The Importance Of Dictionary Instructions In Formulating Pragmatic And Language Competency Of Learners

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ABSTRACT

Dictionary instruction is necessary to help language learners increase the kind of vocabulary knowledge, differentiating pragmatic and semantic meaning of phraseological units that will contribute to their learning process. The main purpose of this article is to examine the importance of using dictionary in language learning and teaching and make some suggestions for language teachers as well as language learners.

KEYWORDS

Encyclopedic, linguistic, definition, phraseological dictionaries, online-dictionary, suggestion, findings, self-teaching, three hierarchical stages.

INTRODUCTION

In these years education has had a somewhat uneasy relationship with the communities it serves. The knowledge of word meanings and the ability to access that knowledge efficiently are recognized as important factors in reading and listening comprehension, speaking and writing fluency. Writers and researchers have expressed several views on the importance of dictionaries as an effective tool in the teaching and learning process. These views are concerned with the reasons of using dictionaries, the difficulties students encounter while dealing with dictionaries, and the types of dictionaries used by several

categories of learners. Since dictionary use has not been researched extensively, we know relatively little about how learners use dictionaries and how dictionary use is related to vocabulary learning. Given the evidence that EFL learners heavily depend on dictionaries (Fan, 2003; Kobayashi, 2000; Schmitt, 1997), it is necessary to discover more about dictionary use. This study also has significant pedagogical implications. Despite their importance for EFL learning, dictionary skills are not taught in many classrooms and are left to individual learners. Whatever instruction teachers provide on dictionary use is based on personal experiences or intuition. This is partially because there has been little empirical research on dictionary use on which teachers can base their instruction. The findings from this study inform teachers about students' dictionary use and improve the ways that they train their students in dictionary skills. Therefore, this study helps to know when to consult a dictionary (Hamouda,2013).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this proposed article, I will continue to focus on types of dictionaries, pragmatic meaning of word expressions, ways of developing students' dictionary skills, to raise students' awareness of the information they can find in a dictionary, with special emphasis on formulating language competency with the help of dictionaries.

Dictionaries are considered good companions to language learners, especially to second or foreign language learners because dictionaries can provide a quick and direct access to the meaning of an unknown word. In EFL contexts, the supporting role of dictionaries has been emphasized by both teachers and researchers

(e.g., Tseng, 2009), and the training of dictionary skills is considered important and necessary because EFL learners may not be able to make good use of dictionaries without explicit instruction (Fan, 2000; Su, 2003; Wright, 1998).Pragmatic meaning is also plays an important role as semantic one while overcoming pragmatic failure in the act of speech(Abdullayeva.,D.SH &et.al 2019).

Al-lmam University English majors' findings show that students are mostly concerned with two types of information when they consult their dictionaries: finding the meanings of words and checking the spelling of these words. Of course, since students study English as a foreign language, they always find difficulty in guessing the meanings of words and in spelling them correctly. Dictionaries are originally designed to help EFL learners to achieve these two purposes. As for the other look-ups, they received less interest. Students were interested in finding the stylistic of words since they rarely need to find. This result is attributed to the fact that TEFL learners are rarely in need of such types of information. When they are in need of such information, they find it easier to ask their English instructors (Al-Mu'tassim A, 2013).

Students find difficulty in the arrangement of English alphabets while using their dictionaries. They also find it difficult to understand the given instructions or examples. To understand why students face difficulties in the arrangement of alphabets, I can say that students learned English alphabets in their elementary classes at school. After that, they haven't had enough chances to practice arranging these alphabets. Therefore, it is natural to forget the arrangement of these alphabets and consequently they find it

difficult to use their paper dictionaries since their entries are arranged alphabetically.

The difficulties students face in understanding illustrations or examples given in their dictionaries could be attributed to the fact that these students are not competent enough to understand such illustrations and examples and to decide the most appropriate ones for their needs. This means that students have to practice using dictionaries though giving them enough chances to acquire the needed skills.

There is no doubt that the single most important resource students have for learning English is their dictionary. There are very few students or teachers who cannot benefit from learning how to use dictionaries effectively. To do this, learners should know the types of dictionaries, how to use them in learning language.

All dictionaries are traditionally divided into encyclopedic and linguistic dictionaries. Encyclopedic dictionaries are thing book, the deal with concept reflecting different objects and phenomena, their relationships and so on. Linguistic dictionaries are word-books; they list word of the language and give other linguistic facts. Besides these two types now there exist the so-called cultural dictionaries. They combine their information of two types both encyclopedic and linguistic dictionaries. Linguistic dictionaries can be uni-lingual or explanatory and by-lingual or translation (Ginzburg et al.,1979). One of the actual problems of lexicography at the present stage is creation of dictionaries, reflecting all the new processes of social life, satisfy needs of different users. Analyzing materials which concern the importance of creating dictionaries that the need for dictionaries of

different kinds and types of increases due to the constant changes in social life, which immediately found its reflection in language, as well as expansion of business, academic and cultural contacts between different countries. Despite the titanic work of lexicographers in published dictionaries sometimes we see a confusion set of words, violations of the current spelling, which is explained by lack of a unified methodological basis of making dictionaries.

Since learners of different linguistic background will have different pitfalls in mastering the same language, will need different directions for use, different restrictive remarks, each pair of languages requires its own dictionaries, dictionaries based on a contrastive study of the learner's native tongue and the language to be learned. In this connection it must be said that Hornby's dictionary, with all its merits and advantages, has an essential demerit-it does not take into account the user's linguistic background, so it cannot foresee and prevent the possible language problems of this or that national group of English learners.

Often students believe a dictionary can only provide them with the meaning of a word, and while it is true that this is sometimes the main use of dictionaries, it is by far not their only use.

One of the main elements of using dictionaries in language learning is that enriching lexicon with common and uncommon vocabulary for communication. In fact, pragmatics is approved as the main component of education by language educators. The quality of lesson will in great part determine how much content pupils learn and how efficiently time is used. A dictionary is a very important tool for anyone

who is learning a new language. With a good dictionary you can do the following:

- Look up the meaning of word
- Find the translation of a word
- Check the spelling of a word
- Check the plural of a noun or past tense of a verb
- Find out other grammatical information about a word
- Find the synonym or antonym of a word
- Find out the pragmatic meanings of word expressions
- Look up the collocations of a word
- Check the part of speech of a word
- Find examples of the use of a word in natural language

Atkins suggests that teachers and educators should teach dictionary skills to their students if they want to be aware of what they are doing in class(1997). Hartman has assured that dictionaries can facilitate the process of building and learning vocabulary when the user follows some strategic activities and skills(1999). Beech points out that the developing use of a dictionary has the potential

to provide self-teaching opportunities, for reading, spelling and general phonological skills(2004).

Teaching students to use a dictionary games helps bridge the controversy behind dictionary use in classes. If students are going to use them regardless of the teacher's advice, it is better to teach them how to use this resource in the proper way. Furthermore, many language experts agree that a dictionary can help students continue to develop all their macro skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Online dictionary-using skills can be developed through guided practice, including in-class activities designed for this purpose. Such activities may include presentation of special features offered by dictionaries in an electronic form. With the help of electronic dictionaries students avoid the problem of pronouncing new words. Most of them contain native-language equivalents and explanations, as well as definitions and example sentences in English. They can speak the English word to us, and they are easy to carry around.
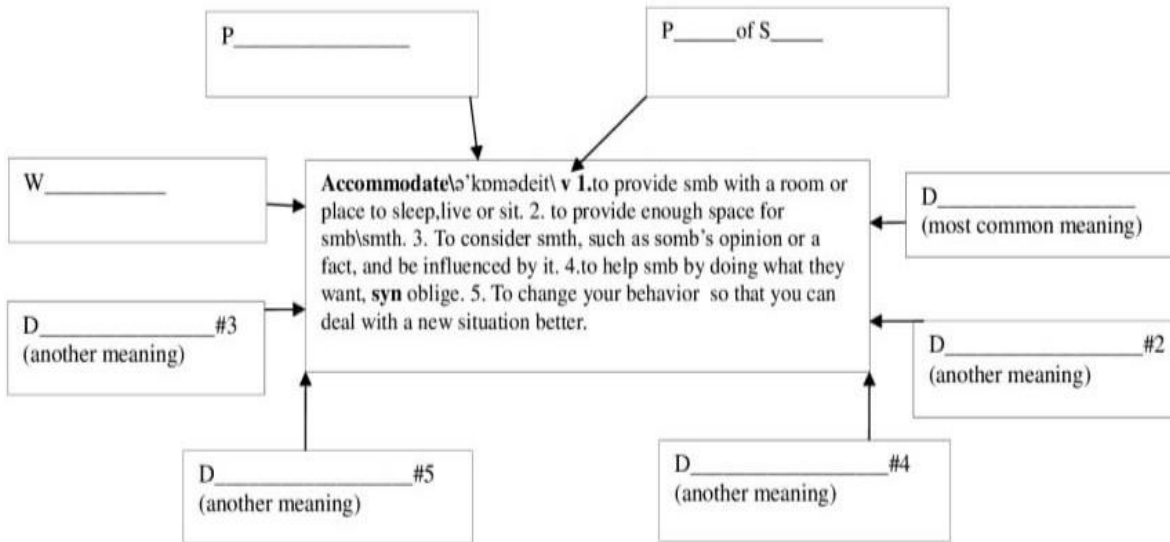
One of the most important activities you can do with students is helping them identify all the parts of a dictionary entry. The image below exemplifies something you can do. This definition is taken from the Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary.

Answers: Word, Pronunciation, Part of Speech, Definition [Teaching ESL Students to Use Dictionaries with Dictionary Games,2014].

It is also important for students to identify words at the top of dictionary pages so that their use of the dictionary is more efficient as well. To practice that skill, you can develop Dictionary Races. Dictionary Race is a game that combines a kinesthetic way of learning and team work so that ESL students find certain words in the dictionary.

After students have interacted with dictionaries, asking them to create their own picture dictionaries or their own vocabulary booklets is a great way to help them increase their lexicon.

Henriksen suggests a model of vocabulary development acquisition based on three

hierarchical stages: the first stage is partial-precise continuum. In this stage the student begins to recognise the words used by the teacher or while reading a text, but he/she does not know their meanings and how to use them. The receptive – productive continuum is the second level. In this level as the student moves along he/she begins to understand word meanings and they know how to use them in some contexts; the student begins to have a precise understanding of the words. The third stage is depth- of-knowledge continuum. In this stage students finally understand words in different contexts and they use those words as well. This is to say that this stage measures how well a word is known(1996).

Ewan Hackett has suggested a game to pick a random word from a dictionary and get the children to look it up. Get one student to read out definition. Do this another three times. Then ask them to create a sentence or short

paragraph which uses all of the words either: in the order they were looked up or rearrange them and use them in alphabetical order.

Troy Landrebe has contributed another suggestion is to give the groups a definition and have them find the word in their dictionary. The winners are the group that put their hands up with the correct word and page number. He usually starts with very basic words and as the year progresses increase the difficulty. This works great with spelling lists.

Another variation from Lori A Kuzyk" I wrote out the words and had my daughter look them up. To make it more challenging I misspelled some words that she frequently did and with some assistance had her look up the correct spelling".

FunsoFagbohun's suggestion: "After the teacher calls out a word, and the fastest learner finds it in the dictionary, the teacher can reward the learner by asking him or her to look for another word to call out the next day. The student then sticks this in a special place in the classroom under the caption Dictionary Word for Today". The next day another student gets a chance to do the same and by the end of the week the whole class could have a spelling test on all the words. This will help the learner develop an interest in checking up words.

Personally I also have a suggestion; students open any page of dictionary and look at the first word, focus on the meaning and make a chunk at first, then step by step make up a story in logical order while using words on different pages. This activity is really helpful for practicing new words, improving speaking skills and thinking creatively.

Students must also decide which the best dictionary is for any of the purposes listed above. As well as this, they need to be able to find what they are looking for quickly; need to be sure that have found what were looking for; and, most importantly, need to know when to use dictionary.

Technological development has changed the form and the use of dictionaries. Consequently, those new media and applications require the translator trainer to devise innovativeand inspiring activities leading to improvement of dictionary-using skills of translationstudents, also by exploring various features offered by modern electronic tools and resources. Electronic dictionaries scored the highest rank on the distributed questionnaire, while monolingual dictionaries scored the lowest rank. Of course these results seem natural since electronic dictionaries are easier and faster to use, and they do not depend on alphabets which many students do not learn them by heart. English majors also find bilingual dictionaries easier and more practical to decide the exact meanings of words since some of them get mixed up with the given entries of monolingual dictionaries which sometimes make students unable to decide the correct entry.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that dictionaries can be very beneficial for students in all language skills. Therefore, special efforts should be made to enhance this role. Students should be given enough chances to learn dictionary skills with the help of their instructors. Special courses could be held to achieve this purpose. Instructors should encourage their students to use their

dictionaries in class and at home by giving them tasks and exercises related to many types of dictionary skills. Students need training to master the required skills for using dictionaries. Students need special instruction to get enough chances to practice using electronic dictionaries in particular. More studies are recommended to investigate the strategies students at different levels follow to look up the information they need in their dictionaries.

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