Examining the Effectiveness of Monolingual, Bilingual and
Bilingualised Dictionaries for Georgian Learners

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Abstract: The present article shows the results of the experiment planned and conducted at Tbilisi State University and aims to examine the differences in the effectiveness of various types of dictionaries while English language learning.

In the 1970s, the scientific study of dictionary users and dictionary usage came into the limelight of lexicographers. The same period is remarkable for the investigation of vocabulary users, revealing the marked tendency of contemporary theoretical lexicography.

Thus, in foreign countries, all the working processes related to the word-entries are based on such an empirical research taking into consideration users' requirements.

A lot of studies have been conducted in order to examine dictionary users and dictionary usage in various countries. However, our study of Georgian dictionary users is one of the first attempts of this kind.

Key Words: *monolingual dictionary, bilingual dictionary, bilingualized dictionary.*

Introduction

The present article shows the results of the experiment planned and conducted at Tbilisi State University and aims to examine the differences in the effectiveness of various types of dictionaries while foreign language learning. In fact, we were

interested in the investigation of the effectiveness of 3 types of dictionaries – monolingual (English words with English definitions), bilingual (translation from English into Georgian equivalents) and bilingualized (English definitions plus Georgian equivalents) – for Georgian learners.

It should be mentioned that the monolingual dictionary, as well as the bilingual one, is well-known and widely spread among their users, but the bilingualized dictionary, which is a combination of the other two, is relatively new and appeared on the lexicographic market a couple of years ago in European and Asian countries [4].

Such studies have been implemented in various countries. Since the 1970s the new tendency of study of vocabulary users and vocabulary usage has been added to aspects of theoretical lexicography such as the genre theory of lexicography, linguistic data processing, lexicographic genres, the history of lexicography, and critical analysis of lexicography and so on. The lexicographers supposed the empirical studies would foment a revolution in lexicography that would reveal, on the one hand the exact number of dictionary users and, on the other hand, it would help to take into consideration users' requirements and create consulting courses of dictionary usage.

The aim of this kind of study was to adjust the dictionaries to the requirements of different social classes, age groups, etc. Thus, orientation on the dictionary users, analysis of their needs and dictionary usage skills have become a priority for the process of planning and compilation of comprehensive dictionaries [7].

The study was conducted in different directions: we tried to determine, for example, what kind of information the user looks for; what the dictionary requirements are for foreign learners of the English language; how the user looks for the desired information on the level of both micro and macro structures of the dictionary; whether there is something special in dictionary design or content that can be impeding, misleading or, conversely,

helpful for a user in the process; and how the user interprets obtained information.

In recent years there have been numerous theoretical experiments planned and conducted in order to reveal the effectiveness of the dictionaries. However, our study of Georgian dictionary users is one of the first attempts of this kind.

Taking into consideration the period of contemporary globalisation, foreign language learning is a matter of a great significance for a small nation like Georgia, and the upbringing foreign language experts requires on the one hand comprehensive academic bilingual dictionaries and, on the other hand, efficient methods for language study. There is a close connection between bilingual dictionaries and a selected methodology of foreign language studies both in Georgia and abroad.

For teaching classical languages, the grammar-translation method was most frequently used in Britain as well as in other European countries. In the 1920-30s, when there was a great demand for English as a foreign language, all the study methodology and textbooks were based on the above-mentioned traditional method and thus, teachers, linguists and scholars eagerly applied this one. Later there appeared alternative methods of foreign language teaching which neglected the role of translation. Moreover, it reduced the usage of the native tongue while treating foreign language studies. As a result, this led to a total rejection of bilingual–translation dictionaries. So the emphasis was primarily on monolingual dictionaries. This practice prevailed also in schools and universities in Georgia.

Later, in the west, the interest was revived in the previously approbated translation-method, but with a slight modification due to modern requirements. Empirical studies of different methods were being conducted by foreign scholars to take a deep insight into the matter. The majority of these studies are related to the effectiveness of vocabulary use as we attach a paramount importance to dictionaries while acquiring a foreign language. We

took an interest in those studies which could determine the effectiveness of various dictionaries while vocabulary acquisition of a foreign language, particularly, that of monolingual, bilingual and bilingualised ones, on the one hand, with regard to comprehending new words fully, and on the other hand, to using them properly in context.

We have selected the studies of Laufer and Hadar [5], carried out in Israel (1997) and another replicated one, but a slightly modified version, by Yuzhen Chen [3], held in China, in 2011. We decided to do the same study in Georgia and on the basis of these two experiments developed our own version of the study, which was conducted in October 2014 at Tbilisi State University.

The Study
Purpose

Thus, the aim of our experiment was to determine the effectiveness of different types of dictionaries for Georgian English learners. Firstly, to evaluate the effectiveness of 3 types of dictionaries - monolingual, bilingual, bilingualised dictionaries for Georgian users and secondly, how effective each dictionary is for comprehension and production.

Participants

The participants subjected to the experiment were, as mentioned above, university students who had had some learning experience in English for about 5-8 years. The participants were divided into two equal groups according to their English proficiency: intermediate and upper-intermediate level students. The experimental subjects were selected and put in these groups due to the placement test which was carefully designed for this study. There were 18 experimental subjects who were excluded from the experiment as they could not demonstrate the considerable English proficiency for this experiment.

Methodology

The experiment was held in both groups separately. We prepared 15 words for each group, that is, 15 words for the intermediate group and 15 for the upper-intermediate one. The words were chosen based on their English proficiency. We chose upper-intermediate vocabulary for intermediate level students and advanced vocabulary for upper-intermediate level ones. Consequently, these target words should have been unfamiliar to them. However, there were some cases when some of the words were familiar to the participants. We marked such cases and while correcting the exercises and analysing the results, we did not take these cases into consideration, so they were annulled.

It needs to be mentioned that the 15 target words were selected this way: 5 nouns, 5 adjectives and 5 verbs. All the experimental subjects did exercises with 15 unfamiliar words in comprehension and production. Out of these target words, we included in each test set 5 words with monolingual entry, 5 with the bilingual, and 5 with the bilingualised entry. Thus, each word was tested by three dictionaries and each student was exposed to three dictionary types. We applied Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English[8] as the monolingual dictionary, the comprehensive English-Georgian online dictionary[9] for bilingual and our self-designed dictionary for the bilingualised one, as we consider such a dictionary does not exist in reality. A bilingualised dictionary is a combination of a learner's monolingual dictionary with a translation of the entry. In other words, a combination of English language definitions and mother tongue translation equivalents.

Procedure

The experiment was held in two stages and the time was not limited. First, the experimental subjects were handed out the papers with target words. In other words, there were 15 words, out of which 5 were from monolingual dictionary, another 5 from bilingual and the last 5 words from bilingualised dictionary.

Shortly after having been introduced to the target words, the students were provided with exercises. The task consisted of 4 different kinds of exercises. To be more precise, there were exercises in terms of word comprehension and production with the aid of the following exercises: 1) multiple-choice; 2) synonyms; 3) gap filling and 4) translation-sentence translation from English into Georgian for intermediate levels and vice versa from Georgian into English for upper-intermediate ones. The first two exercises were done with the dictionary-entries in hand, while the last two exercises were completed without dictionary use. The exercises with dictionary use were intended to identify the effectiveness of these three dictionaries in terms of unfamiliar word comprehension, whereas the exercises performed without dictionaries had to indicate the effectiveness in production in context.

Results

The effectiveness of each dictionary was scrutinized thoroughly in respect of word comprehension and production. The results obtained were transferred into percentages and presented in the form of Tables.

The charts below show the results obtained from our experiment. The first Table (Group 1) presents the results of the experimental subjects with intermediate levels of proficiency, while the second Table (Group 2) shows the results of those of upper-intermediate

Levels of proficiency.

I group
Table 1.

Tasks	Monolingual	Bilingual	Bilingualised
comprehension	86%	95%	86%
production	49%	66,6%	64,6%
comprehension + production	63,7%	78%	73,2%

Group 2.
Table 2.

Tasks	Monolingual	Bilingual	Bilingualized
comprehension	90%	82%	86,6%
production	53%	54%	75%
comprehension + production	67,6%	65,6%	80%

As we can clearly see from the first Table, the monolingual dictionary yields the best results with 90% in terms of word comprehension for intermediate level students, whereas both bilingual and bilingualised dictionaries appeared slightly less effective with 82% and 86% respectively. As for word production in context, the most preferable was the bilinguialised dictionary (75%), while monolingual and bilingual dictionaries showed the lowest rate with 53% and 54% respectively.

Regarding the upper-intermediate level students (Table 2), they showed significantly better results in the usage of the bilingual dictionary. With regard to word comprehension, the bilingual dictionary seemed to be the most effective (95%), though, monolingual and bilingualised dictionaries were close with 86%.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the monolingual dictionaries received the smallest percentage of 49% in terms of word production. Better results were shown with 66,6% and 64,6% by bilingual and bilingualized dictionaries respectively.

In summary, the study revealed that among the three dictionaries involved in the research, the bilingualised one (80%) was the most effective of all with regard to word comprehension and production for intermediate level students, whilst

monolingual and bilingual dictionaries showed the same results with 67,6% and 65,6% (Table 3).

Group 1
Table 3

Tasks	Effectiveness of three dictionaries	Significant differences
comprehension	MD > BLD > BD	MD* > BD
production	BLD > BD ≥ MD	BLD** > MD BLD** > BD
comprehension+ production	BLD > MD ≥ BD	BLD* > MD BLD* > BD

Note: > means "better than";   *- slight difference;   **- significant difference
MD-monolingual; BD-bilingual; BLD-bilingualized

In the upper-intermediate level group, a better preference was given to the bilingual dictionary (78%) than the bilingualised one (73, 2%), and what is more, the bilingual dictionary was much more effective than monolingual one with 63,7%, which is clearly shown in Table 4.

Group 2
Table 4

Tasks	Effectiveness of three dictionaries	Significant differences
comprehension	BD > BLD BD > MD	BD* > BLD BD* > MD
production	BD > BLD > MD	BD** > MD
comprehension +production	BD > BLD > MD	BD** > MD

242

Note: > means "better than"; *- slight difference; **- significant difference MD-monolingual; BD-bilingual; BLD-bilingualized

Analyzing the results

The above formulated Tables give us detailed information on the effectiveness of different dictionaries for Georgian users. We can definitely say that bilingual and bilingualised dictionaries are the most effective. It is natural as both of them contain entries with native language equivalents that are essential to understand and use a foreign word, while a native tongue (Georgian) and a foreign language (English) are not from the same branch of language families. They differ in language - specific perception of the world as well as in expressing manner attributed to semantic asymmetry etc.

It should be noted that in the experiments carried out by Laufer and Hadar, as well as Yuzhen Chen, bilingualised dictionary had the greater preference than a bilingual one. This was explained by the authors in the way that the used dictionaries did not contain illustrated phrases and sentence examples and this drawback was overcome with the aid of the bilingualised dictionary, which was full of English definitions, illustrational phrases and sentence examples and equivalents in mother tongue. In our experiment, bilingual and bilingualised dictionaries showed nearly similar results for upper-intermediate groups. What is more, the bilingual dictionary shows slightly better performance than bilingualised one for the same target group. The same upper-intermediate group achieved the best results for the whole task, particularly, in terms of word comprehension and production tasks. We expected such results considering the fact that the online-dictionary we used in our experiment stands out because it is replete with illustrated phrases and sentence examples. Empirically confirmed results verify the necessity of illustrated phrases and sentence examples in the dictionaries with word-entries.

The study revealed a different picture for the intermediate group, as they preferred the bilingualised dictionary rather than bilingual and monolingual ones. We should like to mention the results of one study carried out in the Lexicographic Centre of Tbilisi State University for intermediate level learners. The aim of the study was to investigate the necessity of provision of specific bilingual dictionary with simplified vocabulary entries for intermediate learners. The experiment showed that the majority of intermediate learners obtained better results while applying a bilingual dictionary, which was designed with simplified vocabulary. The entries we prepared for the intermediate level students in our experiment were intended to follow the same principle, in other words, the entries were simple words. We got similar results to that of our colleagues. In both cases, they preferred the bilingual dictionary.

However, it should be noted that the bilingulised dictionary is a step forward in the field of pedagogical lexicography in future for Georgian learners. Comparing Laufer and Kimmel's results with ours, we can conclude that learners take advantage of the bilingulised dictionary if it has monolingual definitions with the native tongue equivalents of foreign language words [6].

Our experiment proved the necessity of the translation method during foreign language study. Whilst analysing and correcting the papers our attention was drawn to the fact that even students with higher vocabulary levels showed deficiencies in translation tasks which evinces a lack of proper training.

Recent Studies have revealed that lexicographers and scholars put emphasis not only on the creation of extensive dictionaries, but also on the necessity of teaching how to use them. A lot of symposia [1, p. 381-392; 2] devote careful attention to this topic pointing out that the good dictionary users are those who have received training in the skills of dictionary use.

Conclusion

In our experiment, Georgian learners took advantage of bilingual and bilingualised dictionaries, which contain foreign language equivalents in the native tongue. The study also revealed the role and necessity of translation in foreign language learning. Accordingly, we cannot exclude the native language from the English learning process and decline the importance of dictionaries for Georgian learners. Particular care should be taken to obtain the working skills with a dictionary as it is vital for them to comprehend all the relevant information underlying the languages and dictionaries.

In our experiment the bilingualised dictionary received preference among Georgian users, this fact should be noteworthy for lexicographers while planning their future lexicographic projects. We hope that due attention will be paid to the adequate development of this new trend in the contemporary theoretical lexicography, namely the scientific study of dictionary users and dictionary usage, and the study results themselves will be taken into consideration at every stage of dictionary planning.

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