

CONCLUSIONS

The driving idea behind the conception of this thesis was conceived as a result of the author's long-term observations collected during the whole course of teaching experience. It is common practice among language instructors to leave vocabulary, so to speak, to take care of itself and treat this area of language as a 'second class' issue that learners will deal with in due course and in due time. Referring to the views expressed in the opening chapter of the work, the lexical component is indispensable to acquire full competence in a number of contexts and communicative situations. Likewise, it needs to be stressed that if a high level of proficiency in *L2* is the aim, vocabulary should naturally be the main concern. The opening chapter of this work examined the research that is focused on providing questions concerning the theoretical background of vocabulary instruction. More specifically, we addressed the role of vocabulary in mastering a target language, and – at the same time – we emphasised the need for reasonable selection of lexical units on the grounds of learners' aims, age, level and interests. This part dealt with various questions concerning the methods that are applicable to certain age groups, as well as the complexity of such areas as what it actually means to know a word, how many lexical items should be introduced at one time and what the levels of word knowledge are.

Chapters 2 and 3 were clustered mainly around persistent issues in language teaching, such as the usefulness of idioms and proverbs as part and parcel of every natural language. The aim behind this part of the work was to sketch the peculiarities of multiword units, and – on the other hand – to discuss the main approaches towards their application in language instruction processes and the influence they may exert on learners' communicative competence.

In turn, *Chapter 4* focused on providing a detailed enquiry of the semantics of lexical items related to the conceptual macrocategory **MAMMALS** and the didactic potential of the targeted vocabulary at different levels of language instruction. This section provides an analysis of the history of groups of lexical items, starting with Old English data, followed by the Middle English contribution and Modern English innovations. At the same time, it offers a representative selection of idioms and proverbs related to the lexical items the teaching of which is the core subject of the final part of the work.

Chapter 5 is fully analytical and its aim is to offer a panorama of lexical activities that encompassed the theoretical considerations from the initial sections of the thesis as well as the author's personal views concerning vocabulary instruction. As an outcome of the quantum of considerations offered in the thesis, it must be emphasised that the lexical syllabus should simply occupy a more significant position in every teaching curriculum. It is important for learners to be given a variety of approaches to lexis with the hope of achieving a breadth of coverage. Focusing on random words to be learnt by heart should be replaced by a more organized model of lexical development. The lexical field **ANIMALS** offers a great point of departure in the adventure of learning English at the youngest age. Animals are omnipresent and they stimulate positive emotions. That is why they are often employed in the titles of school handbooks and as their main characters. 7 7 'Captain Jack' – a parrot; 'Pingu loves English' – a penguin; 'Dex, the Dino' – a dinosaur, 'Robby Rabbit' – a rabbit; 'Cheeky Monkey' – a monkey, etc.

Unfortunately, as *Appendix 1* reveals, animal-related words are rarely the centre around which another layer of vocabulary is built up. It is common practice that animals occur as characters in written or oral texts, colouring pictures, describing certain illustrations, pointing or matching. The **MULTICURRICULAR MODEL**, developer during the course of writing this thesis promotes intertwining one lexical field with others which, in effect, extends the scope of vocabulary to be acquired by the learners. The aim behind these activities worked

out and offered was to combine the lexical development and learners' productive skills by means of engaging them in some forms of communication. More importantly, the above model of vocabulary instruction promotes the view that the pure repetition of words in order to memorize them is not the key to language learning. In contrast, it must unavoidably be a constant process of manifold actions.

The second part of the practical section revolves around the idea of the **SUBCONSCIOUS PROCESSING MODEL** which was given this name for the needs of this work. The set of the activities (starting from *Activity 50*) aimed at teenagers and adults with a level higher than beginners made it clear that the potential of animal-related vocabulary for didactic purposes is practically unlimited. Thus, it is obvious that the author was in no way in a position to incorporate all the idioms and proverbs included in the analytical section of *Chapter 4*. The activities that focused on the processing of idioms and proverbs combined manifold didactic assumptions. The lead-in stage focused on presenting and explaining various idiomatic expressions, and the part that followed aimed at making them active in learners' mental lexicon. The idea behind the **SUBCONSCIOUS PROCESSING MODEL** links vocabulary acquisition with grammar practice and developing communicative skills. They increase learners' idiomatic, proverbial or collocational awareness, which ultimately learners develop fluency. It favours the instruction of lexical chunks, and the key is to revolve around them in a subconscious way, with the attention being paid to other aims that are assigned in the activities. As may be concluded, the **SUBCONSCIOUS PROCESSING MODEL** favours the processing of lexical chunks in manifold ways provided that the idioms or proverbs are learned 'by the way' without being the main focus of the activities. A feature of successful teaching instruction is that it displays a great thematic variation and allows the learners to be engaged and motivated sufficiently to enable learning to take place, as well as providing an opportunity for fresh vocabulary to be introduced. Obviously, there is always a need for an equal mixture of the most and less frequent thematic materials. It appears from the activities in the second section that animal-related lexical items allow for free diversity in the choice of idiomatic expressions or proverbial sayings as they relate to almost all thematic units. It remains to be hoped that the outcome of the analysis does not belittle the role of conscious effort in acquiring words, which is a widely held belief confirmed by Harris and Snow (2004:55) who state that *few words are retained from those which are learned or taught by direct instruction*. It must be concluded on the basis of the analysis of the coursebooks that the animal-related idiomatic expressions and proverbs are not commonly used; the higher the level, the fewer actually appear, and more importantly rarely or even at all in a productive manner. All the observations and conclusions notwithstanding, we are aware that our analysis has left many issues partially answered or merely touched upon, and thus open for future research. One of the somewhat dissatisfying aspects of this thesis concerns the lack of tools that would help to measure which idiomatic expressions and proverbs are of more or less importance. On the one hand, it seems reasonable that the ones that are easier to transfer from *L1* to *L2* should be easier to adopt. But, on the other hand, the aim of language acquisition is the ability to communicate with native speakers of the target language and thus the selection of the most needed chunks from their perspective takes the lead. The panorama of animal-related lexical items may provide the basis for further elaboration and refinement in terms of their appropriateness at certain levels of language advancement, which requires an in-depth analysis that was far beyond the scope of this work. Likewise, it is tempting to develop the map of lexical items linked to various other fields that interrelate with animal-related words in order to discover whether there is any limit to the scope of words that can be taught in accordance with the **MULTICURRICULAR MODEL**. These and other goals not accomplished here will constitute the core of my future research on vocabulary instruction.

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