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**ROLE CÍLENÉHO PROCVIČOVÁNÍ SLOVNÍ ZÁSOBY VE VÝUCE
ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA**

Kristýna Hrbáčková

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**THE ROLE OF DELIBERATE VOCABULARY PRACTICE IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

Kristýna Hrbáčková

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Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

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Kristýna Hrbáčková

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ABSTRACT

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The thesis deals with vocabulary teaching and learning. Vocabulary knowledge represents an indispensable part of language proficiency since, without vocabulary, one can only hardly communicate. Therefore, vocabulary practice should not be omitted under any circumstances in any language course and should be carried out regularly.

The overall goal of the research is to examine how deliberate vocabulary practice influences vocabulary learning and if, in the end, leads to better learning results. Three hypotheses are to confirm or disprove employing the research findings. H1: Weaker pupils experience an improvement when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. H2: Strong pupils do not experience any considerable improvement when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. H3: In the whole language group, the average score improves when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. The research tool used is action research in the form of an experiment. In the first part of the research, deliberate practice is integrated into English lessons regularly. On the contrary, no special attention to deliberate vocabulary practice is paid in the second research part. At the beginning and the end of both research parts, learners take a vocabulary test, and the results are analysed afterwards in order to draw conclusions and either confirm or disprove the hypotheses stated above.

Even though the difference between the overall average score in the first and the second teaching approach was not a significant one, the findings of the research confirmed that deliberate vocabulary practice effectively influenced students' vocabulary learning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	3
VOCABULARY LEARNING.....	3
<i>Second Language Acquisition</i>	3
<i>Vocabulary in General</i>	4
<i>Productive and Receptive Vocabulary</i>	7
<i>What Is Needed for a Learner to Master a Word</i>	8
<i>What Vocabulary to Learn</i>	11
<i>The Role of Memory</i>	17
<i>The Role of Motivation</i>	18
<i>Vocabulary Learning and Children – the Role of Age and Level of Proficiency</i>	20
<i>Vocabulary Learning Goals</i>	21
HOW VOCABULARY IS LEARNED.....	22
<i>Deliberate and Incidental Vocabulary Learning</i>	23
<i>Repetition</i>	26
<i>Individual Stages of Remembering Words</i>	28
VOCABULARY PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM - EXPLICIT VOCABULARY TEACHING ACTIVITIES.....	32
CONCLUSION.....	36
III. METHODS.....	37
RESEARCH HYPOTHESES.....	37
RESEARCH SUBJECTS.....	37
RESEARCH TOOL AND PROCESS.....	39
DATA ANALYSIS.....	41
IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES.....	43
THE FIRST HYPOTHESIS.....	43
THE SECOND HYPOTHESIS.....	45
THE THIRD HYPOTHESIS.....	48
THE AVERAGE PUPILS.....	49
FINAL WORD.....	52
V. IMPLICATIONS.....	53
LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH.....	53
IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING.....	54
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	54
VI. CONCLUSION.....	56
REFERENCES	
APPENDIX A	
APPENDIX B	
SUMMARY IN CZECH	

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 1. <i>Weak pupils' results in Test 1A and Test 1B in points</i>	44
Graph 2. <i>Weak pupil's results in Test 2A and Test 2B in points</i>	45
Graph 3. <i>Strong pupils' results in Test 1A and Test 1B in points</i>	47
Graph 4. <i>Strong pupils' results in Test 2A and Test 2B in points</i>	48
Graph 5. <i>Average pupils' results in Test 1A and Test 1B in points</i>	51
Graph 6. <i>Average pupils' results in Test 2A and Test 2B in points</i>	51

I. INTRODUCTION

The thesis deals with vocabulary teaching and learning, which is nowadays one of the central topics in the frame of English language teaching. I chose this topic because it is relevant for me as an English language teacher, and I think that even though vocabulary is an essential part of language proficiency, sometimes vocabulary knowledge is perceived by language teachers and learners as inferior to grammar knowledge. However, one can only with difficulty communicate without words to convey. Although English learners usually acquire new vocabulary incidentally as a by-product when engaging in various activities and tasks, deliberate vocabulary practice should not be omitted in English lessons.

The whole piece of work consists of six chapters discussing the main theoretical points, the research methods, the results, and, finally, the research implications. Each chapter comprises constituent sections which deal with the particular topic area in detail. The theoretical background consists of three main sections - 'Vocabulary learning', 'How vocabulary is learned', and 'Vocabulary practice in the classroom – explicit vocabulary teaching activities'. The section 'Vocabulary learning' covers the fundamental pieces of knowledge, such as what vocabulary groups there are in the language and which are relevant for L2 learners, what aspects of word knowledge learners need to learn to be able to master a word, the goals of vocabulary learning, and the role of memory and motivation in the process of vocabulary learning. The second section is called 'How vocabulary is learned' and discusses the gradual learning process that leads to successfully learned lexical items. The section consists of three constituent parts - 'Deliberate and incidental learning', 'Repetition', and 'Individual stages of remembering words'. The last theoretical section focuses on vocabulary practice in the classroom and introduces a brief sample of explicit vocabulary activities that English teachers can use.

The third chapter focuses on the research methods and introduces my three research hypotheses, the research subjects, the research tool used, and the research and data analysis process. Within the fourth chapter, the research findings and results are introduced, discussed, and the research hypotheses are either confirmed or disproved. The fifth chapter deals with the research implications and provides a few words on the research limitations, implications for teaching, and suggestions for further research. In the Conclusion chapter, all results and research findings are summarized. The whole piece of work ends with the summary written in Czech.

The overall goal of the research is to examine how deliberate vocabulary practice influences vocabulary learning and if, in the end, leads to better learning results. Three hypotheses are to confirm or disprove employing the research findings. H1: Weaker pupils experience an improvement when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. H2: Strong pupils do not experience any considerable improvement when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. H3: In the whole language group, the average score improves when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. The research tool used is action research in the form of an experiment. In the first part of the research, deliberate practice is integrated into English lessons regularly. On the contrary, within the second research part, no special attention to deliberate vocabulary practice is paid. At the beginning and the end of both research parts, learners take a vocabulary test, and the results are analysed afterwards in order to draw conclusions and either confirm or disprove the hypotheses stated above.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The goal of this chapter is to discuss the main points in the frame of the topic of vocabulary teaching and learning. The whole theoretical background consists of three main sections - 'Vocabulary learning', 'How vocabulary is learned', and 'Vocabulary practice in the classroom – explicit vocabulary teaching activities'. The section 'Vocabulary learning' covers the fundamental pieces of knowledge, such as what vocabulary groups there are in the language and which are relevant for L2 learners, what aspects of word knowledge learners need to learn to be able to master a word, the goals of vocabulary learning, and the role of memory and motivation in the process of vocabulary learning. The second section is called 'How vocabulary is learned' and discusses the gradual learning process that leads to successfully learned lexical items. The section consists of three constituent parts - 'Deliberate and incidental learning', 'Repetition', and 'Individual stages of remembering words'. The last theoretical section focuses on vocabulary practice in the classroom and introduces a brief sample of explicit vocabulary activities that English teachers can use.

Vocabulary Learning

Second Language Acquisition

Ellis (1997) defined the term 'L2 acquisition' as "the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom" and the term 'second language acquisition' as the study concerning the principles determining the accomplishment of its goals (p. 3). Dörnyei (2009) agreed with this definition by citing de Bot, Lowie, and Verspoor (2005) and stating that second language acquisition research concerns how many languages one learns (p. 18). The adjective 'second' implies that the language is being learned subsequently to the mother tongue. However, the term can be used for the acquisition of a third or even fourth language, too, and, therefore, it does not oppose the appellation 'foreign' (Ellis, 1997, p. 3). Lewis (1993) argued, moreover, that the elementary term 'acquisition' can be understood as "the internalisation of rules and formulas which are then used to communicate in the L2" (p. 20). According to this explanation, one can think that the term 'acquisition' is a synonym for 'learning'. Nevertheless, Krashen, cited by Lewis (1993), proposed that the term 'acquisition' evolves the meaning of the "spontaneous process of rule internalisation that results from natural language use, while learning consists of the development of conscious L2 knowledge through formal study" (p. 20).

Besides, Dörnyei (2009) clarified that it is possible to specify the term as 'instructed second language acquisition' – an academic appellation for language learning and teaching in a classroom (p. 267). The terms 'explicit learning' and 'explicit teaching' are closely related to these. To be clear, both terms are mutually connected, as there needs to be one who teaches and one who learns as a consequence. The term 'explicit teaching' refers, according to Dörnyei (2009), to “any consciously applied teaching practice that elicits explicit learning” (p. 269). Richards (2015) explained the difference between explicit and implicit learning by stating that “explicit learning is conscious learning and results in knowledge that can be described and explained, but implicit learning is learning that takes place without conscious awareness and results in knowledge that the learner may not be able to verbalize or explain” (p. 27). Dörnyei (2009) also cited Norris and Ortega (2000), who proposed a crucial advantage of L2 explicit instruction over L2 implicit instruction, which can be recognized as more natural and spontaneous, and so that explicit teaching approaches in classroom instruction “lead to more substantial effects than implicit instruction” (p. 271).

Richards (2015) added that it is pivotal to consider that there are individual theories of second language learning rather than a particular theory of how second language learning happens (p. 31). Dörnyei (2009) specified, moreover, that the main goal of the researchers occupying themselves with the field of second language acquisition is to establish instructional strategies to enhance the “efficacy and efficiency of L2 learning” (p. 267).

Vocabulary in General

McCarthy (1990) reported that “it is the experience of most language teachers that the single, biggest component of any language course is vocabulary. No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way. And yet vocabulary often seems to be the least systematized and the least well catered for of all the aspects of learning a foreign language” (p. 8). According to Stoller and Grabe (2018), the lack of vocabulary is the chief cause of frustration in terms of reading and listening and “the common expression “I’m at the loss for words“ applies well to the plight of non-native language users who often find themselves searching for words to express themselves in speaking and writing” (p. 3043). Richards (2015) also pointed out the importance of vocabulary knowledge and noted that grammar and words are usually regarded as the foundation stones of language proficiency (p. 297). Well-developed reading, writing, listening, and reading skills work on the assumption that a language learner is

endowed with an extensive vocabulary. Therefore, it is apparent that each English language lesson is a vocabulary lesson to some extent, as vocabulary “plays role in all of the four skills” (Richards, 2015, p. 297). Lessard-Clouston (2013) agreed and reported that vocabulary is essential for English language teaching and learning since adequate vocabulary equipment creates suitable conditions for understanding other people and expressing one’s ideas and thoughts (p. 2). Subsequently, Lessard-Clouston (2013) supported this opinion by mentioning his personal experience in terms of the importance of vocabulary and stated that one is usually able to communicate in a foreign language on the ground of some useful phrases and words and, therefore, the knowledge of grammar does not play a crucial role (p. 2). This statement is supported by Scrivener (2011) above in the paper as well. A person who says “Yesterday. Go disco. And friends. Dancing” can serve as an example (Scrivener, 2011, p. 187). Even though the message is completely missing any grammatical structure, one would probably be able to understand the main point since the speaker makes use of the “accumulative effect of individual words” which carry the meaning (Scrivener, 2011, p. 187). Thornbury (2002) cited Dellar and Hocking (2004), who indicated that “if you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much. You will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost nothing with words!” (p. 13). Therefore, when speaking of communicative ability, vocabulary knowledge is regarded as more significant than grammar knowledge. According to Lewis (1993), “language consists of grammaticalized lexis, not lexicalised grammar” (p. 89).

For the purpose of this paper, it is also inviting to define the essential term ‘vocabulary’ as such. Lessard-Clouston (2013), for instance, explained this complex term as “the words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do” (p. 2). Scrivener (2011) specified the term ‘vocabulary’ in his publication as well and defined it as the appellation that customarily and most frequently refers to individual words and, occasionally, to very firmly linked two- or three-word combinations and phrases as well (p. 186). Scrivener’s statement was supported by mentioning some examples of one-word vocabulary items, such as ‘computer’ and ‘water’, then some more-word vocabulary items that function as a single vocabulary item, such as ‘stock market’ and ‘swim against the tide’ (an idiom), as they are mentioned in dictionaries as a whole (pp. 185-186). Richards (2015) supported Scrivener’s claim and added that people usually suppose that words are single lexical items, but they

frequently occur in multi-word groups (p. 298). Additionally, Richards (2015) cited O'Keeffe et al. (2007), who mentioned some examples of the most common two- to five-word chunks in a five-million-word corpus, such as 'sort of', 'if you', 'I don't know', 'do you think', 'or something like that', 'you know what I mean' (pp. 298-299).

Scrivener (2011) distinguished, moreover, between the term 'vocabulary' and the term 'lexis' and advised that the notion of the term 'lexis' is far more considerable since it "refers to our 'internal database' of words and complete 'ready-made' fixed/semi-fixed/typical combinations of words that we can recall and use quite quickly without having to construct new phrases and sentences word by word from scratch using our knowledge of grammar" (p. 186). Besides, the field of lexis covers not only the above-mentioned single-word lexical items, but also recurring word combinations recognized as 'collocations' and longer word sequences that go customarily together as if they were single lexical items. These are termed 'chunks' or 'multiword items', such as the phrase 'I'd rather not say' (Scrivener, 2011, p. 186). Lessard-Clouston (2013) specified that although these phrases are composed of more words, they have "a clear, formulaic usage and make up a significant portion of spoken or written English language usage" and, therefore, they are worth attention in the frame of vocabulary teaching and learning (p. 2). Nevertheless, although there is, according to some authors, a slight difference between the terms 'vocabulary' and 'lexis', most language teachers use them synonymously (Scrivener, 2011, p. 187). Furthermore, the same issue arises in terms of terminology of 'lexical items' since they are mostly referred to as 'words', 'collocations', and 'chunks'. The appellation 'word' is used very often in particular because it serves as "a useful shorthand for all three" (Scrivener, 2011, p. 187). McCarthy (1990) defined 'words' as "freestanding items of language that have meaning" (p. 3). However, according to the information given above in the text, it is apparent that the terms 'lexical item' and 'word' cannot be used completely synonymously. To support this distinction, Wallace (1982) explained the difference between these two terms in two example sentences, and so "Jack was sitting on the bank of the river, fishing." and "I am going to the bank to cash a cheque.", and argued that some people would say that, in both sentences, the twice-mentioned 'bank' is the same word, since it has the same form, but it represents two individual lexical items with two different lexical meanings (p. 12).

As one can see, vocabulary reflects the ceaselessly changing reality, and therefore, the coining and acquisition of new words never stop (Thornbury, 2002, p. 1). Thornbury

(2002) argued that “even in our first language we are continually learning new words and learning new meanings for old words” (Thornbury, 2002, p. 1).

Productive and Receptive Vocabulary

When talking about vocabulary knowledge, it is desirable to distinguish between productive and receptive vocabulary. Probably, it is not surprising that English speakers understand many more words than they use daily. In simple terms, ‘receptive vocabulary’ is one’s equipment of all lexical items that one understands and recognizes and ‘productive vocabulary’ is, on the contrary, made up of words that one uses while speaking and writing regularly, so they have become “part of the learner’s everyday English” (Scrivener, 2011, p. 188). Nation (1990) advised that receptive vocabulary knowledge covers the ability to distinguish the word from other words of similar form and the ability to consider if “the word form sounds right or looks right” (p. 31) and added that receptive vocabulary knowledge is required to deal with lexical items in listening and reading (Nation, 2005, p. 585). Besides, it includes one’s expectation of what grammatical structure the expression will occur in (Nation, 1990, p. 32).

By contrast, productive vocabulary knowledge covers the above-mentioned receptive knowledge, which broadens since it requires proper pronunciation and spelling knowledge, and knowledge of the corresponding grammar that leads to correct use of appropriate “grammatical pattern along with the words it usually collocates with” (Nation, 1990, p. 32).

Nevertheless, the terms ‘receptive’ and ‘productive vocabulary’ are not entirely accurate as there are some productive factors in the receptive language skills as well (when learners read, they produce meaning, for example) (Nation, 2001, p. 24). According to Thornbury (2002), receptive vocabulary knowledge surpasses productive vocabulary knowledge and precedes it in general (but not necessarily always), and that is the reason why learners understand far more words than they can use by themselves (p. 15). It is the teachers’ job to decide which vocabulary learners should produce by themselves and which vocabulary they are merely supposed to recognize. However, every teacher must be aware of different demands on learners when acquiring the vocabulary productively and receptively. These demands include the learners’ ability to pronounce and spell the word correctly, to put the stress on the right syllable, to use the correct form of the word, to use the word in an appropriate collocation, and, finally, to be able to use the word in a suitable situation according to its meaning (Wallace, 1982, p. 23). Through long-term practice,

receptive vocabulary can become productive vocabulary. The distinction between receptive and productive vocabulary should be considered during the teachers' preparation for a vocabulary lesson (Scrivener, 2011, p. 188).

What Is Needed for a Learner to Master a Word

According to Diamond and Gutlohn (2006), vocabulary knowledge cannot be perfectly mastered as it broadens and deepens during a lifetime (p. 1). However, this concerns vocabulary knowledge in its broadest sense, not knowledge of individual words, of course.

When speaking of the knowledge of a particular word, Bush (2018), for example, argued that knowing a word demands much more than being able to define it since vocabulary acquisition is a gradual process and leads through different stages and levels of mastery (p. 3051). Individual levels and stages of word knowledge can be considered a “continuum that ranges from completely unknown to total mastery”, and the two opposite-situated halves of the notional scale represent the already mentioned receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge (Bush, 2018, p. 3052). An example of such a scale looks like the one below mentioned (this is the most well-known and widely used scale but also the scale that was criticised multiple times):

1. The word is not familiar at all.
2. The word is familiar, but the meaning is not known.
3. A correct synonym or translation is provided.
4. The word is used with semantic appropriateness in a sentence.
5. The word is used with semantic appropriateness and grammatical accuracy in a sentence. (Bush, 2018, p. 3052)

Nonetheless, as already mentioned above in the paper, it is crucial to realise that no tasks and activities are unconditionally either receptive or productive. They are rather more receptive or more productive since receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge is mutually interconnected (Bush, 2018, p. 3053).

The degree of vocabulary knowledge is sometimes called the 'depth' of vocabulary knowledge. It is usually compared to the 'breadth' of vocabulary knowledge, which refers

to the number of lexical items that learners learn or have already mastered (Bush, 2018, p. 3051).

Bush (2018) admitted that the form-meaning relation is commonly the first aspect of word knowledge to learn and may be the most significant one, but only being able to understand the core meaning of a word does not usually create conditions for the correct productive use of that word (p. 3051). The numerous aspects of word knowledge can be divided into three groups - knowing the word form (how the word is spelled, what parts it has, how it sounds), knowing the word meaning (what does it refer to, its concept, other words with related meaning that are associated to it), and knowing the way how the word is used (the grammatical structures in which it usually occurs, grammatical categories of the word, its collocations and connotations) (Nation, 2005, p. 583). By contrast, Thornbury (2002) specified the individual groups of aspects more minutely and argued that, at the most fundamental level, knowing a lexical item includes knowing its form and its meaning in terms of knowing not only the meaning provided in dictionaries but knowing the words that are usually associated with it (its collocations) and its connotations, register, and cultural accretions as well (p. 15). The ability to recognize the restrictions of function and situation in the frame of word choice, and so the ability to choose appropriate vocabulary to suit the situational requirements, is a part of one's vocabulary knowledge as well (Richards, 1976, p. 79). According to Scrivener (2011), many English teachers believe that the main aim is to present to learners the meaning, spelling, and pronunciation of the new vocabulary, but, unfortunately, it is insufficient as "much of the difficulty of lexis isn't to do with learning endless new words, it's learning how to successfully use words one already knows, ie learning how 'old' words are used in 'new' ways" and this demands exposure to a large amount of language samples in use (p. 205). Scrivener (2011) furthermore revealed that among the aspects that a learner should know about a lexical item belong, for example, (except for spelling, meaning, collocations, etc.) the number of syllables, stressed syllables and stronger and weaker syllables, the word's part of speech, grammatically related forms, colligation, connotation, false and true friends of the word, lexical families and sets, synonyms, homonyms, antonyms, and homophones of the word, suffixes and prefixes that can be attached to the word, and, last but not least, one's personal feelings about the word and mnemonics - the things that lead people to recall the word (pp. 206-207). Nevertheless, Scrivener (2011) acknowledged that it is not achievable for an initial classroom meeting with a lexical item to deal with more than three aspects mentioned above. Therefore, it can be

said that initial teaching methods aim at the acquisition of an item's core meaning, spelling, and pronunciation (p. 207). And yet, "problems arise when classroom work continually focuses on introducing more and more new items in this way, and doesn't explore the previous words in more depth" (Scrivener, 2011, p. 207).

Vocabulary learning is a 'step-by-step' process since there are many different dimensions of vocabulary knowledge to be learned for a learner to be able to master a word. Therefore, Richards (2015) proposed to sequence the individual aspects of vocabulary knowledge as follows:

- knowing the spelling of the lexical item
- knowing the pronunciation of the lexical item
- knowing the basic (core) meaning of the lexical item
- knowing the lexical item receptively
- knowing the words that are related to the lexical item (antonyms, synonyms, etc.)
- knowing the grammatical function of the lexical item
- knowing the lexical item productively (being able to use it in speech/writing)
- knowing other meanings of the lexical item
- knowing the common affixes of the lexical item
- knowing the common collocations of the lexical item (p. 307).

According to Nation (2005), "a substantial part of the difficulty of learning a word depends on whether these aspects of an L2 word are similar for its L1 translation or are regular and predictable from already known L2 words of similar or related meaning" (p. 584). This phenomenon is called the 'learning burden' and can be explained more precisely as the amount of effort a learner has to invest to learn a word (Nation, 2001, p. 23).

In the end, Scrivener (2011) suggested planning English lessons that let learners steadily encounter the same lexical items in use in various texts, recordings, conversations, etc. and pay attention to them in new combinations in distinctive surroundings and different usage and then have repeated opportunities to use the words themselves productively rather than make use of a conventional teaching model such as "teach new vocabulary, practise it, and recycle it later on" (p. 208). Richards (2015) agreed and proposed that vocabulary learning is "an incremental process that involves frequent encounters with words and their uses over time" (p. 297).

What Vocabulary to Learn

What vocabulary to teach is a crucial question to ask, and the target vocabulary that a teacher will teach should be chosen carefully and thoroughly, but, in most cases, the decision on what vocabulary to teach is made by someone or something else, such as syllabus designers or textbook choice, for example. Textbook authors and syllabus designers “have at their disposal a variety of lexical corpora, as well as their own highly developed intuition as to what words form the central core of the language” (McCarthy, 1990, p. 79).

Vocabulary, as such, can be divided into different groups according to its frequency and range – high-frequency words, academic words, technical words, and low-frequency words. The term ‘frequency’ refers to how often the lexical items occur in the language, and the term ‘range’ refers to how broadly the lexical items occur in the language (Nation, 2008, p. 17). Therefore, it is apparent that individual words are of various values when speaking of L2 learners, and the determining factor for indication of their relevance is, as already pointed out by Nation in his publication from 2008, the word’s frequency in the language. Basically, some words are for L2 learners much handier and more practical to acquire than others (in terms of communication needs). The categories ‘technical vocabulary’ and ‘academic vocabulary’ include words that are frequent in peculiar discourse types. Unlike this, high-frequency words are usually found in all types of texts, contexts, and communication situations, so not knowing this group of words can lead to misunderstanding (Webb & Nation, 2017, pp. 6-7).

High-Frequency Words. From the above stated, it is apparent that words that are generally considered to be high-frequency are the most significant word group in the language. There are many high-frequency word lists, and most of them comprise around 2,000 word families. Most words included in those lists are rather short ones, and the 169 word families out of the 2,000 are function/grammatical words (a, because, at, for example) – the remaining 1,831 word families consist of content words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs) (Nation, 2008, p. 7). It is apparent that, in order to communicate successfully, a learner needs to know and be able to use primarily content words, such as ‘answer’ and ‘depend’. It would be very difficult or even impossible to convey a message using only grammatical/function words (Thornbury, 2002, p. 21). Richards (2015) noted that teachers should distinguish between content words and function words as there is an enormous difference between these two groups in size. Function words comprise quite a limited word list compared to content words.

Therefore, when learners broaden their vocabulary, they expand the size and knowledge of content words (p. 304).

In his earlier publication, Nation (2001) claimed that, although high-frequency words comprise a relatively small word group, they are pivotal since they cover “a very large proportion of the running words in spoken and written texts and occur in all kinds of uses of the language” (p. 13). The majority of various text types include around 80% (or even more) of words out of the 2,000 high-frequency words (Nation, 2008, pp. 7-8). People acquire high-frequency words naturally in their native language in an incidental way because they encounter these words again and again in spoken and written language. However, it does not work the same in the L2 setting, as L2 learners need to acquire a relative majority of the high-frequency words deliberately (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 14). Nation (2001) summed it up by stating that “high-frequency words are so important that anything that teachers and learners can do to make sure they are learned is worth doing” (p. 16). Nevertheless, there has always been a debate about how many words should one regard as high-frequency words (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 13).

Word Families. According to Thornbury (2002), it is possible to speak of individual words as belonging to various families (p. 4). Thornbury (2002) explained that “a word family comprises the base word plus its inflections and its most common derivatives” (Thornbury, 2002, p. 4). As an example, the base form ‘understand’ can be mentioned that covers in its word family word forms such as ‘understands’, ‘understanding’, ‘understood’, ‘understandable’, ‘misunderstand’, etc. Based on plenty of research, the human mind groups the diverse word forms together and, therefore, it is more purposeful to refer to the number of individual word families rather than to the number of individual words (Thornbury, 2002, pp. 4-5). According to Nation (2001), the chief problem in terms of counting using word families as a unit is judging what lexical items should be considered to be a part of a word family (p. 8).

Frequency Lists. As already mentioned above in the text, there are many frequency word lists. However, the most popular and best-known is Michael West’s *General Service List* (GSL in short) from 1953, which consists of circa 2,000 word families. The main aim of creating the GSL was “to make a list of the words that would be the most useful for learners, so various other criteria such as ‘ease of learning’ and ‘necessity’ were also used to select items” (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 10). However, vocabulary is constantly changing, and,

therefore, this frequency list rather lacks relevance nowadays. Other popular frequency lists are, for example, British National Corpus (BNC in short), British National Corpus/Corpus of Contemporary American English (BNC/COCA in short), new-General Service List (new-GSL in short), and Essential Word List (EWL for short) (Webb & Nation, 2017, pp. 10-12).

Low-Frequency Words. According to Webb and Nation (2017), “any words that are not high-frequency are considered to be low-frequency” (p. 14), and, therefore, low-frequency words comprise the largest word group out of the four mentioned above (Nation, 2008, p. 11). According to Nation (2001), low-frequency vocabulary includes, in other words, “technical words for other subject areas, proper nouns, words that almost got into the high-frequency list, and words that we rarely meet in our use of the language” (p. 12). In English, low-frequency words go in tens of thousands and range from still quite frequent words (such as ‘alternate’) to words that are very infrequent (such as ‘anagogic’). Therefore, it is evident that, in total, low-frequency words exceed high-frequency words (Nation, 2005, p. 582).

Low-frequency words are even by native speakers mainly only recognized since they occur in the language infrequently in comparison to high-frequency words, which they learn early in their lexical development. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that, in the L2 setting, “although words tend to be learned according to their frequency of occurrence in the language, we do not focus exclusively on words from one category, so both high- and low-frequency words will be learned during the language learning process” (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 14). Nevertheless, the difference lies in the number of high- and low-frequency words that L2 learners are probably going to acquire during their learning process (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 14).

Webb and Nation (2017) cited, moreover, Schmitt and Schmitt (2014), who proposed breaking the low-frequency words into two subcategories - ‘mid-frequency words’ and ‘low-frequency words’. The purpose of this grouping is to determine and separate the 9,000 most frequent word families (these are high- and mid-frequency words) since they represent adequate vocabulary equipment needed for comprehension in spoken and written language. However, the goal of achieving the 9,000 word families demands effective and efficient vocabulary instruction and substantial interaction with the target language as well (pp. 14-15).

Frequency as the Only Aspect Determining Vocabulary Selection. Contrary to what is stated above, it is possible that a lexical item is quite frequent, but it occurs chiefly or even

only in one or two kinds of text, so, in the end, a lexical item can be of high frequency but of quite a small and restricted range at the same time. Therefore, the most useful and practical lexical items for learners are frequent ones with a wide range (McCarthy, 1990, p. 69). Moreover, McCarthy cited Sinclair and Renouf (1988), who claimed that the most frequent lexical items are not automatically the most useful and practical ones for learners since the most frequent words are often the grammatical/function words which lack information, and, therefore, they are not very helpful for learners who need to communicate and understand the shared message (p. 82). It follows that teachers also must pay attention to “words relating to domestic reality, such as days of the week and kinship terms, and other common lexical sets; also, further words to refer to physical sensations and personal emotions, and to use in making evaluations” (McCarthy, 1990, p. 82). Webb and Nation (2017) were of the same opinion and admitted that frequency is not the only criterion to consider when deciding what vocabulary is the most valuable for the learners, as teachers should consider criteria such as learners’ motivation and needs as well, but it is probably the essential criterion (p. 10).

Core Vocabulary. Teachers should make decisions on what and how many words their students need to know on the ground of learners’ needs because there are many different language situations that learners may encounter in the present or future, and each demands a bit different vocabulary. However, there is a group of words that learners can make use of in most situations. This group of words is called ‘core vocabulary’ (Thornbury, 2002, p. 21).

The most essential vocabulary learning target is a set of words between 1,500 and 2,000 high-frequency words since these lexical items are very frequently and broadly used, so it is necessary to learn them as fast and soon as possible. In contrast to this set of words, there is a group of low-frequency words that goes in thousands, as mentioned above in the text. Teachers do not need to pay special attention to them, but learners must learn them gradually (Nation, 2005, p. 582). Richards (2015) agreed with Nation (2005), who argued that vocabulary learning in L2 comprises improving a core vocabulary and more specialized vocabulary, too. Core vocabulary can be commonly found in many various domains, genres, and kinds of text. On the contrary, more specialized vocabulary is linked to learners’ personal interests and needs of diverse nature (academic, occupational, social, etc.) (p. 297).

There were many various research studies carried out during the time with the main goal to identify the number of words that L2 learners need to master. Richards (2015) cited West (1953), who revealed that the research aim was “to find the minimum number of words

that could operate together in constructions capable of entering the greatest varieties of contexts has, therefore, been the chief aim of those trying to simplify English for the learner” (p. 304). Richards (2015), moreover, cited O’Keeffe et al. (2007), who revealed that core vocabulary for L2 includes many distinct groups of lexical items such as modal items (which cover modal verbs, lexical modals, and adverbs), delexical verbs (‘do’, ‘make’, ‘take’, for example), stance words (‘just’, ‘actually’, ‘really’, for instance), discourse markers (‘you know’, ‘I mean’, ‘anyway’, for example), basic nouns (such as ‘person’, ‘problem’, ‘trouble’), general deictics (‘here’, ‘there’, ‘now’, for instance), basic adjectives (‘lovely’, ‘nice’, ‘horrible’, for example), basic adverbs (such as ‘today’, ‘tomorrow’, ‘usually’), and basic verbs (‘give’, ‘leave’, ‘feel’, for example). Some of the lexical items that are included in the above-mentioned categories are not, in fact, a part of the vocabulary lists for ESL/ELT learners since these lists are commonly comprised on the ground of frequency counts of written language instead of spoken (p. 305).

Core vocabulary consists of words that are central to the language. It represents a kind of survival kit covering elementary words that can be used in any language situation. Words that are considered to be a part of core vocabulary are inclined to be the most frequent words, but “this may be just a circular way of saying people use such words most frequently because they do have core meaning-potential and are therefore useable in a wide variety of situations” (McCarthy, 1990, p. 49). According to McCarthy (1990), the feeling of the need to equip the learners with core vocabulary and the so-called ‘survival vocabulary’ is reflected in most popular beginners’ coursebooks nowadays. The term ‘survival vocabulary’ stands for words that learners must master to be able to talk about people, objects, and events in the location where the learners live and study, words that learners must master to be able to respond to routine directions and commands, and, finally, words that are needed for classroom communication (‘describing, comparing, and classifying various animals’, for example) (pp. 88-89).

Native speakers, teachers, and materials writers usually recognize which words are core in the given field of interest because of their instinct (McCarthy, 1990, p. 50).

Academic Vocabulary. Another vocabulary group that a learner can learn as an extension to core vocabulary accounts for academic vocabulary that is used ordinarily in the field of academic activity. Academic vocabulary is crucial for students during their studies (Richards, 2015, p. 306). According to Nation (2008), academic writing covers various types

of texts and materials, such as academic textbooks or articles discussing individual subject areas (p. 9). These lexical items are not a part of the 2,000 most frequent words in general English (Richards, 2015, p. 306). The most frequent words in the frame of academic vocabulary are, for example, 'analyse', 'approach', 'research', and 'require' (Richards, 2015, p. 306), and probably the most well-known word list comprising academic vocabulary is Academic Word List (AWL in short) that covers 570 word families (Nation, 2008, p. 9). Webb and Nation (2017) called this vocabulary category 'sub-technical vocabulary' and explained the difference between technical and academic vocabulary, and so that technical vocabulary commonly carries meanings that are crucial for comprehending a certain topic, whereas academic vocabulary is used to encourage technical vocabulary use. Academic vocabulary should not be acquired before high-frequency words (p. 16).

Technical Vocabulary. The last group that vocabulary as such is divided into is called technical vocabulary. Technical vocabulary is made up of words that frequently occur in a particular subject area, such as computer science, law, or medicine (Richards, 2015, p. 306). However, according to Nation (2008), "some technical words can occur in other areas, some with the same meaning and some with different meanings", such as the words 'by-pass' and 'neck' (p. 10). In the article that is meant to aim at medical students, for example, many technical words may occur, such as 'organism' or 'cell' (Richards, 2015, p. 306). Therefore, it can be stated that even when low-frequency words are rather infrequent in the language in general, they can be considered frequent in the frame of a particular subject area, as explained above (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 15). Nation (2008) claimed that people would usually guess what field of activity these words frequently come from if they know a little about it (Nation, 2008, p. 9). Webb and Nation (2017) understood the term 'technical words' as "words that are very frequent within a particular topic or discipline but less frequent outside that area" (p. 15). Learners most often acquire technical vocabulary during their learning process – as they learn about a particular topic (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 15). Unfortunately, very little information is known about technical vocabulary, but it is estimated that there are circa 1,000 to 5,000 words according to the subject area (Nation, 2008, p. 10).

Other Criteria to Consider – Learners' Needs and Learnability. Other criteria to consider when teachers decide on what vocabulary include in their lessons are learnability and learners' needs. The most frequent lexical items are commonly learned with no greater difficulties since they often occur in the language. However, a word's frequency is not the

only factor that influences learnability, as there are many other reasons that make a word's learnability easier or more difficult. These comprise, for example, a word's spelling, pronunciation, syntactic properties, and close meaning to other words. Another situation that causes more difficulty in learnability is when learners are "unable to relate the meaning of a word to their world experience or to their culture" ('solicitor', 'chaplain', for example) (McCarthy, 1990, p. 86). False friends, as these words are called, cause many problems, too. False friends are two words in different languages that look alike formally and may sound alike as well, but their meaning is quite different (McCarthy, 1990, p. 86). Wallace (1982) agreed with McCarthy (1990) and pointed out that words in related languages are frequently of very similar forms but of completely distinct meanings, such as 'actually' (pp. 25-26). Thornbury (2002), moreover, added to the notional list of factors that cause some words to be more difficult to learn than others a word's grammar, range, connotation, idiomaticity, length, and complexity (pp. 27-28).

To sum this issue up, "difficulty and learnability cut right across the notions of frequency and range. We cannot predict that just because a word is frequent it will be learnt quickly and thoroughly or, conversely, that, because a word is infrequent, it will not be easily learnt" (McCarthy, 1990, p. 87).

Apart from the different difficulty of learnability of words, another criterion that teachers should consider when planning vocabulary lessons is learners' needs. Learners' needs are mirrored in a lesson through the teacher's ability to predict what learners will probably need in the frame of vocabulary learning. What vocabulary they will probably use in real-life language situations in the future (McCarthy, 1990, p. 87).

Eventually, McCarthy (1990) mentioned that there are three chief ways in which vocabulary selection can be influenced, and so:

- "Teachers' / coursebook writers' predictions.
- A sense of need in the learner, fostered by the teacher.
- The learners' own sense of their needs, which may conflict with the teachers' perceptions" (pp. 87-88).

The Role of Memory

One of the most significant problems in connection with learning new vocabulary is "the difficulty in remembering words that have been encountered" (Richards, 2015, p. 309).

Usually, there are many repeated encounters needed before a learner remembers a word and the word can be regarded as a learned one. There are two individual memory processes/systems that affect vocabulary learning, and so short-term memory that stores memory for a short time, while the information is being processed, and long-term memory that, on the contrary, stores information for a longer period – for possible use in the future. According to Thornbury (2002), short-term memory is adapted to store only a limited number of information items and merely up to a few seconds – when learners repeat words after the teacher (p. 23). Naturally, the overall target of vocabulary learning is to set up the new lexical items in long-term memory. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to encounter the new word repeatedly for a longer period (since spaced repetition increases the chances to remember the word successfully) and to connect the new word to other words that learners already know using individual forms of links and associations (word families and words with similar meanings, for example). Thornbury (2002) further distinguished another memory system - working memory - which enables many cognitive processes, such as reasoning, learning, and understanding (p. 23). Working memory is “a kind of work bench, where information is first placed, studied, and moved about before being filed away for later retrieval” (p. 23). However, working memory can store information only for circa twenty seconds (Thornbury, 2002, p. 23).

The Role of Motivation

Apart from memory, there is another factor influencing the efficiency of vocabulary learning - learners’ motivation. According to Gehsmann (2018), many educators agree that it is crucial to motivate learners to engage in vocabulary acquisition in order to fulfil their potential (p. 3061). The term ‘motivation’ can be defined as the “enthusiasm for doing something” or “the need or reason for doing something” (Cambridge Dictionary Online, 2022). It is possible to distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is “fuelled by the pleasure or satisfaction of pursuing short and long-term goals and is usually associated with higher levels of engagement and learning”, and extrinsic motivation is usually elicited by longing for some kind of external rewards, such as grades, praise, recognition, etc. (Gehsmann, 2018, p. 3061). Nevertheless, these external rewards are quite problematic because they usually cause a lowering of intrinsic motivation when they are used over time (Gehsmann, 2018, p. 3061).

Grogan, Lucas, and Takeuchi (2018) reported that “a motivated learner will strive to overcome obstacles, but an unmotivated learner, whatever their ability, is unlikely to learn”

(p. 3015). It is the teacher's task to create learning conditions that are motivating, induce initial motivation, preserve motivation, and encourage positive retrospective assessment (p. 3015). In addition, Grogan, Lucas, and Takeuchi (2018) cited Tseng and Schmitt (2008), who found that learners need to develop into self-motivated experts in terms of vocabulary learning and must be able to make use of individual strategies and develop autonomy in promoting success (p. 3016).

Motivation is one of the factors that determine what exactly learners pay attention to, how deeply they are concerned with a particular topic, and how much effort they invest in achieving a goal (in connection with more difficult tasks above all). Moreover, it determines "students' ability to build on previous learning, expanding their knowledge, understanding, and skills" (Gehsmann, 2018, p. 3062). The overall process is gradual and natural – learners acquire more and more, and their sense of self-effectiveness is increased. After that, they are usually motivated to establish new and even more challenging goals (Gehsmann, 2018, p. 3062). When learners (usually over time) adopt the values and beliefs of their social and cultural groups, internalized motivation, an aspect of self-regulation, is developed. It is "a form of intrinsic motivation that can stimulate a student's engagement in activities that are not always enjoyable or immediately gratifying but are valued by those in their sociocultural groups" (Gehsmann, 2018, p. 3062). Therefore, it is apparent that learners' motivation is formed and considerably affected by their teachers, parents, and peers, both in a positive and negative way (Gehsmann, 2018, p. 3062).

It is also pivotal to mention that the condition for creating or maintaining motivation is learners' confidence and hope that they can succeed – learners' expectancy. Nonetheless, there is a difference between younger and older learners, as younger children often "value tasks and activities they enjoy, regardless of their level of success" (Gehsmann, 2018, p. 3062). Moreover, Gehsmann (2018) cited Dörnyei (2015), who mentioned another 'propulsion power' in terms of motivation and emphasized the significance of learners' ability to envision their possible selves and desired future selves and, according to that, the consequences of failure as well (p. 3062).

Motivation, as such, can be affected, besides other things, by the set learning goals, too. The learning goals must be high but still achievable (the learners themselves must feel this way) to maintain learners' motivation (Gehsmann, 2018, p. 3065).

Vocabulary Learning and Children – the Role of Age and Level of Proficiency

Hellman (2018) claimed that learners' age plays quite a significant role in terms of vocabulary learning and that "with age, the conditions of foreign and second language learning change" (p. 3138). Since the research carried out within this paper is focused on sixth graders, it is inviting to state some characteristics that form vocabulary learning in connection with learners that Hellman (2018) called 'older children'.

According to Webb and Nation (2017), children are generally very successful vocabulary learners (p. 137). One can foresee that there is an immense difference between teaching L2 to adults and children. Therefore, teachers must consider individual aspects such as "children's learning needs, the role of listening, the issue of measuring vocabulary knowledge, and limitations around word knowledge and metalanguage" (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 138). When speaking of older children, Hellman (2018) pointed out that "the abilities of older children make them ideal word learners provided they sustain intrinsic motivation for language learning, have access to at least a moderately intense language instruction program, and read widely in the target language" (p. 3144). Nevertheless, the problem is that the conditions mentioned are usually still not a standard part of a common language instruction.

In general, older children need, most importantly, a quick L1 translation to cope with new (unknown) words. At this age level, learners are already able to take notes and thus comprise their own word lists (Hellman, 2018, p. 3144). Hellman (2018) explained that "an important challenge for older children is the continuity of the language program, and within that a systematic mastery of progressively challenging word lists with regular maintenance of previously learned words" (p. 3144). Older children are usually competent in using various kinds of technologies and electronic devices, so they can take advantage of using them in terms of vocabulary learning as well. However, nothing should be heavy-handed and, therefore, work with electronics and technology should always be balanced with face-to-face instruction, extensive reading that suits learners' interests, etc. Among the most appropriate activities that suit this age level belong shared book reading with a partner, vocabulary journals and cards, and group games, for instance (Hellman, 2018, p. 3144).

According to Webb and Nation (2017), as already mentioned above in the paper, children are very successful vocabulary learners, but one must keep in mind that words that are useful for most adults do not have the same value for children. Words such as 'monster'

or 'dragon' are more likely to be encountered in children's stories than in texts that are aimed primarily at adults, and, therefore, when teaching children, these words should be addressed as they are to be found across different stories. There are many words that are important for adults as well as for children, of course (p. 138).

Not only age but the level of proficiency as well must be considered when teaching vocabulary to children. Older children are usually at the border of the beginner to the elementary level of proficiency. However, each child is an individual, and the differences concerning language proficiency can be quite immense within a classroom. When teaching L2 to beginners, it is crucial to keep in mind that "helping students to develop a foundation of vocabulary knowledge that can be used to scaffold future learning should be the primary lexical aim" (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 144). There are several deliberate learning activities that teachers may use with beginners, such as flashcards, word parts, and dictation. At this level, children learn most words through deliberate learning (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 144).

Hellman (2018) argued, moreover, that it is crucial to maintain children's motivation. This is possible to achieve by making the learning process rewarding. The selection of target vocabulary plays a role as well. Inherently motivating activities and tasks should be incorporated into the instruction rather than drilling and memorization. These are, for example, activities creating friendly competition, such as guessing words from classmates' miming or guessing words from pictures (pp. 3153-3154). Teachers can also use many different games because "almost any game that uses pointing, gesturing, illustrating, labelling, miming in response to verbal instructions, matching word form to meaning, or sorting words into categories could foster word learning" in an enjoyable and motivating way (Hellman, 2018, p. 3154).

Vocabulary Learning Goals

According to Richards (2015), "the goals of vocabulary instruction are not to 'teach' vocabulary, but rather to provide opportunities for learners to improve their knowledge and use of vocabulary related to their specific needs" (p. 297). Scrivener (2011) explained, in addition, that the teacher's job does not lie only in the presentation of new lexical items since learners need to practise, learn, store, recall, and use the new words, too (p. 188).

Equally essential is to equip the learners with vocabulary learning strategies as they may facilitate them to become more "effective and efficient vocabulary learners" (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 151). These strategies include, for example, learning word parts, guessing

from context, using flashcards, and effective dictionary use (Webb & Nation, 2017, pp. 162-173). Nation (2008) called 'guessing from context' the essential vocabulary learning strategy and added that one of the goals of equipping learners with learning strategies is to introduce to them how to apply the strategies well so they can develop into independent vocabulary learners (p. 4). Thornbury (2002) cited the publication *Communicating Naturally in a Second Language*, CUP (1983) and revealed that "vocabulary cannot be taught" (p. 144). Teachers can merely present, explain, incorporate it in classroom activities, and experience it in several individual associations, but the main work is done by individuals – by learners themselves. The teacher's role is to excite learners' interest in learning new words and their personal development in terms of vocabulary learning. In short, teachers can only help their learners to find the right way by providing them with ideas on how to learn new words, but the rest have the learners in their own hands (Thornbury, 2002, p. 144).

How Vocabulary is Learned

According to Webb and Nation (2017), English teachers may use individual classroom activities and tasks in order to facilitate vocabulary learning, "but more specifically it is the learning conditions that these activities set up which result in the learning itself" (p. 61). Basically, vocabulary learning can happen when conditions promoting learning are set up. According to Webb and Nation (2017), these conditions comprise noticing, retrieval, varied encounters and varied use, and elaboration. On top of that, they are supported and somehow boosted by two crucial factors - repetition and learners' attention quality at every word encounter (p. 61).

Laufer (2016) proposed that the three main factors determining L2 vocabulary acquisition are language input (input through reading in particular), word-focused language instruction (both in authentic communicative activities and activities that were adapted for language learners), and vocabulary learning involvement "which is a motivational-cognitive construct that operationalizes the notions of attention, elaboration and depth of processing into task-specific constructs that can be designed and measured" (p. 352).

Webb and Nation (2017) understood the term 'repetition' as "the number of encounters with each word" and mentioned that with a greater number of encounters with a particular word and its deeper quality, which is considered to be the more significant factor out of the two, the chances that learning will happen are increased (p. 61). Moreover, the resulting quality of the learner's attention depends chiefly on whether it is incidental or

deliberate. 'Incidental attention' can be defined as the type of attention that occurs when learners are focused on "some other aspect of communication besides individual words and phrases", and 'deliberate attention', on the contrary, can be defined as the type of attention that occurs when learners are consciously focused on "particular aspects of a word or phrase" (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 62). Cervatiuc (2018) cited Ellis (1999), who provided a different definition and drew a distinction between incidental and intentional vocabulary learning through the explanation that "incidental learning requires attention to be placed on meaning (i.e., message content), but allows peripheral attention to be directed at form, while intentional learning requires focal attention to be placed deliberately on the linguistic code" (p. 3037). Thus, it is apparent that the main difference lies in the consciousness of learners' acting. In simple terms, learners are aware that they are learning particular words and phrases or not. Nevertheless, deliberate attention is generally considered to be far more efficient in the classroom setting than incidental attention, and therefore, it is more likely for learning to occur.

To sum it up, teachers should incorporate into the classroom instruction activities that provide enough repetitions of the target vocabulary and, moreover, they should always make sure that the repetitions are bound to "high-quality encounters with the words" as well (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 75).

Deliberate and Incidental Vocabulary Learning

The terms 'incidental' and 'deliberate' that are used above in the text are usually used when speaking of incidental and deliberate learning in general or, as referred to by some authors, direct and indirect learning.

According to Richards (2015), vocabulary, as such, can be taught directly or indirectly, and, as a result, it is possible to distinguish between direct vocabulary instruction or, in other words, explicit vocabulary learning and incidental vocabulary learning. 'Explicit vocabulary learning' stands for classroom activities that "seek to teach students particular words, or word groups, and to help them remember words they have already encountered" (p. 307). Explicit vocabulary learning requires learners' deeper level of mental processing (Richards, 2015, p. 308). 'Incidental vocabulary learning', by contrast, stands for learning that does not need specific vocabulary instruction to happen, as it occurs when learners engage in activities that are not primarily aimed at vocabulary practice, such as reading or listening tasks. Therefore, it can be said that incidental vocabulary learning comes into being

as some sort of by-product of another activity and, most importantly, “depends upon the frequency with which learners encounter words” (Richards, 2015, p. 307). When engaging in a listening task, for example, learners’ main intention is to understand the message. However, there is a certain likelihood that learners might gradually learn some new words that they encounter in a text repeatedly. There is a simple rule – the larger the input, the larger the opportunity to come across the vocabulary repeatedly and, as a result, the greater likelihood that learners may learn these words in the end (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 48). Generally, reading tasks offer many opportunities for incidental learning as learners occupy themselves with words in context. Graded readers, especially, are very efficient since they enable spaced repetition of core vocabulary to happen. Another efficient alternative is extensive reading, as it enables learners to read for pleasure and, in the end, the reading experience becomes a reward (Richards, 2015, pp. 307-308). Richards (2015) cited, moreover, Elley (1991), who pointed out that extensive reading allows learners to broaden and develop their vocabulary knowledge without explicit instruction (p. 309).

Nevertheless, interesting is the fact that incidental learning is not completely unintentional as one can think because when learners encounter a new word, they may well focus attention on it, try to master the word deliberately and try to find its meaning in a dictionary immediately, for example (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 54). Richards (2015) proposed that “both direct instruction and incidental learning are important sources of second language vocabulary development, and both processes support and complement each other” (p. 309). Cervatiuc (2018) agreed and added that “the emphasis placed on each of them should differ based on the learner’s level of language proficiency” (p. 3038). It is appropriate to make use of intentional vocabulary learning with beginners and with more advanced learners, by contrast, it is possible to make use of incidental vocabulary learning by employing extensive reading activities, for example (p. 3038).

When speaking of the efficiency of both vocabulary learning types, Nation (2008) argued that vocabulary that is being taught deliberately is “one of the least efficient ways of developing learners’ vocabulary knowledge, but nonetheless, it is an important part of a well-balanced vocabulary program” (p. 97). Therefore, it is necessary to balance the time spent on deliberate teaching against “the other types of language-focused learning such as intensive reading, deliberate learning, and strategy training”, as deliberate teaching covers only one part of the language-focused learning strand of instruction, “and against the other three strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, and fluency development”

as well (Nation, 2008, p. 104). In general, language-focused learning should not cover more than 25% of the overall instruction time since the other three strands must be devoted with enough time and must be well represented as well (Nation, 2008, p. 114). However, opinions on the gains and efficiency of both learning types differ. Webb and Nation (2017) revealed, for instance, that the overall gains of deliberate learning compared to the ones of incidental learning are always much greater (p. 49). Nonetheless, it is probably most purposeful to think about the value they afford instead (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 49). Webb and Nation (2017) explained, moreover, that “we are able to make relatively large and rapid gains in vocabulary knowledge through deliberate learning, but we might not learn many things about the words through quick study” (p. 49). Collocates of words can be mentioned as an example since most deliberate learning tasks and activities are probably not able to develop knowledge of more than one or two collocates. Various word derivations can serve as another example, too (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 49). Finally, it is pivotal to realise that both learning types provide learners with benefits and advantages, and therefore, both should be incorporated into vocabulary instruction (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 49).

Moreover, Nation (2008) explained that the main problem in terms of vocabulary teaching is the amount of words and knowledge of individual aspects of a word that can be dealt with at any one time since the amount is very small. Generally speaking, teaching can deal effectively with “only a small amount of information about a word at a time”. There is a direct proportion – the more complex and all-embracing information about a word is given, the greater the likelihood that learners will misinterpret it (p. 97).

As was already mentioned above in the paper, learning a word is a cumulative process, and a word must be encountered several times in varied contexts before it can be mastered by a learner (Nation, 2008, p. 97). Earlier in the learning process, especially, the new word must be encountered in short intervals (preferably within a few days) to avoid too much forgetting. Nevertheless, it is possible to space the encounters with a few weeks later in the learning process (Nation, 2008, p. 103). It is more efficient to increasingly spread the encounters with a word than to do an intensive study of it. Simply said, “distributed or spaced learning is better than massed learning”, and the most successful practice is to space the repetitions increasingly more and more apart (Nation, 2008, p. 113). Revisiting the previously-studied words after some time is crucial to strengthen learning (Nation, 2008, p. 113). However, teaching, as such, enables merely one or two of these necessary encounters at the maximum, and therefore, “the other meetings can involve deliberate study, meeting through

meaning-focused input and output, and fluency development activities” (Nation, 2008, p. 97).

Repetition

As was already mentioned above in the paper, repetition is crucial for successful vocabulary learning since “there is so much to know about each word that one meeting with it is not sufficient to gain this information, and because vocabulary items must not only be known, they must be known well so that they can be fluently accessed” (Nation, 2001, p. 76). Therefore, it is apparent that repetition promotes not only the quality of knowledge but the quantity or strength of this knowledge, too (Nation, 2001, p. 76). According to Webb and Nation (2017), it is also important to distinguish between repetition in incidental learning and repetition in deliberate learning, as way fewer repetitions are necessary in deliberate learning than in incidental learning (p. 65). Therefore, it is apparent that the number of necessary repetitions in both learning types differs. There is nothing like an accurate number because of numerous factors affecting learning that widely vary, such as “the salience of the word, the availability of information about it, the quality of the encounters with it, and the learning burden of the word itself” (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 65). When speaking of repetition in terms of deliberate learning, usually around seven repetitions are needed for a learner to master most words. However, each learner is different. Therefore, this number is not sufficient for all learners (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 66). Nevertheless, there is a universal rule concerning all learners – “the more repetitions there are, the more likely learning is to occur” (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 67). In the frame of incidental vocabulary learning, on the contrary, repetition is chiefly linked to the overall quantity of input, as “the more learners listen and read, the more often words will be repeated” (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 67). To ensure enough repetitions, teachers can, for example, use texts aimed especially at language learners, such as graded readers, or re-read the same or similar text with learners (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 67).

To sum it up, according to the information stated above in the text, it is evident that repetition is an essential element of explicit vocabulary instruction, and it is much easier to be controlled in deliberate learning than in incidental learning (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 68).

Spaced Repetition. The term ‘spaced repetition’ refers to encountering a word later in the learning process (Richards, 2015, p. 310). Thornbury (2002) used another term, ‘distributed

practice' (p. 24). It supports the opinion that repetition in vocabulary instruction over some time is crucial since encountering a word only a single time is highly insufficient and leads doubtfully to learning in the end (Richards, 2015, p. 310). According to Thornbury (2002), the time intervals between individual repetitions can be gradually extended when words become better learned. The goal is to test every word "at the longest interval at which it can reliably be recalled" (p. 24). Richards (2015) cited Nation (2001), who proposed that spaced repetition is more effective than massed repetition over a short period, such as one lesson (p. 310). Nation (2001) defined the term 'massed repetition' as the kind of repetition based on spending a continuous period of time (fifteen minutes, for example) on giving repeated attention to a word. Therefore, the difference between spaced and massed repetition lies in the spread of repetition. The principle is shown in the following example – "the words might be studied for three minutes now, another three minutes a few hours later, three minutes a day later, three minutes two days later and finally three minutes a week later" (Nation, 2001, p. 76). The total study of fifteen minutes is spread across ten or more lessons (days) (Nation, 2001, p. 76). Spaced repetition works on the general principle that learners forget the most right after the initial learning phase, and then, after some time, the rate of forgetting becomes gradually slower and slower – "the older a piece of learning is, the slower the forgetting" (Nation, 2001, p. 77). Therefore, it is pivotal to start the 'repetition process' of the new words immediately after they are studied and before learners forget too much. After that, it is possible to space the repetition further apart (Nation, 2001, p. 76).

An effective teaching technique that has proven to be quite successful is vocabulary learning with flashcards. This simple technique enables spaced repetition, as learners are supposed to write individual words on cards and revise them regularly over a while. Teachers then gradually remove the already mastered words and add new words instead. Flashcards help learners to memorize the words. The purpose of this technique is to minimise "the number of times each card is checked: Words that are easy are memorized and checked at increasing intervals; difficult words more often" (Richards, 2015, p. 311). Many computer and mobile apps are based on this technique. Learners can use 'SuperMemo', for example. These apps "take the work out of learners to practise vocabulary only as often as necessary, while leaving more time for difficult words" (Richards, 2015, p. 311).

To support the importance of spaced repetition in connection with vocabulary learning, Richards (2015) cited Zimmerman (2009), who pointed out that it is possible to achieve repetition of words by recycling significant and relevant words, by covering words

from previous lessons in homework assignments and instruction practice, by creating a key words list from previous units and situating it on a visible place in the classroom, and using tasks and activities that encourage learners to use the new words as frequently as possible (p. 312).

To sum it up, spaced repetition leads to learning that has a bigger chance to be retained for a long period of time (Nation, 2001, p. 76).

Individual Stages of Remembering Words

According to Nation (2001), there are three significant processes/steps in general that, in the end, may result in a word being remembered and so noticing, retrieval, and creative (generative) use (p. 63). Besides, Webb and Nation (2017) claimed that these are learning conditions contributing to the attention quality as well (p. 68). Before the individual stages of the vocabulary learning process will be discussed, a few words to vocabulary presentation will be given, which Thornbury (2002) defined as the “pre-planned lesson stages in which learners are taught pre-selected vocabulary items” (p. 75).

Presenting Vocabulary. According to Scrivener (2011), teachers should avoid presenting words as completely isolated and stand-alone items since they are not of much use on their own. Once learners are provided with a word used in context and in real sentences, it becomes a really usable word for them. The word ‘disgusting’ can be mentioned as an example. As a single lexical item, it has some use, but it is restricted. However, “when students know that they can smell food and say ‘Ooh! That’s disgusting!’ and ‘That café was absolutely disgusting!’, it starts to become a really usable item” (p. 190). Equally important is to consider the number of new words that teachers present to their learners in one lesson since “the number of new words should not overstretch the learners’ capacity to remember them” (Thornbury, 2002, p. 76). This number usually comprises at most about ten words a lesson. Due to this finding, most English coursebooks nowadays operate on that principle as well (Thornbury, 2002, p. 76).

It is ordinarily most efficient when the words presented are associated in some way, for instance:

- “Words connected with the same location or event (eg shop words, wedding words),
- words that have the same grammar and similar use (eg adjectives to describe people, movement verbs),

- words that can be used to achieve success in a specific task (eg persuading a foreign friend to visit your town)” (p. 189).

Nevertheless, Thornbury (2002) claimed that there is plenty of evidence suggesting that too closely associated lexical items are inclined to interfere with each other and are more likely to be confused. That makes the task more difficult. Research showed that the sets of unrelated lexical items (‘mountain’, ‘shoe’, ‘flower’, ‘sky’, ‘television’, for instance) are of better learning rate compared to lexical sets (such as ‘apple’, ‘pear’, ‘nectarine’, ‘peach’). This finding supports the fact that “words are stored together”, but that does not mean that they “should be learned together” (p. 37). By contrast, thematically linked words are way easier to learn, as they have looser relations than lexical sets. As an example, the lexical item ‘bungee jumping’ that can be linked to words such as ‘to jump’, ‘bridge’, ‘rope’, and ‘river’ can serve (Thornbury, 2002, p. 37). Scrivener (2011) also admitted that, most commonly, teachers make use of a presentation-practice technique in their lessons. First, they provide learners with some cues, pictures, and information concerning the target vocabulary and elicit the words from learners. Then, it is crucial to assure that learners have understood the way the words are formed, their meaning, and their use in the language. In the end, it is time for learners to practise the vocabulary. Learners can, for example, repeat the words, use them in short dialogues, etc. (p. 189). According to Thornbury (2002), there are many decisions that teachers must meet during the vocabulary presentation, such as if the meaning or the form should be presented first, by what means the word meaning should be presented (such as translation, picture, and definition), and if the spoken form or the written form should be presented first (pp. 76-77).

Noticing. The term ‘noticing’ stands for the first phase of the vocabulary learning process since it occurs when learners see or hear a new word for the very first time, and “noticing a word in a text is a prerequisite for making a form-meaning connection to be stored in the memory” (Cervatiuc, 2018, p. 3039). Richards (2015) referred to the term ‘noticing’ as to “conscious focus on vocabulary as a learning goal and paying attention to aspects of words that might facilitate understanding and learning, such as similarities and differences between words, how the word is pronounced and the grammatical function of the word” (p. 310). Nation (2001) cited Schmidt and Frota (1986) and Ellis (1990), who revealed that noticing may be influenced by numerous factors, such as “the salience of the word in the textual input or in the discussion of the text, previous contact that the learners have had with the word, and learners’ realisation that the word fills a gap in their knowledge of the language” (p. 63).

In the frame of incidental learning, noticing occurs when learners guess from the given context and retrieve the meaning of the words that they are familiar or partially familiar with. However, when learners look words up in a dictionary, then noticing becomes more deliberate (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 68). Apart from looking up a word in a dictionary, noticing can appear when learners study a word deliberately, guess from context, or when a teacher explains a word to them (Nation, 2001, p. 63). One can see that noticing is closely linked to attention, or, more precisely, to what exactly learners pay attention to, since if learners focus on the form of a word, they are more likely to master the form than the meaning and, equally, if learners focus on the meaning of a word, then they are not able to pay equal attention to its form (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 68). Naturally, noticing can occur when certain conditions are set up, such as motivation and interest. They can be induced and aroused by the right choice of content in general. Nevertheless, it is crucial to realise that what teachers find interesting does not always match what learners find interesting (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 68).

Noticing can occur in several ways, such as decontextualization, word consciousness, or negotiation. Particularly important is the term 'decontextualization', which can be defined as "looking at a word in isolation, rather than as part of the context in which it appears" (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 68). However, it does not mean the word is extracted from a sentence. It means the word is merely separated from "its message context in order to be focused on as a language item" (Nation, 2001, p. 64). It occurs, for example, when learners look up a word in a dictionary and perceive it as a language item and not as a part of the overall context (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 68).

Retrieval. According to Cervatiuc (2018), retrieval occurs when learners recall a word meaning (p. 3039). Therefore, it is apparent that retrieval "can only occur on the second or subsequent encounters with a word" (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 69). To ensure that learners will be able to recall the word after some longer period of time (to ensure long-term retention), it is necessary to retrieve the word from the learner's memory several times (Cervatiuc, 2018, p. 3039).

Nation (2001) argued that there are two types of retrieval – receptive and productive (p. 67). "Receptive retrieval involves perceiving the form and having to retrieve its meaning when the word is met in listening and reading", while "productive retrieval involves wishing to communicate the meaning of the word and having to retrieve its spoken or written form

as in speaking or writing” (Nation, 2001, p. 67). When learners hear or read a word form, it is necessary to retrieve its meaning (what they know of it) and “this retrieval is likely to be the retrieval of ideas stored from previous meetings and retrieval of content and information from present meeting” (Nation, 2001, p. 67). Nation (2001) also cited Baddeley (1990), who proposed that with each word retrieval, the link between its form and meaning becomes stronger, and it facilitates subsequent retrieval, too. Nevertheless, it is crucial to make sure that the time span between the previous and the present encounter with the word is not too extensive. Otherwise, the present meeting is not a repetition but rather a first encounter. In case the learner’s memory of the previous word encounter remains, it is possible that the present meeting may add to and strengthen that memory. In simple terms, there is a principle – learners need to be provided with the opportunity to encounter a recently met word repeatedly within a certain period “before the memory of previous meeting fades” (p. 67). There was plenty of research carried out on how long memory for words can last. According to Nation (2001), for example, memory can store words for about several weeks. However, there are many factors influencing the time span for remembering words, such as the quality of the meeting with the word (p. 68). Webb and Nation (2017) claimed that various reading and listening classroom activities create optimal conditions for retrieval since “when reading, for example, the meaning of an unfamiliar word may be guessed from context or looked up in a dictionary and the next encounter with that word in the text provides an opportunity for retrieval to occur, and subsequent encounters provide further opportunities” (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 70). Numerous opportunities for developing retrieval skills provide activities based on re-telling, digital glossaries, or flashcards (Webb & Nation, 2017, p. 71). The term ‘retrieval skills’ can be explained as the ability “to summon up the word when required” (McCarthy, 1990, p. 43).

Generative Use. Cervatiuc (2018) explained that generation is the third main stage in the process of vocabulary learning and that it “involves encountering or using a word in a manner that differs from the linguistic context, which led to learning the word in the first place” (p. 3039). Nation (2001) provided quite a similar definition and pointed out that “generative processing occurs when previously met words are subsequently met or used in ways that differ from the previous meeting with the word” (p. 68). Richards (2015), in contrast, referred to generative use as to learner’s productive use of a word, either in speech or in writing, and understood it as the opposite of a passive encounter with a word. Therefore, it is apparent that generative use requires the learner’s active practice in word use (p. 312).

Generative use works based on the principle that each new word encounter makes learners reconceptualise their current knowledge of that word (Nation, 2001, pp. 68-69). Cervatiuc (2018) proposed that metaphors, analogies, and comparisons that are more conducive to lexical meaning are examples of some highly generative and creative uses of words (p. 3039). However, as explained by Nation (2001), generative use is not bound to metaphorical word meanings only since it can concern variations such as inflexion, collocation, and grammatical context to reference and meaning, too. Generation can be receptive and productive just as retrieval and, moreover, there are individual degrees of generation ranking from low to high generative use. Low generation occurs when the linguistic context does not differ from the textual input significantly, such as the expressions 'chronic pain' and 'very chronic pain'. By contrast, high generation arises when "the word is used in a substantially different way, perhaps indicating that the word has begun to be integrated into the learner's language system", such as the expressions 'chronic pain' and 'chronic backache/illness' (Nation, 2001, pp. 69-70).

Vocabulary Practice in the Classroom - Explicit Vocabulary Teaching Activities

After learners have encountered a new word for the first time, it is time to focus on practice. Learners will need opportunities to get more familiar with this newly met lexical item, or, more precisely, "to practise recognising, manipulating and using it" (Scrivener, 2011, p. 191).

The majority of simple activities that are used to practice vocabulary are based on two vast areas. The first area concerns the use of vocabulary in written tasks, and the second concerns discussions, communicative activities, and role plays, which require productive use of the target vocabulary as well (Scrivener, 2011, p. 191). Scrivener (2011) found out that there are many published vocabulary tasks that include, for example, matching pictures to words, matching individual word parts together (eg beginnings and endings) or matching individual words to others, such as collocations or synonyms/opposites, using affixes to create new words, classifying words into various vocabulary lists, using provided words to fill in an exercise, filling words in crosswords, grids, and diagrams, filling missing words in gaps in sentences or games to strengthen learners' memory (p. 191).

According to Webb and Nation (2017), there are a lot of activities that centre around learners' use of vocabulary learning strategies and techniques. These strategies include, for example, dictionary use, flashcards, and the keyword technique (p. 77). They are briefly

discussed above in the paper as well. Particularly interesting is the keyword technique, which is, according to Thornbury (2002), the best-known mnemonic technique. The keyword technique “involves devising an image that typically connects the pronunciation of the second language word with the meaning of a first language word” (p. 145). Oxford and Crookall (1990) explained that the basic principle of this technique is that the process of remembering an L2 word is facilitated by using auditory and visual connections. “The first step is to identify a familiar word in one's own language that sounds like the new word; this is the auditory link. The second step is to generate a visual image of some relationship between the new word and a familiar one; this is the visual link. Both links must be meaningful to the learner. For example, to learn the new French word ‘potage’ (soup), the English speaker associates it with a pot and then mentally pictures a pot full of ‘potage’” (p. 19). Thornbury (2002) proposed that it is a good idea to provide learners with some time to silently and individually devise keywords when teaching new words (p. 145).

The flashcard activity that was already briefly described above in the paper is a common classroom vocabulary learning activity. It typically leans on writing an L2 lexical item on one side of a small piece of paper/a card and its L1 equivalent on the other side. Learners create a set of cards and go through each L2 lexical item. The goal is to recall the L1 equivalent, and once a learner is able to do this “with a high degree of success, the cards are turned over, and the learner looks at the L1 translation and tries to recall the L2 word form” (Webb and Nation, 2017, pp. 112-113). Thornbury (2002) specified that a complete set at any time should comprise between twenty and fifty flashcards, depending on how difficult the words are, and the principles of spaced repetition should be taken into consideration. Moreover, lexical items that cause difficulties “should be moved to the top of the pile” and “the cards should be shuffled periodically to avoid ‘serial effects’ - that is, remembering words because of the order they come in and not for any other reason” (p. 146).

An especially interesting classroom activity that is based on the use of cards for recycling words is a vocabulary box/bag/jar. Richards (2015) cited a language teacher who described the principle of using a vocabulary jar in English lessons and who explained that “one learner was given a large jar and several slips of card and was assigned the job of ‘secretary’ for that lesson. Every time a new word came up which the students wanted to remember, they asked the secretary to write the word down and put it in the jar. This empowered the learners, giving them responsibility for choosing the words they wanted to recall” (p. 311). Then, learners can recycle the selected vocabulary at the end of each week,

for instance. The vocabulary jar can serve as a kind of 'physical evidence' of how many new words the students have learned within a week. Teachers can use the jar for other follow-up activities, too, such as using the words to write a story (Richards, 2015, p. 311). Thornbury (2002) proposed that the new words from the vocabulary jar can be used as the basis for a revision activity at the beginning of the next lesson. There are several ways how this revision can be carried out. Teachers can ask, for instance, for a definition, translation, or use in a sentence (p. 51).

Besides, Richards (2015) mentioned other classroom activities that can be used to revise and recycle vocabulary and are proven to be effective, such as a hot-seat game, various miming games, and Pictionary, which is a very popular activity. The goal of the hot-seat game is to guess which word is being defined by a teammate. In miming games, one learner mimes the lexical item using only body language and other teammates guess. The activity called 'Pictionary' is quite similar to these miming games, as one learner is supposed to draw the word and other teammates guess (p. 311). Oxford and Crookall (1990) proposed that the main advantage of language games that recycle vocabulary is that they are competitive, consequently memorable, and simply fun. Scrabble, Word Bingo, and Jeopardy can serve as other examples. Word Bingo is a popular classroom activity. The teacher writes about ten words on the board, and each learner chooses five and writes them down. After that, the teacher provides learners with brief word definitions or synonyms, and learners tick their words (the words they think the teacher is describing). When learners tick all their words, they shout 'BINGO!'. The learner who shouts 'BINGO!' as the first one is the winner (Koprowski, 2006). Another fun classroom activity that can contribute to vocabulary recycling and is used to revise the vocabulary of a particular topic is called 'Jeopardy'. The teacher prepares a set of questions – the more difficult question, the more points per each – and draws a table with topic areas and points on the board ('housing for 3000 points', for example). Each team chooses a question, and the teacher, a host, reads it ('What rooms can be found in a house? Name at least five rooms!', for example). If the team provides the right answer, learners get points. Failing that, the opposite team gets the chance to answer and earn points (Hladík, 2013, p. 21).

Dodigovic (2018) divided activities to build vocabulary into two categories - 'cognition-oriented activities' and 'socially oriented activities'. The difference lies chiefly in different learning theories. "The cognitivist theories are primarily interested in the internal processes of the mind that enable learning. Problem-solving, mostly individually, is one of

the key approaches, since the learner's mind is seen as an active constructor and therefore the owner of knowledge. Thus, simulation games, crosswords puzzles, or any other individually played games fall within the bounds of the cognitive approach" (p. 3031). Socially oriented activities, by contrast, aim at social interaction and not at learners in isolation, such as Pictionary. The category of cognition-oriented activities comprises activities such as Flashcards, Crossword Puzzles, and Text Reconstruction, and socially oriented activities include, on the contrary, games such as Simon Says, Hangman, Pictionary, Scrabble, and Hot Seat (Dodigovic, 2018, pp. 3033-3034). Thornbury (2002) proposed, on the contrary, dividing classroom vocabulary activities into 'decision-making tasks', 'production tasks', and 'games'. Decision-making tasks are those in which learners make decisions about words and are primarily aimed at receptive vocabulary knowledge. They are divided into various types according to their cognitive demand – identifying (the least cognitively demanding task), selecting, matching, sorting, and ranking and sequencing (the most cognitively demanding task). The second group of classroom activities includes production tasks "in which the learners are required to incorporate the newly studied words into some kind of speaking or writing activity" (Thornbury, 2002, p. 100). This group of tasks is represented mainly by two main types - completion (known as gap-fills in general) and creation of sentences and texts (Thornbury, 2002, pp. 100-101). In terms of vocabulary games, Thornbury (2002) argued that the most efficient games are those that "encourage learners to recall words and, preferably, at speed" and provided some examples such as Word snap, Word race, Coffeepot, Back to board, or Categories (p. 102).

There is a vast number of various activities and tasks promoting vocabulary learning and recycling that can be used in the classroom setting, and the activities mentioned above in the paper serve only as a brief sample. Nevertheless, each vocabulary activity and task should meet the requirements as follows:

- It focuses on useful words, preferably high frequency words that have already been met before.
- It focuses on a useful aspect of learning burden. That is, it has a useful learning goal.
- It gets learners to meet or use the word in ways that establish new mental connections for the word. It sets up useful learning conditions involving generative use.

- It involves the learners in actively searching for and evaluating the target words in the exercise.
- It does not bring related unknown or partly known words together. It avoids interference (Nation, 2008, p. 103).

Conclusion

As stated above, the goal of this chapter was to discuss the main points of vocabulary teaching and learning. Vocabulary learning is a gradual process that consists of individual stages and is influenced by many different factors and conditions, such as learners' age and the number of repetitions. Teachers can employ a vast number of classroom activities based on the principles of explicit learning that facilitate vocabulary learning. The following parts of the thesis examine the impact of deliberate vocabulary practice on students' mastery of new language items.

III. METHODS

This chapter comprises a brief description of the research hypotheses, the research subjects, the research methods used to confirm or disprove the research hypotheses, and, finally, the overall research and data analysis process.

Research Hypotheses

There are three hypotheses based on the knowledge from the theoretical background that must be either confirmed or disproved. H1: Weaker pupils experience an improvement when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. H2: Strong pupils do not experience any considerable improvement when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. H3: In the whole language group, the average score improves when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons.

Research Subjects

For the research, the lower secondary pupils were chosen that attend an elementary school in the Czech Republic. The elementary school can be described as an ordinary Czech elementary school, as it does not apply any specific or alternative teaching methods. Pupils learn English from the third grade three times a week. One lesson takes forty-five minutes. There are no English double classes. Nevertheless, English is not a compulsory foreign language since pupils can choose German, too. Lessons usually take place in special classrooms that are adapted to language teaching, and pupils are divided into smaller groups (up to twenty pupils per group) in order to ensure the appropriate conditions for language learning. At the end of lower secondary school, pupils' proficiency level should be A2 or, in words, elementary level, according to The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. That evolves that at the end of elementary school, pupils should be able to express their ideas in speech and writing on different topics, such as home, family, housing, school, free time, culture, weather, nature, town, and other fundamental topics that are involved in daily communication.

The research subjects were pupils attending the sixth grade. The pupils were about eleven to twelve years old. There were twenty pupils in the English language group. This language group was one of the largest in the school. The language group consisted of twelve girls and eight boys, and there was a considerable difference in the level of language

proficiency. Some pupils were particularly strong, and some were, by contrast, very weak. There were about six very strong girls, but there was no particularly strong boy. On the contrary, there were about two boys and one girl among very weak pupils. In general, girls were much stronger than boys in this language group. The first reason why this language group was chosen for the research was its size and diversity in terms of language proficiency which enabled more objective results. The second reason was that pupils in the sixth grade are usually more comfortable with and willing to engage in various vocabulary games, especially speaking activities, than children in the eighth or ninth grade.

In the English lessons, a course book and a workbook from the Project series were used, published by Oxford University Press. There are six units in the course book, and each is divided into four individual topic areas. There are many grammatical rules and exercises for grammar development in the Project series coursebook and workbook. Nevertheless, there are some vocabulary exercises practising word form, meaning, and use as well. The most common vocabulary exercise type is filling in the correct word, matching a word or a phrase with a picture or picture labelling, a crossword, and a word search. Teachers can also use some additional material for vocabulary practice created by the Project series authors.

The research was carried out during the fourth unit, or, more precisely, during parts 4B, 4C, and 4D. These parts focus on vocabulary development in terms of daily routine and free-time activities. Verb and Noun collocations, such as 'have breakfast' and 'go skiing', were the main vocabulary target. Collocations are a significant part of one's vocabulary as "knowing a word involves knowing what words it typically occurs with" in the language (Nation, 2001, p. 56). Thornbury (2002) defined the term and explained that "two words are collocated if they occur together with more than chance frequency, such that, when we see one, we can make a fairly safe bet that the other is in the neighbourhood" (p. 7). According to McCarthy (1990), "the relationship of collocation is fundamental in the study of vocabulary; it is a marriage contract between words, and some words are more firmly married to each other than others" (p. 12). The extremely strong relationship between the words 'blond' and 'hair' can serve as an example since when one mentions the word 'blond', something else but 'hair' can hardly be referred to (McCarthy, 1990, p. 12).

Research Tool and Process

Action research in the form of an experiment was the research tool applied during the survey to collect the data necessary to confirm or disprove the research hypotheses. Generally, action research is a research tool used for researching changing conditions and situations in the teaching process (Somekh, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, it can be stated that action research combines theory and practice (Avison et al., 1999). Somekh (2006) argued that “action research combines research into substantive issues, such as how to improve the quality of children’s learning in a state-maintained education system with research into the process of development in order to deepen understanding of the enablers of, and barriers to, change” (p. 1). This research tool represents a systematic intervention that goes beyond describing, analysing, and theorizing to working with research subjects to reconstruct and transform social practices (Somekh, 2006, p. 1). Nezvalová (2003) claimed that the goal of the action research is the constant improvement of teacher’s work and, therefore, in the end, improvement of learning conditions and increasing the overall quality of the learning process. One can see that an essential element of action research is change since it leans on carrying out a change, observing what the change causes, and, finally, analysing and evaluating the results.

The research was carried out within twelve English lessons and was divided into two research parts that were compared afterwards. First, the goal of the research had to be stated, and so to confirm or disprove the hypotheses. Second, the research process was planned in detail, and third, the research results were analysed, evaluated, and the hypotheses confirmed or disproved. At the beginning of both research parts (the first lesson of the given topic), the target vocabulary was practised intensively, and at the end of the lesson, pupils took a vocabulary test. Subsequent lessons were carried out in different ways in the two research parts (as is discussed below in the text), and, at the end of both research parts (the last lesson of the given topic), pupils took the test once more. Both vocabulary tests were the same to enable measurement and comparison of the differences in pupils’ results. The test comprised three exercises aimed at checking pupils’ knowledge of word form, meaning, and use (see Appendix A). In the first exercise, the pupils’ task was to match the given collocations with the pictures. In the second exercise, pupils had to fill in the sentence a missing collocation so it would make sense, and in the third exercise, pupils were provided with three collocations that they had to use in a sentence. The task instructions were in English and

Czech, and before pupils started writing, the individual tasks were explained to them. Moreover, they had an opportunity to ask whenever they encountered some ambiguities during the test completion. The test was evaluated after that. In the first exercise that aimed at testing word meaning knowledge, pupils could obtain three points (half a point per correct answer) as it required only matching the collocation with the appropriate picture. The second exercise was more demanding since the task was to fill in the sentence with a correct collocation so that it would make sense, which required the knowledge of word form (correct spelling). In the second exercise, pupils could obtain six points – one point for the correct answer and half a point for a minor mistake that would not cause any misunderstanding, such as wrong spelling. The most demanding was the last exercise, as pupils had to use the given collocations in a sentence by themselves. This task was awarded with eight points. For each sentence that was grammatically, syntactically, and lexically correct, pupils could get two points. If there were some minor mistakes that would not interfere with the meaning of the sentence, pupils obtained one point. However, if the sentence was missing the subject, the word order was not observed, or there were some other serious mistakes, pupils got zero points. In total, pupils could obtain seventeen points.

During the first research part that took six lessons, special attention to deliberate vocabulary practice was given in the lessons. In each lesson, there were some vocabulary activities incorporated, and therefore, deliberate vocabulary practice took place in lessons. The target vocabulary of the first research part was Verb and Noun collocations from the topic area of daily routine activities/my day. Therefore, collocations such as 'have lunch', 'get up', and 'do homework' were practised intensively within the six lessons. The activity bank that was used in the lessons comprised activities and exercise types such as matching (a word with a picture), miming the actions, flashcards, bingo, and exercises aimed at filling in the missing word in the sentence and using the word in a sentence. All four language skills were developed and practised to some extent, as the pupils had to recognize the words first (while reading and listening) before they were able to use them in speech and writing by themselves. The first test (at the end of the first lesson of the topic) took sixteen pupils, and the second test (at the end of the last lesson of the topic) took seventeen pupils out of twenty. On the first test occasion, three average pupils and one very weak pupil were missing. On the second test occasion, two very strong pupils and one average pupil were missing.

The second part of the research took the same amount of time as the first one. The target vocabulary that was dealt with at that time was Verb and Noun free-time activities

collocations, such as 'play tennis', 'go swimming', and 'watch TV'. At the beginning (the first lesson of the topic), the target vocabulary was practised intensively, but during the following lessons, no special attention to that vocabulary was given, and therefore, no deliberate vocabulary practice took place in lessons anymore. The last lesson of the second research part, pupils took the test one more time as in the first part of the research. The first test (at the end of the first lesson of the topic) took seventeen pupils, and the second test (at the end of the last lesson of the topic) took nineteen pupils out of twenty. On the first test occasion, two average pupils and one very strong pupil were missing. On the second test occasion, the weakest pupil of the language group was missing.

One can deduce that the difference between both research parts lied in distinguished teaching approaches in terms of vocabulary teaching. Unfortunately, as stated above in the paper, not all pupils took both vocabulary tests twice, as some were ill at the time of test writing. Some pupils took each vocabulary test only once, and therefore, their results could not be included in the research.

Data Analysis

After pupils took both vocabulary tests twice, the data obtained from them could have been analysed. First, the pupils that did not attend all parts of the research were set aside. That concerned pupils that were not at school at some of the lessons when the vocabulary tests were taken. Therefore, the results of only eleven out of twenty pupils could have been regarded as relevant to the research. Second, the tests of other pupils that attended all research parts were evaluated with points. At the maximum, pupils could obtain seventeen points in the first test focused on daily routine collocations and fifteen in the second test aimed at free-time activities collocations. The number of points that pupils could obtain in each exercise was provided above in the paper. Third, to arrange the results of individual pupils, a transparent and well-arranged table was created (see Appendix B). Results of each pupil from all four test occasions were recorded in the table in points and per cent (see Appendix B), and after, the difference in success rate between the first and the second test occasion in the frame of the same topic was calculated and noted in per cent. Pupils were colour-coded according to their capabilities and proficiency. Strong learners were marked green, average learners orange, and weak learners red. Fourth, the overall success rate of each test was calculated, and the result were provided in per cent as well. Finally, the overall success rates of all four tests were compared to each other in order to draw conclusions and

confirm or disprove the third hypothesis. Moreover, the tests of all eleven pupils were analysed in detail once more, and all the possible reasons for the obtained test results were considered. For confirmation or disproval of the first and the second research hypothesis, the same method was used, but only the results of a particular group of pupils, according to their language proficiency, were considered.

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

In order to draw conclusions, individual test results within the first and the second research part were analysed, evaluated, and, most importantly, compared. After that, both research parts were compared to each other, too.

Unfortunately, as stated above in the text, not all pupils' results could have been used for the data analysis as nine pupils were ill (or simply not at school for other reasons) and did not take both vocabulary tests twice. Nevertheless, despite the relatively small number of research participants, the results showed noteworthy findings.

The First Hypothesis

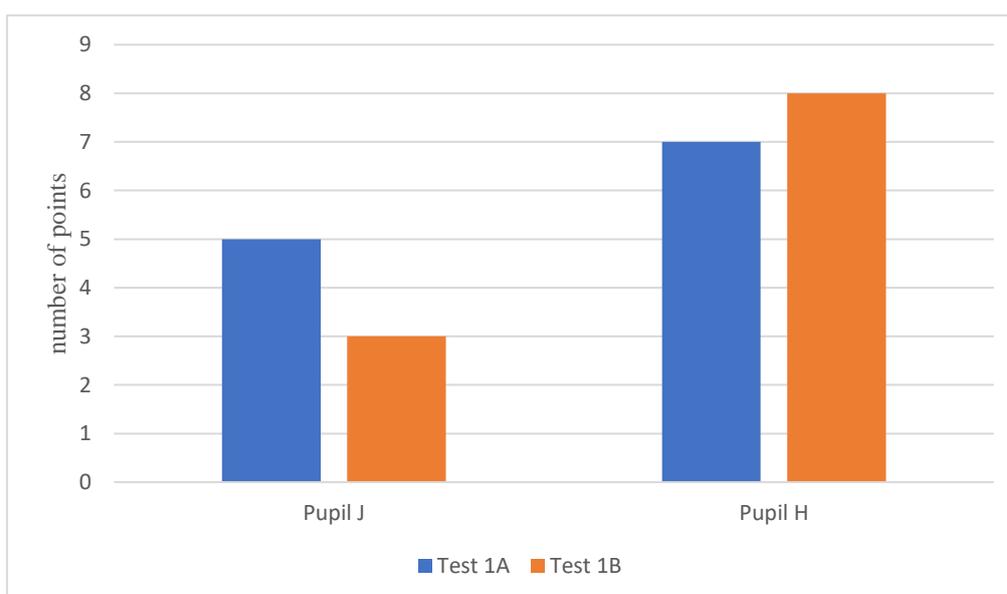
The first hypothesis says that weaker pupils experience an improvement when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. There were four weak learners in the language group, but only two of them participated in all parts of the research. In the first part of the research that was aimed at deliberate vocabulary practice, Pupil J obtained five points out of seventeen in the first test (see Test 1A in Graph 1) and three points in the second test that learners took after six lessons of regular deliberate vocabulary practice (see Test 1B in Graph 1). This final result showed that the deliberate vocabulary practice was not much effective for this learner in particular, as the pupil's percentage score descended from twenty-nine to eighteen per cent. By contrast, the second part of the research did not focus on regular deliberate vocabulary practice. In the first test, Pupil J obtained seven out of fifteen points (see Test 2A in Graph 2) and in the second test, only four points (see Test 2B in Graph 2). The pupil's percentage score descended from forty-seven to twenty-seven per cent. As it was apparent, the learner got worse in both final tests regardless of the teaching approach. Nevertheless, the difference between the results of the tests taken during the time of regular deliberate vocabulary practice was lower than the difference between the results of the tests taken in the research part that did not pay any extra attention to deliberate vocabulary practice. The reasons why Pupil J got worse in both final tests, regardless of the teaching approach, could be of various kinds. The pupil was one of the weakest in the classroom, not only in English but in other school subjects as well. Pupil J was unfocused for a considerable part of a lesson, quite slovenly, and easily distracted by other learners. Unfortunately, Pupil J is not provided with any distinct support because she grows up in an orphanage. Therefore, the reason may have related to the inattention and lack of concentration during the lessons.

By contrast, Pupil H improved in both final tests regardless of the teaching approach, which was quite surprising. In the frame of the deliberate vocabulary practice research part, Pupil H obtained seven points out of seventeen in the first test (see Test 1A in Graph 1) and eight points in the second test (see Test 1B in Graph 1). The improvement accounted for six per cent. In the second research part, the improvement was even more considerable since it accounted for sixteen per cent. In the initial test (see Test 2A in Graph 2), Pupil H obtained eight and a half points and in the final test, eleven points out of fifteen (see Test 2B in Graph 2). The reason why he was more successful during the second research part may have resided in the fact that the pupil had come to the elementary school at the beginning of the school year, and therefore, it was possible that he had already known some vocabulary discussed in the second part of the research. Another reason may have been that the daily routine collocations such as 'take a shower' are usually for learners more difficult to learn than the free-time activities collocations such as 'go swimming' as learners usually know some of them from previous school years.

According to the reasons and evidence given above, it is apparent that the first hypothesis was disproved by means of the research findings. Nevertheless, the absence of remaining weaker learners strongly limited the research since one of the missing pupils was the weakest learner in the language group.

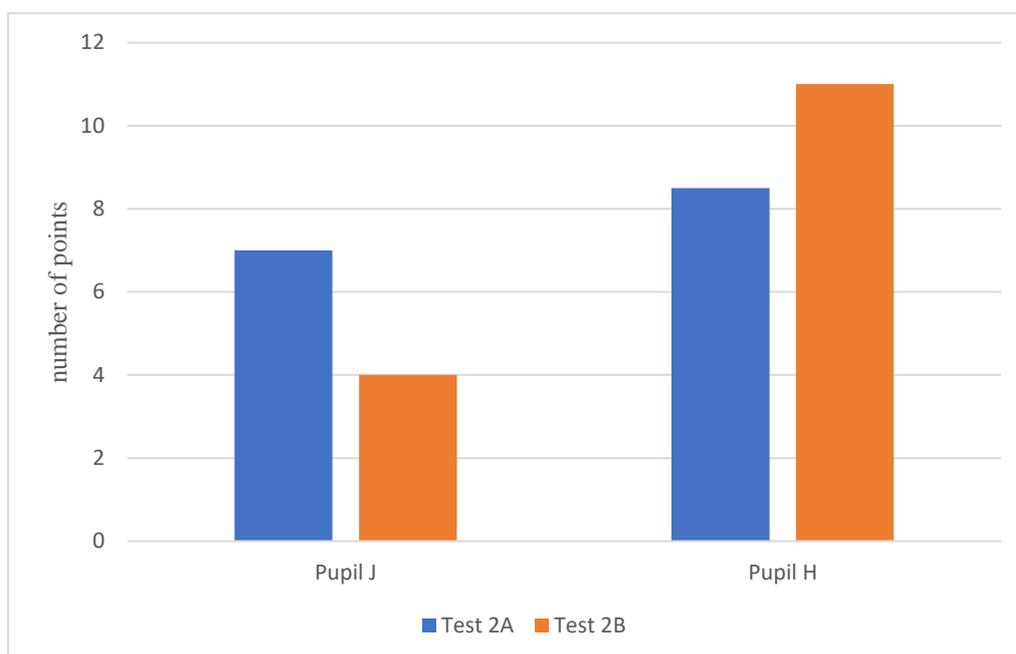
Graph 1

Weak pupils' results in Test 1A and Test 1B in points



Graph 2

Weak pupil's results in Test 2A and Test 2B in points



The Second Hypothesis

According to the second hypothesis, strong pupils do not experience any considerable improvement when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. There were about six strong learners in the language group, but, unfortunately, only the test results of three of them could have been regarded as relevant to the research since the other three pupils were not at school at one or more of the test occasions. Pupil B, Pupil N, and Pupil O were the three learners that attended all research parts. In the frame of the first research part oriented to deliberate vocabulary practice, Pupil B, the strongest learner in the whole language group, accessed sixteen out of seventeen points (see Test 1A in Graph 3). Therefore, the improvement comprised six per cent. However, within the second research part, Pupil B scored the total number of points in the initial as well as in the final test (see Test 2A and 2B in Graph 4). Thus, there was no improvement at all. The points difference in the tests taken within the deliberate vocabulary practice research part was only one point that the pupil lost in the most difficult exercise in the test. There was one sentence in the exercise in which the pupil did not observe the word order, and therefore, Pupil B did not receive two points for the sentence but only one point as the sentence was not syntactically correct. However, this mistake was only a trifle, and all the four tests that Pupil B took were almost perfect. A possible reason

for the score difference between the two tests taken in the first research part may have been the fact that the tests used were not standardized but created by quite an inexperienced teacher. Therefore, there is no guarantee that the tests were reliable, valid, and objective. Especially, considering the last test exercise in which pupils had to use the given collocations in the whole sentences, pupils scored two points per sentence in case the sentence was linguistically correct (the grammar, syntax etc. the learners could not have known, was not taken into consideration), one point if the sentence was comprehensible (so there were only some small mistakes that were not quite relevant to the research), and zero points in case the sentence was incomprehensible and some significant mistakes such as missing subject or incorrect verb form were present. On the one hand, Pupil B lost one point in this exercise because of wrong word order that was not the target of the vocabulary test but, on the other hand, pupils could have used sentences of their own choice. They did not have to write complicated compound sentences or use sentence types with more difficult word order other than a declarative sentence since a simple sentence, such as 'I have lunch at home.', was sufficient to get the total points. With regards to the second part of the research, Pupil B scored in both tests the total number of points, and therefore, one could assume that the pupil had already known all the vocabulary at the time of the practice and the collocations were not new for her. In other words, the tests were not sufficiently challenging for this learner. Generally, the free-time collocations were much easier for the learners (and so were the tests revising this topic) since they had already encountered this vocabulary to a certain extent in previous school years. However, that did not apply to daily-routine collocations that were, for most pupils, new.

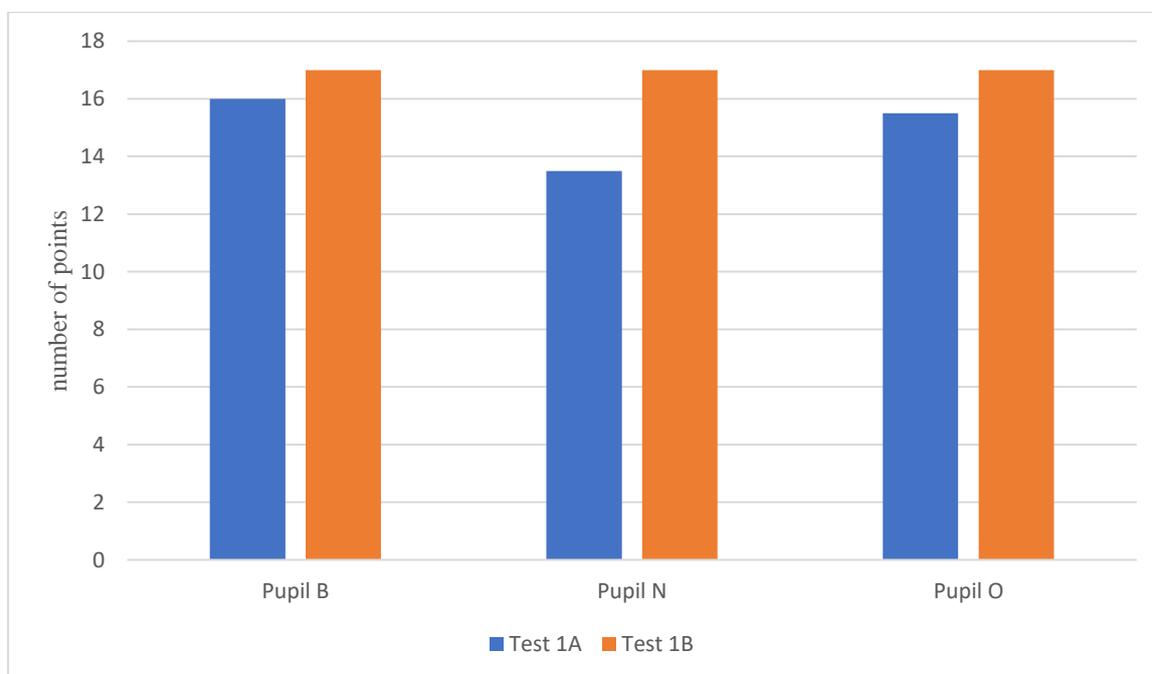
The test results of the other pupils, Pupil N and Pupil O, were almost equal. That corresponded with their language proficiency, which was more or less equal, too. At the end of the deliberate vocabulary practice, both learners improved and scored the total number of points (see Test 1B in Graph 3). Pupil N improved by twenty-one per cent and Pupil O by nine per cent. However, their score was already high in the initial test (see Test 1A in Graph 3) as Pupil N scored thirteen and a half points which accounted for seventy-nine per cent, and Pupil O obtained fifteen and a half points which accounted for ninety-one per cent. The error rate was in both cases the highest (like in the rest of the class) in the last exercise aimed at word use. Nevertheless, the mistakes were not serious, except for Pupil N, who did not mention a subject in one sentence, and posed inaccuracies such as wrong spelling, absence of an article, or wrong preposition. In the case of the second research part, when no special

attention to vocabulary practice was paid, both pupils improved even more. Pupil N improved by twenty-seven per cent and Pupil O by seventeen per cent. They were both very successful in the final test (see Test 2B in Graph 4) since Pupil N scored the total score and Pupil O lost only half a point for wrong spelling and scored fourteen and a half points out of fifteen. The reason for their improvement may have lied in the fact that these pupils paid attention, prepared for each lesson, and did all their homework regularly, the homework or extra work that was voluntary included. Therefore, deliberate vocabulary practice probably happened in some form at home as well.

According to the information provided above, the second hypothesis was confirmed. The strong pupils do not experience any considerable improvement when practising vocabulary regularly at school as they improved regardless of the teaching approach. All these pupils were careful, hardworking, and fulfilled their school duties with a great sense of responsibility, and therefore, it may be assumed that the deliberate vocabulary practice took place at home even during the second research part when no special attention was paid to the target vocabulary at school.

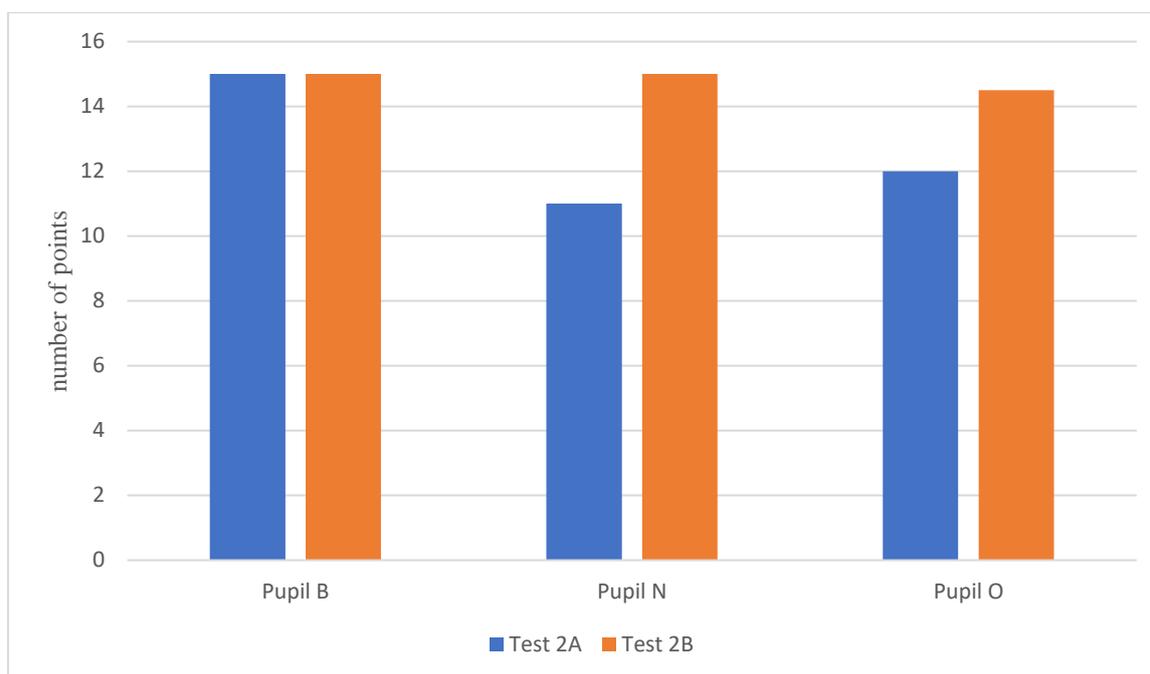
Graph 3

Strong pupils' results in Test 1A and Test 1B in points



Graph 4

Strong pupils' results in Test 2A and Test 2B in points



The Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis states that in the whole language group, the average score improves when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. In the first research part aimed at regular deliberate vocabulary practice, the average percentage score in the whole group improved by eight per cent, and, by contrast, in the second research part that did not pay special attention to the vocabulary practice, the average percentage score in the whole group worsened by one per cent. Even though the percentage difference was not striking, it was apparent that the deliberate vocabulary practice led to improvement, while the other teaching approach that did not focus on deliberate vocabulary practice was not as effective since the difference in success rate between the initial and the final test was minimal.

To sum it up, the research showed that deliberate vocabulary practice led to better test results, and therefore, it could be presumed that vocabulary learning happened, and the intensive vocabulary practice was effective. According to the research findings, the third hypothesis was confirmed.

The Average Pupils

Apart from weak and strong learners, average pupils are worth discussing, too, since the research showed some interesting findings. There were six average learners that attended all parts of the research. Pupil's T, Pupil's R, and Pupil's S results were quite comparable as they all improved and obtained better scores in the final test of the first research part (see Test 1B in Graph 5). That showed the efficiency of regular deliberate vocabulary practice in the lessons. Pupil T improved only by three per cent, but Pupil S, on the contrary, improved by twelve per cent, and Pupil R enhanced even by twenty-one per cent. Pupil T lost in the initial test (see Test 1A in Graph 5) by only half a point and scored ninety-seven per cent. However, this test result may have been notched up the good memory that this pupil had. Unlike the first research part, Pupil T and Pupil R both worsened and reached worse scores in the final test of the second research part (see Test 2B in Graph 6). Pupil's T success rate decreased by twenty per cent and Pupil's R by ten per cent. Pupil S obtained the same score as in the initial test, so there was no improvement or worsening. Pupil S was very hard working and responsible. Therefore, it is possible that Pupil S practised the target vocabulary at home during the second part of the research. That may have been the reason for the maintenance of the score which accounted for ninety-three per cent in both tests (see Test 2A and 2B in Graph 6).

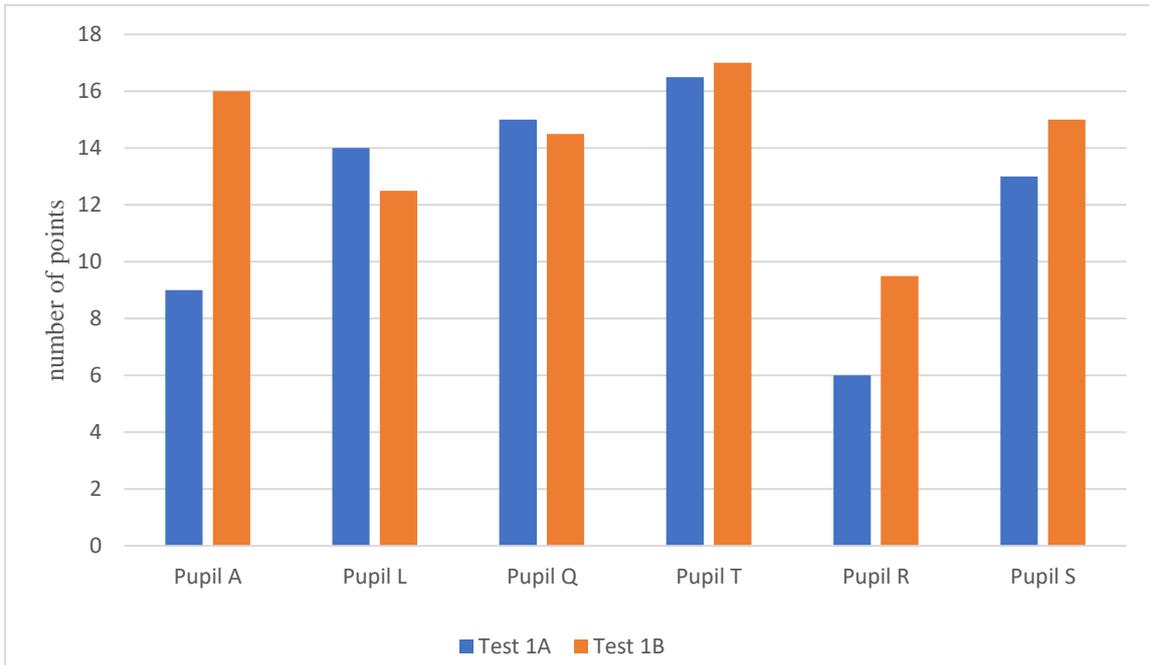
Interesting were also the test results of the three remaining average learners – Pupil A, Pupil L, and Pupil Q. Pupil A improved considerably in the final test of the first research part by forty-one per cent (see Test 1B in Graph 5) and, in the final test of the second research part (see Test 2B in Graph 6), by contrast, worsened by seventeen per cent. These results represented substantial fluctuation of success rate. This pupil had come to the class at the beginning of the school year, so it is possible that he had already known some of the vocabulary from previous school years at that time. This statement would have explained the total number of points that the pupil obtained in the initial test of the second research part (see Test 2A in Graph 6). Nevertheless, this pupil was very impetuous and always wanted to be the first to submit his work or a test. Therefore, his competitiveness may have caused a great fall in success rate in the final test of the second research part (see Test 2B in Graph 6). In the frame of the first part of the research, the improvement may have been assigned to intensive and regular vocabulary practice.

Pupil Q was very similar to Pupil A in terms of competitiveness. They were good friends who used to sit together at the desk, but they were permanently disturbing and interrupting the lesson, so they were seated separately. Nevertheless, even though they did not sit together anymore, they still communicated with gestures and other non-verbal means of communication and distracted each other. In the first research part, within the deliberate vocabulary practice, Pupil Q scored fifteen points out of seventeen in the initial test (see Test 1A in Graph 5), which accounted for eighty-eight per cent, and fourteen and a half points in the final test (see Test 1B in Graph 5), which accounted for eighty-five per cent. It was apparent that the success rate was more or less similar. In the second research part, when no special attention to deliberate vocabulary practice was paid, Pupil Q obtained fourteen and a half out of fifteen points in the initial test (see Test 2A in Graph 6), which accounted for ninety-seven per cent, and fourteen points in the final test (see Test 2B in Graph 6), which accounted for ninety-three per cent. Even though Pupil Q worsened in both final tests regardless of the teaching approach, the points difference was not considered a significant one as he lost in both tests only half a point. For this reason, this learner's performance may have been regarded as equal in both parts of the research. One of the reasons for Pupil's Q constant test results may have been his opinion that he was proficient in English enough so that he did not need to practise anymore. Thus, it happened every now and then that he did not pay any attention to what was going on in the classroom.

As for Pupil L, the test results showed some remarkable data as well. In the first part of the research, Pupil L worsened by eight per cent and in the second part of the research, Pupil L improved by three per cent, which was quite surprising as one would have assumed that the results would be the opposite. Pupil L was often ill and was present in the lessons only sporadically during the regular deliberate vocabulary practice period. It may have explained the result of the final test in the first research part (see Test 1B in Graph 5) since she took the test immediately after she had come back to school. It was improbable that she had practised the vocabulary at home when she had been ill, and her memory may have faded until she returned. On the contrary, in the second part of the research, Pupil's L final test result improved by three per cent (see Test 2B in Graph 6), which represented only half a point. Thus, the difference in success rate between the initial and the final test was not enormous. Therefore, it is possible that Pupil L had already known some of the target vocabulary at the time of the first testing, and this knowledge remained unchanged until the final test was taken.

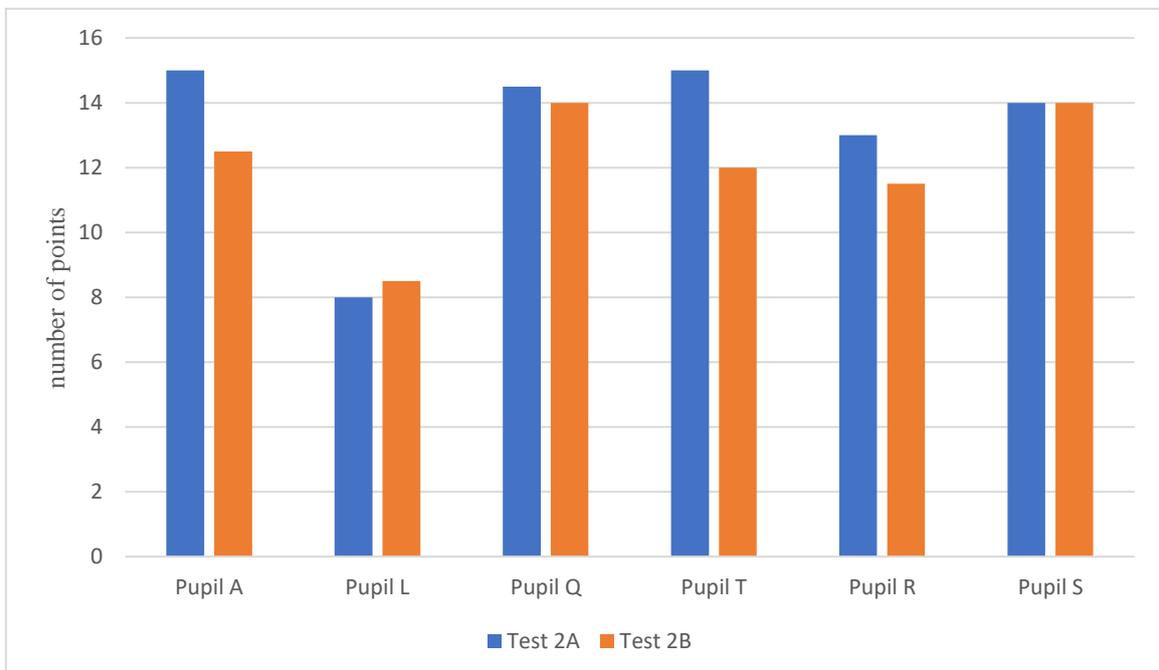
Graph 5

Average pupils' results in Test 1A and Test 1B in points



Graph 6

Average pupils' results in Test 2A and Test 2B in points



Final Word

The research findings confirmed that regular deliberate vocabulary practice effectively influenced vocabulary learning. Nevertheless, the difference between the overall average score in the first and the second teaching approach was not striking. The first teaching approach that corresponded with the first set of tests (see Test 1A and 1B in the graphs above) focused on deliberate vocabulary practice that was quite intensive since circa fifteen to twenty minutes of each lesson were dedicated to it. On the contrary, in the second teaching approach that tallied with the second set of tests (see Test 2A and 2B in the graphs above), no regular deliberate practice of the target vocabulary was incorporated in the lessons. This teaching approach represented the way the lessons are usually composed and run in this language group. As mentioned above in the paper, the average percentage score of Test 1A was seventy per cent and of Test 1B seventy-eight per cent. The average percentage score improved in the final test by eight per cent. Although the difference was not significant, it showed that there was some improvement after all. In contrast to the first research part, the average percentage score of Test 2A was surprisingly already high and accounted for eighty-one per cent. I assume that the vocabulary choice (the free-time activities collocations) strongly influenced the results in Test 2 since learners had already known some of the collocations at the time of the research, which did not apply to Test 1 because the daily routine collocations were, for most of the pupils, new. Unlike Test 1B, there was no improvement in Test 2B. The average percentage score in Test 2B was almost the same as in Test 2A since it differed merely by one per cent.

V. IMPLICATIONS

This chapter briefly discusses the limitations of the research, the possible employment of the obtained research findings in the teaching practice, and the suggestions for further research.

Limitations of the Research

First, it is crucial to emphasise that the research findings must be regarded as very broad and general since they were not statistically proven. To draw more valid conclusions, more research participants and a more time-proven and deeper research process with more participants belonging to each group according to their language proficiency (strong pupils, average pupils, and weak pupils) would be required.

The considerable number of missing pupils, the research participants, represents another weakness of the research. As was already stated above in the paper, the test results of nine pupils out of twenty could not have been regarded as relevant to the research since these pupils did not attend all parts of the research and did not take both vocabulary tests twice. Therefore, their test results were not recorded in the table (see Appendix B) and were not included in the data analysis at all. The month that was chosen for the research was a bit unfortunate as pupils were most ill at that time. One of the possible solutions for this shortcoming would have been to choose May for the research because in May, pupils' absence is not commonly that high.

The subsequent weakness of the research lies in the fact that in both research parts, the first lesson of the topic was dedicated to intensive deliberate vocabulary practice, and at the end of the lesson, pupils took the first vocabulary test. Therefore, short-term memory could have played a crucial role and may have influenced the test results, especially the results of those pupils that were usually concentrated and paid attention to what was going on during lessons. Not taking the first vocabulary test at the end of the first lesson but rather at the end of the second lesson would have, perhaps, slightly reduced the effect of short-term memory on the test results, at least within the second research part when the target vocabulary was deliberately practised only the first lesson of the topic. The overall research results may have been influenced by the pupils' predictability, too, since both research parts were similar in the way the data were gathered. In the frame of both research parts, at the end of the first lesson, learners took the test, and at the end of the last lesson, learners took

the same test once more. Therefore, after the experience from the first research part, some pupils might have predicted that they would take Test 2A at the end of the second research part, and some pupils might have prepared for it at home.

The last weakness and limitation of the research that is worth mentioning is that there was no exact demarcation between what could have been considered an improvement and what should have only been regarded as a chance and coincidence. Nevertheless, to draw an exact line between these two variables would require deeper, longer, and more complex research.

Implications for Teaching

Even though the research was merely very general and not statistically proven, the research findings showed that regular deliberate vocabulary practice was effective and brought positive learning results since the pupils' overall average score improved by eight per cent at the end of the first research part. From the research findings, it can be deduced that deliberate vocabulary practice is an indispensable part of English lessons and should not be omitted. There are many various ways how to incorporate deliberate vocabulary practice into a lesson. Some vocabulary practice activities were introduced in the theoretical background of the paper. Nevertheless, the activities and tasks mentioned in the thesis represent only a very brief sample, as many others are proven to be effective, too. It is always the teachers' task to think about the final form of deliberate vocabulary practice appropriate to their learners that can be integrated into their English lessons. This piece of work should serve as an inspiration for them.

Suggestions for Further Research

There was already plenty of research carried out in the field of vocabulary teaching and learning exploring its aspects and contribution to English language learning. Nevertheless, some suggestions for further research were introduced in the two previous sections. It may be interesting to conduct the research once more but with more research participants over a longer period and to conduct it as statistically proven research so the results can be generalized.

Another valuable research may be the one which would explore the demarcation between a point range in the tests that could be considered an improvement (the number of

plus points) and one that can only be considered a coincidence as accurate as possible. However, I believe that this kind of research would require a large sample of research participants (a sufficient number of strong, average, and weak learners) and mathematical capabilities at the advanced level to draw exact conclusions.

VI. CONCLUSION

To understand the research process and findings properly, the fundamental pieces of knowledge from the field of vocabulary learning and teaching had to be described and explained in the frame of theoretical background. These main theoretical points cover topic areas such as vocabulary selection, the difference between receptive and productive vocabulary and between deliberate and incidental vocabulary learning, the levels of word mastery, the role of memory, motivation, and repetition, individual stages of remembering words, deliberate vocabulary practice in the classroom etc. Based on the knowledge discussed in the theoretical background, it is apparent that vocabulary knowledge is integral to language proficiency since words are needed to be able to communicate successfully, to convey one's thoughts, ideas, opinions, and beliefs.

The research was realized as action research in the form of an experiment, and there were three hypotheses to be confirmed or disproved based on the research findings. The first hypothesis said that weaker pupils experience an improvement when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. According to the research results provided above in the paper, the first hypothesis was disproved as the test results of the weaker learners did not show any improvement at the end of the research part that focused on regular deliberate vocabulary practice compared to the test results at the end of the research part during which no special attention to deliberate vocabulary practice was paid. Nevertheless, the research findings were strongly influenced and limited by the absence of the two remaining weaker learners who did not attend all parts of the research and, therefore, their test results could not have been regarded as relevant to the research. Based on the second hypothesis, strong pupils do not experience any considerable improvement when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. This hypothesis was confirmed since the strong learners obtained in both final tests a great number of points, regardless of the teaching approach. A possible reason for this result may have been the presumption that strong learners practise vocabulary at home regularly, and therefore, it is possible that the deliberate vocabulary practice took place at home even during the second research part when no special attention to the target vocabulary was paid. The third hypothesis stated that in the whole language group, the average test score improves when practising vocabulary regularly in lessons. The third hypothesis was proven to be true as well. In the first research part aimed at regular deliberate vocabulary practice, the average percentage score in the whole language group improved by eight per cent. In the second research part that did not pay special attention to deliberate vocabulary practice, the average

percentage score in the whole language group worsened by one per cent. Even though the percentage difference was not striking, it was apparent that the deliberate vocabulary practice led to improvement, while the other teaching approach that did not focus on vocabulary practice was not as effective since the difference in success rate between the initial and the final test was minimal. On the ground of the result, it can be presumed that vocabulary learning happened, and the intensive vocabulary practice was effective.

As stated above in the thesis, the overall goal of the research was to examine impact of deliberate vocabulary practice in the classroom instruction on vocabulary learning. The research findings confirmed that regular deliberate vocabulary practice effectively influenced vocabulary learning. Although the difference between the overall average score in the first and the second teaching approach was not significant, it showed that there was some improvement after all. Nevertheless, the research findings were limited by several things, such as the considerable number of missing pupils - the research participants. Besides that, it must have been emphasised that the research results and findings could not have been generalized since they were not properly statistically proven. To draw more valid conclusions, more research participants and a more time-proven and deeper research process with more participants belonging to each group according to their language proficiency (strong pupils, average pupils, and weak pupils) would be required. This idea can serve as a suggestion for further research.

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APPENDIX A

Test 1 and Test 2

Vocabulary revision – collocations

Name: _____

1. Match the collocations with pictures. (Spoj slovní spojení s obrázky.)

brush my teeth

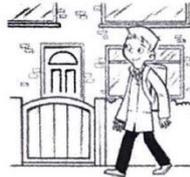
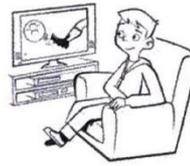
go home

do homework

watch TV

have dinner

have a shower



2. Complete the sentences. Write the missing words. (Dokonči věty. Doplň chybějící slova.)

- When I come back from school I must _____ before I can go on the Internet.
- I always _____ after breakfast. I want to have a nice smile!
- I _____ at half past seven in the morning. It's a bit early for me. I would like to sleep until ten o'clock.
- At ten to eight in the morning I _____. I usually eat yoghurt and drink tea.
- After school I _____. My cat welcomes me in the doorway every afternoon.
- I don't walk to school because it's too far away. I always _____.

3. Use the collocations in a sentence. (Použij dané slovní spojení ve větě.)

go to bed –

finish school –

listen to the radio –

have lunch -

1. Match the collocations with pictures. (Spoj slovní spojení s obrázky.)

play ice hockey

collect badges

go swimming

play the violin

go to dance class

go skiing



2. Complete the sentences. Write the missing words. (Dokonči věty. Dopln chybějící slova.)

- a) After I come back from school I _____. I love dancing! I'm really good at it!
- b) I always _____ in the evening. I have got many interesting films and a new DVD player!
- c) I _____. It's my hobby. I have got many of them in my collection – blue, red, and yellow!
- d) On Monday, Wednesday, and Friday I _____ at my friend's house. I don't have my own piano at home but I really want one!
- e) After school I usually _____. We have got a big swimming pool in our town and many people go there.
- f) I love sport! Every Friday afternoon I _____ with my friends. All you need is a ball and football boots.

3. Use the collocations in a sentence. (Použij dané slovní spojení ve větě.)

go skiing –

play the guitar –

play computer games –

APPENDIX B

Table with pupils' test results

	Pupil A	Pupil B	Pupil J	Pupil L	Pupil N	Pupil O	Pupil Q	Pupil H	Pupil T	Pupil R	Pupil S		average test score											
Test 1A	9	53%	16	94%	5	29%	14	82%	13,5	79%	15,5	91%	15	88%	7	41%	16,5	97%	6	35%	13	76%	$130,5/11 =$ 11,86	70%
Test 1B	16	94%	17	100%	3	18%	12,5	74%	17	100%	17	100%	14,5	85%	8	47%	17	100%	9,5	56%	15	88%	$146,5/11 =$ 13,3	78%
		+41%		+6%	-	11%		-8%		+21%				-3%		+6%				+21%		+12%		
Test 2A	15	100%	15	100%	7	47%	8	47%	11	73%	12	80%	14,5	97%	8,5	57%	15	100%	13	87%	14	93%	$133/11=12,09$	81%
Test 2B	12,5	83%	15	100%	4	27%	8,5	50%	15	100%	14,5	97%	14	93%	11	73%	12	80%	11,5	77%	14	93%	$132/11=12$	80%
		-17%		0%	-	20%		+3%		+27%				-4%		+16%					-10%		0%	

Summary in Czech

Diplomová práce se zabývá tématem procvičování slovní zásoby ve výuce anglického jazyka. Znalost slov je nedílnou součástí jazykové kompetence každého žáka, jelikož bez dostatečné slovní zásoby v cizím jazyce jednoduše nelze na kvalitní úrovni komunikovat. Z tohoto důvodu by pravidelné procvičování slovní zásoby nemělo být za žádných okolností ve výuce opomíjeno, a naopak by mělo být zařazováno do hodin anglického jazyka pravidelně. Všechny tři hypotézy, které byly následně, na základě výsledků šetření, potvrzeny či vyvráceny, jsou spjaty s obecnou otázkou, zdali je cílené procvičování slovní zásoby efektivní a vede k úspěšnému procesu učení či, v tomto případě, lepším výsledkům v testu.

Ke sběru dat potřebných k vyvození závěrů a potvrzení či vyvrácení hypotéz byl použit akční výzkum formou experimentu. Samotný výzkum, který utváří praktickou část práce, je rozdělen do dvou dílčích částí zastupující dva odlišné přístupy k výuce anglické slovní zásoby. V první části šetření bylo cílené procvičování slovní zásoby pravidelně začleňováno do výuky. Naopak ve druhé části výzkumu nebyla cílenému procvičování slovní zásoby věnována zvláštní pozornost. Obě dílčí části výzkumu byly následně porovnány a na základě výsledků v testech, které účastníci výzkumu absolvovali vždy na začátku a konci každé výzkumné části, byly vyvozeny závěry.

Přestože rozdíl mezi průměrným skóre v testech v obou částech šetření, tedy v obou přístupech ve výuce, není nijak markantní, výsledky potvrdily, že cílené procvičování slovní zásoby v hodinách anglického jazyka mělo na proces učení pozitivní vliv.