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Effective Utilisation of Memorising Techniques in Teaching vocabulary

(Efektivní využití memorizačních technik při výuce slovní zásoby)

Závěrečná práce 96-PF-KAJ

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ANOTACE:

Výuka slovní zásoby je nezbytnou součástí vyučovacího procesu v každém jazyce. Přesto se naši žáci velmi často potýkají s obtížemi při zapamatování si nových výrazů. V tomto projektu jsem se pokusila najít a vyzkoušet účinnou paměťovou techniku vhodnou pro běžné školní prostředí, která by usnadnila osvojovací proces nové slovní zásoby a přinesla zvýšení počtu slov, které si je žák schopen uložit do své paměti a dlouhodobě používat.

ABSTRACT

Vocabulary teaching is an essential part of learning and teaching process in every language. Nevertheless, our students very frequently face difficulties when trying to remember new lexical items. In this project I attempted to discover and test an effective memorising technique, suitable for an average classroom environment, that would make the learning of new vocabulary easier and support the enhancement of words a student is capable to store into memory and utilise permanently.

ANOTATION

Das Lernen des Wortschatzes ist ein unbedingter Bestandteil des Unterrichts jeder Sprache. Trotzdem haben die Schüler sehr oft die Schwierigkeiten mit den Bemerkungen der neuen Ausdrücken. In diesem Projekt versuchte ich wirkungsvolle Gedächtnistechnik finden und ausprobieren, die für die Schule passend ist die den Lernensprozeß des neuen Wortschatzes erleichtern würde und die Erhöhung der Wortanzahl bringen würde, die der Schüler im Gedächtnis behaltet und nutzt langfristig aus.

OUTLINE

Thesis statement:

Frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises is the most effective memorising technique when practising vocabulary in a classroom environment.

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I. Chapter I. ACADEMIC

A. Vocabulary and its storage into long term memory

1. Vocabulary is an essential focus in any language training

A foreign language cannot be learned without acquiring vocabulary that is an essential focus in any language training. As Mc Carthy [1990] says, "It is the experience of most language teachers that the single, biggest component of any language course is vocabulary. No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in L 2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way" [McCarthy, 1990: vii]. Michael Wallace also suggests that " Not being able to find the words you need to express yourself is the most frustrating experience in speaking another language" [Wallace, 1982:9]. However, all learners have to face a serious difficulty - forgetting words. Research has proved that vocabulary is the easiest part of language to be forgotten. Scrivener [1994] suggests that getting to be on familiar terms with vocabulary is quite difficult and that the long lists of words always seem to defy our memory [Scrivener, 1994:73]. Therefore, it is the task of teachers to decrease their students' propensity to forget.

2. Human memory and vocabulary storage-an important part of memorisation

One possible key to decrease students' propensity to forget is helping the learners to memorise words effectively. Memorising a word involves four phases: putting words into storage [input], keeping them in storage, retrieval and use. People store and keep information about lexical items and their relationships in our "mental lexicon" that "...is highly organised and efficient" [Gairns, Redman; 1986: 87]. The words are placed there in chunks containing more than one single item and according to Mc Carthy [1990] they are also stored in terms of their orthographic as well as phonologic pattern [Mc Carthy, 1990: 117]. Carter and Mc Carthy [1988] claim that a great part of a learner's task is to chunk unfamiliar material in meaningful ways and the teacher who makes this chunking easier increases the number of items the learners retain [Carter, Mc Carthy; 1988: 65]. These chunks are then organised on a higher level into a series of associative networks that are semantically related.

Once the words are stored, we have to think into what kind of memory they are set. There are two kinds of human memory. The short term memory and the long term memory. Gairns and Redman [1986] provide us with their useful descriptions.

The specific features of the first type are:

- a. the capacity for storing information is limited.
- b. the duration of holding the information is quite short.
- c. the commitment of new lexical items here is relatively much easier than in long term memory.

On the other hand, the specific features for the long term memory are:

- a. the capacity for storing information seems to be inexhaustible.
- b. the recall may happen years later.
- c. it is much harder to commit the information into this type of memory [Gairns, Redman; 1986: 87].

It is important for our learners to store words into long term memory because then they can retain the lexis at any time. However, as stated above, it is quite demanding.

3. Ways of storing vocabulary into long term memory

To make the process of committing words into long term memory easier, we utilise different approaches. One possible key is helping learners to memorise vocabulary effectively. One way to store the information there is to operate with meaningful tasks in classrooms because "...more meaningful tasks require learners to analyse and process language more deeply, which help them to commit information into long term memory [Gairns, Redman; 1986 :90].

Yet, meaningfulness is not the only way of enhancing the commitment. The other two possibilities are effective repetition and creation of associations with a word-imagery. "Research in memory suggests that words are stored and remembered in a network of associations [Carter, McCarthy; 1988: 12]. Carter and Mc Carthy also suggest that "The principle of vocabulary learning which emerges is that the more words are analysed or are enriched by imagistic and other associations, the more likely it is that they will be retained"[Carter, Mc Carthy; 1988: 12]. It has been proved as well that similarities in sound, morphology or etymology can assist word memorisation. Taking all these ideas into account, Carter and

McCarthy [1988] came up with a conclusion that: " To know the meaning of a word becomes the task of knowing its associations with other words: therefore, to teach it most effectively, we must present it in this network of associations [Carter, McCarthy; 1988: 65].

Exploring this subject, I learned that these three approaches are the main tools of five memorising techniques I discovered in engaged literature. These were: rote learning, which is the most common kind, mnemonic devices -loci, key-word, paired associates- and finally a frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises technique [FOGWET].

The process of making associations with a word is the key procedure of loci, key word and paired associates techniques. "The associations can be aural or imagistic and, preferably, incorporate both dimensions" [Carter, McCarthy; 1988: 12]. In loci and key word, except for aural images, the learner may also "conjure up" mental images or, in other words, he paints pictures in his head. Gairns and Redman [1986] point out that "...our memory for visual images is extremely reliable and there is little doubt that objects and pictures can facilitate memory" [Gairns, Redman; 1986:92]. In this way the techniques link form, meaning, and structure of a word and also facilitate a combination of both productive and receptive word-attack skills. Therefore, "...the techniques would appear to have advantages over an exclusive focus on straight translation or rote-learning" [Carter, McCarthy; 1988:12].

The importance of utilisation of meaningful tasks when we learn a lexis serves the FOGWET technique I tested in three lessons of my project. As the title of the technique suggests, to support the influence of meaningful tasks, I aimed to include effective repetition there as another factor increasing storage into long term memory, because " Research seems to

show that most forgetting occurs immediately after initial learning; this seems to suggest that repetition is most effective when it commences very soon after the first encounter" [McCarthy, 1990: 117]. Here, an important question emerges. How many encounters are necessary for remembering a lexis? Research shows that "...some learners learn words after only one encounter; seven repetitions seem to be enough for most people to be able to memorise a word [Nation, 1982] " [McCarthy, 1990: 117]. It implies that it is highly useful when a pupil is given a chance to meet new words in one lesson many times. The ideal number then would be seven times but it might not be always possible in only forty-five minutes.

II. Methodology

1. The advantages of utilisation of memorising techniques

The mnemonic devices represent variety in the teaching-learning process. Already including them into the lesson is an interesting change for students. Dealing with our thoughts in such ways is very unusual and it often represents brand new ideas for most students. The techniques possess a highly interesting nature and they can become an enjoyable approach to learning new lexical items.

The application of all the techniques is conditioned by a preceding and motivating presentation of new words which helps to increase the number of various teaching strategies to be implemented to our students. [The possible forms will be discussed later.] It becomes a great help for language teachers who know that, in teaching, variety is necessary. An additional advantage is that students are given a chance here for personal interaction with each word. They create a relationship with it. The teacher attempts to include the learner into the action of presenting the words whenever it is possible and students themselves think about the separate word to select a technique for its memorisation that best suits their needs.

2. The necessity of valuable vocabulary presentation before application of memorising techniques

If one aims to memorise a lexis, it is impossible without knowing its precise form and meaning, otherwise the learning would then lose sense. Taking this into account, one has to think about the procedure of presenting new lexical items themselves. As Jim Scrivener [1994] suggests, a careful selection of an appropriate presentation technique supports learning a word

[Scrivener;1994:79]. This means that a teacher's task is to choose from a huge variety of possibilities the best way of introducing a lexical expression because it is also a significant way to influence the storage of vocabulary.

3. Possible techniques of presenting vocabulary

Present methodology offers a sufficient number of techniques to introduce a word. According to Celce-Murica [1991] a word should be taught in these three stages: 1. teacher conveys meaning [i.e. he explains meaning]; 2. teacher checks understanding of the word; 3. consolidation [i.e. he relates the word to students' personal experience]; [Celce-Murica;1991: 301]. However, these procedures take time to administer. Therefore, for the purposes of memorising techniques it seems to be enough if we choose an effective presentation method for a single expression.

Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman [1986] supply a valuable survey of possible presentation techniques in their book "Working With Words"; chapter 5; "How a learner discovers meaning".

The authors divide the subject into two main groups with three sub-categorises in each. In the first group are the traditional approaches and techniques; visual and verbal techniques and translations. Visuals include flashcards, photographs, blackboard drawings, wallcharts and realia [i.e. real objects], which are mostly used for teaching concrete items [clothes, kitchen equipment], and which includes miming and gestures. Verbal techniques include: 1. use of illustrative situations [oral or written] that are useful mainly when teaching abstract concepts; 2. use of synonymy and definition; 3. contrast and opposites ; 4. scales [after students have learnt two contrasting or gradable items]; 5. examples of utilisation of hyponymy and superordinates. The last item in this group represents translation and its usage is still being discussed. The recent trend has been to use translation as

little as possible but Gairns and Redman [1986] point out that "...translation can be a very effective way of conveying meaning. It can save valuable time that might otherwise be spent on torturous and largely unsuccessful explanation in English..."[Gairns, Redman; 1986:75].

The second group includes the techniques of student-centred learning that makes a student "... more responsible for his own learning but also permits greater attention to individual needs"[Gairns, Redman; 1986:76]. In this part we can classify these three items: 1. asking others; 2. using a dictionary; 3. making use of context to deduce meaning and guessing from the item itself.

As Mariane Celce-Murica [1991] suggests, other ways that can be used are pictorial schemata [venn diagrams, grids, tree diagrams, stepped scales] and teaching the most common Greek and Latin roots as well as affixes to be found in English [Celce- Murica; 1991:301].

After a teacher uses an appropriate technique of presentation and has made sure that students understand the meaning of the word, an appropriate memorising technique can be selected.

4. Rote learning

As Gairns and Redman [1986] state, rote learning is a "... memorising technique which has a long history in language learning ..." [Gairns, Redman; 1986: 93].

The major factor here is repetition. Students repeat the target items either silently or aloud several times and they also may write them down.

Apart from the opinion that this is the means to commit the words into long term memory, Gairns and Redman [1986] suggest that repetition is the opportunity to manipulate the oral and written forms of language

items so that many learners derive a strong sense of progress and achievement from this kind of activity [Gairns, Redman; 1986: 93].

However, I feel that rote learning is highly mechanical, monotonous and not suitable for an application in the classroom. Therefore I decided not to use it in this project.

5. Loci

Carter and Mc Carthy [1988] uses Neisser's definition of loci: "Loci are the world's oldest and best-known memory device, described in every self-help book on improving memory [Neisser, 1976]" [Carter, Mc Carthy; 1988:65]. As I have stated above, the main idea which the loci are based on is that our mind works with "cognitive maps". These maps are "... familiar sequences of visual images that can be recalled easily" [Carter, Mc Carthy, 1988:65], but they must have one aspect in common. All the images [loci] have to be placed into a familiar scene. This could be represented by a well travelled path, room, or events in a well-known story. Next we form a visual image of the word we want to remember and set it into the scene. Later, when we are in need of this lexis, we recall our images and together with them the word appears.

An example can better illustrate this description. Let's say that we want to memorise the word "armchair". The technique procedure proposes that we have to think up an interesting place or scene that we remember well and that will provide us with a good start for additional images. In my case I would choose my favourite place in the countryside near my hometown. I have definite feelings towards this area and it is connected with my best memories so that the scene for me is motivating enough.

The following step consists of making up "mind pictures" including the place and the armchair somehow combined. I would try to situate the

armchair untraditionally, for example up a tree; stairs heading there would be covered by precious carpets. Then I would try to imagine everything to the last detail. It is important to notice what kind of armchair it is; what colours it possesses; what colours the surroundings are; what else is placed there. The more images we make, the larger probability of word retrieval.

In case I need the lexical item, I would imagine the place with all its aspects and I should be able to gain the word.

6. Paired associates

The second mnemonic, paired associates, deals in contrast to the previous one with associating similar sounds and meanings. Research shows that not only visual images but also associations of this type are effective.

Therefore, to memorise a word by "paired associates" we have to find its equivalent in our language that is similar to it in sound and meaning. Carter and Mc Carthy [1988] give a good example of this technique. If we want to remember a German word "schwarz", one may associate the word "swarthy" which has the same meaning of "dark, black" [Carter, Mc Carthy; 1988:66].

Although this technique certainly works efficiently, my experience is that it is quite difficult to look for a word in our language that has both a similar form and meaning. Deducing from my knowledge of the history of English, this technique seems to be more useful with languages such as German or French. These languages assisted in the development of English, and therefore, they possess a number of similar expressions.

7. Key - word

In my opinion, key word is the most interesting memorising technique of the five I studied. "This technique is, on the face of it, slightly ridiculous, for it seems to go against what theories of language acquisition tell us is reasonable, and for that reason its success is far more astonishing" [Carter, Mc Carthy; 1988: 66].

Here we work repeatedly with visualisation. The mnemonic "...consist of associating the target word which is pronounced or spelt similarly in the mother tongue, but is not necessarily related in terms of meaning" [Gairns, Redman;1986:92]. Thus, if we are learning a word, e.g. a German word "Rathaus" meaning "town hall", as Gairns and Redman show [1986], we can conjure up a picture of hundreds of rats coming out of our town hall. There appeared some suggestions that the more bizarre the image, the easier recall later, but the evidence for it is unconvincing [Gairns, Redman; 1986: 92].

This technique has an important advantage. The key words can be invented by students or "... they can be provided by the teacher without reducing the effectiveness of their recall" [Carter, Mc Carthy; 1988: 66]. It implies that tutors can teach their students how to form these key words and they can be easily included into a lesson course. In addition to this, the method is "...valuable for students at both advanced and beginning levels of ability" [Carter, Mc Carthy; 1988:66].

In my project I used this technique in teaching the word "onion". If we separate the word, as it is spelled, into two parts [oni, on], we get a Czech phrase expressing "they" and "he". Pupils can imagine some people picking onions from the ground and one man, on the other side, who is their supervisor. Then, they will very easily learn the lexis, and especially its spelling.

8. Frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises

The last item of the set of techniques I dealt with is the FOGWET. The technique has been constructed so that it involves the important aspects helping to store lexical items into long term memory such as meaningful tasks, their variety, contextualization, application of logical thinking and effective repetition.

Generally, the basic structure of the method application is that repetition comes instantly after a presentation of new vocabulary and the lexical items are repeated in a selected set of meaningful tasks as many times as possible during one lesson period.

To demonstrate how the technique works I prepared a possible example of its utilisation. Our students were just presented with an article and a series of vocabulary dealing with shopping. The teacher had prepared a set of tasks [usually three or four; it depended on their length]. In the first exercise the students matched the new words with their opposites or definitions. The second tasks might be a gap-fill involving a text with blanks and cues. The text would be similar to the one they read at the beginning of the lesson. Here the pupils had to place the right word into the right position and so confirm the meaning. For the third activity a role-play could be chosen. Students were divided into small groups, given a situation [e.g. shopping for a birthday party] and asked to think up a conversation among its participants, using the new lexical items. Finally, they would perform it in front of the class. Here, the students had to show understanding of meaning as well as the form.

The activities of this set are, of course, only a fraction of what can be utilised. Any exercises practising vocabulary that are adjusted to the technique could serve. Many methodology books have been published on

this topic, and therefore, it should not be a problem to select interesting activities.

9. Problems connected with memorising techniques

The difficulties described in literature engaged in memorising techniques concern two of them: key word and loci. Mc Carthy [1990] points out the major difficulty both of them have in common.

The main criticism against it is that one cannot probably hope to perform rather complex procedure on the hundredsof words that will have to be learnt and memorised if one is to come at all close to the target of a 2,000-3,000 word~~nt~~ative vocabulary for learners" [Mc Carthy, 1990:118]

The problematic time-consumption of the technique procedures is closely connected with this objection. To discover the most effective images of just one word takes a certain amount of time [the actual amount is a fairly personal matter] and here arises an issue of how much space a teacher can devote to working with mnemonics in a lesson. As the books do not touch this area, one of the tasks during my experiments was to discover it for myself.

Another quite important drawback, occurring with loci technique, is its limited application. Here we situate our images along a well-travelled path or in a familiar room and it is quite difficult to "place" abstract words such as "love" or "pain" there.

However, it is also dependent on an individual learner's ability to work with images and still, there is a simple solution. We have the freedom to choose another technique that deals better with abstract concepts.

While testing all the five techniques, I discovered one more negative aspect. The students remembered the vocabulary well but they had problems with its pronunciation. The reason was that we focused on pronunciation, more or less, only during the presentation of words. I concluded that if we wanted to use these techniques, it was necessary to also include some pronunciation practice so that we avoided this difficulty.

D. Thesis Introduction

This project has been carried out to support the following thesis: Even the occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared texts is the most effective way to ensure the acquisition of new vocabulary in a classroom environment.

E. Paper Parts

The paper consists of five parts. Chapter 1 introduces theory and methodology. Chapter 2 describes the techniques and it is based on literature research. Chapter 3 presents the data and four teaching steps. The conclusion is given in Chapter 4.

C. Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of this project is to explore the effectiveness and the utilisation of memorising techniques in real teaching situations. I wanted to objectively find which techniques are the most suitable for learning different vocabulary and how easy or difficult it is to use them in the classroom. I also wanted to show that there is a wide range of interesting techniques that we can adopt when teaching new words and that it is more effective to be open to as many approaches as possible. This is the way to possess success, variety, efficiency and a creative learning-teaching environment.

D. Thesis Introduction

This project has been carried out to support the following thesis: Frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises is the most effective memorising technique when practising vocabulary in a classroom environment.

E. Paper Parts

The paper sustains of three major parts. Chapter I introduces theory and methodology concerning memorising techniques and it is based on literature research. Chapter II consists of a class profile and four teaching plans. The outcome of the project is discussed in Chapter III.

II. Summaries 1-4. Reflective Teaching Practice

A. Class profile

School	Gymnazium F. X. Saldy, Liberec
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Class	Sekunda
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Age	12-13 years
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Number of pupils	14
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Girls/Boys-Ratio	9 girls 5 boys
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Level	advanced beginners
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Textbook	Project English 2
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Lessons per week	5 x 45 mins
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Teaching problems	Light discipline problems
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What was positive	my relationship with students the supervising teacher
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Comment

1. Class

This class was sekunda. It was their second year of studies at the gymnazium. For most of the students it was their third year of studying English.

2. Age

These students were twelve to thirteen years old. At this age students are difficult to cope with because their interest in studying decreases, in comparison to the previous years, which seems to be the result of their adolescence. My position in the class was even more problematic as they knew I was only a trainee. To keep their attention I had to select activities that would attract and motivate them to work.

3. Number of pupils

14 was a very good number of students. Being an inexperienced teacher, it helped me with the organisation and management of the class. In addition, I possessed more time to pay my attention to individual students and it was much easier to manage the few discipline problems that occurred.

4. Girls/Boys-Ratio

There was a majority of girl students but it did not influence the class. Owing to the even number of pupils, I did not have any problems with setting up the pair-work or group-work which was very helpful.

5. Level

The students were advanced beginners. They were bright and understood my instructions and explanations well. However, there were two weaker students who needed a lot of my time and their peers' help. The particular problem of this class was their inability to express their ideas in English. They possessed the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary but lacked the ability to communicate.

6. Textbook

The pupils used the second volume of the textbook series Project English for the first year. The positive aspect about this book was that the students found it graphically attractive and they were interested in the content. The negative aspect concerned the vocabulary list. The list lacked transcriptions of the target words and Czech translations. Thus, writing the new words down took too much valuable lesson time.

7. Lessons per week

This class had 5 x 45 minute lessons per week which I found sufficient to cover all the tasks the textbook offered and add some interesting activities taken from other sources. Another positive aspect was that the students were in touch with English four days a week, which supported the learning process with the target language.

8. Teaching/Learning Problems

There were not any major problems in this class. The students were responsible, and when given a motivating task, they co-operated very well. However, during my practice some boys became fairly disruptive and I had

to often calm them down. The reason for such behaviour was their adolescence and my inexperience.

Another difficulty I met with was the pupils' mixed ability. Two students were much weaker and their working pace was slower in comparison to the other pupils. I tried to encourage them and praised every good piece of their work.

9. What was positive

The most positive and motivating factor was the nice relationship I had with my students. They considered me more a friend than a teacher which supported the creative and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. The pupils were not afraid of asking or saying anything and therefore I felt more secure. Also the supervising teacher was very helpful and I learned a lot from her.

SPECIAL LESSON 1

1. GENERAL LESSON THEME

My first lesson centred on the efficient presentation of vocabulary using two memorising techniques [loci and key-word]. I chose a fairy tale "Stone Soup" [Project English 2, p 46] where students learned new vocabulary dealing with food. The lesson was divided into sections: a discussion about fairy tales; presenting new vocabulary by using pictures, realias, the involvement of student senses and guessing from the context; listening to the story and finally working with memorising techniques.

2. THESIS FOCUS

This lesson focused on proper and interesting presentation of vocabulary followed by an application of memorising techniques [paired associates, key word]. My purpose was first to make the meaning of the new words entirely clear to the students and then together with them to create images connected with the words students should store. I wanted the students to express their ideas, to play with the words and to build up a relationship with the language items they would meet.

3. ANTICIPATED TEACHING PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The memorising techniques I was going to apply are ones not commonly being used. Therefore, I expected some problems:

a, I anticipated that it would be difficult for my students to imagine anything the moment I ask them. To avoid this I prepared a chart with a few convenient images for each new language item.[e.g. to taste-"taste meče", potato-"po tatovi" /in a moravian dialect/,onion-"oni+on"]

b. Students would be afraid to say what they imagined. I planned to encourage them to talk freely by providing a model; I would talk about the most bizarre images I got when preparing this stage without any hesitation [e.g. I thought about the word vegetable and I imagined vegetable having an easy life in our garden, because we disliked it, and in Czech it would sound: je to zelenina , která má "veget", protože lidi říkají "ble" a nemají ji rádi. Then I would write on the blackboard: veget + ble = vegetable.)

c, Students may learn incorrect pronunciation of some new language items [e.g. to taste; I would help them to imagine a word that sounds the same in Czech: "taste meče" and I would perform the action; here students should remember the correct spelling very easily but they could forget its real pronunciation.] I decided to stress the pronunciation of each lexis and get students to repeat after me in chorus.

d, In case there is some time left at the end of the lesson I prepared a filler to use. [Bingo; this game requires only minimal amount of time and we can practise the newly learned vocabulary.]

4. LESSON AIMS

The basic lesson aims are:

- a, to get students to talk about their favourite fairy tales and so prepare them for listening to the story
- b, to practise listening and reading
- c, to present new vocabulary in an untraditional manner so that students know exactly their meaning and will be able to use them in the fifth stage
- d, to lead students to work with their imagination so that the process influences the level of storing vocabulary in their memories

5. LESSON SUMMARY

Lesson Plan:

1. A discussion about fairy tales

-teacher asks students questions: What is a fairy tale?

Do you know any fairy tales?

What is your favourite fairy tale now and what was your favourite fairy tale when you were a small child?

Do you think fairy tales are written according to true stories?

Is there any truth in these stories?

What did you learn from fairy tales?

-students answer the questions

Aim: to lead students into the topic and prepare them for the listening section

2. Teacher Explains The New Vocabulary

a, Teacher asks: Does anybody know the fairy tale "Stone soup"?

-teacher holds up a stone and a picture of soup

-t explains what a stone and soup are and that together they make stone soup

b, teacher explains the word "tramp" and "mean" and shows the picture of the word "vegetable"

Aim: to make students familiar with the new words necessary for understanding the text

3. Students listen to the story [English Project 2, p 46]

a, teacher gives instructions

b, teacher plays the tape

c, teacher asks questions: Did you like the story?

What happened there?

Aim: to meet the new vocabulary in context; to learn what the story is about

4. Presentation of new vocabulary

a, teacher has prepared a "magic plate" with realias

-teacher asks students to close their eyes, walks among them and gives the realias to students to taste them [carrot, salt, pepper, onion, potato, apple...]

- students guess in Czech what the food is and the teacher translates it into English

b, the teacher shows the students a picture of wine bottle and let them guess the English equivalent

-teacher performs the verb "to go away" and asks the students its meaning

Aim: to present new vocabulary and prepare students for the final stage

5. Working with memorising techniques [key-word, loci]

a, teacher introduces the activity [she explains what they are going to do and how]

b, teacher selects word after word and lets students describe how the word sounds to them, what they imagine when they hear it or what it reminds them of

c, teacher tries to elicit as many connected images as possible

[What else do you imagine when you hear it ? Is it similar to any Czech word? What comes to your mind when you see it written on the blackboard?]

Aim: to help students to remember the new vocabulary more easily and efficiently

6. MATERIALS:

Project English 2, Issue 4 , pg 46, text "Stone Soup"

REFLECTION

[The reflection has been based on the tape I recorded during the lesson.]

1.[a discussion] This stage did not go as I expected. The first problem appeared when I asked them about their favourite fairy tales. They could not remember one. After a while a student said "Jeníček a Mařenka" which helped elicit other titles.

The next question was quite difficult and it confused the students. [The question was: Is there any fairy tale which you like now when you are older and which you did not like when you were a small child?] In spite of the fact I gave an example, students could not answer. I realised they were too young to think this way.

Then I asked a student to narrate her favourite fairy tale, but she could not manage it in English. This class had not developed a high level where they would be able to talk alone without any given pattern or an example. The student just said: "In fairy tale ... is three woman. One nice, one old...." She did not continue and I asked her to go on in Czech.

Also, the rest of the questions brought confusion. [What did you learn from fairy tales? Did you get the message?] I had to translate them

into Czech and explain what I wanted to learn. Only then the students gave me answers, but unfortunately, in Czech.

This stage did not go well since the questions I asked were inappropriate to the student's level of proficiency and they were confused. I also learned that these students were not used to discussing without preparation.

2.[Explaining new vocabulary] The second stage went quite smoothly. Students knew what a stone and a soup were and they liked the way I put the words together into "stone soup".[I drew the stone soup on the black board.] I explained the difference in meaning of the word "tramp" in English and in Czech.

3.[Listening to a story] Surprisingly, students worked very well in this stage. When I asked them to narrate the story, one student started and others continued. Sometimes I had to help them and ask a question to remind them of what happened next. However, they created the sentences themselves and understood the whole plot. In comparison to the first section, the students were much more successful because they did not have to make up something entirely new but just reproduced what they heard.

4. [A presentation of vocabulary] This was the most successful part of the whole lesson. I let the students taste the food I had prepared on my magic plate without seeing it, which they enjoyed. Students loved this activity and they were excited even more after trying pepper or salt. It seemed to be a very strong input for the storage of words which was an important factor.

5.[Using memorising techniques] In this stage I reached my planned goal. I got the students to create different images with each word. They gave me

about four to seven ideas with each lexis. [e.g. to taste: pasta , po sté, taste test , taste po sté, taste thé. soup: sup, sloup, polévka ze sloupu, polévka ze supa, supět, sup supí; delicious: Deli, delikátní, super Deli, delicious Deli, reklama na deli na Nově; pepper: Petr, Peter, přeper, předem, přeper, přeper si plíny, pokr, ...) I always gave them my example and stressed the best one that appeared [e.g. bean-Mr Bean, onion-Orion/a star looking as an onion/, soup-polévka ze supa). Students enjoyed the techniques and co-operated well. The anticipated problems were not met and it supported the relaxed and friendly atmosphere in the class.

In contrast to it, when I encouraged the students to utilise loci, their reaction was fairly unsure. I asked them to close their eyes and attempted to get them to imagine their favourite room. Then they had to place the three selected objects [carrot, salt, meat] in an interesting way there so that if they imagined the scene again, it would remind them of the words. To help the pupils I gave them my own example. However, it still took me a long time to make them work and I saw they did not feel comfortable working in this way in front of their mates.

I felt that using this techniques was not as efficient as it could have been. Firstly ,I think that the students should have had more time to think about each word so that they would be able to create more personal images. Unfortunately, it seems to be impossible to manage in the forty-five minute lesson provided that a teacher must thoroughly present a new text, vocabulary and proceed in their other plans.

Secondly, the methods seems to be overused when applied to every new lexis the students meet in one lesson. My impression is that memorising techniques are more functional when we use them only for the vocabulary we can not remember by other means. Only then we make the

language items special and our memory stores the "special" items more effortlessly.

Finally, I am persuaded that these methods need an intensely individual approach. It means that students should think about a word on their own, for as long as they need, because no one knows which image will touch them the most. We all are individuals with different experiences and emotional lives and therefore, only providing the suitable conditions the students should be able to discover the most interesting and efficient images that increase the storage of information.

CONCLUSION

Summarising all the aspects I have to say this lesson was very significant for my next steps in the diploma paper, and generally, I can say that it was a reasonably successful lesson.

The class confirmed that applying memorising techniques should be preceded by a sufficient, and for students, interesting presentation of vocabulary. I tried to utilise the presentation as a highly motivating factor in the learning process and make it as attractive as possible. The students appreciated it and they fully participated and co-operated.

However, there was a very weak point in this lesson that should be avoided next time. [stage 1] I made a basic mistake in selecting questions inappropriate for the level of the language proficiency. Next time I will choose easier questions to lead a conversation, state them clearly and keep simple.

The fifth stage fulfilled its purpose but as I have already pointed out the methods did not have as great an impact on the students as they could have. I tested their knowledge of vocabulary the next lesson and they were only able to give me about fifty percent of the words I wanted them to

remember [e.g. delicious, mean] . I concluded that these methods are not suitable for usage in a normal class. However, I still consider them as effective methods for learning new vocabulary provided we use them in certain conditions [see Summary, part 1]. In the future I am going to use them differently. I think it is a good idea to let students know that they exist, show how they work and encourage them to use the techniques in their studying as an enjoyable and useful alternative.

These thoughts made me change the plans for the continuation in this project. I intended to use them also in the following lessons but considering the results I decided against it and applied the frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises technique.

As I have stated at the beginning of the reflection, I based the first section on a recording. It was a very useful tool for me as one of my tasks was to record precisely how the students reacted in stage 5. Here they were talking all the time and even if I wrote the notes immediately after the lesson, I would not be able to remember all. By having this record I was able to make precise comments on the class and subsequently create more valuable conclusion.

4 STONE SOUP

8 Here's a story from one of our readers

One day a tramp came to an old woman's house. "Excuse me," said the tramp. "I'm very hungry. Can you give me something to eat?" But the old woman was very mean. "Go away," she said. "I haven't got any food." "Oh," said the tramp. "That's a pity. I've got a magic stone. I can make soup with it. But I need some water." "Well, I've got a lot of water," said the mean old woman. "A magic stone, eh?"

She fetched a big saucepan of water. The tramp put the stone into it. After a while he tasted the soup. "Mmm. It's very good," he said. "It just needs a bit of salt and pepper." The old woman fetched some salt and pepper.

"Mmm. That's better," he said. "It really needs a few vegetables. It's a pity you haven't got any vegetables." "Oh, I can find some vegetables," said the old woman. She ran into the garden and brought back some potatoes, carrots, beans and a big onion. The tramp put the vegetables into the saucepan.

"Is it ready now?" asked the woman. "Almost," said the tramp. "It really needs a bit of meat. It's a pity you haven't got any meat." "Oh, I can find some meat," said the old woman. She ran into the kitchen and came back with some ham and some sausages. The tramp put them into the saucepan.

"Right," said the tramp. "I can't see the stone anymore. So the soup is ready. Bread is very good with stone soup. It's a pity you haven't got any bread." "Oh, I've got a bit of bread," said the woman. She ran into the kitchen and came back with a loaf of bread, some butter and a piece of cake. She put them on the table.

The old woman tasted the soup. "Mmm. This stone soup is delicious, and you made it with just that magic stone." When the tramp left, he said, "Here is the magic stone. You can keep it." "Oh, thank you," said the old woman. "But remember," said the tramp. "For the best stone soup you need a bit of meat, a few vegetables and a bit of salt and pepper, too."

Hutchinson, T. Project English 2 Student's book
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986

SPECIAL LESSON 2

1. GENERAL LESSON THEME

This lesson focused on a proper presentation of vocabulary followed by the frequent occurrence of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises technique. The lesson consisted of: an introduction where students learned the topic [recipes]; presentation of vocabulary [talking about my favourite recipe]; reading a recipe [Project 2, p 42]; a set of exercises dealing with the presented vocabulary.

2. THESIS FOCUS

We can contribute to storing new language items into memory if we provide our students with time to think about each word and its usage in different situations as many times as possible during a lesson period. Therefore, this time I tended to make students be aware of the meaning and pronunciation of the new words and then had them meet and work with the vocabulary in five different contexts: 1. a matching exercise where the students matched various ingredients with the right recipe; 2. an exercise where the students first made up the difference between selected verbs and then gave two examples of food that can be prepared in this manner; 3. matching nouns with their definitions; 4. students made up nouns semantically associated with provided verbs. I wanted to explore how many lexical items students would remember after practising them in five different contexts. [This lesson I presented new words related to the article Potato cakes; Project English: p 42]

3. ANTICIPATED TEACHING PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

I assumed that students would have problems in stage one, because it could be difficult for them to ask me questions only in English as they would not know the vocabulary they needed. I would try to encourage them to ask me in English as much as possible and only in Czech if they really could not. I also expected students would have difficulties in stage three [reading a recipe]. They should pronounce correctly the new words presented in stage two which they might not remember. I did not suppose I could avoid it but I decided to be careful in presenting the pronunciation and in correcting the mistakes students would do when reading the text.

4. LESSON AIMS

1. to present effectively the new vocabulary by talking about my favourite recipe [aids: flashcards with pictures, drawings on the blackboard, physical gestures]
2. to give students an example of an English recipe; to practise reading; to meet the vocabulary in context
3. to get students to apply the newly learned knowledge of words to different conditions and exercises; to practise their usage and spelling; to enhance the process of memorising

5. LESSON SUMMARY

Lesson plan:

1. A puzzle

-teacher asks: "What do you think my favourite meal is?"

-teacher encourages the students to find out by asking questions as /she gives an example/: Is it sweet? Is there some milk in it?

-students find the answer and teacher translates it into English [palačinky-pancakes]

Aim: to introduce the lesson theme and to motivate the students for following activities

2. Presentation of vocabulary

-teacher asks : Do you know how we prepare pancakes?

Do you know the **recipe**?

What do we need? Which **ingredients**? [**flour**]

How many **grams**?

Where can we prepare it? [in a **bowl**]

What do we do with the ingredients? [to **mix**, a **mixture**]

How is the mixture called? [**batter**]

What else do we do with the batter? [**frying pan**,
to fry, **margarine**, **to keep it warm in a dish**, **an oven**]

Do we need some fruit? How do we prepare it?[**to slice**, **to grate**]

We serve it with tea. How do we prepare tea? [**to boil**]

-during the conversation the teacher explains the words in boldface above [she lets the students guess the meaning /a recipe, ingredients, grams, to mix/, uses flashcards with pictures/oven, flour/, draws the pictures on the blackboard /bowl, batter, frying pan/ and lets students perform the verbs /to mix, to slice, to grate/]

Aim: to present quickly and sufficiently new vocabulary and to prepare students for the next tasks

3. Reading a recipe [Potato Cakes; p 42]

- teacher asks: What are potato cakes? Have you ever eaten them?
- students read the text aloud and the teacher asks again: What is the recipe for? What are the ingredients? What equipment [things] do you need? Do you think potato cakes are delicious? Which of you will prepare them for us?

Aim: to show the vocabulary in its usual context and to practise reading

4. Implication of the memorising method

-the students go through a set of four exercises [see enclosure no 1 of the handout]

a, exercise 1:

-here the students are to match the ingredients with the right recipe; they use both the new words and the already identified ones/water, eggs oil.../; the students are given 3 minutes to do the exercise

b, exercise 2:

- first, the teacher chooses the pairs of verbs and students must distinguish the differences between them [e.g. mix-mash, fry- cook, slice-grate]

-second, the students match the verbs with two examples of food that can be prepared like this [e.g. slice- lemon, potatoes]

-the students are given eight minutes for this task

- teacher checks the answers

c, exercise 3:

- students match the nouns on the left side with their definition on the right side [e.g. margarine - a yellow substance that looks like butter]
- students are given five minutes to do the exercise
- teacher checks the results

d, exercise 4:

- students should think up two things that are semantically connected with the verb [e.g. to fry-frying pan, margarine]
- the students are given four minutes

Aim: to practise new vocabulary within different contexts and to help students learn it

6. MATERIALS:

Project English 2, Issue 4, pg 42, text "Potato Cakes"

REFLECTION:

[The reflection has been based on a tape I recorded during the lesson.]

1. [a puzzle] This stage was not successful. The students did not want to guess what my favourite meal was and I had to encourage them. The failure was probably caused by the students' inability to express the questions in English. [Finally, they had to guess all in Czech e.g. Dává se do toho sůl? Je to uvařené? Je v tom mléko?] Everyone feels negative if they are not able to talk in a second language when they need it. Here it caused discouragement. I thought that the activity itself was quite interesting for the students but the situation changed when they did know how to ask relevant questions. For a success of any similar activity in the future it is necessary to strengthen the knowledge of creating questions in this particular class.

2.[presenting vocabulary] There were not any major problems in this stage. I asked the questions I had prepared [see lesson plan, stage 2] and if a new lexis appeared I asked whether somebody knew its Czech equivalent and if not, I explained it myself. Students liked my drawings on the blackboard and we had fun when they performed the verbs. I was persistent in getting students to repeat the pronunciation of new words as I expected problems in the next stage [see anticipated problems].

3.[reading] This stage went quite well even if some students mispronounced new words . I always corrected them and let them repeat the words. We read the recipe and then the students answered my questions easily. They thought that potato cakes must be very tasteful. One student offered she would prepare them and bring for us to try. [She brought them the following lesson and they were delicious, indeed.]

4.[memorising techniques]

a, This exercise was not particularly demanding; students understood the words very well but there was a problem that boys were not sure what ingredients we used to prepare each recipe as they did not cook at home. I knew this was not a serious problem so I asked them just to guess. They managed it perfectly. They were also able to finish the work in a given time limit / and we did not have any problems with time limits the rest of the stage 4 /.

b, In this part the students had problems with distinguishing the meaning of the verbs to mix and to mash. They thought they expressed the same . I explained the differences, gave an example and got one student to think up another one. When they were working on the examples, some of them asked me about the meaning of the verbs as they could not remember them.

/They asked especially about the verbs to grate, to slice./ Some students also did not give me two examples with each verb when I was checking the exercise. They were not sure if we really do the action with a particular kind of food or they did not know the English word. We had a bigger problem dealing with the verb to boil. The students wrote that we could boil tea, coffee or cocoa. I had to explain in Czech that if we boil something we keep it near the boiling point for some time and that to prepare tea or coffee we usually boil the water without tea leaves or coffee powder. Finally, the students gave me these examples: e.g. to mix-fernet and coke, rum and wine, eggs and ham; to fry -fish, potatoes, meat; to boil water, eggs, meat; to grate vegetables, cheese, potatoes; to slice meat, steaks, potatoes; to cook soup, pancakes, hamburgers; to mash potatoes.

c, This part went well . Students managed it very quickly and they enjoyed it since it was as a kind of quiz.

d, The last exercise was not very successful since the students were not very inventive. They used the same nouns for more verbs. For example they used 'cooker' and 'potatoes' for all the verbs. Finally, the students supplied e.g.: to fry: a frying pan, an onion, a steak, eggs; to slice: an apple, a knife, a bowl; to mix: a bowl, a mixer; to cook: food, a saucepan.

CONCLUSION

I consider this lesson successful despite the difficulties we faced in part 1 and 4b. I tested students' knowledge of this vocabulary the following lesson. I asked them to give me all the words they remembered from the recipe and they were able to give me about eighty percent [about words]. The best students told me the rest of the words after I gave Czech

equivalent of a lexis as a clue . Nevertheless, there was still a problem with pronunciation. Some students spelled the more demanding words as they were written: a recipe , an oven, grated, to slice .

This is an area which will need much work if I am going to use these methods in the future. It is necessary to add some effective pronunciation exercises where students can have a chance to practise each word properly. Unfortunately, my project is limited and closely focused on memorising techniques, and it cannot include additional research.

What I consider the most valuable points in this lesson /and I agreed on them with my supervising teacher/ are that students are strongly interested in working on these kinds of exercises. They are also challenged because the work is time-limited and students want to be ready first. Another advantage is that these activities help to create a healthy competitive atmosphere which is highly motivating even for the weaker students.

Similarly, as in the first lesson, I recorded this one as well. Here the efficiency was not so great because the results of the exercises were documented in the handouts, and therefore, by reading the sheets the students gave me I gained a more valuable survey than I had on the tape. However, I still consider recording lessons to be a good idea when the content of the lesson is mainly speaking.

The application of the frequent occurrence of words in this lesson had quite a positive effect on students' memory . The students gained most of the presented vocabulary and they were able to use it meaningfully in subsequent lessons. Therefore, I think that a similar set of exercises can be used again and we can expect a satisfactory result.

Enclosure 1:

1. Here are mixed two famous recipes. Match the ingredients with the right recipe.

POTATO SOUP water CHERRY CAKE

eggs

oil

flour

grated vegetable

milk

salt

sugar

margarine

potatoes

onion

fruit

2. Here is a list of seven verbs. Find the difference between them and give two examples of food that you can match with the verb [e.g. to mix: whisky and soda].

a, to mix

b, to fry

c, to boil

d, to grate

e, to slice

f, to cook

g, to mash

3. Try to match these words with their explanations:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. flour | 5. batter |
| 2. bowl | 6. pancake |
| 3. ingredients | 7. margarine |
| 4. oven | |

a, a mixture of water, flour., sugar, milk...

b, a yellow substance that looks like butter

c, a kind of food made from milk, eggs, flour and oil

d, a thing [made of glass, plastic, metal] where you mix batter or keep some fruit

e, all the things you need for a recipe

f, a thing in kitchen; you can make cakes there

g, a white powder for making bread, rolls, cakes...

4. Write two things that you need if you want to do something

[an example is done for you]

a, to boil something-water, cooker

b, to fry st.

c, to slice st.

d, to mix st.

e, to cook st.

5 PHIL'S POTATO CAKES

It's a real recipe. It's delicious.

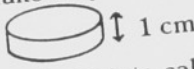
Potato cakes

Ingredients

- 400g potatoes
- 125g flour
- 40g butter or margarine
- 40g grated cheese
- salt



Instructions

- 1 Peel the potatoes and slice them.
- 2 Put the potatoes in a saucepan with some water and a bit of salt and boil them for 20 minutes.
- 3 Mash the potatoes.
- 4 Put the mashed potatoes, the flour and the butter or margarine into a bowl and mix them with a fork.
- 5 Make 12 potato cakes with the mixture like this:

- 6 Fry the potato cakes in a frying pan until they are brown on both sides.
- 7 Cover the cakes with the grated cheese. Put them in a dish and keep them warm in the oven.

34

Che

Ingredients

- 120g gr
- 100g flo
- 40g bu
- 2 eg
- sa

Instructions

- 1 Mix
- 2 Add
- 3 Mel
- it is
- 4 No
- 5 Sti
- am
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- ov
- 7 S

Hutchinson, T Project English 2 Student's book

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986

SPECIAL LESSON 3

1. GENERAL LESSON THEME

In this class we directed our attention to another fairy tale since the students were greatly interested in this topic and they themselves suggested we work on another story. Therefore, I selected a fairy tale The Three Bears. The lesson was divided into several sections: a pre-reading discussion about the fairy tale [students guessed what it was about]; a reading part; a while- -reading activity connected with presentation of new vocabulary; a set of selected activities prepared in order to apply the frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises technique.

2. THESIS FOCUS

In this lesson I wanted to prove with a specially selected set of tasks that the frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises technique provides us with a variety of exercises that are considerably effective in enhancing the storage of vocabulary in memory. Also, they are fairly flexible because we can use them to teach not only the infinitives of verbs but also their regular and irregular past forms. I aimed to show that by this technique we can consolidate students' knowledge of the verb infinitives and to help them to quickly learn new irregular verb forms. Therefore, I selected one phrasal and eight irregular verbs that students already commonly used in the infinitive and present verb forms and created a set of tasks where the different forms of all nine verbs repeated in each exercise. Working with the verbs involved three procedures: 1. selecting appropriate verbs in past tense forms from the brackets and completing given sentences [a multiple choice exercise] 2.

looking for different verb forms in a text and transforming them into infinitives that were subsequently translated into Czech; 3. writing the beginning of the fairy tale in short and finishing the story [students had to transform the provided infinitives into past forms and use them in 7-9 sentences long narration].

3. ANTICIPATED TEACHING PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Going through part 4c, I anticipated that the students might have difficulties here because it required their own work. Students were to create seven to nine sentences, finish the story and use given verbs in past tense which seemed to always be a huge problem. To make it easier I decided to organise the task as group-work and to encourage students to keep the stories very simple.

4. LESSON AIMS

The lesson aims were:

1. to get students to anticipate the facts about the story from looking at the pictures
2. to practise listening to the voice of a non-native speaker in stage 2
3. to present new vocabulary in a while-reading activity
4. to put into practice the memorising technique through a set of different exercises and prove its effect on the extension of the ability to learn new words
5. to help students learn the form of irregular verbs in past tense
6. to get students to produce a piece of writing using correct verb forms [finishing the story]

5. LESSON SUMMARY

Lesson Plan:

1. A pre-reading discussion

- teacher writes the title of the fairy tale on the blackboard and asks what it means in Czech
- teacher gets students to look at the pictures and asks: What is the story about? Who are the heroes? / teacher explains the word *heroes* / Where are they?
- students guess from the pictures

Aim: to lead students in the lesson

2. Reading the story

- teacher reads the beginning of the story aloud for students
- students follow in their photocopies

Aim: to practice listening to the voice of a non-native speaker and to learn the beginning of the story

3. A while-reading activity

- teacher asks questions: What did the bears have?

What does Mother Bear do every morning?

What happened with the porridge?

-as the students give their answers, the teacher extends them and introduces new vocabulary [*middle-sized*, *teeny-weeny*:: by comparison to big; *porridge* : explanation in Czech; past forms of irregular verbs -*ate*, *sat*, *ran away*, *fell asleep*, *broke*, *held out*, *kept*, *slept* - and of a phrasal verb

-looked after - through a chart with infinitives and their past forms on the blackboard]

Aim: to find out whether students understood the story and to present new vocabulary

4. Applying the memorising technique [see the attached sheet]

a, exercise 1:

-students choose nine suitable verbs in past tense from the brackets to fill in the sentences so that they express the ideas stated in the fairy tale as precisely as possible; [some of these sentences make sense even if the incorrect verb is chosen but the students should show their understanding of the text by selecting the right word]

-teacher checks the answers

b, exercise 2:

-students are given a text summarising the beginning of the story

-teacher explains that they should find all the verbs in the article, write them down, transform into infinitives and add their translations [the chart with the verb infinitives and their past tense forms used in stage 3 is deleted off the blackboard so that students work from memory]]

-teacher checks the answers

c, exercise 3:

-teacher explains the instructions [students are asked to finish the story in 7-9 sentences using the same nine verbs that need to be transformed from the provided infinitives into past tense]

- teacher divides the class into groups of four [the groups are of mixed abilities and also genders]

- students create their sentences and then a speaker from each group reads their version
- teacher points out major student mistakes

Aim: to use the verbs in different tasks in order to help students to remember it easily

6. MATERIALS:

Carruth, J. Goldilocks and three bears

London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1991

REFLECTION

1.[a pre-reading discussion] This stage went smoothly as students translated the title easily as they knew a similar fairy tale in Czech.

2. [reading] The second part of the lesson also did not bring any difficulty since I read the fairy tale and students only listened.

3. [a while-reading activity] In this stage the students had no major difficulties too because they understood most of the text . They managed to find the answers to my questions in the text if they did not remember them and I presented some new vocabulary by extending their sentences and explanation of the words [middle-sized, teeny-weeny, porridge]. Then I wrote the two forms of the verbs in a chart on the blackboard and explained that these are the infinitives and the past forms. I showed them how to pronounce the past forms, asked some students to repeat their pronunciation and had them to make up simple sentences where a verb

would be used. They produced sentences as: I ran away from school. Jirka sat on a dirty chair. I ate bad lunch today.

4.[memorising technique]

a, exercise 1

The results of this exercise were quite interesting. It was obvious that the students did not think about the original text I presented but they translated the sentences into Czech word by word. Therefore, they made only one type of mistake - in expressions that are similar in Czech and where we use the verb I selected as a distractor e.g. Every evening Baby Bear *went* asleep in his bed. If we translate the sentence as the students probably did we have a perfectly correct sentence in Czech: Každý večer šel malý medvídek spát do své postýlky. The other incorrectly used verbs were: watered, helped.

In evaluating the task I think it was a very good preparation for the following assignments. The mistakes the students made enabled them to realise the correct usage of the verbs and they received a chance to become aware of the past verb forms.

b, exercise 2

This exercise went very well. To my surprise, the students worked quickly and did not have any problems which was probably the reason why they liked the exercise. I thought that the task supported their positive motivation and even the weakest students completed the whole exercise. The only mistakes they made were when transforming the verb "prepared" they wrote *to prepar* and when translating the verb to come, they interpreted it as *to go*.

c, exercise 3

I divided the students into groups. First, the students did not like the division but then they started to co-operate and they worked enthusiastically. They were eager to reproduce what they wrote, because these were their own ideas and they wanted to prove that the end of their story was the best. One group wrote this: "The bears went to the wood for some wood. Girl came to bear's house. She saw 3 chairs, 3 beds, and 3 bowls. She ate porridge from teeny- weeny bowl and she brought it. Then she fell asleep. Bears came back to home and they kill the girl."

The students managed the task considerably well. In this case the group misused the verb *brought* which shows that they were not sure what *broke* meant. One other group made the same mistake and both of them a few other grammatical and syntactical ones. A major problem occurred with the wrong usage of articles and the transformation of verbs that I did not present in the lesson in past tense. Also, the children were still thinking in their mother tongue and it reflected in the translations. On the other hand, they tried hard to make use of the given verbs and managed it quite well. In addition, the students liked the activity and they produced worthy pieces of writing showing their real interest.

What I consider as another important and positive aspect is that this task helped students not only to remember and to learn utilisation of past verb forms, but that it also provided a meaningful written practice where students showed their knowledge of constructing a narration.

Conclusion

This lesson seemed to be reasonably successful. It proved that a teacher using the memorising technique of frequent occurrence of words disposed of a variety of flexible tasks to apply in a lesson which avoids the danger of

one-sidedness in our course of teaching. The class also confirmed that in a properly selected set of exercises we can consolidate students knowledge of verb infinitives and help them to remember the difficult irregular forms of verbs in past tense.

Except for these achievements, there is another important provision occurring in this class - the involvement of basic skills other than grammar and vocabulary. In this class students meaningfully practised writing [stage 4, ex. 3], reading [stage 4, ex. 2] and listening [stage 2]. This shows that when we apply the frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises technique, we can utilise the lesson for more purposes. In short, the practice of all the skills can be realised along with application of this technique.

What I see as another positive aspect is that students got a chance to use their imagination and creativity here [stage 4, exercise 3]. They loved this work and appreciated it. Definitely, it was positive motivation for them. In addition, teachers can use these exercises to make the atmosphere in the class more competitive or try to encourage the sense of appurtenance by letting the students work in groups.

Enclosure 2

1. Choose the best answer:

- a, Father Bear _____ [watered, looked after] the flowers.
- b, Mother Bear _____ [kept, cleaned] the rooms neat and tidy.
- c, Father Bear _____ [sat, was] on his very big chair.
- d, Mother Bear _____ [got up, slept] in her middle-sized bed.
- e, Baby Bear _____ [ate, drank] out of his teeny weeny bowl.
- f, When the porridge was ready, Baby bear _____ [gave, held] out his bowl to fill.
- g, Every evening Baby Bear _____ [went, fell] asleep in his bed.
- h, Sometimes the porridge was too hot to eat and the Baby Bear _____ [ran, were] away to woods.
- i, Baby Bear never _____ [broke, helped] anything in the house.

2. Find all the verbs in this article. Write them down and add their infinitives. Then translate the infinitives into Czech.

There lived three bears in the middle of some woods. Father Bear, Mother Bear and Baby Bear. They had a garden and Father Bear looked after it. Mother Bear kept the rooms clean. Baby Bear always sat on his own teeny-weeny chair, slept in his own teeny-weeny chair and ate out of his teeny-weeny bowl. He was a good bear. He never broke anything in the house and he was always in his bed in time. Every evening he quickly fell asleep in his lovely bed and slept until the next morning.

Every day Mother Bear prepared porridge. One day it was too hot so the bears wanted to go for a short walk. Baby Bear was faster then his parents and he ran away. Later, a girl came to bear's house.

3. Write the beginning of the story very shortly again and then finish the fairy tale. In groups, create 7-9 sentences and use the given verbs in their past tense forms. [At least 6 of them.]

- to eat
- to hold out
- to look after
- to sit
- to break
- to fall asleep
- to run away
- to keep
- to sleep

The Three Bears

Carrauth, J. Goldilocks and the three bears

London The Hamlyn Publishing Group; 1991



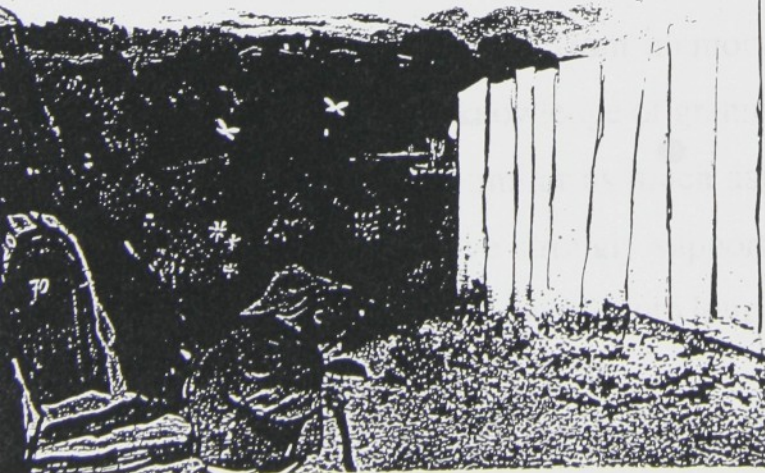
ONCE upon a time there were Three Bears: Father Bear, Mother Bear and Baby Bear.

They all lived together in a pretty little house right in the middle of some woods.

5 Father Bear looked after the flowers in the garden. Mother Bear kept the rooms neat and tidy, and Baby Bear helped with the washing up and the dusting.

Father Bear always sat on his own very
10 big chair, slept in his own very big bed and
ate out of his own very big bowl.

Mother Bear always sat on her own middle-
sized chair, slept in her own middle-sized
bed and ate out of her own middle-sized
15 bowl.



Baby Bear always sat on his own teeny-
weeny chair, slept in his own teeny-weeny
bed and ate out of his own teeny-weeny
bowl.

20 Every morning Mother Bear went into her
tidy kitchen and made porridge.

When it was smooth and creamy, Baby Bear
held out his bowl and Mother Bear filled it
to the top with lovely porridge.

25 Then Father Bear held out his bowl and
Mother Bear filled that to the top. Then
she filled her own bowl and, when that was
done, the Three Bears sat down to their
breakfast.

30 One morning, Mother Bear cooked the
porridge just as usual, but when Baby Bear
tasted it he found that it was really much too
hot to eat.



SPECIAL LESSON 4

1. GENERAL LESSON THEME

In this lesson we focused our attention on memorising new lexical items by a multiple repetition of new words in different tasks as well but this time we worked especially with past participle verb forms. For this purpose I selected the article *Hot Dog And Cool Cat* [p 52, Project 2]. The lesson was organised into these stages: listening to the article and looking for specific information; presentation of new vocabulary and working on the last set of exercises dealing with the frequent occurrence of words technique.

2. THESIS FOCUS

This class centred on a fairly exacting set of exercises for memorising method. My purpose was to clearly present the vocabulary of the article and then use it in following meaningful tasks in order that the students would store the vocabulary effectively. The set included: 1. an opposites matching exercise; 2. a gap-filling exercise; 3. a reproduction of the article. The last task was highly demanding. I wanted to explore whether after presenting and practising new words from the text, students would be able to reconstruct the article from memory using not only newly presented words but also their knowledge of grammar because their task was to create complete sentences similar as much as possible to the original text. This procedure should have strongly supported the effect of the technique and contribute to storing the words into long term memory.

3. ANTICIPATED TEACHING PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

The only problem I anticipated here was that the final exercise [stage 3, ex. 3] would be too difficult for my students as it required their exact reproduction of the textbook article. Therefore, if the students became stuck in this exercise, I decided to provide them with the verbs in present perfect tense that appeared in the text and that would direct them through the writing.

4. LESSON AIMS

1. to practise listening [students will listen for specific information]
2. to present efficiently new vocabulary so that students are able to work with it
3. to practise the present perfect tense and its form
4. to get students to find out the opposites of five new words
5. to get the students to fill the missing words in the text in order to prepare them for the final exercise
6. to get the students to reproduce the article as exactly as possible

5. LESSON SUMMARY

Lesson Plan:

1. Listening for specific information
 - teacher asks students to read the questions related to the article on their photocopies, to translate them into L1 and to be ready to answer the questions after the listening
 - [Who were the characters? How much money did the criminals take? Whose was the robot detective?]
 - students listen to the text once
 - the teacher asks the questions and students answer them

Aim: to practise listening for specific information; to introduce the lesson

2. A presentation of vocabulary

[the teacher prepares the vocabulary and its transcription on the blackboard before the lesson]

- the teacher asks questions about the new words: What does it mean 'I have invented' in Czech?

Who is a *criminal*?

What were the criminals doing in the National Bank? [*to steal*]

If I tell you that you are a *silly* boy or that somebody is silly, how will you understand it?

Every bank has a *safe*. What is it?

What does it mean *to leave* money in a safe?

Imagine that Jakub got a five. I will say: "*It does not matter.*" What does it mean in Czech?

[I have dropped a pen deliberately.] I say: I must pick the pen up.

What is it to *pick up* in Czech?

The policemen arrested Cool Cat. What is it *to arrest* ?

[the teacher writes the word 'school' on the blackboard without one 'o']

She says: Here is a *mistake*. I made a mistake. Explain what happened in Czech.

-after each lexis the teacher introduces spelling of the word on the blackboard and points out its pronunciation

- teacher points at the infinitives of verbs on the blackboard that she prepared before the lesson to save time [to break, to find, to take, to run, to do] and introduces their irregular past participles [broken, found, taken, run, done]

Aim: to present vocabulary of the story

3. Applying the memorising technique

a, exercise 1

-in this exercise the students should match a word from the left column with its opposite from the right one [e.g. silly-clever; to open- to close etc.]

- the students work out the exercise according to the given example and then the teacher checks the answers

b, exercise 2

- the students are provided with a text of the article with eleven expressions left out [stealing, arrived, invented, have broken, done, have run, criminals, silly, matter, mistake, arrested]; the items are written above the article in a wrong order

- the students fill the words in the blanks

-the teacher checks the answers

b, exercise 3

- the teacher explains the instructions and divides the students into groups of four [the students close their books and try to rewrite the text as exactly as they can]

-they are given ten minutes for completing the task

-the groups perform the story for the class

Aim: to work effectively with the new vocabulary in order to help students remember it

6. MATERIALS:

Project English 2, Issue 5, pg 52, text "Hod Dog And Cool Cat"

REFLECTION

1.[listening] The first part of the lesson was quite easy for the students. Nevertheless, they had a slight difficulty in translating the last question that contained the relative pronoun *whose* . First I had to make its meaning clear and then the students translated it correctly.

During the listening I let the students follow the text in their textbooks as they were to meet some forms of past participles for the first time, and it would be too difficult for them to find the information out without seeing the article.

After listening I checked students' responses to the questions and all of them were right.

2. [a presentation of new vocabulary]

In this stage I made a mistake. The first part of the presentation of new lexical items went smoothly because the students either already knew the meanings or they guessed them very well and so the explanation was easy for me. I made clear pronunciation of the lexis on the blackboard where I had prepared their transcriptions in advance. Unfortunately, I did not have enough time before the start of the lesson, and therefore, I forgot to prepare infinitives of the verbs on blackboard, which the students would meet in the text in past participle forms,. The result was that I did not present the past participle verb forms which caused minor confusion later [stage 3b].

3. [memorising technique]

a, This stage went very well. Students did not need a lot of time and they got the right answers. I thought this was an interesting exercise for them because the pupils had mostly worked only with Project English 2 and this type of task was not often used there .

b, In this exercise the confusion I referred to in stage 2. occurred. I explained the instructions and asked the students to work. Soon they did not know how to proceed. When I tried to find out what happened, I realised they did not understand the past participle forms e.g. *have broken* or *done* and they did not know what to supply to the blanks preceded by the auxiliary verb *have* [e.g. A police car has ----- , Cool Cat.] I had to interrupt the activity and present quickly the past participles of the verbs. Then the exercise followed without difficulties. I gave the students enough time to finish and then I checked the answers. I always selected a student and they gave me a lexical expression related to the number in the text. They chose the right answers but often mispronounced the words so I repeatedly had to correct them.

I chose this exercise as an important preparation for the following step and according to the results, it seemed to be a good selection.

3c, This part represented the most difficult exercise I did with my students during the final paper project. It centred on the precise reproduction of the text. The students were forced to use their memory a great deal and they had to really concentrate and co-operate to be the best group. My supervising teacher confirmed that this was a very challenging, motivating task and that the students enjoyed it.

The students had ten minutes for preparation. When I discussed the time with my supervisor before the class, she was afraid it would not be a sufficient amount. Surprisingly, the students managed to finish within the time limit and we could evaluate the versions of two groups in this lesson. [Because of the time pressure I had to check the version of the third group in the following lesson.]

The results were positive. One group was fairly precise. Here the students were able to recall most of the sentences. Nevertheless, we met some difficulties. Pupils' performances showed that they were sufficiently aware of

the word meanings but they often lacked knowledge of the form. Therefore, they used the lexical items in suitable contexts but they made grammatical mistakes when constructing the sentences [e.g. Broke the window! Pick the money! I have taked] The most frequent mistakes were missing articles because these learners were of the lower intermediate level and still thought in Czech while working. Thus, they easily forgot to put the articles in and were prone to make word-order mistakes. In addition to this, we had to face the same problems as usual. Performing their texts, the students were not thinking about the pronunciation and they made quite a few mistakes [e.g. have run /run/; have found /found/; have picked /pickid /]. I did not correct them during their presentation as I did not want to disturb them, but I pointed out the problems afterwards so the students had a chance to realise their weakness and be aware for next time.

A very positive provision of this activity was the way the students co-operated. Every member of a particular group tried really hard to support their members and they worked enthusiastically. Another positive aspect was that despite their mistakes, the students constructed the text and they themselves were satisfied with their work which seemed to be a highly motivating factor.

CONCLUSION

Generally, this lesson was successful even if I made a mistake that influenced the dynamics of the rest of the lesson. The exercises progressed from the easiest to the most demanding where students tested their general awareness of English language utilisation. They were also given the chance to revise and strengthen their knowledge of grammar. Owing to the exacting character of the exercise and to the necessity to using memory a great deal, the storage of words seemed to be influenced more than in previous lessons, and therefore,

more effective. The confirming proof was that when the students worked with the words the following lesson, they did it fairly naturally. Some incorrectly pronounced words appeared but the pupils confirmed their ability to use the vocabulary properly in meaningful contexts and in correct forms.

In my opinion, this set of tasks was highly useful and I would use it again. Next time I would be careful and not repeat the same mistakes. The other aspect I want to change is to plan the lesson so that students would have more time to work on presentation of their texts. This way they could be more careful about the usage of both grammar and pronunciation.

Enclosure 3

QUESTIONS:

1. Who were the characters?
2. How much money did the criminals take?
3. Whose was the robot detective?

EXERCISES:

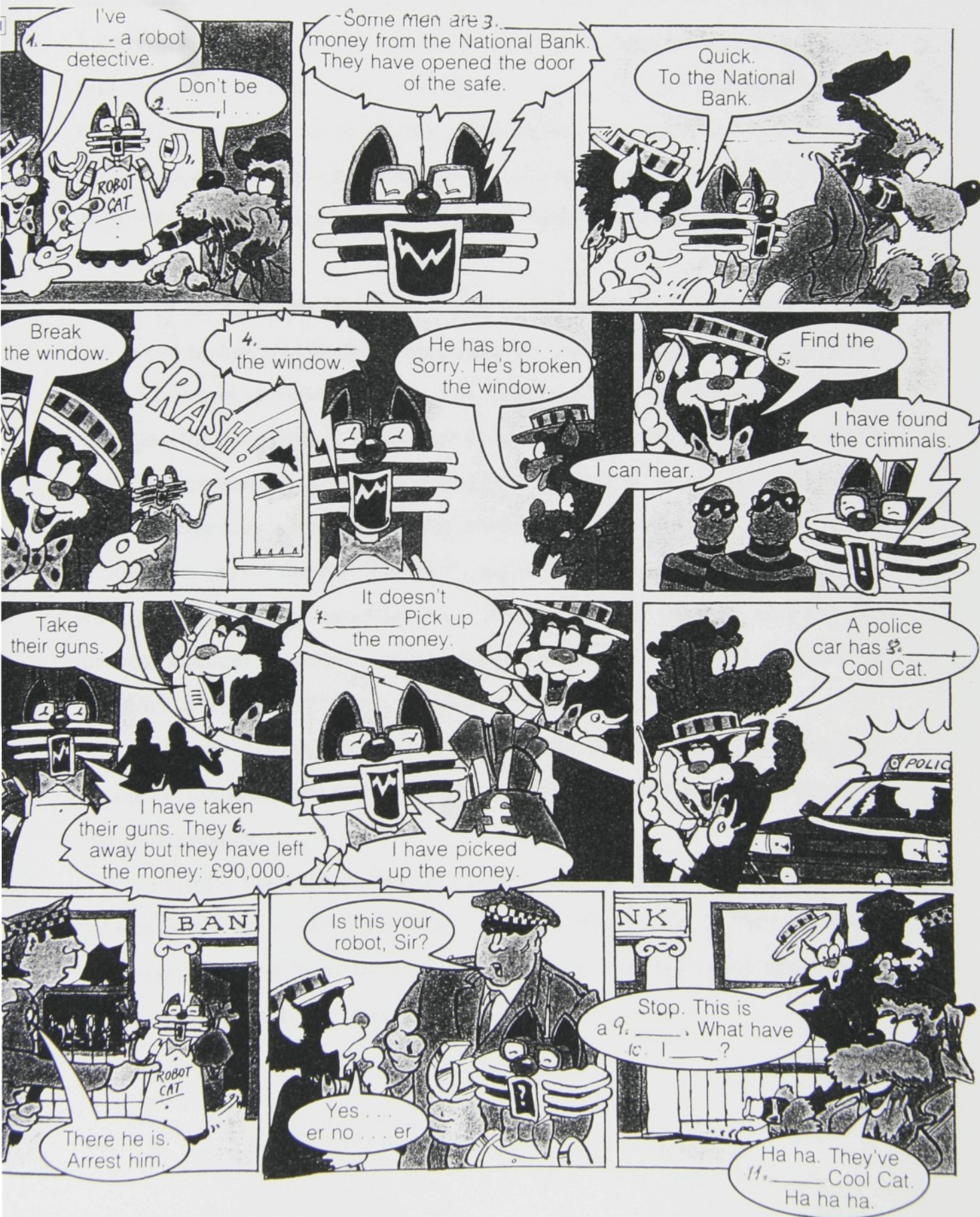
1. Here are five pairs of opposites. Try to match a word from the e left column with its opposite from the right one.

silly	to let somebody go, make somebody free
a girl	to come back
to open	to give something back
to run away	clever
to steal	a boy
to arrest	to close

2. Turn the page and fill the missing words in the text. Use the words given above the article.

3. You will work in groups of four. Close your textbooks and think of the text about the robot detective. With your partners try to write down the text as exactly as possible. Then perform it for the class.

STEALING, ARRIVED, INVENTED, HAVE BROKEN, DONE, HAVE RAN, CRIMINALS,
 SILLY, MATTER, MISTAKE, ARRESTED



III. CONCLUSION

The main aim of this project was to verify that some memorising techniques lead to a greater storage of vocabulary and assist learning with longer-lasting effects. This paper represents my intentions to find enjoyable and motivating methods of learning new vocabulary that are applicable in ordinary classroom environments. Memorising processes that pupils apply most frequently are often routine and insufficient. Therefore, I made explorations in this area and investigated effectiveness of three memorising techniques.

In my first special lesson I tried two mnemonic devices: loci and the key-word technique. Students' unsatisfactory performances in utilising newly learned words in subsequent classes indicated that this particular style of applying the memorising techniques connected with enriching vocabulary by associations was not effective. I found three reasons why they did not work.

Firstly, my experience is that working with images is a very personal matter. To create images that really assist the enhancement of vocabulary storage requires two conditions: a sufficient amount of time to carry the process out and a suitable environment. This means allowing a student to consider a selected lexis on their own for as long as necessary.

The second negative factor is high time consumption. Working with images often takes too much valuable lesson time and it does not seem to be worth the results.

Thirdly, I felt the mnemonics were overused when applied to so many lexical items in a forty-five minute period. My opinion is they are more effective when utilised only with vocabulary that represent the biggest obstacle for students to remember.

Despite these three negative factors, I am deeply persuaded that key-word, loci and paired associates can be highly useful techniques in learning new vocabulary. If we deal with mnemonics individually, have time for it and may apply them only to some words, then we can be very successful. I myself use the techniques [especially key word] and I can confirm they work effectively.

After testing the utilisation of mnemonics I wanted to find other memorising techniques that would work effectively in the classroom. I realised that frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises might be convenient because it included aspects promoting the storage of words into long term memory [repeated usage of the same words in one lesson, contextualization, variety and application of logical thinking] and was meaningful and interesting to my students.

I investigated the effects of frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of exercises in three special lessons. Afterwards, the learners proved their ability to use the target vocabulary correctly with regard to meaning and context and they did it fairly automatically.

The most positive aspect of the technique concerned a huge amount of flexible tasks a teacher could use. This made individual classes different and increased students' interest. Individual tasks in different sets were time-limited so they were strongly challenging. The students were always interested, co-operated well during group-work and pair-work and they set up a healthy competitive atmosphere which was another positive point.

On the other hand, we faced pronunciation problems connected with the target words in each lesson. Although the students were able to work with presented lexical items and they remembered the vocabulary well, some mispronounced words always occurred. I thought it was because the students heard a proper model only two or three times [during the vocabulary

presentation, reading a text or listening to the tape]. Therefore, it seems that this technique should be accompanied by special pronunciation practice where the learners are offered a chance to discover correct pronunciation of target words.

We also have to take into consideration the time the teacher devotes to this technique. It usually takes about half of the teaching period. However, if a teacher selects an appropriate set of activities, the students can practise through it all the four skills [see the summary of lesson 3]. This demonstrates that sensibly chosen activities may include a practice of any skill or subskill [writing, reading, listening, speaking, pronunciation, vocabulary] and we definitely cannot consider the whole procedure as a waste of time and the spent amount of time as a negative aspect.

In summary, I have to say I am persuaded that utilisation of memorising techniques should become a normal part of learning new vocabulary, both at school and at home, because they are valuable and effective devices to our memory and they assist easier learning. However, we should always bear in mind that not all the techniques are suitable for use in a classroom environment. One of the techniques that worked was the frequent occurrence of a group of words in a set of appropriately prepared exercises. It enabled to approach learning a new word [as well as memorising] from more than one angle and thus contributed to effective teaching and learning vocabulary.

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PROHLÁŠENÍ

Souhlasím, aby moje závěrečná práce byla podle směrnice, uveřejněné v Pokynech a inf. VŠST 1/1975, zapůjčena nebo odprodána za účelem využití jejího obsahu.

Jsem si vědoma toho, že závěrečná práce je majetkem školy a že s ní nemohu sama disponovat.

Souhlasím, aby po pěti letech byla závěrečná práce vrácena na níže uvedenou adresu, nebo v případě nedoručitelnosti skartována.

Lenka Žmitková

.....
podpis

Jméno a příjmení: Pod Lenka Žmitková

Adresa stálého bydliště: Pod lipou 1647

Horice v Podkrkonoší

508 01

Adresa podniku, kde budete pracovat (pokud víte): _____