

## Dictionary Culture among Students of English: A Case Study <sup>(\*)</sup>

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**Abstract:** A dictionary is an indispensable instrument in foreign language learning. It is the primary reliable source which learners refer to. Dictionaries inform about not only meaning of the word but also spelling, pronunciation, etymology, synonyms, grammar and usage. They play a crucial role in improving vocabulary knowledge. As for dictionary consultation, it is of importance for learners of today's language English. The problem is the fact that learners of English are deficient in dictionary consultation and that they are not aware of the richness in dictionaries. In addition, there is little study on reference needs and skills of dictionary users.

This study investigates quantitatively the needs and habits, i.e. the dictionary behaviours and culture of Turkish students majoring in English language and literature in using English dictionaries. The findings and results show that students prefer monolingual and bilingual dictionaries to other types of dictionaries and that they generally benefit from the information contained in the appendices. However, most of the participants find dictionaries insufficient. In addition, according to the study findings, it can be claimed that age, gender and level of study are not effective factors on the students' culture of dictionary use.

**Keywords:** Dictionary, dictionary use, dictionary culture, learners, reference needs and skills

### İngilizce Öğrencilerinin Sözlük Kültürü: Bir Durum Çalışması

**Özet:** Sözlük, dil öğreniminde vazgeçilmez bir araçtır. Öğrencilerin başvurabileceği başlıca güvenilir kaynaktır. Sözlükler sadece kelime anlamı değil aynı zamanda yazım, telaffuz, kelime kökeni, eşanlam, dilbilgisi ve kullanım hakkında da bilgi vermektedir. Kelime bilgisini geliştirmede önemli bir rol oynamaktadırlar. Sözlük kullanımı günümüzün dili İngilizceyi öğrenenler için büyük önem arz eder. Problem şudur ki; İngilizce öğrenenler sözlüğe danışmada yetersizdirler ve sözlüklerde var olan zenginliğin farkında değildirler. Ayrıca, sözlük kullanıcılarının kaynak ihtiyaçları ve becerileri üzerine az sayıda araştırma yapılmıştır.

Bu çalışma İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde eğitim gören Türk öğrencilerin İngilizce sözlük kullanımına yönelik ihtiyaç ve alışkanlıklarını, başka bir deyişle sözlük kültürlerini nicel olarak araştırmaktadır. Bulgular ve sonuçlar öğrencilerin tek dilli ve iki dilli sözlükleri diğer sözlüklere tercih ettiklerini ve genellikle eklerdeki bilgilerden yararlandıklarını göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte, katılımcıların çoğu sözlükleri yetersiz bulmaktadır. Ayrıca, araştırma bulgularına göre, yaş, cinsiyet ve sınıfın öğrencilerin sözlük kullanım kültüründe etkili faktörler oldukları iddia edilebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sözlük, sözlük kullanımı, sözlük kültürü, öğrenciler, kaynak ihtiyaçları ve becerileri

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## **Introduction**

### **1. Background of the Study**

A dictionary is a significant instrument in foreign language learning. Chan (2011:1) regards dictionaries as indispensable self-learning tools. It is apparent that dictionary consultation comprises a leading point in language learning process (Al-Salami and Ali Hattab, 2008:29). In fact, they are a necessity not only in language learning but also in developing four language skills; that is, reading, writing, listening and speaking. Dictionaries as significant pedagogical tools play a crucial role in different language learning processes such as writing, reading, comprehension and vocabulary acquisition (Ali, 2012:3).

Contributions of dictionaries to language development come from informative entries of the word grammatically, phonologically, etymologically let alone semantically. Dictionaries broadly give information on meaning, spelling, pronunciation and word derivation; furthermore, a qualified dictionary bears extra information about grammar and usage, synonyms, derivation and differences between spoken and written English (Wang, 2001:27). When learners of English are observed during an activity such as an exam or a class, they consult their dictionaries perpetually. This proves that dictionaries are major reliable sources to which learners refer unquestioningly.

It is no doubt that dictionary usage, no matter what sort of it is, is indispensable for learners, especially FL learners because dictionary look-up contributes language learning process substantially. Dictionaries are frequently required in native languages as well. A foreign language learner begins language learning with purchasing a dictionary in order to assist their learning of vocabulary (Wang, 2001:27). Dictionaries offer learners practical linguistic and cultural information especially during self-learning (Ryu, 2006:84). According to Ali, dictionaries have a substantial position in mastering vocabulary and learning a foreign language, and make a large amount of information about words and their usage available (2012:2).

#### ***A. Statement of the Problem***

It is proved that every learner of a foreign language possesses at least one dictionary because the dictionary is an indispensable tool in the process of language learning. Learners can be in need of reliable information to which they refer, when teachers are unavailable; then, an English dictionary becomes the filler (Ryu, 2006:83). Dictionaries designed for language learners include not only word meanings but also other considerable units, e.g. phonological, etymological, grammatical features of the words, word derivation, and usage. Nevertheless, learners are unaware of the abundance in dictionaries.

The problem in dictionary use is the fact that learners of English are deficient in dictionary consultation and that they are unconscious of the richness in dictionaries. In addition, there is little study on reference needs and reference skills of dictionary users. Most authorities recommend that dictionaries be made by primarily considering the users'

needs; however, very few studies direct this point sufficiently (Lew, 2011:1). In terms of dictionary consultation in teaching and learning English, both teachers and learners are underdeveloped; as a matter of fact, “lexicography is not taught even at the university level (Al-Salami and Ali Hattab, 2008:30).

“The subject of dictionary use is very much alive today, as is evidenced by the numerous scholarly papers devoted to it” remark Hulstijn and Atkins (1998:7). To mention the quantitative research and studies on dictionary use, they are as follows (Welker 2010):

Quirk (1973); Bejoint (1981); MacFarquar & Richards (1983); Sora (1984); Griffin (1985); Heart & Herbst (1985); Kharma (1985); Iqbal (1987); Ripfel (1989); Diab (1990); El-Badry (1990); El-Ajmi (1992); Rehail (1994); Taylor & Chan (1994); Lacarias (1997); Atkins & Varantola (1998); Bishop (1998); Hartmann (1999a); Bishop (2000); Tall & Hurman (2000); Nishimura (2002); Wingate (2002); Sanchez Ramos (2004); Höfling (2006). These papers mostly investigate the attitudes, needs, habits and preferences of dictionary users.

### ***B. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions***

The purpose of this study is to investigate quantitatively the needs and habits, i.e. the dictionary behaviours and culture of Turkish students majoring in English language and literature in using English dictionaries.

The research questions expected to be answered through this research are in the following:

- 1) How is the dictionary culture of the students?
- 2) How are the attitudes of the students toward different types of dictionaries?
- 3) Do the students take advantage of the information in dictionaries?
- 4) How are the reference skills of the students and their training on dictionary use?
- 5) Do the students’ dictionary behaviours differ in terms of their genders, ages and levels of study?

### ***C. Significance of the Study***

Dictionary consultation is of importance for language learners owing to the characteristic of being the foremost reference. A dictionary is such a versatile instrument that it is consulted by foreign language learner semantically, phonologically, grammatically and etymologically as well as by user of mother tongue for similar functions. Dictionaries enable learners to enrich their vocabulary; as a result, improve their English. Ryu (2006:84) notes “a dictionary is an invaluable reference to the English language”.

Research on dictionary use has significance in the academic field because there are few studies upon this point. Surveys about dictionary use have become a little easier; yet, “the need for more empirical studies is still as urgent as ever (Hartmann, 2000:385). Although it is considered that using a dictionary has no challenge, it requires some skills

of usage. Dictionary look-up is not simply an option like guessing (Scholfield, 1999 cited in Chan 2011:1). Chan states dictionary usage skills in the following:

Quite a range of skills is needed to use a dictionary effectively, such as locating the right entry, selecting the most suitable definition, integrating the definition grammatically into the context where the unknown word has been encountered, and selecting the most appropriate example (2011:1).

Dictionary user research is a critical subject on the grounds that it gains an increasing attention in recent years. The reasons why research on dictionary use has been attracting notice in the last two decades are firstly, a change in attitude towards dictionary user, secondly, a change in the viewpoint of pedagogical dictionaries and thirdly, late trends in language teaching (Tono, 1998:98).

This study is significant due to the fact that it is a quantitative research on dictionary use; therefore, it is based on the individual's own ideas and experiences. Questionnaire is an effective technique for determining individual or collective user profiles (Hartmann, 1999b:155). Furthermore, almost nothing is known about dictionary user behaviour, in other words, the needs and preferences of the students of English in Turkey. This research is expected to contribute to the field of lexicography in terms of dictionary research.

## **2. Methodology**

### **A. Participants**

The questionnaire survey was conducted to the students of the department of English Language and Literature at Atatürk University in 2012-2013 Academic Year. The participants were undergraduate education students who were taking English Literature and Linguistics courses. The students of prep classes were not included to the survey in order to maintain the reliability of the questionnaire survey.

In this study, 151 students participated in the questionnaire survey. The participants of this study comprise 36 male and 115 female undergraduate students. The number of the female participants tripled the number of the male participants. Demographic information of the participants is displayed in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1.** Demographic Information of the Participants

		Frequency	Per cent
Gender	Male	36	23,8
	Female	115	76,2
	Total	151	100,0

The participants are from different groups of ages. The great majority of the participants are between the ages 21-25. Table 3.2 demonstrates the participants by age.

**Table 3.2.** Participants by Age

		Frequency	Per cent
Age	17-20 age	26	17,2
	21-25 age	121	80,1
	26-30 age	3	2,0
	36-40 age	1	,7
Total		151	100,0

The participants of this study are freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors; namely, the questionnaire is not conducted to the students of preparatory classes. The frequencies of the level of study are given in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3.** Participants by Level of Study

		Frequency	Per cent
Level of Study	1	33	21,9
	2	35	23,2
	3	45	29,8
	4	38	25,2
Total		151	100,0

**B. Materials**

This study was based on a questionnaire survey; thus, the type of instrument, questionnaire was used to collect the data of the research. The questionnaire comprising of 27 items including gender, age and level of study was conducted to the students. The instrument is based on the questionnaire survey by Hartmann (1999a): Case Study: The Exeter University Survey of Dictionary Use (Appendix 1). These questionnaire items were modified and applied by various researchers. The survey questions of this research examine the dictionary use of learners and their opinions, i.e. their dictionary behaviours. The questionnaire was applied in English on the grounds that the participants were the students of English. The language of the questionnaire was understandable enough for the level of students. It consists of 27 items including age, gender and level of study.

All the questionnaire items were designed to measure the dictionary culture of students. The items 3, 6, and 7 were designed to evaluate the attitudes of the students toward different types of dictionaries. The items 11, 12 and 13 were planned to quantify the status of students' benefiting from information in appendices. To assess the reference skills of the students and their training on dictionary use, the questionnaire items 21 and 24 were organized. Moreover, the findings about learners' dictionary use were examined

by gender, by age and by level of study in order to estimate whether these three factors affect learner's dictionary use or not.

### ***C. Procedure***

The data of the study were collected from undergraduate students. All the participants were the students studying at the Department of English Language and Literature. Their level of study varies from freshmen to seniors. Before the data collection, written permission for the application of the research was received from the head of Department of English Language and Literature (Appendix, 2).

Scoring the questionnaire survey which had multiple choice items was uncomplicated for the students of English. In the beginning of the questionnaire, there was a background information section. In this section, it was stated that the participation in this survey is completely voluntary (Appendix, 1).

The questionnaire was conducted in English; thus, it was not applied to the students of the preparatory classes. The language of the questionnaire was plain and understandable enough. The estimated time for the application of the questionnaire was between 15-20 minutes.

In the analysis of the data, three different statistical calculations (Frequency, Per cent and Chi-square) were used and these analyses were performed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows 15.00. Significance level is approved as  $p=0.05$ .

## **3. Research Findings and Results**

### ***A. Findings***

To the question "When did you start to use a dictionary?", 56.3 % of the students answered "at primary school", 28,5 % answered "at secondary school", 13,9 % answered "at high school" and 1,3 % answered "at university".

To the question "When did you purchase your first dictionary?" 51,7 % of the students answered "at primary school", 26,5 % answered "at secondary school", 21,2 % answered "at high school" and 0,7 % answered "at university".

To the question "What type of dictionaries do you own?" the great majority of the informants responded that they had bilingual dictionaries (78,1 %) and monolingual dictionaries (74,2 %) rather than thesaurus (19,2 %), special subject dictionary (14,6 %) and encyclopaedic dictionary (10,6 %).

To the question "Do you own an electronic dictionary?", 58.9% of the learners answered "no"; 41,1 % answered "yes".

To the question "How many dictionaries do you own?", 33,1 % of the students answered "more than three", 31.1% answered "three", 30,5 % answered "two", and 5,3 % answered "one".

To the question "Which type of dictionary do you use most frequently?", 57,6 % of the students answered "bilingual dictionary", 34,4 % answered "monolingual dictionary", the

rest answered “thesaurus” (2,6 %), “special subject dictionary” (2,6 %) and “encyclopaedic dictionary” (2,6 %).

To the question “In your opinion what type of dictionary is the most useful?”, 46,4 % of the students answered “bilingual dictionary”, 37,7 % answered “monolingual dictionary”, 13,2 % answered “encyclopaedic dictionary”, and 2,6 % answered “thesaurus”.

To the question “Why did you buy the most recent dictionary you own?”, 51 % of the respondents answered “because a teacher or a tutor recommended it”, 41,7 % answered “as a result of my own deliberate choice”, 4,6 % answered “I cannot remember”, 2 % answered “as a result of an advertisement” and 0,7 % answered “because a friend or relative suggested it”.

To the question “What are your priorities when buying a dictionary?”, 74,8 % of the students answered “relevance to my needs”, 53 % answered “number of words”, 32,5 % answered “number of examples”, 29,1 % answered “the reputation of the publisher”, 24,5 % answered “a reasonable price”, 10,6 % answered “convenient to carry about”.

To the question “What do you remember about your own favourite dictionary?”, 51,7 % of the students answered “colour”, 46,4 % answered “title”, 43 % answered “number of entries”, 35,8 % answered “size”, 26,5 % answered “publisher” and 11,9 % answered “editor”.

To the question “Do you ever use information contained in the appendices?”, 82,8 % of the students said “yes” and 17,2 % said “no”.

To the question “If your answer is ‘yes’, which kind (s) of information do you use?”, 53 % answered “lists of irregular verbs”, 46,4 % answered “lists of abbreviations”, 35,1 % answered “proper names”, 25,8 % answered “others” and 16,6 % answered “units of measurement”.

To the question “Have you ever read front-matter guidance notes in order to know how to use your dictionary (ies)?”, 54,3 % of the students approved and 45,7 % disapproved.

To the question “When do you use a dictionary?”, 93,4 % of the respondents answered “studying at home”, 55,6 % answered “during exam”, 42,4 % answered “during class” and 32,5 % answered “studying in the library”.

To the question “Do you use a dictionary while you are ...?”, 94 % of the students answered “translation (working on a translation exercise)”, 73,5 % answered “writing (working on a written assignment)”, 67,5 % answered “reading of textbooks or academic journals”, 23,8 % “reading for entertainment” and 8,6 % answered “playing word games”.

To the question “What do you do when you notice a new or difficult word while reading?”, 58,3 % of the students answered “I look it up in a dictionary”, 31,8 % answered “I try to guess the meaning”, 6 % answered “I ignore it and go on reading” and 4 % answered “I ask other people what it means”.

To the question “Why do you refer to a dictionary?”, 94,7 % answered “to find meaning”, 64,2 % answered “to find examples of use”, 50,3 % answered “to find pronunciation”,

37.7 % answered “to find synonyms”, 29.1% answered “to find grammatical points”, 15.2 % answered “to find spelling” and 14.6 % answered “to find word origin/etymology”.

To the question “Are you satisfied with your ability to use the dictionary?”, 79.5 % of the students answered “yes” and 20.5 % answered “no”.

To the question “Does it happen that you cannot find the information you look for in the dictionary?”, 85.4 % of the participants answered “sometimes”, 6.6% answered “never” and “often” and 1.3 % answered “very often”.

To the question “Which type of information is the most difficult to find?”, 71.5 % of the participants answered “specialized technical terms”, 55.6 % answered “idioms and phrases”, 22.5 % answered “common English words in a special subject area” and 5.3 % answered “general English words”.

To the question “What do you think about the causes of these difficulties?”, 63.6 % of the student answered “not enough information in the dictionary”, 24.5 % answered “my lack of dictionary knowledge”, 21.9 % answered “my lack of dictionary skill”, 20.5 % answered “unclear layout of the dictionary” and 5.3 % answered “I do not read the instructions to the user”.

To the question “Using dictionaries is ...”, 58.9 % of the participants answered “worthwhile / informative”, 41.7 % answered “easy”, 28.5 % answered “tedious/boring”, 24.5 % answered “exiting/fun” and 8.6% answered “of little help/not worth the trouble”.

To the question “Using dictionaries can ...”, 78.8 % of the participants answered “help me perform better in my studies”, 67.5 % answered “improve my writing”, 35.1 % answered “improve my reading” and 30.5 % answered “help my speaking”.

To the question “Have you ever been taught how to use the dictionary?”, 41.1 % of the students answered “yes”, 29.8% answered “a little” and 29.1% answered “no”.

## ***B. Results***

### ***B.1. How is the Dictionary Culture of the Students?***

With regard to the first research question, the students generally use and purchase dictionaries at primary school. The findings show that the students mostly have bilingual and monolingual dictionaries and find these types of dictionaries more practical and beneficial. Almost all of the students have at least two dictionaries; this indicates that they are aware of the importance of the dictionaries as students of English. Incidentally, three fifth of the students owns electronic dictionaries.

The students bought their most recent dictionary as a result of either their teachers’ recommendation or their own deliberate choice. The students’ major priority when buying a dictionary is relevance to their needs; they ignore the convenience to carry. When they think about their favourite dictionaries, they remember their colours, titles and size more easily than the publishers and editors.

The students generally use information contained in the appendices. Moreover, more than half of the students have read front-matter guidance notes in order to know how to use



their dictionaries. While studying at home, the students almost always use dictionaries. Also, they sometimes consult them during exam and during class. Dictionaries are mostly helpful to the students during translation, reading and writing activities. Few students ignore unknown words which they encounter.

The findings indicate that a large majority of the students refer to dictionaries to find meaning. It can be concluded that they are unconscious of the wealth in the dictionaries. However, they are generally satisfied with their ability to use dictionaries. Also, they claim that sometimes they cannot find the information they look for in the dictionary. They often relate the cause of the difficulties of finding certain words to insufficient information in the dictionaries.

According to findings and results, the students mostly find using dictionaries informative and easy rather than boring and of little help. Furthermore, they accept the contribution of dictionaries to the development of their language skills.

### ***B.2. How are the Attitudes of the Students toward Different Types of Dictionaries?***

In the light of findings, as displayed previously, the great majority of the students own bilingual and monolingual dictionaries. It can be concluded that students purchase bilingual dictionaries due to its practicality since this type of dictionary give the translation in another language. Also, they prefer having monolingual dictionaries because they are students of English.

Bilingual dictionaries are most frequently used by the participants. In addition, the participants think that bilingual dictionaries are the most useful dictionaries. As to monolingual dictionaries, they are also used frequently and considered as useful dictionaries. The participants hardly use other types of dictionaries; however, some students regard encyclopaedic dictionaries as the most useful ones.

In short, most of the students own bilingual and monolingual dictionaries and find these dictionaries much more advantageous. Therefore, they use them much more than other types of dictionaries.

### ***B.3. Do the Students Take Advantage of the Information in Dictionaries?***

Except for the word entries, dictionaries have information contained in appendices such as lists of irregular verbs, lists of abbreviations and proper names. The students participating in this research usually take advantage of the information in appendices. The students whose answer is 'yes' sometimes look up lists of irregular verbs, lists of abbreviations and rarely look up proper names.

Findings derived from learner answers show that more than half of the students have read front-matter guidance notes in order to know how to use their dictionaries. It can be concluded that almost half of the students do not need to read front-matter guidance notes.

In conclusion, students usually use information contained in the appendices. More than half of the participants benefit from appendices in order to look up lists of irregular

verbs. Furthermore, more than half of the students have read front-matter guidance notes in order to know how to use their dictionaries.

#### ***B.4. How are the Reference Skills of the Students and their Training on Dictionary Use?***

With regard to the fourth research question, the participants sometimes have difficulties in finding information in dictionaries. Most of the students relate these difficulties to not enough information in dictionaries. Also, some participants think that these difficulties result from their lack of dictionary knowledge and dictionary skill as well as unclear layout of the dictionary.

About 40 % of the students claim that they have been taught how to use a dictionary. Almost 30% of the students do not feel satisfied about their training on dictionary use. The rest have not been taught how to use a dictionary.

Finally, almost two thirds of learners relate the cause of the difficulties of finding certain words to insufficient information in the dictionaries. Also, about the half of the students are taught how to use a dictionary.

#### ***B.5. Do the Students' Dictionary Behaviours Differ in terms of their Genders, Ages and Levels of Study?***

In order to see the factors that affect learner's dictionary use, the distribution of the students' answers is examined by age, gender and study level of the students, via Chi-square analysis. Significance level is approved as  $p=0.05$ .

The differences in terms of the learners' answers, by gender, on the only questionnaire item, "When did you purchase your first dictionary?" has been found significant across the significance level  $p<0.05$  whereas the differences in terms of the distribution of the students' answers to all other questionnaire items, by gender, have been found insignificant across the significance level  $p>0.05$ . The table shows that the rate of the female participants who answered "in high school" to the question "When did you purchase your first dictionary?" is less than male students.

The differences in terms of the distribution of the students' answers to all other questionnaire items, by age, have been found insignificant across the significance level  $p>0.05$ . As a result, it can be concluded that students at different ages give similar answers to questionnaire items.

The differences in terms of the learners' answers, by level of study, on the questionnaire items, "How many dictionaries do you own?" and "When do you use a dictionary?" have been found significant across the significance level  $p<0.05$  whereas the differences in terms of the distribution of the students' answers to all other questionnaire items, by level of study, have been found insignificant across the significance level  $p>0.05$ . The table indicates that most of the students have more dictionaries in the third grade as far as it is derived from students' answers to the questionnaire item "How many dictionaries do you own?". Moreover, according to the table, the great majority of the freshmen use their

dictionaries while studying at home whereas they benefit from their dictionaries at least during an exam.

To summarize how the factors, gender, age and level of study affect dictionary use, in terms of the learners' answers, by gender, the data obtained from this research indicated that students' dictionary behaviours are hardly affected by gender. In terms of the distribution of the students' answers to all the questionnaire items, by age, the data obtained from this research displayed that students at different ages give similar answers to questionnaire items. The data derived from students' answers by the last factor, level of study presented that most of the students have more dictionaries in the third grade and that the great majority of the freshmen use their dictionaries while studying at home whereas they benefit from their dictionaries at least during an exam.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate quantitatively the needs and habits, i.e. their dictionary behaviours and culture of Turkish students majoring in English language and literature in using English dictionaries. The study was based on quantitative research. The quantitative data were gathered by means of a questionnaire. This questionnaire survey was conducted to the participants who are the undergraduate students who study in Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Atatürk University, Erzurum in Turkey. 151 students participated in the questionnaire survey.

With regard to the first research question "How is the dictionary culture of the students?", the data obtained from this research showed that the students of English generally appreciate dictionaries and accept the importance of them for their own development. However, they are not aware of the richness in dictionaries enough. In terms of the second research question "How are the attitudes of the students toward different type of dictionaries?", the data obtained from this research indicated that most of the students own bilingual and monolingual dictionaries and find these dictionaries much more beneficial and that they, therefore, use them more. In terms of the third research question "Do the students take advantage of the information in dictionaries?", the data obtained from this research presented that students usually use information contained in the appendices and that more than half of the participants take advantage of appendices in order to look up lists of irregular verbs. Furthermore, more than half of the students have read front-matter guidance notes in order to know how to use their dictionaries. With regard to the fourth research question "How are the reference skills of the students and their training on dictionary use?", the data obtained from this research showed that almost two thirds of learners relate the cause of the difficulties of finding certain words to insufficient information in the dictionaries. Also, about the half of the students are taught how to use a dictionary. To mention how the three factors affect dictionary use, in terms of the learners' answers, by gender, the data obtained from this research indicated that students' dictionary behaviours are hardly influenced by gender. In terms of the distribution of the students' answers to all the questionnaire items, by age, the data obtained from this research displayed that students at different ages give similar answers to questionnaire items. The data derived from students' answers by the last factor, level

of study presented that most of the students have more dictionaries in the third grade and that the great majority of the freshmen use their dictionaries while studying at home whereas they benefit from their dictionaries at least during an exam.

To conclude about the students' dictionary culture, they prefer monolingual and bilingual dictionaries to other types of dictionaries. They generally benefit from the information contained in the appendices. Also, most of the participants find dictionaries inadequate. It can be claimed that age, gender and level of study are not effective factors on the students' behaviours of dictionary use.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1.**

**Instrument Used in the Data Collection**

Dear friends,

It is generally accepted that dictionaries are significant instruments in foreign language learning. They are necessary both in language learning, especially in vocabulary acquisition and in developing four language skills, that is, reading, writing, listening and speaking. But what are your experiences and how is your dictionary behaviour in choosing and using dictionaries?

Please spend about fifteen minutes participating in this survey for the investigation of dictionary culture among university students. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary.



Gender:            Male ( )                            Female ( )  
Age:                17- 20 ( )            26 -30 ( )            36 - 40 ( )  
                          21-25 ( )            31-35 ( )            over 40 ( )  
Level of Study:    1<sup>st</sup> year ( )        2<sup>nd</sup> year ( )        3<sup>rd</sup> year ( )        4<sup>th</sup> year ( )

1. When did you start to use a dictionary?
  - at primary school
  - at secondary school
  - at high school
  - at university
2. When did you purchase your first dictionary?
  - at primary school
  - at secondary school
  - at high school
  - at university
3. What type of dictionaries do you own?  
(You can select more than one option.)
  - monolingual
  - bilingual
  - thesaurus
  - encyclopaedic
  - special subject dictionary

4. Do you own an electronic dictionary?
- yes
  - no
5. How many dictionaries do you own?
- one
  - two
  - three
  - more than three
6. Which type of dictionary do you use most frequently?
- bilingual
  - monolingual
  - thesaurus
  - encyclopaedic
  - special subject dictionary
7. In your opinion what type of dictionary is the most useful?
- bilingual dictionary
  - monolingual dictionary
  - thesaurus
  - encyclopaedic dictionary
8. Why did you buy the most recent dictionary you own?
- because a teacher or a tutor recommended it
  - because a friend or relative suggested it
  - as a result of my own deliberate choice
  - as a result of an advertisement
  - I cannot remember
9. What are your priorities when buying a dictionary?  
(You can select more than one option.)
- relevance to my needs
  - number of words
  - number of examples
  - a reasonable price
  - the reputation of the publisher
  - convenient to carry about

**10. What do you remember about your own favourite dictionary?**

(You can select more than one option.)

- |                                    |                                                    |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> title     | <input type="checkbox"/> year of publication       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> colour    | <input type="checkbox"/> editor                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> publisher | <input type="checkbox"/> number of entries (words) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> size      |                                                    |

**11. Do you ever use information contained in the appendices?**

- Yes  
 no

**12. If your answer is 'yes', which kind (s) of information do you use?**

(You can select more than one option.)

- lists of abbreviations  
 lists of irregular verbs  
 units of measurement  
 proper names  
 others (to be specified)

**13. Have you ever read front-matter guidance notes in order to know how to use your dictionary (ies)?**

- yes  
 no

**14. When do you use a dictionary?**

(You can select more than one option.)

- |                                         |                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> during a class | <input type="checkbox"/> studying at home        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> during an exam | <input type="checkbox"/> studying in the library |

**15. Do you use a dictionary while you are ...?:**

(You can select more than one option.)

- |                                                                    |                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> reading of textbooks or academic journals | <input type="checkbox"/> translation (working on a translation exercise) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> reading for entertainment                 | <input type="checkbox"/> playing word games                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing (working on a written assignment) |                                                                          |

16. What do you do when you notice a new or difficult word while reading?

- look it up in a dictionary                       ask other people what it means  
 try to guess the meaning                       ignore it and go on reading

17. Why do you refer to a dictionary?

(You can select more than one option.)

- to find meaning                       to find synonyms  
 to find pronunciation                       to find examples of use  
 to find grammatical points                       to find word origin/etymology  
 to find spelling

18. Are you satisfied with your ability to use the dictionary?

- yes  
 no

19. Does it happen that you cannot find the information you look for in the dictionary?

- Never  
 Sometimes  
 Often  
 Very often

20. Which type of information is the most difficult to find?

(You can select more than one option.)

- specialized technical terms  
 idioms and phrases  
 common English words in a special subject area  
 general English words

21. What do you think about the causes of these difficulties?

(You can select more than one option.)

- my lack of dictionary skill  
 my lack of dictionary knowledge  
 not enough information in the dictionary  
 unclear layout of the dictionary  
 I do not read the instructions to the user



**22. Using dictionaries is ...**

(You can select more than one option.)

- worthwhile / informative
- easy
- exiting/fun
- tedious/boring
- of little help/not worth the trouble

**23. Using dictionaries can ...**

(You can select more than one option.)

- improve my writing
- help me perform better in my studies
- improve my reading
- help my speaking

**24. Have you ever been taught how to use the dictionary?**

- Yes
- A little
- Never



**Appendix 2.**

**Permission for the Application of the Questionnaire from the Head of Department  
of English Language and Literature**



Sayı : 82806933 / 9b  
Konu : Anket Uygulaması.

T.C.  
ATATÜRK ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
Edebiyat Fakültesi  
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü



01.04.2013

Sayın Arş. Gör. Cansu GÜRÇÜ

İlgi: 27.03.2013 tarihli dilekçeniz.

Yüksek Lisans Tez çalışmasına yönelik hazırlanmış olduğumuz anket formunu bölümümüz öğrencilerine uygulamanız bölümümüzce uygun görülmüştür.

Gereğini bilgilerinize rica ederim.

  
Doç.Dr. Ahmet BEŞE  
Bölüm Başkanı

Eki :