

Constant enrichment of the mental lexicon with new lexis

Neustále obohacovanie mentálneho lexikónu o novú slovnú zásobu

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Abstract: The paper deals with acquiring new lexis and storing it in the mental lexicon. The results of research list significant abstract nouns and multiword units in political discourse for the proficient user of English. Discourse analysis is based on the chronology of the most important events and facts from twentieth and twenty-first century Britain.

Key words: abstract noun, proper name, acronym, idiom, learning strategy, mental lexicon

Introduction

Recent work in the areas of lexical grammar, above-the-word lexis, and idioms has underlined the need for the learner to remember and recall much larger chunks of language than the single word. Multiword units come in a variety of guises, and therefore can be classified into several categories. The description of lexical chunking indicates that there are processing advantages to using chunks and the ability to rely on them is one of the factors that allows the native speaker to be fluent. Linguistic ability requires not only the ability to produce discourse through syntactic generation via grammatical competence, but also the ability to use lexical chunks. Basically, the language learner needs both abilities to use a language well.

Every lecturer in 'Area Studies in English focused on Great Britain' is also a vocabulary teacher. It is his or her duty to explain new lexis when dealing with the economy, politics and the welfare state of the United Kingdom. The best lectures are those in which the participants are motivated not only to listen but also to talk, and the best time to learn new lexis is when the need to understand or express ideas is at its height.

1 The study of lexical meaning

What words mean is not always easy to pin down (Cowie, 2009) – and this is well demonstrated in defining the basic terminology of lexical semantics. **Semantics** is the study of linguistic meaning. The word *lexical* in lexical semantics refers to the **lexicon**, a collection of meaningful linguistic expressions from which more complex linguistic expressions are built. Such lexical expressions are often, but not always, words, and so **lexical semantics** is often generally defined as 'the study of word meaning', although the word *word* is not the most straightforward term

to use. It is more precise to use the term *lexeme* rather than *word* in the study of lexical meaning.

Although the details of the structure and content of the lexicon are discussed in the following sections, some general discussion of what the lexicon is and what it contains must come first. Murphy (2010) claims that a lexicon is a collection of information about words and similar linguistic expressions in a language. But which information? Which expressions? What sort of collection? Whose collection? As might be expected, some of these issues will be covered, but first the polysemy of the word *lexicon* must be acknowledged. It can refer to a dictionary, especially a dictionary of a classical language, or the vocabulary of a language, or a particular language user's knowledge of his or her own vocabulary (Murphy, 2010).

In this context, the last two definitions are both relevant to the study of lexical semantics. In speaking of *the lexicon*, different scholars and theories assume one or the other or the interrelation of both, as the next section discusses.

2 'Out there' and 'in here' lexicons

Some traditional approaches to the lexicon normally make claims about the vocabulary of a language, its **lexis**. Taking this perspective on vocabulary, *the lexicon* is '**out there**' in the language community – it is the collection of anything and everything that is used as a word or a set expression by the language community. Other linguistic perspectives focus on vocabulary '**in here**' – in the mind of a language user (Murphy, 2010). The way words are stored in the mind resembles a kind of network or web. The mind seems to store words neither randomly nor in the form of a list, but in a highly organised and interconnected fashion – in what is often called the **mental lexicon** (Thornbury, 2002). The term *mental lexicon* is used in order to distinguish this more psychological and individualistic meaning of *lexicon*.

Clearly though, the learner has to take into consideration the fact that the 'out there' and 'in here' lexicons are interrelated; in order to communicate the speakers of a language must aim to have reasonably indistinguishable ways of using and understanding the words they know. The lexicon of the language 'out there' in one's culture is the lexicon that he or she aims to acquire 'in here' and use. This is not the same as saying that the lexicon of a language is a union of all the lexicons of all the language's speakers. When linguists study a language's lexicon, they tend to standardize it. To study the lexicon of a language, the learner needs to have a sense of what does and does not count as part of that language; slang and non-standard words are also part of the language.

Likewise, although mental lexicons exist in individual speakers' minds, in studying the mental lexicon the focus is standardly on an imagined 'ideal' speaker of the

language. For an 'ideal' mental lexicon, one can imagine that a speaker has at his or her disposal the knowledge necessary to use the language's lexis (Murphy, 2010).

3 Lexemes in a lexicon

The things that an individual knows when he or she knows a language can be divided into two categories: the lexical and the grammatical. A **grammar** is a system of rules or regularities in a language and a **lexicon** is a collection of linguistic knowledge that cannot be captured by rules. The grammar explains linguistic issues like word order and regular morphological and phonological processes. The grammar tells one the difference between sentences. What the grammar cannot tell him or her is what individual words bring to the sentence. At some point in one's acquisition of English, he or she learned that the sound and the spelling of a word are paired with a particular set of linguistic and semantic properties – like being a noun and denoting a kind of person, animal or thing, and so forth. The lexicon is the collection of those associations between pronunciations, meanings, and grammatical properties that had to be learned rather than produced by grammatical rules (Murphy, 2010).

The lexicon is organized into **lexical entries**, much as a dictionary is organized into entries that pull together all the information on a headword. Each of these lexical entries collects the appropriate information about a particular linguistic expression, called a **lexeme**. A linguistic form represents a lexeme if that form is *conventionally* associated with a *non-compositional* meaning. Lexemes are conventional – that is, these form-meaning pairings are common knowledge among the speakers of the language, and one has had to learn these particular associations of form and meaning from other members of the language community. Lexemes are non-compositional – that is, the meanings of these linguistic forms are not built out of the meanings of their parts (Murphy, 2010).

4 'Area Studies in English' taught by principles

According to Brown (1994), a great many of a teacher's choices spring from established principles of language learning and teaching. By perceiving and internalizing connections between practice (choices the teacher makes in the lectures) and theory (principles derived from research), his or her teaching is likely 'enlightened'. He or she is better able to see why he or she has chosen to use a particular technique, to carry it out with confidence, and to evaluate its utility after the fact.

Such a principled approach to language teaching sounds logical. There are *cognitive*, *affective* and *linguistic principles* – altogether twelve overarching principles of foreign language learning from which sound practice springs and on which his or her teaching can be based. As mentioned above, the first set of principles is called

'cognitive' because they relate mainly to mental and intellectual functions. This set consists of five principles and the focus will be put on one of them.

In the past, the language teaching profession mostly concerned itself with the 'delivery' of language to the student: teaching methods, textbooks, or even grammatical paradigms were cited as the primary factors in successful learning. In the light of many studies of successful and unsuccessful learners, language teachers focus more intently on the role of the **learner** in the process. The 'methods' that the learner employs to internalize and to perform in the language are as important as the teacher's methods – or more so. Brown (1994) calls this the **Principle of Strategic Investment**: *Successful mastery of the second language will be due to a large extent to a learner's own personal 'investment' of time, effort, and attention to the second language in the form of an individualized battery of strategies for comprehending and producing language* (Brown, 1994:20).

Language teaching methodology has seen a dramatic increase in attention to the strategic investment that learners can make in their own learning process. The learning of any skill involves a certain degree of 'investment' of one's time and effort into the process. Every complex set of skills is acquired through an investment of considerable observing, focusing, practicing, monitoring, correcting, and redirecting. And so one develops strategies for perceiving others and for choosing relevant elements of language and all the other necessary behaviours essential for ultimate mastery. A language is in all probably the most complex set of skills one could ever seek to acquire: therefore, an investment is necessary in the form of developing multiple layers of strategies for getting that language into one's brain.

Needless to say, there is no single magic formula for successful foreign language learning. The persistent use of a whole host of **strategies** for language learning is required for ultimate mastery and the fluency (Brown, 1994).

5 Vocabulary learning strategies

One approach of facilitating vocabulary learning that has attracted increasing attention is *vocabulary learning strategies* (VLS). Interest in VLS has paralleled a movement away from a predominantly teaching-oriented perspective to one that includes interest in how the actions of learners might affect their acquisition of language. Many learners use strategies for learning vocabulary, especially when compared to language tasks that integrate several skills. This might be due to the relatively discrete nature of vocabulary learning compared to more integrated language activities, making it easier to apply strategies effectively. It may also be due to the fact that classrooms tend to emphasize discrete activities over integrative ones, or that students particularly value vocabulary learning (Schmitt, 2000).

Commonly used VLS seem to be simple *memorization, repetition, and taking notes* on vocabulary. These more mechanical strategies are often favoured over more complex ones requiring significant active manipulation of information (imagery, inferencing, keyword method). If the depth of processing perspective is followed, it would seem that learners often favour relatively 'shallow' strategies, even though they may be less effective than 'deeper' ones. Research into some 'deeper' VLS have been shown to enhance retention better than rote memorization. However, even rote repetition can be effective if students are accustomed to using it. In general, shallower activities may be more suitable for beginners, because they contain less material, whereas intermediate or advanced learners can benefit from the context usually included in deeper activities.

Rather than being used individually, multiple VLS are often used concurrently. This means that active management of strategy is important. Good learners do things such as use a variety of strategies, structure their vocabulary learning, review and practice target words, and they are aware of the semantic relationships between new and previously learned L2 words: that is, they are conscious of their learning and take steps to regulate it. Poor learners generally lacked this awareness and control (Amed, 1989; Sanaoui, 1995; In: Schmitt, 2000).

When considering which vocabulary learning strategies to recommend to the student, the overall learning context needs to be considered. The effectiveness which learning strategies can be both taught and used will depend on a number of variables. But the most important is to gain cooperation of the learners. According to Molinsky and Bliss (1994), to actively involve students in their acquisition of English vocabulary the communication activities such as *naming, identifying, definitions, clues, asking questions, categories, associations, connections, dialogues, discussion, research, extensions* can be done. Thornbury (2002) offers a brief summary of some of the research findings that are relevant to the subject of word learning: *repetition, retrieval, spacing, pacing, use, cognitive depth and personal organising*.

There are numerous different VLS (Schmitt, 2000). To give some impression of the range of possibilities some of the strategies are:

1. Strategies for the discovery of a new word's meaning

- a) *Determination strategies*: (i) analysing part of speech, (ii) analysing affixes and roots, (iii) checking for an L1 cognate, (iv) analysing any available pictures or gestures, (v) guessing the meaning from textual context, and (vi) using a dictionary.
- b) *Social strategies*: (i) asking teacher for a synonym, paraphrase, or L1 translation of a new word, and (ii) asking classmates for meaning.

2. Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered

- a) *Social strategies*: (i) studying and practicing meaning in a group, and (ii) interacting with native speakers.

- b) *Memory strategies (mnemonics)*: (i) connecting a word to a previous personal experience, (ii) associating the word with its coordinates, (iii) connecting the word to its synonyms and antonyms, (iv) using semantic maps, (v) imaging a word form, (vi) imaging a word's meaning, (vii) using a key-word method, (viii) grouping words together to study them, (ix) studying the spelling of a word, (x) saying a new word aloud when studying, and (xi) using physical action when learning a word.
- c) *Cognitive strategies*: (i) verbal repetition, (ii) written repetition, (iii) word lists, (iv) putting English labels on physical objects, and (v) keeping a vocabulary notebook.
- d) *Metacognitive strategies*: (i) using English-language media, (ii) using spaced word practice, (iii) testing oneself with word tests, (iv) skipping or passing a new word, and (v) continuing to study a word over time.

Such a long list becomes cumbersome unless it is organized in some way, so it is categorized in two ways. First, the list is divided into two main classes of strategies. This reflects the different processes necessary for understanding a new word's meaning and usage, and for consolidating it in memory for future use. Second, the strategies are further categorized into five groupings. The first contains strategies used by an individual when faced with discovering a new word's meaning without recourse to another person's expertise (*Determination strategies*). This can be done through guessing from one's structural knowledge of a language, guessing from an L1 cognate, guessing from context, or using reference materials.

Social strategies use interaction with other people to improve vocabulary learning. One can ask teachers or classmates for information about a new word and they can answer in a number of ways (synonyms, antonyms, translations, etc.). One can also study and consolidate vocabulary knowledge with other people.

Memory strategies or *mnemonics* involve relating the word to be retained with some previously learned knowledge, using some form of imagery, or grouping. A new word can be integrated into many types of existing knowledge (e.g. previous experiences or known words) or images can be custom-made for retrieval (e.g. images of the word's form or meaning attributes). *Grouping* is an important way to aid recall, and people usually organize words into groups naturally without prompting. If words are organized in some way before memorization, recall is improved (Cofer, Bruce, & Reicher, 1966; Craik & Tulving, 1975; In: Schmitt, 2000).

It is worth noting that *memory strategies* generally include the kind of elaborative mental processing that facilitates long-term retention. This takes time, but the time expended will be well spent if used on important words that really need to be learned, such as high-frequency vocabulary and technical words essential in a particular learner's field of study. A learner may not have time to 'deeply

process' every word encountered, but it is unquestionably worth attempting for key lexical items (Schmitt, 2000).

Cognitive strategies exhibit the common function of 'manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner' (Oxford, 1990). They are similar to *memory strategies*, but are not focused so specifically on manipulative mental processing; they involve repetition and using mechanical means to study vocabulary, including the keeping of vocabulary notebooks.

Finally, *metacognitive strategies* incorporate a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best ways to study. This covers improving access to input, deciding on the most efficient methods of study/review, and testing oneself to gauge improvement. It also comprises deciding which words are worth studying, as well as persevering with the words one chooses to learn (Schmitt, 2000).

6 Research – objectives, material and methods

The main objective of the research is to analyse political discourse – a 78,054-word corpus composed of two chapters from the main textbook *The Oxford History of Britain* and other sources for significant abstract nouns, proper names, acronyms, idioms and multiword units the student needs to learn and use correctly. On the basis of the chronology of the facts and events, at the back of the compulsory textbook, and the above presented information, both quantitative and qualitative methods of discourse analysis are carried out. The aim of the quantitative analysis is to find out whether and to what extent significant abstract nouns, proper names, acronyms as well as idioms occur in this type of discourse. Consequently, the qualitative analysis provides: a classification of proper names, i.e. official and informal names of institutions, acts and treaties, wars and battles; and a list of abstract nouns ending in -ism, -ion/-sion/-tion/-ition/-ation. The second main objective is to find out whether each abstract noun has a core (printed in bold in tables) or near synonym, and an antonym. The third main objective is to explain the meaning of all acronyms.

Concerning the material, *The Oxford History of Britain* (Morgan, 2010) is the compulsory textbook for students to study the political, economic and social changes of 20th and 21st century Britain. One of the most important criteria for the choice of other sources is the fact that the main textbook does not cover the Political and Legal Systems of the United Kingdom. The following chapters are investigated: 1) *The Oxford History of Britain* (Morgan, 2010) – The Twentieth Century (1914 to 2000) (32,174-word corpus), and Epilogue (2000–2010) (11,720-word corpus); 2) *An Illustrated History of Britain* (McDowall, 1989) – The Twentieth Century (14,500-word corpus); 3) *Britain for Learners of English* (O'Driscoll, 2009) – the

Political System and Legal Systems (19,118-word corpus); and 4) *Oxford Guide to British and American Culture* (OUP, 2005) – the Legal System (542-word corpus).

7 Results and discussion

Recent research into collocations and idioms (Hrdličková, 2012–15) proved that one of the features of English that presents greatest difficulty for the Slovak undergraduate is the meaning of idiomatic expressions. Apart from significant abstract nouns, proper names and acronyms, all ideational idioms, which should be of particular interest to the learner, are identified. The quantitative analysis has revealed that the number of acronyms and idioms in political discourse is quite high (see Table 10), which is rather surprising.

Often successful learners achieve their goals through conscious systematic application of a battery of strategies. As mentioned above, *grouping* is an important way to aid recall. In order to help the student memorize the following lexemes, they are all explained and organized in several categories. As can be seen, nearly all abstract nouns have synonyms and antonyms.

Tab. 1: *Acronyms*

Acronym	Full form
the BBC	the British Broadcasting Corporation
the BNP	the British National Party
BREXIT	Britain + exit
BSE	bovine spongiform encephalopathy (<i>informal</i> mad cow disease)
the CAP	the Common Agricultural Policy
the CBI	the Confederation of British Industry
the CND	the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
the DUP	the Democratic Unionist Party
the EC	the European Community
the ECB	the European Central Bank
the ECSC	the European Coal and Steel Community
the EEC	the European Economic Community
the EFTA	the European Free Trade Association
the EMU	the Economic and Monetary Union (European Monetary Union)
the ERM	the exchange-rate mechanism
the EU	the European Union
EURATOM	the European Atomic Energy Community
the ILP	the Independent Labour Party
the IMF	the International Monetary Fund
the IRA	the Irish Republican Army
JP	Justice of the Peace
<i>(to be continued)</i>	

Acronym	Full form
the LRC	the Labour Representation Committee
MEP	Member of the European Parliament (<i>also</i> Euro-MP)
MI5	Military Intelligence section 5
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
the NHS	the National Health Service
NI	National Insurance
the NUM	the National Union of Mineworkers
the RUC	the Royal Ulster Constabulary
the SDLP	the Social Democratic and Labour Party
the SDP	the Social Democratic Party
SEATO	South-East Asia Treaty Organization
the SNP	the Scottish National Party
the TRL	the Tariff Reform League
the TUC	the Trades Union Congress
UKIP	the United Kingdom Independence Party
the UN, UNO	the United Nations (<i>also</i> the United Nations Organization)
the UUP	the Ulster Unionist Party

Tab. 2: *Abstract nouns ending in -ism*

Abstract noun	Core synonym; Near synonym; Antonym (A)
anti-Semitism	fascism → authoritarianism ; nationalism, <i>anti-Semitism</i> , jingoism
capitalism	private enterprise , free enterprise, the free market
conservatism	conservative (adj) → right-wing , traditionalist; <i>in the UK</i> Tory; A : socialist; socialism (n) → leftism ; A : <i>conservatism</i>
equilibrism	equilibrium (n) → balance , equality; A : imbalance
Euroscepticism	scepticism → doubt ; disbelief ; <i>rare</i> Pyrrhonism; A : conviction
fascism	authoritarianism , totalitarianism, dictatorship, Nazism; <i>German, historical</i> : Hitlerism; A : democracy, liberalism
idealism	Utopianism , wishful thinking; A : realism, defeatism
imperialism	imperial (adj) → royal , monarchical
internationalism	international (adj) → global , intercontinental; A : national; local
interventionism	intervention (n) → involvement ; interference
jingoism	extreme patriotism , chauvinism, flag-waving
liberalism	liberal (adj) → progressive , reformist; left-wing; A : conservative, reactionary; fascism (n) → authoritarianism , A : democracy, <i>liberalism</i>
Marxism	socialism → leftism ; <i>Marxism</i>
nationalism	patriotism ; xenophobia , chauvinism, jingoism
patriotism	nationalism ,loyalism; jingoism, isolationism; A : treachery
pluralism	plurality (n) → wide variety ; multitude, plethora

(to be continued)

Abstract noun	Core synonym; Near synonym; Antonym (A)
protectionism	protection (n) → 1. defence; 2. safe keeping; 3. barrier
radicalism	radical (adj) → 1. thoroughgoing; A: superficial; 2. revolutionary , reformist; leftist, socialist; extremist; <i>derogatory</i> Bolshevik
republicanism	Republican (adj) → supporting political parties that want Northern Ireland to become part of the Republic of Ireland, not part of the UK
socialism	leftism , Fabianism, welfarism; communism; A: conservatism
totalitarianism	totalitarian (adj) → authoritarian ; fascist, neo-Nazi, Stalinist; A: democratic, liberal
unionism	union (n) → 1. unification; A: separation; 2. association , trade union

Tab. 3: *Abstract nouns ending in -ion/-sion/-tion/-ition/-ation*

Abstract noun	Core synonym; Near synonym; Antonym (A)
corruption	dishonesty , deceit, fraud; bribery; A: honesty
decimalization	decimalize (v) → to change to a decimal system of money
deflation	deflate (v) → reduce ; devalue, depress; A: inflate
depression	recession , slump; credit crunch; <i>technical</i> stagflation; A: boom
determination	resolution ; strong-mindedness; the bulldog spirit; A: weak-mindedness
devaluation	devalue (v) → belittle , depreciate, deflate
devolution	decentralization , delegation, transfer; A: centralization
dominion	dependency , colony, protectorate, satellite state
inflation	inflate (v) → increase ; A: decrease, depress
jurisdiction	authority , control, power, dominion, rule
legislation	law , body of laws, constitution, rules, acts
liberation	1. freeing , setting free; 2. freedom, equality ; A: oppression
privatization	the act of privatizing (selling) something
probation	trial period , test period, trial
procrastination	dithering , delaying tactics, hesitation
prosecution	prosecute (v) → take to court , sue; A: defend; pardon
recession	economic decline , downturn, credit crunch; A: boom, upturn
remuneration	payment , pay, salary, wages; earning(s)
retaliation	revenge , vengeance; response , reaction
stagflation	depression → recession ; <i>technical stagflation</i> ; A: boom

Tab. 4: *Proper names: Wars*

Official name	Also known as:
the Anglo-Irish War	the Irish War of Independence; the Troubles
the Second Boer War	the South African War
the Cold War	—
<i>(to be continued)</i>	

Official name	Also known as:
the Falklands War	the Falklands Conflict; the Falklands Crisis; the Malvinas War
the Gulf War	the Persian Gulf War; the First Gulf War; Gulf War I; the Kuwait War; the First Iraq War; the Iraq War
Iraq War	the War in Iraq; the Occupation of Iraq; the Second Gulf War; Gulf War II
the Korean War	—
the Pacific War	the Asia-Pacific War
the Second Italo-Ethiopian War	the Second Italo-Abyssinian War
World War I	the First World War; <i>old-fashioned</i> the Great War
World War II	the Second World War

Tab. 5: *Proper names: Battles*

Official name	Also known as:
the Battle of Britain	the Blitz; the Blitzkrieg
the First Battle of El Alamein	—
the Second Battle of El Alamein	—
the Battle of Jutland	—
the First Battle of the Marne	the Miracle of the Marne
the Second Battle of the Marne	the Battle of Reims
the Battle of Passchendaele	the Third Battle of Ypres
the First Battle of the Somme	the Somme Offensive
the Second Battle of the Somme	—
the Battle of Stalingrad	—
the Battle of Normandy	Operation Overlord

Tab. 6: *Proper names: Acts*

Official name	Also known as:
the British Nationality (Falkland Islands) Act 1983	—
the Channel Tunnel Act 1987	—
the Climate Change Act 2008	—
the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900	—
the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968	—
the Corn Production Act 1917	—
the Education Act 1902	Balfour's Act
the Education Act 1918	Fisher's Act
the Education Act 1944	Butler's Act
the Gold Standard Act 1925	—

(to be continued)

Official name	Also known as:
the Government of India Act 1935	—
the Government of Ireland Act 1914	the Home Rule Act; the Third Home Rule Bill
the Government of Ireland Act 1920	the Fourth Home Rule Act; the Fourth Home Rule Bill
the Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act 1919	Addison's Act
the Human Rights Act 1998	—
the Indian Independence Act 1947	—
Irish Free State (Agreement) Act 1922	—
the Labour Exchanges Act 1909	—
the National Health Service Act 1946	—
the National Insurance Act 1911	—
Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973	—
Northern Ireland Act 1998	—
the Old-Age Pensions Act 1908	—
the Parliament Act 1911	—
the Probation of Offenders Act 1907	the Probation Act
the Representation of the People Act 1918	the Fourth Reform Act
the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act 1928	the Fifth Reform Act; the Equal Suffrage Act
South Africa Act 1909	—
the Trade Disputes Act 1906	—
the Welsh Church Act 1914	—
the Workmen's Compensation Act 1906	—

Tab. 7: *Proper names: Agreements*

Official name	Also known as:
the Good Friday Agreement (GFA)	Belfast Agreement
the Anglo-Irish Agreement	—
Hoare-Laval Pact	—
Munich Agreement	Munich Pact; Munich Diktat; Munich Betrayal
Nassau Agreement	—
Ottawa Agreements	—

Tab. 8: *Proper names: Treaties*

Treaties known as:	Official name
the Anglo-Irish Treaty; the Treaty	Articles of Agreement for a Treaty Between Great Britain and Ireland
Maastricht Treaty	Treaty on European Union (TEU)
—	The North Atlantic Treaty
<i>(to be continued)</i>	

Treaties known as:	Official name
the Treaty of Amsterdam	Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty of the European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts
the Treaty of Canterbury	Treaty between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the French Republic concerning the Construction and Operation by Private Concessionaires of a Channel Fixed Link with an Exchange of Letters relating to the Arbitration Rules
the Treaty of Lisbon; the Reform Treaty	Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community
the Treaty of Paris	Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community
the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT); the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT); the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (NTBT)	Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water
the Treaty of Rome	Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (TEEC)
the UN Charter	Charter of the United Nations
the Treaty of Versailles	Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany

Tab. 9: *Idioms*

Idiom	Idiom
another/the final nail in the coffin	a land fit for heroes to live in (<i>catchphrase</i>)
be in dire straits	loom large
be first past the post; first-past-the-post	make headway
be in the red	make up your mind
bit by bit	a new deal
blood, sweat and tears	the Old Bill <i>BrE informal, old-fashioned</i>
bread and circuses	peace in our time
the cold war	the permissive society
come under fire; (be) under fire	play (with) a straight bat
from the cradle to the grave	a sea change <i>literary</i>
the corridors of power	shoulder to shoulder
one's darkest hour	a skeleton in the/your cupboard/closet
die hard	a spin doctor
feel good	stand still
a free loader <i>informal</i>	take its toll
give sb a free hand; have a free hand	go/swim against/with the tide
go hand in hand	taken sb/sth for granted
go too far	a Trojan horse

(to be continued)

Idiom	Idiom
the golden age (of sth)	a volt-face <i>formal</i>
the good/bad old days	a welfare state
the grass roots	the wind of change (<i>catchphrase</i>)
a guinea pig	white-collar
have a hand in sth	wither/die on the vine <i>literary</i>
keep a close eye on	a winter of discontent (<i>catchphrase</i>)
laissez-faire	

Traditional teaching approaches tend to group idioms together according to some category, and present them in sets. But teaching a set of idioms that are notionally related would seem to be a sure recipe for confusion. A more effective and less perilous approach might simply be to teach them as they arise, and in their contexts of use (Thornbury, 2002). Some examples are provided:

Epilogue

It followed that, in such an economic climate, much that embodied Old Labour – public ownership, controls on industry, redistributive taxation, comprehensive welfare, or support for the trade unions – **withered on the vine**. New Labour’s ‘Third Way’ implied structures of managerialism as a substitute for ideology. Analysts described an expanding ‘demi-monde’ of quangos, ‘czars’, task forces, private finance initiatives, and the like, with a concomitant emphasis on unelected management consultants, special advisers, and **spin doctors** at the expense of Whitehall and Westminster. (Morgan, p. 678–9)

Skeletons in the cupboard

In modern Britain, the 1950s are often spoken of as **a golden age** of innocence. But innocence can go hand in hand with ignorance – ignorance of what your government is doing to you. In the early years of this century, it became clear that British governments in the fifties were prepared to use people as **guinea pigs** in their military experiments. (O’Driscoll, p. 73)

The welfare state

As a result of the changes which gave importance to people’s happiness and well-being, the government became known as **‘the welfare state’**. (McDowall, p. 169)

Conclusion

Vocabulary is more than just individual words working separately in a discourse environment. Learning strategies are germane to the eventual success of learners.

Tab. 10: *The occurrence of significant lexemes to learn*

Type of lexeme	Number
Acronyms	40
Abstract nouns ending in <i>-ism</i>	22
Abstract nouns ending in <i>-ion/-sion/-tion/-ition/-ation</i>	20
Proper names: Wars	11
Proper names: Battles	11
Proper names: Acts	31
Proper names: Agreements	6
Proper names: Treaties	11
Idioms	49
Total:	201

Strategies are, in essence, learners' techniques for capitalizing on the principles of successful learning. In an era of interactive, intrinsically motivated, learner-centred teaching, learner strategy training cannot be overlooked. One of the principal goals of interactive language teachers is to equip students with a sense of what successful language learners do to achieve success and to aid them in developing their own unique individual pathways to success. Since interaction is unrehearsed, mostly unplanned discourse, students also need to have the necessary strategic competence to hold their own in the give and take of meaningful communication.

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