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ID перевірки:  
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Дата перевірки:  
10.05.2021 17:28:20 EEST

Тип перевірки:  
Doc vs Internet

Дата звіту:  
10.05.2021 21:15:37 EEST

ID користувача:  
100006701

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Кількість сторінок: 49 Кількість слів: 15948 Кількість символів: 109015 Розмір файлу: 1.72 MB ID файлу: 1007906797

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**Закарпатський угорський інститут ім. Ференца Ракоці II**  
**Кафедра філології**

Реєстраційний № \_\_\_\_\_

**Кваліфікаційна робота**

**ЯК ОТРИМАТИ ЗНАЧЕННЯ НОВОЇ ЛЕКСИКИ ЗА ДОПОМОГОЮ ДВОХ  
СТРАТЕГІЙ; СЛОВНИКА ТА/АБО ВІДГАДУВАННЯ «УМОВИВОДУ»**

**МАЦКО ШОМА ШАНДОР ОЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ**

Студент 4-го курсу

Освітня програма 014 Середня освіта. Мова і література (англійська)  
Ступінь вищої освіти: бакалавр

Тема затверджена Вченою радою ЗУІ

Протокол № 7 /27 жовтня 2020 року

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Протокол № \_\_\_\_\_ / 202\_

**Закарпатський угорський інститут ім. Ференца Ракоці ІІ**

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Берегове  
2021

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Department of Philology**

**HOW TO GET THE MEANING OF A NEW VOCABULARY BY USING  
TWO STRAGIES; DICTIONARY AND/OR GUESSING “INFERENCE”**

Bachelor’s Thesis

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**Professional Education program:**

014 Secondary education. Language and literature (English)

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## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	5
PART 1. Defining “vocabulary” .....	7
1.1 What is Vocabulary? .....	7
1.1.1 Defining “word” .....	8
1.2 Active and passive vocabulary .....	8
1.3 Types of vocabulary .....	11
1.4 The importance of vocabulary .....	12
1.5 The classification of vocabulary .....	15
1.5.1 Vocabulary levels .....	17
1.6 Early stages of vocabulary development .....	18
1.7 Techniques in teaching vocabulary .....	23
1.8 Getting the meaning by using dictionaries .....	26
1.9 Getting the meaning by inference .....	26
PART 2. Empirical research on using dictionaries and/or guessing (inference) .....	30
2.1 Research questions and hypotheses .....	30
2.2 Participants .....	31
2.3 Instruments .....	31
2.4 The procedure of the research .....	31
2.5 Interpretation of the results .....	32
2.5.1. Questionnaire results .....	32
2.6 Conclusions of the research .....	39
CONCLUSIONS .....	41
REFERENCES .....	43
SUMMARY IN UKRAINIAN .....	45
APPENDIX .....	47

## ЗМІСТ

ВСТУП.....	5
РОЗДІЛ 1. Визначення «лексики» .....	7
1.1. Що таке «лексика»?.....	7
1.1.1. Визначення «слова».....	8
1.2. Активний та пасивний словниковий запас .....	8
1.3. Види лексики .....	11
1.4. Важливість словникового запасу.....	12
1.5. Класифікація лексики .....	15
1.5.1. Рівні лексики .....	17
1.6. Ранні етапи розвитку словникового запасу. ....	18
1.7. Прийоми навчання лексиці.....	23
1.8. Отримання значення за допомогою словників.....	26
1.9. Отримання значення шляхом «умовиду». ....	26
РОЗДІЛ 2. Емпіричне дослідження використання словників та/або відгадування .....	30
2.1. Питання та гіпотези дослідження .....	30
2.2. Учасники .....	31
2.3. Засоби .....	31
2.4. Хід дослідження .....	31
2.5. Інтерпретація результатів .....	32
2.5.1. Результати анкетування.....	32
2.6. Висновки дослідження.....	39
ВИСНОВКИ.....	41
СПИСОК ВИКОРИСТАНОЇ ЛІТЕРАТУРИ.....	43
РЕЗЮМЕ .....	45
ДОДАТКИ.....	47

## INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays a major role in a language and the larger your vocabulary the greater your fluency in a language. The greater your vocabulary, the easier it is to develop your language abilities. For starters, having this knowledge will give you access to a broader range of learning materials designed for native and non-native speakers alike. It will also assist you in comprehending these words in their meaning, automatically expanding your vocabulary and developing your language skills without the need to consult a dictionary or seek guidance. Furthermore, the more vocabulary words you know, the better you will be at deciphering the new vocabulary by breaking them down into morphemes (smaller parts). The term “unhappy” is a clear example of this. We have [un-] and [happy] when we break down this term. We can deduce the meaning of the word by knowing that the prefix [un] is a derivational morpheme (i.e., it inverts the meaning of the morpheme to which it is attached). (Nation, 2008) All of this saves time, improves the language student’s morale, and aids in the development of fluency. It is believed that they are capable of dealing with more complicated texts or social circumstances, when exposed to a larger vocabulary pool and allowing to expand their knowledge of the second language.

A large number of studies have been published on the subject of using dictionaries and/or guessing (inference), and the researcher Nation (2008) has done a significant amount of research. Sternberg (1985) has extensively worked on the subject of inference, and Jensen (1980) has contributed to the research of the topic as well.

The object of the thesis focuses on methods which students’ use when they meet a new word.

The subject of the thesis is the problem what students face when they try to guess the meaning.

The aim of the thesis is to find out what the best method for studying new words for students is.

The thesis has three hypotheses, the first of which claims that in the majority of cases, students consult a dictionary when they encounter a new phrase/word. The second hypothesis is that when only contextual clues are used, guessing strategies are ineffective. The third hypothesis is that using dictionaries to learn from the context is preferable.

The thesis was given the following tasks: analyse the theory behind using only guessing methods, analyse the theory behind using only dictionary, determine how efficient guessing methods are over dictionary, and determine the best method for students to use when learning new words.

The research was conducted with the help of a questionnaire which concentrated on the students' dictionary using habits as well as how often they use dictionaries when they find a new word and how often they use guessing methods and how efficient they are in doing so.

The thesis is made up of an introduction, 2 parts, conclusions, resume, references, and an appendix. Part 1 provides a theoretical and conceptual framework for the study by reviewing literature on vocabulary and the usage of dictionary while studying new words and or inferring the meaning of a word. Part 2 presents the procedure, results and discussion of an empirical investigation on the effectiveness of using guessing methods.



## PART 1

### DEFINING “VOCABULARY”

The aim of this part of my thesis is to define the term vocabulary and get a clear view on what is meant by vocabulary, as well as different types of vocabulary. This part will contain a comprehensive analysis on the importance of vocabulary; in the follow up it will summarize what is known about passive and active vocabulary, by going forward we will investigate how the vocabulary grows and develops.

In short, the following topics will be discussed throughout this part of the thesis: *Definition of vocabulary, Defining “word”, The importance of vocabulary Types of vocabulary, Vocabulary growth, The size of vocabulary.*

#### 1.1 What is vocabulary?

The definition of vocabulary could be as plain as ‘words of a language,’ which is probably how most people think of it, and this is right because vocabulary does deal with words. However, as this section would show, vocabulary is far more than just a set of words. Recent vocabulary research is based on an interpretation of *lexis*, the Greek term for word, which is translated as “word” in English. “refers to all the words in a language, the 2 Teaching Vocabulary entire vocabulary of a language”. So it should come as no surprise that vocabulary often contains lexical chunks, which are phrases of group of words, such as Good morning and Nice to meet you, that children and adults learn as standard lexical units, according to studies. These phrases contain more than one word but have a consistent, formulaic use and account for a large portion of spoken or written English language usage.

They are fundamental to English vocabulary learning and thus deserve teachers’ attention when teaching vocabulary. They are also known as formulaic sequences. So, vocabulary can be described as a language’s words, including single items and phrases or chunks of many words that convey a specific meaning in the same way that individual words do. Vocabulary focuses on individual lexical items—words with particular meaning(s), but it also contains lexical phrases or chunks. (Michael, 2013 p.1-2)

### **1.1.1 Defining “word”**

The definition of a word can be interpreted in a variety of ways, but three important aspects that we must be conscious of and concentrate on are shape, context, and usage. Nation (2001) defines a word's shape as its pronunciation (spoken form), spelling (written form), and any word sections that comprise this specific object (such as a prefix, root, and suffix). The word *uncommunicative* is an example of a word element, where the prefix *un-* means negative or contrary, *communicate* is the root word, and *-ive* is a suffix denoting that someone or something is capable of doing something. In this context, they all apply to someone or something that is unable to communicate, therefore uncommunicative. According to Nation (2001), meaning includes the way form and meaning interact, in other words, the term and what things it applies to, as well as the connections that come to mind when people think about a particular word or phrase. Nation described use as “the grammatical functions of the word or expression, the collocations that normally accompany it, and any restrictions on its use, in terms of frequency, degree, and so on.” Nation (2001) stated that there is a receptive and efficient dimension to form, context, and usage, so understanding these three dimensions for each word or phrase actually requires 18 different types of lexical information, as given in Table 1 (see p. 9).

When teachers teach vocabulary to students in order to improve understanding of terms and phrases, helping them learn any and many of these various components helps them improve their English vocabulary knowledge and usage. After reviewing Table 1, please take a Reflective Break to consider your students' specific English strengths and limitations in terms of these three areas of vocabulary awareness. (Nation, 2001, 40- 42)

### **1.2 Active and passive vocabulary**

According to Meara (1997), one of the main differences between active and passive vocabulary is the directionality of the relation. A word is considered passive if it is only linked to the rest of the lexicon in a unidirectional manner, with no knowledge flowing back. Active vocabulary objects, on the other hand, “have several types of connections to their parent lexicons” (Meara 1997, 119). As a result, other terms can easily unlock the active vocabulary “because it has several incoming and outgoing connections with other words” (Nation 2001, 25). External stimuli, such as hearing or seeing the form, may be the only way to unlock passive vocabulary pieces.

**Table 1. What is involved in knowing a word? (Nation 2001,40-41)**

Aspect	Component	Receptive knowledge	Productive knowledge
Form	Spoken	What does the word sound like?	How is the word pronounced?
	Written	What does the word look like?	How is the word written and spelled?
	Word parts	What parts are recognizable in this word?	What word parts are needed to express the meaning?
Meaning	Form and meaning	What meaning does this word form signal?	What word form can be used to express this meaning?
	Concepts and referents	What is included in this concept?	What items can the concept refer to?
	Associations	What other words does this make people think of?	What other words could people use instead of this one?
Use	Grammatical functions	In what patterns does the word occur?	In what patterns must people use this word?
	Collocations	What words or types of words occur with this one?	What words or types of words must people use with this one?
	Constraints	Where, when, and how often would people expect to meet this word?	Where, when, and how often can people use this word?

The receptive/productive division refers to the receptive skills of listening and reading versus the productive skills of speaking and writing. Thus, the language is not without flaws. For example, some scholars question why reading and listening should be classified as passive, as this implies that the learner does not contribute much to these activities. Furthermore, the words active and passive imply a strong distinction between the two types of vocabulary awareness, which is not the case. Rather, there are different levels of understanding an expression, which can be thought of as a knowledge scale (Nation 2001, 25).

For example, other researchers believe that passive vocabulary includes the active vocabulary as well as at least three other types of vocabulary knowledge: one for words that are only partially known, another for words that are avoided in active use for some reason (perhaps because their pronunciation is difficult), and a third for low frequency words that are almost never used in production. The more times a learner encounters an object, the more likely it is that new connections will form between old and new information gained from these encounters. As a result, the phrase progresses along the spectrum from passive to active vocabulary. Another fascinating feature of vocabulary knowledge is the degree of control a learner has over word knowledge for a specific object. The important factors here are whether a learner can easily access the item or whether a prompt or a particularly rich context is required for a learner to recall a given word. This may be due to the amount of contacts a particular object has made with other units once again. The more associated an object is, the more likely it is to be enabled. Because of the regular prior activation, the activation threshold will be low. Automaticity is often confused with a high level of control “the extent to which learners can automatically retrieve and produce words in language use”. (Saskia, 2010, pp. 55-56)

The words a learner acquires in a foreign language must satisfy a variety of requirements. It is difficult for an instructor to determine which words will be particularly useful and interesting for a particular learner, as well as whether these things will be understood in all of the ways that are relevant to the learner, i.e., whether the information is deep enough. Finally, learners should have a great deal of control over the most relevant objects, allowing for quick access and comprehension. (Saskia, 2010)

### 1.3 Types of vocabulary

*Listed in order of most ample to most limited.*

#### ***Reading vocabulary:***

The vocabulary of a literate person is made up of all the words that he or she can remember when reading. This is the most common form of vocabulary, simply because reading exposes a reader to more words than listening does.

#### ***Listening vocabulary:***

When listening to speech, a person's listening vocabulary is made up of all the words he or she recognizes. Using signals such as sound, expressions, the subject of discussion, and the social meaning of the interaction, people can still understand terms they haven't heard before.

#### ***Speaking vocabulary:***

Many of a person's words used in speech are used in his or her speaking vocabulary. It's most definitely part of the listening vocabulary. Words are often misused due to the spontaneous nature of expression. Face expressions and voice tone will compensate for this minor and unintentional misuse.

#### ***Writing vocabulary:***

From structured essays to Twitter feeds, words are used in a variety of ways. Many written words are seldom used in conversation. When interacting, writers usually use a small vocabulary, such as:

- 1) If there are several synonyms, a writer can choose one based on his personal choice.
- 2) He is unlikely to use technical terms referring to a topic in which he knows nothing or is uninterested.

#### ***Focal vocabulary:***

Focal vocabulary is a specialized collection of terms and distinctions that are especially relevant to a certain category of people: those that have a specific focus of experience or activity. The dictionary of a language is its lexicon, or collection of names for objects, events, and ideas. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis proposes that lexicon affects people's perceptions of objects. The Nuer of Sudan, for example, have a complex vocabulary for describing cattle.

Because of the cattle's unique histories, economies, and habitats, the Nuer have a plethora of names for them. As with the amount of "Eskimo words for snow," this kind of

distinction has sparked some linguistic debate. When the need arises, English speakers with specific specialized knowledge may also demonstrate elaborate and precise vocabularies for snow and cattle.

### ***Vocabulary growth:***

A child's vocabulary is built naturally throughout its early years. Words are imitated by infants, who then equate them with objects and behaviours. This is the language for listening. When a child's thoughts become more dependent on his or her ability to self-express without relying on gestures or babbling, his or her speaking vocabulary grows. When the child's reading and writing vocabularies begin to grow, he or she begins to notice inconsistencies and irregularities in language through questions and education.

A child who can read learns roughly twice as many words in first grade as a child who cannot. In most cases, the distance does not close over time. By the age of five or six, an English-speaking child would have acquired about 1500 words, resulting in a diverse vocabulary. After graduating from high school, the growth of one's vocabulary reaches a halt. Reading, playing word games, and engaging in vocabulary-related activities are popular ways for people to broaden their vocabularies. Traditional print media teaches proper spelling and vocabulary, while text messaging teaches less stringent word acceptability restrictions. (Asha, 2016.)

## **1.4 The importance of vocabulary**

Recent advances in second and foreign language acquisition show that, in addition to grammar and pronunciation, non-native speakers need a strong vocabulary base to be active users of English in any academic setting. As a result, regardless of how well learners understand grammar and pronunciation, they would be unable to communicate effectively unless they have a proper vocabulary. This is due to the fact that the lexicon holds more of a text's meaning than the grammar. In reality, grammatical errors lead to ungrammatical utterances, while improper vocabulary usage has an impact on the communicative act. Vocabulary knowledge is regarded as a necessary tool for mastering any language ability, as well as for comprehending written and spoken texts. As a result, the more often learners are exposed to vocabulary, the more confident they are in their ability to grasp and perceive the meaning of certain unfamiliar words from context. Learning vocabulary entails not only learning new words but also understanding their functions and applicability in various contexts and circumstances. In other words, the

simultaneous and complex process of extracting and constructing utterances through the use of appropriate lexical combinations, at the appropriate time and place, is required for language comprehension and development. Learners must not only learn the language as an abstract system of vocal signs or as if it were a kind of grammar text with an accompanying dictionary, but also as a tool that helps them to know what utterances are useful for successful communication and what utterances are or are not suitable to use in a given context. Words are one of the most important components of the mental processes that lead to the acquisition of languages, which can be acquired in both accidental and deliberate ways. The process of learning a word is a series of interactions that take place in four stages: meaning-focused input, language-focused input, meaning-focused output, and fluency production. The standard of contact and meaningful association with other words are more important than single meetings in the acquisition of words. In this vein, if the learning goal is communication, language instructors should place a greater focus on lexicon and less on target structures. Lexis is essential in language learning because it allows learners to actively interact with one another. Otherwise, they can have difficulty communicating because they are unable to distinguish utterances from context.

Vocabulary acquisition, especially in second and foreign languages, has recently become a major focus of applied linguistics research. The biggest difficulty for scholars and language teachers is getting students to read new words, use them correctly in different ways, become familiar with their pragmatic use, and keep them in their long-term memory. This process enables students to learn the target language as well as the proper application of lexical objects in various communicative situations. In terms of how language is used in a given context, it is perceived as a system of meaning potential in which the lexicogrammatical system as a whole realizes the semantic system, which is what the speaker can say and do at the same time.

In order to learn a language, you must have a good vocabulary. It not only aids in language comprehension and development, but it also serves as a reliable measure of success and acquisition of any language ability. Learning a second language (L2) or a foreign language (FL) is a complex process involving social interaction and exposure to the target language. As a result, language instructors should develop their teaching methods by concentrating on lexical elements rather than individual words. Language learners can interact with one another using adequate vocabulary even if they do not have sufficient knowledge of the target structures. Then, teaching directions should aim for ways for students to practice their new vocabulary while also improving their language skills. As a result, language teachers must consider the type of terms to be taught as well as their frequency of occurrence when increasing learners' vocabulary sizes, since not all of those words must be mastered in order to be a good language student.

Despite the fact that vocabulary plays a crucial role in the development of spoken and written texts, it has received little recognition. As a result, language instructors place a greater focus on students' verbal abilities rather than their vocabulary skills. In this light, it is important to emphasize that, regardless of how well a student knows grammar or masters the sounds of the target language, communication cannot take place in a meaningful way without words to communicate a wide range of meanings. Words require contact and combination with others in order to be learned effectively. That is, learning certain words is as pointless as attempting to write grammatical sentences without knowing the words used to convey messages. As a result, in order to improve their lexical and communicative skills, learners must gain both breadth and depth vocabulary. In terms of lexical competence, it is recommended that students who are studying English as a second or foreign language take academic courses learn academic words.

Those terms offer students the linguist elements they need to develop their language skills in the disciplines they're studying. Learning vocabulary by organized procedures, such as defining the type and role of terms within a specific context, is therefore extremely beneficial. The lexical approach distinguishes between vocabulary, which is historically defined as the storage of single words with fixed meanings, and lexicon, which is defined as the acquisition of individual words and their form-meaning combinations that are stored in our mental lexicon. Only a small percentage of spoken and written texts are considered novel creations, according to the lexical approach. Language is made up of meaningful bits that, when combined, yield continuous coherent utterances. In this vein, the lexical approach emphasizes the acquisition of vocabulary and word combinations as a means of improving learners' language proficiency. It is founded on the premise that understanding and producing lexical phrases within the communicative act is an important part of language acquisition.

Vocabulary knowledge is essential for learning any language; however, if teachers and students are not involved in the process, vocabulary learning would be impossible. If learners are not interested in the relationships within the provided information (input), it is unlikely that input will lead to knowledge retention (intake), since comprehensibility is required for input to become intake. The acquisition of linguistic features of the language, especially new vocabulary, should emphasize the quality of exposure to the target language and the quality of knowledge provided during the learning process, as both terms input and intake play an important role in the construction of output. Rather than memorization of single words, this process should represent the learning of fixed words and how they are combined with others (language in use). That is, meaningful relations are needed for words to have meaning in a given context. As a result, the coherence of the speakers' purpose – production– and the receivers' understanding of utterances – comprehension– determines the relationship between language and learning materials.



Learners develop vocabulary by comprehending meaningful input, in the sense that only ideas that affirm, expand, or change the place from which they began the process can be learned and incorporated into their thought. As a result, if we listen to or read anything that we don't understand, we are likely to lose interest in it. Since a lexical syllabus should be matched with an instructional methodology that emphasizes language use, defining words, their meanings, and the combinations in which they are used, a lexical syllabus should be matched with an instructional methodology that emphasizes language use, identifying words, their meanings, and the combinations in which they are used.

Since vocabulary learning is linked to certain linguistic features (such as grammar and phonology) and to language development (speaking, writing) and comprehension (listening, reading), vocabulary knowledge in EFL students has a direct impact on language competence and usage. According to the findings, the pedagogic intervention with vocabulary exercises improved learners' output production because they were able to incorporate precise vocabulary words into the creation of written texts. As a result, it will be crucial and appropriate for language instruction to place a greater focus on expanding vocabulary awareness in the target language. That is, rather than creating language constructs, the learning process should concentrate on exchanging meanings. Learning instructions should improve learners' lexical and communicative skills by "looking for ways to practice the language so that learners see it as a useful tool for social interactions," since language is made up of grammaticalized lexis rather than lexicalized grammar.

The lexical approach is extremely important to the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the sense that the communicative competence that FL language learners achieve is measured by their ability to use language in various communicative contexts rather than their mastery of grammatical laws. As a result, it is estimated that second language learners need more than 95% of the target language's vocabulary to comprehend written texts. Indeed, knowing vocabulary aids in understanding the precise meaning of an expression, allowing FL learners to determine which utterances are suitable to use in various contexts. As a result, knowing and mastering vocabulary is critical; it allows learners to communicate effectively and maintain productive interactions with others. (Tovar, 2017).

### **1.5 The classification of vocabulary**

Vocabulary is divided into four groups based on how often it appears in the language (its frequency) and how widely it appears (its distribution) (its range). Vocabulary is divided into

four categories: high frequency words, academic words, technical words, and low frequency words. The four classifications are as follows: Words that appear frequently High frequency words are those that appear regularly in all types of language use. These terms are drawn from the 2,000 most common word families in the General Service List. They are widely used in formal and informal settings, written and spoken text such as newspapers, conversations, novels, and scholarly texts. They cover approximately 80% of the running words in most written texts and 90% of the running words in spoken texts. The majority of high frequency word lists are composed of about 2,000 word families and are relatively short. Aside from that, 169 of the words on the list are function words, such as conjunctions (and, or, but), pronouns (I, you, she, it), numbers (one, two, three), and so on. The remaining feature words are content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. They are also very popular words that even a very young native English speaker seems to know. They are needed on a daily basis when we use English. Since these words are so significant, it has been proposed that they be placed on the first list of target words in any type of vocabulary development program. Academic words are words that appear regularly in academic texts but do not appear on a list of 1,000 or 2,000 high frequency words. These terms appear often in newspapers, formal conversation, children's books, scholarly literature, and other types of specialized text. This collection of terms is made up of 570 word families and is organized into a list called Academic Word List (AWL). In general, the words on this list account for approximately 8.5 percent to 10% of the running words in academic texts. It means that one out of every ten words will come from the AWL. Academic words do not appear often in other types of language use. It is less than 2% of running words, or 2 words in every 100 running words in conversation, taken from the AWL. The 570 academic terms are important for those who use English for academic research, such as in colleges, vocational institutes, or schools. As a result, university students who use English for academic purposes should concentrate on learning this vocabulary after mastering the high frequency terms. Technical words Academic terms can be used in a variety of academic disciplines, such as linguistics, biology, and physics. There are words that are much more specific to each subject area in place of those words. These terms are often used in specific fields, such as political vocabulary or botany vocabulary. These special terms are so unique to the subject area that people can immediately know where they came from. They are known as technical terms. The technical terms are usually only used in one specialized field. However, certain words can be used in other subjects and have the same or different meanings. The terms by-pass and neck, for example, are medical terms that are often used in fields such as biology and psychology. Technical vocabulary appears more frequently in one field, such as economic textbooks, which is a specialized text, than in another category of specialized texts from other fields. Technical terms make up about a

third of the moving words in anatomy. It means that roughly one out of every three words is academic. While some of these technical terms are found in the 2,000 most commonly used words, they are used as specialized words in a particular field. Although several of the words seem to be specific to a subject field, some are likely to come from the Academic Word List. Technical terms are important for someone who is specialized in a particular field. While there are few statistical research on technical vocabulary, it is likely that at least 20% of the running words in a large number of technical texts are technical words. We don't know much about technical vocabularies, but they can range from 1,000 to 2,000 words depending on the subject region. The majority of a language's vocabulary are known as low frequency words. They have a large number of word families, perhaps the largest of all the vocabulary levels, but they are seldom used in most texts. If all single-word objects are counted, English could have over 100,000 word families. And native speakers may not be aware of all of them. Native English speakers typically have a vocabulary of about 20,000 words, although this varies depending on their educational level and how much reading they do in their subject areas or interests. Low frequency words can make up only 2% of the running text, or around 1 word in every 50 running words. On the other side, a distinction between high frequency words and low frequency words must be made. They suggest a new category of vocabulary called mid frequency words as a distinction between high and low frequency words, regardless of academic word lists or technical terms. Furthermore, they increased the number of high frequency words from 2,000 to 3,000 most common word families. They then describe mid frequency words as those that fall between the most common 3,000 and 9,000 word families, and low frequency words as those that fall beyond 9,000. (Sudarman, & Sumalee 2018).

### **1.5.1 Vocabulary levels**

It is important to divide the English vocabulary into levels based on the frequency in which it is used. They then recommend creating a list of 1,000 words for each class, beginning with the most common and working your way down. A word list based on the British National Corpus was developed, with fourteen levels of terms ranging from the most common to the least common. High frequency terms range from the first 1,000 to the second 1,000 levels, or from the first 1,000 to the third 1,000 levels (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2014 pp. 484-503)

Low frequency words are in the list from the 9th 1,000 level to the 14th 1,000 level, whereas mid frequency words are in the list from the 3rd 1,000 level to the 9th 1,000 level. In terms of vocabulary training and evaluation, the development of a word list is beneficial. By

selecting words from the most frequently used list, teachers can easily concentrate their vocabulary instruction. For example, a teacher should begin by teaching the first 1,000 level to his students, and once they have mastered it, he should move on to the second 1,000 level as the next focus of instruction. In reality, it isn't important to begin the vocabulary development program at the first 1,000 word stage. Instead, an instructor should tailor the vocabulary emphasis to the needs of their students. As a result, teachers must be able to assess their students' vocabulary mastery by conducting a test like the Vocabulary Levels Test. (Schmitt, N., Schmitt, D., & Clapham, C. 2001 pp. 55-88) The test results will provide teachers with information about their students' current vocabulary levels, including which levels they have mastered and the levels they lack. If students want to continue their education at colleges, teachers should concentrate first on high frequency terms and then on academic word lists. (Nation, 2006 pp 59-82).

## **1.6 Early stages of vocabulary development**

Thanks to various longitudinal and cross-sectional studies, we already know a lot about the characteristics of each stage of the mother tongue acquisition process. In this chapter, we shed light on the classical stages of language development from the aspect of vocabulary, that is, we go around what words a child produces at each age. There may be large individual differences in the timing (beginning and end) of each language section, so the ages given are for information only. In the review, we emphasize the universal and language-specific features of acquisition. Since the basic condition for starting a speech is good hearing, accurate perception and proper processing, first of all we will briefly discuss some perceptual factors and the role of communication to the child.

The development of speech perception and speech production shows an asymmetry the child has always understood more of the language message than he or she can produce. This can be traced back to fetal recipient behaviour. And persists for the rest of our lives in certain situations (such as learning a foreign language or understanding dialect texts). The fetus already acquires auditory experience in the mother's womb with the help of the inner ear already formed in the structure of the base, in general about the human voice. On the voice of the mother and the prosody of the mother tongue their utterance in the fetal demonstrated relative to other noises, sounds of strangers, or sounds of a foreign language.

Research to assess vocabulary size often mentions expressive and receptive vocabulary, the former containing the words with which the child expresses himself, i.e., which he

pronounces, and the latter with which to process, able to understand. The latter always includes more elements than the former.

Perceptual and production development are not always consistent in later ages either; this is because behind a good level of production there may be a serious perceptual disorder, or even with an adequate level of perception, the child's speech production performance may be poor. In connection with speech perception, mention should be made of maternal speech (mother tongue, mother tongue, motherese), which has been shown to have an effect on a child's speech development. It is a universal phenomenon that the mother (father, older sibling) uses a special code when communicating with children. The utterance of the nurse's language is tied to place and time, it is limited to the situation, contains many repetitions, uses simple morphology and syntax, as well as vocabulary adapted to the communication situation.

Nursal words (such as Hungarian *bibi* (seb), *tütü* (autó), English *tummy* (stomach), Hungarian *has*) simplify the phonological phenomena of adult language (for example, congestion with the other), often use reduplication diminutive or nickname training, which adds an expressive or emotional component to words, referring to objects, persons, actions that are important to the child.

The first words of the child are preceded by the gagging (vocalization) that usually occurs between the 3rd and 6th week, and then the gagging, during which the infant exercises the articulation gestures necessary to create later speech sounds. At this stage, the child does not yet use words but words (protod declarative) or call to action (protoimperative) through vocalization and gestures. The universal nature of language development is reflected in the fact that children of different mother tongues initially pronounce similar types of speech sounds, and the pronounced strings are organized according to a similar pattern. Characteristics that differ from language to language appear first in the suprasegmental structure (intensity change, sound slope).

International and Hungarian literature indicate a similar age for the appearance of children's first words, which appear at about one year of age (10–15 months). These first-meaning sequences are called word sentences or holophrases because they are formally similar to words and adult sentences in terms of their function. Their understanding is greatly influenced by the situation, and in most cases it is only through this that the student understands the child's one-word communications. The meaning varies as a function of intonation. The same word (such as *mama*) uttered with different prosody and gestures can express a statement, question, or even instruction.

In the sentence phase, the child's mental lexicon is characterized by double storage. This means that there are two forms in the lexicon: the adult (conventional) sequence corresponding to the given semantic content and the child's own (child's) pronunciation, such as the slipper and

the corresponding patch. The latter forms are formed on the basis of “childhood sound laws”, such as similar processes (e.g., *amma* instead of apple), substitution processes (e.g., *motoj* instead of motor), metatheses (e.g., *bodoz* instead of doboz), and distortion of timing processes (*cicca* instead of cica).

In conversations between young children and adults, a phenomenon has been observed that already shows the difference between the form stored by the child and the form produced. In an English study, a child pronounced the word fish [fiʃ] meaning ‘fish’ as [fis], due to the fact that in the development of sound formation it has not yet reached the level of uttering all sounds perfectly and making certain sounds a replace with another. However, when the adult imitated the soundtrack he or she produced, the child was unable to understand or accept it until he or she heard the adult language form. Based on the example above, the phenomenon has been termed a “fis phenomenon”.

With the phasing out of dual storage in childhood and the simultaneous increase in vocabulary, the lemma and lexeme levels are clearly separated, ie the lexical access of children from a certain age follows similar strategies as in adulthood. The initial vocabulary shows many similarities despite the large individual (quantitative) differences.

It is a common phenomenon in all children that the first words are related to ‘here and now’, the child’s immediate surroundings. They cover the names of people, objects, food, body parts, and everyday activities. In most languages, these are expressed primarily through nouns. This may be due, among other things, to the fact that the perception and identification of objects is clearer than that of actions, and that verbs are more conceptually and linguistically complex. After the appearance of the sentences, the next phase of two-word communications (from an average age of 18 months) is during which the child juxtaposes two known lexemes. According to theories of language acquisition, two-word communications are not random but rule-driven language formations. According to one theory (pivot grammar, axis grammar theory, words in two-word sentences can be divided into two major groups: pivot (‘axis’) and open / open word classes. The former group includes few words (e.g., *this*, *small*, *several*) and has a constant position, serving as an axis, a keyword around which children can paste words from the open class (e.g., *dad*, *boy*, *milk*).

The child’s rudimentary grammatical knowledge is enhanced by recognizing that there are constraints on the position of the elements (two open and one pivot and an open class word may occur side by side, but two pivot may not). There have been several criticisms of pivot grammar, which are based on merely describing the very first word combinations, even those according to grammatical principles which are still virtually devoid of grammatical formulation,

rather semantically based; moreover, it has not been proven that formal rules control the process, the mapping of the frequency distribution may also be in the background.

According to semantic models, combinations are not based on operations on formal elements, but on the communication intentions, intentions, and cognitive cognitions of a child who is able to distinguish categories such as action, agent, object, place, and so on. With two-word sentences, the child is able to express a wide range of meanings, the most common being the noun subject and verb prediction (e.g., *teddy bear sitting*), verb prediction and object (e.g., *I want chocolate*), verb prediction and adverb (e.g., *we go wise*), and possessive (e.g., *Peti's needle, Peti's car*) structures. Around the age of two, the period of telegraphic speech begins. The telegraphic nature of speech is caused by the partial omission of function words (adjectives, suffixes, etc.) and word endings (e.g., signs, syllables), the order of successive words suggests logical belonging.

In any language, the incidence of function words and meaningful words tilts toward the former, yet children leave them. Thus, the frequency of adult language is not decisive in this respect, but it can be explained by the so-called perceptual conspicuousness, according to which it is easier to perceive linguistic elements that are in an emphatic position. Thus, children's perceptions are focused on meaningful words and "more conspicuous" function words (such as verbs), and these are learned relatively quickly. The system of word types used is constantly expanding, although in the absence of knowledge of the necessary word type categories (e.g., nouns, adverbs, pronouns, modifiers), the telegraphic character is still felt. Statements produced around the age of two can be as long as three or four words, which children combine in several ways and add more and more suffixes. The order of acquisition of the suffixes shows a very similar picture for each child, although it sometimes takes place in very rapid succession. According to the literature, the first suffixes of Hungarian children are: *-t* (object horn), *-ba*, *-a* (adverb), *-é* (possessive sign) and *-m* (possessive personal horn).

The fact that the order of acquisition is more or less the same in the individual can be explained by the principle of cognitive priority, which states that cognitive development determines the order in which suffixes appear. This means that the child must first understand the content and meaning of the relationship he wants to express before he can produce the morphological form that expresses it. For example, to use verb tenses, it is essential to crystallize the concept of time, or to use the conditional mode sign, you must first understand the concept of condition. Instead of the more complicated regular future tense forms created with the auxiliary verb *tooth* and the noun verb, he initially prefers circular present tense but future tense forms (e.g., *I will go, we will travel tomorrow*).

In terms of verb conjugation, the first and third person forms of each number appear first. The explanation for this can be found in the childish egocentrism characteristic of the age, which is that the child and his immediate world are at the centre of the child's way of thinking, looking at everything from this point of view. Later, as it comes into constant contact with the social environment, the social way of thinking characteristic of adults will play an increasingly important role in its activities and speech. The telegraphic nature of early sentences gradually disappears with the knowledge of suffixes, and the child's "sentences" become more and more similar to the sentences created by adults. Compound sentences appear around the age of three. The first step toward creating a complex sentence is when the child puts simple sentences next to each other that have a closer semantic relationship between them. It is also typical to initially produce only one sentence by introducing a conjunction (e.g., *dare you ate 'because you took it'*), and then the conjunction connects two sentences together (e.g., *I don't give, but I don't give, 'I don't give because you break'*). Later, the accumulation of conjunctions becomes common, and the beginning of sentences (in discourse markers) is especially popular.

Paradigmatic systems are beginning to emerge. At the age of three or four, there is a period of so-called verbal intoxication, when the predominance of verbs in children's speech is characteristic. The age between 3 and 6 years is an extremely creative period in terms of morphological phenomena. Children build language through a combined mechanism of imitation and rule-making. Experiments have shown that children are able to add suffixes to unfamiliar words based on a learned rule. In agglutinating languages, such as Hungarian, the variety of suffixes and the types of noun and verb stems make it difficult for a child to learn the rule. The frequency of suffix types also influences how difficult it is for children to recognize and master them. In the process of analogical learning, the individual selects a schema that is already known to him or her and uses it to create a schema that will guide the information needed for learning. It is relatively common for a child to apply a learned rule even if it would not be justified, then - with the term used in the Hungarian literature - we hear analogous misconceptions or over-generalizations, over-regulations. This phenomenon (overgeneralization) can also be observed in English and other mother tongue children.

From the point of view of adult language, he makes mistakes when he says that instead of a monkey, I saw an elephant instead of I ate, or I saw an elephant instead of an elephant, but during language development these are natural phenomena that show where a child is in learning grammar, what he has already learned and what he does not yet know. It often makes its unusually conjugated lifestyle "regular" (for example, you are, it is not). Improper use of multiform verbs (according to the adult language norm) can occur even at the beginning of school (e.g., sleeping, coming). Children's creativity is reflected in the way they create new



words / phrases by expanding the meaning of meaningful words. For example, English children say you sad me instead of you make me sad / don't kill him instead of kill him. During training, Hungarian children form new word forms, such as pattern ('pattern') or work ('work'), which reflects the child's logical thinking. He learns words from his surroundings, but there are words he has heard that he does not understand. In such cases, instead of unknown words, he often looks for a word that sounds similar but is meaningful to him, ie he uses arbitrary meaning, word interpretation and etymologization. For example, they say Thursday soup instead of pumpkin soup or sleep pyrine instead of Algopyrin.

In the case of the phenomenon called folk etymology, a new form is formed associatively from an unknown/accepted, seemingly meaningless form, under the influence of the known. Child etymologization is present during the whole preschool, the most productive and creative seems to be the 4–6 years old in this respect. Children's language products similar to stylistic forms or based on other word formation can also be observed (for non-stylistic purposes), e.g., metaphor (e.g., *grass is the hair of the Earth*), impersonation (e.g., *the door moaned*), analogy (e.g., *Mama measured my blood pressure. It was as low as a squirrel.*), contrast (e.g., *joking as opposed to malice*, or *I was dressed in the meaning of 'undressed'*), the revitalization of the word end (e.g., *could you wash my tubb? – instead of the tub*). The wordings are often based on the children's own experiences and the specific meaning of the word. Vocabulary is further enriched in the post-6 age period as a result of institutional education. (Neuberger, 2017)

### **1.7 Techniques in teaching vocabulary**

This section summarizes the findings of a study that looked at the methods used by an English instructor to present the context and type of vocabulary. When it comes to teaching 'vocabulary,' there are a variety of approaches. Most English teachers, on the other hand, must note a few things if they intend to introduce new vocabulary or lexical objects to their students. It simply means that English teachers want their students to retain new vocabulary. To prevent students from forgetting, it must then be taught, practiced, and updated. Teachers' techniques are influenced by a variety of factors, including the content, time constraints, and the importance of the material to the students. As a result, teachers have several justifications for using such vocabulary presentation methods. Instead of using only one technique to show one expected vocabulary item, the instructor typically combined several techniques. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to use as many different vocabulary presentations as possible. Here are some techniques of teaching vocabulary:

### ***Using Objects***

Realia, visual aids, and demonstration are all included in this technique. Since our memory for objects and pictures is very reliable, visual approaches can serve as cues for recalling words, they can help learners remember vocabulary better. Furthermore, when presenting concrete language, the real objects approach is suitable for beginners or young learners. When the language consists of concrete nouns, objects may be used to demonstrate context. When a new word is introduced by displaying a real thing, it is much easier for students to visualize the word and memorize it. Objects from the classroom or items carried in from outside may be used.

### ***Drawing***

Objects may be sketched on the blackboard or on flash cards. If they're made of cards and wrapped in plastic, the latter can be reused in a variety of situations. They will assist young students in quickly comprehending and remembering what they have learned in the classroom.

### ***Using Illustrations and Pictures***

Students' prior experience is linked to a new story through pictures, which also helps them learn new words. Many vocabularies may be implemented with the use of diagrams or images. They're great for clarifying the context of unfamiliar terms. They must be used as often as possible. Posters, flashcards, wall maps, magazine photos, board sketches, stick figures, and portraits are among the images. Images for vocabulary instruction can be used in a variety of places. They are collections of colourful pictures intended for classrooms, apart from those created by the teacher or students. Images cut from newspapers and magazines are also very useful. Many readers, vocabulary books, and coursebooks also have a large number of appealing illustrations that explain the meaning of simple terms. The instructor will use school-provided learning materials. They may also use pictures from magazines or create their own visual aids. Learners benefit from visual reinforcement because it helps them understand the context and remember the expression.

### ***Contrast***

Some terms are easily clarified to learners by comparing them with their opposites, such as the words "*good*" and "*evil*". However, certain terms aren't. It's almost impossible to compare and contrast terms whose opposite is gradable. When the words "*white*" and "*black*" are contrasted, the word "*gray*" appears in the center. Furthermore, the word "contrast" means "to demonstrate a difference," as in images that contrast "*before*" and "*after*" shots to reveal how much weight someone lost. Many more studies have shown that vocabulary is better gained when it is close to

what has already been studied, so studying synonyms is a natural way to broaden our lexicon. Synonyms are also important to understand since this is how dictionaries are structured. Aside from bilingual dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries essentially use terms to describe words, and synonyms are often used in this process.

### ***Enumeration***

An enumeration is a list of all the objects in a set that is complete and organized. It can be used to convey information. In other words, when every word is difficult to describe visually, this method comes in handy. We may say “*clothes*” and then enumerate or list different things to describe. The sense of the word “*clothes*” will become apparent after the teacher lists a variety of clothes, such as a shirt, a skirt, and trousers. The same can be said for words like “*vegetable*” or “*furniture*”.

### ***Mime, Expressions and Gestures***

Mime and gesture can be used not only to denote the context of a word in a reading passage, but also in speaking activities because it emphasizes communication. Mime, expressions, and gestures can be used to add several terms. Adjectives such as “sad”, “happy”, mime, and removing a hat from your head to teach hat and so on are examples. Several studies have stressed the importance of gestures in the learning of a second language (L2). Teachers make a lot of gestures, particularly when speaking to young students and/or beginners. Teaching movements are well-known for capturing attention and making a lesson more dynamic. Three key functions for teaching gestures were identified based on analyses of video recordings of English lessons to French students: class management (to start/end an exercise, query students, request silence, etc.), assessment (to demonstrate an error, correct, congratulate, etc.), and clarification (to provide syntax signs, underline basic prosody, describe new vocabulary, etc.). Hand gestures, facial expressions, pantomime, body motions, and other teaching gestures come in a variety of shapes and sizes. They can either mime or symbolize something, and they can assist learners in deducing the meaning of a spoken word or phrase if they are clear and easy to understand. As a result, this teaching technique is essential for comprehension. Its usefulness, however, may be contingent on the teacher’s gesture. Foreign emblems, for example, have been noted to trigger misunderstandings when the learners are unfamiliar with them. Teaching movements can be useful for learners’ memorization in addition to assisting comprehension. Indeed, many second language teachers who employ gestures as a teaching technique claim that they aid students in memorizing the lexicon of the second language. Many of them have found that when the instructor makes the gesture associated with the lexical item during the lesson, students will

quickly recall the phrase. Others have observed students (particularly children) spontaneously repeating the gesture while saying the phrase. Many people have observed the influence of gestures on memory, but it has seldom been studied in a systematic and analytical way. (Mofareh, 2015)

### **1.8 Getting the meaning by using dictionaries**

There's a better way to figure out what something means than guessing from context. For explicit instruction in word definitions, dictionaries, and thesauruses, students may use a well-established technology. Traditional dictionary definitions, on the other hand, fall well short of offering a full picture of a word's context. Definitions are written by lexicographers, while meanings are concepts in people's heads. Dictionary meanings have traditionally linked lexicalized concepts to a list of other lexicalized concepts. They are unable to include ostensive definitions, but they instead provide a phrasal description and, on occasion, extracts demonstrating usage, from which the reader is expected to infer the intended concept. Polysemous word definitions are especially difficult. The ability to learn from a dictionary necessitates a high level of cognitive maturity. The learner must stop reading and go to the dictionary to look up the unknown word in an alphabetical list, all the while holding the original meaning in mind so that they can compare it to the dictionary's alternative senses and choose the one that best fits the situation. Even in L1, this challenging method often results in errors. Children often struggle to use dictionaries properly due to a naive substitution technique in which they search for a familiar word or phrase among the meanings after discovering the unfamiliar word, and then simply substitute the new word for the familiar word or phrase. One fifth-grader, for example, looked up the unfamiliar word erode and discovered the phrases eat out and eat away in the meaning, resulting in the frame "Our family eats out a lot" and the imaginative use of the new word: "Our family erodes a lot"! (Miller, & Gildea, 1991. pp. 150-158)

### **1.9 Getting the meaning by inference**

While a lot of vocabulary is picked up from context when reading, word meanings are not learned that way. rather, as Sternberg (1985, p. 307) argues, "simply reading a lot does not guarantee a high vocabulary. What seems to be critical is not sheer amount of experience but

rather what one has been able to learn from and do with that experience. According to this view, then, individual differences in knowledge acquisition has priority over individual differences in actual knowledge.” Jensen (1980, p. 146-147) argues this position even more strongly: “Children of high intelligence acquire vocabulary at a faster rate than children of low intelligence, and as adults they have a much larger vocabulary, not primarily because they have spent more time in study or have been more exposed to words, but because they are capable of educing more meaning from single encounters with words... The crucial variable in vocabulary size is not exposure per se, but conceptual need and inference of meaning from context, which are forms of education.” Learners may benefit from education strategies training. Selective encoding (separating relevant from irrelevant information for the purposes of formulating a definition), selective combination (combining relevant cues into a workable definition), and selective comparison are the three basic subprocesses defined by Sternberg (1987) (relating new information to old information already stored in memory). He divided the available cues and moderating variables into four categories: 1) the number of occurrences of the unknown word, 2) the variability of contexts in which multiple occurrences of the unknown word appear, 3) the importance of the unknown word in understanding the context in which it is embedded, and 4) the usefulness of the surrounding context in understanding the unknown word’s meaning (too high a proportion of unknown words will thwart attempts to infer meaning). In a pretest-posttest Clockwork Orange system, subjects who were trained in the use of these moderating variables or given experience in the processes of inferencing from context outperformed control subjects in vocabulary acquisition from texts. This successful derivation of meaning not only promotes inferencing from context, but it also makes the language more memorable.

In the absence of dictionaries or human assistance, contextual inference or contextual guessing is described as an essential strategy. and it “entails guessing the meaning of target word based on interpretation of its immediate context with or without reference to knowledge of the world” (Haastrup, 1989 in Parel, 2004, p. 848). Reader-related variables and text-related variables are the two key factors that influence guessing ability. Vocabulary size, grammar knowledge, language proficiency, attention to detail, cognitive and mental effort, and reader characteristics are all reader-related variables. Word characteristics, text characteristics, the availability of contextual hints, and subject familiarity are the text-related variables. (Kaivanpanah & Alavi, 2008). According to research, language learners attempt to use contextual clues when deciding the meaning of unknown terms. It was discovered that predicting word meaning using context clues was the most common technique. This technique was used 260 times, with translation being used 195 times, sections of speech being used 18 times, and word analysis being used 15 times. Fraser (1999) used a retrospective think-aloud interview to

investigate the use of lexical processing strategies. When inferring unknown word meaning, the participants used sense formation (the use of linguistic and situational context to infer) 65 percent of the time, according to the report. Soria (2001) conducted a study to compare the usage of various types of sources (interlingual, intralingual, and contextual sources) by language learners at different levels of proficiency. The language learners' primary source of information was word morphology. In addition, the students were able to use contextual cues to infer word sense. The high level learners, on the other hand, were more effective than the low level learners in using the immediate and wider contexts. The findings of these studies may be interpreted as evidence that language learners prefer to make accurate word meaning inferences by using contextual clues. The amount and quality of contextual clues will decide the effectiveness of guessing, which offers enough clues for readers to quickly and accurately infer the meaning of unknown words. Kelly's (1990 in Laufer, 1997) analysis can be classified as a study on the existence of contextual clues. Kelly randomly selected a sample of unknown terms from two Italian books and attempted to deduce their meanings from context. As a result of his lack of success, he believed that "unless the context is constrained, which is relatively rare occurrence, or unless there is a relationship with a known word identifiable on the basis of form and supported by context, there is little chance of guessing the correct meaning" (Kelly, 1990 in Laufer 1997, p. 27). In this respect, it is possible to assert that in certain situations, hints are unavailable. Context can provide a variety of clues to aid readers in their guessing process. For example, context can include just a few hints that enable language learners to deduce a general meaning. Clarke and Nation (1980 in Laufer, 1997, p. 29) provided an example of a partial hint: "Typhoon Vera killed or injured 28 people and crippled the seaport city of Kellung". Since a typhoon can have mostly negative effects on a site, the reader can understand crippled as "damaged" or "destroyed." This example demonstrates that in certain situations, knowing the basic or approximate meaning of the terms is adequate for understanding the context in general. Local contextual clues are the other types of clues that are present in the sentence that contains the target word, or clues that are very similar to the unfamiliar word, such as an unfamiliar adjective right in front of a common noun. Some of the hints aren't near the unfamiliar words. In that case, the meanings of unfamiliar words are deduced by examining the text's clues, which are referred to as global contextual clues. (Mokhtar & Rawian, 2012 288-305). Language learners, according to some studies, are more receptive to local contextual clues than global contextual clues. L2 learners of various groups were all capable of effectively using local contextual clues. (1993 in Mokhtar & Rawian, 2012). However, a large percentage of the study participants had trouble using global contextual clues that were located far away from the target term. (Huckin and Bloch 1993, p. 187) discovered that the participants in their research favoured local

contextual clues over global contextual clues. In the studies listed above, the value of immediate contextual clues was confirmed. Another aspect that affects correct lexical inference is that certain contexts might not be plain enough to guide language learners to the meaning of unknown terms. According to the results of Frantzen (2003)'s research, context can not always lead to correct inference of unknown terms. Some terms could easily be guessed from context in a study about how Spanish students deduced word meaning from context because the contexts were useful in these situations. However, since the contexts were unclear, ambiguous, or confusing at times, they were unhelpful or liable for the subjects' loss. The importance of guessing strategy has been demonstrated in a large number of studies in the literature.

**PART 2**  
**EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON USING DICTIONARY**  
**AND/OR GUESSING (INFERENCE)**

This part illustrates the main purpose of the research and explains the methods that were used to obtain the results. The aim is to find out how effective getting the meaning of a new word is by using contextual clues. The objective of this part is to find the best method on how to get the meaning of a new word.

The study was conducted by a questionnaire that included questions about the students' dictionary using patterns as well as how much they used guessing methods when encountering foreign words.

### **2.1 Research questions and hypotheses**

The study questions were formulated in such a way that they could provide details about students' learning patterns when they encounter a new word during their English language studies.

The following research questions were used to lead the thesis:

- 1) How often do students use guessing methods when they meet a new word?
- 2) How effective are the guessing methods? Is it a reliable method overall?
- 3) How often do students use dictionaries and which are the most common ones?
- 4) Is using a dictionary a better and effective way to get the meaning of a new word?

The following hypotheses were stated to lead the research:

- 1) Students use dictionary when they meet a new word in the majority of the situations.
- 2) Using guessing methods are not reliable when using only contextual clues.
- 3) Using dictionaries is the better method to get the meaning of a new word.

Each research question was given a hypothesis, which will be confirmed or disproven by the findings, which will aid in obtaining the desired knowledge about the students' studying methods.



## **2.2 Participants**

The participants were 11th grade pupils, with a total of 24 pupils taking part. The participants were selected from secondary school pupils who learned English as a foreign language; the pupils were given a questionnaire to fill out anonymously.

## **2.3 Instruments**

The research tool was a questionnaire that participants could fill out anonymously after being informed that they were performing an anonymous questionnaire and that their identity would be kept private, as it was more convenient to answer anonymously.

The questions were open-ended and closed-ended, which helped to distinguish students' studying behaviours and methods.

The questions focused on the following aspects:

- How often could pupils get the meaning of a new word using only contextual clues?
- How often could pupils get the meaning of a new word using only dictionary?
- How often do pupils use dictionaries over guessing methods?
- What kind of dictionary do students prefer (Bilingual, Monolingual dictionaries etc.)?
- What are the most common things pupils do when they meet a new word?

These questions are to be answered by the participants in both open and close-ended question format and the answers are to be analyzed in the next section of the research.

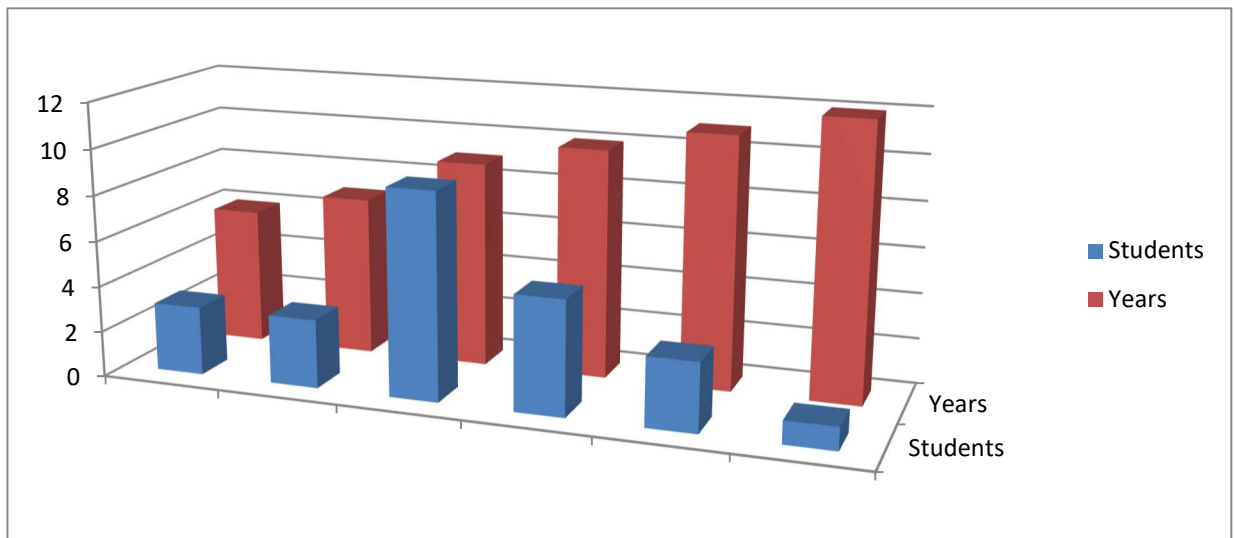
## **2.4 The procedure of the research**

The research was conducted during February and March of the second semester. This research required pupils who studied English as a foreign language. The research questions were available on an online platform which the pupils could access at any given time and fill it out anonymously.

## 2.5 Interpretation of the results

### 2.5.1 Questionnaire results

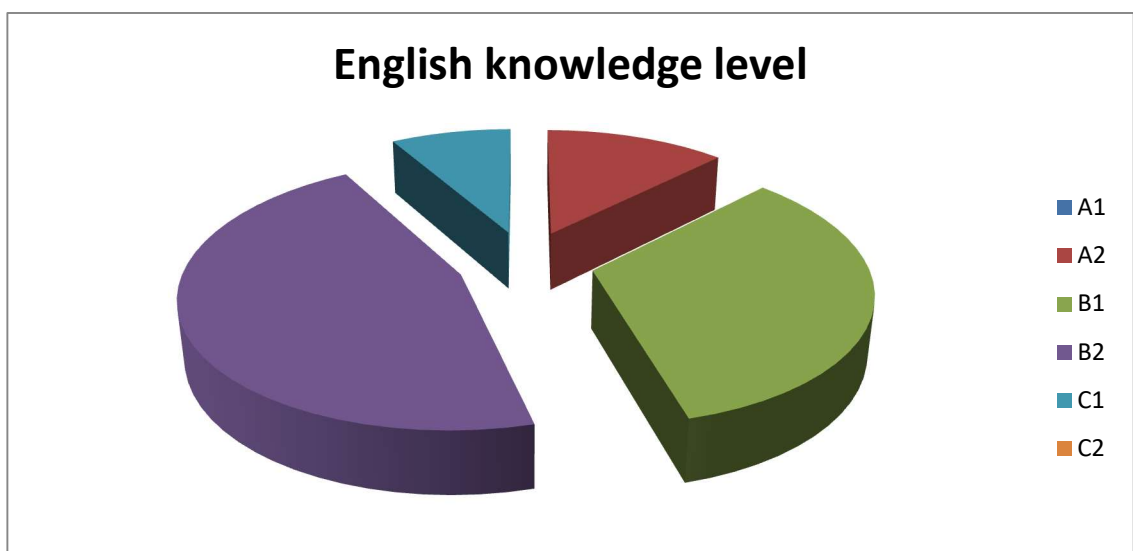
**Diagram 1. 'How long have you been studying English as a foreign language?'**



Students were asked how long they had been learning English as a foreign language, and the results revealed that the total year spent studying English was 9 years.

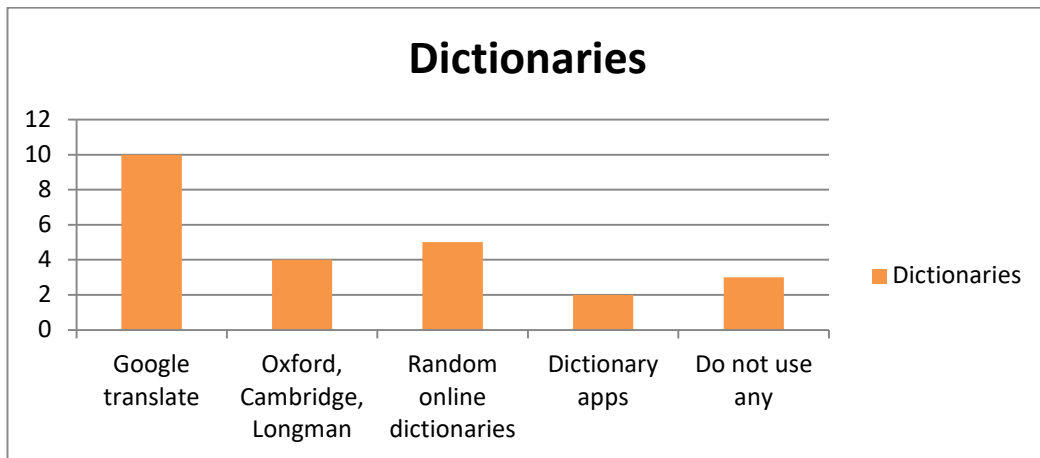
The question was open-ended, and the students responded with their own study years. The majority of the pupils stated that they had studied English for more than 9 years, accounting for 38 percent of the 24 students.

**Diagram 2. 'What do you think the level of your current English language knowledge is?'**



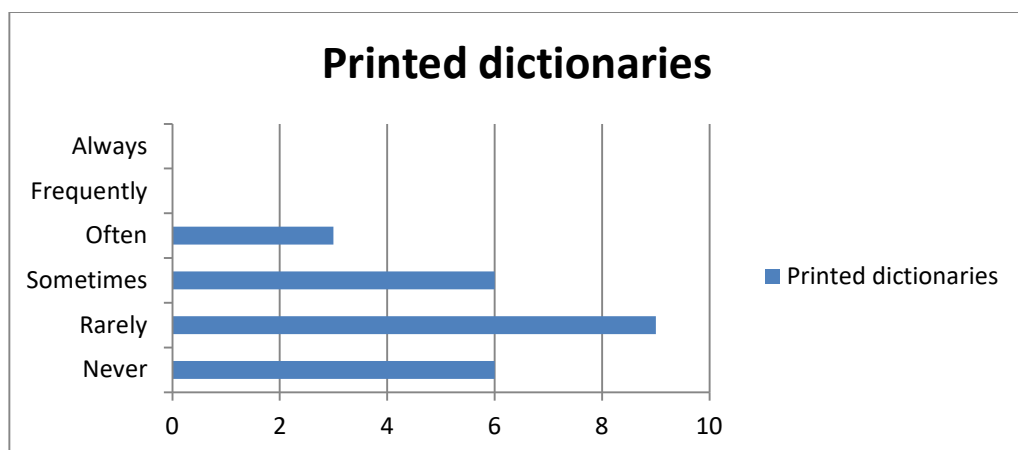
Students were asked to determine their English knowledge level and the results show us that the majority evaluated their level to be at B2 level which is 11 out of 24 students and 8 students evaluated themselves at B1 and 3 students evaluated themselves at the level of A2 and only 2 of the students said that their level might be at C1, none of the students evaluated themselves at the level of A1 nor C2 as you can see the results in diagram 2.

**Diagram 3. ‘What kind of dictionaries do you use while studying English?’**



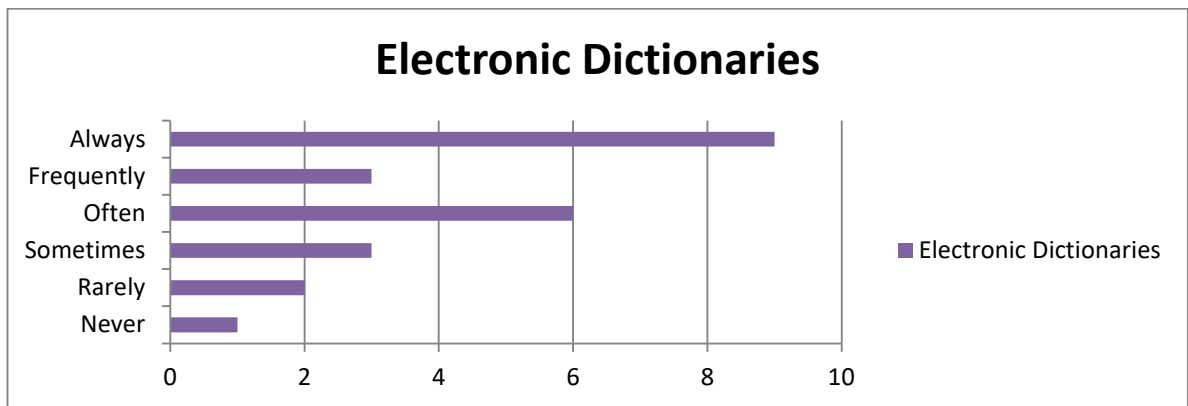
The question was left open-ended, so there were many different dictionaries however I chose the most common ones to see which is the most used one among them all. As we can see in diagram 3 ‘Google translate’ was the mostly used one which is understandable due to its quickness and because it is always available due to our current technology.

**Diagram 4. ‘How often do you use printed dictionaries?’**



Students nowadays rarely use paper-based dictionaries and only a few students use a printed version of a dictionary so this means that students do not prefer using it as a primary source for studying. My theory is that students do not like printed versions of dictionaries because they are not accessible, and if you need to concentrate on another language, you must purchase another dictionary that corresponds to that language which you need, and it does not have access to a vast database of word spelling, meanings, descriptions, pronunciation, thesaurus, and so on.

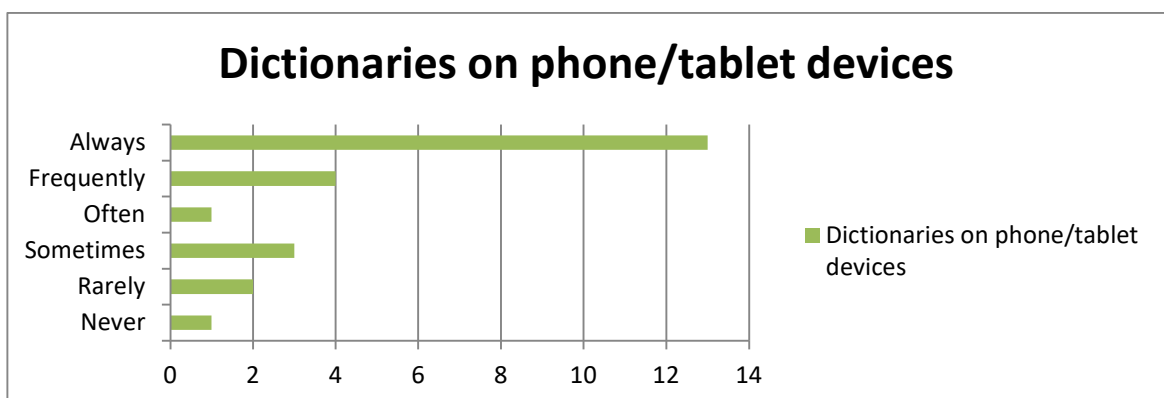
**Diagram 5. ‘How often do you use electronic dictionaries on your computer?’**



Although not every computer has electronic dictionaries built in, they all have internet access, which is the most efficient way to check spelling and even find the meaning of a word, as well as antonyms and synonyms, while learning.

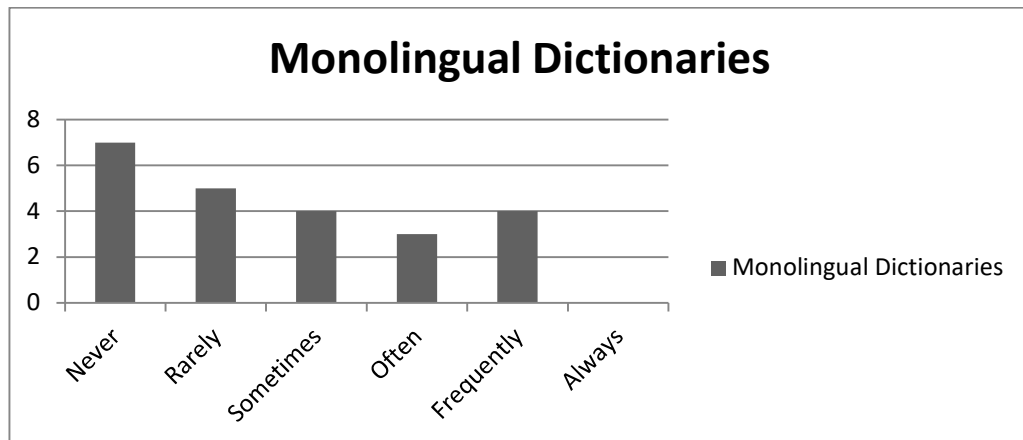
Nowadays, every household has at least one computer, and as can be seen in diagram 5, students tend to use electronic dictionaries on their computers in the majority of cases, as having a large database and a variety of resources to make learning quicker and easier is crucial for students, which is why they prefer to use them on computers.

**Diagram 6. ‘How often do you use electronic dictionaries on your phone/tablet devices?’**



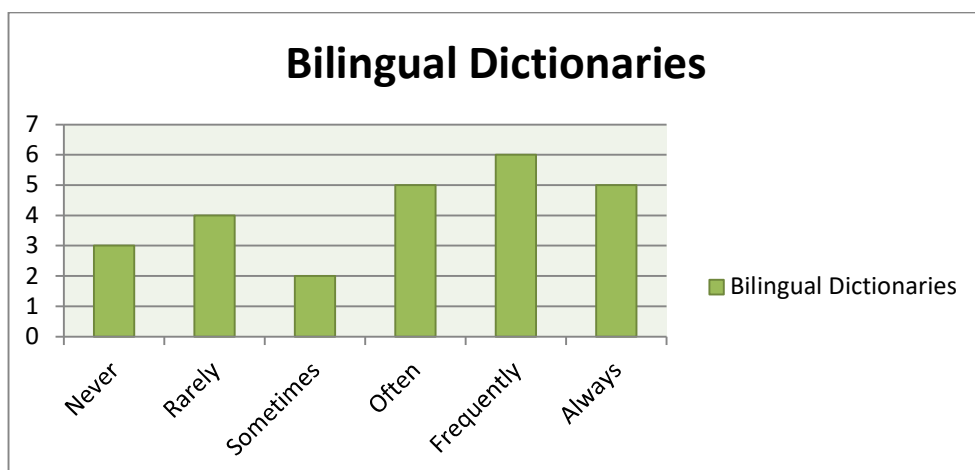
It is clear that the majority of students use their phones to access an electronic dictionary because they do not want to carry a large, bulky book around with them. It is now very simple to carry your phone in your back pocket with a dictionary and numerous study aids installed on it. Needless to say, that electronic dictionary variants, of course, have millions of meanings, definitions, examples, audio pronunciations etc.

**Diagram 7. ‘How often do you use monolingual dictionaries?’**



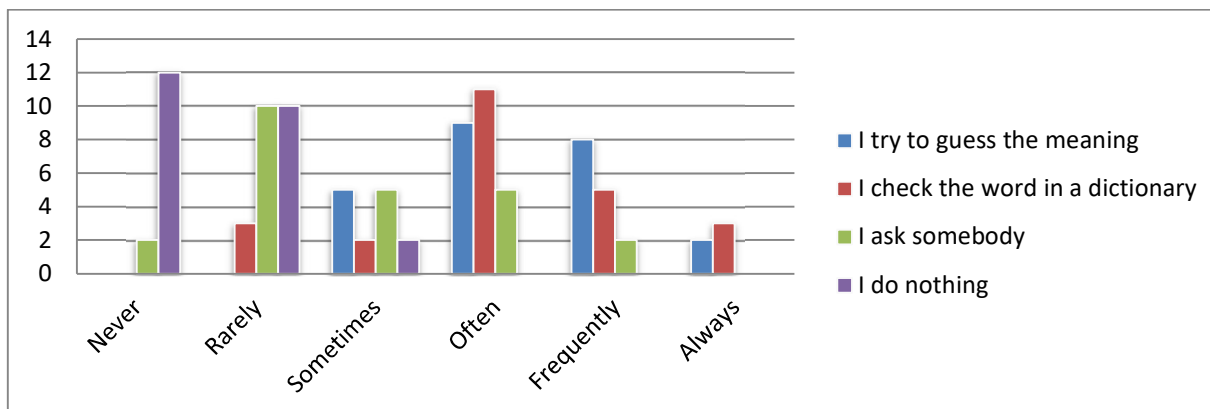
As we know, monolingual dictionaries clarify the meaning of a word using only one language, which is the language you want to learn. Based on diagram 7, pupils do not like or use this form of dictionary on a regular basis; the explanation for this may be that their comprehension of English is inadequate, they still have holes in their vocabulary, which makes it difficult to comprehend every sentence correctly. The bilingual dictionary may be preferred by students because it offers an interpretation in their own language.

**Diagram 8. ‘How often do you use bilingual dictionaries?’**



A bilingual dictionary is used for phrases and terms that need to be translated into your own language; this means that its function is to include the meaning of a word from one language to another, allowing students to translate in both ways. As seen in diagram 8, students prefer bilingual dictionaries to monolingual dictionaries because they are simpler to use, and easier to comprehend in their own language.

**Diagram 9. ‘When you meet a new/unfamiliar word, how often do you do the following...?’**

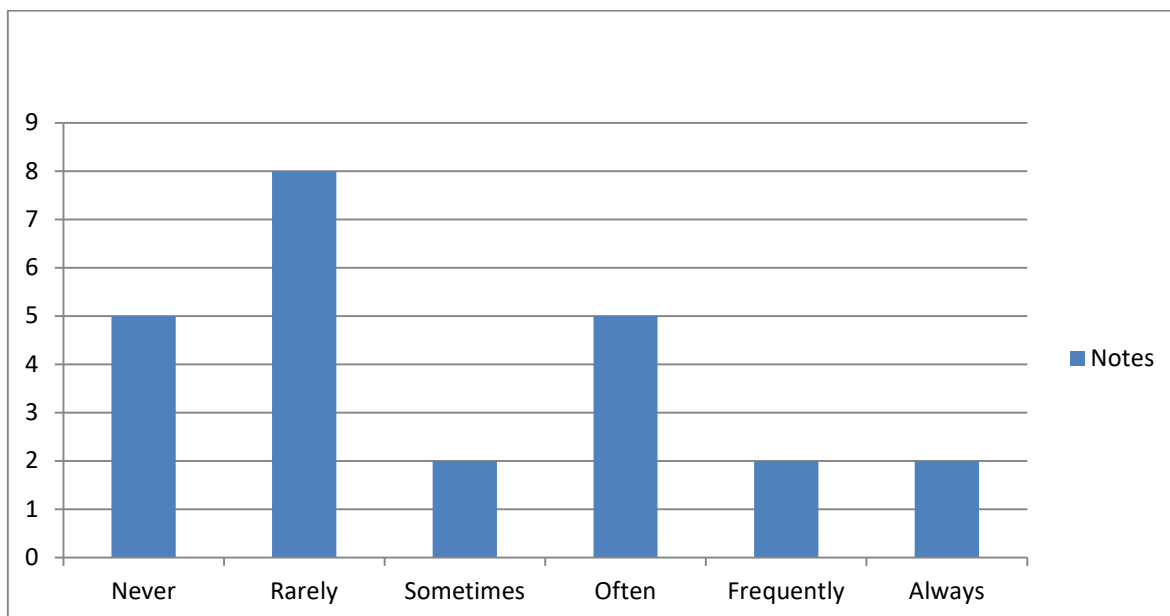


Students were asked to select an option which describes which method they usually prefer when they meet a new word. The results can be seen in diagram 9 and we can say that students prefer to check the meaning in a dictionary, however they do not exclude the possibility of guessing the meaning as the results suggest. This may be due the situation in which students find themselves, as they do not always have access to a dictionary and in such cases they prefer the guessing method.

We can deduce that students normally do not overlook new words they encounter during their studies; instead, they either ask someone or attempt to deal with the new word using other approaches such as guessing or looking it up in a dictionary.

Students were asked to choose an option that best represents their noting behaviours towards new words they encounter during their studies. The findings show us in diagram 10 that students seldom make any written record of a new word, with just a small percentage (around 38 percent, or less than half) taking notes of a newly learned word they encounter during their studies.

**Diagram 10. ‘When you meet a new/unfamiliar word how often do you note it down in your dictionary?’**



The next segment of the questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions in which students were asked to write down the definition of a word based on contextual clues.

There was a total of 12 sentences for students to complete, with six of them requiring guessing methods and the other six requiring the use of a dictionary.

This section of the survey aims to decide which of the two approaches (guessing or using a dictionary) would be more effective and useful when attempting to figure out the meaning of a new word based on context.

The students were given the following sentences in which they were asked to guess the meaning of the underlined word based on the clues of the context:

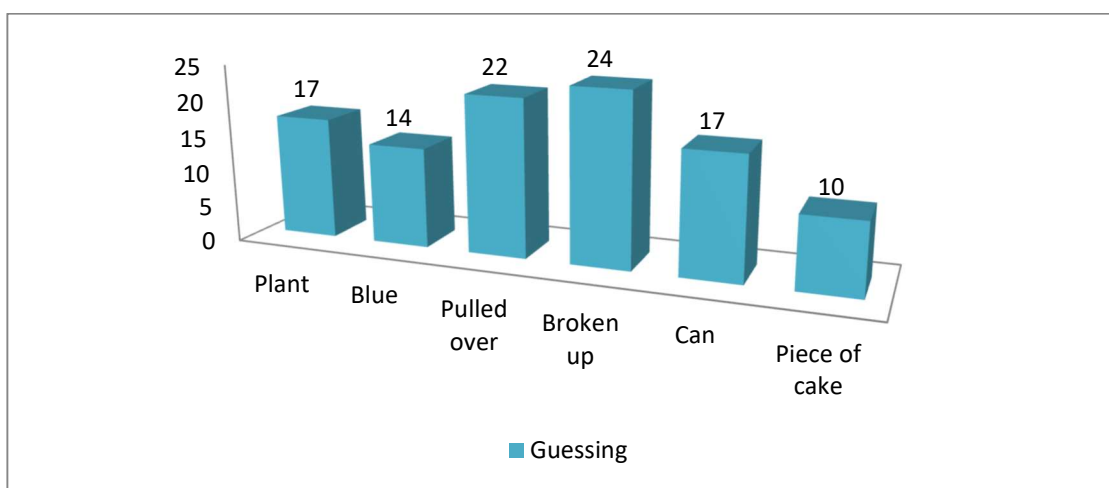
- They built a large plant to make cars.
- I don't know what's wrong – I just feel blue.
- We pulled over to watch the sunset.
- She's just broken up with her boyfriend.
- You'll need a can of beans for this recipe.
- Once I've done that, it's a piece of cake.

The results can be seen in diagram 11; we can see that the most difficult one was guessing the meaning of 'a piece of cake', which caused the majority of students to guess

wrongly and believe it was about a cake, and the same thing happened with the word ‘blue’, but there were fewer mistakes than with the previous one.

The words ‘plant’ and ‘can’ were easier for students to infer, but not for all of them because it was not clear what these words meant. Students confused the word ‘plant’ with the words ‘planning’ and ‘plants,’ and in the sentence with the word ‘can’, a few students mistook it for a modal verb while it was a noun in the context of this sentence.

**Diagram 11. Guess the meanings of the underlined words**



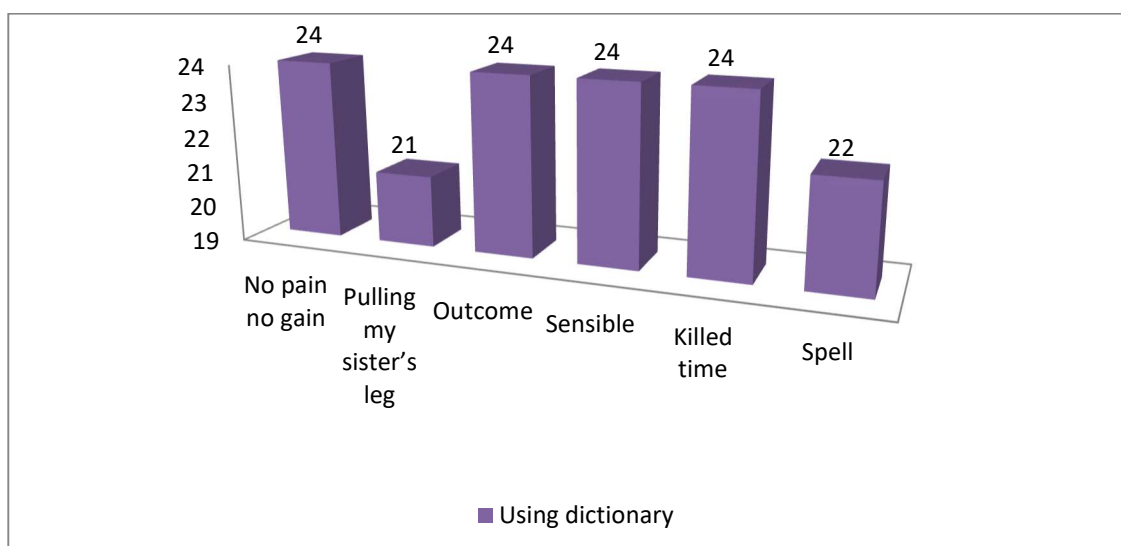
The expressions ‘pulled over’ and ‘broken up’ were handled by the students really well. They managed to guess the correct meaning behind them so in 2 instances out of 6 sentences students could determine the meaning just by looking at the surrounding contextual clues behind the underlined words.

The students were given the following sentences and were instructed to use a dictionary to determine the meaning of the underlined word based on the clues of the context:

- We work 16 hours a day, but no pain no gain.
- I love pulling my sister’s leg – It’s almost too easy to annoy her.
- It’s too early to predict the outcome of the election.
- It would be sensible to take an umbrella.
- We killed time playing cards.
- The witch put a spell on the prince and he turned into a frog.



**Diagram 12. Translate the underlined words with the help of a dictionary**



We can see that the idiom *'pull one's leg'* was the most difficult for the pupils to translate, but the vast majority of them were able to comprehend the sentence and its context.

The word *'spell'* was also treated well, with only two out of twenty-four students failing to grasp the meaning; they mistook it for the word *'spelling'*, which is why it was not recognized as a correct response.

The words in the other sentences were all accurate, and solving them for the pupils with a dictionary was not a problem; in fact, looking at diagram 12, we can clearly see that using a dictionary is a much better method for learning the meaning of a new word than guessing.

## **2.6 Conclusion of the research**

The study was carried out with the aid of a questionnaire that was filled out by secondary school pupils; the total number of participants was twenty-four, and each pupil was required to fill out the questionnaire in order to contribute to the study, which included closed-ended questions and open-ended questions.

The questionnaire addressed all three hypotheses; the first hypothesis of the study was confirmed, stating that students prefer using a dictionary over guessing methods; however, students only use a dictionary when they have access to one; in other words, students attempt to guess the meaning when they do not have a dictionary nearby.

The second hypothesis was that guessing methods for determining the meaning of a new word are unreliable, and this hypothesis was proven in the open-ended question portion of the

questionnaire, where we can see that the guessing approach had a lot of students guess incorrectly the meaning and only 72 percent of the responses was accurate, while when students used a dictionary, the rate of correct answers was 96 percent, demonstrating that using a dictionary is more effective than guessing.

The third hypothesis proposed that using a dictionary is a safer way to learn the meaning of a new word, which was confirmed by the findings, and the usefulness of the method lies in the comprehensive knowledge that a dictionary can offer and the assistance that it provided during the process, as shown by the results when students were asked to use a dictionary to get the meaning of the underlined term. Overall, we can conclude that using a dictionary is the advantageous method because it helps you find the meaning that suits the best into context.

## CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of the thesis was to find out which method is the best on finding the meaning of a word: using dictionary and/or guessing (inference).

The theoretical part of the thesis focused mainly on vocabulary itself and gave a detailed overview to understand the shades of vocabulary as a whole and the importance behind it, which as my own definition of vocabulary is as plain as “words of a language”, which is probably how most people think of vocabulary, and it is right because vocabulary does deal with words.

However, vocabulary is much more than just single words, as the first part of the research demonstrates that vocabulary often contains lexical chunks, which are phrases of two or more words, such as *Good morning* and *Nice to meet you*, that children and adults learn as single lexical units. These phrases contain more than one word but have a consistent, formulaic usage and account for a significant portion of spoken or written English language usage. Thus, vocabulary can be described as a language’s words, including single objects, phrases, or chunks of several words that convey a specific meaning in the same way that individual words do. Single lexical items – words with particular meanings – are addressed by vocabulary, but it also includes lexical phrases.

The second part of the research was carried out with the help of a questionnaire and focused on a group of secondary school pupils and their studying methods when they meet a new word and what they prefer using: dictionary or inferring method. The participants of the research were asked to evaluate their English knowledge level based on a scale, most of the students were at the level of B2 and their results were based on that knowledge, on average students stated that they are studying English as a second language for nine years. The participants mostly used the Internet as a source for getting the meaning of words and only a small portion of the participants used printed version of a dictionary however they do use dictionaries on their devices such as phone, tablets and computers for the most part. Students also prefer using bilingual dictionaries over monolingual dictionaries as it helps to break the language barrier they have to face with a monolingual dictionary. Students were asked to select an option which describes which method they usually prefer when they meet a new word. The results were that students prefer to check the meaning in a dictionary however they do not exclude the possibility of guessing the meaning. The answers were more or less balanced, and they normally do not ignore the new words they encounter during their studies. The questionnaire’s next segment included open-ended questions in which students were asked to write down the meaning of a word based on contextual clues. Students were given a total of 12 sentences to complete, six of which required guessing and the other six requiring the use of a dictionary. This part of the research served the

purpose of giving us valuable information regarding the best method to use when students meet a new word and addressed the three hypotheses. The first stated that students prefer using a dictionary over guessing methods, however students only use a dictionary when they have access to one, in other words students attempt to guess the meaning when they do not have a dictionary nearby. The second hypothesis was that guessing strategies for deciding the meaning of a new word are inefficient, which was confirmed when students guessed wrongly and only 72 percent of their responses were right, while when students used the dictionary, the number of correct answers was 96 percent, showing that using a dictionary is more reliable than guessing. The third hypothesis proposed that using a dictionary is a better way to learn the meaning of a new word, which was confirmed by the data. The usefulness of the method lies in the comprehensive knowledge and assistance that a dictionary would provide during the process, as shown by the results when students were asked to use a dictionary to get the meaning of the underlined words. Overall, we may agree that using a dictionary is the most beneficial approach because it allows you to locate the most appropriate meaning for the context.

The following conclusion can be taken from the research: students who use a dictionary as a main instrument for learning foreign words will effectively make progress in their studies outside of the classroom, their comprehension and enjoyment of the language will be improved, and students will be able to interpret the meanings of words more easily. Dictionaries should be used as an additional source of learning in the classroom that can help students gain confidence.

Further research is needed however on a larger scale to get more detailed information on using both dictionary and inferring methods and how they could be implemented into studying both inside and outside of the classroom.

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## РЕЗЮМЕ

Головною метою дипломної роботи було з'ясувати, який метод найкращий при пошуку значення слова: за допомогою словника та/або вгадування (умовиводу).

Теоретична частина дипломної роботи була зосереджена головним чином на самій лексиці та дала детальний огляд, щоб зрозуміти відтінки лексики в цілому та значення, яке стоїть за нею, яке, як я вважаю, є простим, як і «слова мови», що ймовірно, як більшість людей думає про словниковий запас, і це правильно, оскільки словниковий запас має справу зі словами.

Однак словниковий запас – це набагато більше, ніж просто окремі слова, оскільки перша частина дослідження демонструє, що словниковий запас часто містить лексичні шматки, які є фразами з двох або більше слів, таких як «Добрий ранок» та «Приємно познайомитися з вами», що діти і дорослі вивчають як лексичні одиниці. Ці фрази містять більше одного слова, але мають послідовне, сформульоване вживання та враховують значну частину розмовної чи письмової англійської мови. Таким чином, словниковий запас може бути описаний як слова мови, в тому числі висловлювання, фрази або шматки декількох слів, які передають певне значення таким самим чином, як і окремі слова. Одиничні лексичні висловлювання – слова з певним значенням – адресовані словниковим запасом, але він також включає лексичні фрази.

Друга частина дослідження була проведена за допомогою анкетування і була зосереджена на групі учнів загальноосвітніх шкіл та їх методах вивчення нових слів, та на те, чи вони віддають перевагу використанню словника чи методу умовиводу. Учасників дослідження попросили оцінити свій рівень володіння англійською мовою зумовлюючись на знання за шкалою, більшість студентів було на рівні B2 і їх результати були підтвердженням його знання, в середньому студенти заявили, що вони вивчають англійську, як іноземну мову в середньому вже дев'ять років. Учасники здебільше використовували інтернет, як джерело для отримання значення слів, і лише невелика частина учасників використовувала друковані словники, однак вони використовують словники на своїх пристроях, таких як телефони, планшети та здебільшого комп'ютери. Студенти також переважно використовують двомовні словники, а не одномовні, оскільки це допомагає подолати мовний бар'єр, з яким вони стикаються, коли використовують одномовний словник. Студентам було запропоновано вибрати варіант, який описує можливі методи, які вони зазвичай використовують, коли зустрічають нове слово. Проте зазвичай замість використання словника учні частіше використовують метод вгадування значення. Ці відповіді були більш-менш збалансовані, учні зазвичай не ігнорують нові

слова, з якими вони зустрічаються під час навчання, натомість, вони або питають когонебудь або намагаються мати справу з новим словом, використовуючи інші підходи, такі як вгадування або його пошук в словнику.

В анкеті наступний сегмент включав відкриті питання, в яких студентів попросили записати значення слова на основі 46 контекстних підказок. Загалом студентам було дано 12 речень, шість з яких вимагали вгадування, а решта вимагали використання словника. Метою цієї частини дослідження було дати нам цінну інформацію щодо найкращого методу, який слід використовувати, коли студенти зустрічають нове слово та розглядають три гіпотези. Перша гіпотеза виявила, що студенти вважають за краще використовувати словник понад методом вгадування, однак студенти використовують тільки словник, коли вони мають доступ до нього, іншими словами студенти намагаються вгадати сенс, коли у них немає словника поруч. Друга гіпотеза полягала в тому, що стратегії вгадування для визначення значення нового слова неефективні, це було підтверджено, коли студенти вгадували неправильно, але 72 відсотки їхніх відповідей були правильними, тоді як коли студенти користувалися словником, кількість правильних відповідей становила 96 відсотків, показуючи, що користування словником надійніше, ніж ми могли б здогадуватись. Третя гіпотеза передбачала, що використання словника є кращим способом дізнатися значення нового слова; це підтверджено даними. Корисність методу лежить у всебічних знаннях і допомоги, яку словник буде забезпечувати в ході процесу, який показують результати, коли студентів попросили використовувати словник, щоб отримати значення підкреслених слів. Загалом, ми можемо погодитись, що використання словника є найбільш вигідним підходом, оскільки він дозволяє знайти найбільш відповідне значення для контексту.

Наступний висновок може бути взятий з дослідження: студенти, які використовують словник в якості основного інструменту для вивчення іноземних слів будуть ефективно допомагати прогресу в своїх дослідженнях за межами класу, їх розуміння і задоволення від мови будуть покращені, і студенти будуть здатні легше інтерпретувати значення слів. Словники слід використовувати як додаткове джерело навчання в класі, яке може допомогти учням набути впевненості.

Однак необхідні подальші дослідження в більш широкому масштабі, щоб отримати більш детальну інформацію про використання як словникових методів, так і висновків, а також про те, як їх можна застосувати для вивчення як у класі, так і за його межами.



## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire questions

A kérdőív kitöltése anonim, személyes adat megadására nincs szükség. A kapott válaszokat csak összesítve elemzem és mutatom be szakdolgozatomban. A kitöltése ... percet vesz igénybe.

Köszönöm a segítségédet!

1. Mit jelentenek az aláhúzott kifejezések? Írd a mondatok mellé a jelentésüket. NE használj szótárt!
  - a) They built a large plant to make cars. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) I don't know what's wrong – I just feel blue. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) We pulled over to watch the sunset. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) She's just broken up with her boyfriend. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) You'll need a can of beans for this recipe. \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) Once I've done that, it's a piece of cake. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Hány éve tanulod az angolt?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Milyen szintűre becsülöd az angol nyelvtudásodat? (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
A1 – kezdő  
A2 – alapszint  
B1 – középhaladó-alapfokú  
B2 – haladó-középfokú  
C1 – felsőfokú  
C2 – anyanyelvi szint
3. Milyen szótárakat használasz az angol tanulása során? Írd le a neveiket.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Milyen gyakran használasz papíralapú szótárt? (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
soha – ritkán – néha – gyakran – nagyon gyakran – állandóan
5. Milyen gyakran használasz elektronikus szótárt számítógépen? (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
soha – ritkán – néha – gyakran – nagyon gyakran – állandóan
6. Milyen gyakran használasz elektronikus szótárt telefonon/tableten? (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
soha – ritkán – néha – gyakran – nagyon gyakran – állandóan

7. Milyen gyakran használsz egynyelvű (angol) szótárt? (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
soha – ritkán – néha – gyakran – nagyon gyakran – állandóan
8. Milyen gyakran használsz kétnyelvű (angol-magyar) szótárt? (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
soha – ritkán – néha – gyakran – nagyon gyakran – állandóan
9. Ha új/ismeretlen angol kifejezéssel találkozol, milyen gyakran csinálod az alábbiakat?  
a) megpróbálom kitalálni a jelentését a szövegkörnyezetből (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
soha – ritkán – néha – gyakran – nagyon gyakran – állandóan  
b) megnézem a jelentését egy szótárban (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
soha – ritkán – néha – gyakran – nagyon gyakran – állandóan  
c) megkérdezem valakitől, hogy mit jelent (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
soha – ritkán – néha – gyakran – nagyon gyakran – állandóan  
d) semmit, kihagyom (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
soha – ritkán – néha – gyakran – nagyon gyakran – állandóan
10. Ha ismeretlen/új angol kifejezéssel találkozol feljegyzed-e a szótáradba a jelentésével együtt? (a megfelelőt húzd alá)  
soha – ritkán – néha – gyakran – nagyon gyakran – állandóan
11. Mit jelentenek az aláhúzott kifejezések? Írd a mondatok mellé a jelentésüket. HASZNÁLJ szótárt!
- a) We work 16 hours a day, but no pain, no gain. \_\_\_\_\_
- b) I love pulling my sister's leg – it's almost too easy to annoy her. \_\_\_\_\_
- c) It's too early to predict the outcome of the election. \_\_\_\_\_
- d) It would be sensible to take an umbrella. \_\_\_\_\_
- e) We killed time playing cards. \_\_\_\_\_
- f) The witch put a spell on the prince and he turned into a frog. \_\_\_\_\_

## NYILATKOZAT

Alulírott, Maczkó Soma Sándor angol szakos hallgató, kijelentem, hogy a dolgozatomat a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskolán, a Filológia tanszéken készítettem, angol nyelv és irodalom tanári diploma megszerzése végett.

Kijelentem, hogy a dolgozatot más szakon korábban nem védtem meg, saját munkám eredménye, és csak a hivatkozott forrásokat (szakirodalom, eszközök, stb.) használtam fel.

Tudomásul veszem, hogy dolgozatomat a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola könyvtárának Kézirattárában helyezik el.