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Learning and Testing Vocabulary

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Studentka se ve své bakalářské práci bude zabývat využitím informačních technologií ve výuce anglické slovní zásoby s důrazem na internetové interaktivní servery zaměřující se na výuku školní i individuální. V teoretické části nejprve bude definovat klíčové koncepty spojené s učním a vyučováním slovní zásoby. Poté analyzuje možnosti využití online stránek a aplikací v procesu rozvoje slovní zásoby studentů. V praktické části potom zhodnotí vybrané webové stránky na základě principů definovaných v teoretické části a prezentuje výsledky výzkumného šetření, kde se pomocí dotazníků zaměří na preference uživatelů těchto stránek, jejich studijní návyky a motivaci k jejich využívání.

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis deals with learning vocabulary. It also discusses written types of vocabulary tests with the focus on doing tests on websites created for learning English.

The first part is theoretical and it contains three chapters. The first chapter is aimed at English language from the lexical point of view. It gives basic information about vocabulary, such as definition of a word, word building and relations among words. Learning vocabulary is the second chapter which discusses motivation, process of learning a word, learning styles, the theory of multiple intelligences, how many words to learn and remembering words. The last chapter focuses on testing vocabulary. Characterization of vocabulary tests along with some examples is mentioned there. The last chapter also places a great emphasis on advantages connected to doing tests on websites that are created for learning English.

The other part is practical. This part contains two sections. The first one analyses a chosen website with the focus on vocabulary tests according to the theoretical part. The other part includes a questionnaire in order to find out to what extent students make use of advantages connected to doing tests on the particular website.

Key words:

vocabulary, learning, testing, vocabulary tests

Souhrn

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá učením slovní zásoby. Pojednává také o písemné formě testování slovní zásoby se zaměřením na testy na webových stránkách, které jsou vytvořeny pro učení se anglického jazyka.

První část je teoretická a obsahuje tři kapitoly. Úvodní kapitola je zaměřená na anglický jazyk z lexikálního hlediska. Informuje o samotné slovní zásobě jako je definice slova, stavba slova a jaké existují vztahy mezi slovy. Další kapitola pojednává o učení se slovní zásoby. Zabývá se otázkou motivace, popisuje proces naučení se slova a různé učební styly, uvádí pojem mnohočetné inteligence, pojednává o počtu slov k naučení a vysvětluje, jakým způsobem jsou slova zapamatována. Poslední kapitola je zaměřena na testování slovní zásoby. Tato kapitola obsahuje klasifikaci testů na slovní zásobu společně s uvedenými příklady určitých testů. Zdůrazňuje také výhody spojené s testováním slovní zásoby na webových stránkách, které jsou vytvořeny pro učení se anglického jazyka.

Praktická část nejdříve obsahuje popis vybraných webových stránek se zaměřením na testy slovní zásoby podle teoretické části. Praktická část dále obsahuje dotazník, jehož úkolem je zjistit do jaké míry studenti využívají výhod spojených s testováním slovní zásoby na vybraných webových stránkách.

Klíčová slova:

slovní zásoba, učení, testování, testy slovní zásoby

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THEORETICAL PART

Introduction

This work concerns learning and testing vocabulary on specific vocabulary tests. Learning vocabulary, one of the subskills, is the core of the language. “If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh.” (Harmer 246) There is no doubt that learning vocabulary is a key factor in learning a language. Nowadays – in the age of technology – websites that teach English can be the best solution to students’ needs since they provide a wide range of exercises for learning as well as testing new words. The aim of this bachelor thesis is to find out to what extent students make use of advantages connected to testing on a chosen website. A description of this website according to the theoretical part is also included.

The work is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part contains three chapters. The first one describes the definition and the importance of vocabulary. It also includes a chapter about word building. Moreover, words and their relations are presented there. Next chapter informs about the process of learning vocabulary. This chapter deals with the question of motivation and describes the process of learning a word. Learning styles, the theory of multiple intelligences, a number of words to learn as well as the explanation of how words are remembered are other constituents of this part. Lastly, the final chapter of the theoretical part concerns testing vocabulary. A general division of vocabulary tests and detailed descriptions of some vocabulary tests are outlined there. Furthermore, this chapter focuses on testing vocabulary with the help of the Internet, trying to emphasize advantages of testing vocabulary via websites created for learning English.

The practical part first describes a chosen website according to the theoretical part such as what types of vocabulary tests appear there. This part also investigates if there are any advantages connected to doing tests on this website. Furthermore, this part

contains a questionnaire. The analysis of the research should show the extent of making use of the advantages connected to doing tests on the particular website.

1. Vocabulary

Words are the essential parts of every language. They are not just a few letters connected together but they express certain ideas. Words present meanings of particular things, certain concepts. “Lexis is a powerful carrier of meaning.” (Scrivener 228) Words are simply substitutes of both abstract and specific thoughts and ideas. When one learns a foreign language, words are an unavoidable and a necessary part of learning. The statement that vocabulary is of high importance is supported many experts on vocabulary. As Morgan and Rinvoluceri claim “any learner of a foreign language knows only too well, words are essential, and the lack of them leads to feelings of insecurity.” (Morgan-Rinvoluceri 3) McCarthy stresses the importance of vocabulary this way

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. (McCarthy introduction)

In short, vocabulary is a crucial part when learning a language, thus remarkable attention should be paid to it.

1.1 Definition of a word

Words are necessary part of learning English, however, it is not always easy to define what a word is. For example *easy-going* is only one word or two words connected together with a hyphen? Similarly, *a lot of* has only one specific meaning but is it composed of three words or parts? Next, this can be same for collocations like *couch potato*. Two different words create one specific meaning. So how to define what a word is? McCarthy claims that “a word must consist of at least one potentially freestanding morpheme.” (McCarthy 3) Scrivener adds the explanation of the term – vocabulary as words that “are regularly found together with a fixed meaning.” (Scrivener 74) However, Thornbury states that “the decision as to what counts as a word

might seem rather academic.” (Thornbury 3) Although it is not always clear what a single word is, we can divide words into two main groups according to their meanings. Words like *and, so, but, or* can link other words while words like *chair, woman, nice* have a concrete meaning of things that you can easily imagine. Thus *and, so, but, or* are grammatical words (or function words) and they are generally prepositions, conjunctions, determiners and pronouns. On the other hand, there are content words, those that carry a high information load. Content words are usually nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. (Thornbury 4) Knowing a word means not only uttering, writing and using it correctly but also knowing other meanings of the word as well as its morphological forms. Thus learning words is a process which contains many aspects.

1.2 Word Building

When learning a vocabulary, a process of building words can be very useful. To know a word properly, one should know how the word is built. McCarthy specifies two different purposes of word-formation principles. Firstly, similarly to grammar, it is a system of rules that can make the process of describing words easier. Secondly, students can experiment with words for example when creating ‘their own’ words. (McCarthy 5) Moreover, word building can be very important when learners meet new words for the first time and they do not know what the words should substitute. They can easily guess the meaning of the particular words according to the rules of word building. Almost every word can be separated into smaller parts – morphemes. If we take the word *watching*, we can see the independent word *watch* and its suffix *-ing*. In this case, *watch* can stand alone, still making sense, however, alone *-ing* does not mean anything. Therefore, morphemes are further divided into free morphemes, like *watch*, or bound morphemes, like *ing*. Morphemes can be suffixes, roots or prefixes. For example the word *uncountable*, where *un* is a prefix, *count* is a root and *able* is a suffix. There are some basic ways to build a word in English – affixation, compounding, conversion and shortening.

1.2.1 Affixation

The process of adding suffixes and prefixes to a root is called affixation. Adding suffixes to a root can be further divided into inflexion and derivation. Inflexion changes words grammatically, whereas derivation creates new meanings. For example if we want to express past tense to the word *cook* – *cooked*, it is not a different meaning of the word but only a grammatical function has changed. However, if we append the suffix – *er*, we change the meaning of the word, therefore it is a derivation. Similarly, the adjective *lonely* and the noun *loneliness* carry the same meanings but they differ in word classes. For instance, the word *unbelievable* is compounded of three small parts. Does it mean that every part creates a new word?

Research suggests that the mind groups these different forms of the same word together. Therefore, rather than talk about the number of individual words a person knows, it makes more sense to talk about the number of word families. (Thornbury 5)

1.2.2 Compounding

Apart from affixation, another way of forming new words is compounding. This type of word building can come in handy when learners cannot remember a particular word. They can supply the forgotten word by the help of compounding. We talk about this formation when two or more independent words are joined together, as in the case of *paperback*, *dishwasher*, *wildflower*. There are more spelling variations possible. “The fact that many compounds started life as two separate words is evident from their variant spelling. Thus: *dish washer*, *dish-washer*, *dishwasher*.” (Thornbury 5)

1.2.3 Conversion

When an item does not change its form but can be used in a different part of speech we speak about conversion. For example, *We've just had a lovely swim.* (noun) versus *I can't swim very well.* (verb) (Gairns-Redman 48)

1.2.4 Shortening

Shortening includes further ways of word building like clipping, abbreviations, acronyms and blending. Clipping is a way of creating new short words from longer ones, e.g. *influenza – flu, refrigerator – fridge, telephone – phone.* Abbreviations like *VIP, CIA* and acronyms like *NATO, UNESCO* rank among type of formation which also makes use of shortening. The basic difference between abbreviation and acronym concerns pronunciation. Abbreviation is read after letters whereas the other one is read as a whole word. Next type of shortening is blending. When two words are mixed together, a blend is created, e.g. *telebanking, guesstimate, stagflation.*

To summarize word building, this process can be highly made use of when intentionally learning new vocabulary. Putting together words with the same or similar formation can be a key to learn vocabulary in an organizational way. Moreover, word building can help learners when guessing meanings of unknown words. Last but not least, McCarthy sees another usage “creative word-formation can also be seen as a communicative strategy, for supplying formations when the right word cannot be found.” (McCarthy 5)

1.3 Words and Their Relations

Relationships between words can also be highly effective when learning vocabulary. McCarthy clearly explains a definition of relationships between items this way

how they are related to one another in terms of their meaning; how similar or how different they are to one another; how they may or may not substitute for one another, and so on. (McCarthy 15, 16)

He added a division of these relationships – paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations.

Paradigmatic concerned with how each word in a text reflects a *choice* from a number of possible words. Often thought of as the ‘vertical’ axis of text. Syntagmatic concerned with how words *combine* to form text. Often thought of as the ‘horizontal’ axis of text. (McCarthy 159)

Paradigmatic relations which are also called sense relations include synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, polysemes and homonyms. Collocations, idioms, and phrasal verbs belong to the other type of relations between words – syntagmatic relations.

1.4.1 Synonyms

Synonyms are two or more words that share a similar or seldom the same meaning. Thus *good-looking, pretty, handsome* are all synonyms with the common meaning of *not attractive*. But they still cannot be substituted for one another. We can say *a pretty woman* but not *a pretty man*. Although we can say *a good-looking man* and *a handsome man*, are these two synonyms totally the same? “All the evidence suggests that it would be unwise to declare any two items to be exact synonyms.” (McCarthy 16) Collocations with other words can be decisive. As McCarthy provides an example with a sentence – *The baby began/started to cry as soon as they had left*. Both verbs are appropriate here. But next two sentences cannot exchange the verbs – *I couldn’t start my car; the battery was flat* in the comparison with *Before the world begins, only God existed*. Native speakers would not simply accept it. He also mentions other aspects that should be taken into consideration when substituting synonyms like syntactic behaviours, contexts and situations, if words are archaic or modern and geographical distributions.

This type of evidence suggests that synonymy in an absolute sense has no validity in vocabulary study, and yet there is no doubt that it has great psychological validity for the majority of language learners, learning and storing words as out-of-context synonyms could be a useful organizing principle. (McCarthy 17)

1.4.2 Antonyms

Antonyms express opposite meanings of words. Similarly with synonyms, oppositeness is quite troublesome. According to Gairns and Redman, there are several kinds of different forms – *complementarity*, *converseness*, *multiple taxonomy* and *gradable autonomy*. Firstly, *complementaries* are antonyms which truly represent oppositeness and they cannot be graded, for example *true/false*, *dead/alive*, *male/female*. Secondly, *converses* whose relationship between the pairs is reciprocal e.g. *wife/husband*, *above/below*, *brother/sister*. Family and social relations, time relations and space relations provide many examples of converses. Thirdly, *multiple taxonomies* are sets of semantic systems which can be further divided into closed or open-ended systems. Closed systems are those which have a strictly limited number whereas open systems cover a much wider field, often an indeterminate number. Typical examples of closed systems are days of the week, seasons or months of the year. Open-ended systems are e.g. *flowers: lily, daffodil, pansy, geranium*, etc. Fourthly, *gradable antonyms* are mostly opposites of adjectives e.g. *small/big, short/long, old/new*. (Gairns-Redman 25-28)

1.4.3 Hyponyms

Hyponyms represent members of a particular class and they are at the same time organized into hierarchical tree type diagrams with a superior concept called superordinate word. For example *flower* is the superordinate term of these hyponyms *lily, rose, tulips*. *Plant* can be a superordinate term of *flower*, different types of roses

would be hyponyms of *rose* and that is the way the hierarchy enlarges. These relations of sameness, oppositeness and inclusion can significantly help to clarify the language system of vocabulary.

The organizing *principles* are universal, and taxonomy-like relations will be found in all languages; thus language teaching might hope to encourage transfer of knowledge of patterns of organization to the L2 learning context. (McCarthy 20)

1.4.4 Polysemes

Polysemes are words that have many but closely related meanings. Thornbury provides an example with a word *hold* in sentences. “I *held* the picture up to the light. I was *held* overnight in a cell. You need to *hold* a work permit. These books *hold* the bed up.” All the words *hold* in these sentences have multiple but related meanings. (Thornbury 8)

1.4.5 Homonyms

Homonyms like polysemes have many different meanings, still sharing the same form, but the words are not closely related. Thornbury proves this on these sentences “She had long *fair* hair. My pig won first prize at Skipton *Fair*.” (Thornbury 8)

1.4.6 Collocation

Collocation is two or more words that are often used together e.g. we can say *a big man* but not *a major man*. The reason for not using *a major man* is of no acceptable collocation between the adjective *big* and the noun *man*. McCarthy highlights the importance of collocations in a very nice way. “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.” (McCarthy 12) Inappropriate using of collocations can lead to misunderstanding. Although collocations can be very problematic, they are very significant when learning since English is full of collocational pairs.

1.4.7 Multi-words Units

Both idioms and phrasal verbs belong to one group called *multi-words units* or *lexical chunks*. These units function as a meaningful unit, still not forming compounds e.g. *look after*. According to Thornbury, chunks vary in terms of how fixed and idiomatic they are. He gives an example with a multi-word unit *out of the blue* that is fixed and idiomatic, which means that its meaning is not easily recoverable from its individual components. (Thornbury 6) Despite a number of words in one multi-word unit, it should be treated as a single lexical item.

An idiom contains words that form a meaning together but the idiom itself cannot be understood of its parts as in the case of *under the weather*.

The other feature of idiom is that they are often syntactically restricted e.g. someone can have a ‘chip on their shoulder’, but not a ‘shoulder with a chip’; and sometimes grammatically restricted e.g. you can have a ‘white elephant’, but the adjective cannot take the comparative form and become a ‘whiter elephant’. (Gairns-Redman 35, 36)

Students should simply learn idioms like other single semantic units in order to avoid misinterpretation when for instance translating word after word.

Phrasal verbs are parts of multi-word verbs that consist of a verb and another word or words. They are quite difficult for students to learn since many phrasal verbs do not have only one meaning. Their meaning can be either literal e.g. *Sit down* or non-literal e.g. *John always gets away with cheating in exams*. Literal meaning helps students to understand the meaning of phrasal verbs while non-literal ones can

contribute to misapprehension. Gairns and Redman describe three types of multi-word verbs in their book *Working with Words*. Firstly, a verb together with a preposition like *look into, get over*. Secondly, a verb with an adverbial participle like *break down, call off*. Thirdly, a combination of two previous types – a verb with both adverbial participle and preposition like *put up with*. What is more, multi-word verbs are difficult from the grammatical point of view since students need to know whether the verbs are prepositional or phrasal. The possibility of separation is in phrasal verbs e.g. *take off your hat – take it off. Take your hat off – but not take off it*. But prepositional verbs do not have this possibility e.g. *look after the children – look after them*. (Gairns-Redman 33, 34) What is more, students should be aware of which phrasal verb is formal or informal to avoid inappropriate style in some situations. Under these circumstances, one-word equivalents instead of informal phrasal verbs are preferred. Phrasal verbs are very common, especially in spoken English. That is why students should certainly include them when learning English.

To conclude, this chapter has showed what a word is as well as how various functions words can have. It has also informed about many ways of forming words. In addition, words can stand on their own or they can co-occur with other words and form units. Furthermore, words can share different meanings although they may look same. All these facts can help learners when learning vocabulary.

2. Learning Vocabulary

2.1 Motivation

Motivation is a very important part when anybody learns anything. It is the engine that leads students forward. According to Jeremy Harmer, motivation can be divided into two main types. The first type is extrinsic motivation, which means that students learn in order to have good marks, to be praised or to have another reward from outside. Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, as the title suggests, is an internal desire to learn. Students themselves feel the necessity to learn. Moreover, it could give them a

downright pleasure. (Harmer 15) Scrivener adds that either in extrinsic or intrinsic motivation, students' "strength of their motivation will be a factor in determining how seriously they approach the work, how much time they set aside for it, how hard they push themselves, etc." (Scrivener 63) There is no doubt that the intrinsic type of motivation is better, especially for learning a language, because studying at school is just not enough to master the language. It would be ideal if students were both curious and eager to know more about English so that they devote their spare time to improve their knowledge. Allen considers motivation with regard to students' level of English. She states that beginners are usually interested in the process of learning a new language and they feel happy when they are able to understand a few words since it is something new for them. Nevertheless, this process is not new for students of the intermediate level. Their endeavour does not have to bring so much satisfaction, moreover, they have already known about some difficulties concerning learning the language. Therefore students can feel discouraged. Discouragement can be immediately reduced by students' success. Students can feel successful when they prove themselves the ability to do something with the words they have known so far. Hence, it is satisfaction that plays a big role in supporting motivation. (Allen 67)

2.2 Process of Learning a Word

The ability of acquiring words is a crucial and very important sub-skill when learning a language. Many factors influence this process. Learners usually have some feelings towards words. Not only spelling of a word, but also sounds, various associations and shapes can make this process easier or even more difficult. John Morgan compares this process to the way people sift other people and faces. It is quite a mysterious way of evaluation where sympathy probably plays the biggest role. (Morgan-Rivoluceri 5)

Process of learning a word can be easily described in children. When children learn to speak, they use labelling. They are able to label specific things that their parents

or whoever taught them. If parents show an apple to their child, the child is able to repeat the word after his/her parents and remember it. Although children can label some things, it is not enough. Children should also know that there is a superordinate term like fruit. “In other words, acquiring a vocabulary requires not only labelling but categorizing skills.” (Thornbury 18) Children should know that the words like *apple*, *banana* and *orange* are subordinate terms of fruit. Thornbury calls this as a process of network building. Learning a second language is similar to a process in which children learn their native language. “Learning a second language involves both learning a new conceptual system, and constructing a new vocabulary network – a second mental lexicon.” (Thornbury 18) This network building can be used when learning a foreign language as a very helpful technique to enhance one’s vocabulary.

2.3 Learning Styles

Students differ in their learning styles. There are many individual differences among students. Some students for example prefer learning alone whereas others like co-operation. Students’ speed when learning, solving problems, making notes are just a few examples of differentiations. Scrivener mentions that humans have different sensory preferences – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. (Scrivener 64) Knowing which approach works best can help students considerably. Firstly, visual learners who need to see the things they are learning. Therefore, visual displays including pictures, various demonstrations, written texts, etc. contribute to improving the learning process. Secondly, there are auditory learners who easily learn through hearing. In this case, students should read texts loudly and participate in discussions, and make use of other aids aimed at listening. The third approach is a kinaesthetic type of learner who learns best when moving. Touching the world around as well as experiencing things is the best way for such a student.

To summarize this subchapter, learning styles are not same in all students. Every student is individual, thus needs various ways of learning.

2.4 The Theory of Multiple Intelligences

This term was first introduced by Howard Gardner, the famous psychologist. To understand what it means, the term – intelligence should be first explained. “Intelligence is a biological and psychological potential to solve problems and/or create products that are valued in one or more cultural contexts.” (Gardner online) Scrivener mentions that

Gardner has suggested that people could have seven ‘intelligences’ (maybe more!): linguistic, visual, musical, logical/mathematical, bodily/feeling, interpersonal (contact with other people) and intrapersonal (understanding oneself). (Scrivener 64)

Later on, Gardner added naturalist intelligence and speculated about the next, existential intelligence. He emphasized that although all people have these intelligences, two people cannot possess the identical profile of intelligences since each person experiences individual life situations, in addition, they want to differ from each other. Gardener also explains that a person could be more talented in some areas of intelligence than in others. Because of many myths of the multiple intelligences theory, such as confusing learning styles with multiple intelligences, Gardner continued in explaining this theory. He added that “any serious application of MI ideas should entail at least two components:”

1. An attempt to individuate education as much as possible. The advent of personal computers should make this goal much easier to attain.
2. A commitment to convey important ideas and concepts in a number of different formats. This activation of multiple intelligences holds promise of reaching many more students and also demonstrating what it means to understand a topic thoroughly and deeply. (Gardner online)

To summarize this chapter, Gardener’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences proves that differences among individual students exist. Learning and teaching should not be same for all students but multiple approaches should be included.

2.5 How Many Words to Learn

There is not a specific number of words that a student should know. It is very individual and it depends on a specific learner's needs. If a student's aim is to fully understand foreign films, newspapers, etc., his/her extent of vocabulary will be larger than those who want to make themselves understood in a foreign language. "One figure that is often quoted is 2,000. This is around the number of words that most native speakers use in their daily conversation." (Thornbury 21) Gairns and Redman mention that although students are able to recognize and comprehend a lot of words in contexts, not every word is appropriately used in speaking or writing. They call this vocabulary *passive*. It takes a longer period of time to recall these words and when they are not used, they can completely disappear. On the contrary, they write that vocabulary that is revised repeatedly becomes *active*. Recalling these words take a short period of time. (Gairns- Redman 64, 65) The number of passive vocabulary far exceeds active vocabulary. The same is true for our native language.

An educated speaker is able to 'understand' between 45,000 and 60,000 items, although no native speaker would pretend that his productive vocabulary would approach this figure. (Gairns-Redman 65)

The process of changing passive vocabulary into active is gradual. One has to read and hear a word many times so as the word belongs to active vocabulary. (Gairns-Redman 65)

To sum up, the number as well as the choice of words to learn depends on an individual learner's needs as well as on their aims in the target language.

2.6 How Words Are Remembered

Storing information in memory, in other words – remembering, is a key process when acquiring new words. Lexical relationships between words and other linguistic

consideration such as derivation were dealt in the first chapter. Now we have a look at how this data is organized and stored in a brain. In a comparison with the learning grammar, learning vocabulary does not have any rules, so students must just accumulate lexemes. According to Gairns and Redman, we store lexemes into two basic memories. The first type of memory which is limited in capacity is called *short term memory*. Learners need to work much harder to transfer information into the other type of memory – *long term memory*. Repetition is considered to be a very effective way of this transferring. (Gairns-Redman 87) Thornbury describes memory in more details, providing many types of transferring information into long term memory. He firstly refers to researchers who distinguish three types of memory: *short-term memory*, *working memory* and *long-term memory*. He describes the short term memory as “the brain’s capacity to hold a limited number of items of information for periods of time up to a few seconds.” (Thornbury 23) Thornbury claims that this process is not enough for successfully vocabulary learning. Further, he explains that understanding, learning and reasoning are tasks that depend on the next type of memory – working memory. The process involves first scrutinizing the information before saving it into the long-term memory. Lastly, he describes the long-term memory as a memory that has enormous capacity. To transfer information into this type of memory, many steps should be taken. Thornbury features the most important ones:

- *Repetition*
- *Retrieval*
- *Spacing*
- *Pacing*
- *Use*
- *Cognitive depth*
- *Personal organizing*
- *Imaging*
- *Mnemonics*
- *Motivation*
- *Attention/arousal*
- *Affective depth*

(Thornbury 23-26)

McCarthy presents two examples of methods of remembering words – keyword technique and rote learning. Firstly he introduces the *keyword* technique. “A technique whereby the subject makes a mental image that connects the new L2 word with an L1 word that has some formal association with the L2 word.” (McCarthy 118) The rote learning simply means repeating the words. He concludes with a statement that not only one single method can lead to effective memorizing and adds that

the good learner will operate a variety of techniques, some of which will be highly individual and idiosyncratic; indeed, encouraging learner autonomy in such matters is probably the best way to foster good vocabulary memorization. (McCarthy 120)

All these above mentioned factors can have an enormous share in acquiring new vocabulary. They can make this process easier. But although these factors are fulfilled, learners forget words. “It is generally believed that of the information we forget, eighty per cent is lost within twenty-four hours of initial learning.” (Gairns-Redman 90) Therefore, active revising and practising vocabulary is recommended in order to not lose words we have already stored in memory. Another theory called *cue-dependent forgetting* describes forgetting words differently. “That information does in fact persist in the memory but we may be unable to recall it. In other words, the failure is one of retrieval rather than storage.” (Gairns-Redman 89) There is a good solution to avoid forgetting – recycling. Thornbury advises that recycling words in different ways is much better. “Research suggests that if learners see or use a word in a way different from the way they first met it, then better learning is achieved.” (Thornbury 27) Since various tests are aimed at quite different ways of practising vocabulary, they can be very helpful in reaching this.

To summarize the whole chapter, learning vocabulary is a complex process containing many aspects. Motivation is undoubtedly an important part of learning a language that can encourage students to further learning. Not all students are the same in learning styles, therefore, a style should be chosen according to the learner’s needs. The Theory of Multiple Intelligence has been mentioned as a proof that differences

among students exist and different approaches should be invited. This chapter has also discussed the number of words to learn as well as the process of learning a word. Lastly, some techniques that can be useful when remembering vocabulary have been introduced.

3. Testing Vocabulary

3.1 Aim of Vocabulary Tests

The previous chapter was about remembering vocabulary and which principles must be observed in order to remember words efficiently. Consequently, when we want to find out how successful students were in remembering words, testing can give us the answer. “Without testing, there is no reliable means of knowing how effective a teaching sequence has been.” (Thornbury 129) However, Hughes claims that “testing is not, of course, the only way in which information about people’s language ability can be gathered. It is just one form of assessment.” (Hughes 5) Madsen expressed his opinion that well-made tests can help learners in at least two ways. The first one is that tests can create positive attitudes toward a class in the sense of motivation and competition. The other advantage is that tests of appropriate difficulty can help students to master the language. He also remarks that good English tests show students where they need to improve. (Madsen 4) Thornbury added next useful effect called backwash, which means that students take vocabulary learning more seriously when they know that they are going to be tested. (Thornbury 129)

As far as concerns history of testing, there is a brief summary by Madsen. According to him,

Testing during the last century and the early decades of this one was basically *intuitive*, or subjective and dependent on the personal impressions of teachers. After the intuitive stage, testing entered a *scientific* stage, a time that stressed objective evaluation by language specialists. We are now in a *communicative* stage, a time when we emphasize evaluation of language use

rather than language form. Tests today are mainly concerned with evaluating real communication in the second language. (Madsen 5-7)

3.2 Tests of Vocabulary

There are many ways of testing. Although testing can be carried out orally or in writing, the whole third chapter is only aimed at written types of testing. Tests which are focused on a particular subskill such as vocabulary are called tests of language subskills. (Madsen 9) There is an enormous number of tests that can practise students' vocabulary. For better orientation, tests can be classified from certain points of views. Here is a Madsen's obvious division of types of tests:

Contrasting Categories of ESL Tests

- Knowledge Tests – Performance (or Skills) Tests
- Subjective Tests – Objective Tests
- Productive Tests – Receptive Tests
- Language Subskill Tests – Communication Skills Tests
- Norm-referenced Tests – Criterion-referenced Tests
- Discrete-point Tests – Integrative Tests
- Proficiency Tests – Achievement Test

(Madsen 8)

Madsen gives brief explanations to each type of test. He begins with a comparison of knowledge and performance tests. While the first one tests students' knowledge about the language itself, a performance type of test discovers students' using of the language.

Secondly, the difference between subjective and objective tests is that the first type measures skills naturally. The example of subjective test is a translation whereas a multiple-choice is a typical example of objective tests.

Thirdly, tests that require creative or active answers are productive e.g. gap filling without options. On the contrary, receptive tests, as in the case of multiple-choice, are not based on creativity but only on recognition.

Next, as it has been already mentioned, tests of language subskills are aimed at a particular part of learning, such as vocabulary. Communication skills tests check students' abilities to use the language in order to make them understood.

Another pair is that of norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests. Norm-referenced tests compare students with other students while criterion-referenced tests do not take this into consideration.

The sixth contrast pair shown in the division is discrete-point tests along with integrative tests. Discrete-point tests are aimed at filling one particular item like a preposition. Integrative tests involve various language skills, they are not so specific.

Finally, achievement tests, as the name suggests, simply measure progress that a student has made whereas proficiency tests measure overall mastery of English. (Madsen 8, 9)

This clear classification can help teachers as well as students themselves to achieve extensive testing by including many techniques.

3.3 Examples of Vocabulary Tests

Madsen divides tests into four general kinds in his book *Techniques in Testing*. The first kind of tests is that with a limited response which is especially used for beginners. Pointing to objects when testing orally or verbal as well as written answers such as "yes" or "no" are responses to this kind of test. The second, a multiple-choice completion, is a test where students have to choose one correct of four offered answers. The third kind of tests is very similar to the second one. Students have to choose a word with the closest meaning to the underlined word. There are also four options which students can choose from. A completion words is the last type of tests. Students have to fill in words with no given options. (Madsen 12)

Detailed descriptions of some basic written tests of vocabulary followed.

Multiple Choice Completion

In these tests, students have to choose the most appropriate option of given words which fits best in each gap. There are a few formats of multiple choice completion. It can be either completion of a word which is depended on contexts or just filling with isolated words. In the first case, the context can be given from a whole text or only from a sentence whereas when filling with isolated words, students do not need contexts at all. This type of test is usually based on choosing right definitions or synonyms. Only content words like nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs are filled in this type of tests, otherwise it would be testing a grammar. According to Madsen, by the help of these tests, phrase completion like idioms and appropriateness to context, definition and phrasal context are alternate ways of multiple choice completions. (Madsen 22) As Oller claims about the popularity of these tests “the main argument in favour of using multiple choice tests is their supposed ‘objectivity’ and their ease of administration and scoring.” (Oller 257) Although multiple choice tests are said to be a popular way of testing, there are a few disadvantages connected to these tests. Thornbury mentions some of them. Firstly, a process of elimination can be one of a learners’ technique of choosing the best option, which really does not mean that learners know the right answer. Secondly, there is still a one-in-three (or on-in-four) chance of getting the right answer. Thirdly, students do not produce words but it is a question of recognition only. (Thornbury 132) On the other hand, Madsen sees the advantage of multiple choices as a good way of testing more difficult vocabulary items because of no production. (Madsen 17) Moreover, Hughes claims that we would probably wish to encourage guessing the meaning of vocabulary. (Hughes 180) Despite all these advantages and disadvantages, multiple choice completions certainly belong to a rapid way of testing vocabulary. This can especially hold for doing tests on the Internet. “The marking, as well as being reliable, is simple, more rapid and often more cost effective than other forms of written test.” (Weir 43)

Multiple Choice Paraphrase

These tests are very similar to multiple choice completion tests. Both these tests have almost same advantages and disadvantages. Madsen points out that when doing a multiple choice paraphrase, choosing the right answer depends not so much on finding the meaning in the sentence but on knowing the key vocabulary item. He divides paraphrase questions into two groups. One task is more based on finding the best synonym or related word whereas in the other, students choose the best short definition or paraphrase of the key word. Idioms, phrases and phrasal context can be tested when doing both multiple choice completions and paraphrases. Paraphrase types of tests can also check paradigmatic relations among words like hyponyms. E.g. *He eats lots of vegetables. (a. Bananas, b. Peaches, c. Oranges, *d. Carrots.)* An unrelated-word identification can be another way of this testing, e.g. *He lives in a big house. (a. Attic, *b. Car, c. Basement, d. Bedroom)* Last but not least, we can test vocabulary by questions about a reading passage context. After reading a passage, students should find out similar meanings of marked words in the text. (Madsen 24)

Gap Filling

Gap filling tests require students to complete a word from their memory with no given options. Thus production is more tested than just recognition like in multiple choice completions or paraphrases. A **cloze test** is the best-known example. In these tests, students should complete words that have been deleted from the text. Knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary as well as understanding the context is main prerequisites of a successful completion of these tests. Weir mentions that the term ‘cloze’ was taken from the gestalt concept of ‘closure’. He also refers to the W. L. Taylor’s description of this term as Taylor was the first one that introduced it.

A cloze unit may be defined as: any single occurrence of a successful attempt to reproduce accurately a part deleted from a ‘message’ (any

language product), by deciding from the context that remains, what the missing part should be. (Weir 46)

However, Thornbury says that “cloze tests were originally designed as tests of reading. It is arguable, therefore, whether they are really vocabulary tests at all.” (Thornbury 133)

A **word formation** test is another example of gap filling tests. As the title of these tests suggests, the emphasis is laid on formation, in other words, on building words. Students should convert a certain word so as to fit to the context. Thus knowledge of derivations is desirable. Since students have to create a proper form of given words, active skills are tested. Madsen provides four alternate forms of gap filling tests. Firstly, stem-first procedures e.g. (*beauty*) *She has a beautiful new dress* Secondly, phrasal contexts e.g. *an inconvenient delay*. Thirdly, compounds e.g. *He found the bedroom, but he couldn't open the door to the clothes closet*. Lastly, inflectional clozes e.g. *He's the tallest (tall) person in the class*. (Madsen 30)

To sum up, gap filling tests can have just a gap with no given word or there can be a prompt for each gap. Nevertheless, both types of tests require perfect understanding of a context.

Matching Pictures with Words

These sorts of tests are based on a principle of matching a picture with a right word. It is just an example of vocabulary tests including pictures. Mainly visual learners are those who really appreciate tests enriching by pictures.

3.4 Advantages of Online Vocabulary Tests

Generally, testing can take place either with a tutor or teacher e.g. at schools, or without any authorities e.g. when learners themselves want to test or just practise their

vocabulary. This chapter deals with the second type of testing only. If learners are motivated enough to test themselves, they can do tests from various textbooks and from other similar materials or they can make use of the Internet. Websites created for learning English provide a wide variety of exercises and they have a plenty of advantages in a comparison with testing at schools or doing tests in some textbooks.

Firstly, websites can promptly give students an idea of which sensory preferences they have because of a wide range of various exercises. Consequently, they can work on exercises that fit them best. For example, songs, and other listening recording, such as fairytales and poems, help auditory learners to learn vocabulary in an enjoyable way. Listening to a song and filling the missing words changes the learning process into a game.

Secondly, students can easily monitor their progress by achieved points or percentages of their success while working at their own pace. Students who want to compare their results with others have this option as well. They can compare it with an average achieved percentage of success which is shown after the evaluation of each test, so students who need competitive atmosphere when learning can be satisfied as well.

Moreover, some websites provide a possibility of taking part in discussions with other learners. So students can help each other or just talk about a particular test.

Thirdly, explanations which appear next to wrong answers should clarify students' mistakes.

Students can make an infinite number of mistakes without trying the computer's patience and, spend time only on their own mistakes without having to listen to the teacher explaining something they already know." (Rivers 178)

They receive an immediate feedback, which is a great advantage. What is more, some exercises repeat the tasks in which students made mistakes. The probability of making the same mistakes again is likely to decrease. Students can skip parts that seem easy and deal with complex ones.

The next advantage is that some websites even allow students to ask for some advice or a supplementary explanation when needed. Authors of websites themselves or other students can take part in replying.

Another advantage is privacy. Shy people are those who can really appreciate this positive side of websites.

Only student knows what mistakes have been made; the rest of the class and the teacher are not aware of an individual's performance and the student is not embarrassed by public errors. (Rivers 178)

Learning via websites is beneficial to autonomous students. McCarthy explains that autonomous learners are those who "take more responsibility for how and what they learn, and organizing vocabulary learning is a particularly productive area for the encouragement of learner autonomy." (McCarthy 129) So students working on websites can choose by themselves which vocabulary to learn. "After elementary level, it becomes increasingly difficult for the teacher to select vocabulary that will be equally useful to all his students. " (Gairns-Redman 76) Students for example have an opportunity to encounter colloquial English. They can learn new words that are used in a real life but hardly appear in English textbooks. In this case, attention to individual interests can also support students' motivation for further learning.

The next advantage, which can support students' motivation as well, is a computer graphics. Websites can focus on a certain age group which makes the learning even friendlier.

According to J. Duggleby, there are other advantages in learning via websites.

- the learners who live in remote areas with no local educational institutions can study
- time is not wasted in travelling to an institution
- money is saved on fares and on childcare costs
- people who e.g. work shifts or have children can study whenever they want, day or night
- people who have disabilities that prevent or deter them from accessing face-to-face education can participate

- students can be judged by the quality of their tests alone, no prejudice based on their class, ethnicity, age and so on from the teacher's perspective (Duggleby 7, 8)

Finally, websites which try to be the most appropriate to students' needs offer them to take part in making such websites better by adding a commentary.

The aim of this chapter was to highlight some advantages when doing tests on websites created for learning English in a comparison with doing tests at schools or privately with the help of textbook or other materials. Nowadays – in the age of technology – the computer seems to be the best solution to students' needs, thus putting other options of textbooks aside. As the computer has already a place in our lives and almost every family can afford this device at home, learners should try to make the best of it. Websites on the Internet give students a place for their individual needs. They also provide immediate feedback about students' mistakes enriched by explanations. The possibility to skip easier tasks and deal with the complex ones is another advantage. All the learning carried out in privacy, which people who are shy really appreciate. Websites can promptly give students an idea of which types of learners they are because of a wide range of various exercises. Consequently, they can work on the tests that fit them best. Students can also easily monitor their progress while working at their own pace. They can learn vocabulary according to their interests and a perceived level of proficiency whenever they want. Students have a possibility to ask for some advice or a further explanation, when needed. Websites also play a key role in students' motivation. Computer graphics, competitive atmosphere, learners' choice of vocabulary to learn, are only some examples that support students' motivation in further learning. Last but not least, students become autonomous as well as responsible in their process of learning.

PRACTICAL PART

The practical part of this thesis is divided into two parts. In the first part I tried to analyze a particular website created for learning English from the point of view of vocabulary tests as well as available advantages connected to these tests according to the theoretical part of this paper.

The other part contains a questionnaire with the aim to find out how much students make use of the advantages connected to doing tests on the chosen website.

Both these parts in the practical part refer to the same website – www.helpforenglish.cz.

The Description of the Chosen Website

To describe which vocabulary tests appear on this particular website, Madsen's division of types of tests was used. He describes the first pair of tests – knowledge and performance tests. I did not find any knowledge vocabulary tests that would find out students' knowledge about English, therefore, only performance tests, which test the use of English, are used there. When we look at the vocabulary tests from the point of view of subjectivity and objectivity, objective tests are those which appear there. Madsen further divides tests into receptive or productive. Since gap filling with no options as well as word formation types of tests is available there, productive tests are included. However, also many multiple choice tests which belong to receptive tests appear there. Therefore, both these types are presented on this website. Further, language subskill tests aimed at vocabulary only as well as discrete-point tests can be found there.

Next, I wanted to find out if this website provides some of the advantages described in the theoretical part.

Firstly, as it has been said in the theoretical part, websites can give students an idea of which sensory preferences they have. I must admit that this requirement is met. There are exercises for auditory learners such as learning or filling words to texts of

songs while listening to the song. Exercises for visual types of learners such as learning words by the means of pictures are included there. Therefore, students can discover which method suits them best.

Secondly, monitoring of students' progress is done by scoring tests through percentages. Students also have a possibility to compare their results with others, since an average percentage of success is shown after scoring the test. Therefore, students who need competitive atmosphere can be satisfied.

Next, if students want to discuss a particular problem or they need a further explanation, they have a possibility to take part in discussions with others. Almost every test is followed by such a discussion where even the authors add their remarks or provide further explanations when needed, which can help students enormously.

Another advantage provided on this website is that students get explanations to both correct and incorrect answers. What is more, the explanations are supplemented by Czech translations which can more clarify specific vocabulary. The explanation of a particular word can also appear after double clicking on it. Consequently, students do not waste their time by looking the particular word up in a dictionary.

Next advantage is a wide range of various vocabulary tests. Multiple choice, gap filling tests like cloze as well as word formation are only examples of tests there. Students can choose a test with respect to their levels as well as interests. This website also contains tests that are primarily focused on problematic vocabulary such as *believe* versus *trust* or on collocations e.g. *make* versus *do*. Students can practise their idioms as well. If students want to test their vocabulary according to topics, they have this possibility. Last but not least, students can learn colloquial English, which can be highly motivated factor in learning.

To sum up, this website offers many types of vocabulary tests which students can choose from according to their needs. Moreover, this website is a perfect example of advantages connected to doing tests on-line since they provide all advantages described in the theoretical part.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to carry out this research. The questionnaire was created on a special website served for doing research – www.vyplnto.cz. In order to have many respondents, a link to this questionnaire was added to famous social network services – Facebook and Twitter. Another link was added to the website – www.helpforenglish.cz – which the questionnaire was mainly focused on. The number of students that completed and filled the questionnaire was 515. Both men and women took part in the filling, at the age from twelve to seventy-one. Their levels of English were starter (8%), intermediate (52%) and advanced (40%).

The questionnaire first contains questions that deal with vocabulary in order to find out how great emphasis students lay on learning vocabulary and how difficult it is for them. The question of motivation is also included. The rest of the questionnaire gives some information about testing vocabulary with the focus on the advantages connected to the testing vocabulary on this website.

The whole questionnaire was written in Czech language to avoid misunderstanding. The questions were closed ended with the types of multiple choice, yes/no questions and scaled questions. The results of the research have been elaborated in the following graphs.

Question 1 (Figure 1)

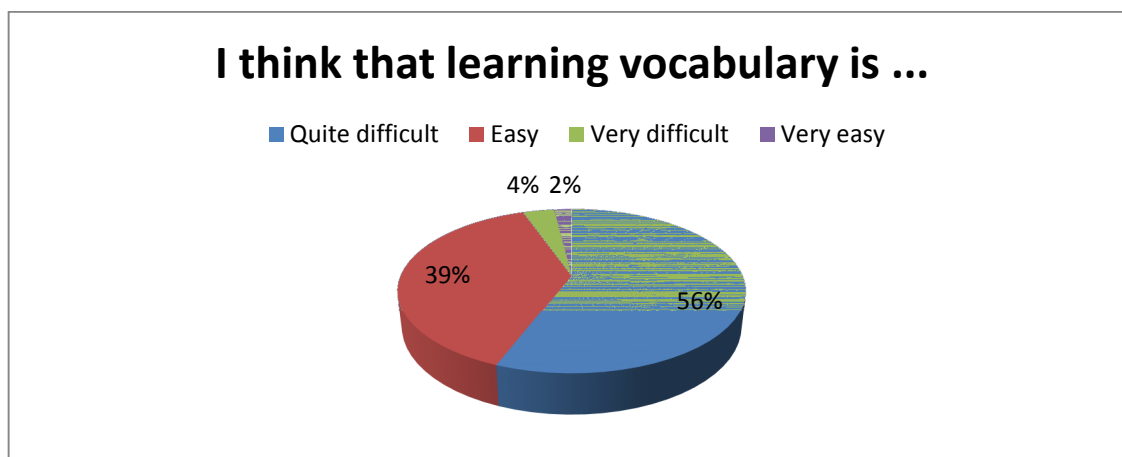
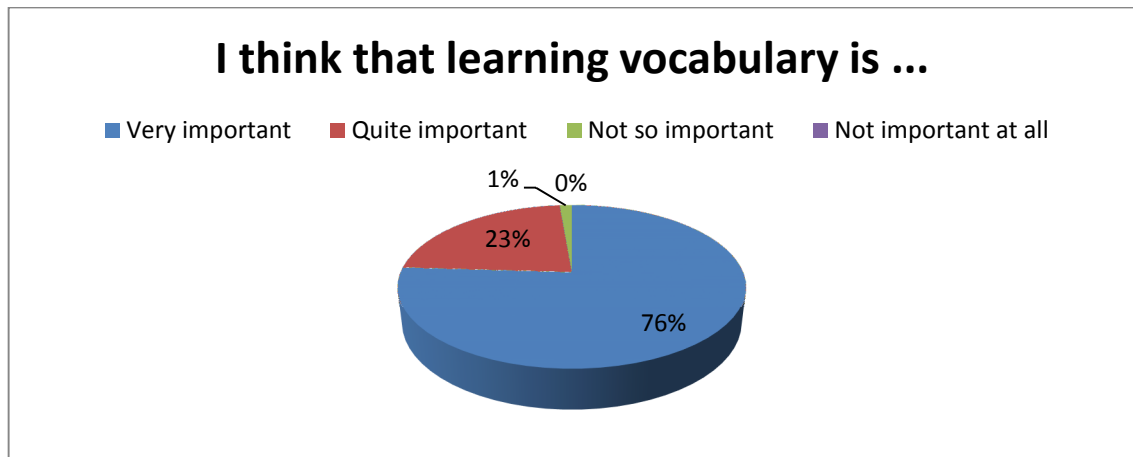


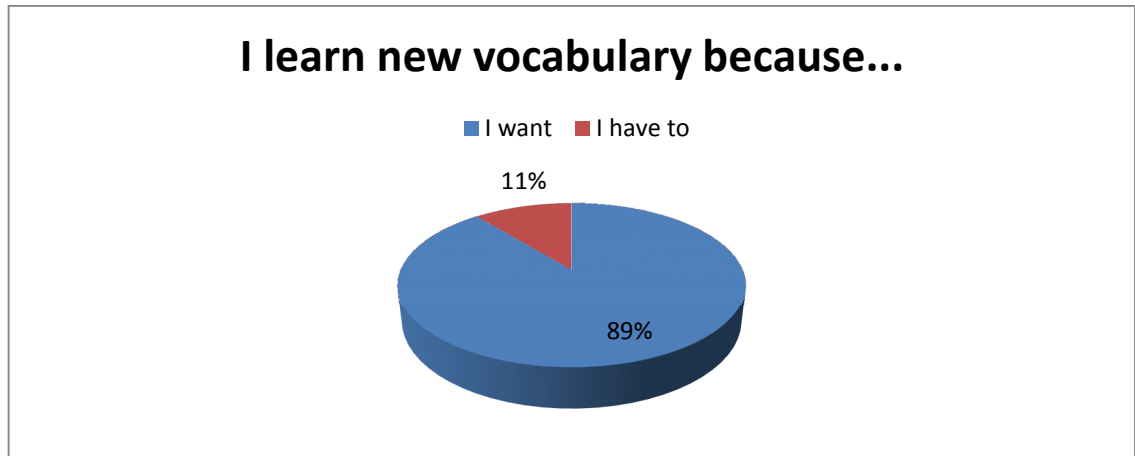
Figure 1 shows that for most students learning vocabulary is quite difficult. However, others regarded learning vocabulary as an easy process. Only a small number of people considers it very easy and very difficult.

Question 2 (Figure 2)



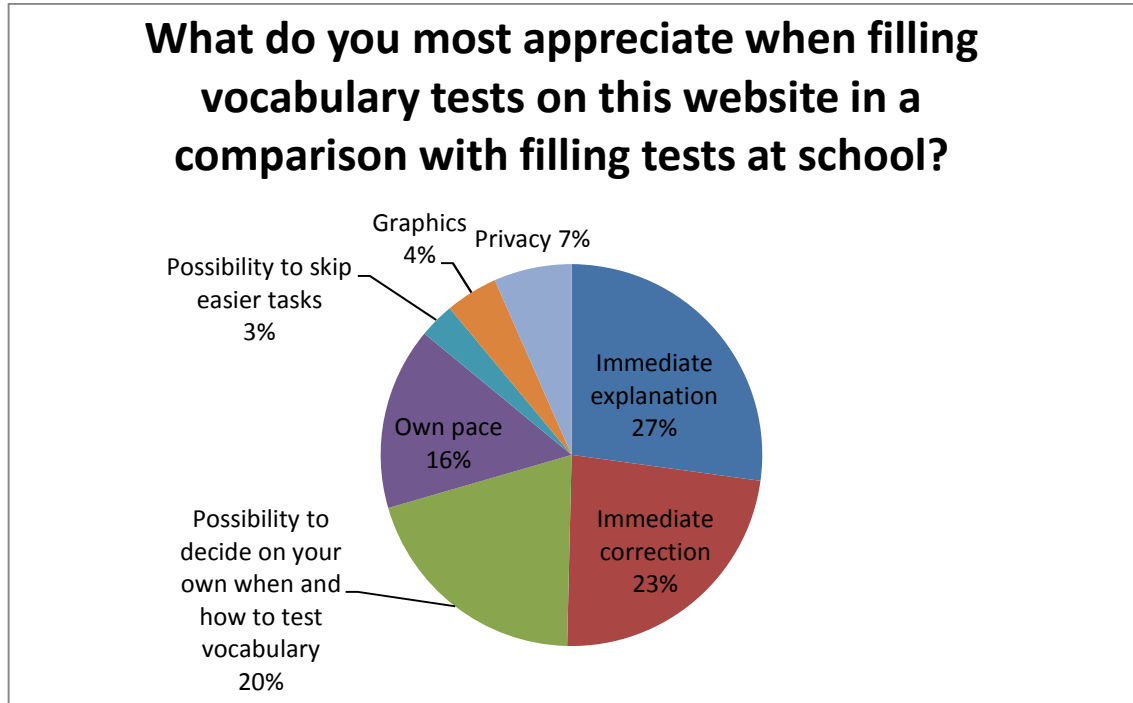
As we can see from the figure 2, an overwhelming majority of students think that learning vocabulary is very important. This corresponds to my conviction as well as to the statements in the theoretical part. A smaller part of the students marked learning vocabulary as quite important. Only one per cent of the respondents stated that learning vocabulary is not so important. I would like to mention that I am pleased that nobody chose the option that learning vocabulary is not important at all.

Question 3 (Figure 3)



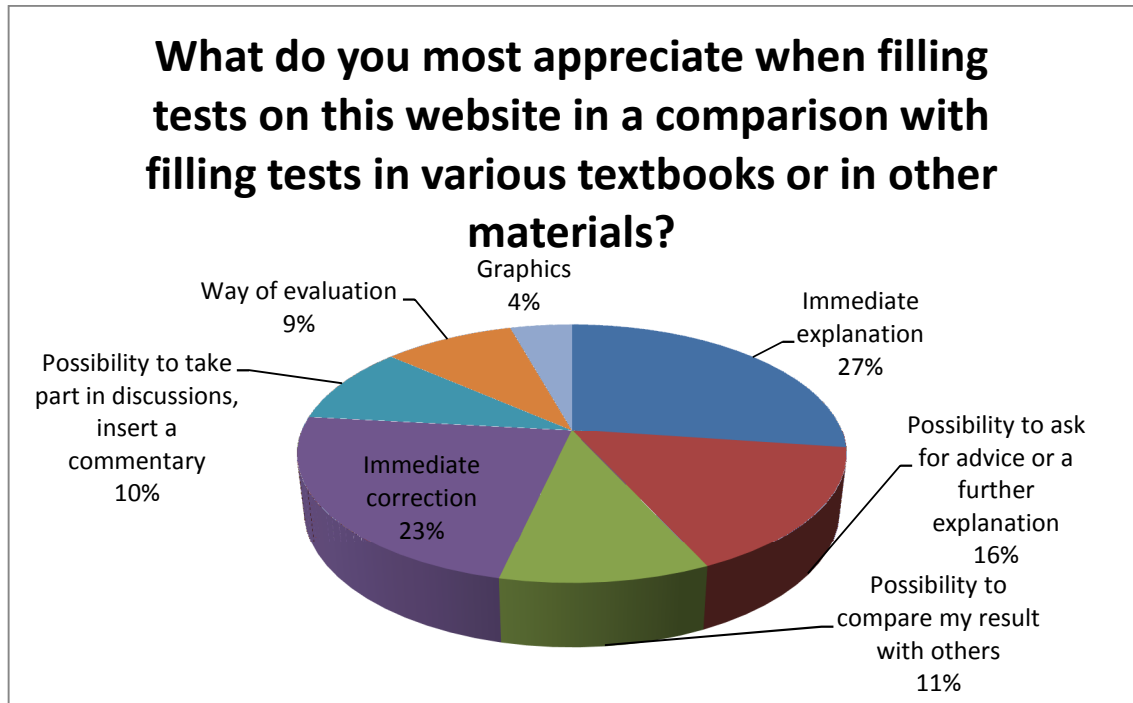
The question number 3 should have found out why students learn English. As I described in the theoretical part, the intrinsic motivation is better since students themselves feel a necessity to learn a language. To my pleasure, this pie chart shows that almost ninety per cent of the students study vocabulary because they want.

Question 4 (Figure 4)



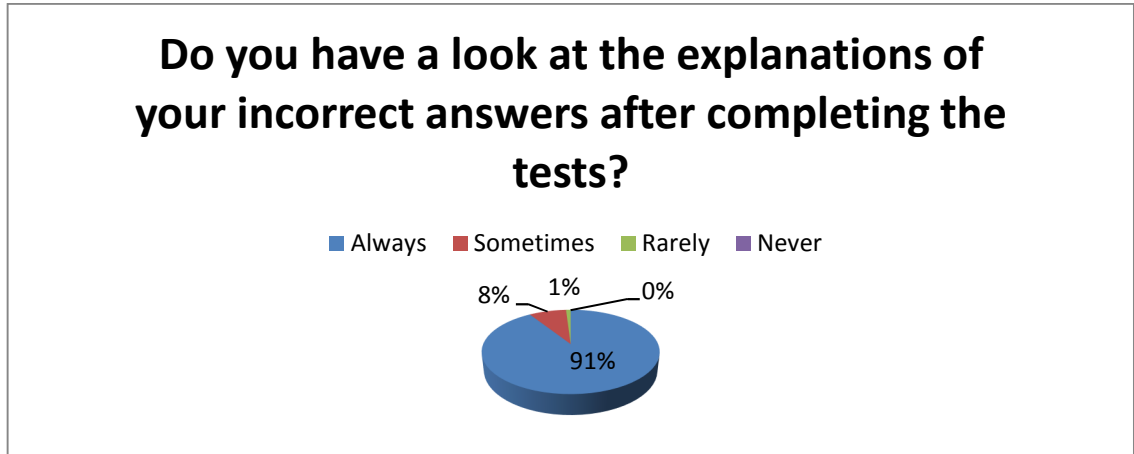
According to my survey, immediate explanation and immediate correction is what students most appreciate in a comparison with doing tests at schools. As I expected, twenty per cent of the students chose the advantage of the possibility to decide when and how to test their vocabulary. In other words, students become autonomous in the process of learning. The fourth most frequent advantage connected to doing tests on this website is the own pace. Not to be in a hurry or to be hindered by other students are the advantages that relate to the own pace. Moreover, I was surprised that only seven per cent of the students mentioned privacy. Finally, graphics and the possibility to skip easier tasks were chosen as well.

Question 5 (Figure 5)



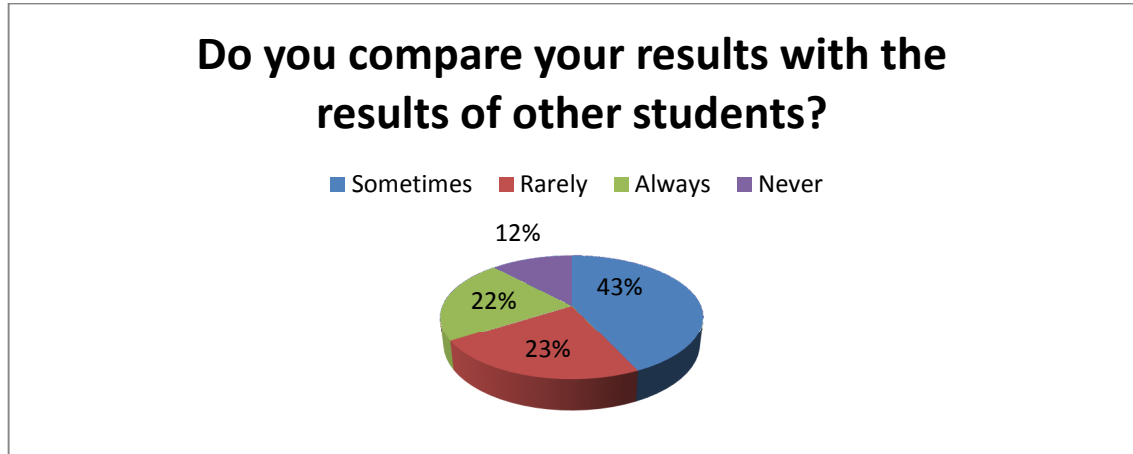
As can be seen from Figure 2, most students appreciate immediate explanation and correction like in the previous graph. Not surprisingly, the possibility of asking for some advice or explanations was chosen by students very often. However, few learners pointed out the possibility of comparing their results with others and the possibility of taking part in discussions or inserting a commentary. Furthermore, not many students wrote that they most appreciate the way of evaluation. To be honest, I was surprised with the finding that only four per cent mentioned the graphics of tests, which I thought to be a great advantage.

Question 6 (Figure 6)



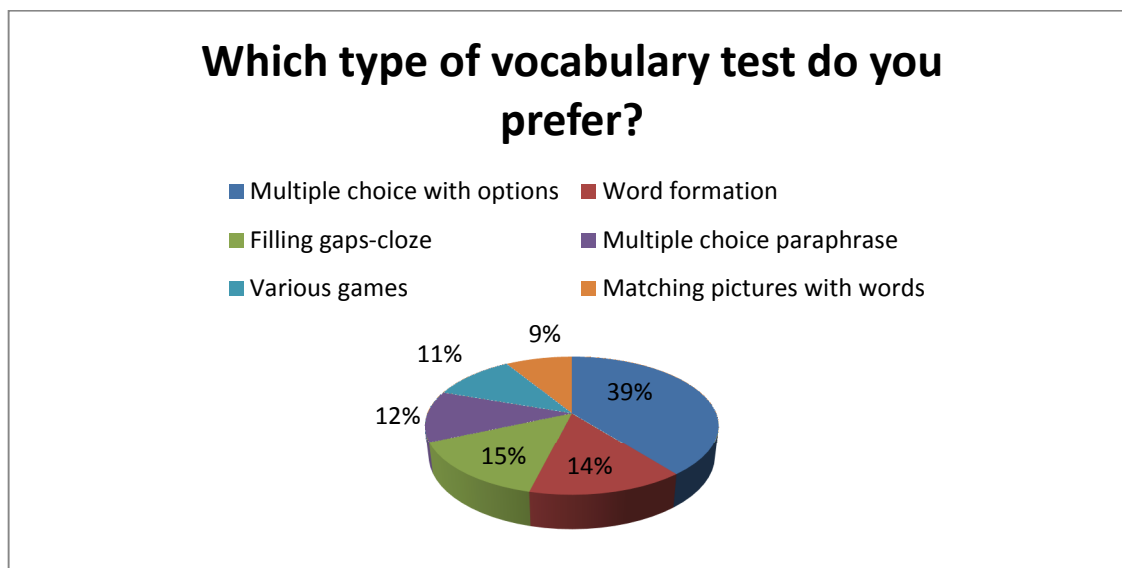
By this question, I wanted to find out how often students look at their wrong answers after completing tests. I am pleased to find out that ninety-one per cent of the students always want to clarify their mistakes. Other eight per cent of the students sometimes look at the explanations. Insignificant one per cent of the students rarely or never look at the explanation at all. To my pleasure, the answer – never – was not chosen at all. According to the figure 6, it is obvious that students want to understand their mistakes to avoid them in further practising.

Question 7 (Figure 7)



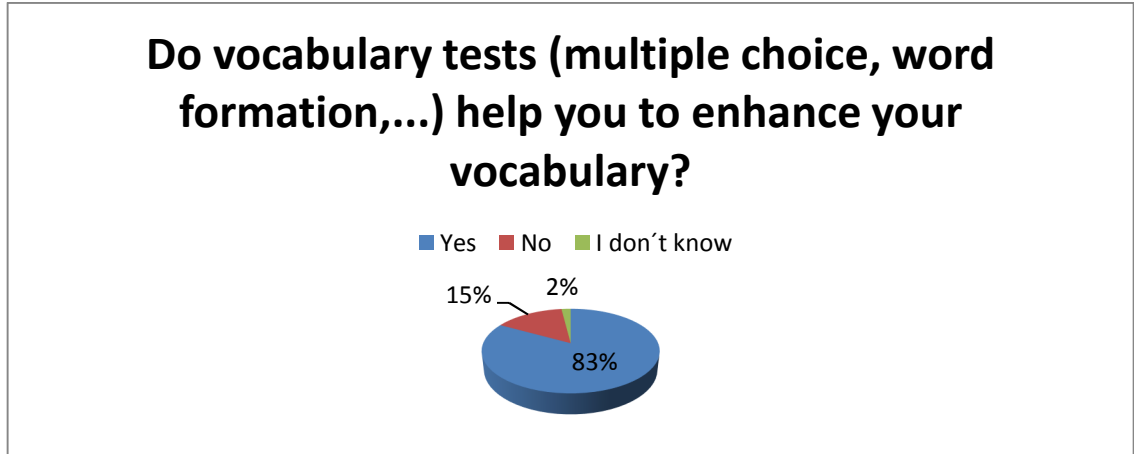
This graph (Figure7) shows that students need to compare their results with others. Almost forty-five per cent of them marked that they sometimes compare their results with others. Another group of twenty-three per cent students rarely do this. However, twenty-two per cent of the students always want to know the other students' success. They are those students who need competitive atmosphere as it mentioned in the theoretical part. Only twelve per cent of the students never want to know other students' results.

Question 8 (Figure 8)



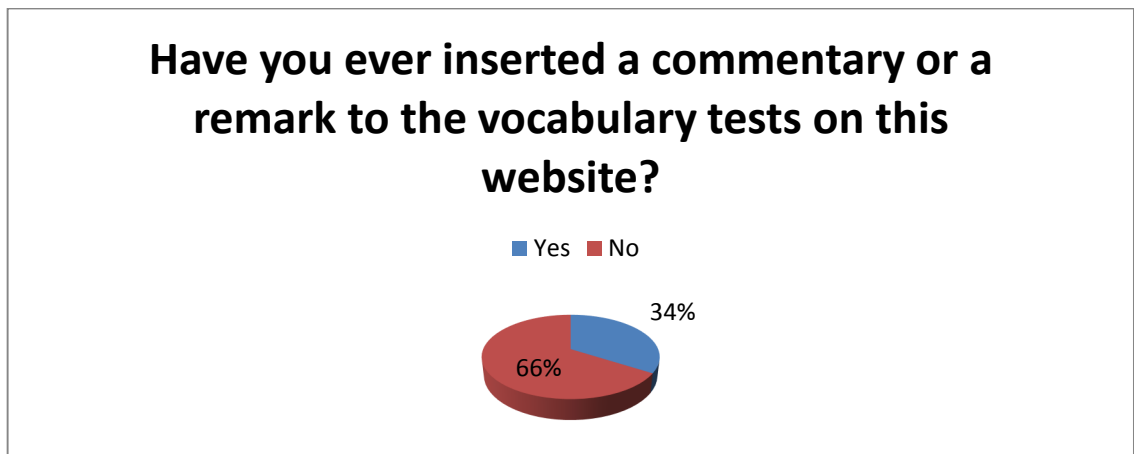
By the help of this graph, I wanted to discover which type of vocabulary test is the most preferred when practising vocabulary. This finding has proved my hypothesis that most students prefer tests in the form of multiple choice. This type of exercise belongs to a rapid way of testing vocabulary, especially when doing tests on websites since marking is very easy and fast. I was surprised with finding that filling gaps-cloze are the second most frequent answers. In these tests, not only students' knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary but also good understanding of context are necessities for completion these quite difficult tests. Another favourite type of test is word formation, which is also a type of gap filling tests, based on word creating. A production of words is more tested in gap filling than just recognition like in multiple choice types of tests. Twelve per cent of the students chose a multiple choice paraphrase. As their title suggests, they are very similar to multiple choice completions with their great advantages like rapidity. Various games were marked by only eleven per cent of the students. The least preferred type of a vocabulary test was matching pictures with words.

Question 9 (Figure 9)



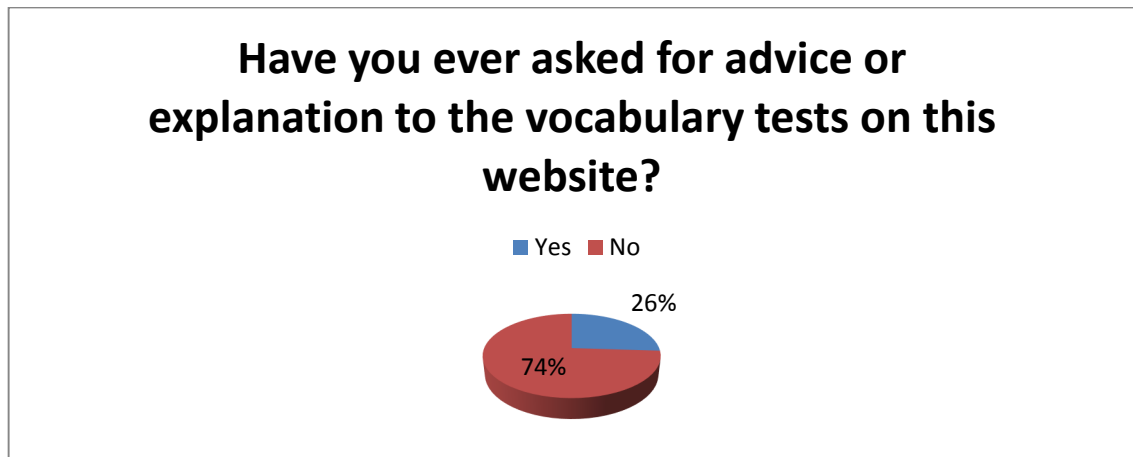
The survey has proved my hypothesis that not only revising or testing vocabulary are the functions of vocabulary tests but these tests also help with learning new vocabulary. Fifteen per cent of the students are not aware of this. However, there are two per cent of the students who do not know whether vocabulary tests help them to enhance their vocabulary.

Question 10 (Figure 10)



As can be seen from this graph (Figure 10), a majority of students have not made use of adding a commentary or a remark to tests. No more than thirty-four per cent of the students have ever used this advantage.

Question 11(Figure 11)



Similarly, most students have never made use of the possibility to ask for some advice or a further explanation to the tests.

To conclude the practical part, the questionnaire first informed about learners' opinions about the difficulty and the importance of vocabulary. The data gathered showed that learning vocabulary is a very important process for most students although it is quite difficult. Further, the great finding was that a majority of students learn English not because they have to but they want. According to the advantages connected to doing tests on the particular website, immediate explanations and immediate corrections were pinpointed in a comparison with doing tests at schools. Students also highly appreciate their autonomy and their own pace. Similarly, when they compared doing tests on this website with doing tests in textbooks or in other materials, immediate explanation and correction were also the most frequent answers. The possibility of asking for further explanation or some advice was the third often advantage. The next outcome of the research showed that most students look at the explanations of their

wrong answers after completing tests. Moreover, the students marked that they sometimes make use the advantage of comparing their results with others. As I expected, when testing vocabulary, an overwhelming majority of students appreciate multiple choice completions. I must admit that my hypothesis that students not only test or revise their vocabulary but they also enhance their vocabulary by means of vocabulary tests has also proved. However, most students do not take advantage of inserting a commentary to tests or asking for a further explanation or advice. Taking everything into account, students are aware of the advantages of doing tests on the particular website since they make use of most of them.

Conclusion

Learning vocabulary belongs to the most important processes when learning a language. There are many aspects which should be taken into consideration when learning new words. I decided to write about vocabulary in order to broaden my knowledge about learning as well as testing vocabulary through the use of vocabulary tests. I also wanted to confirm that doing vocabulary tests on websites that are created for learning English brings many advantages. The research has helped me to discover to what extent students make use of the advantages available on the certain website.

Before looking at learning itself, some basic information was described about vocabulary. Definition of what a word is, how words are built as well as how words relate to one another were subchapters of the first chapter about vocabulary.

Motivation is a very significant process when learning vocabulary and that is why this topic introduced the next chapter about learning vocabulary. As this chapter suggests, the process of learning a word was described along with how many words to learn and how words are remembered. In addition, a learning process differs among students, so learning styles were mentioned there as well. The theory of Multiple Intelligences that supports the idea of differences among students was also involved.

The last chapter in the theoretical part laid great emphasis on testing vocabulary by means of written vocabulary tests. How this testing can help students was explained at the beginning of the third chapter together with a brief summary of the history of testing. Since there is a great deal of number of vocabulary tests, a general classification of tests was presented there. The following subchapter dealt with descriptions of some basic vocabulary tests like multiple choice completion, multiple choice paraphrase, gap filling and matching pictures with words. Finally, I tried to emphasize advantages of doing vocabulary tests on websites that are created for learning English. Since nowadays – in the age of technology – the Internet can be a great helper for students when doing these vocabulary tests.

In the practical part, I chose a certain website and tried to find out whether the website offer the advantages described in the theoretical part. This website supported my hypothesis that doing vocabulary tests online can be advantageous since all the advantages are presented on the website. The practical part also included a questionnaire with the aim to explore the use of the advantages connected to the vocabulary tests there. The data gathered showed that students are aware of the advantages since most advantages are made use of them. Firstly, I have tried to verify whether students' opinions about the importance of vocabulary correspond to the statements in the theoretical part. It was proved that learning vocabulary is a very important as well as a quite difficult process for most students. The next intention of this research was to explore whether intrinsic or extrinsic motivation lead students to learning English. I was delighted with the finding that intrinsic motivation predominated. The rest of the research was aimed at the advantages which students can make use on the particular website. The research has showed that immediate correction and immediate explanations are the advantages of the on-line vocabulary tests that are most appreciate in a comparison with doing tests at schools or doing tests in textbooks. Furthermore, when comparing these on-line tests with doing tests at schools, autonomy and students' own pace were pinpointed as well. Similarly, when comparing doing tests on this website with doing tests in textbooks or in other materials, students' third

frequent advantage that was mentioned was the possibility of asking for some advice or explanations. This research also proved my hypothesis that vocabulary tests not only revise or test vocabulary but learners can also learn new vocabulary by means of them. When taking into account the possibility of inserting a commentary or remarks to the tests and the possibility of asking for some advice or explanations to the tests on this website, these advantages are not made use by many students. Further, according to the students, a multiple choice type of test is the most preferred when practising vocabulary.

To sum up, I think that the research has achieved its purpose. I have learnt about the advantages which the particular website offers as well as to what extent students exploit these advantages. In addition, I have got familiar with students' opinions about the difficulty and the importance of vocabulary itself. This thesis can contribute to my professional competence when either teaching vocabulary or creating tests for students.

Resume

Bakalářská práce se zabývá procesem učení se slovní zásoby a následným testováním slovní zásoby pomocí různých typů testů a to zejména na webových stránkách, které jsou vytvořeny pro studenty anglického jazyka.

Slovní zásoba zastává velmi významnou roli v učení se anglického jazyka. Harmer, Scrivener, McCarthy a mnozí další významní lingvisté toto tvrzení podporují. Učení se slovní zásoby je klíčovým faktorem k naučení se nejen anglického jazyka.

Teoretická část této práce obsahuje tři kapitoly, které se zabývají slovní zásobou. První kapitola je věnována samotné slovní zásobě, jako je definice slova, složení slova a také představuje různé vztahy, které mezi slovy mohou být. Pojem slovo není v anglickém jazyce jednoduché definovat. Slova spojená pomlčkou či ustálená spojení obsahující dvě slova mohou nést pouze jeden význam. Počítá se tedy slovo podle počtu významů či lexikálních jednotek? McCarthy tvrdí, že slovo musí obsahovat alespoň jeden volně stojící morfém. Slova se dále mohou rozdělovat podle jejich významů. Slova, jejichž význam si lze představit, jsou nazývána obsahová. Předložky, spojky,

členy či zájmena patří do slov označených jako gramatická. Znat slovo ovšem neznamená pouze správně ho vyslovit, napsat či použít, ale i například vědět, z čeho se slovo skládá a jaké předpony a přípony se se slovem pojí. Znalost předpon a přípon může studentům napovědět při hádání významu neznámého slova. McCarthy také připomíná, že studenti mohou využít schopnost anglického jazyka spojovat slova pomocí pomlčky v případech, kdy si nemohou vzpomenout na určité slovo. Další možností, jak se učit či procvičovat slovní zásobu, může být pomocí vztahů mezi slovy. Studenti se například mohou učit slova se stejným či podobným významem, nebo naopak opačný význam slov jim může pomoci slova si snadněji zapamatovat. Tato kapitola také vysvětluje pojmy ustálená spojení, frázová slovesa nebo idiomy.

Druhá kapitola je zaměřená na učení se slovní zásoby. Motivace, důležitý faktor v učení se slovní zásoby, otevírá tuto kapitolu. Harmer rozděluje motivaci na vnitřní a vnější. Je-li například student motivován k učení se slovní zásoby dobrými známkami, odměnou či pochvalou, jedná se o motivaci vnější. O vnitřní motivaci mluvíme, pokud studenti sami cítí touhu či potřebu učit se. Allen zmiňuje motivaci vzhledem k úrovni anglického jazyka studenta. Uvádí, že začátečníci mohou být více motivováni než studenti pokročilí, jelikož učení se anglického jazyka je pro ně něco nového a cítí se šťastně, pokud jsou schopni rozumět alespoň pár slovům. Naproti tomu proces učení se jazyku pro pokročilé studenty není nic nového, a navíc si jsou i vědomi těžkostí, které jazyk může přinášet. Allen vysvětluje, že satisfakce a úspěch studentů hraje důležitou roli v udržení si motivace. Druhá kapitola tedy popisuje proces učení se slova. Přibližuje tento proces k procesu, kdy se děti učí svůj rodný jazyk. Označování věcí a zařazování předmětů do vztahu nadřazenosti či podřazenosti jsou důležitými prvky při získávání nové slovní zásoby. Tato kapitola zdůrazňuje, že studenti potřebují individuální přístup v učení, jelikož se odlišují v učebních stylech. Tempo při učení, řešení problémů, psaní poznámek je jen pár příkladů odlišností mezi studenty. Student je také jedinečný ve své inteligenci. Toto tvrzení potvrzuje i známý psycholog Gardner, který představuje svou teorii mnohočetné inteligence, skládající se z osmi různých inteligencí. Jelikož každý člověk zažívá jiné životní zkušenosti, je tudíž v různých oblastech inteligence rozvinutý

jinak. Co se týče počtu slov k naučení, záleží též na studentu samotném a jeho vytyčeném cíli v určitém jazyce. Gairns a Redman přidávají rozdělení slovní zásoby na aktivní a pasivní. Jsou-li studenti schopni rozumět slovům při čtení a psaní, ale sami tato slova nepoužívají, jedná se o pasivní slovní zásobu. Do aktivní slovní zásoby řadíme slova, která studenti používají jak v psaném, tak v mluveném projevu. Způsob, jakým se slovíčka ukládají a uchovávají v paměti popisuje další část kapitoly. Gairns a Redman tvrdí, že slova jsou ukládána do dvou pamětí. První paměť nazývají krátkodobou. Abychom uchovali slova v paměti druhé, dlouhodobé, musíme se slovy více pracovat. Nejeftivnější způsob jak uložit slovo do paměti dlouhodobé je opakování si slovíčka. Thornbury přidává třetí typ paměti – pracující, která se nachází mezi krátkodobou a dlouhodobou pamětí. Charakterizuje také, jaké kroky musí být následovány, aby se slovo dostalo až do paměti s největší kapacitou – dlouhodobé. Motivace, používání a opakování si slova a pozornost jsou jen příklady těchto kroků.

Tématem třetí kapitoly teoretické části je testování slovní zásoby pomocí písemné formy testů. Chceme-li zjistit, jak úspěšní jsme byli při učení se slovíček, testy na slovní zásobu nám mohou poskytnout odpověď. Madsen konstatuje, že dobře vypracovaný test pomáhá studentům minimálně dvojím způsobem. Za prvé, může vytvořit pozitivní přístup ve smyslu motivace a soutěživé atmosféry ve třídě. Za druhé, testy přiměřené obtížnosti pomáhají studentům osvojit si jazyk. Madsen také poznamenává, že testy mohou studentům též ukázat, kde je potřeba své znalosti vylepšit. Stručný přehled historie testování je zde též zahrnut. Jelikož existuje mnoho typů testů na slovní zásobu, Madsen zařadil testy pro přehlednější orientaci do různých kategorií. Tato kapitola teoretické části také podrobně představuje čtyři nejčastější typy písemných testů jako je multiple choice (test s možnostmi), multiple choice paraphrase (parafráze), gap filling (doplňování do vět), do kterého patří jak cloze test (doplňování slov bez možností), tak word formation (cvičení na tvoření slov) a v neposlední řadě, spojování obrázků se slovy. Poslední kapitola teoretické části zdůrazňuje výhody spjaté s vyplňováním těchto testů na webových stránkách, které jsou vytvořeny pro studenty anglického jazyka. Jelikož webové stránky většinou obsahují různé formy testů na

slovní zásobu, studenti mohou zvolit typ testu, jaký jim nejvíce vyhovuje. První výhodou je tedy volba testu dle individuálních potřeb studenta. Vlastní tempo a možnost sledování pokroku dosaženým počtem bodů či procent je další výhodou on-line testů. Studenti si také mohou porovnat svůj výsledek testu s výsledky ostatních a to buď pomocí průměrného dosaženého výsledku, či některé stránky umožňují studentům zapojit se do diskuze. Této diskuze se mohou zúčastnit jak studenti, aby si sdělovali své zkušenosti a dojmy z testu, tak autoři stránek, kteří mohou studentům poradit, popř. podat další informace a rady, je-li potřeba. Další nepřehlédnutelnou výhodou on-line testů je jejich rychlost zpracování výsledků. Některé testy mají dokonce funkci opakování špatně zodpovězených otázek, což eliminuje opakování chyb studenta. Je zřejmé, že další výhodou on-line testů je soukromí. Studenti jsou ušetřeni pocitům trapnosti při nesprávně zodpovězené otázce a ani nemusí poslouchat učitelovo vysvětlení k něčemu, co jim je již jasné. Testování slovní zásoby na webových stránkách je též prospěšné pro autonomní studenty. McCarthy vysvětluje pojem autonomní studenti jako studenti, kteří si jsou sami zodpovědní za proces učení a organizování slovní zásoby. Rozhodnutí, kdy a jaká slovíčka se budou studenti učit, tedy závisí jen na nich. Studenti také mají možnost přijít do kontaktu s hovorovou angličtinou, což ve škole, kde se učí formální anglický jazyk, je téměř nemožné. Počítačová grafika testů a možnost učit se slovní zásobu dle studentova zájmu mohou podporovat jeho motivaci v dalším učení se jazyka. Duggleby přidává další výhody spojené s učením se prostřednictvím webových stránek, např. ušetření času a peněz za dopravu do místa probíhající výuky, možnost učit se v kteroukoli dobu, což je výhodné zejména pro lidi pracující na směny či starající se o děti, atd.

Praktická část popisuje webové stránky www.helpforenglish.cz z pohledu teoretické části. Nejdříve mapuje, jaké druhy testů dle zmíněné klasifikace v teoretické části se na stránkách vyskytují. "Performance tests", neboli výkonnostní testy, zkoumají schopnosti studentů použít anglický jazyk. Zatímco "knowledge tests", čili vědomostní testy, ověřují znalosti studentů o samotném jazyku. První typ testů se na těchto webových stránkách nevyskytuje, což znamená, že všechny testy na těchto stránkách

jsou zaměřené na procvičování si anglického jazyka. Jelikož si studenti mohou procvičit svou slovní zásobu jak pomocí cvičení na tvoření slov a doplňování slov bez možností, tak doplnit cvičení s možnostmi, můžeme konstatovat, že jsou zastoupeny testy na pasivní i aktivní zásobu. Testy zaměřené jen na jednu dovednost, např. na slovní zásobu, lze zde také najít. Další část zkoumá, zda tyto webové stránky nabízejí výhody spojené s vyplňováním testů on-line, které jsou v teoretické části popsány. Tyto webové stránky mohou být perfektním příkladem dokazující výhody při vyplňování on-line testů, jelikož nabízejí všechny výhody popsané v teoretické části.

Praktická část také obsahuje výsledky dotazníku, jehož úkolem bylo zjistit, do jaké míry jsou tyto výhody na webových stránkách studenty využívány, názory studentů na slovní zásobu, ale také zjišťuje, jaký typ motivace k učení se anglického jazyka u studentů převyšuje. První dvě otázky v dotazníku zjišťovaly postoje studentů ke slovní zásobě. Na otázku, jak těžké je učit se slovíčka, nejvíce studentů odpovědělo – docela těžké. Studenti si uvědomují důležitost slovní zásoby, což dokazuje 76% studentů. Třetí otázka pátrala po tom, která motivace, vnitřní či vnější, u studentů převažuje. Příjemné zjištění bylo, že převážná většina studentů, 89%, se učí anglický jazyk, protože sami chtějí. Další otázky zjišťovaly, do jaké míry studenti využívají již zmiňovaných výhod na těchto webových stránkách. Když měli studenti porovnat vyplňování on-line testů jak s vyplňováním testů ve škole, tak s vyplňováním testů v různých učebnicích, okamžitá oprava a vysvětlení byly nejčastější odpovědi. Dotazník dále ukázal, že 90% studentů se dívá na vysvětlení u špatných odpovědí po dokončení testu. Polovina studentů zaškrtnula, že srovnává svůj výsledek s ostatními jen někdy a pouhá čtvrtina studentů potřebuje toto srovnání vždy. Dotazník dále prokázal, že si studenti uvědomují, že testy neslouží jen k procvičování slovní zásoby, ale mohou jim i slovní zásobu navýšit. Další otázka zkoumala oblíbenost typů testů. “Multiple choice“, neboli test s možnostmi, byl vyhodnocen jako nejvíce oblíbený při procvičování slovní zásoby. “Cloze test“, test bez možností, a “word formation“, cvičení na tvoření slov, byly další dva velmi oblíbené typy testů na slovní zásobu. Poslední dvě otázky zjišťovaly, zda studenti využívají možnost vložit svůj komentář či poznámku k testům a možnost

požádat o radu či vysvětlení k testům. Většina studentů odpovídala na tyto otázky záporně.

Závěrem lze podotknout, že výzkum splnil svůj účel. Poodhalil názory studentů na slovní zásobu a též zjistil, jaké možnosti jsou studenty při vyplňování on-line testů nejvíce žádány. Tato bakalářská práce přispěla k mému profesnímu rozvoji jak z hlediska teorie o slovní zásobě, tak při případném sestavování on-line testu.

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