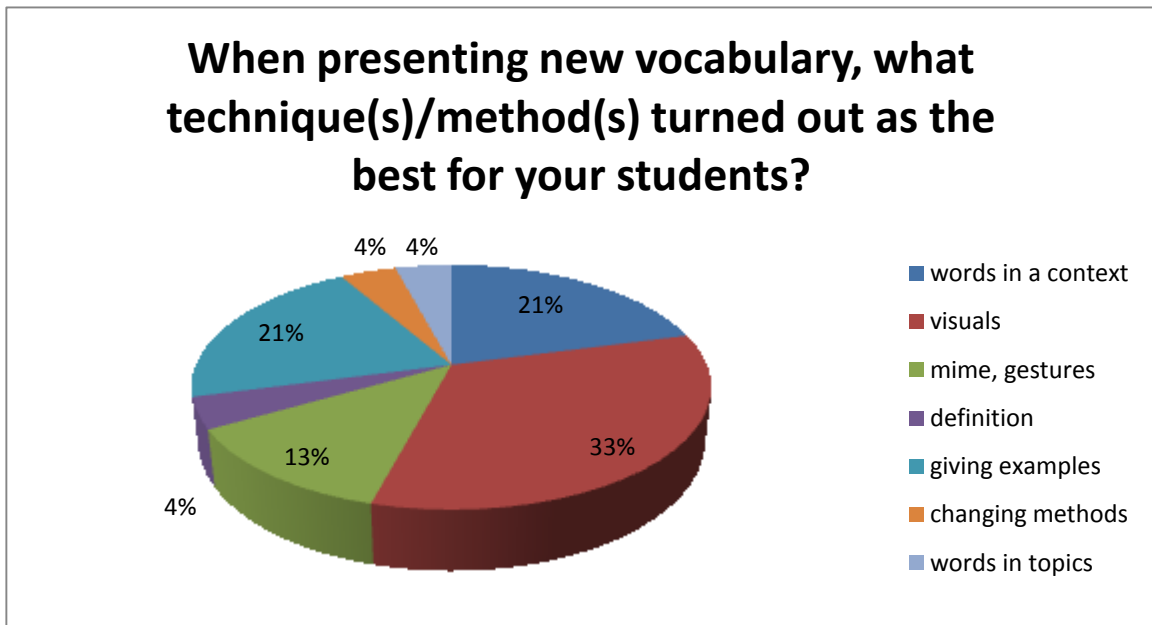
As we can see from Figure 5, the most teachers mention words in BrE (British English), which I expected. However, there are teachers who claim that they add words in AmE (American English) if there is a clear difference between AmE and BrE and if it is written in students' textbooks (e.g. sidewalk – pavement). See also Table 5 in Appendix 2.

Question 6 (Figure 6):



According to my survey, as I expected, when presenting new words to learners, teachers mention mostly their translation, spelling and pronunciation. They also pointed out that if the learners are at higher level, they add to a new word some information about its grammar (e.g. irregular plural of the noun). See also Table 6 in Appendix 2.

Question 7 (Figure 7):



As can be seen from Figure 7, according to teachers, the best method for presenting new vocabulary to learners is using visuals, such as pictures and flashcards. Then they write that presenting words in a context and giving examples of common phrases is also an effective technique for learners. However, surprisingly, I believed that presenting words in topics would have been a good method, too (only four per cent of teachers think it is the best technique). Therefore, in my opinion, the most suitable method can be each of these because it depends on which learning style the learner prefers (either visual, aural, kinaesthetic or tactile). See also Table 7 in Appendix 2.

Question 8 (Figure 8):

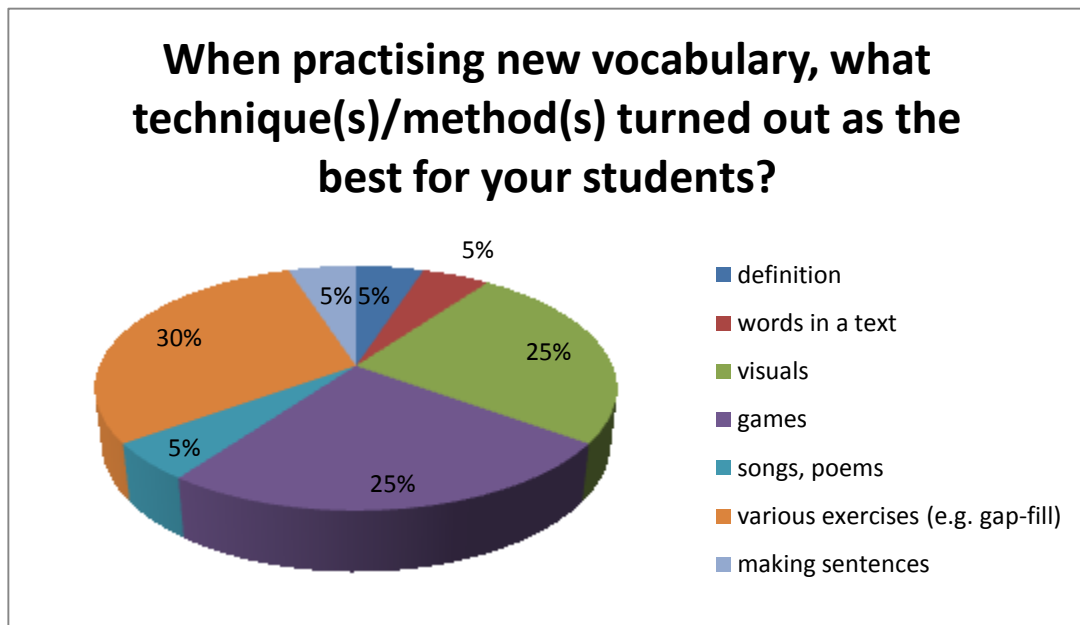
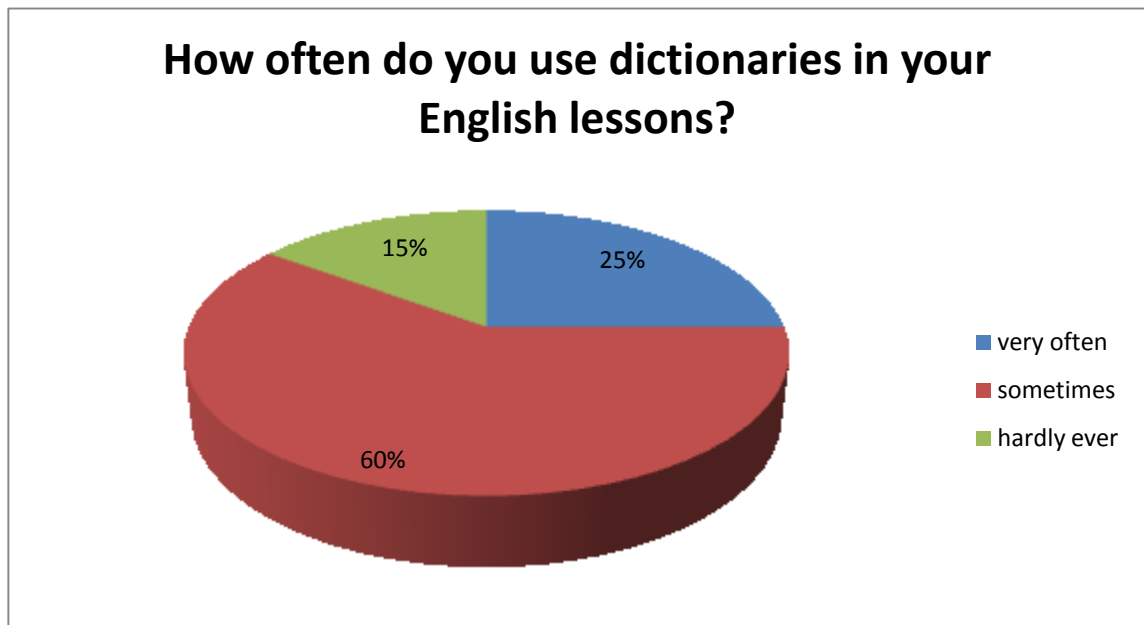


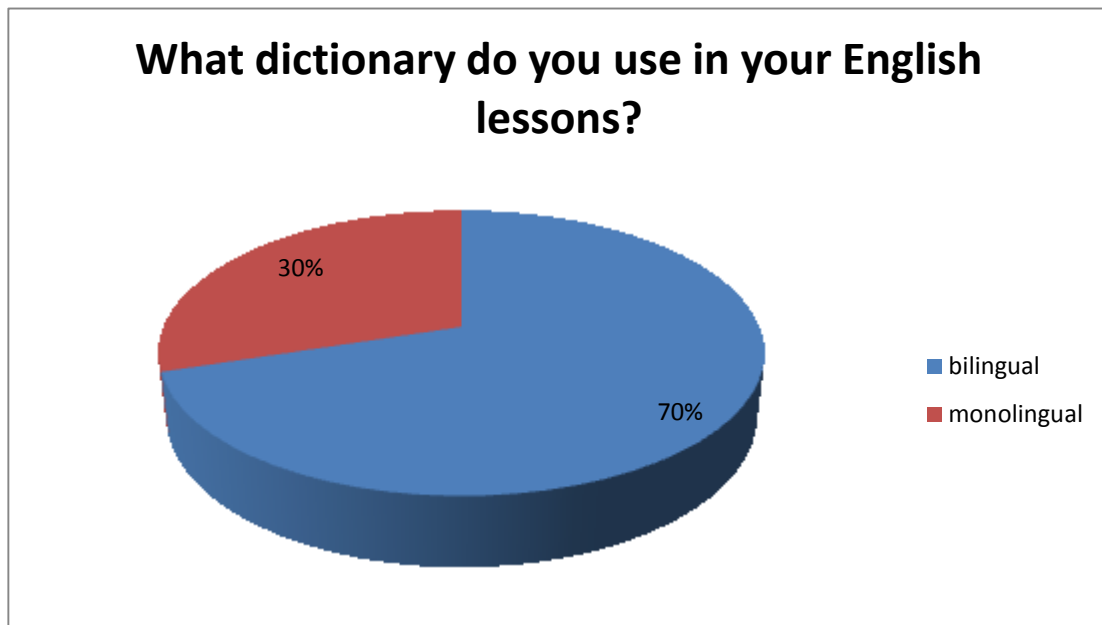
Figure 8 shows that doing various exercises (e.g. gap-fill) turned out to be the best method for practising new words in the classroom. What is more, teachers agreed that using visuals and vocabulary games are very useful and effective techniques, which I expected. Similarly, we must know which learning style the learner prefers in order to find the most suitable technique for practising vocabulary. See also Table 8 in Appendix 2.

Question 9 (Figure 9):



According to my survey, as expected, it is not so common that learners use dictionaries in every English lesson. The research has proved my hypothesis that learners *sometimes* work with dictionaries in English lessons. However, about twenty-five per cent of teachers use dictionaries *very often* when teaching. Moreover, I would like to mention that I am pleased to find out that there is nobody who wrote that he or she does not use a dictionary at all. See also Table 9 in Appendix 2.

Question 10 (Figure 10):



As I expected, Figure 10 shows that most teachers use bilingual dictionaries in their lessons. However, it surprised me a lot when I found out that about thirty per cent of teachers use monolingual dictionaries, too. Finally, teachers also pointed out that the usage of dictionaries in English lessons often depends on learners' skills and level. Furthermore, they wrote that they hardly ever use dictionaries in 6th classes. On the other hand, according to them, they encourage learners to work with dictionaries in 7th, 8th and 9th classes.

Questionnaire for English language learners

Question 1(Figure 1):

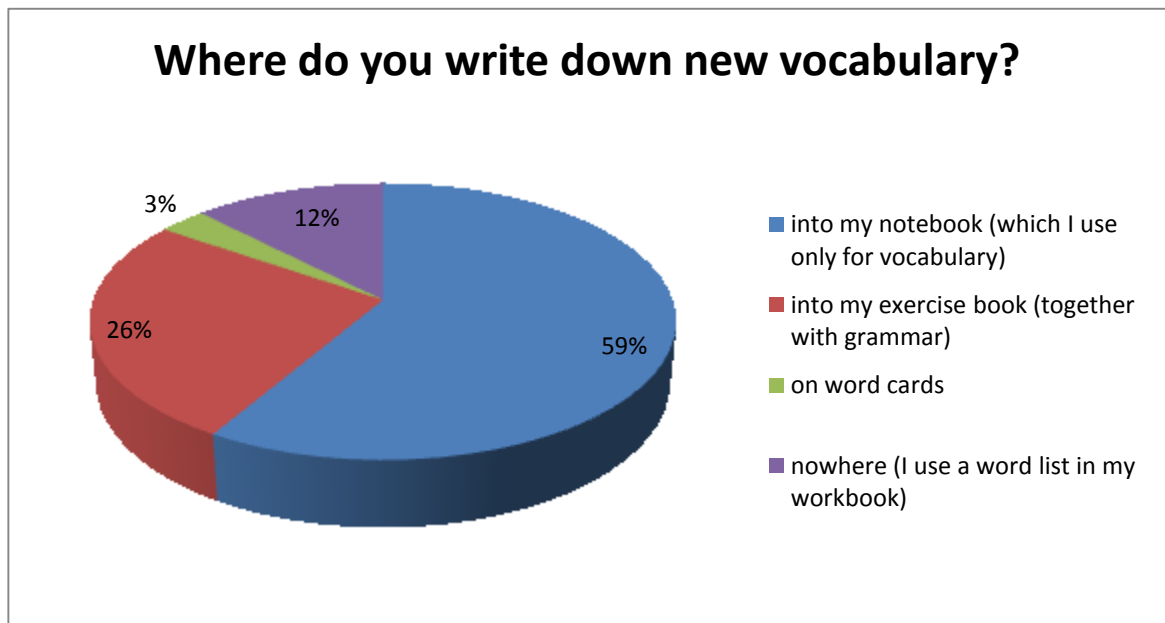
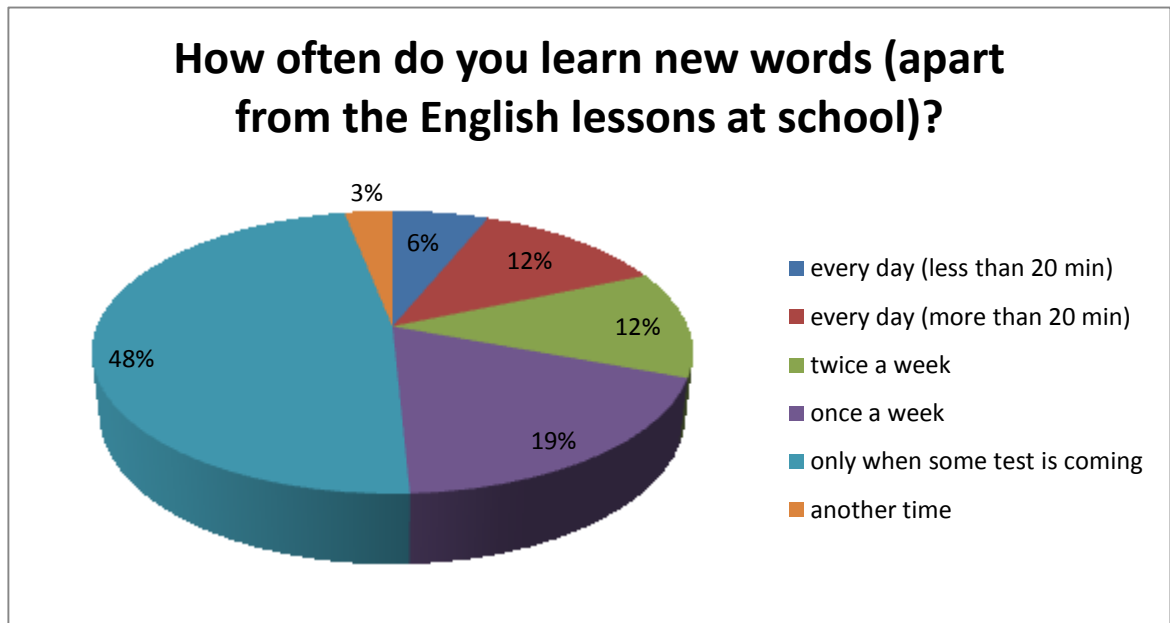


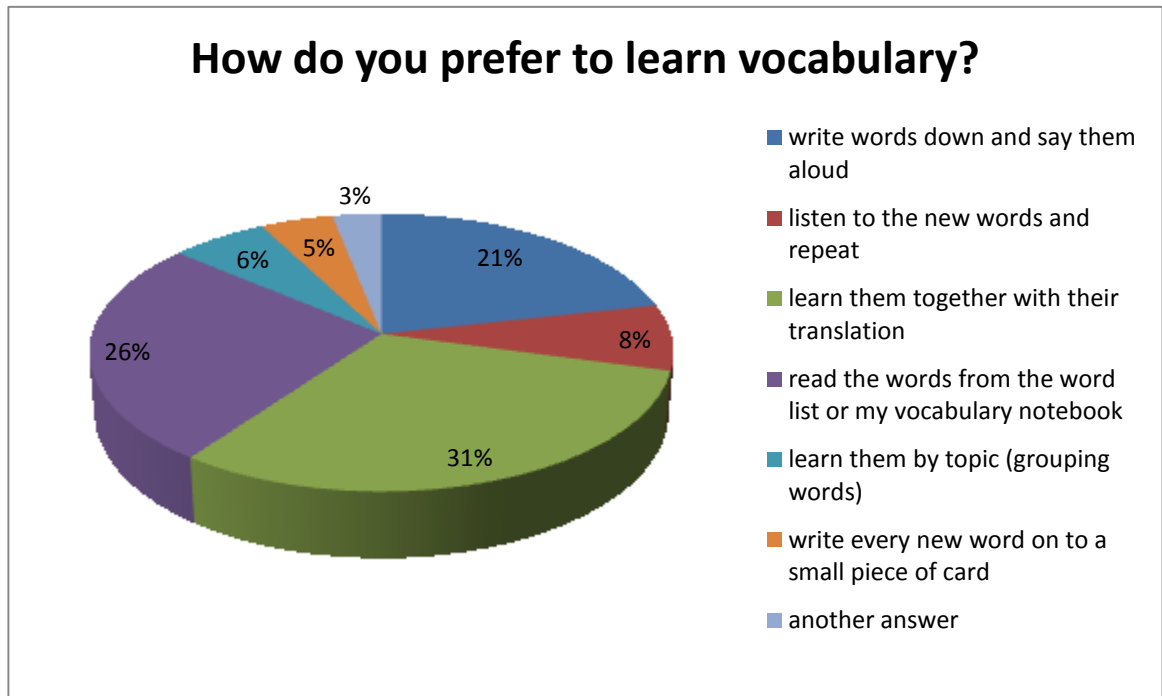
Figure 1 proved my hypothesis that most students write new vocabulary into their vocabulary notebooks. However, there are learners who prefer recording words together with grammar. Moreover, I was surprised with the finding that only a few learners keep word cards. Finally, many learners at primary schools state that they do not have any vocabulary notebooks because they use word lists which are included in their workbooks. So, they do not need to write anything down. See also Table 1 in Appendix 3.

Question 2 (Figure 2):



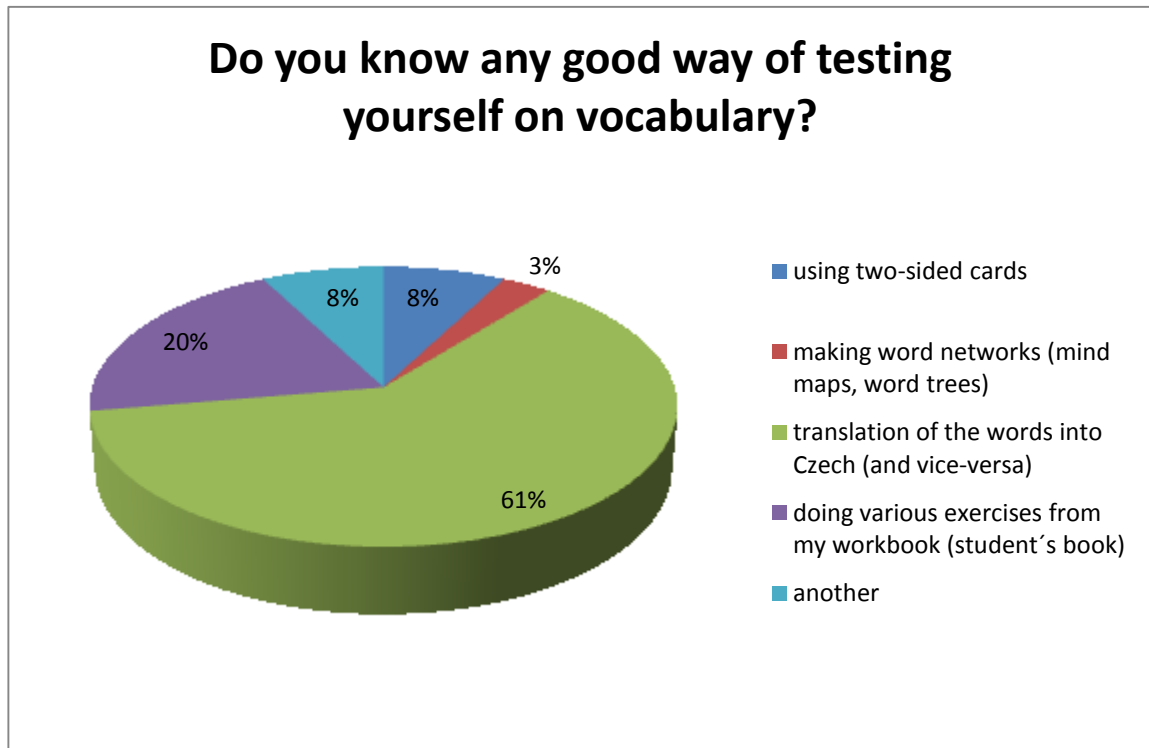
As can be seen from Figure 2, most students learn English vocabulary only when a test is announced. To be honest, I feel very disappointed with this finding. It shows that pupils do not learn vocabulary regularly. However, there are some learners who devote themselves to English vocabulary at least once a week. Furthermore, I am glad to find out that some students learn every day, even during their breaks (that one pupil wrote). Finally, according to my survey, I would like to mention that learners at language schools learn vocabulary more often than pupils at primary schools. See also Table 2 in Appendix 3.

Question 3 (Figure 3):



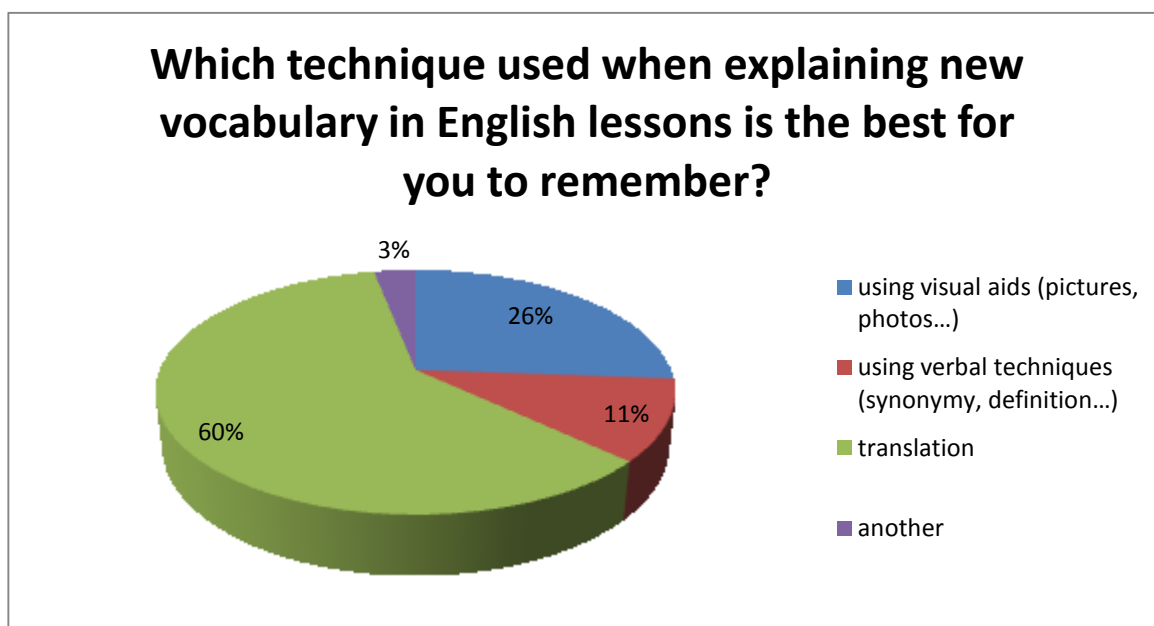
As expected, Figure 3 shows that most students learn vocabulary together with their translation, which is very common. What is more, the questionnaires have proved findings that many learners prefer learning vocabulary either by reading them from their notebooks or word lists, or by writing them down and saying them aloud. However, only a few students state that it help them when they learn new words by listening and repeating them. Finally, there were two learners who claimed that they sing a song with the new words in order to learn them. See also Table 3 in Appendix 3.

Question 4 (Figure 4):



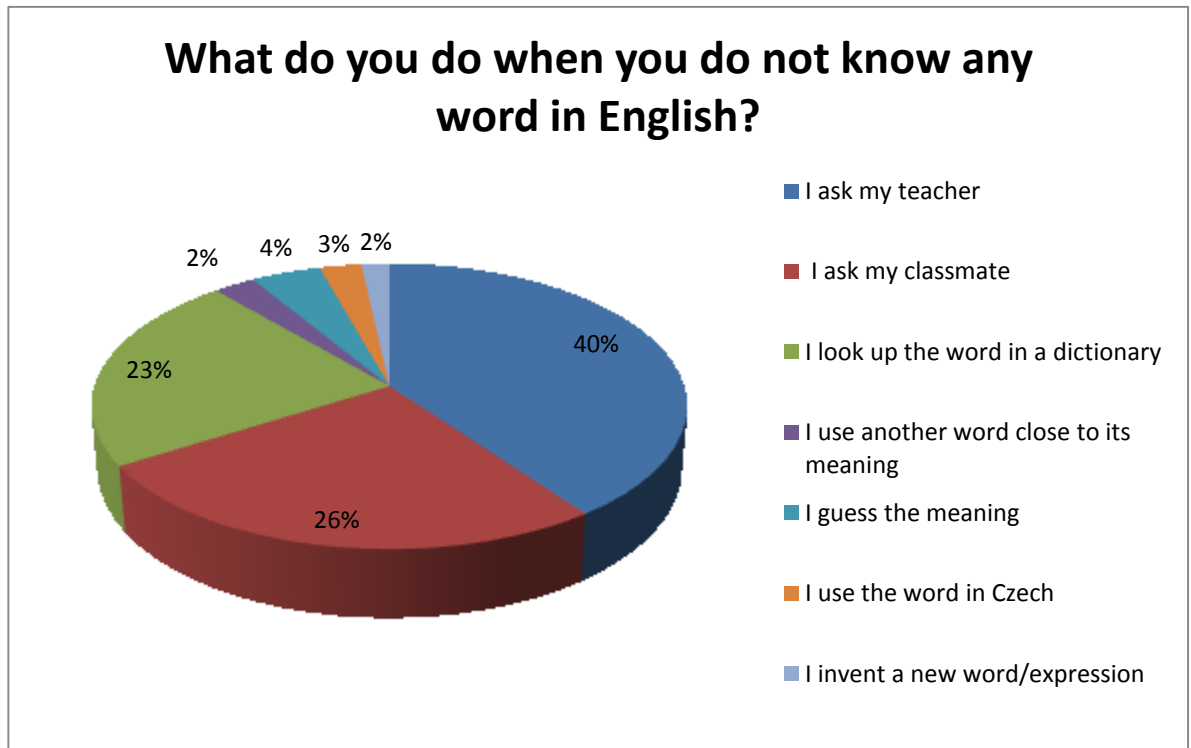
Similarly, when learning vocabulary, the survey has proved my hypothesis that most learners practise new vocabulary items by translating them into Czech and vice-versa. At the same time, as I expected, many of them do various exercises in order to practise new words. However, there are learners who state that they like to practise vocabulary when there is a second person who test them (orally). Other students add that it helps them when they watch films or read books in English. See also Table 4 in Appendix 3.

Question 5 (Figure 5):



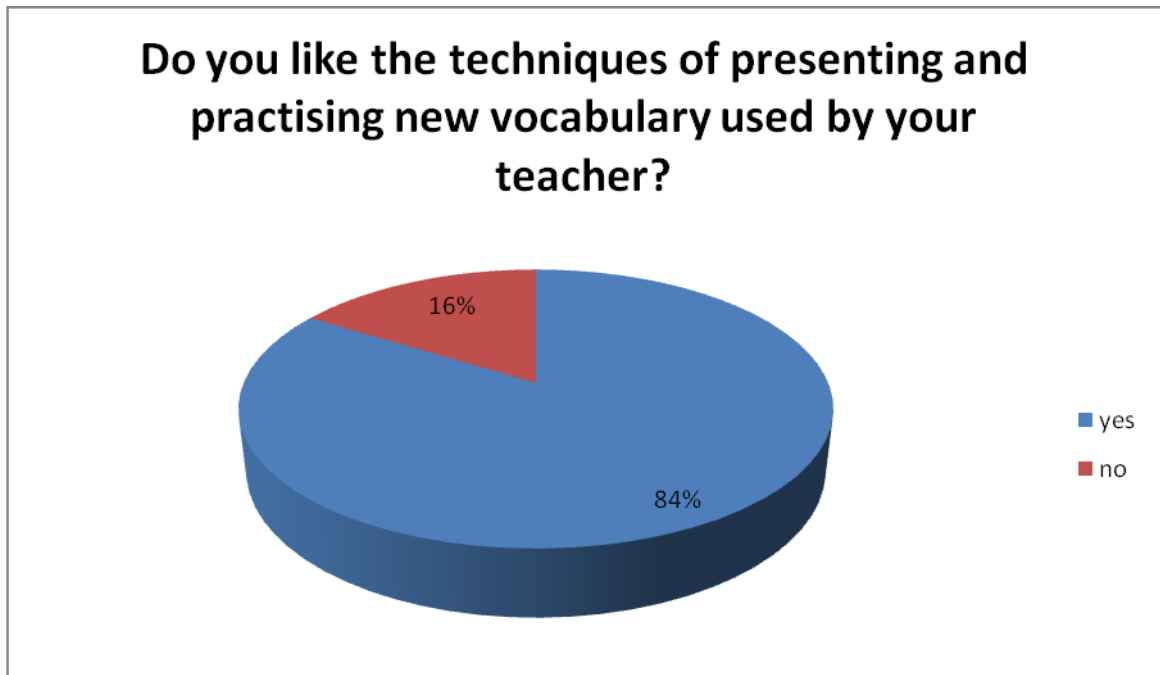
As mentioned before, a method of translation is widely used at Czech schools. So, as we can see from Figure 5, I was not surprised with the finding that more than half learners wrote that they remember a new word best when it is introduced with its translation. Moreover, as expected, about twenty-six per cent of learners claim that visual aids help them to remember new vocabulary items. However, there are some of them who point out that the best technique for remembering new words is saying them aloud, doing exercises in their workbooks and finding new words in a text. See also Table 5 in Appendix 3.

Question 6 (Figure 6):



According to Figure 6, most learners answered that they ask their teacher when they do not know any word. Not surprisingly, others prefer to ask their classmates for help or they look up the word in a dictionary. However, this survey has also disproved my hypothesis that there are learners who use English description of the unknown word they would like to know in English. So, it shows that describing a word in English is difficult for the ESL learners. See also Table 6 in Appendix 3.

Question 7 (Figure 7):



As seen from Figure 7, an overwhelming majority of students states that they like the way of presenting and practising new vocabulary items by their teacher. Although, there are some students who would prefer other effective methods, such as watching film, playing games, and practising more. Furthermore, according to this survey, some learners point out that there are not interested and motivated in learning English vocabulary at all. So, I think teachers should be more inventive when presenting and practising new words to learners. See also Table 7 in Appendix 3.

Question 8 (Figure 8):

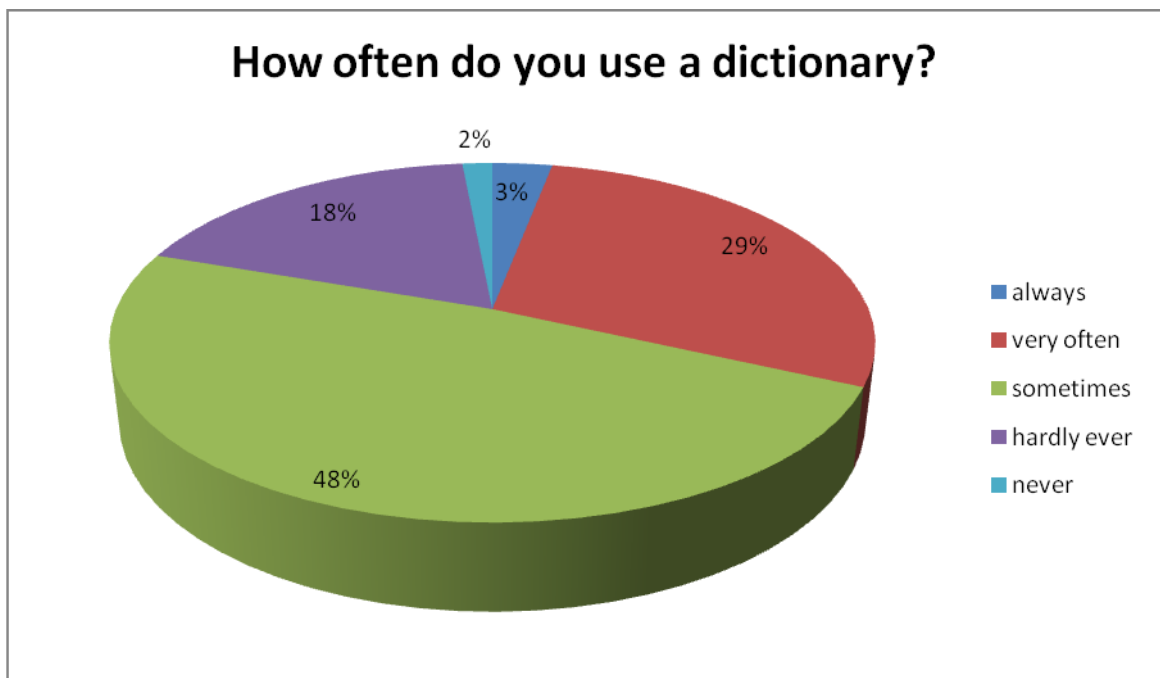
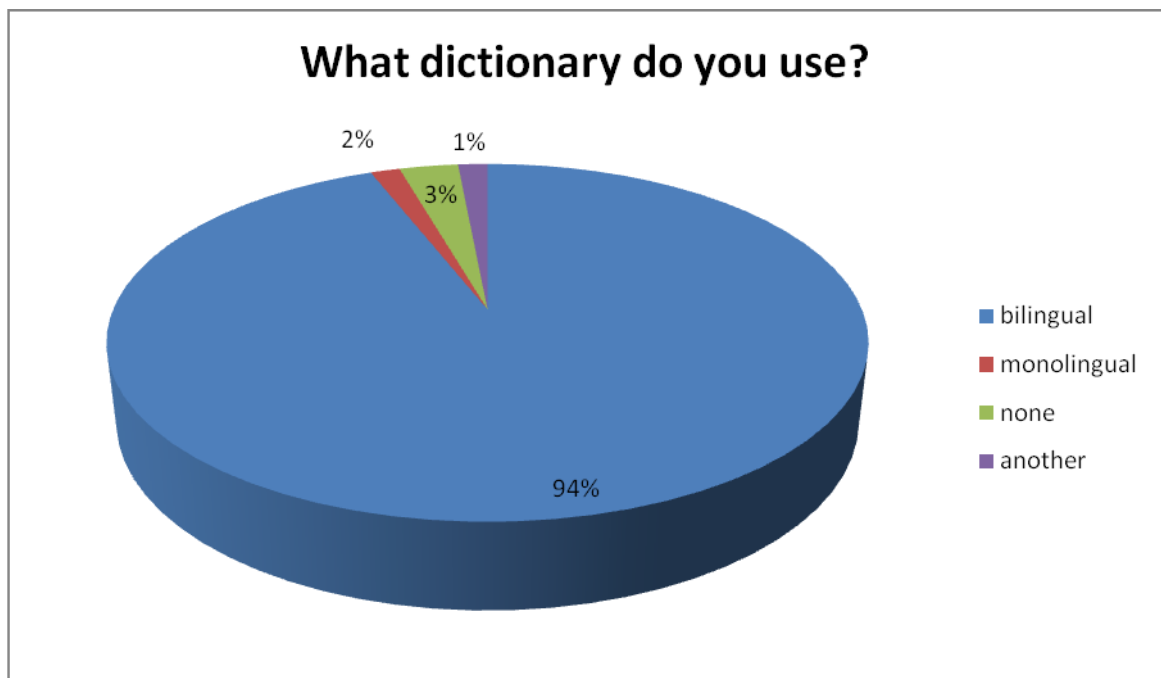


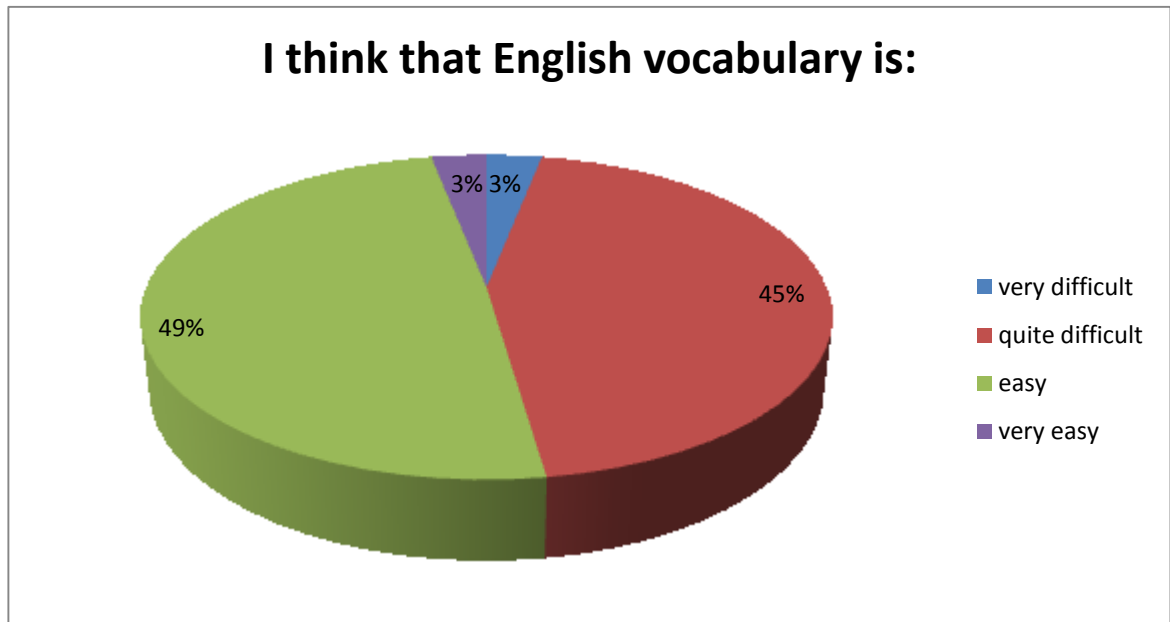
Figure 8 shows that almost fifty per cent of learners write that they *sometimes* use a dictionary when learning English words. However, I did not expect that nearly thirty per cent of learners use dictionaries *very often*. Moreover, there are some of them who hardly ever use dictionaries. So, in my opinion, the frequency of working with dictionaries depends on learner's skills and language level. See also Table 8 in Appendix 3.

Question 9 (Figure 9):



As we can see from Figure 9, the majority of students use bilingual dictionaries, which I supposed to be so. I was quite disappointed with the finding that only one student claims that he or she uses a monolingual dictionary. So, this has proved the statement that monolingual dictionaries are hardly ever used at schools which I could experience as a trainer teacher. Moreover, one per cent of students' answered that they like looking up meanings of words via Internet. See also Table 9 in Appendix 3.

Question 10 (Figure 10):



According to the questionnaires, Figure 10 shows that for most students learning English vocabulary is easy. However, others (forty-five per cent) believe that it is quite difficult. Moreover, this finding has proved my hypothesis that the younger students are, the easier they find learning vocabulary. See also Table 10 in Appendix 3.

Question 11 (Figure 11):

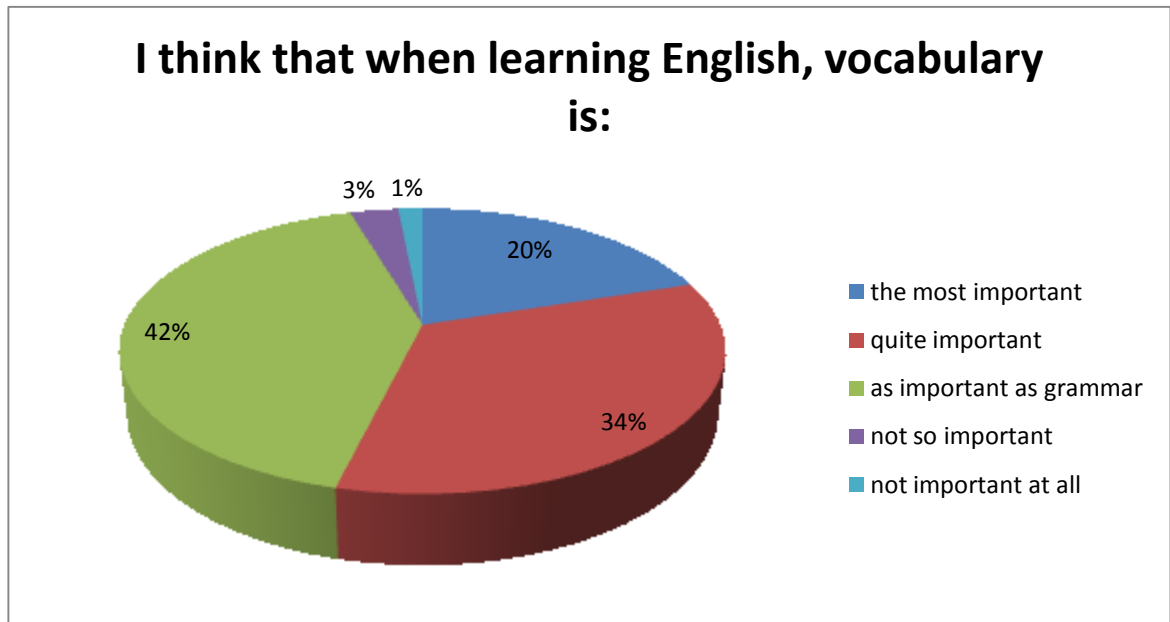


Figure 11 shows that most learners think vocabulary is as important as grammar when learning English language. However, some students place greater emphasis on vocabulary than on grammar (about thirty-four per cent). Finally, twenty per cent of informants write that vocabulary is the most important component when learning English. See also Table 11 in Appendix 3.

Conclusion

The outcomes of the first research show that teachers place great emphasis on teaching vocabulary in the classroom. The survey also informed about different techniques and methods used by teachers when presenting and practising vocabulary. The most used techniques when presenting vocabulary are visuals and translation, whereas the least used methods are verbal techniques (e.g. synonyms and opposites), blackboard drawings, showing realia and presenting words in idioms and collocations. When practising vocabulary, teachers place the greatest importance on various exercises from teacher's books, visuals, mind maps and games (e.g. bingo, "pexeso", dominoes etc.). Furthermore, new words are presented mostly in phrases or in a context. When teaching a new lexical item, its translation, spelling and pronunciation is introduced most often. However, sometimes its grammar, context and a word in American English is added to a new word. Moreover, according to the survey, the most effective methods for learners when presenting new vocabulary seem to be using visuals, words in a context and giving examples of common phrases. Most teachers also believe that using visual aids, various exercises and games are the best techniques for practising vocabulary in the classroom. Finally, it was proved that bilingual dictionaries are sometimes used during English lessons. However, the usage of dictionaries depends on learners' skills and language level.

From the outcomes of the second research it is obvious that most learners record new vocabulary items either into their vocabulary notebooks, or into their exercise books together with grammar. Surprisingly, according to the survey, most students learn vocabulary only when a test is announced. So, my hypothesis that most learners learn vocabulary every day was disproved. In addition to this, it was found out that learners prefer learning new words with their translation and recording or reading them from their word lists or vocabulary notebooks. However, I must admit that my hypothesis that many learners use word cards when learning vocabulary was disproved. On the other hand, as I expected, giving Czech or English equivalents to words seem to be the most effective method used by students when practising new vocabulary. Similarly, the research shows that the best way how learners remember new words is when translating them into Czech. Moreover, it was proved that when the learner does not understand some word, he or she asks either teachers or classmates for help most often. With reference to the research, most learners are satisfied with the presentation

and practising techniques used by their teachers. What is more, as I expected, the majority of students sometimes use bilingual dictionaries. In conclusion, the research also shows that younger learners find English vocabulary easy, whereas for older learners it is quite difficult to learn English lexis. Additionally, most learners think that when learning English language, vocabulary is as important as grammar.

To sum up, according to my studies, there are several suggestions teachers should remember about vocabulary. Firstly, they need to be aware of different methods that are available for presenting and practising vocabulary. In addition to this, it is worth changing these techniques. Secondly, when presenting new lexis, teachers should demonstrate new words in phrases, sentences or in contexts rather than in single units. What is more, learners need to know not only the translation of a new vocabulary item, but also its spelling, pronunciation, common collocations, context and grammar should be mentioned as well. Thirdly, teachers should be more creative in their teaching and they should include word games and word game-like activities in the classroom, too. The last key thing which I consider to be worth remembering at this point is that learners need to be well informed about possible methods and techniques that may be helpful for their language learning, including good ways of recording vocabulary and work with dictionaries.

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