

English Dictionary Ownership and Usage among the Acehese Students in Malaysian University

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Abstract

In academic, students, teacher and researcher may need English dictionary as an urge to comprehend English literature. This study is conducted mainly to find out what kind of the most used dictionary by student and what aspect do they learn about from an English dictionary. The result of this study verifies the conclusion of Jian, et al. (2009), Kobayashi (2008), Bower & Mcmillan (2006), Perry (2003) and Tang (1997) studies about the preference of electronic dictionary in student of Kanda University, Japan. On the other hand it is confirming the declaration of the studies of Al- Khub (2001) and Diab & Hamdan (1999) that students use the dictionary more to find the meaning of specific word. Besides, they prefer to use new technology where they not only can find the meaning, but also syntax, pronunciation etc on just finger tips (Vivian & Barnes, 2010) And Aceh students (the respondents) as the scholars in UPSI use dictionary regularly and every one of them have at least one kind of dictionary. It can be concluded that they are ready to adopt English as their secondary language and can progress towards excellence by understand English literature of respective subject.

Keywords: English Dictionary Ownership, English Dictionary Ownership, Aceh, Acehese Students, Malaysian University

Introduction

As English is now considered as an international language, a good command of the language is deemed essential to function in a globalized world (Ryu, 2007). Dictionaries are considered faithful companions to language learners, especially to second and foreign language learners because they provide a quick and direct access to the meaning of an unknown word (Al-Qudah & Al-Qudah, 2011). Dictionary now consider as the part of student necessities in international schools. Tseng (2009) stated that the supporting role of dictionaries has been emphasized by both teachers and researchers. Nowadays with the easy and wide spread access to the Internet, more and more EFL students use online dictionaries when they encounter unknown words in their learning tasks. It is mainly because online dictionaries like electronic ones, it can provide students the information about the looked – up words easily and quickly. Dictionaries are often seen as a basic tool in the process of foreign language learning. It seems that the conviction of the usefulness of dictionaries is common among lexicographers, as well as language learners themselves (Al-Qudah & Al-Qudah, 2011).

While the scope of this study is restricted to dictionary used among degree students of English second language major students at the Malaysian university, dictionary used is not in general restricted to learners or students.

Theories in Test

- 1) Tomaszczyk (1979) said students feel greater satisfaction with monolingual dictionaries, the majority preferred to use bilingual dictionaries.

2) Diab & Hamdan (1999) declared that students use the dictionary more to find the meaning of specific word.

Objective

This paper will give insight about the English dictionary ownership and usage among the Acehese students in Malaysian university. This paper will help to:

- To determine the status of dictionary ownership among Acehese students enrolled in the Malaysian university.
- To determine the kinds of dictionaries that are most used and how often.
- To determines the status of dictionary usage among Acehese students enrolled in Malaysian university.

Research Questions

- 1) What is the status of dictionary ownership among Acehese students enrolled in the Malaysian universities?
- 2) What kinds of dictionaries are used most and how often?
- 3) What is the status of dictionary usage among Acehese students which is enrolled in the Malaysian universities?

Literature Review

Tomaszczyk (1979) who was the first researcher initiated the research study to investigate the dictionary used by non-native speakers of English in Poland. The results Illustrated that participants are feel greater satisfaction with monolingual dictionaries, the majority preferred to use bilingual dictionaries. Tomaszczyk also explained that participants used dictionary in the following ways: meanings (85%), synonyms (74%), idioms (72%), spelling (72%), pronunciation (65%), grammar (59%), taboo words (45%) and etymology (19%). Diab & Hamdan (1999) investigated in Jordan University and found that meaning and pronunciation were the prime purposes of dictionary used. The study also showed that monolingual dictionaries were used more frequently than bilingual ones; they were also found more useful. Cowie (1999) stated that dictionary users are overwhelmingly concerned with meaning, and with those categories of lexical items which present semantic or cultural difficulties and he further added that levels of dictionary reference skills are in general extremely low, and many researchers are inclined to attribute these poor levels primarily to a lack of systematic training in dictionary use.

Al- Khub (2001) investigated the types of information EFL learners at Yarmouk University look up in their dictionaries. It also tried to find out the type of dictionary that EFL learners use. It also attempted to identify the problems EFL learners face when they consult dictionaries. The sample of the study consisted of 212 English major students, 124 English and 88 field teachers and students. The findings indicated that the most frequent usage for dictionaries was looking up meanings of words and phrases and the least frequent usage was looking up the etymology of a certain word. The majority of the students used both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries. The frequency and level of skill of using both types were almost the same. Students encountered three main difficulties when they consult their dictionaries. The first difficulty related to the spelling of words. The second difficulty related to the confusion caused by the information given in the dictionary. The third difficulty resulted from the inadequacy of the illustrations and examples given in the dictionary. Miller (2006) conducted a study in which four groups of university ESL students participated in a session to improve their use of English article system. Two groups used English learners' dictionaries and two did not. The results of the study indicated that the students who had used the dictionaries achieved a slightly higher number of correct answers in the given article exercise, and expressed a higher level of satisfaction with the session than those who had not.

Atkins & Varantola (1997) found that the students provided more emphasis to the use of bilingual dictionaries than monolingual dictionaries for translation purposes and monolingual dictionary role was as their need for secondary information development. Ryu (2006) investigated dictionary used by Korean EFL college students. Study found that students favored bilingual dictionaries over monolingual dictionaries to find out the meanings of unfamiliar words. The interesting findings of the study indicated that 60% of the students had never been taught how to use an English dictionary. Most students had at least one English dictionary. English – Korean dictionaries were the most common. 38.6% of the students owned pocket electronic dictionaries.

Thumb (2004) summarized 32 empirical studies on dictionary use, he illustrated that (1) Many dictionary users are not aware of the wealth of information that their dictionaries contain. (2) Most foreign learners prefer using bilingual dictionaries to monolingual dictionaries because of the comprehensibility of definitions. (3) Foreign learners may benefit from the bilingualized learner's dictionary, because bilingualized studies reported high success rate in dictionary use.

Chan (2005) investigated the general use of dictionaries in English majors of universities in Hong Kong. Results indicated that students' dictionary skills were often not adequate enough for them to cope with their learning demand. 71.7% of the respondents used a monolingual dictionary in their study and work, and 85% of them used a bilingual dictionary. 46.7% were taught dictionary skills only in their primary schools. 42.5% of the respondents ranked translation as the top priority; 34% ranked written comprehension and written composition as the top priority. 88.7% of them sought the meanings of words, most frequently. Synonyms and an antonym were the least frequently looked up. Collocation and spelling ranked very low in their priority list. Translation purposes ranked first by respondents. 60.4% of them regarded the definition of a word as the most useful kind of information.

Hayati & Fattahzadeh (2006) investigated the monolingual and bilingual dictionaries' effect on vocabulary recall and retention of 100 EFL learners Iranian university. The results indicated that the students learned quite. The same number of words while reading, whether they used a bilingual or a monolingual dictionary. Bower & Mcmillan (2006) surveyed 1076 students of English at Kanda University of International studies in Japan. The study revealed that 96% of the students owned electronic dictionaries, and 90% of them were very active electronic dictionary users on reading and writing tasks (writing 53% and reading 37%). Chen (2007) studied dictionary use in English vocabulary learning of Renmin University of China and found that the important of the dictionary and the access to the dictionary are established among the college freshmen, but they lack the basic knowledge of the dictionary and the dictionary instruction. 85% of the subjects never received formal dictionary training and 46% never recommended a dictionary by teachers. The subjects owned 266 copies of dictionary per person. 81% of the subjects use the dictionary to get relevant information, meaning and pronunciation. One of the major findings is that the electronic dictionary is replacing the printed dictionary (51% of the subjects) as the major source tool in vocabulary learning.

Proposed Hypotheses

H1: Most of the Acehnese students used to prefer printed bilingual dictionary rather than the other kinds of dictionary

H2: Most of the Acehnese students use the dictionary mainly to find the meaning of specific word.

H3: Most of the Acehnese students feel greater satisfaction with monolingual dictionary.

Research Methodology

The research design was field/ survey and consists on quantitative analysis. The population of the study was the Acehnese students of UPSI. The number of sample was 74 participants from Aceh which accessible for data collection in different programs in UPSI. The data collected on convenience sampling method. The data survey took one and half month to complete. The questionnaire of the study will adopt from Al-Qudah & Al-Qudah (2011). The descriptive methods and cross tabulation are used to test the theories and take general idea about the dictionary usage of Acehnese students.

Data Interpretation

Table 1 shows the majority of respondents were female 40 (64.5%) and remaining respondents were male 22 (35.5%). Table 2 indicates that majority of respondents 41 (66.1%) were in the age range of 18-25, 19 were 26 to 32 years old and remaining 2 were over 33.

Table 3 explains the ownership of kind of dictionaries by 21 (33.9%) Acehnese students owned the electronic and printed bilingual dictionaries, 18 (29%) owned only printed monolingual, 10 (16.1%) owned electronic dictionary, 7 (11.3%) and 6 (9.7%) had printed monolingual and electronic dictionaries and printed monolingual, electronic and printed bilingual dictionaries respectively.

Table. 4 demonstrates the most used dictionary(ies) by Acehnese students. The students that use electronic dictionary frequently 20 (32.3%), close to that count, 18 (29%) employ printed monolingual dictionary, 13 (21%) of them

utilize printed monolingual and electronic dictionaries and 11 (17.7%) use electronic and printed bilingual dictionaries.

Table 5 exemplifies that 15 (75%) Acehnese students who own electronic dictionary, use it more than once in a day. Meanwhile printed monolingual and electronic dictionaries' frequently used by 13 (100%) users, use one or more dictionary more than once in a day, 11 (100%) students use electronic or printed bilingual or both electronic or printed bilingual dictionaries more than once in a day. No one use printed monolingual dictionary daily, 12 (66.67%) of them use it in 3-5 times a week.

The domain of use of dictionary according to Acehnese students is illustrates in table 6, which point out that 13 (72.22%) of students use printed monolingual dictionary for spelling, phonetics (pronunciation), semantics (meanings), syntax and morphology and etymology, same number of students (54.17%) who use monolingual and electronic dictionaries more often, the domain of utilizing the dictionaries are spelling, phonetics (pronunciation), semantics (meanings), and syntax & morphology. The student who use electronic and printed bilingual dictionaries more often, utilize the dictionaries for 11 (45.83%) spelling, phonetics (pronunciation), semantics (meanings), and syntax & morphology purpose. Electronic dictionary 10 (66.67) more often users, use the dictionary for semantics purpose only. Printed monolingual 5 (33.33%) more often student users of dictionary, use it for semantics (meanings) purpose. Again 5 (27.78%) electronic dictionary more often users, use the dictionary for spelling, phonetics (pronunciation), semantics (meanings), syntax and morphology and etymology. Same number of student 5 (100%) like last dictionary category, electronic dictionary's more often users, use the dictionary for spelling, phonetics (pronunciation) and semantics (meanings).

In response to Hypothesis one, it is clearly shows in results that 20 students more often use the electronic dictionary and other 22 who use electronic dictionary more often than monolingual or bilingual dictionary. Only 11 students owned and use more bilingual dictionary and electronic dictionary. These results are not supporting the hypotheses (H1). For hypothesis two results illustrates that students from Aceh use printed monolingual, electronic, and combination of monolingual & electronic, electronic & printed bilingual dictionaries to find the meaning of specific word. The figure of table 7 may support the hypothesis two.

For the hypothesis three, three types of descriptive results combined i.e. most owned dictionary, more often use dictionary and most often use dictionary for certain domain. In first result of most owned dictionary, only monolingual dictionary (not owned any other dictionary) owned by 18 students, and 13 have it with the other (electronic or bilingual) dictionary, which mean 32 students own the monolingual dictionary. Meanwhile, 10 Acehnese students own only electronic dictionary. In fact, the students who use the combination of one or more dictionaries are indicated to 34 students. The number of students who own electronic and bilingual dictionary is 21, 7 for monolingual and 6 bilingual and monolingual. This means that the total of 44 students own the electronic dictionary. In frequent use, monolingual dictionary with one or more other dictionary is only owned by 31 students. On the other hand, electronic dictionary count is with only owned or owned with one or more other dictionary is 44. Same is the case in purpose of using the dictionary that, electronic dictionary is use more by Achenese students (44) for one or combination of the following domains: spelling, phonetics (pronunciation), semantics (meanings), syntax and morphology and etymology. Therefore, Hypothesis three not supported.

Conclusion

This study rejects the findings of the studies of Chan (2005), Al- Khub (2001) and Tomaszczyk (1979) and that students use to prefer printed bilingual dictionary and feel greater satisfaction with monolingual dictionaries, as technology advancement (ipad, note books, TFT screen cell phones) and easiness of use of electronic dictionary urged students to use it. So this study verifies the conclusion of Jian, et al. (2009), Kobayashi (2008), Bower and Mcmillan (2006), Perry (2003) and Tang (1997) studies about the preference of electronic dictionary in student of Kanda University, Japan. But on the other hand verdict of the results are confirming the declaration of the studies of Al- Khub (2001) and Diab & Hamdan (1999) that students use the dictionary more to find the meaning of specific word.

Today students are prefer to use new technology (Vivian & Barnes, 2010), and now they can find the meaning, syntax, pronunciation etc on just finger tips, they not need to bother to take heavy dictionary(ies) in bags and turn the pages to find respective word. Aceh students use dictionary on regular basis and every one of them have at least one kind of dictionary, which is positive sign of learning. This study also exemplifies that students of Aceh are ready to

adopt English as their secondary language and can progress towards excellence by understand English literature of respective subject.

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Table 1. The figure of respondents' gender

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	22	35.5	35.5	35.5
	Female	40	64.5	64.5	100.0
	Total	62	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. The figure of respondents' age

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25 years	41	66.1	66.1	66.1
	26-32 years	19	30.6	30.6	96.8
	33-40 years	2	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	62	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. Kinds of dictionary used

Item	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Printed Monolingual Dictionary	18	5.8	29.0	29.0
TYD23	21	6.8	33.9	33.9
TYD12	7	2.3	11.3	11.3
TYD123	6	1.9	9.7	9.7

Table 4. MUD printed monolingual dictionary

Item	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
MUD printed monolingual dictionary	18	5.8	29.0	29.0
MUD 12	13	4.2	21.0	21.0
MUD 23	11	3.5	17.7	17.7

Table 5. The frequency of the used dictionary

How often do you use dictionary		Yes	No	Total
printed monolingual dictionary	More than once a day	0	39	39
	3-5 times a week	12	0	12
	3-5 times a month	6	5	11
Total		18	44	62
printed electronic dictionary	More than once a day	5	34	39
	3-5 times a week	0	12	12
	3-5 times a month	5	6	11
Total		10	52	62
TYD23	More than once a day	21	18	39
	3-5 times a week	0	12	12
	3-5 times a month	0	11	11
Total		21	41	62
TYD12	More than once a day	7	32	39
	3-5 times a week	0	12	12
	3-5 times a month	0	11	11
Total		7	55	62
TYD123	More than once a day	6	33	39
	3-5 times a week	0	12	12
	3-5 times a month	0	11	11
Total		6	56	62

Table 6. How often you use dictionaries in your study

Frequency		Yes	No	Total
printed monolingual dictionary	More than once a day	0	39	39
	3-5 times a week	12	0	12
	3-5 times a month	6	5	11
Total		18	44	62
electronic dictionary	More than once a day	15	24	39
	3-5 times a week	0	12	12
	3-5 times a month	5	6	11
Total		20	42	62
MUD12	More than once a day	13	26	39
	3-5 times a week	0	12	12

	3-5 times a month	0	11	11
Total		13	49	62
MUD23	More than once a day	11	28	39
	3-5 times a week	0	12	12
	3-5 times a month	0	11	11
Total		11	51	62

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of semantics (meanings) items

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I use the dictionary to find out the meanings of unfamiliar words	62	4.00	5.00	4.7903	.41040
I use the dictionary to check the meanings of phrasal verbs	62	2.00	5.00	3.8065	1.36512
I use the dictionary to find out the meanings of compound words such as (nightmare; nitrate, etc.)	62	1.00	5.00	3.6774	1.21161
I use the dictionary to find out the meanings of idioms	62	2.00	5.00	2.8226	.93255
I use the dictionary to find out the synonyms of a certain word	62	2.00	5.00	3.2581	1.03916
I use the dictionary to find out the antonyms of a certain word	62	1.00	5.00	2.8387	1.02739
I use the dictionary to check the meanings of technical terms	62	2.00	4.00	3.0645	.67438
I use the dictionary to find out the meanings of proverbs	62	2.00	5.00	2.9839	.71269
I use the dictionary to check how a certain word collocates with other word	62	1.00	5.00	2.5806	1.07959

I use the dictionary to check what a given abbreviation stands for	62	1.00	5.00	2.7581	.95274
I use the dictionary to find out the meanings of some prefixes such as (re-, un-, dis-)	62	1.00	5.00	2.1452	.98923
I use the dictionary to find out the meanings of some suffixes (such as (-ing, -er, etc)	62	1.00	5.00	2.2258	1.03098
I use the dictionary to find out the meanings of a word through illustration (pictures)	62	2.00	3.00	2.2581	.44114
I use the dictionary to check the meanings of Latin root words	62	1.00	4.00	2.2258	.75573
Overall	62	1.00	5.00	2.9596	0.66626