A STUDY OF DICTIONARY USING HABITS OF STUDENTS AT SECONDARY LEVEL IN THE URDU MEDIUM SCHOOLS IN DISTRICT KHANEWAL-PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT-This study attempts to explore dictionary using habits of secondary school students in Khanewal district. The study throws light on learners' dictionary needs and problems they face while using the dictionaries. It also shows the causes, hurdles and hindrances which do not let the secondary level learners and teachers use dictionaries properly. Questionnaire and structured interview were used to gather data from learners and teachers respectively as it is a descriptive and quantitative type of research. The researcher commenced his research with the hypothesis that the secondary level students and teachers do not utilize the treasure of linguistic knowledge, dictionary offers. If they use dictionary, they use it solely to look up the meanings of the words. In this regard, many types of questions were included in the questionnaire and a structured interview was conducted and explored the reasons and causes of all this behavior. The population for this study was selected from Public Sector Urdu medium secondary schools in district Khanewal. While selecting the schools, purposive sampling was opted to conduct the study. Our study concludes that the use of dictionary is essential for better learning and usage of The English language.

Key Words: Dictionary, Habits, Secondary Schools, better learning, linguistic knowledge.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A dictionary is a reference book with alphabetically listed words. It is a reference book which is used by people when necessary. History reveals "dictionaries first came into being in response to very practical needs, and the conventional shape and look of the English dictionary we know today owes much to what users had wanted of it in the past." (Hartman, 1983 p.13) It is the quality of a good dictionary that it has great knowledge but unluckily, in Pakistan learners do not have capability of dictionary use to add to their knowledge about the language they learn. Even the well-versed users use dictionaries to understand for systematic purpose only. Even it is used only to know the meanings of words. Learners are unaware of the use of dictionaries as there is no proper training for the use of dictionaries. "A special competence is necessary for the better use of dictionaries" (Cowie 1999:188) unfortunately, we have the language teachers who do not use dictionaries fully. "The dictionary is considered a tool for quick support in the case of emergency (Bejoint 1994:152)". In this research, I will discuss the habit and preferences of using dictionaries of secondary level teachers and students and will highlight it by using the following research tools: (a) Questionnaire (b) Interview

1.1 Brief History of the English Dictionaries

The first English dictionary was produced by Robert Cawdrey, an obscure school master who lived at Oakham in the country of Rutland in the time of Shakespeare. It had about 2500 entries, and may be thought a rather disappointing little book if we reflect that there were already in existence in Cawdrey's day English-Latin dictionaries contained over 20,000 items. But we should accept the fact that Cawdrey represented an important step forward in lexicographic technique, for this is the first dictionary in which English words were explained in English despite its lack of lexical coverage. The fact remains that English dictionaries grew out of Latin

which were to have their influence on contents in later ages, even down to our own time. There is, in the OED, no historical record of their occurrence except in other reference books and they seem simply to have been copied from dictionary to dictionary down the ages, without ever actually falling into use. Cawdrey's, the first-ever English to English dictionary, is full of such hard words and later dictionaries have tended to remain that way ever since. In the 18th century, revolutionary efforts were made to improve dictionaries. In this century, the most prominent work was that of Samuel Johnson in Britain, that is, "Dictionary of the English Language" (1755) while Noah Webster published the first edition of his dictionary in America in 1828. In the second half of the nineteenth century, a huge project was carried out in Britain. It was the preparation of a huge dictionary of English. This dictionary recorded every word, its spellings and sense attested in writing in English since the year 1000. The director of the project was a Scottish Scholar James Murray. This work was published in a series of volumes between 1884 and 1928, with the title "New English Dictionary on Historical Principles". In 1933, it was republished with a supplement "Oxford English Dictionary". In the present era, lexicography is expanding with dictionaries in book form as well as in electronic form.

1.2 Research Question

 1. In which situation do the students feel the need to consult dictionaries?

 2. In which circumstances do the teachers feel the need to use dictionaries.

 3. What are the hurdles and hindrances which do not let the students use dictionaries?

4. What are the problems of students which they face while using dictionaries?

1.3 Significance of the Research

        This study will provide detailed information on the dictionary using habits of learners at Urdu medium public secondary school students and teachers. It

high lights about their dictionary needs and their problems in using dictionaries. It will be a pioneering research on dictionary using habits of students in Pakistani setting. This study will also throw light on the causes, hurdles and hindrances which do not let the secondary level learners and teachers use dictionaries properly because "lexicographers and linguists are probably the least representative of all dictionary users". The findings of this research can be very helpful for the compilers of dictionaries and for the linguists who want to know about dictionary using habits of the Pakistani English language learners in this part of the country.

1.4 Delimitations of the Study

This study is confined to Urdu medium secondary schools in public sector. Dictionary using habits of English medium schools were not taken into consideration. The population and sample of this study was taken from district Khanewal. Only questionnaire and interviews were used as the data collection tools for this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section summarizes of various studies carried out in context of dictionary users and their needs. During the last centuries many researchers conducted research on dictionaries keeping in view the perspective & habits of users. Barnhart's work (1962) is the utmost for the needs, wants and habits for using dictionaries. The purpose was to find out the relative importance of different types of information entered in popular American college dictionaries. His results have proved significant lexicographers on managing the materials of dictionary and its presentations for the benefit of the dictionary users. Quirk (1973) was the first scholar to attempt in Britain to assess dictionary users' attitudes, expectations and prejudices. His questionnaire asked users to comment on what already existed in

their dictionaries, and, despite the invitation to suggest improvements, there was little encouragement to think laterally and suggest departures from the conventional dictionary format. Tomaszczyk (1979) was the first researcher to investigate the dictionary requirements of non- native speakers of English. He was motivated by the observation that among foreign language learners there was a wide spread dissatisfaction with dictionaries. His aim was to obtain information relevant to the production of better dictionaries for non-native speakers. Baxter (1980) examines the question of the value of using monolingual dictionaries. He describes a pedagogical problem the inability of language learners to express their ideas in an acceptable way when the precise lexical item does not come to mind and suggests that one possible cause of this inability might be the use of bilingual as opposed to monolingual dictionaries. The most frequently cited study of non-native speaker dictionary needs was conducted by Bejoint (1981). He claims that his survey was directly influenced by previous scholars. Its stated aim was to reveal how the French students of English used their monolingual general English dictionaries, although its findings have been applied to the dictionary use of learners of English in general. Hartman (1983) is of the view lexicography is professional process codifying vocabulary, by which dictionaries and other references field are produced. Kipfer (1985) carried out a study and observe the influence of skills of dictionary usage, attitudes and habits of ˝intermediate level students. It was found that the subjects were not to have been taught dictionary skills and Dictionaries were only used for meanings and spellings etc. In this research, Iqbal (1987) the researcher threw light on the aspects of learner dictionaries in reference to the needs, habits and attitudes of Pakistani students towards dictionary use. The object of the study was to observe the reference skills and language needs of Pakistani advanced

learners. Diab's work (1990) was based on pedagogical lexicography. He has given a case study of Arab nurses as dictionary users at the University of Jordan. The study responded that some monolingual dictionary lacks the specifications for the ESP users as they meant only for every possible learners of English and for every type of background. Nuccorini (1992) research topic was dictionary look up process. She has conducted her study on the use of different bilingual and monolingual dictionaries. Her subjects were six Italian EFL teachers/learners. She found that 75% of all cases dictionaries were used for meaning she had given only frequency which is not much informative. McKeown's (1993) investigated the way language learners acquired word's meanings provided in the conditions of the traditional and revised versions of dictionary definitions. Laufer and Melamed (1994) investigated in their study the differences of three different dictionaries, monolingual and bilingual on comprehension activity EFL learners. In results they found that bilingual dictionary was more used or preferred than the other two. Laufer & Hadar (1997) examined the effectiveness of monolingual, bilingual and semi-bilingual dictionaries on comprehending and using new words with a group of foreign language learners studying in high schools and universities. Meanwhile, Huckin & Coady (1999) point out the drawbacks of incidental learning, namely guessing is successful only when context clues are good in accordance with readers' good basic vocabulary knowledge, guessing needs, careful monitoring and training in reading skills as well as in word recognition, and guessing is not equivalent to acquisition especially in case of acquiring multiword lexical items. Tono (2001) has conducted many studies. His work presented in book form with the title "Research on Dictionary use in the context of Foreign Language Learning" in 2001. The main object of this book is to show research on using dictionaries with special reference to language learning.

Nesi and Haill (2002) investigated a study at the University of Warwick. The main object of this study was to observe the habits and preferences of international student's and using dictionaries in this university. They found that the subjects had difficulties in searching entries also. They also reported that dictionary consultation was also a problem due to the errors of interpretation. Tailor (2004) believes that English is the best source of enhancing vocabulary by native and non-native speakers. So dictionaries should be used wisely. Skills of using dictionaries are not inherent. Anthony Bruton (2007) selected a state secondary school in Spain for her study. The result of this study was encouraging and it shows that focus does not show language gains.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is an authentic & genuine way of collecting new information; it guides us to the progress of thoughts which can predict about some new events with authenticity. The motives of the new method give us causes to perceive the principle of piling up pieces of correct information. This section would stress on the methodology, process of research & specific devices that are unavoidable in this business. We have put forward the following questions in order to know the proper answers to meet the needs of the research.

3.1 Nature of the Study

This research is quantitative because the researcher will analyze the data collected through questionnaire and interview statistically and will give ratio of the secondary level students and teachers who use dictionaries for different purposes and in different situations and those who use them for the purpose of meaning and in a particular situation only. The statistical analysis will help to show the difference of habits and attitudes of different students towards dictionaries. It will also show the ratio of students who face specific problems and those who don't

face them. In the same way, quantitative approach will be utilized to give statistical data of students' needs.

3.2 Population and Sample

The competent researcher starts with the total population and works down to the sample (Cohen and Manion 1986:98). A population is a group of individuals, persons, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement. The population in this research consists of the students of twenty Urdu medium schools in Khanewal district. The sample contained 250 secondary level students and 25 teachers from high standard schools in district Khanewal. Both genders (Male & Female) were taken for this purpose. The ages of all the students were 12 to 16. Fifty students and five teachers were taken for questionnaires and interview respectively from each school. Sample collecting is no doubt a very delicate job in which every thread of the task is considered and addressed well.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

These devices were used for collection of data. A) Questionnaires. B) Interview. In my research, questionnaire was used as the main research tool for the collection of data. The language of questionnaire was simple English. It had, in total, 25 questions. A well coherent & structured interview can bring about the exact findings so, for the teachers of secondary level. It was arranged but some same questions were included in the interview, which were in the questionnaire so that exact comparison could be done.

3.4 Research Procedure

Different schools of secondary level were visited in order to implement both of the tools interview & questionnaire. It was done through proper channel with the permission of relevant departments. The respondents were asked to cooperate in this respect. For the research purpose, twenty well reputed schools of a good

standard were visited as the students of such institution are respectively good at English. The purpose was nothing more than getting a reliable data so that maximum authenticity might ensure. The implementation of questionnaire was held in the student's class room in the natural environment of study and education. All the students were morally well disciplined as their class teacher was present in the class room. The entire scenario was explained before the students as the questionnaire was a form of self-assessment. The students were entirely facilitated in case of any problem or ambiguity regarding the understanding of the question. It was done in five different days and all the teachers and students were cordially paid regards and thanked for their cooperative behavior.

3.5. Hypothesis

The researcher hypothesizes that language learner's low tendency of using dictionary skills at govt. Urdu medium secondary schools, hampers their use of the dictionaries properly. They have no habit of using dictionaries for increasing their vocabulary and enhancing their knowledge of the target language. "The user, a language learner, has a very limited understanding of dictionary conventions. Even the language teachers do not encourage the use of dictionary. As far as teachers are concerned, they use dictionary only to look up the meanings of words. Neither teachers nor students have any formal training in the efficient use of dictionary. They have a very limited understanding of the dictionary and the wealth of information it offers.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This section analyses the collected data through questionnaires and conducted interviews. At first, the researcher analyses the data of questionnaires. The questionnaires were structured to hunt up data from secondary class students from the schools of District Khanewal. The questionnaire was divided into five

portions. The first portion is about personal experience of dictionary using. The second portion informs about habits of students. The third section has questions about the attitudes of the students to the dictionaries. The fourth and fifth put forward questions which expose the needs and problems of the students. The questionnaire consists of 25 questions. First section deals with the experience that how often the students use a bilingual or monolingual dictionary. Majority of the participants came up with the negative remarks about the usage of the dictionary. Details can be seen in the table 1 that the responses of the majority of the students were on the options 'never' and 'seldom'.

Table 1: Dictionary Using Experience

Dictionary	Never	Seldom	Often	Constantly	Mean
Bilingual	21.6%	54%	20%	4.4%	1.772
Monolingual	42%	38%	14%	6%	0.844

Second section consists of three sub sections and it was designed to inquire about the habits of the students regarding dictionary usage. The first sub section consists of two questions and they were designed to know that why and for what purpose students use the dictionaries. From the responses of the students it becomes apparent that the majority of the students use dictionaries to clarify the meanings of the words presented in daily routine lectures.

Table 2: Reason of Using Dictionary

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Assigned Textbooks	93	37.2%
What is said in the lectures	18	35.6%
Teacher's handouts	89	7.2%
Preparing assignments	50	20%

Table 3: Purpose of Using Dictionaries

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Meanings	198	79.2%
Pronunciation	12	4.8%
Spelling	15	6%
Grammar	16	6.4%
Idioms & Prepositions	0	0%
Illustrations	6	2.4%

Second sub section of section two inquires about the consultation of the dictionary with teachers, family and fellows. Each question comprises of seven options regarding the attributes of the dictionary that are consulted with the above mentioned people. Majority of the participants, 62.8% to be précised came up with the responses that they discuss the dictionary only of the hunting up the meanings of the difficult words. Details are given in the following table.

Table 4: Consultation of Dictionaries

Categories	Teachers	Family	Fellows
Meanings of words / phrases	62.8%	63.2%	45.6%
Class of words	5.2%	4.4%	10.8%
Pronunciation of words	6.8%	9.6%	15.2%

Spelling of words	6.4%	9.2%	14%
Sample use in dictionary	5.2%	4.8%	14%
Type of dictionary to be used	5.6%	6.8%	5.2%
How to use certain dictionary	8%	3.2%	3.2%

Third sub section of section two inquire about the general habits regarding the dictionary usage. It comprises of seven questions and each question consists of four options. Table indicates that the very few participants use the dictionary on the regular basis while most of the students rarely use it consistently. Details of this section are given in the table below.

Table 5: Habits of Dictionary Usage

N	Category	Never	Seldom	Constantly	Often	Mean
1	Dictionary use in class	30%	54%	4.8%	11.2%	0.972
2	Seeing various dictionaries	31.6%	45.6%	7.2%	15.6%	1.068
3	Meanings of unknown words	18.8%	42%	20.4%	18.8%	1.392
4	Taking down meanings	18%	38.4%	18.8%	24.8%	1.504
5	Browsing dictionary pages	44.8%	30%	4.8%	20.4%	1.008
6	Introductory page reading	41.6%	34.4%	11.6%	12.4%	0.948
7	Library reading	30%	32%	24.4%	13.6%	1.324

Third main section of the questionnaire was designed to inquire about the general attitudes of the students regarding the usage of dictionary. This section comprises of four questions with each question carrying five options to choose from. This section will highlight the perceptions of the attitudes of the learners regarding the dictionary

usage. (SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Disagree).

Table 6: Attitudes of Dictionary Using

N	Attitudes	SD	D	NS	A	SA
1	Information is always right	6%	14%	8%	12%	60%
2	Dictionaries have same information	40%	16%	24%	14%	6%
3	It should be allowed in exams	24%	12%	32%	20%	12%
4	Dictionary using is boring	4%	12%	8%	24%	52%

"The information given in the dictionary is always correct" was the first statement 6% (n=15) students told that they were strongly disagreed with the statement, 14% (n=35) students said that they were slightly disagreed. 8% (n=20) students said that they were not sure 12% (n=30) students told that they were slightly disagreed and 60% (n=150) students expressed that they were strongly agreed. The second statement of question no.24 was (all dictionaries have the same information). It was analyzed that 40% (n=100) students told that they were strongly disagreed 16% (n=40) students told that they were slightly disagreed. 24% (n=60) students said that they were not sure while 14% (n=35) students expressed that they were slightly agreed and 6% (n=15) students told that they were strongly agreed with the statement. Third statement was "is dictionary using boring in general" it was found that 24% (n=60) students were strongly disagreed to the opinion. 12% (n=30) students said that they were slightly disagreed, 32% (n=80) students expressed that they were not sure while 20% (n=50) Students said that they were slightly agreed and12% (n=30) students told that they were strongly agreed. The fourth statement was "students should be allowed to use dictionary during secondary level examination." It shows that 4% (n=10) students were strongly disagreed to the statement. 12% (n=30)

students that they were slightly disagreed. 8% (n=20) students said they were not sure while 24% (n=60) students told that they were slightly agreed and 52% (n=130) students said that they were strongly agreed with the statement.

Section four was designed to inquire about the needs of the students regarding the use of dictionaries. This section consists of 6 questions and each question has given five options to select from. The statement of the question was about the kind of help they require in the attributes of the dictionaries.

Table 7: Needs of the Students

Category	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Meaning	4.4%	39.2%	18%	25.2%	13.2%
Pronunciation	6.4%	36.8%	19.6%	30%	7.2%
Grammar	8.4%	19.2%	24.4%	23.6%	24.4%
Spellings	20%	16%	24%	14%	26%
Idioms/Phrases	36%	20%	20%	12%	12%
Illustrations	32%	24%	12%	20%	12%

It shows that for the dictionary entry 'meaning' 4.4 % (n=11) students answered (Never). 39.2% (n=98) students told that they were needed help seldom. 18% (n=45) students told that they were needed help some time. 25.2% (n=63) subjects expressed that they were needed help often and 13.2% (n=33) students said that they were needed help very often for meaning. Pronunciation was the second entry 6.4% (n=16) students expressed that they had never needed help for the pronunciation, 36.8% (n=92) subjects said that they were needed help seldom for it. 19.6% (n=49) subjects said that they were needed help some time. 30% (n=75) subjects told that they were needed help often and 7.2% (n=18) students expressed that they were needed help very often for pronunciation. When they were asked about 'Grammar' 8.4% (n=21)

students at secondary level told that they were never needed any help in grammar, 19.2% (n=48) students expressed that they were needed help seldom in grammar. 24.4% (n=61) students said that they were needed help some time in grammar. 23.6% (n=59) students said that they were needed help often and 24.4% (n=61) students said that they were needed help very often in grammar. When they were asked about the entry of 'spelling' 20% (n=50) students said that they never needed help, 16% (n=40) students told that they needed seldom for spelling.24% (n=60) students said that they were needed help some time. 14% (n=35) students said that they were needed help often and 26% (n=65) students told that they were needed help very often in spelling. For the prepositional and idiomatic phrases, 36% (n=90) student said that they were 'Never needed' any help, 20% (n=50) students said that they were needed help seldom. 20% (n=50) learners said that they were needed help sometimes. 12% (n=30) subjects said that they were needed help often and 12% (n=30) students said that they were needed help 'very often' for the prepositional and idiomatic phrases. For illustration 32% (n=80) students expressed that they were 'Never' needed help, 24% (n=60) students told that they were seldom needed help.12% (n=30) subjects said that they were needed help sometimes while 20% (n=50) students said that they were often needed help and 12% (n=30) students said that they were needed help very often for illustration to know the meanings of various words.Fifth section was designed to know about the problems that students face while using the dictionaries. This section consists of two questions regarding the nature of problems that students face in using the dictionaries.

Table 8: Problems of the Students

Nature of Problem	Frequency
Problem in understanding dictionary symbols	20%
Problem in pronunciation of words	10%
Problem in looking up for meanings	26.8%
Problems in looking up synonyms / antonyms	22%
Problem in understanding grammatical information	12%
Problem in looking up idioms / phrases	4.8%
Any other	4.4%

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of present research study was to analyze the habits of dictionary usage at secondary level in Urdu medium school of district Khanewal. Questionnaire was utilized together data from teachers and students respectively. For this purpose, different kinds of questions were added in the questionnaire. The researcher used four research question together clears idea about the dictionary using habits of the students at secondary level in Govt. schools of district Khanewal. The findings of the present study indicate that most of the secondary schools' students used the dictionary when a task is assigned to them for textbooks and when they needed to learn the difficult words discussed in lectures. Majority of the students were habitual to using dictionary to hunt up the meanings of the words while a small number of the participants used dictionary for the sake of finding correct spellings, pronunciations, grammar of the particular word, idioms, prepositions and some of them for the illustrations. This suggests that the trend of consulting the dictionaries among the students is mainly due to the current scenario of handling the tasks in their daily studies routine for finding the meanings of the difficult words. Majority of the students pointed out that they found it really hard to choose one proper meaning of the word out of several

meanings. Many believed that they faced the problem in right pronunciation of the word because they did not know about the international alphabet symbols. Few participants were of the view that it was tough for them to find the antonyms and synonyms of the particular word. A little portion of the participants said that they faced the problems while understanding the grammatical information and looking for idioms and phrases. Many teachers believed that the students found themselves wandering in many aspects of the dictionary which did not allow the students to use it properly. This is all due to lack of proper training and guidance by the teachers to the students.

6. Suggestions for further Research

Our research study provides a number of suggestions for the future researchers. Future researchers can conduct similar research studies on their own secondary level learners. As my study was restricted to population sample consisting of 250 students and 25 teachers, similar studies can be conducted with larger research sample for more authentic and reliable results. The present research study focused only district Khanewal. The future researchers may carry out similar studies in other districts of Pakistan. The current research study has been carried out in Urdu medium schools of district Khanewal. Same research study can be conducted in English medium schools. The future researchers can design research study for comparing dictionary using habits of non-native secondary level students and dictionary using habits of native secondary level students of English. Future researchers can carry out research on the dictionary using habits of English language learners on elementary, higher secondary and university level.

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