
Impact of English Monolingual Dictionaries on ESL Learners' Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Building

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Abstract:

The study aimed to investigate the impact of English monolingual dictionary on learners' performances in reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. The subjects were advance learners from Govt. Girls College, Vehari whose average age was 18 years old. The subjects in the experiment were randomly divided into two groups: the group who solved the test with the help of dictionary named as Achievers, and the group who solved the comprehension test without using dictionary named as non-achievers. The instruments used for collecting data were a questionnaire and a reading comprehension test. The data were statistically analyzed in terms of mean and standard deviation. The findings of this research would let us know that consulting dictionary during the test had a significantly positive effect on the subjects' performances in reading comprehension and vocabulary learning.

Key words: Monolingual dictionaries, reading comprehension, vocabulary building, achievers, non-achievers.

INTRODUCTION

Dictionary use is viewed as a key technique for reading comprehension and vocabulary advancement. It is an ordinary scene that the second language learner bears a dictionary while learning a second language. Hypothetically, contentions flourish as to the usefulness and adequacy of dictionary use as a second language learning method; most importantly, the impacts on reading comprehension arouse overwhelming verbal confrontations. In light of test discoveries, questions will be thrown on the origin that counseling word references would unfavorably influence reading comprehension and in this way this technique is constantly recommended if all else fails. Before exploring the relationship between dictionary use and vocabulary improvement, an aptitude between dictionary use for reading understanding and for vocabulary adapting needs to be made.

Dictionary use for reading comprehension is for the most part not a sanction for language learners to seek after at present reading (Bensoussan, 1984). By and by, it will be contended that this methodology obliges an apprehension on the off chance that we examine the exploration writing with respect to reading comprehension (Knight, 1994), (Fraser, 1998). Diverse conclusion will be drawn to the premise of these discoveries. Then again, the part of dictionary use in vocabulary improvement will be all the more empowering for second realizing in that the look-up conduct should make a deeper flaw in the learner's memory and accordingly respected to be helpful for vocabulary learning. Then again, it is significant to make clear a couple of misconceptions (Fraser, 1998).

In the meantime, sorts of word references to be received will be an ensuing concern on the off chance that we discover dictionary use worth suggesting for vocabulary learning. In spite of the fact that the status of monolingual word references is constantly viewed as better than that of bilingual ones, the inclination for bilingual lexicons among dialect learners is overpowering that the focal point of this kind of lexicons can't be disregarded (Baxter, 1980) (Laufer, 1997). Consequently, another sort of word references will be proposed and its adequacy is affirmed in latest experiments.

A standout amongst the best compensatory systems for expanding vocabulary and perusing understanding is to peruse broadly and generally, something poor learners don't endeavor either inside or outside the school setting (Paul, 1996).

Dictionary likewise encourages English perusing cognizance for learners (Stanovich 1992). Be that as it may, learners are less inclined to utilize a thesaurus for backing with poor language learners failing to choose such an instrument (Paris, 1981). Beech (2004) reported that more established learners were more probable than more youthful children to utilize a lexicon to locate the significance of a word in content. For the more youthful children trouble emerges because of the failure to comprehend the word's literary lexicon definition and relating this to the connection of the entry. Subsequently, utilizing definitions from word references to help perusing is prone to grow later when perusing cognizance makes strides.

Lexicons are basic devices for achieving vocabulary and taking in a second language as a rule. It gives learners access to an endless measure of data about words and their use. Utilizing lexicons can be seen as an express procedure for taking in a second language vocabulary or as correspondence methodology. As per Pousi (2010) "vocabulary acquisition is considered by many to be the single most important aspect of foreign language learning" (p. 21). Moreover, according to Knight

(1994) “not only the majority of students studying foreign language cite vocabulary as their number one priority, but it is often considered a priority by teachers as well” (p. 1).

The expansion in the use of dictionary to bolster perusing and learning vocabulary might be a matter of youngsters finding the convenience of a lexicon after some time as their perusing enhances so that the definitions in a lexicon are really understandable. Despite the fact that there are various investigations of kids' advancement of perusing and spelling, there has been moderately little research on the current or the potential part of the word reference in promoting this improvement (Beech, 2004).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Use of Dictionary for Reading Comprehension

Dictionary use for comprehension is regularly examined in studies of second Language reading, however it is constantly disheartened by language teachers. It is generally guaranteed that dictionary use obliges a generous measure of time both in counseling the dictionary and in picking a suitable lexical passage for polysemous things where different implications are given so it is for the most part accepted to interfere with reading comprehension (Carrel, 1988). Prior research studies appeared to support this notion. Case in point, the study by (Bensoussan, Faint & Weiss, 1984) attempted to explore the impacts of dictionary use on reading comprehension tests.

The lexicon is an imperative pedagogical apparatus that assumes a key part in different procedures of learning of language including perusing perception and vocabulary learning and obtaining. In any case, which sort of a lexicon understudies ought to utilize has turned into a questionable matter in the writing? Should utilization of lexicon be controlled by understudies' level and capability? Underhill (as

referred to in Hayati, 2005) asserts that the function of a monolingual lexicon is not only to provide definitions of the word but it has also other functions. Moreover, Baxter (1980) as referred to in (Hayati, 2005) likewise guarantees that monolingual lexicons exhibit definitions as well as other essential perspectives. He trusts that more consolation ought to be given to the utilization of monolingual lexicon since it advances familiarity by providing definitions; interestingly bilingual lexicons have a tendency to empower word for word interpretation counterparts that may not be fitting in specific circumstances and might bring about disarray and vagueness.

Besides, (Bensoussan, Faint & Weiss, 1984) as referred to in (Hayati, 2005) bring up that a bilingual lexicon appears to give understudies surety of authentic answer, whereas a monolingual lexicon regularly constrains understudies to figure and foresee the significance, and lead to uncertainty and disarray. Moreover, monolingual lexicons are liable to give a long and befuddling portrayal that won't recommend the expected and fancied importance. Nonetheless, as per Bejoint (1981); cited in (Schofield, 1982) "those learners who use monolingual dictionaries would help them to get into habit of thinking in the target language" (Schofield, 1982).

Recently, the general conviction that use of dictionary would hinder reading comprehension was indicated to just reflect halfway truth. Research into dictionary use amid reading landed at an alternate conclusion that, despite the fact that this method does influence reading rate, it doesn't naturally infer that it likewise obstructs reading comprehension (Fraser, 1998) (Knight, 1994).

Contrasting the test plans of Bensoussan et al. (1984) and Knight (1994), we could find that the conflicting results found in Bensoussan et al's. are because of the higher capability of the subjects. The rate of genuine utilizing a dictionary while

reading is very low and can't be a direct connection to execution in reading, a reason recommended by (Fraser, 1998).

As of right now, we might want to take the stand that dictionary use is useful for reading comprehension. To help the learner using a dictionary adequately, a closer examination of the look-up procedure may give us useful rules. Verbally processed information were gathered while Chinese learners of German read two German articles (Wingate, 2004). They were permitted to turn upward obscure words and gave monolingual or bilingual dictionaries, or new definitions written in the style of Collin COBUILD English Dictionary.

It was discovered that the learner constantly neglected to discover a suitable meaning in an entry for the reading writings and the disappointment was found to result from either the act of looking for seeming synonym word (Wingate, 2004). This discovery echoes the proposals given by Schofield that aside from the initial stage of gazing up target words following the alphabetical order of the dictionary, an effort should be made to differentiate among the polysemous senses of most words and choose an appropriate one to match the context (Schofield, 1982).

This step is most persuasive because the accomplishment in selecting a fitting sense concerns the viability of dictionary use, and shockingly, learners of whatever capability levels lack the strategy. Finally, it is concluded that the language learner needs to be taught about the technique of how to distinguish a proper sense inside an entry.

Dictionary Use for Vocabulary Learning

Dictionary use for vocabulary learning is viewed as more basic for vocabulary advancement than for reading comprehension. Disagreements, however, exist and contentions basically become out of the attestation that vocabulary ought to be learnt from content, where the particular properties of lexical things

and the fine qualifications between comparative words can be uncovered.

As a matter of first importance, one value of dictionary use in second language learning is that this method can prepare the learner to take in the target language freely and diminish his/her dependence on the teacher (Horsfall, 1997). While the learner's self-governance is extraordinarily lauded and energized, this technique help accomplish this objective in language learning procedure. Besides, given that dictionary is by and large viewed as a kind of reference materials, the act of dictionary use is viewed as ready to encourage the aptitude of exchanging learning from the dictionary to the learner's memory and store it in long haul memory for subsequent use (Horsfall, 1997). In training, this aptitude is critical in every field of knowledge acquisition (Horsfall, 1997).

Furthermore, in the meetings with second language learners, Gonzales found that dictionary use is a regular method sought after by the learner when experiencing obscure words in a content and accordingly can't be dismissed since it fulfills the learner's vocabulary needs in-depth knowledge (Gonzalez, 1999)

More interesting data is revealed in the studies of (Hulstijn, 1996). Dutch learners of Spanish were subjected to three distinctive learning conditions: procurement of minimal glosses, access to lexicons and a control group with no support while reading. After they were obliged to peruse a short story, they were tried on their maintenance of target words.

Despite the fact that it was discovered that the execution of learners with access to peripheral sparkles was fundamentally superior to that of the other two groups, the scores for word maintenance for those words which were gazed upward by learners with access to lexicons were really higher than those of learners in the minimal gloss group. It implies that, when word was searched, it was more inclined to stay in

the learner's memory. That's why, this research demonstrated that dictionary use can improve vocabulary building however not perception in that it captivates the learner in a form-meaning relationship, which is viewed as the introductory venture of vocabulary improvement (Hulstijn, 1996).

In teaching second language, the ideal time to enhance dictionary use may be one of pedagogical concerns. The degree of the learner's requirements or inspiration to use a dictionary may give imperative data about how and when to promote such a methodology. This is the thing that Hulstijn indicated in an alternate study (Hulstijn, 1996)

In a substantial scale study, Fraser examined three vocabulary learning methods, including: overlooking, counseling (lexicons or specialists), and deriving (Fraser, 1998). In reading a content, one could decide to disregard an obscure words, find it in the dictionary, or make a surmising about its importance. In this investigation, these three methods were initially acquainted with the learner to secure what they were, the way they worked and why they were vital in managing obscure words. This was trailed by a period of practice in utilizing these methodologies.

As generally recognized, learning words from content is viewed as a crucial method for vocabulary development in second language learning, and "coincidental learning" is highly suggested (Hulstijn, 1996). Research likewise proposes that coincidental learning can deliver more prominent consequences for vocabulary learning when joined with the use of word references because a dictionary gives a valuable chance to check the word meaning from the context. Actually, check is considered as an essential venture in vocabulary improvement (Hulstijn, 1993).

To conclude as to the part of dictionary use in vocabulary advancement, Fraser recommended that counseling a dictionary during the process of reading is found to enhance

reading comprehension as well as adds to vocabulary improvement (Fraser, 1998). Three functions of this procedure are thought to be significant for long haul memory. Firstly, the learner's concentration would be focused on the form-meaning association while searching a word in a dictionary. Secondly, while looking for the meaning of a word, the learner practices the word and structures a provisional representation in living up to working memory. Practice offers an open door for data to stay in the memory for a long time. Finally, in the wake of spotting the statement in a dictionary, the learner needs to pick the best possible grammatical feature to fit into the content. These three capacities lead to a superior chance for an obscure word to be held in long term memory.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling Technique

Random sampling was adopted as a sampling technique for the present study. The study is an attempt to highlight the impact of English monolingual dictionary on reading comprehension and vocabulary development. For this purpose a questionnaire and a reading test were used.

Research Sample

The study concerns advanced learners of English as a foreign language in Pakistan, so the subjects were recruited from a Govt. College Vehari. The subjects who took part in the study were third-year students in Govt. College. The average age of the subjects was 18 years old. 100 students participated in the study. All were females.

Data Collection Instruments

As in the study of Knight (1994) and Fraser (1998), this study has also the same data collection instruments.

Reading comprehension test

A test was conducted to check the influence of dictionary on reading comprehension. Fifty students were supposed to guess the meanings of the underlined words in comprehension passages with the help of dictionary and fifty were supposed to guess the meaning of the words without using dictionary. Before conducting the test, I gave briefing to the students about the purpose of this research and specified the time constraint.

Questionnaire

After the reading comprehension test, a questionnaire was used to collect the response of participants' attitudes towards the importance of English monolingual dictionaries and its role in reading comprehension and vocabulary building.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed by using the statistical technique of deriving arithmetic mean against each statement. First, the subjects' attitudes toward learning L2 vocabulary by using English Monolingual Dictionary and example sentences are presented according to the calculation of numbers and percentages of their answers collected in the questionnaire.

Finally the results of each treatment group on the comprehension test are analyzed by one-way analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) and post hoc multiple comparisons. Then, the effects of each treatment on high proficiency and low proficiency subjects are analyzed by one-way ANCOVAs and post hoc multiple comparisons as well.

RESULT ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES OF ADVANCED ENGLISH LEARNERS AS ENGLISH MONOLINGUAL DICTIONARY USERS

The survey was conducted to measure the frequencies of the strategies of the advanced learners of English while using

monolingual English dictionaries and their attitude towards the use of monolingual English dictionary. In view of the feasibility of availability and proportion of the respondents, 100 learners from the Government College were selected.

Table 1: Comprehensive Tabular Representation of Overall Results

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean score
1	English Dictionaries are helpful in understanding meanings.	70	10	10	6	4	4.34
2	Dictionary plays an important role in vocabulary learning.	75	15	5	5	0	4.6
3	Dictionary is a tool to find out meanings of difficult words.	60	20	11	9	0	4.31
4	Teachers should appreciate dictionary use in language learning classes.	64	21	10	5	0	4.44
5	Monolingual English dictionaries are more effective way of vocabulary development than bilingual dictionaries.	50	34	11	5	0	3.99
6	Dictionary is an essential resource for language learners.	72	15	8	5	0	4.54
7	Reading comprehension is improved by the use of English Dictionaries.	60	20	11	9	0	4.31
8	English Monolingual Dictionaries are more effective in reading comprehension.	50	34	11	5	0	3.99
9	Monolingual dictionary explains the words better through definitions.	55	34	11	0	0	4.44
10	To put the dictionary use strategies into practice, the teacher should provide easy access to good dictionary to the students.	57	23	9	5	6	4.5

Table 2: Comprehensive Graphical Representation of Overall Respondents

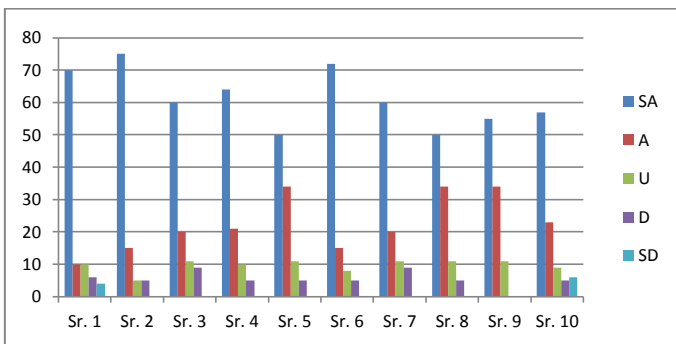
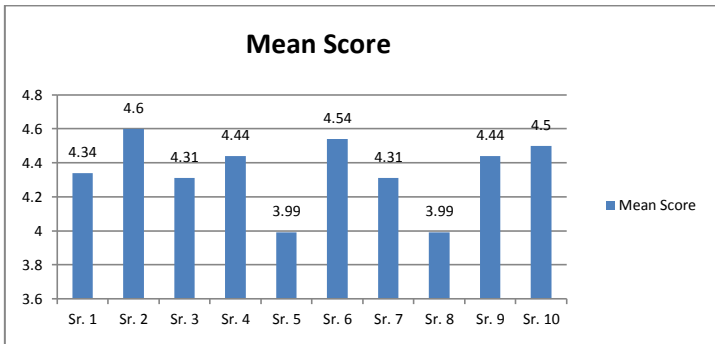


Table 3: Comprehensive Graphical Representation of Overall Meanscore



DISCUSSIONS ON FINDINGS

The results drawn from the responses obtained from the learners quite clearly indicated that they are much aware of the notion of dictionary and its use and also its impact on reading comprehension. Learners showed a tendency of using dictionaries for looking up meaning, pronunciation, grammatical information and the usage of the words. A high frequency was calculated when the learners were asked about the helpfulness of dictionaries in understanding meanings.

In the second section of the questionnaire respondents indicated mean score higher than 3.00 in the responses of the statement pertaining to the significance of the use of dictionaries while learning a language. The responses of the learners were very much in favor of using English dictionary and they highly favored that dictionary is a tool to find out meaning of a difficult words. The learners were strongly approved the notion that teachers should appreciate the use of dictionary in classrooms. Majority of the learners indicated agreement to the statement that dictionaries should be recommended by the teachers. So teachers should not recommend the dictionaries on their intuitive knowledge rather it must be based on the knowledge of the empirical studies done

in the field of pedagogical lexicography. Majority of the sample reported that English Monolingual Dictionaries are the effective way of vocabulary development than bilingual dictionaries. The respondents also expressed a stronger opinion about the effectiveness of using monolingual dictionaries for learning a language. Majority of the learners indicated a strong agreement to the statement that reading comprehension can be improved by consulting a dictionary. A high frequency was calculated when the learners were asked that the teacher should provide an easy access to a good dictionary to the students.

RESULT ANALYSIS OF THE READING COMPREHENSION TEST

Table 4 Subject who solved the test with the help of dictionary

Number of Participants	100% Achievement	75% Achievement	50% Achievement	25% Achievement
50	4	28	12	6

The percentage shown in the table indicates that consulting a monolingual English dictionary have an influence on the comprehension of the learners.

Table 5 Subjects who solved the test without Dictionary

Number of Participants	100% Achievement	75% Achievement	50% Achievement	25% Achievement
50	0	2	10	38

In the above table, the percentage of the learners who solve the comprehension test without using dictionary is shown.

According to Table 1, four learners succeeded to guess the exact meaning of the words in the test. We can say that they showed 100% achievement in guessing the meaning of the words which could be interpreted that the students use dictionary moderately. The learner who got 75% achievement

by using dictionary was 28 and 50% achievement was shown by the 10 students. 25% achievement was shown by the six students. The percentage of the students who solved the test with the help of dictionary showed that using a dictionary has an influence on the comprehension power of the students.

Table 2 shows the percentage of the learners who solved the test without dictionary. Their percentage shows that most of the learners were unsuccessful in guessing the meaning of the underlined words without using dictionary. No one got 100% achievement without dictionary. Only 2 students showed the tendency to solve the test 75% correct. So it is proved that without consulting dictionary one cannot be good in reading comprehension and vocabulary development.

CONCLUSION

A dictionary is a very essential and effective tool in vocabulary learning. In this research I have focused on the strategies and attitudes towards using dictionaries as it is the best way to explain their basic concepts about dictionaries and their use. The learners' use of dictionaries and their strategies of looking up words are very helpful in reading comprehension and vocabulary development. Vocabulary knowledge may be the most important single factor in reading comprehension. According to Alderson (2000: 99), "In studies of readability, most indices of vocabulary difficulty account for about 80% of the predicted variance". However, vocabulary knowledge while important is the factor affecting comprehension. So, teachers should have the knowledge about the effectiveness and suitability of a particular dictionary at different levels and for different activities. Learners enjoy using dictionaries and they would be more motivated if they can get an adequate guidance on the part of the teacher. This is however only one area that can make it possible to go for further researches.

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