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Investigating the Competency Level to Use the Dictionary by Secondary Level Students



Khan Ruksana

Research Scholar,
Deptt. of Education,
Jai Narayan Vyas University,
Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India



Vandana Arora

Lecturer,
Deptt. of Education,
Shri Parsram Maderna Govt. P.G.
College, Bhopalgarh,
Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India

O. P. R. Vyas

Retired Principal,
Deptt. of Education,
Sr. Sec. School,
Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India

Abstract

This research study aimed at investigating the competency level to use the dictionary by secondary students in Jodhpur district of Rajasthan. For this purpose, 120 students from four English medium schools and six Hindi medium schools were selected from Jodhpur district. The investigators concludes that the English medium students and Hindi medium students differ significantly in their competency level to use the dictionary but the competency level of boys and girls of same medium in using the dictionary did not differs significantly.

Keywords: Competency Level, Monolingual Dictionary, Bilingual Dictionary, Multilingual Dictionary, Thesauruses.

Introduction

Dictionary is a never failing friend of the learner. In fact a dictionary is a great source of information. It is a reference book or list of words usually in an alphabetical order. The first few pages give a lot of information to the learners. Abbreviations used in the dictionary are also given in those pages.

Kinds of dictionaries:

There are a number of different kinds of dictionaries:

1. Monolingual (one language) or explanatory dictionaries e.g. English – English dictionaries, Hindi – Hindi, Urdu – Urdu etc.
2. Bilingual (two languages) dictionaries: e.g. English – Hindi, Hindi-English, Sanskrit-Hindi, Sanskrit – English, Gujarati-English, Urdu-English etc.
3. Multilingual (written or expressed in more than two languages) dictionaries: e.g.
 - i. Sanskrit – English – Hindi
 - ii. Arabic Translator (English, French, Turkish)
 - iii. A multi-lingual dictionary of musical terms (English, French, German, Serbian)
 - iv. Finnish – English – Swedish Glossaries of Mathematics etc.
4. Specialized dictionaries - e.g. Language dictionaries, dictionary of Idioms and phrases, dictionary of proverb, Rhymes, crossword, subject dictionaries (e.g. for accounting, banking, commerce, chemistry, biology, botany, physics, zoology, science, psychology, education, environmental science, mathematics, history, geography etc.) Technical dictionaries, dictionary of computer and information technology etc.
5. Sound dictionary – e.g. phonetic dictionary, rhyming dictionary.
6. Visual dictionary – e.g. Ultimate visual dictionary. It provides a link between pictures and words in a way that no ordinary encyclopedia ever has.
7. Online dictionaries – Internet is a major source of information these days. There are a number of online dictionaries available on the net. Apart from explaining the meaning they also provide audio pronunciation and usages in various sentences. They are quick and easy to use and available on the gadgets like mobile- phones, computers, kindle etc. e.g.
 - i. www.merriam-webster.com,
 - ii. www.oxforddictionaries.com
 - iii. www.thefreedictionary.com
 - iv. www.shabdKosh.com
 - v. www.idoceanline.com
 - vi. www.collinsdictionary.com
 - vii. www.macmillandictionary.com

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8. Thesauruses i.e. dictionaries of synonyms (words with the same meaning) and antonyms (words with the opposite meaning)

Reasons for Using Dictionary

In the learning of a foreign language, the student is often confronted with the problem of understanding. The student reads some material and is unable to understand it. On scrutinizing further, the learner feels that if the meaning of some words were known to him, he could understand the subject matter well. Meaning of difficult words can be known by consulting the dictionary. It helps the learner in solving the problems of meaning. Out of a number of meanings given, the student can gradually find out the exact meaning that is needed by him. A good dictionary is one which also gives us information on : spelling, meanings pronunciation, etymology, derivation or history of the words, phrases or idioms etc. parts of speech (verb, noun, adj....) syllabication, capitalization where relevant gender etc.

The students do not take advantage of different dictionaries available. Moreover they do not know how to use a dictionary properly. Accurate use of dictionary by the students adds to their quality of learning. An essential component of this proficiency is improving one's ability to communicate, since it is crucial to effective communication and essential to employment in today's world. The aim of this study is to know how much the students are able to use a dictionary and to identify more specifically the purpose of using it.

Review of Literature

1. L. A Walter (2015) in his study on "Dictionary Use and Preferences of L2 English Learners in an Intensive English Context" reveals that dictionaries are one learning strategy that students can use to help them acquire new vocabulary knowledge. Their use is acknowledged as a beneficial strategy for both understanding words in context and using them productively in speech and writing. However, in order to utilize dictionaries well, students need to know how to use them effectively.
2. Lemmens (1996) indicates that of the 112 translation studies 46.5% students in his study did not know what grammatical information could be found in the bilingual dictionaries which they used regularly. Indeed many students assume that they already know how to use dictionaries and do not take the trouble to investigate further.
3. Julia Miller in her study on "English learners' dictionaries: An undervalued resource" revealed that although students claimed prior use of learners' dictionaries, they were not familiar with the full range of their dictionaries contents. Nineteen students (45%) used a bilingual dictionary to do the exercise while twenty students (48%) used learners' dictionaries. Three students (7%) did not use a dictionary.
4. A study by Bejoint revealed that 89% of those surveyed had not studied their dictionary's introductory matter and 55% did not use the coded information on word usage (Bejoint, 1981). Bejoint's conclusion, like that of Atkins and

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Varantola (1998), was that students should be guided in their use of learners' dictionaries.

5. Bensoussan, Sim and Weiss (1984) found that most students ignored the part of speech of a given word and felt that they "merely (needed) to look up words in order to understand the text" (P.269), leading the researchers to the conclusion that teachers need to make students more grammatically aware when using dictionaries.
6. Asmus Freytag (2006) in his study "The use of phonetic and other symbols in dictionaries: A brief survey" stats that dictionaries use a number of different methods to indicate the pronunciation of terms. Special symbols are used to represent phonetic and other information in dictionaries.

Previous studies suggest that learners do not fully understand the range of resources offered by their dictionaries.

Statement of the Problem

"Investigating the Competency Level to Use the Dictionary by Secondary Level Students"

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the competency level to use the dictionary by English medium secondary level boys and English medium secondary level girls.
2. To study the competency level to use the dictionary by Hindi medium secondary level boys and Hindi medium secondary level girls.
3. To study the competency level to use the dictionary by English medium secondary level boys and Hindi medium secondary level boys.
4. To study the competency level to use dictionary by English medium secondary level girls and Hindi medium secondary levels girls.
5. To study the competency level to use the dictionary by English medium secondary students and Hindi medium secondary level students.
6. To study the competency level to use the dictionary by secondary level boys and secondary level girls.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There will be no significant difference in the competency level to use the dictionary by English medium secondary level boys and English medium secondary level girls.
2. There will be no significant difference in the competency level to use the dictionary by Hindi medium secondary level boys and Hindi medium secondary level girls.
3. English medium secondary level boys and Hindi medium secondary level boys will not differ significantly in their competency level to use the dictionary.
4. English medium secondary level girls will not differ significantly from the Hindi medium secondary level girls in their competency level to use the dictionary.
5. There will be no significant difference in the competency level to use the dictionary by English medium secondary level students and Hindi medium secondary level students.

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6. Secondary level boys and secondary level girls will not differ significantly in their competency level to use the dictionary.

Method

In the present study normative survey method of investigation was employed.

Sample

1. Jodhpur district was selected for the collection of sample.
2. The sample of the present study was the secondary students.
3. The students studying in English medium and Hindi medium were included in the population.
4. The researcher had randomly selected 120 students from four English medium schools and six Hindi medium schools as sample for the present study.
5. 60 students were selected from English medium and 60 students from Hindi medium
6. Among them 30 boys and 30 girls were from English medium and 30 boys and 30 girls were from Hindi medium.

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The description of the sample is given as follows:

S. No.	Students	Gender Wise		Total No. of sample
		Boys	Girls	
1.	English medium secondary students	30	30	60
2.	Hindi medium secondary students	30	30	60
	Total	60	60	120

Tool

"Competency Test to Use the Dictionary" developed by the investigator was used for the present study.

Statistics Use

In this study the investigator has used the following statistical techniques for analysis and interpretation of the data.

1. Mean, SD and t-test were used to find out significance difference in the competency level.
2. Percentage was used to analyze the level of competency

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The following table shows the percentage of competency level and the number of students in each category

Table 1
Level of Competency to Use Dictionary by Secondary Students

Level	Marks Range	English Medium				Hindi Medium			
		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
High	44-80	14	46.67	12	40	2	6.67	3	10
Moderate	23-43	14	46.67	15	50	19	63.33	16	53.34
Low	Below 23	2	6.67	3	10	9	30	11	36.66

From overall estimation of the data it is found that 46.67% English medium boys show high and moderate competency whereas 40% English medium girls show high competency and 50% shows moderate competency. 6.67% English medium boys and 10% English medium girls show low competency.

As compared to English medium students the performance of Hindi medium students is low. Only 6.67% of Hindi medium boys and 10% of Hindi medium girls show high competency whereas 30% Hindi medium boys and 36.66% Hindi medium girls show low competency.

Table 2
Mean SD and t-value of Marks of Competency Test to Use the Dictionary by English Medium Secondary Boys and Girls

Students	N	Mean	SD	df	't' value	Level of significance	Significance
English Medium Sec Boys	30	42.83	13.19	58	1.54	0.05	NS
English Medium Sec Girls	30	37.67	12.80				

It may be seen from the table -2 that the mean scores of English medium boys were 42.83 while it was 37.67 in the case of English medium girl

and their SDs were 13.19 and 12.80 respectively. The calculated 't' value 1.54 is not significant at .05 level as it is lower than table value.

Table 3
Mean, SD and t-value of Marks of Competency Test to Use the Dictionary by Hindi Medium Secondary Boys and Girls

Students	N	Mean	SD	df	't' value	Level of significance	Significance
Hindi Medium Sec Boys	30	28.66	11.85	58	0.92	0.05	NS
Hindi Medium Sec Girls	30	25.84	11.75				

It may be seen from the table-3 that the mean scores of Hindi medium boys and Hindi medium girls were 28.66 and 25.84 respectively and their SDs

were 11.85 and 11.75 respectively. The calculated 't' value 0.92 is not significant at .05 level.

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Table 4

Mean, SD and t-Value of Marks of Competency Test to Use the Dictionary by English Medium Secondary Boys and Hindi Medium Secondary Boys

Students	N	Mean	SD	df	't' value	Level of significance	Significance
English Medium Sec Boys	30	42.83	13.19	58	4.38	0.05	Significant
Hindi Medium Sec Girls	30	28.66	11.85				

From the table 4 it is observed that the mean scores of English medium and Hindi medium secondary boys were 42.83 and 28.66 and their SDs

were 13.19 and 11.85 respectively. The calculated 't' value is 4.38 and it is significant at 0.05 level as it is higher than table value.

Table 5

Mean, SD and t-Value of Marks of Competency Test to Use the Dictionary by English Medium Secondary Girls And Hindi Medium Secondary Girls

Students	N	Mean	SD	df	't' value	Level of significance	Significance
English Medium Sec Girls	30	37.67	12.8	58	3.73	0.05	Significant
Hindi Medium Sec Girls	30	25.84	11.75				

Table 5 shows that the mean scores of English medium and Hindi medium secondary girls were 37.67 and 25.84 correspondingly and their SDs

were 12.8 and 11.75 in that order. The calculated 't' value is 3.73 and it is significant at 0.05 level as it is higher than table value.

Table 6

Mean, SD and t- Value of Marks of Competency Test to Use the Dictionary by English Medium and Hindi Medium Secondary Students

Students	N	Mean	SD	df	't' value	Level of significance	Significance
English Medium Sec Students	60	39.5	13	118	5.65	0.05	Significant
Hindi Medium Sec Students	60	26.5	12.23				

It may be seen from the Table – 6 that the mean scores of English medium students were 39.5 while it was 26.5 in the case of Hindi medium

students. Their SDs was 13 and 12.23 respectively. The calculated 't' value (5.65) is significant at 0.05 level as it is higher than table value.

Table 7

Mean, SD and t-Value of Marks of Competency Test to Use the Dictionary by Secondary Level Boys and Girls

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	't' value	Level of significance	Significance
Secondary Boys	60	35.5	14	118	1.59	0.05	NS
Secondary Girls	60	31.5	13.55				

It may be observed from table – 7 that the mean scores of secondary level boys and girls are 35.5 and 31.5 respectively and their SDs were 14 and 13.55 in that order. The calculated 't' value 1.59 is not significant at 0.05 level.

Findings of the present study show that English medium secondary boys have more competencies to use dictionary than Hindi medium secondary boys. Hence the hypothesis – 3 rejected.

Hypothesis – 4

"English medium secondary girls will not differ significantly from the Hindi medium secondary girls in their competency level to use the dictionary".

It was observed from the investigation that English medium secondary girls have more competencies to use the dictionary than Hindi medium secondary girls. Hence the hypothesis 4 is rejected.

Hypothesis – 5

"There will be no significant difference in the competency level to use the dictionary by English medium secondary students and Hindi medium secondary students."

On the basis of research study it was found that English medium secondary students show more competency than Hindi medium secondary students. Hence the hypothesis – 5 is rejected.

Hypothesis – 6

"Secondary level boys and secondary level girls will not differ significantly in their competency level to use the dictionary".

It was observed from the investigation that there was no significant difference in the competency level of secondary level boys and secondary level

Findings of the Study on the Basis of Hypotheses

Hypothesis -1

"There will be no significant difference in the competency level to use the dictionary by English medium secondary boys and English medium secondary girls."

It was observed from the investigation that there were no significant difference in the competency level of English medium secondary boys and girls. Hence the hypothesis -1 is accepted.

Hypothesis -2

"There will be no significant difference in the competency level to use the dictionary by Hindi medium secondary boys and Hindi medium secondary girls."

On the basis of research study it was found that there was no significant difference in the competency level of Hindi medium secondary boys and girls. Hence the hypothesis-2 is accepted.

Hypothesis-3

"English medium secondary boys and Hindi medium secondary boys will not differ significantly in their competency level to use the dictionary."

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girls to use dictionary. Hence the hypothesis – 6 is accepted.

Conclusion

1. The present study clearly shows that the competency level of English medium boys and girls is same.
2. On the basis of research study it was found that Hindi medium secondary boys and girls have same competency level to use the dictionary.
3. English medium secondary boys have more competency level to use the dictionary than the Hindi medium secondary boys.
4. English medium secondary girls have more competency level to use the dictionary than the Hindi medium secondary girls.
5. English medium secondary students have more competency than Hindi medium secondary students to use the dictionary.
6. The secondary level boys and girls have same level of competency to use the dictionary.

Educational Implications of the Study

Consulting dictionary helps the learner in a number of ways. The proper use of dictionary helps the students in the following ways: -

1. A student becomes a better learner of the language,
2. The learner becomes good in spellings,
3. It improves the knowledge of grammar,
4. It creates good habit of self learning,
5. Knowledge of stress is acquired by the learners,
6. It expands the vocabulary of students,
7. It helps in the improvement of pronunciation,
8. And above all, it gives a lot of confidence to the student and he becomes self reliant.

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