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ALGORITHMS FOR USING DICTIONARIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

INTRODUCTION

Learning new words and phrases is the first step you take when you learn a foreign language. To form a solid foundation in your knowledge, you should be careful and know how to choose the best dictionary for your purpose. By doing this, you can maintain a smooth learning experience and succeed in other stages of language learning.

A dictionary is one of the most important tools when studying at university. A good dictionary can help a student better understand the subject and improve his communication in a foreign language. A dictionary is an acknowledged learning tool that plays a huge role in language acquisition. It is useful in learning vocabulary and developing language skills. The use of monolingual dictionaries is considered to be very effective for learning vocabulary.

Not all dictionaries are the same, so it's important to determine which option is best for foreign language learners. Bilingual dictionaries can be the easiest for students because they include the language we already know and the language

we are learning. However, for effective learning of a foreign language, it is advisable to use different types of dictionaries. Although in bilingual dictionaries we can only find the equivalent meaning of an unknown word, dictionaries for students can show more than one definition, variations in tense (for verbs) and plural (for nouns), pronunciation, parts of speech, example sentences, phrases, idioms and expressions. Thus, the use of dictionaries by students can ensure better learning.

THE EFFECTIVE USE OF VARIOUS DICTIONARIES WHEN LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Thesauri (thesaurus) and collocations dictionaries are two types of dictionaries that should be used regardless of the level of foreign language proficiency. Learning a new language is not just about learning a meaning or a definition of a word. It is important to study related phrases, words, idioms or sentences made with the unknown words.

When a student reaches an intermediate level of language proficiency, he can start using monolingual dictionaries and specialist dictionaries. As monolingual dictionaries are more complex than other types of dictionaries, it is not recommended to use them at the beginning of language learning. Also, specialist dictionaries are unique to a particular field. If you use them at the beginning, you are not learning a new language, but learning the terminology of the field.

Currently, students can access dictionaries for free:

1. Printed dictionaries, they can be purchased online or in a bookstore. But with the widespread use of online dictionaries, printed dictionaries seem a bit old-fashioned.
2. Online dictionaries, access to such dictionaries can be obtained by subscription, for example, the Oxford English Dictionary. What is important in such dictionaries you can find basically everything you may need, because they “provide comprehensive information about the vocabulary” (Mutlu, 2021).

Using a dictionary to learn vocabulary is a complex process that requires mental effort and in-depth study of various strategies. Students should be well trained in how to use a dictionary so that the process of finding words in the dictionary is not a difficult task for them. Therefore, students should know about the various necessary skills and algorithms for using a dictionary. In recent decades, specialists have focused their efforts on this main aspect of learning and teaching foreign languages. This gave birth to a new field of knowledge, which is defined as applied lexicography.

In recent decades, specialists have focused their efforts on this main aspect of learning and teaching foreign languages. This gave birth to a new field of knowledge, which is defined as applied lexicography.

Applied lexicography combines various topics, including the study of vocabulary and its use. Within this, a variety of studies have emerged, such as aspects and ways or strategies of dictionary use, purposes of dictionary use, user attitudes toward a dictionary, and dictionary use learning. In recent decades, there has been a growing interest among many scientists in the study of various strategies used by dictionary users in the process of searching for the necessary information (Bishop, 2001; Hartmann, 1991; Scholfield, 1982; Wingate, 2004). In addition, researchers have investigated and conceptualized that students use dictionaries for two functions – decoding and encoding (Lounas, 2017). One of the famous models was developed by Scholfield (1982). This refers to the algorithms that students should follow when using a dictionary to decipher the purpose of a search. In fact, Scholfield (1982) suggests that the strategy of finding and understanding the information needed by the acquirer can be divided into the following steps:

1. Identify unclear words and phrases for yourself.
2. If the unknown word form is inflected, remove the inflection to renew the word form for search.
3. Search for an unknown word in alphabetical order.
4. If you can't identify at least one basic form for an unknown word, try these steps:
 - If the unknown form is similar to a fixed expression, idiom, or phrase, try to find each basic element.
 - If the unknown word seems to have a suffix, try to identify the stem of the word.
 - If the unknown word is an incorrect declined form of the word or a variant of spelling, check the words next to it, you can also look in the dictionary application.
5. If the word has several meanings or is a homograph, they are shortened.
6. Choose the appropriate definition and integrate it into the context where the unknown word was encountered.
7. If none of the meanings found match, try to infer something that might match the meaning you want. If more than one meaning is appropriate, look for additional context clues in the source text to resolve the ambiguity (Scholfield, 1982, p. 186).

Each of the above steps requires different strategies. In the first step, for example, the reader finds a new word(s) or phrase(s), which may involve several complex strategies. In the case, that the reader finds it difficult to understand an idiomatic phrase, even if he understands the meaning of the individual words that

make up the phrase, he may need to look up the corresponding meaning under different headings. The student should continue his search using the given steps one by one until he reaches the value he is looking for.

However, another scholar, Wingate, suggested that the steps described by Scholfield (1982) do not offer a comprehensive algorithm, since these steps are only for those involved in reading. Wingate (2004) states that the number of steps in the algorithm should be much more if the purpose of using the dictionary is writing.

Bishop (2001) compiled a set of recommendations on the use of bilingual dictionaries for learning a foreign language. The purpose of the guide is to use the guidelines during written exams and personal language study. The algorithm consists of 10 steps:

1. Review the dictionary and see that the dictionary contains different types of information.
2. Identify the part of speech (e.g., verb, noun) of the word you are looking for, and also learn the symbols used to denote verbs, nouns, etc.
3. Use a dictionary to look up synonyms to enrich your vocabulary.
4. Use a dictionary to accumulate specialized vocabulary before writing a paper on a certain topic.
5. Make sure you understand how to use the grammar information included in the dictionary.
6. Learn to read the phonetic symbols listed in the dictionary.
7. Make sure you know how to check the required word in the dictionary (e.g., formal/informal, written/spoken).
8. Check the meaning in the second half of the bilingual dictionary to make sure it is exactly what you are looking for. For example, when you translate a new word into English in the “English to Ukrainian” section to find out what it means in Ukrainian, look up the translated word again in the “Ukrainian to English” section to make sure it has the correct meaning.
9. Proofread your written work after writing.
10. Remember that a dictionary cannot be a substitute for a confident mastery of your own vocabulary (Bishop, 2001, p. 63).

Obviously, these recommendations differ from the algorithms proposed by Scholfield (1982). First, they mainly focus on vocabulary skills that can help students in their writing. Second, these guidelines were designed to help with the use of a bilingual dictionary, so they may not work with monolingual dictionaries. Students can use monolingual, bilingual or a combination of dictionaries, the dictionary can be used for different activities in the lesson, such as reading or listening, writing or speaking; therefore, the difficulty in creating dictionary algorithms is that it is difficult to cover all possible dictionary uses and types of dictionaries.

Taking into account Scholfield's (1982) algorithm, Wingate proposed her strategy for using the dictionary:

1. Vocabulary-oriented strategies are those related to knowledge of vocabulary rules.
2. Language-oriented strategies are those that analyze an unknown word morphologically and syntactically.
3. Strategies are focused on the meaning of the word, that is, those that determine the most suitable meaning for a multi-meaning word (Wingate, 2004, p. 7).

Wingate's research only deals with vocabulary work during reading, so they may not be applicable to other activities such as writing. Therefore, Wingate emphasized the need for further research with greater attention to other language activities.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECORDING AND KИPEENG A VOCABULARY JOURNAL

As we found out above, algorithms for using dictionaries and learning new words can be different, depending on the purpose of learning and the type of language activity. The student can try and choose the most effective and suitable algorithm for himself. Taking into consideration the strategies defined by leading scientists, one of the effective methods that we can offer for use in English language classes is to record a new word in an individual vocabulary journal, such a "journal" can be in the form of a table.

Table 1

An example of an individual vocabulary journal

New Word	Dictionary Definitions	In My Language	Example Sentence	Parts of Speech	Collocates
lecture	talk that is given to a group of people to teach them about a particular subject, often as part of a university or college course	лекція	I have a lecture at nine tomorrow.	lectrice, lecture hall	go to /attend/ deliver/give/ present a lecture, course of/ program of/ series of lecture, lecture course/ program, series
seminar	a class at a university or college when a small group of students and a teacher discuss or study a particular topic	семинар	Teaching is by lectures and seminars.	seminary	give/teach/go to/attend/hold/run/ conduct a seminar

Tab. 1 cont.

New Word	Dictionary Definitions	In My Language	Example Sentence	Parts of Speech	Collocates
tutorial	a period of teaching in a university that involves discussion between an individual student or a small group of students and a tutor	консультація	The total number of hours spent in lectures, tutorials and practicals varies according to the course of study.	tutor	group tutorial, individual tutorial, have tutorial, prepare for tutorial, go to tutorial, -tutorial class, tutorial group
independent learning	self learning; by confident and without needing help from other people	самостійне навчання	The increased use of independent learning at higher levels within the pathway is reflected in the assessment pattern within the modules.	independence; independently	independent study, independent day, independent country/region

Source: Mutlu, 2021, p. 1.

According to Table 1, the algorithm for working with dictionaries is as follows:

1. New Word – a student should write down the word for which the vocabulary journal is kept.
2. Dictionary Definitions – a student needs to make sure that the correct dictionary definition is selected for this part. If the students find any other contexts in which the word is used, they should also add that information to their journals.
3. In my language – if a student does not understand the meaning of a new word, he can use a bilingual dictionary and write a translation. In this case, it is necessary to remember that words can have many different meanings, so it is advisable to write down the meaning of the word that corresponds to the context of the studied material and makes sense to the student.
4. Example Sentence – to understand how to use a word, it is appropriate to write at least one sentence first. But if a student sees new and different uses of a word, he should continue to add example sentences to his journal.
5. Parts of speech – it is necessary to write down the type of a word that a student has learned and find other parts of speech. For example, if the word “independent” is studied, then you should first write its part of speech (adjective). Next, with the help of a dictionary, you need to search and find

other variants of the word “independent”, for example, “independently” and “i dependence”.

6. Collocations – almost all words have common combinations with other words. When studying phrases, it is better to use them in a sentence.

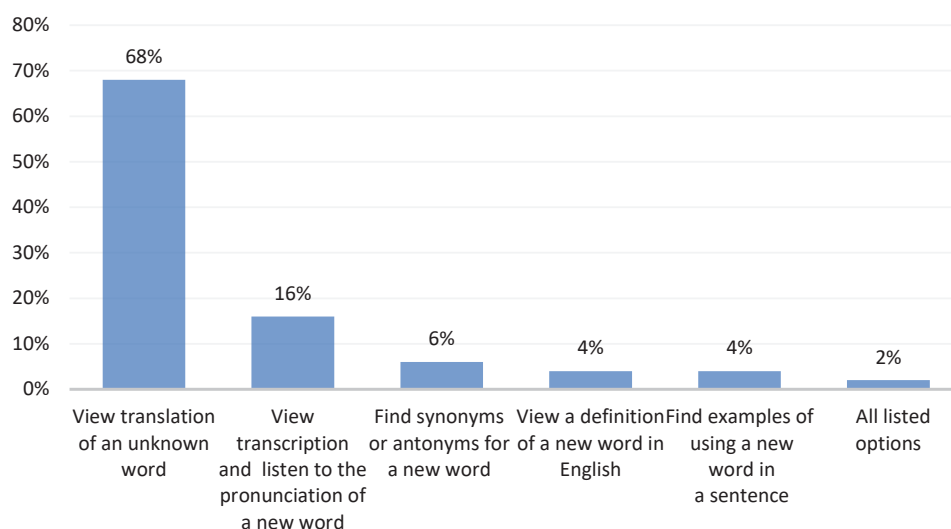
Learning a foreign language, it is quite natural to get confused at first. To understand how to use this or that word, first write at least one example sentence. The examples given in this article are intended for those who learn English, but this algorithm can be easily applied when learning other foreign languages, because learning a new language begins with learning new words (Mutlu, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

For a deeper understanding of the situation regarding the use of dictionaries by students when learning English, we conducted research among the students of the Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University 50 students of the 1st – 3rd years took part in the survey. The aim of the survey is to identify a student’s need for a dictionary, the method of working with the dictionary, the frequency of using the dictionary and which dictionary is in constant use by a student. The results of the research revealed the following – 82% of students use the dictionary in English lessons, mostly it is the online translator “Google Translate” (67.3%). Respondents gave a variety of answers (Figure 1) to the question “For what purpose do you turn to a dictionary”, but the majority (68%) is still looking only for a translation of an unknown word.

Figure 1

For what purpose a student turns to a dictionary



Source: own research.

52% of students answered that they have their own algorithm for using a dictionary, but almost half of the students (48%) do not have such an algorithm, which proves the inability of a considerable number of students to work with a dictionary. Also, 52% of the respondents admitted that they do not keep an individual vocabulary journal, which means that these students translate a new word while completing a certain task, but a further work on memorizing and using a certain word is not carried out. This opinion is refuted by the following question from the questionnaire, whether a student is interested in other aspects, besides the translation of a new word, if necessary, the respondents turn to a dictionary not only for the translation of an unknown word:

1. 43% of students are interested in transcription or how to pronounce a new word;
2. 24% of students are interested in how a word is used in a sentence;
3. 20% of students are usually interested only in the translation of an unknown word;
4. 10% of students are interested in the definition of a word in English;
5. 3% other.

CONCLUSIONS

Learning vocabulary is essential as it is a prerequisite for students to be able to speak, read, write and listen a foreign language well. When learning vocabulary, we should know its meaning and be able to use it in the context of a sentence. First, students need to be introduced to the basic vocabulary. They should know and understand the meaning of words, pronounce the word correctly. For a long time, the teaching of vocabulary skills was not included in textbooks, because, obviously, they did not play an important role in learning a foreign language. As a result, the use of dictionaries was not encouraged in English classes. A similar situation developed with the use of translation in English lessons, when communicative approaches began to form. However, today the situation has changed, and both dictionaries and translation are recognized as useful skills in language teaching and learning (Hajmi, 2022).

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Summary

Dictionaries are an invaluable resource for foreign language learners. They provide insight into the meaning of new words, their grammatical properties and usage, thereby enhancing students' vocabulary and literacy. The ability to work with a dictionary is beneficial for both reading and writing. While guessing the meaning of unfamiliar terms based on context is a useful strategy, it is not always reliable, especially for infrequent or specialized vocabulary. In addition, students may not always have the opportunity to seek assistance from teachers or peers. Therefore, proficiency in using dictionaries plays an important role in fostering independent learners who rely on their own decisions, efforts, and learning styles.