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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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Using pictures in teaching vocabulary

Bachelor's thesis

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I hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work, which I have created myself.
All the literature I used is properly quoted and is listed in Bibliography.

In Brno.....

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(signature)

At this point I would like to express my thanks to the leader of this thesis, Mgr. Ivana Hrozková, whose significant help was very valuable to me.

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INTRODUCTION

My bachelor's thesis deals with a contemporary issue of importance – that of teaching vocabulary using pictures. Perhaps a little neglected in the past, vocabulary teaching is today a hot topic for many teachers; they have realized that without the cornerstone of a well functioning mental lexicon, no student can possibly engage in meaningful active communication. And active communication in English is what counts in today's globalized world. As I will strive to demonstrate in this thesis, pictures represent an indispensable tool for vocabulary teaching, especially (but not by far only) when teaching children. My goal is to show *how* pictures can be employed in lessons as well as to reach conclusions on *why* they work and *in what way exactly* they help retaining the memorized words.

As is the custom, the thesis is divided into a theoretical and practical part. The theoretical one comprises three chapters. The first one introduces and specifies the phenomenon of vocabulary and goes on to examine some crucial terms connected with it: the form, meaning, grammar or formation of the word and so on. It also strives to advise the teacher on what criteria he or she should consider in choosing the areas of vocabulary to be taught. The second chapter deals with various techniques of vocabulary teaching in general and includes hints on how to optimise the learning process. The third chapter is specifically aimed at using pictures (and marginally other visual aids) in ELT classes. Five categories of pictures, such as flash cards or wall posters are looked into here.

The practical part is in numerous ways linked to the theoretical part. In the form of several activities and one lesson plan, it offers practical examples of pictures utilization in the class. Each type of pictures listed in Chapter 3 of the theoretical part is put to use here, followed by an evaluation and analysis of the lesson or activity. It is in these analyses, I believe, where the answers to the questions raised in the beginning of this introduction can be found, supported by theories specified in the theoretical part.

I would also like to turn the reader's attention to the appendices in the back of the thesis. Although it was not exactly my goal, the lesson plan and activities can be put to immediate use in the classroom with their help.

I. THEORETICAL PART

1. Vocabulary

“If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh.” (Harmer 1993: 153)

Vocabulary functions as a cornerstone without which any language could not exist. Speaking would be meaningless and perhaps impossible having only structure without vocabulary. The word “vocabulary” generally represents a summary of words or their combinations in a particular language. However, we should bear in mind, as Ur (2000: 60) remarked, that one item of vocabulary can consist of more than one word. E.g. ‘post-office’ consists of two words and still expresses one idea.

Vocabulary teaching is one of the most important components of any language class. The main reason is the fact that it is a medium, which carries meaning; learning to understand and express the meaning is what counts in learning languages.

There has been increased focus on teaching vocabulary recently, partly as a result of “the development of new approaches to language teaching, which are much more ‘word-centred’.” (Thornbury 2004: vi)

1.1. What knowing a word includes

What does teaching vocabulary actually involve? Is it enough for the learner to know the form of the word and one or more of its meanings? In fact, teaching vocabulary is more of a complex matter:

Ur (2000: 60-62) and Harmer (1993: 156-157) agree in listing the fundamental features, which need to be included within vocabulary teaching:

Besides knowing the form of the word, learners also need to be familiar with its grammar. Learners need to know e.g. irregular forms of verbs or plural nouns, the position of adjectives etc. Another aspect in teaching vocabulary is the word formation.

Learners should know how to change a word form and when to use it (gerund, the past form...).

Teaching the meaning includes mainly connecting a word with its equivalent in the real world. It is called denotation. Apart from denotation, connotation of the word (associations and feelings, which arise when the word is heard) should be taught. Many vocabulary items have several meanings depending on context. To make it even worse, “word meaning is frequently stretched through the use of *metaphor* and *idiom*”. (Harmer 1993: 157) Furthermore, learners need to be provided with the word sense relations to other words. There are various relationships such as synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms etc.

Another challenge the learner will face when learning a new item is collocation. That means he or she needs to know which words can be used in connection with each other and how. E.g. when learning the word “picture”, the learner should be informed that one can *take* a picture, not *make* a picture. On top of that, the student needs to acquire the ability to recognize when it is appropriate to use a particular word - speaking or writing, informal conversation with a friend or formal polite conversation. (Ur 2000: 60-62; Harmer 1993: 156-157)

To sum this up, it is not enough to learn just the form of a new vocabulary item and its denotation. In order to be able to understand properly and to use a new item of vocabulary in a given language correctly, the learner must be familiar with the word connotation, grammar and formation as well as its collocation and the right way and appropriateness of use.

1.2. What vocabulary to teach

Every language teacher must make a difficult choice on what and how much vocabulary to teach. Furthermore, they must consider what vocabulary items to teach first (during early stages of the course) and what vocabulary to leave for later on.

The teacher's choice of vocabulary is influenced into some extent by the course book and supplementary materials they use. However even here, "teacher decides on emphasis given to individual items." (Gairns and Redman 1992: 54)

1.2.1. Usefulness

When making a decision about what vocabulary to teach preferentially, the teacher should take into consideration mainly usefulness of the words. Yet, what words are actually useful? To be able to answer this question, it might be helpful to look into several aspects.

In the first place, the teacher should consider the learner's needs. Allen (1983) pointed out that it is useful to provide the learner with words for 'classroom language' just at the early stages of the course. She continues that it is important for the teacher to predict what words the student needs to know for talking about everyday life, people and things surrounding them. "When such words are learnt, the new language can immediately be put to use". (Allen 1983: 108)

One of the criteria affecting the teacher's choice is the frequency in which the particular item is used in common language. In general, "The words which are most commonly used are the ones we should teach first." (Harmer 1993: 154) However, most frequent words do not usually convey much information, being so-called 'empty' words (i.e. grammar words) and to be able to communicate, learners need considerable amount of words bearing some meaning. (McCarthy 1992: 82)

Another aspect to consider is coverage. As Harmer (1993: 154) stated, the words covering more things are likely to be taught before words with only one specific meaning. E.g. the word 'book' will be taught before words 'notebook or exercise book'.

McCarthy (1992: 84) also speculates on the range of an item. It is generally advisable to avoid the vocabulary with a restricted range, since the wider range an item has, the more useful it is likely to be.

1.2.2. Learnability

Besides usefulness, “learnability” is another factor influencing the order in which chosen vocabulary will be taught. There are a lot of reasons why words might be easy or difficult to learn. Of them all, let us mention that complicated spelling, pronunciation or meaning might be a reason for a word to be difficult to remember. Generally, concrete things are more learnable than abstract ones, therefore they are always taught first. (McCarthy 1992: 86)

2. Vocabulary teaching

2.1. How to make vocabulary teaching and learning effective

Vocabulary is generally a matter of remembering, unlike e.g. learning grammar, which is a system based mainly on rules. (Thornbury, 2004) To be able to teach as effectively as possible, it is important to know, how words are remembered and stored in students' minds and how long term memory is organized.

Several authors agree that vocabulary is stored in the mind in a highly organized and complex web-like system, the so-called 'mental lexicon'. In the mental lexicon, words are stored, categorized and interconnected in many ways, according to their features such as meaning, form, collocation, syntactic properties, cultural background etc. Consequently, a word being retrieved is looked up through several pathways at once, which is extremely economical in terms of time needed. (Thornbury 2004; McCarthy 1992; Gairns and Redman 1992)

One of the important roles of the language teacher is to help their students find the easiest way of conveying new information into the already existing system of the mental lexicon. (Thornbury 2004: 93) Moreover, students need to acquire the ability to store the information for as long as possible.

Thornbury (2004: 24-26) summarized a research into memory, which suggests principles supporting the process of permanent or long – term remembering. In this summary he listed several techniques to follow to make vocabulary teaching as effective as possible:

Firstly repetition, yet what he means is “repetition of encounters with a word” (Thornbury 2004: 24) e.g. in reading. Furthermore, he stresses the importance of retrieval and use of the new words. While practicing, learners should make decisions about words, e.g. match rhyming words or use new items to complete sentences.

Moreover, personalizing in vocabulary practice has proved to be beneficial for remembering along with spacing, which means that presentation of new vocabulary is divided into more widely separated sequences followed by repeated revision later on

with gradually extending periods between them. E.g. the end of the lesson, next lesson, next week and so on. (Thornbury 2004: 24)

Another helpful element is motivation, which is closely linked with attention. “A very high degree of attention (called arousal) seems to correlate with improved recall.”(Thornbury, 2004: 25) Connected to this, emotional value of words should be considered as well. I must definitely agree with Thornbury on this matter, as his conclusions correspond with my own experiences – see for example the evaluation and analysis in chapter 2.1.1 of the practical part.

Finally, Thornbury (2004: 25) advises to visualize a picture for a new word or to link an abstract word with some mental image. Images drawn by students themselves have the best outcomes. Besides imaging, there are other mnemonics, such as making clues from associations with similarly sounding word and its meaning in the mother tongue.

Again, Thornsbury’s claim that students’ own images have the best influence on remembering is in accordance with my own conclusion (see the evaluation and analysis in chapter 2.3 of the practical part)

When examining this matter, Gairns and Redman (1992) stressed the importance of meaningful activities in the classroom. They pointed out that meaningful tasks need to be analyzed in greater detail and therefore information is more likely to be retained in long-term memory. Furthermore, they as well as Thornbury reason the positive impact of personalization, imaging and retrieval mentioned above. They also suggest a good organization of written storage of vocabulary to support retention. Among other possibilities, they mention using ‘word diagrams’, which they claim might be very useful for “storage of lexis”. (Gairns and Redman 1992: 96) For more information about the word diagrams see chapter 3.1.4 - Semantic maps.

To sum it up, the teacher should help students build up and use a mental lexicon in such a way that they will be capable of storing, keeping and retrieving words when needed. He or she can call on various methods to aid him or her in accomplishing this task, mainly arousing motivation and attention, engaging in meaningful activities and providing many channels for learning and practicing. Pictures represent a convenient tool to be employed in nearly all of these methods. For more information on how this can be done, see Chapter 3. – Pictures in ELT.

2.2 Techniques in vocabulary teaching

Learners acquire vocabulary in various ways. Students are exposed to a lot of new vocabulary during lessons: by the teacher, by texts or other materials they work with. A lot of this vocabulary is automatically absorbed. (Harmer 1993: 159)

Beside this incidental acquisition there are “pre-planned lesson stages in which learners are taught pre-selected vocabulary items” (Thornbury 2004: 75). Various techniques and activities are aimed directly at learning vocabulary, which is usually put into sets of somehow related words, often by topic or meaning.

As McCarty (1992) suggests, before presenting new language, pre-teaching activities might be beneficial “to activate existing knowledge to make the encounter with new words more meaningful.”(McCarthy 1992: 108) Pre-teaching activities often arouse students’ attention and desire to explore a particular topic or subject in greater detail.

Both McCarthy (1992: 110) and Thornbury (2004: 76) suggest two general possibilities of arranging vocabulary presentation. The teacher provides the learners with the meaning of the words and then progresses to introduction of their forms or vice versa – the form is introduced first, followed up with illustration of the meaning.

In the latter, forms are often presented in text or another form of context and students are encouraged to discover meanings and other properties of words themselves. This type of activity is called the *discovery technique*. (Harmer 1993: 160)

There are many possibilities how to explain or illustrate the meaning of the words. In the first place, it is necessary to mention techniques typical for ‘Direct Method’ as Thornbury 2004) specifies them “using real objects (called realia) or pictures or mime.” (Thornbury 2004: 78)

The same author continues that these means are especially appropriate for teaching elementary levels, where many concrete objects are taught. These types of presentation are usually supplemented with the use of TPR (Total physical response), which is a technique where the teacher gives commands and students perform the actions. In TPR, “the intention is to replicate the experience of learning one’s mother tongue” (Thornbury 2004: 79) Techniques for using pictures are furthermore explored

in chapter 3; an example of Direct Method can be found in chapter 1 of the Practical Part.

As Harmer (1993: 161-162) suggests, sense relations, definition and direct translation of words might function as yet another helpful tool for clarifying the meaning.

Thornbury (2004) listed these options as well and furthermore included an idea of clarifying the meaning by examples, such as “providing an example situation” or “giving several example sentences” (Thornbury 2004: 81)

All these techniques are more or less useful for a particular situation, level and vocabulary, the best way would be in many cases to combine them and use several together.

Besides explaining the meaning in vocabulary presentation, it is also important to focus on forms, since the sound of words is one of the aspects influencing the organisation of the mental lexicon. (Thornbury 2004: 84; McCarthy, 1992: 110)

This is arranged by various drilling activities. From experience, songs and chants are very suitable for drills, providing rhythm, catchy rhymes and an element of fun. As Thornbury (2004: 86-7) suggests, introducing the written form of the word should follow not long after the presentation of the pronunciation.

After presentation, learners should be provided with plenty opportunities to practice the newly gained language in accordance with the principles listed in chapter 2.1 of the theoretical part, since it is crucial for successful remembering. This is done by various forms of practice activities. In the first stage, usually mechanical practice is applied “in the form of some of kind of oral repetition”. (Thornbury 2004: 93) Furthermore as Thornbury (2003: 93) claims, it is necessary to integrate new vocabulary into existing knowledge in the mental lexicon, which is done by types of activities, where students make judgements about words, e.g. matching, comparing etc. This mechanical practice is then followed by more open and communicative activities “where learners are required to incorporate the newly studied words into some kind of speaking or writing activity.” (Thornbury 2004: 100). This is often provided by various pair-work or group-work activities.

3. Pictures in foreign language teaching

As Hill (1990) pointed out, “the standard classroom” is usually not a very suitable environment for learning languages. That is why teachers search for various aids and stimuli to improve this situation. Pictures are one of these valuable aids. They bring “images of reality into the unnatural world of the language classroom.” (Hill 1990: 1) Pictures bring not only images of reality, but can also function as a fun element in the class. Sometimes it is surprising, how pictures may change a lesson, even if only employed in additional exercises or just to create the atmosphere.

Pictures meet with a wide range of use not only in acquiring vocabulary, but also in many other aspects of foreign language teaching. Wright (1990: 4-6) demonstrated this fact on an example, where he used one compiled picture and illustrated the possibility of use in five very different language areas. His example shows employing pictures in teaching structure, vocabulary, functions, situations and all four skills. Furthermore he pointed out that “potential of pictures is so great that only a taste of their full potential can be given” in his book. (Wright 1990: 6) To be more specific, beside lessons where pictures are in the main focus, they might be used just as a “stimulus for writing and discussion, as an illustration of something being read or talked about, as background to a topic and so on” (Hill 1990: 2)

However, “pictures have their limitations too”. (McCarthy 1992: 115) For example in teaching vocabulary, pictures are not suitable or sufficient for demonstrating the meaning of all words. (McCarthy 1992: 115; Thornbury 2004: 81) It is hard to illustrate the meaning of some words, especially the abstract ones such as ‘opinion’ or ‘impact’. Therefore, in some cases, other tools are used to demonstrate the meaning (see chapter 2.2 of the Theoretical Part), or alternatively pictures might be supplemented by other tools.

There are many reasons for using pictures in language teaching. As Wright (1990: 2) pointed out, they are motivating and draw learners’ attention. This fact will be repeatedly demonstrated in the Practical Part of this thesis. Furthermore, Wright (1990: 2) refers to the fact that they provide a sense of the context of the language and give a specific reference point or stimulus.

Pictures, being suitable for any group of learners independently on age or level, can be used in lots of various ways. As Hill (1992: 2) stated, “What is done is limited

only by the preparation time available, the visuals to hand and the imagination of the individual teacher.”

Hill (1990: 1) listed several advantages of pictures, such as availability (one can get them in any magazines, on the internet, etc.); they are cheap, often free; they are personal (teacher selects them); flexibility - easily kept, useful for various types of activities (drilling, comparing, etc.), they are “always fresh and different”, which means they come in a variety of formats and styles and moreover the learner often wonders what comes next. (Hill 1990: 1)

From my experience, learners always pay attention and are curious about what are they going to do with the pictures shown. However, there is always a downside: it can be quite time consuming to find the right pictures for a specific type of activity for a beginning teacher who lacks his or her own collection. Still on the whole, this drawback is greatly outweighed by the above-mentioned pros. Furthermore, when the collection of pictures is once made, it can serve for a long time.

Another matter is the question of how to use pictures effectively. It counts as general methodological knowledge that in learning languages, students should perceive the input through as many channels as possible. Therefore it is important to include variety of stimuli in teaching. It is important to find a balance and not to use pictures or visuals only but to combine them with other techniques and different types of stimuli (movement, verbal stimuli, sound, etc). Moreover, pictures used for demonstration of the meaning should be repeatedly connected with the spoken and subsequently also written form of the word or chunk of language.

3.1. Pictures in vocabulary teaching

3.1.1. Picture flashcards

David A Hill (1990) classified pictures according to their size into three ‘key’ categories:

- “Large (20x30 cm): useful for whole-class work”
- “Medium (10x15 cm): useful for group-work”
- “Small (5x5 cm): useful for games and other group-work activities”

(Hill 1990: 5)

This classification applies to picture flashcards as well. I have simplified Hill’s classification and divided them into two groups only. The first group covers “Big flash cards” (about 15x20cm or larger), typically used by the teacher for whole-class activities such as presenting new language, controlled practice or as prompts for speaking activities. The second group then covers “small picture flash cards” (smaller than about 15x20cm), usually used by students for working individually or for games and activities in pairs or groups.

Big picture flashcards

Big picture flashcards are very helpful tools in presenting and drilling forms of new words, since they draw learners' attention and make these often boring activities more enjoyable. And that is exactly what teachers need when presenting new language – to catch their learners' full attention, to raise their interest in the presented subject and hence also their motivation. At the same time flashcards (as well as other forms of pictures and visual aids in general) enable students to link the meaning of the words with real-world images immediately. When using flashcards in presentation, it is easy to involve learners actively and to combine the presentation with controlled practice. The presentation of vocabulary with flashcards can be done in lots of various ways, for example in telling a story or just simply based on a set of vocabulary for a particular topic. (For an example of how flashcards can be used in presentation, see chapter 1 and chapter 2.1.1. of the practical part)

Wright (1990) and Wright and Haleem (1996) listed several possibilities how to illustrate the meaning of a new word or a piece of language through pictures. A single picture might often serve this purpose well enough; yet, employing several pictures might be in some cases preferable if not necessary to make sure that students get the correct idea about what aspect of the picture the teacher had in mind. Displaying several different pictures with one identical feature should suffice for this purpose. E.g. to teach the phrase 'to be horrified', the teacher could show three pictures of people horrified by different things.

Contrasting meanings could be another possibility: The teacher works with two antonymous pictures, or similarly, compares two pictures with things very alike in their meaning, such as 'hill' and 'mountain'. Yet another possibility is to employ the sense of a collective idea or to present the word as a part of a larger thing. As for the first case, the verb 'to work' can be accompanied by pictures of different people working in various jobs; in the second case, the word 'leaf' can be put into context as a part of 'a tree' (Wright 1990: 139-144; Wright and Haleem 1996: 51-52)

Big flashcards are suitable for vocabulary practice and testing. To draw students' attention, it is advisable to reveal pictures in an interesting way. Wright and Haleem (1996) presented several activities that might be modified for this purpose, such as 'Flashing picture', where the teacher just flashes the cards quickly and students guess or

describe what they saw. As another example might serve ‘The slow picture reveal’. (Wright and Haleem 1996: 56-57)

In this sense, the picture is used in a more meaningful and ‘real-life-communicative’ way than being just displayed for students to say what they can actually see. This will probably have a greater impact on the retention of a piece of vocabulary again and also subsequently on the ability to use it in communication.

Hill (1990) illustrated this idea on the example: “In the same way that the idea of holding up a pen and asking ‘What’s this?’, expecting the answer ‘It’s a pen’ is uncommunicative, it is uncommunicative to hold up a picture of a pen and ask ‘What’s this?’ expecting the same answer.” (Hill, 1990, p.17)

Word flashcards

Word flashcards are perhaps worth mentioning at this point, even though they are not actually pictures. However, being used in a similar way as picture flashcards, they can often enrich the lesson. On top of that, those two can be indeed combined and applied together, e.g. in a matching or labelling activity. As Wright (1990: 59) pointed out, word flashcards are most typically used in teaching reading and writing.

Nevertheless, they will find their use in teaching vocabulary too, offering valuable help mainly in teaching the spelling of newly learnt words, which definitely should not be neglected as it often is.

Small picture flashcards

A plenty of variations of these cards are typically applied in communicative activities in pairs or small groups of students, thus finding a meaningful role in reviewing and practicing vocabulary. In a closer look, we will find one-side-only cards, both-sided ones and sets of pairs (antonyms or synonyms, a picture and the corresponding word or phrase) or sets of cards connected e.g. by their meaning.

Being flexible in their way of use, these cards offer teachers and their students a large amount of possibilities in applying them in a number of activities and games such as ‘domino’ or various forms of word matching activities. Moreover, they are fit for a range of sorting or ordering activities, e.g. creating a story. These cards can also be used for games based on asking each other questions and exchanging them while searching

for a set. (See chapter 2.2.2. of the practical part) On top of that, they might be helpful in individual practice of vocabulary, e.g. looking at a picture and guessing the meaning written on the other side.

Both Hill (1990) and Wright (1990) considered activities with this type of visual material very useful and presented plenty of them in their books.

3.1.2. Drawing

Drawing finds huge potential in teaching languages. I must agree with Wright (1990: 203) that in the first place, simple drawings can possibly substitute other forms of pictures.

Although some teachers may not be exactly proficient in drawing, they are eventually bound to find a way of drawing simple pictures for classroom use. Wright (1990) stated that drawings “provide an immediately available source of pictorial material for the activities. Students and teachers drawings also have a special quality, which lies in their immediacy and their individuality.” (Wright 1990: 203)

The element of individuality might have a significant impact on remembering, whether it is a unique expression of the teacher or even better, the expression of students when creating the pictures themselves.

The activity of drawing within the classroom could be perhaps divided into two categories: Drawing on the board carried out by the teacher for example to illustrate the meaning of new language in presentation and drawing as an activity of students in various, usually listening or reading, exercises.

Drawing on the board

It is highly flexible during presentation and therefore bears several advantages, as Wright and Haleem (1996) listed among their board characteristics: “Texts and pictures can grow in front of the class”.... “can be erased, added to or substituted quickly.” (Wright and Haleem 1996: 5)

This feature widens the teacher’s options how to present or review language in a meaningful way. This is true for teaching structures as well as vocabulary. E.g. in reviewing, the teacher draws only a piece of a picture on the board and invites students to guess what he or she is drawing. This makes students curious, they desire to know what the answer actually is and it makes them speculate and reason their opinions and so on. (Wright and Haleem 1996: 6)

In this sense, the picture is again used in a more meaningful way as the same principle was already described in chapter 3.1.1.

Wright and Haleem (1996: 8) presented another very inspiring idea of using drawing on the board: They suggest using it in combination with flashcards or pictures from magazines, e.g. the teacher draws a scene and supplements it with individual pictures of people, animals or things. The authors presented this technique for teaching structure.

In my opinion it is a wonderful tip for presenting and practicing vocabulary too, since this might put the vocabulary into context. For example a house could be drawn and pictures of furniture could be placed inside, either by the teacher or by students. This particular example can be used for the presentation or practice of names of rooms or furniture, prepositions of place, home activities, together with the phrase ‘there is/are’ or perhaps the present continuous etc.

This composition is again very flexible, as the pictures might be easily moved around the board and there is a lot to talk about while doing so. For more details see chapter 2.2.3 of the practical part.

Drawing as a students’ activity

Children in general love drawing; therefore exercises with drawing are rather popular, especially among young learners. Pupils can relax while doing this calming activity and the combination of fun and well-being forms a solid ground for successful learning.

Drawing as an activity might serve a lot of goals (these often combined together) in learning languages. It is often used to support developing particular language skills, mostly (but not only) listening and speaking. Furthermore it meets with a great benefit and usefulness in practicing or learning vocabulary, especially when talking about elementary English, since a lot of essential vocabulary here are concrete and easy-to-draw.

Scott and Ytreberg (1993) specify that this type of activity “is particularly useful for checking object vocabulary, prepositions, colours and numbers. It is not so useful for actions, since drawing people doing things is quite difficult for most of us.” (Scott and Ytreberg 1993: 24) They furthermore pointed out that drawing exercises might

often be time-consuming and so they advise “to keep the picture simple”. (Scott and Ytreberg 1993: 23) However, the teacher can control this into some extent by setting an exact time limit or by telling pupils not to concentrate too much on the artistic quality. Moreover, he or she can choose things easy to draw. To sum it up, if used in the right way, drawing is not wasted time at all, as it is often considered to be by some teachers.

There are several ways of using drawing as an activity in language teaching. As was already mentioned, vocabulary is often practiced within exercises focused at the same time on other aspects of language, such as skills and structures. This enables vocabulary to be used in context, which is more meaningful. Besides, vocabulary is hard to be separated from these other aspects of language anyway. Very favourable is the listen-and-draw or alternatively the listen-and-colour type of activity. This can be organized either as teacher-to-class, student-to-class or as pair work. Another useful exercise is the draw-and-describe type of activity, which is usually done in pairs. An example can be found in chapter 2.3 of the practical part.

Among other not so significant advantages of using pictures students draw Allen listed:

“When someone has drawn a picture of a scene, he knows the meanings of the English words that the teacher will use while talking about parts of his scene. The meanings are in his mind before he is given the English word. (As we have noted, meanings often come before words in successful learning of vocabulary.)” (Allen 1983: 28)

She had in mind students drawing pictures on the board for the teacher to subsequently work with. However, a similar idea will go for other drawing activities students do. When drawing a picture for the purpose of describing it afterwards him or herself, the student again knows the meaning in advance and most likely forms the language to be used in the following speaking activity during the whole time of the process of drawing. Moreover, in the reverse procedure, when a word comes before the illustration of its meaning, e.g. in listen-and-draw type of activity, the retention of the word or chunk of language is reinforced by the length of the process of drawing again.

Drawings “are suitable as illustrations for personal expression.” (Wright 1990: 203) That is yet another reason why to use drawing in language teaching - the fact that it gives students the opportunity to express themselves. Every piece of drawing is unique,

projecting a piece of personality of its author as well as instant mood or state of mind. This fact personalizes the learning subject and makes these pictures highly memorable along with the language connected with them.

3.1.3. Wall-pictures and posters, compiled pictures

Wall-pictures are another valuable visual material for language classes. In the first place, they can be displayed in the classroom to set English (or foreign in general) environment and then they function as another source of language to be absorbed by students in the process of natural acquisition. Furthermore, they will find their use both in presentation of new language and controlled practice.

Wright and Haleem (1996: 45) specified in their characteristics of wall-pictures that these are often complex pictures, illustrating a scene and containing lots of objects and details. They are big enough to be seen by the whole class and they can be used instantly and repeatedly.

Due to their character, they are obviously suitable for presentation of new language. They put vocabulary into context and therefore make the presentation meaningful, which is highly recommended for successful retention of new words.

As Wright and Haleem (1996) pointed out, many words and various structures might be demonstrated by these complex pictures and subsequently many opportunities for controlled practice are given. They listed several types of activities and games to spice up controlled practice, such as variations of the memory game, such as “Hide and seek” or “True/false game” and so on. (Wright and Haleem 1996: 45-48)

The competition element or the challenge to remember in controlled practice is very beneficial. It makes students think and gives them a reason to speak, which has a great impact on remembering the target language as well as making the activities more enjoyable.

Compiled pictures may also be found in plenty variations of worksheets. They are useful for individual written exercises on structure as well as vocabulary practice and for speaking activities in pair work. These often occur in the form of handouts with two slightly differing pictures (or a picture and text), which are used in individual work or pair work. Alternatively, different details can be missing in each picture, which can lead to information-gap type of activity for pair work. For an example of this type of activity, see chapter 2.4 in the practical part. Potentially, a single picture might be

described or used for an objects-naming activity (e.g. from the memory again for higher challenge).

Activities with compiled pictures are usually popular among students, giving them an opportunity to apply their knowledge of vocabulary and structure in combination with their ability to speak in order to reach the goal.

3.1.4. Semantic maps

Semantic maps, also known as word diagrams, are not exactly what people usually imagine under the heading ‘Pictures’. Nonetheless, they are visuals and they are very closely related to pictures. When looking into this matter, it is even possible to claim that they actually are pictures - pictures of sense relations of words. In any case, they are very valuable and highly beneficial not only in learning vocabulary but also, as Gairns and Redman (1992) pointed out, as a tool for storing lexis already learned. Therefore it is, in my opinion, convenient to mention them in this chapter.

Sense relations “are extremely valuable, and can provide a useful framework for the learner to understand semantic boundaries.” (Gairns and Redman 1992: 31)

Semantic relations are useful not only to establish the meaning of vocabulary items but might be also very helpful to reinforce their retention and the retrieval of a word from the mental lexicon when it is needed. Semantic maps, or “diagrams and trees” as these authors refer to them, make these relationships between words “explicit”. (Gairns and Redman 1992: 32)

Semantic maps will find various functions in classes. They can be used in presentations of vocabulary for a particular topic, making this vocabulary organized, withdrawing their relations. They can be used in brainstorming activities as a tool for vocabulary organisation again. Furthermore, McCarthy (1992: 97) listed other uses such as gap-filling activities, speaking activities for group-work, or “as reference device” as well as “recording device in the vocabulary notebook” already mentioned in chapter 2.1.

From my experiences, they are very beneficial, e.g. when students break up the vocabulary into several subcategories within the diagram in their vocabulary notebooks, they are capable of remembering vaster amount rather easily.

An example of a semantic map used in presentation can be found in chapter 1 of the practical part; a semantic map in vocabulary practice then in chapter 2.5 of the practical part.

Summary

There are various types of pictures to be used for language learning, practicing and organizing. They differ regarding their size, form and origin, which makes them fit for a number of activities depending on their type. For several reasons, they help students remember the words better and they help the teacher to make the lesson more interesting and beneficial.

II. PRACTICAL PART

The practical part is focused on techniques of using pictures in vocabulary teaching for primary school pupils (8 – 11 years old). A lesson plan is included to show how a vocabulary lesson with pictures can be organized. The following activities are presented to demonstrate the use of individual forms of pictures examined in the theoretical part of this thesis. These activities have been chosen, because they proved themselves to be highly useful in the process of learning, being used regularly in my lessons. My observations on how the activities work and why they are beneficial for learners are summed up in the Evaluation and Analysis sections following each activity with the aim to display the significance of pictures when learning languages.

1. Lesson plan - Emotions

Class: 4th grade, 14 students, 8-9 years old, 3 English lessons a week

I've been teaching this class for almost one year. It is their 2nd year of compulsory English at school, however about half of the students had attended an English club before. These students are very nice to work with, they are highly motivated to learn and grateful for any kind of work the teacher prepares. Although they are rather a spirited group, they are good natured and easy to manage. Most of them are very bright and fast learners. There is one boy though, who has a speaking problem and needs extra care in learning pronunciation. Three children in this group are noticeably weaker than the others and need more time to process and learn new information.

Time: 45 minutes

Aim: - to learn vocabulary for feelings
- to practice the verb 'to be' in various forms

Aids: - flashcards with 'feelings' (appendix 1)
- picture bingo – feelings (appendix 2)
- text of the "If you are happy" song (appendix 3)
- cards with prompts for the mingling activity
- prompt cards with answers "Yes, I am. No, I am not."
- a worksheet for homework

Assumptions: - the pupils have come across the verb 'to be'
- the pupils have dictionaries at home and are able to work with them

Procedure:

1. Warm up – review of vocabulary from the previous lesson

Pupils walk in a circle and the teacher stands in the middle and gives commands rhythmically and pupils do what the teacher says while chanting: “walk around, walk around”, “jump, walk around walk around, sleep, wake up, walk around, walk around, run...” Then the teacher picks one volunteer and he or she stands in the middle and commands the others. This is done in fast speed and rhythm.

At the end of this activity, the teacher can say and mime: “I am hot. Are you hot too?” In this way he or she uses one of the key words for the lesson and can introduce the topic.

2. Presenting new words

The teacher shows pupils half of the pictures (those with emotions that are not included in the basic text of the song – see appendix 1 and appendix 3) representing emotions one by one and involves them in naming the people in the pictures. (The teacher can also ask some additional questions e.g. about the age of the people and so on). Every time showing a picture, the teacher says how the person feels and why. E.g. “Joe is happy, because the sun is shining.” He or she places each picture on the board, writes its name and draws a picture for the reason of the emotion next to the picture. He or she involves pupils in inventing the reasons for the emotions.

3. Choral drill

Teacher pronounces words for each picture pointing at it one by one, while pupils express the particular feelings. (TPR) Then pupils repeat the words after the teacher in chorus (and later say them together with the teacher) several times, working on pronunciation and miming all the time. While doing this, teacher can label the pictures with words written on cards. This activity should be done rather quickly, so that pupils do not get bored. It can be possibly left out as well, since there will be enough drilling in the next activity.

4. Song

Pupils are invited to form a circle. The teacher introduces one of the emotions (those not introduced in point 1) for each verse. He or she puts a picture for ‘happy’ in

the middle and says that for happy they all will clap their hands. Everybody tries it. The teacher sings the first line of the song, pupils repeat several times. The teacher writes the second line on the board and works with pupils on it. Then it is time to sing the whole first verse. Then the teacher puts a picture for 'sad' in the middle of the circle and says that for sad they will shake their heads and shows them how to do it. The teacher and pupils sing the song again but this time with 'sad' and 'shake your head'. Then they can work on another verses e.g. 'angry' – 'stamp your feet', hungry – 'make hum miam', thirsty – have a drink gloglo, and so on. Pupils with help of the teacher can perform a different action for every picture.

(This activity adapted from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KVNxAyge8Y>, 19.11.08, 22:45)

5. TPR

It is time for a simple game. The teacher says a word and pupils express the corresponding feeling, having the pictures in front of them all the time. Then it can be done vice versa, the teacher acts out the feelings or points at the pictures and pupils say the corresponding word.

6. Controlled practice - structure

The teacher asks a volunteer to stand in front of the class and to choose 'secretly' one of the emotions (from the pictures on the board) and act it out. The teacher asks him or her: "Are you happy?" and helps him or her with the possible answers prepared on the prompt cards. The teacher writes the question and the answers on the board. Another volunteer comes forth and acts out and pupils ask him or her in the same way. This is repeated several times.

7. Mingling activity – mechanical practice

Everybody gets a card with a sentence e.g. "You are happy". Pupils mingle around the class and express the feeling from their card. They practice the conversation from the previous activity with everybody they meet. Then they swap the cards and go to someone else, expressing another feeling. This activity can be done only with 'well behaved' groups. For more problematic groups I would recommend just to practice the previous activity in pairs or groups of three or four instead.

8. Picture bingo

Every pupil gets a slightly different grid with small pictures of emotions. The teacher calls out words or simple sentences and pupils cross the corresponding picture if they have it on their grid. Whoever crosses all his or her pictures first, shouts 'bingo' and becomes the winner.

9. Homework

Pupils get a list of the freshly acquired vocabulary and pictures and their task is to match each picture with the corresponding word and to translate it into Czech. They are advised to use dictionaries to check if they have done it right. (Appendix 4)

Evaluation:

I included this lesson to demonstrate how flashcards can be used to establish the meaning of new words and how they can help to draw children's attention and interest. I used physical actions (miming) as well to stimulate more senses when perceiving new information.

This lesson was successful. All pupils remembered at least 60% of the new words.

The first activity is supposed to establish English environment in the class. Pupils love this activity, since they can move. However, it is not appropriate for some groups for the beginning of the lesson, since children often get silly when having fun and it can be hard to calm them down afterwards. I could afford this activity, since I knew my group was extremely well behaved.

During the second activity, pupils paid attention, because they liked the pictures very much. This fact alone demonstrates the advantage of employing pictures in lessons. They were keen to help with giving names to the people on the pictures and with inventing the reasons for the emotions on the pictures. The third activity took longer than I had intended and some of the pupils got bored and lost their attention. However, there was the element of acting the feelings, which helped me to keep them

busy while doing the drill, so it was not as bad as I would expect. Nonetheless, I would recommend performing it as quickly as possible.

We moved to the back of the class for the fourth activity and worked in a circle. The children were happy about it, since they love all opportunities for changing their places. Some of the pupils had difficulties with learning the second line of the song. But in the end most of them managed. They liked inventing and acting the actions for the particular emotions on the pictures. We did not do a verse for every picture, since they started to be bored after a while and we had to change the activity. Still, this activity shows that pictures can be well combined with other activities and that doing so has a positive impact on memorizing the target vocabulary.

I left the fifth activity out, because I saw there was not enough time to do all I had planned. I saved it for the next lesson, where I used it as a warmer. Children usually like this activity, since they like acting and miming and they can show off how much they remember.

In the sixth activity, my pupils were pretty good in forming questions and answers, partly due to the prompts displayed on the board. Everyone wanted to take a part in front of the class, but only 3 people got a chance to do so, since it was only an introduction to the next activity. The seventh activity was a great success. Everybody participated and enjoyed themselves. It is always a little noisy when children are mingling around the class, so firm rules and a 'stop' sign should be established beforehand.

We did not have a time for the bingo at the end of the lesson; so again, I saved it for a vocabulary review in one of the future lessons. All children love bingo. Everybody always pays attention and listens, everybody wants to win. They are happy if the grid is printed in colours and they can stick it into their notebooks.

This lesson stands and falls on pictures and on the whole proved as a success. Pictures were used in nearly all parts of the plan, helping to establish environment and atmosphere and functioning as an indispensable tool for activities aimed at vocabulary learning. They were sometimes combined with other activities (the song, the game),

which further reinforced the chance to memorize words – a greater number of stimuli seemed to positively affect the learning process. I do not believe that using simple word flashcards would have the same positive effect, as they do not draw so much attention by far and therefore children are likely to lose interest in the matter at hand (vocabulary learning).

2. Activities

2.1. Big picture flashcards

2.1.1. The Simpsons Family

Activity: Presentation of new language; whole class.

Aim: To introduce names of family members; to introduce an idea of the family tree diagram; to introduce/review possessives. To practice asking about and giving ‘personal details’.

Level: Beginners

Aids: Flash cards with the Simpsons family members (appendix 5); a board, potentially pictures of students’ family members for follow-up practice.

Procedure:

The teacher tells the pupils that he or she wants to tell them about her or his best friend and her family. (Alternatively, the she-teacher can say that she will show them her own picture and introduce her family, and then she acts like she was Lisa / the he-teacher can be Bart or another member of the family.)

He or she shows them a picture of Lisa Simpson and tells them her name and age and puts the picture on the board. Then he or she shows them a picture of Bart and introduces him as Lisa’s brother and again places the picture on the board. He or she writes his name and the word ‘brother’ under the picture. He or she does it with all pictures of the Simpsons, placing the pictures on the board into the structure of a family tree (see Appendix 4). He or she writes the name and relationship to Lisa for each picture.

Options for follow-up activities:

There are plenty of activities to do afterwards. Some drilling activities might be done with the words in question or with whole sentences. It is possible to play the ‘Who’s missing’ game (a variation of the ‘What’s missing’ game mentioned above) for memorizing the words. Furthermore the teacher can ask questions about people on the

pictures or about relationships between particular members. E.g. “Who is Marge’s sister? What’s her name? Does she have a child? How old is she? What’s her hobby? ...” This can lead e.g. to “an investigation” among pupils about the most popular character from the Simpsons, or about the most popular TV family.

Eventually, to practice the new language, pupils usually talk about their own family; they can draw their family tree and describe the members and their relations. They can also bring photos into the class and make a family tree with photos and use it in conversations.

Alternatively, they can make up, draw and describe an imaginary family in groups or pairs. Additionally, the pictures might be used for practicing parts of the face and for describing people.

Evaluation and analysis:

This activity is included to display the possibility of using flash cards in combination with a diagram for presenting new vocabulary. Another purpose is to demonstrate the theory how a simple occurrence of pictures in the lesson has a great impact on students’ interest and motivation.

Furthermore, it highlights the benefit of a well-chosen topic (the Simpsons in this case), which if known well or even adored by the children, raises an aspiration in sharing and exchanging information. This results in pupils paying full attention and feeling the need to learn the key words fast, longing to show their knowledge of the topic and to be the first ones in answering the questions. This might have a remarkable influence on remembering the key vocabulary. On top of that, the teacher will appreciate to see his or her pupils being very keen in correcting him or her, when making a mistake about factual information (e.g. Lisa’s age).

2.1.2. What is missing

(Adapted from Mary Slattery 2004: 12)

Activity: guessing game, whole class, chill out activity.

Aim: To memorize freshly acquired vocabulary

Level: All levels

Aids: Flash cards with a topic-based set of vocabulary, board.

Before procedure:

The teacher introduces a new vocabulary set with pictures and fixes them on the board. Then perhaps he or she will do some choral drilling exercises, having pupils repeat the words after him or her and practice the pronunciation. He or she might also arrange a TPR exercise, such as asking pupils to move the pictures around the board (e.g. order them according the size of items on the picture). Highly recommended is to prepare word cards corresponding with the individual pictures before the lesson. Pupils are then asked to fix them under each picture. In that case they can see not only pictures but also the written forms of the words during the game.

Procedure:

The teacher asks pupils to lie down on their desks or turn around and not to look. He or she will take one of the pictures away and invite students to look and guess what is missing. The one who first finds out which picture had been removed, might go to the board and substitute the teacher and again take one picture away for the others to guess. When the game progresses and pupils start to remember the position of individual pictures too well, the teacher might mix them up again in order to make the activity more challenging.

Evaluation and analysis:

This activity has proved itself to be an extremely effective method in memorizing a set of freshly learnt vocabulary items, (or alternatively in reviewing older vocabulary of course), resulting in an incredibly fast outcome. Whilst looking at the remaining pictures, students' minds are occupied by their quick verification whilst trying to recall the one that is not present. Therefore both the pictures and their labels are fully focused on by pupils during the whole game. Only this fact itself enhances the

possibility of successful retention of the aimed vocabulary. Furthermore, their concentration is aimed on the task, not the language itself, which thus function mainly as a tool. In order to accomplish the goal and pronounce the desired word, pupils are motivated by the sense of competition, experience an inner need to obtain the key language fast. Consequently, they learn it much more easily.

This activity is easy to set up and suitable for learners of any age or level. It bears a calming effect for the more spirited groups. It is enjoyable and usually very popular amongst the learners, since students in general like challenges involved in solving puzzles as well as the element of the competition.

2.1.3. Touch the picture

(adapted from Heather Westrup and Joanna Baker 2005: 1 Touch the box)

Activity: warm-up or filler; TPR; teams competition; whole class.

Aim: To review recently learned vocabulary

Level: All levels

Aids: Flash cards of recently learned vocabulary, board.

Procedure:

The teacher fixes about ten to twenty pictures all over the board. He or she divides the class into two teams and invites them to stand one behind another in two rows, about 2 meters from the board. The teacher says a word expressing the meaning of one of the pictures.

The first student from each team runs to the board and touches the appropriate picture. The first one to touch the correct picture gains a point for his or her team. They both fall in the back of their queues. The team which first reaches the beforehand defined amount of points wins.

Options for follow-up activities:

Students can be asked to utilize several selected words in a sentence or give their definition. They can also be asked to sort out the pictures or label them.

Evaluation and analysis:

This activity is included to illustrate how flashcards can be used in combination with TPR in vocabulary revision. This combination of active motion and a visual component makes it easier for some students to memorize the words. Pictures could be substituted for real world objects, which on the other hand tends to be rather demanding for the teacher.

Furthermore, the competition is an important element in this activity, since it functions as a strong motivation to achieve good results (children in general do not like disappointing their team, want to be successful, like running etc.).

This activity can be used with learners of any level or age. It is rather a lively one; therefore as a warm-up it is suitable mainly for somewhat calm or passive groups. With too spirited groups it would be better to perform the activity by the end of the lesson, since it can be tough to calm the students down afterwards. However, it always tends to be a bit noisy; hence it is advisable to set firm rules beforehand. It might be worthwhile to point out that students should be careful about the pictures. Those are recommended to be hard-paper or laminated flash cards.

The presence of visuals plays a significant role in this activity. Its importance lies in the fact that all students tend to watch them for the whole time, even if it is not their turn – they are usually interested if a member of their team touches the correct picture etc. Therefore when the corresponding word is called out by the teacher, the link between the word and its picture is being formed for a longer time. This is being reinforced by concentration and excitement from the game.

2.2 Small picture flash cards

(Inspired by Jane Bell 2006: 100 Happy Families)

Food – a card game

Activity: Vocabulary practice, listening and speaking, group game.

Aim: To review and practice vocabulary regarding food, to practice the verb ‘to have got’ in questions and short answers, or the phrase ‘can you pass me, please’

Level: Beginners, elementary

Aids: A set of cards per group (appendix 6)

Before the procedure:

Before playing the game, the teacher should present or review the key vocabulary with children, especially pronunciation, and perhaps provide them with the structures they will use in the game. He or she might display these as prompts on the board, together with useful phrases for playing the game, such as “It’s your turn”, “shuffle the cards” etc. in order for students to be able to use English also as a communication tool outside the game. At this point the teacher should explain the rules and then distribute the cards among few students and demonstrate how the questions are asked and how the game is played.

Procedure:

Every group of three to six pupils gets a set of cards (appendix 6). A group of six will play with all cards, whereas a group of three might get only three quartets of the same-colour-cards. The cards are shuffled and distributed equally among all members of the group. The goal of the game is to get all four cards belonging to the same group of hyponyms, which have the same colour (e.g. all fruit cards). The first one to manage this wins the game. The first player asks any player in the group for a card he or she needs. If the asked player has the card, he or she must give it to the first player and gets one card back in exchange. The first player then asks another player for another card. If the asked player does not have the required card, there is no exchange and it is the other

players' (the asked ones) turn to ask somebody else for a card. The game can continue until everybody gets their sets of cards. When exchanging the cards, students practice questions such as "Have you got carrots, please?" or "Can I have some cheese, please?" or possibly "Can you pass me/give me some tomatoes?"

Follow-up

A possible additional activity might be for pupils to write as many words for each group of hyponyms as they can.

Evaluation and Analysis:

This game illustrates the way of using 'small picture flash cards' in group work. Aside from the two forms, in which a piece of target vocabulary is displayed within a card (a picture and the corresponding written word), pupils can also see its hypernym (i.e. a name of the group the word belongs to) and three co-hyponyms (i.e. words belonging into the same group). This helps pupils to categorize the vocabulary, which is likely to have a positive impact on remembering the words. Furthermore, every word, being displayed on four different cards, when heard in a question is immediately linked with its visible counterpart, often by all participants. If not, it is at least being searched for among other pictures, which again helps students to memorize it. On top of that, every player must often use a particular word several times before he gets the desired card. In order to accomplish the task, not only words are acquired but also structure is being practiced, specifically questions and short answers.

Pupils usually like this game. Even the weaker ones can participate, as the meaning of all included vocabulary is clarified by the pictures and with structures prompted on the board or help of the stronger classmates, they are able to form a question and accomplish the task. Moreover, everybody can win, since this is not conditioned by knowledge nor language abilities, yet depends more or less on good luck. The teacher should circulate among the groups and observe the language used as well as remind pupils to speak English only, which is usually necessary, since these naturally tend to switch to their mother tongue.

2.3. Drawing

Drawing a monster

(Inspired by Fiona Miller 2002: photocopiable page 3; and by Jill Hadfield and Charles Hadfield 2002)

Activity: Vocabulary practice, listening, speaking and drawing; pair work

Aim: To practice vocabulary for parts of the body and their features; to review numbers, colours and shape; to practice the verbs 'to be' and 'to have'

Level: Beginners, Elementary

Aids: Coloured pencils, paper, imagination and creativity; potentially two posters of monsters for the second variation of the activity.

Procedure:

After reviewing the key vocabulary, pupils draw a monster the teacher describes. While doing so, the teacher might draw it him or herself on the hidden part of the board for following feedback or might as well invite a student to do that.

Now pupils know how to describe a monster and have some tips how it can look like. They work in pairs. They make up and draw their own monster and label all parts of its body or write a simple description. They must not show their pictures to anybody. They can also name the monster and list its 'personal details' or add some extra information, such as its favourite colour, the food it eats etc. Then they work in pairs, one of them describes his or her monster, while the partner draws it according to the description; then they swap the roles. Afterwards they can talk or ask each other about the extra information on their monsters and write the answers down.

Variations:

There are plenty of possibilities how to alter this activity. If the teacher wants to have better control of the target language, it is possible to prepare two posters with different monsters and hang one of them on the front wall and the second one on the back wall of the classroom. In that case one pupil from each pair faces a different picture than the other pupil. The procedure is similar; they take turns in describing the pictures they see while their partner follows the description and draws it.

This variety is not as time consuming as the original one, since the children do not “waste” time on drawing. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the teacher has better control of language, since he can influence it by drawing exactly what needs to be practiced on the posters. On the other hand, the element of creativity and excitement is absent.

(This variation adopted from Hadfield, Simple Speaking activities)

The same activity can be used to practice different vocabulary and target language, e.g. rooms in the house and furniture or/and accessories together with prepositions of place and the phrase ‘there is/are’ or rooms in the house and family members together with the present continuous etc.

Evaluation and analysis:

This activity demonstrates the usefulness of drawing as a tool in practicing not only vocabulary but also other aspects of the language, such as listening, speaking or structure. Being organized as pair-work, the activity provides an opportunity for many students to speak simultaneously, which results in a more effective usage of time in the lesson and thus helps to improve the often difficult situation of limited possibilities for an individual to speak in the class.

Pupils are allowed to unleash their fantasy and creativity and are motivated to make up the most original picture and subsequently are happy to share what they have drawn. This, while giving them an opportunity to use the language in a purposeful way, also functions as an element which has a great influence on remembering the target language. This is further reinforced by the longer time the children spend with drawing, as a longer period brings more opportunities to use and remember the desired words.

The activity of drawing also offers pupils a chance to speak: they can make comments on each other’s picture, ask questions about details (e.g. why has it got four hands, can your monster speak etc.). The teacher should encourage them to do so.

This activity usually works very well in the class, since especially younger students love drawing as well as enjoy practicing the language in the safe environment of pair-work. A possible imperfection might lie in the lack of the teachers’ ability to supervise and help with the language used by all speaking pupils at once. The teacher’s

role would be to circulate and not only offer help and advice when needed but also to mark down his or her observations on pupils' language and mistakes made for latter feedback. Furthermore, the teacher should guide pupils not to spend too much time on drawing their monsters and help them rather direct their effort on subsequent speaking.

2.4. Compiled pictures

In town

(Inspired by Susan Kay 1997: Activity 14)

Activity: Vocabulary practice, listening and speaking, information gap; pair work

Aim: To practice prepositions of place, to review vocabulary of places in town and potentially to practice directions.

Function: Working with a town map, specifying location, potentially giving directions

Level: Elementary

Aids: Picture of a town map – two versions with different information gaps - one copy of both versions per a pair (appendix 7)

Before procedure:

Prepositions of place need to be presented or reviewed as well as names of buildings and places in town and potentially vocabulary for giving directions. Questions and answers needed for the exercise should be reviewed and perhaps displayed on the board. The teacher might demonstrate this activity to the whole class by drawing a simple map on the board and asking for the positions of (or directions to) particular buildings. It is generally recommended to first explain the activity and then distribute the worksheets.

Procedure:

Each student in a pair gets a different copy of the map. They must not show their copies to each other. Their task is to find and mark the places from their lists in their

maps. They take turns and ask each other questions. Their partner describes the locations in relations to the surrounding buildings. For more advanced students, it is possible to mark a place in their maps where they 'stand'. Their task then is to give directions to given places.

Possible follow-up:

The students might draw simple maps of a segment of their hometown (or a town they know) and write a description. They can write either just very simply about the location of individual buildings or more advanced or skilled students might include more information about the town.

Evaluation and analysis:

This activity demonstrates acquiring or revision of vocabulary within a speaking practice combined with the use of pictures.

The target vocabulary is used in a meaningful way not only by being put into context but moreover by being applied for a specific purpose, in this case to carry out the task of filling the gap of missing information. Vocabulary being used in this way is more likely to be retained.

This is again reinforced by the visual element; in this case it is a compiled picture of a map where the meaning of spatial prepositions is apparently manifested as well as the names of buildings are illustrated by individual pictures.

In the first variation of the activity (appendix 7.1), to be able to give out the required information, pupils must evoke the names of the buildings from those pictures. Furthermore, if needed, the legend is there to help them. Nevertheless, even if using the legend, some effort must be made in order to express oneself. This again should support the ability to remember the target vocabulary. On the other hand, since this process leading to providing the information might be rather lengthy, the fluency of speaking might suffer.

In the second variation of the activity (appendix 7.2.), where the names of the buildings are provided directly within the map with pictures functioning here only as a visual support, communication might flow more fluently. In this case, yet, the effort for establishing the meaning of the words is absent and hence the impact on remembering the words might be weaker.

On the other hand, this should be balanced by the fact that students must make an effort again to be able to give the information, only this time to find out what word is actually required, not being given directly but only in the form of hints. This variation is suitable for more advanced or skilled students.

This activity usually works quite well in the class, most of pupils like pair work as well as the information gap type of activity. The teacher might give a support or advice when needed, circulating, observing the language and marking down possible improvements for later feedback. Sometimes it is necessary to remind pupils to speak English only and prevent them from looking into their partners' worksheets.

2.5. Charts with vocabulary webs

What is in the house?

Activity: organizing a vocabulary set into a semantic map

Aim: To review the names of rooms in the house, to learn the names of furniture or things which might be found in particular rooms, possibly to practice the phrase 'there is/there are' and the prepositions of place

Level: Elementary

Aids: board, pictures of rooms in the house, dictionaries

Before procedure:

The teacher prepares the board before the lesson. He or she writes the word 'house' in the middle of the board. There might be a circle or a square drawn around the word, as it will function as the center for a semantic map. The teacher draws several lines from the word out into all directions (one for every room in the house).

Pupils are divided into pairs or groups of three. They are given the time limit of five minutes to brainstorm as many names of furniture (and perhaps accessories in the house) as they can think of. They are allowed to use dictionaries, they compete with other groups about who will make a longer list of items.

Procedure:

The teacher elicits names of individual rooms from pupils. He or she might prompt by pictures of the rooms and by asking questions such as “Where do you usually have breakfast? Where do you usually sleep? etc.” He or she writes the names of rooms in the prepared schema on the board. The words on the board may be supplemented by the pictures, if there is enough space on the board. When all names of rooms are written on the board, pupils are asked to copy the diagram into their notebooks. (Alternatively they might be provided with a larger sheet of paper per group.) They are advised to draw it big enough and leave space around the individual rooms for subsequent adding more things.

Students are asked to place the things they have brainstormed into the schema; each item is matched to the room it belongs to. It is advisable to set a time limit for this task again.

Pairs of students or representatives of each group are asked to come to the board one after another and write five items they have chosen from their schema into the ‘web’ on the board. Weaker pupils go first, since there is a greater possibility that the stronger ones will still have items to add even when coming as the last ones. While writing the items on the board, pupils are encouraged to comment on what they are writing, e.g.: “The fridge is usually in the kitchen. There is a rug in the middle of the bedroom” depending on the level of pupils and the structure the teacher wants them to practice. When the ‘web’ on the board is complete, the teacher might drill pronunciation of the words with pupils. Then pupils are asked to copy several words of their choice from the board to their schemas.

Options for follow-up activities:

If students have used larger sheets of papers, there is a possibility of following-up with supplementing the sheets with pictures; this can be done as homework or perhaps in a lesson of art. Subsequently, actual picture of the house might be drawn on the basis of this semantic map with pictures of individual items of furniture placed in the rooms. This would be done as group-work. Furthermore, the description of the house might be written. The picture might be displayed in the classroom and moreover used for speaking activity when reviewing later on.

Evaluation and analysis

This activity displays a possible use of a semantic map in the lesson. Its main advantage lies in its organized structure – by working with the diagram with explicitly illustrated word relations for a longer period of time, as is required in this activity, a part of students' mental lexicon becomes neatly organized and clear. Pupils will also repeat the words several times and use them in a sentence, which counts as a plus: spaced repeating helps retaining the target vocabulary. Learners are allowed certain autonomy here, as the choice of words is up to them. The sense of autonomy might have a positive impact on the memorized words too, since students' motivation is aroused (they feel useful, the teacher recognizes their effort etc.). Furthermore, the lesson results in the target vocabulary stored in pupils' notebooks, which can be exploited in following lessons.

This type of lesson lacks the fun element, as no games, puzzles or motion activities are included. Therefore the teacher might want to add this element for example by playing some kind of a vocabulary revision game at the end of the activity, which goes especially for passive classes. It will also be important to keep students interested in the topic, perhaps by asking them questions about their favourite things in a room or about how often they use them etc.

On the whole, this activity is great for organizing, learning and reviewing vocabulary especially with spirited pupils.

Practical part summary – insights

In this part of my thesis, I strived to demonstrate particular usages of the individual types of pictures listed in chapter 3. of the theoretical part as well as to answer the following questions: *What are pictures actually used for? Is there a benefit in using pictures? If yes, what? What causes that vocabulary is better remembered? Is it enough to use pictures only or are they better combined with other aspects? Why?* These questions are one way or another repeatedly answered in each chapter of this part. In general, the following could be concluded:

Pictures do have an impact on students' motivation and interest. They are excellent tools for the demonstration of the meaning, especially regarding particular things. They work better (understand have a greater effect on words retaining) if used meaningfully

(for example along with an information gap activity). This effect is further amplified if they are combined with other tools such as songs or sense relations. This is especially true for competitions and puzzles. The distinctiveness of pictures also makes them more memorable, e.g. when the pictures are personified (drawn by students themselves or by the teacher), funny or somehow catchy. Let me observe here that the statements mentioned above are in accordance with the theories explained in the theoretical part. From my own experience I would like to reflect the fact that preparation for some lessons with pictures may be time consuming for a beginning teacher.

CONCLUSION

The main goal of this thesis was to show how pictures can be put to use in English classes in a few ways and to answer the questions how and why this works and in what way exactly they help the learner remember the words he or she studies. For this purpose, I divided this thesis into the theoretical and practical part.

The theoretical part inclines towards the general, although some examples are of course mentioned. It deals with some (typically not so diverse) points of view on the topic of vocabulary properties and its effective teaching using pictures as well as other aids. It furthermore sorts several aspects of the rather broad word 'picture' and examines some of their properties.

The practical part then suggests concrete uses for these aspects, analyses and evaluates them and strives to put them into context with theory.

I am convinced that I have managed to attain the set goal: many answers are given in the analyses of the activities and the lesson plan in the practical part, others are explained in theory. These two are often intertwined in such way that the answer is explained in theory, put to use in the corresponding activity and consequently analysed, thus proving the theory.

As a positive side effect of this process, this thesis may function as a guide to some, possibly not so experienced, teachers, guiding them through vocabulary teaching and providing particular aid in the form of the lesson plan and activities included in the practical part.

As to the literature used, I decided to study primarily Andrew Wright, Scott Thornbury, Michael McCarthy, Jeremy Harmer and Penny Ur, as they are respected specialists in the field and have the necessary experience and education. I found many of their ideas interesting as well as very true and for that reason decided to quote or paraphrase them.

Writing this thesis was beneficial to me in several ways. Being a teacher myself, I gained a better insight into the matter, got familiar with many interesting points of view and facts, learned how to further optimise the process of teaching vocabulary using pictures and was forced to reconsider and improve my own teaching practices. I do hope the same will go for the reader.

RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá využitím obrázků při výuce slovní zásoby v hodinách angličtiny a soustřeďuje se na žáky prvního stupně základních škol. V první, teoretické, části jsou ve třech kapitolách shrnuty zásadní poznatky týkající se slovní zásoby jako takové, její výuky a využití obrázků při výuce. Právě poslední kapitola člení obrázky do několika kategorií dle jejich využití, původu a účelu. Druhá, praktická, část pak obsahuje několik aktivit, kde jsou jednotlivé kategorie využity v praxi. Její součástí je také ukázkový plán výuky na jednu vyučovací hodinu. Především v analýzách jednotlivých aktivit, ale i mimo ně, jsou zodpovězeny zásadní otázky ohledně tématu této práce: Jak se obrázky používají, jaký je jejich vliv na zapamatování si cílové slovní zásoby, jaký faktor způsobuje, že si studenti slovíčka snáze zapamatují a zda stačí využívat obrázky jako takové či je lépe je kombinovat s jinými metodami a nástroji. Díky materiálům obsaženým v příloze lze praktickou část okamžitě využít k jako učebního materiálu.

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Appendices