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**METHODS AND APPROACHES IN
VOCABULARY TEACHING AND THEIR
INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' ACQUISITION**

FINAL WORK

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I declare that I worked on the following thesis on my own and that I used all the sources mentioned in the bibliography.

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Résumé

INTRODUCTION

"Vocabulary acquisition is the largest and most important task facing the language learner." (Swan and Walter 1984)

The aim of this thesis is to present two main streams in language teaching approaches and their influence on students' acquisition. By confrontation grammar translation method vs. communicative approach I summarized their principles, both advantages and disadvantages, and tried to show how to make profit out of both to get the best possible result. The measurable result in this case is acquired knowledge which was tested in a real classroom.

The first part concerns the historical and theoretical backgrounds of both methods and their characteristics. It also devoted in general principles of vocabulary learning process.

The second part is based on practical work within a classroom. It consists of different lesson plans of the same topic dealt with two considered methods and leads to testing and evaluating stage in each group.

THEORETICAL PART

1. THE DEVELOPMENT IN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY

History of teaching English language reaches to Middle Ages. Over such a long period of time linguistic methodology faced to reforms many times. The aim of these papers is not to map development of all methods used within the history but I focused on two, commonly used in today's conditions: grammar-translation method and communicative approach.

1.1. Dilemma in language teaching process

As the titles of pedagogically oriented papers have changed markedly over the years, we can hardly get an idea of what is the best method by a survey of them. While in the past the focus was laid on grammatical description, and procedures of drilling, modern methods reflect on promoting real communication in the classroom, help students understand spoken and written language, and participate in conversations. The primary goal of modern methodology is the lowering of students' anxiety.

David Wilkins summed up the importance of vocabulary for language learning: "Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary **nothing** can be conveyed." This point of view is echoed in the advice to students from a recent course book (Dellar H and Hocking D, Innovation, LTP):

“If you spend most of your time studying grammar, your English will not improve very much . You will see most improvement if you learn more words and expressions. You can say very little with grammar, but you can say almost anything with words!” (Thornbury 2002, p. 13)

When language teachers try to decide which view of the language learning process should be adopted as most suitable for meeting the needs of their students they often face a major source of problems. Reading opposing views, language teachers face a dilemma in trying to decide how to organize their lessons as well as choose the most effective method.

Teaching of grammatical structures was given for a long time a greater priority over the communicative function itself. The number of words introduced in such courses was kept fairly low. Those words which were taught were often chosen either because they were easily demonstrated, or translation even used to be the only way of demonstration. The access of the communicative approach set era for reconsidering the role of vocabulary, as well as debates about effectiveness and optimisation of teaching process.

1.2. Linguistics research

The common definition of linguistic as the “ scientific study of language” and of language as a “ rule governed system” should be treated as serious statements concerning both analytic methodology and the nature of the object under investigation.(Krashen, 1987)

An example that is important consists of experiments that compare teaching methods. Quite simply a group of students is taught a foreign language using method A (grammar translation in this case) and another group is taught the same language using method B (communicative). The result of such an experiment is certainly of interest to theoreticians since a particular theory might predict that students using one method would do better than students using another. The experiment itself, however, is designed for practical ends,

i.e. to decide which method should be used for the students to optimise the effectiveness.

Linguistic and communicative competence

“The relation between linguistic and communicative competence is also important. At the foundation stage, linguistic competence is the spontaneous, flexible, and correct manipulation of the language system. Communicative competence involves principles of appropriateness and a readiness on the part of the learner to use relevant strategies in coping with certain language situations. Linguistic competence, then, is the basis of communicative competence. But communicative competence does not automatically result from linguistic competence. Forms of classroom activities such as role playing, simulations, and real-life interactions should be used to provide as much practice as possible for students to develop communicative competence while practicing linguistic competence.” (Rao Zhenhui, 1999)

(www.exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol37/no3/p27.htm, from 9 April)

2. MODERN TECHNIQUES IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

In modern methodology two main tendencies set apart: methods in which the teacher has the most important role and chooses the items students will learn opposing the one where focus shifts away from the teacher to the students. This makes students more responsible for their own learning and allows to meet individual needs of each student. (Gairns, Redman 1986)

2.1. Grammar-translation vs. communicative approach

In recent years, there has been a major shift in perspective within the language teaching profession concerning the nature of what is to be taught. In simple terms, there has been a change of emphasis from presenting language as a set of forms (grammatical, phonological, lexical) which have to be learned and practised, to presenting language as a functional system which is used to fulfil a range of communicative purposes, which is described as communicative competence. The aim of this thesis is to present both attitudes, which are still widely used in foreign language education area. Each method is introduced concerning its principles and the advantageous place for practical application is elicited.

2.2. Grammar-translation method

The grammar-translation method of foreign language teaching is one of the most traditional methods, dating back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was originally used to teach 'dead' languages (and literatures) such

as Latin and Greek. (Thuleen,1996) However, conscious learning of grammar is no longer the leading strategy in language educating area.

The principal characteristic of the grammar-translation method is a focus on learning the grammar rules and their application in translating texts from one language into the other. Most of the teaching is provided in students' first language. Vocabulary is presented mainly through direct translation from the native language and memorization, using bilingual word list:

e.g. the house – dům

the mouse - myš

The basic unit of a teaching process is a sentence. Students spend most of the lesson time completing grammar exercises, where the main emphasis is laid on accuracy and following given structure. The grammar is presented systematically, in students native language and practiced through translation from one language to the other, e.g.

Do you have my book? = Máš moji knihu?

Nevím kde je tvoje kniha. = I don't know where your book is.

Do you have my book? = Máš moji knihu?

Nevím kde je tvoje kniha. = I don't know where your book is.

In regard to language skills reading and writing are distinctively preferred to speaking and listening. Little time is spent on oral practice and students have not enough opportunities to produce sentences on their own.

(based on www.nthuleen.com/papers/720report.html)

Krashen, 1987 analysed linguistic output of students from grammar translation class. He noticed the fact that many students make errors in rules

that are easy to describe, which means that this technique can not lead to acquisition. He also emphasizes the importance in balance between grammatical accuracy and communication. Though utilizing grammar rules raise students correctness, when speaking they incline to have a hesitant style that is often difficult to listen to. They plan their utterance while their conversational partner is talking. Their output may be accurate, but they all too often do not pay enough attention to what the other person is saying. Students often have difficulties "relating" to the language, because the classroom experience keeps them from personalizing it or developing their own style.

Grammar-translation method should be tempered with other approaches to create a more flexible and conducive methodology. Nancy Thuleen, in his website article criticises the harmful effect on students' interest: "The worst effect of this method is on students' motivation. Because (s)he cannot succeed - leads to frustration and lack of confidence in language usage. On the other hand, for students who respond well to rules, structure and correction, the grammar-translation method can provide a challenging and even appealing classroom environment." (Thuleen, 1996)

The list of linguistics attitudes to grammar translation method could be finished by Barnhouse, 1981: "In English teaching dominated by the grammar-translation method, accuracy is emphasized more than fluency. Students in such classrooms are extremely particular about linguistic details. They never feel satisfied with their language productions until the correct answers are provided. They are keenly interested in the exact words, have a low tolerance of ambiguity, and tend to focus on discrete grammar points and specific syntactic constructions."

(www.exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol37/no3/p27.html)

Considering the aim of this thesis we must admit a great deal of grammar translation method for generations of people educated in such a way. It would not be fair to condemn it for being old-fashioned and worthless. On the other side, it would be of no value to insist on out-dated methods. As shown in the experiment later, the progress in language teaching method can significantly influence students' motivation as well as their linguistic and communicative competence.

The role of grammar

Despite all of the drawbacks mentioned above, there are several positive aspects to be found in this approach. The supporter of grammar translation method, Rao Zhenhui, emphasizes the importance of the language structure as a fundamental element which allows us to generate sentences. Only correct grammar structure can assure comprehensible communication. Appropriate grammar analysis helps students acquire linguistic competence better.

(based on www.exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol37/no3/p27.html)

Conscious utilizing of grammar rules improve students grammatical accuracy, nevertheless this should not interfere with communication. For that it is essential to take into account the time necessary for new structure acquisition. In classroom conditions it is advantageous to apply this approach for activities such as writing and prepared speech, when students must be thinking about correctness or focus on form. Within these terms, given a reasonable time students are able to use obtained skills to great benefit.

The role of translation

"Translation seems to be a useful tool if used sparingly, but it should be used with caution." (Harmer 1993, p. 86)

If teachers rely on the use of translation to excess, students are losing some of the essential spirit of being in a language learning classroom. This often causes listening skills to decline. Furthermore, Harmer points to the difficulties of translation, which requires an efficient speaker of both languages to translate well.

"Sometimes it is worth giving the mother tongue equivalent rather than to spend valuable time trying to define or show the meaning. It is of great value when no easy alternative suggests itself or highlights the danger of false cognates." (Harmer 1993, p. 86)

2.3. Communicative approach

The communicative approach is an umbrella term to describe the methodology which teaches students how to communicate efficiently. It also lays emphasis on students' responsibility for their own learning. It involves cooperation within group, self-activity, dictionary work.

The first concern of the communicative approach is language acquisition rather than conscious learning. According to Krashen, "acquisition is a natural process, similar to the way children develop ability in their first language. It is a subconscious process when students are not aware of the fact they are acquiring language but are using the language for communication." (Krashen, 1987, p. 10)

The principles of the communicative approach:

(based on www.aber.ac.uk website, from 11 April, 2006)

- classroom environment provides opportunities for rehearsal of real-life situations and provides opportunity for real communication. Emphasis on creative role-plays/ simulations/ surveys/ projects/ - all produce spontaneity

and improvisation

- within lessons students have to cope with a variety of everyday situations
- more emphasis on active modes of learning, including pair work and group-work
- it offers communicative activity to students from early stage
- errors are a natural part of learning process
- communicative approach is student-orientated, as it follows students' needs and interests
- communicative approach is not just limited to oral skills. Reading and writing skills need to be developed to promote students' confidence in all language skills
- teaching grammar is set in context, students are awarded of connection between communication and grammar
- use of idiomatic/ everyday language (even slang words)
- use of topical items with which students are already familiar in their own language - arouses students' interest and leads to more active participation
- usage of authentic resources, such as newspaper and magazine articles, poems, manuals, recipes, telephone directories, videos, news...etc.

To sum up, communicative approach refers to classroom activities in which students use language as a vehicle of communication, and the main purpose is to complete some kind of task. Students are required to use any and/or all the language that they know, and they gradually develop their strategies in communication. There is a place for both controlled presentation and semi-controlled language practice, which brings optimal development of students' language skills.

3. TEACHING VOCABULARY

3.1. Principles of learning and teaching vocabulary

However many theories about vocabulary learning process were written, it still remains the matter of memory. Thus, there are several general principles for successful teaching, which are valid for any method. According to Wallace, 1988 the principles are:

- aim – what is to be taught, which words, how many
- need – target vocabulary should respond students' real needs and interests
- frequent exposure and repetition
- meaningful presentation – clear and unambiguous denotation or reference should be assured

Learning vocabulary is a complex process. The students' aim to be reached in learning vocabulary process is primarily their ability to recall the word at will and to recognize it in its spoken and written form.

Generally, knowing a word involves knowing its form and its meaning at the basic level. In deeper aspects it means the abilities to know its (Harmer 1993):

- 1) Meaning, i.e. relate the word to an appropriate object or context
- 2) Usage, i.e. knowledge of its collocations, metaphors and idioms, as well as style and register (the appropriate level of formality), to be aware of any connotations and associations the word might have
- 3) Word formation, i.e. ability to spell and pronounce the word correctly, to know any derivations (acceptable prefixes and suffixes),
- 4) Grammar, i.e. to use it in the appropriate grammatical form

3.2. How words are remembered

Unlike the learning of grammar, which is essentially a rule based system, vocabulary knowledge is largely a question of accumulating individual items. The general rule seems to be a question of memory. And during the process of teaching and learning vocabulary an important problem occurs: How does memory work? Researchers into the workings of memory distinguish between the following systems (Thornbury, 2002)

- short- term store
- working memory
- long- term memory

Short - term store

Short-term store is the brain capacity to hold a limited number of items of information for periods of time up to a few seconds. It is the kind of memory that is involved in repeating a word that you have just heard the teacher modelling. But successful vocabulary learning involves more than holding words for a few seconds. To integrate words into long - term memory they need to be subjected to different kinds of operations.

Working memory

Working memory means focussing on word long enough to perform operations on them. It means the information is manipulated via the senses from external sources and/or can be downloaded from the long- term memory. Material remains in working memory for about twenty seconds. The existence of articulator loop enables this new material processing. It works a bit like audiotape going round a round again. It assures the short- term store to be

kept refreshed. The ability to hold a word in working memory is a good predictor of language learning aptitude. The better ability to hold words in working memory the smoother the process of learning foreign languages is.

Long –term memory

Long-term memory can be seen as kind of filling system. Unlike working memory, which has a limited capacity and no permanent content, this kind of memory has an enormous capacity and its contents are durable over time. However, to ensure moving new materials into permanent long-term memory, requires number of principles to be followed, described by Thornbury, 2002:

- Repetition – repetition of encounters with a word is very important, useful and effective. If the word is met several times over space interval during reading activities, students have a very good chance to remember it for a long time.
- Retrieval - another kind of repetition. Activities, which require retrieval, such as using the new items in written tasks, help students to be able to recall it again in the future.
- Spacing - it is useful to split memory work over a period of time rather than to mass it together in a single block.
- Pacing – to respect different learning styles and pace, students should be ideally given the opportunity to do memory work individually.
- Use - putting words to use, preferably in an interesting way, is the best way of ensuring they are added to long – term memory. This is so called “Use it or lose it” principle.
- Cognitive depth - the more decisions students make about the word and the more cognitively demanding these decisions are, the better the word is remembered.
- Personal organising - personalisation significantly increased the probability that students will remember new items. It is achieved mainly through

conversation and role-playing activities.

- Imaging – easily visualised words are better memorable than those that do not evoke with any pictures. Even abstract words can be associated with some mental image.
- Mnemonics – tricks to help retrieve items or rules that are stored in memory. The best kinds of mnemonics are visuals and keyword techniques.
- Motivation - strong motivation itself does not ensure that words will be remembered. Even unmotivated students remember words if they have to face appropriate tasks.
- Attention - it is not possible to improve vocabulary without a certain degree of conscious attention.

3.3. Other important factors in language learning process

Perhaps it is useful to think in terms of methods to the extent that some of them will be better suited than others to particular learning styles, or particular cultural and educational traditions, but at the same time it is vital to remember that there are much more fundamental factors that determine success in language learning:

1. motivation
2. data (samples of the language, plus - maybe - information about the language)
3. opportunities to experiment with the data
4. feedback – to confirm that you are heading in the right direction, or to re-direct you if you are not

([www.onestopenglish.com/teacher support/ask/methodology/method5.htm](http://www.onestopenglish.com/teacher%20support/ask/methodology/method5.htm))

PRACTICAL PART

For purposes of this thesis I determined two groups of adult students at pre-intermediate level. Both courses took place in the evenings, consisted of 10 people with comparable social status, motivation and other factors, which could be of any influence on language learning process.

The target topic was food, in both groups set in the context of restaurant. In group A I used the grammar-translation method, mostly grounded on *Angličtina pro jazykové školy* (Peprník, 1981), while the plan in group B was based on the communicative approach. The experiment consisted of three 45-minutes lessons, following with a test.

In the testing phase I tried to verify an appropriate usage of target vocabulary throughout the language skills – reading, writing and listening. I focused on all aspects of the word knowledge mentioned in part 1.3., i.e. meaning, usage, formation and grammar.

4.1. Group A

All texts and exercises come from Peprník, *Angličtina pro jazykové školy I.*, 1981. I decided to use this textbook exclusively, as its methodology is a great representative of grammar-translation method as well as the selection of sentences and vocabulary throughout the exercises shows the important relation between individual linguistic section.

Lesson plan 1

Warmer: Students look at the picture (appendix 1), a teacher asks the question: "Where are the Prokops now?" to elicit a word "restaurant". Emphasize resemblance with Czech, and ask for more words students have

already known from their mother language i.e. juice, beer, ice cream, chocolate, coffee, tea, steak,...etc.

Presentation: Students take turns to read the text (appendix 1) aloud. They translate it using a bilingual vocabulary list, joined to the text. Then, they go through the vocabulary and phrase pattern list, item by item, drilling pronunciation. Finally the teacher tests students' memory calling a word in Czech arousing students' translation into English.

e.g. teacher: "souhlasit s někým"

students: "agree with somebody"

teacher: "souhlasím s tebou"

students: "I agree with you"

Grammar presentation: Lesson continues with grammatical part. Students' attention is drawn to irregular comparative and superlative form of adjectives "good" and "bad" in the text. They already know the meanings from the vocabulary list, so they copy the table from their textbooks:

good <i>dobrý</i>	better <i>lepší</i>	the best <i>nejlepší</i>
bad <i>špatný</i>	worse <i>horší</i>	the worst <i>nejhorší</i>

Practice: Cvičení 1. Odpovězte podle obrázku (appendix 2):

- *Is the first car better than the third car?*
- *Is the second car better than the third car?*
- *Is the third car worse than the second car?*
- *Is the third car the worst?*
- *Is the second car as bad as the third car?*
- *Which is the worst car?*

Cvičení 2. Namítejte: (*vzor: I have got a good memory. – But he has got even better memory.*)

- *My pronunciation is good.*
- *I make bad mistakes.*
- *I´ve got good schoolmates.*
- *I had a bad accident.*
- *I have got a good job.*

Cvičení 3. Přeložte: - *Jsou horší věci než tohle.*

- *Které jídlo bylo nejlepší a které bylo nejhorší?*
- *Horší místo mi nevadí.*
- *Je to trochu lepší, že?*
- *Maso mám nejraději s různou zeleninou.*

My notes: The warmer activity students found encouraging, as there are many household items in Czech. However I, noticed a problem in a part when I tried to elicit a word "restaurant" in a context- it would sound more naturally with a preposition. This problem became appreciable in drilling exercise when I test students' memory of vocabulary list. Though they obviously did not have problems to produce a base form of any word from the list, they spent rather long time transferring the items into the correct form within a context.

In grammatical part I felt a pity that student were just given a 'final product'. Though it saved lesson time as ready to use, 'discovering' role on their own is always a challenging activity for students, as well as significant help in language acquisition. Exercise 1 is a good drilling exercise, useful to test the grammar rules mastering. It helps students at this level analyse particular language area. However, vocabulary cover too narrow range and is completely set apart of the unit topic. It makes the exercise boring for students and useless in regard of vocabulary acquisition work.

Exercise 2 simulates personalization. Students do not speak about themselves, but they use a given pattern to produce correct structures. I noticed they sometimes do it automatically without thinking about the meaning .

In translation exercise students proved very low ability to work with a language itself. They treated language as a set of individual words which could be simply put together to create a sentence. They had evident problems with differences between Czech and English syntax, and no student was able to create absolutely correct sentence for the first try. It naturally increases their anxiety and stress in language usage.

During all the exercises students were extremely attentive about the linguistic details. Many grammatical rules were used in a short time, which makes students stressed and worried about mistakes. On the other side, they show no interest in content – it could be caused by too much emphasis on grammar, as well as missing opportunity to personalize the topic in any way and absence of cognitive task. Students had no opportunity to create sentences on their own or developed their own style.

In general, grammar translation method gives students the wrong idea of what language is and of the relationship between languages. Language is seen as a collection of words which are isolated and independent and there must be a corresponding word in the native tongue for each foreign word students learn.

Lesson plan 2

Warmer: 1.vyjmenujte: - výrazy z oblasti podávání jídla v restauraci

- výrazy z jídelního lístku

- různé způsoby poděkování

2. přeložte: - vařit dobře x vařit čaj

- mám hlad x nemám čas

Grammar presentation: Students look at the table with irregular verbs, which appeared in the text:

bring <i>přinést</i>	brought	brought
drink <i>pít</i>	drank	drunk
give <i>dát</i>	gave	given
put <i>položít, dát</i>	put	put
take <i>vzít, brát</i>	took	taken
sit <i>sedět</i>	sat	sat

We drilled all the forms and pronunciation, then students worked in pairs, testing each other's memory.

Practice: Cvičení 1. Odpovězte:

(vzor: *What did you bring? A present? - Yes, I brought a present.*)

What did you give him? A camera?

Where did you put it? On the desk?
Why did you take it? Because you needed it?
Where did you sit? At the back?
Who did you bring with you ? Another friend?
What did you drink? Grapefruit juice?
Where did he speak about it? At the meeting?
Who did you tell? Jack?
When did you come home? At five?
What did he say? Help me?

Cvičení 2. Odpovězte: (vzor: *When did they bring it? - It was brought an hour ago*)

When did she put it here?
When did they take it away?
When did they give it to him?
When did they bring these things?
When did they leave it here?

Cvičení 3. Přeložte: *Kdo to sem položil? Vzal si s sebou spoustu jídla. Sedl si a nic neříkal. Bylo to sem přineseno včera večer. Dal jsem mu dvacet korun. Dal knihu na psací stůl. Včera večer hodně pil. Seděl u stolu s námi. Vzal si to, třebaže to nepotřeboval. Brzy jsem mu to vrátil (=dal zpět).*

Finally students go back to the text, find and underline the new irregular verbs and within the class they answer the questions according to the text:

1. Why were Mr. And Mrs. Prokop alone at home on Sunday? 2. Why did Mrs. Prokop's husband agree to the dinner at a restaurant? 3. Did they go to their favourite restaurant? Why not? 4. Was the other restaurant as cheap as the

first one? 5. What did Mr. Prokop like about the dinner? 6. When did another couple join them? 7. Why couldn't the American visitors choose their meal? 8. How did they choose it when there was no translation on the menu? 9. What do Americans put on steak? 9. Did the American lady have beer too?

Additional activities to the text:

1. Reagujte: *1. What will you have? 2. If you like I can help you. 3. Let's wash the dishes now. 4. Is this table free? 5. I'm afraid I don't understand it.*

2. Uved'te věty, jež by mohly předcházet: *1. The same for me. 2. It was, wasn't it? 3. I'll bring it in a minute. 4. I'm much obliged to you. 5. What a pity.*

3. Doplňte: *1. If you don't mind,.... 2. I'm afraid... 3. She decided... 4. Let's.... 5. Excuse me,.... 6. Why don't ...? 7. They went for... 8. He had an opportunity... 9. I'm no better... 10. We sat down at a table near the window, with...*

My notes: Students proved very good knowledge of target vocabulary. Neatly arranged bilingual word list seems to be beneficial help for home work. There is good feedback to the previous lesson, students work with the text they have already known. They either work with vocabulary they learnt in advance. I would consider disadvantage that students were able to predict the questions and prepare their correct answer. Moreover, as the gap between lessons was a week, in some cases it turned into memory test rather than anything else. In grammatical part I realised that students did very good work, when they were given appropriate pattern. In case the pattern was changed, it took them time to get used to another one to produce fitting structures. Again, they often did it automatically without showing any interest in content.

Additional activities are similar to those we know from communicative approach. They are probably used to create feelings of real communication for students, but actually they are far from it. I would definitely denounce the exercise where students should think out the preceding sentence. First, it is not natural in any way to think about language in reverse order, and second it makes students to use phrases from previous text instead of trying to create some on their own.

Lesson plan 3

Warmer: Zeptejte se spolužáka:

- *vaří-li se u nich doma každou neděli*
- *kteřá je jeho oblíbená restaurace a proč*
- *umí-li si vybrat jídlo rychle*
- *sedí-li u stolu v restauraci sám nebo se k někomu připoj*
- *umí- li přeložit jídelní lístek do angličtiny*
- *jaký nápoj si dává po obědě dá-li si totéž co jeho společník, nebo něco jiného*
- *dostane-li vždy všechna jídla podle jídelního lístku*
- *co má raději: kuře s bramborem nebo s rýží*
- *vaří-li se v restauraci hůř než u nich doma*

Naučte se dialogy zpaměti a ve dvojici předved'te :

a) *How did you enjoy the trip to the Jeseníky * Mountains?*

*It was very nice trip**. The weather was excellent.*

Those're my favourite mountains. There're so few people there.

Yes, you're right.

*(*Beskydy, ** weekend)*

b) *You look rather worried. What's the problem?*

I can't find my watch. And the worst thing is that I'm leaving tomorrow.*

I can help you . You can take my watch.*

*That's very kind of you **. But won't you miss your watch?*

*(*blue tie, **you're very kind)*

c) *Excuse me, do you mind if I join you? No other table* is free, I'm afraid.*

Please do. These two places are free.

The restaurant is rather full today, isn't it?*

There 're a lot of foreign visitors in the town in the winter months.

*(*place)*

Přeložte:

Minulou neděli paní Prokopová nemusela vařit a pan Prokop nemusel umývat nádobí. Prokopovi šli na oběd do restaurace. Byl volný jeden dobrý stůl u okna; odtamtud byl pěkný výhled na střechy starého města. Brzy se k nim připojila další dvojice (druhá dvě místa u stolu byla volná). Pro pana Prokopa to byla první příležitost promluvit si anglicky s Američanem. Přeložil mu názvy jídel na jídelním lístku a pomohl mu vybrat jídlo: zeleninovou polévku, biftek s bramborem jako hlavní chod, pivo pro něj a grapefruitový džus pro jeho společníci. Američané mu byli velmi zavázáni. Prokopovi byli v této restauraci poprvé. Pan Prokop viděl, že to tam nebylo horší (a jídlo tam bylo podáváno dokonce rychleji) než v jeho oblíbené restauraci na rohu ulice Svornosti. Tam nemohli jít, bylo tam plno.

Topic is closed with a text comparing Czech, English and American eating habits (appendix 3). The text should introduce foreign culture to Czech students, and is contributed with bilingual word list.

My notes: Students utilize both grammar and vocabulary introduced in the

teaching unit. It seems very effective way to use well organized structure, neatly built exercises and tables to show how does the language work. Most of the last lesson is based on memorizing and translation, which give students clear idea and feelings of safety in English language world. They mostly proved very high level at stored vocabulary items, as well as sentence pattern. On the other side, when a word already known was presented in a different context or form, students were not able to recognize it. The evidence for it is shown in testing chapter.

4.2. Group B

Lesson plan 1

Warmer: I wrote on the board : 'What do you find on the table in restaurants?' and students in pairs got a time limit to list all the items they know in English. As feedback students' words were put on the board in two groups: 'Food' and 'Others'.

Vocabulary presentation

Instructions: 'Look at the pictures (appendix 4) and try to remember as many things as possible. You have 5 minutes, then turn the sheet over and write as many things from the list as you can. Check your list with the partner and put your notes together'.

Feedback: 'How many things did you manage to remember as a pair?' Then within a class we managed matching all the words and pictures and drilled their pronunciation. Students added other words from warmer to the word bank.

Then we focused on 'Ways of cooking' (appendix 5). Students were able to elicit the meaning of the five adjectives from the pictures. After copying the

basic map into their vocabulary file, they thought of another food for each category, and added it to the map, e.g. **baked**: bread, biscuits, apples, **boiled**: spaghetti, peas...

(This activity is taken from English File 2, Clive, 1997)

Practice:

Instructions: 'On the walls of the classroom there are several lines. In pairs, one of you is a scribe and one is a messenger. The messenger go round the classroom to find the order of jumbled texts, remember what is written there, and dictate it to the scribe. You will find a recipe for mushroom salad. You have a time limit 5minutes.'

Sentences spread over the classroom:

Wash mushrooms and pat dry. (Do not peel.) Cut off most of stalk. Slice the rest thinly and put in salad bowl.

Mix oil with lemon juice, salt and pepper, and beat well.

Pour about 200ml of this dressing over mushrooms, stir gently and put aside for an hour.

Add rest of dressing and put aside again until most of dressing is absorbed, about half an hour.

Meanwhile, chop chives or parsley. Sprinkle this over salad, and serve.

(This activity is introduced by Swan and Walter in The Cambridge English Course 1, 1984)

Personalization

Instructions: 1. 'Now, you are going to invite your mother in law for the next week, and need to built up a menu for her. Think about what kind of person she is to ingratiate with her (i.e. how much money you want to spend

for it, if she prefers sweets or is on a diet, probably she does not like a particular food ... etc.). Do not forget to use your special mushroom salad from 1!

2. 'Find your mother in law within the class, invite her and show off what you have prepared for her (start with: "Oh, I am really happy to be with you the following week! I was just thinking how to please you....").

My notes: The warmer activity helped me elicit the knowledge students already had. Pair work at the beginning allowed them to pull their ideas as well as refresh 'forgotten' lexis stored in their long-term memory. It also facilitated me to determine their extent in this area as well as to follow the presentation principles from acquired matters to the new ones.

The challenging activity from vocabulary presentation part motivated students to absorb the maximum items into their memory. Neatly arranged word bank allowed to sort the load of lexis, fix them and thus spread students' current knowledge.

An effective way of visual presentation is used here. The context is evident for students, and the principle of interfacing old and new information is observed.

Practical part, based on communication, works like a small project. Involves a preparatory part, where students have to practise their language skills: reading and speaking for messengers and writing and listening for scribes. Personalization is supposed to be the most important phase of learning process, which allows students to practise new grammar construction and lexis in concrete situation. When speaking, students were made to use all language they knew as well as to integrate new lexis to work out a task.

Throughout the lesson we can follow the shift from receiving skills development to productive skills area, while main focus was laid on eliciting meaning, spelling and pronunciation.

Lesson plan 2

Presentation:

Reading a menu: Teacher set the scene, introduce Pieter who is meeting two old friends, Benni and Hana, for dinner in a restaurant in Stockholm. Students quickly read the menu (appendix 6) and answer the questions:

1. 'How many meat dishes are there?'
2. 'Is there anything for vegetarians?'

Ordering a meal: a/ Students listen to the tape (transcript – appendix 7), ticking on the menu the food that they hear. Check answers by writing these chart on the board, student should be able to say what each person ordered:

	<i>Starter</i>	<i>Main course</i>
<i>Pieter</i>		
<i>Benni</i>		
<i>Hana</i>		

b/ Students read quickly through incorrect phrases, trying to find the error. Then listen the tape again, noting the missing words and their position in each sentence. Check answers.

Phrases to read and check: *A table three, please.*
 Are you ready order?
 What you recommend?
 I have the pepper steak.
 Rare , medium, well-done?
 The roast chicken me, please.
 What you like to drink?
 I like some mineral water too, please.

c/ Students read the sentences again and decide who says them. They write **c** (customer) or **w** (waiter). Finally they find and underline expressions to order food.

Personalization: Roleplay

Students in groups of three roleplay ordering a meal. A is a waiter, B and C are customers. Teacher could demonstrate with strong student, taking more difficult role – the waiter. Then class continue in their groups. Teacher monitors the activity, providing help if necessary.

(This activities are taken from English File 2, Clive, 1997)

My notes :

Students utilized the vocabulary from previous class and learned how to use them in context. The main focus shifted from recognizing the target words in their both written and spoken form to active production within the context. Students are taught to use them in common phrases with appropriate level of formality. Topic is a part of so called 'survival language', students at this level has already gone through this situation in real, so they are naturally highly motivated to acquire it.

Lesson plan 3

Warmer: students are working in pairs, their task is to complete food crossword puzzle (Appendix 8) . They take turns to give definitions to their partner.

Presentation: Questions on the board: "*Which food and drink comes from our country?*" "*Which foreign food and drink is popular in our country?*" Students pull their ideas to built-up two lists.

Now, focus on the pictures (appendix 9). '*Can you identify any places or nationalities in the photographs?*' '*What else can you see?*'

Then students read the text quickly to match the correct heading for each paragraph. Headings:

WHERE DOES OUR FOOD COME FROM?

WHAT DO WE EAT?

HOW DO WE EAT?

After checking the answers let students to read the text again, more carefully and answer the questions bellow the text.

Follow-up: In small groups students discuss the questions about eating habits in their country: '*What is a typical breakfast?*' '*What does your family have for breakfast?*' '*Is lunch or dinner the main meal of the day?*' '*What is a typical main meal?*'

(This activity is taken from New Headway English Course, Soars, 2000)

True or false game: one person says a sentence about eating habits in Britain or America, the others decide whether it is true or false. For example:

English people drink tea with milk. – true

The Americans do not use knives and forks. – false

Teacher start this activity, regulates it a bit in the course and provides students with factual information about real habits and culture of eating in English speaking countries.

My notes:

During warmer activity students revise new vocabulary meaning and spelling. For this purposes crosswords puzzle is more enjoyable form than a test dictated by the teacher. As students had to create definitions on their own, it works as speaking and listening exercise as well.

Presentation part provides students with very similar information to those given in lesson plan 3 for group A, based on different implementation. In this lesson students were made to participate in creating the text, although in minimum extent. For comprehension they were not given a bilingual dictionary but a set of questions, they were able to answer.

Similar approach was chosen in giving specific information about eating habits in English speaking countries. The last activity involves many cognitive tasks. First, students have to think about what they already know, then create or listen to sentences in a class and think about them to decide if they are right or not. This effort works as a strong motivational factor arousing adequate attention to listen and absorb the maximum information.

4.3. Testing phase

Testing provide a form of feedback both for learners and teachers. Vocabulary tests involve the aspects of word knowledge mentioned earlier, i.e. the word's form, meaning, connotations, register or style, common collocations, derivations and grammatical characteristic.

Each of them can be realized receptively (in listening and reading) or productively (in speaking and writing). Words can be tested in and/or out of context. In general the important attitude to tests is to strike a balance between validity, practicality and reliability.

For purposes of this thesis I tried to built up the test suitable for both groups of students. It could be said, each group was in some respect in favourable position within particular exercise. To avoid this I used exercises from independent sources regarding both communicative as well as grammar-translation approaches.

4.3.1. Test - commentary

(full version of the test - appendix 8)

exercise 1: *Students are simply dictated the list of words involved in the topic.*

exercise 2: *Teacher asks students to write the English word that means: i.e. a place where you go to buy meat.*

Both exercises focus on spelling and meaning. No context is provided and students' only task is to produce the correct form.

Evaluating: - one point for correctly written word in exercise 1 - maximum

10pts

- in exercise 2 – one point for correct meaning and one point for correct spelling – maximum **12 pts**

exercise 3: Use the words from exercise 2 and write a short text including the items. If you need you can change the word form.

This task tests productive vocabulary knowledge as well as students' ability to put acquired vocabulary into context. Students here can but do not need to prove further aspects of word knowledge – collocations, derivations, register...

Evaluating: one point for correct form and appropriate use of a word
– maximum **6pts**

Exercise 4: Read the text below and decide which answer A,B,C or D best fits each space. Example: *Would you 1. C some more carrots?*

1. a)go b)want c)like d)can

This is an example of a multiple choice test. It is quite easy to score fair. Multiple choice format can be used with isolated words, words in a sentence context, or words in whole texts. It focuses on word recognition, not the ability to produce the word. On the negative side, learners may choose the answer by process of elimination, which does not necessary correspond to knowledge the right answer.

Evaluating: one point for each correct answer, maximum **12 pts**

Exercise 5: Read the text and complete the gaps with exactly one word.

Example: *The kind of food we eat depends on country we live in.*

Gap-filling exercise is an alternative to multiply choice. It requires students to recall the word from memory in order to complete a sentence or a text. Thus they test the ability to produce a word rather than recognize it. It could

be used for testing knowledge of a wide range of words, including grammar as well as content words. The ability to complete the gaps depends on understanding the context.

Evaluating: 3 points for each correct answer, one for fitting the context, one for proper grammar form and one for proper spelling. Maximum **30pts**.

Exercise 6a): *Look at the picture and write down the items you find there. What else you can find in the shop?*

Exercise 6b): *Look at Barry's shopping list. Listen and tick the things he buys. Why doesn't he buy the other things?*

THINGS TO BUY	
Orange juice	Bread
Milk	Apples
Cheese	
Coffee	
Pizza	

The first part of this task requires students' active production of topic vocabulary, the second part tests listening comprehension. Students listen to the tape twice, first they focus on recognizing the items, for the second time they listen for more details.

Evaluating: -one point for each item produced in the first part, no maximum limited

- in the second part- one point for correctly ticked item, and one point for appropriate detail – maximum **14pts**

Exercise 7: *You are going to the restaurant for a lunch with your English*

friend, who is a vegetarian. Suggest a starter, main course and dessert for you and your friend.

This is an opportunity for students to actively produce and utilize all the vocabulary topic. Evaluating of this kind of exercise is rather objective, reliability of the test could be improved by providing more explicit criteria for marking. In this case I marked the range of words, proper collocations and forms and ability to categorize the target words, which is essential to complete the task. Maximum **20pts.**

4.3.2. Results of the test

Ex	Max points	Average score received	
		Group A	Group B
1	10	9	5
2	12	11	8
3	6	5	3
4	12	9	10
5	30	13	19
6a	No max limit	16	25
6b	14	5	9
7	20	14	18
Total score		82	97

Though the exercises were intentionally chosen so that superiority of any group was eliminated or minimised at least, partial results show slight

directivity to one or another approach, which is not possible to avoid.

While the first three exercises suit better to group from the grammar-translation class, the second half of the test meets the needs of communicative approach group better. Some phenomena are not displayed in scoring, but different attitude to language is evident in both groups.

Students taught through grammar translation method generally proved very good knowledge of lexis covered in current unit, especially when they should produce or recognize them in their base form, and when they did not have to work with the context. Therefore they achieved relatively high score in the first two exercises. Communicative students, as distinct from those of grammar-translation, often do not care a lot about the form and spelling mistakes, which lowered their grades within the whole test.

Grammar-translation students' good results in ex.3 were reached mainly due to memorization the phrases from the textbook, rather than producing sentences on their own. This is not reflected in final evaluation but in comparison with the second group the range of sentences patterns was rather narrow. In communicative group, students created sentences on their own, which was evident from wide scale of structures and common occurrence of mistakes.

In multi-choice exercise, grammar translation students again proved excellent knowledge of lexis from textbook, almost all of them chose correct answer in phrases taught in the course. However, it seems valid only on condition the sentence is not modified in any way. Expectedly, gap-filling exercise was the most complicated one for both groups. Each group tend to confront different sort of problems. Communicative students seem to understand the context and they usually put the word in more or less correct form with spelling mistakes. On the other hand, grammar-translation students often did not get the context, so they inclined to use wrong word at all. In case they understood the context and use the proper word, they wrote it more or

less without spelling mistakes but often in wrong form.

A marked difference in results reached in exercise 6 could be explained by wider utilization of acquired vocabulary by communicative students: while grammar translation students simply refreshed the vocabulary items from the current unit and then just selected those related to the category, communicative students integrated items learned before. In listening part, the fact they do not understand all recording clearly, took grammar-translation students by surprise and they failed to recognize even the words they already know. Communicative students are obviously used to this situation and did not hesitate to experiment even with the context they were not sure about.

The same attitude is indicated in the last creative writing exercise. Rather narrow range of vocabulary, no awareness of word formation or collocations and usage of fixed expressions only are the most distinctive features of grammar-translation students.

CONCLUSION

Vocabulary is an important part of the English teaching process. It is supposed to be a very effective communicative device as it carries the highest level of importance within peoples' verbal interaction. However, language itself is not only individual lexemes put together, but it is necessary to follow a set of grammar rules to assure correct comprehension of speaker's intention. Therefore, vocabulary together with grammar rules acquisition plays significant role in foreign language teaching.

The purpose of this thesis is to compare two different attitudes to language teaching methodology, which are widely used in current conditions: the grammar-translation method and communicative approach, with their reasons what is to be taught and how they influence final students' acquisition.

The first part is devoted to the theoretical background of vocabulary teaching. It also resumes the principles of both examined approaches and monitors the development in language teaching area - the shift from focusing on grammatical forms which have to be memorized to the communicative function of language.

Practical part was realized as an experiment in the classroom. I presented the same target language for two groups of students, using different approach for each. Experiment consists of three lesson plans for each group, followed with a test. Final results are directly confronted, and benefits of each method

for students' development are specified. The main goal is to assess the relationship between teaching approach and students' final knowledge, focusing on vocabulary load.

Phenomena proved during the practical part could be summed up in short:

- grammar-translation students tend to use rather narrow range of language with problems to integrate it within context
- conscious learning of rules does not lead to language acquisition
- communicative approach prepares students for real communication, students are not anxious about experiments with language and they are able to respond the context well

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R E S U M É

Cílem bakalářské práce bylo co možná nejobektivnější posouzení vývoje v oblasti jazykového vzdělávání. Práce sleduje dva nejvýznamnější trendy, které jsou v současnosti uplatňovány při výuce cizích jazyků.

První část shrnuje teorii učení jazyků, historické a teoretické pozadí obou metod, jejich metodické postupy, aplikaci a přístup k procesu učení jako takový tak aby využitím jejich předností bylo dosaženo optimálního výsledku. Stěžejním úkolem je zkoumání souvislosti vlivu jednotlivých výukových metod na dosaženou slovní zásobu studentů a jejich schopnosti využití získaných dovedností.

Praktická část obsahuje metodické plány konkrétního zaměření zastupující různé výukové techniky. V závěru práce je zařazen test umožňující přímou konfrontaci výsledků s vysvětlením opakujících se jazykových tendencí v souvislosti s aplikovaným metodickým postupem.

R É S U M É

The aim of the thesis is to present the development in language teaching area. The thesis focus on two main streams applied in this area currently.

The first part resumes the theory of language acquisition, historical and theoretical background of different approaches, their methodology and application so that the optimal results could be achieved. The relationship between teaching method and students' acquisition is the crucial function of this thesis.

The practical part involves lesson plans of the same topic dealt with two considered methods. Final test allows direct confrontation of achieved results as well as explanation of common language tendencies accompanied by applied

methodology.