

PAPER DICTIONARIES VS ONLINE DICTIONARIES IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASS: RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL TEACHING

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INTRODUCTION

The tradition of English teaching has been drastically changed with the remarkable entry of technology. Technology provides many options as making teaching interesting and also making teaching more productive in terms of improvements. Each lesson can be among the most interesting and efficient lessons in the world because of a large amount of online resources.

Based on the rapidly changing evolution of computer technology, it is important for English language teachers to recognize how effectively and efficiently to integrate computer technology into their curriculum design in order to help students to acquire foreign language easily and to enhance their own teaching performance as well nowadays. English language teachers have to develop their computer knowledge and skills in order to use computer technology as a teaching tool.

Among many tools we have highlighted online dictionaries (online translation tools) which are very popular with users (teachers, students, translators, etc.) nowadays.

Dictionaries (in any format – printed or electronic) have always been a highly valuable resource in education. In order for students to see dictionaries as a valuable resource, they not only need to learn how to use them, but also, they need to make use of them for different activities during their course of studies on a regular basis. The more the students use this tool, the better they will be at using it and the more value they will find in it.

It is important to remember that looking up a word in a dictionary and/or reading its definition does not guarantee that a student will learn this word and use it in their next writing or speaking assignment. It is important that students understand the word and its meaning in English, and see the word used correctly

in an example. These are the minimum steps for students to develop a comprehension of the word.

Translators definitely serve a purpose and students perceive them as the best resource for learning new words because they can see the new word in both their native language and English. Thus, we recommend that students (at all levels of study) use online dictionaries.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL TEACHING

Our experiment was conducted with the 8th grade students of Noratus secondary school N1 (Gegharkunik region, Armenia).

UNIT 9 from the textbook by G.Gasparyan, N.Hovhannisyan, H.Qajberuni [1] was chosen for the experimental teaching. All the topics of UNIT 9 from the textbook correspond to the topics of objective criteria and programs for the Armenian schools [2, p. 22-24].

The textbook itself consists of 3 parts: focus on speaking, focus on reading and focus on grammar.

The text on page 130 with the title “ROAD SAFETY” with the corresponding vocabulary was chosen during the experimental teaching [1, p.130].

Learning Objectives:

- Upon the end of the lesson they will be able to use the topic vocabulary concerning road signs and traffic rules;
- They will be able to work both individually and in pairs/small groups; etc.

As educators, our *objectives* are:

- To get students energized and engaged in the hands-on learning process; dictionaries (both printed and online) are an instructional medium that are compelling and generate a greater amount of interest and enjoyment;
- To engage students in problem-solving and investigative activities;
- To develop peer collaboration: students have a chance to help their peers and to learn to work collaboratively as they solve a problem.

In total 23 students were involved in the experimental teaching. Large class is usually a big problem while teaching and keeping the discipline. It is known that a large class can be handled better dividing it into various groups. In order to divide a class into groups it is vital to consider the following factors:

- ✓ the size of a class;
- ✓ intellectual maturity of students;
- ✓ students motivation;
- ✓ course learning objectives;

- ✓ instructor's preferences;
- ✓ availability of technologies.

By taking into account all the above mentioned factors, the class was divided into 2 parts: those who will use online dictionaries and those who will use paper-based dictionaries.

Before the start of the experimental teaching it was necessary to speak about some popular online dictionaries and explain the learners how to use the dictionaries effectively. The students were given some practical advice and recommendations on the use of dictionaries.

How to use a dictionary effectively. 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 an English word you see or hear,
- find the English translation of a word in your native language,
- 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 new word,
- look up the collocations of a word,
- check the part of speech of a word,
- find out how to pronounce a word,
- find out about the register of a word,
- find examples of the use of a word in natural language.

To be a good dictionary user, however, it is not enough to know what to use the dictionary for. You must also decide which is the best dictionary for any of the purposes listed above. As well as this, you need to be able to find what you are looking for quickly; you need to be sure that you have found what you were looking for; and, most importantly, you need to know **when** to use your dictionary.

Finding words quickly

This is a skill that you need to practise. Of course, you will need to know the English alphabet perfectly, so practise this too. Use the guide words at the top of each dictionary page; and keep practicing until you can find any word within 10 seconds. You should also practise finding words in your own language in your bilingual dictionary. If you use an electronic dictionary, take some time at home to learn how it works and, again, practise finding words quickly.

Finding the right meaning of an English word

Very often when you look up a new English word, you find that it has more than one meaning. If you are not sure which one is correct, here's what you can do:

- First, check through all the meanings and find the one that makes most sense in the context where you found the word. (Very often, many of the different meanings are similar and this should be enough to give you a good idea what the word means.)
- Second, if you really want to make sure, think what the word is in your own language and look it up in a bilingual dictionary. If one of the English translations is the original word you looked up, then you can be satisfied that you have found the right meaning.

Finding the right spelling

Another problem you may have is when you want to check your spelling but you can't find the word you're looking for. What can you do?

- If you are sure of the first few letters, just look down the page until you find the right spelling. (Again, it is helpful to check the meaning is the one you expect.)
- If you are not sure of the first few letters, try some other possibilities. You know for example that some words that start with an *-n* sound have *k* as their first letter; e.g. *knife*, *knight*. So if you can't find the word under *N*, try looking in the *K* pages.
- If you still can't find the word, think what it is in your language and look it up in your bilingual dictionary.

Finding the right English translation of a word in your language

When you look up a word in your own language in a bilingual dictionary, you will probably find that there is more than one English translation. If you are not sure which to use, you could try a *back translation*. This means that you look up the English translations one by one in a monolingual dictionary. If a word has a definition that matches the word in your language, you are safe to use it.

Knowing when to use the dictionary

If you look up every new word you see or hear, you will spend your whole day with the dictionary in your hand. That's no good! You have to be clever and choose the right words to check and the right time to do it. Try to follow the advice below and you will become a much more efficient language learner:

- When you find a new word while reading, finish the sentence (better: the paragraph). If you haven't guessed the meaning and it still seems important, then you can look it up. To avoid interrupting your reading for

too long, you should find its meaning in your own language using a bilingual dictionary.

- When you hear a new word in class (or the teacher has written it on the board), wait and continue listening. What the teacher says next may help you to understand the word. If you look in your dictionary, you will not hear what comes next, and this will make understanding the lesson more and more difficult.

Creating their own dictionaries when recording new vocabulary. This is a good way to remember the meaning and all the aspects of a new word.

Vocabulary records can be organized in different ways:

- by parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, etc.);
- alphabetically;
- in word families;
- in the order that they appear in the book;
- by situation (e.g. at the shops, at the restaurant, at the airport, etc.);
- by topic (e.g. clothes, money, nationality, food, etc.).

After this introductory part of the lesson the students were given 10 minutes to see who will analyze the new words better, those who had used online dictionaries or those who had used paper-based dictionaries.

The students were given the following list of online dictionaries to be used during the lesson:

- ❖ *Cambridge online dictionary*: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>;
- ❖ *Oxford online dictionary*: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/>;
- ❖ *WordReference.com*: <https://wordreference.com/>;
- ❖ *Google translate*: <https://translate.google.am/>.

Below is the list of the unknown words to be analyzed: *accident n., to crash v., crash n., to hurt v., to injure v., injury n., to damage v. cause n. to cause v. care n. careful a. careless a. to obey v. traffic n. to hit v. hit n. emergency n. service n. operator n. to call v. call n. to dial v. ambulance n. to put somebody through v. to happen (to) v.*

RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL TEACHING

Those who had used paper-based dictionaries learnt the unknown words more slowly than those who had learnt the words with the use of online dictionaries. The online dictionaries helped them to learn the new words not as isolated abstract words but they found more information on these words as well. With the use of online dictionaries the students learned the definitions of the

words, for example the word *accident* means *something bad that happens that is not expected or intended and that often damages something or injures someone*. Besides they learned the translation of the word in their language, for example the word *accident* can be translated as *դժբախտ պատահար, վթար, փորձանք, արկած*. They also learnt synonyms and antonyms and related words. Therefore, the use of online dictionaries was useful, productive, fast and interesting. On the contrary, the use of paper-based dictionaries was time consuming and boring for pupils.

At the end of the lesson the pros and cons of the online dictionaries and paper-based dictionaries (Oxford dictionary, English-Armenian dictionary by Asmangulyan) were discussed with the class. The results of the discussion can be summarized as follows:

Pros and Cons of Online Translation Tools

Online translation tools are a big step forward in the field of translation technology. Most of them are free, fast and quite accurate.

THE PROS

- **Online dictionaries are fast.** Incredibly fast. So fast that no human translator (or even a team of translators) can hope to compete with it in sheer output. A professional might translate 3,000 words in an 8-hour day. But Online Translation tools can do that in the blink of an eye.
- **Online dictionaries are free.** Online translation tool costs the user nothing.

THE CONS

- Users who need a translation for rarer language pairs may find Google's translation tool useless.
- Simply getting a result (any result) in no way guarantees that the result is good.

The advantages of a paper dictionary over an online dictionary

- It takes much more time to find the translation in a paper dictionary than in a digital dictionary. While you will be searching for the particular word, you will be unconsciously preparing for learning and remembering that word. So, it could be more effective.
- Another paper dictionary advantage: it doesn't need electricity. So, if you will be somewhere without electricity, you still will have your dictionary.
- The best paper dictionaries are created by teams of linguists (people with a degree in linguistics) based on a text corpus. So the first advantages are credibility and reliability.

- Good paper dictionaries often provide types of information that are not provided by many online dictionaries, e.g. usage examples and grammatical information. Online dictionaries are often basically word lists with translations.
- Obviously, a printed dictionary does not require a computer or a smartphone or an Internet connection.

Feedback on using the Online Dictionaries

The students were asked to answer several questions about the experimental teaching just ticking the appropriate column:

- ✓ I find Online Dictionaries useful for my reading and writing assignments.
- ✓ I find Online Dictionaries trendy for my assignments.
- ✓ I like using Online Dictionaries to improve my reading and writing skills.
- ✓ I am determined to study English better with the use of Online Dictionaries.
- ✓ I plan to use Online Dictionaries continually to improve my skills.

The table below represents the results of the feedback we gained after the use of paper and online dictionaries during the experimental teaching.

Statements		strongly agree	agree	disagree
1.	I find Online Dictionaries useful for my reading and writing assignments.	100%	-	
2.	I find Online Dictionaries trendy for my assignments.	60%	40%	
3.	I like using Online Dictionaries to improve my reading and writing skills.	100%	-	
4.	I am determined to study English better with the use of Online Dictionaries.	80%	20%	
5.	I plan to use Online Dictionaries continually to improve my skills.	80%	20%	

Table 1: The results of the feedback on using the Online Dictionaries

According to the table presented above it is clear that the students like using online translation tools while studying English, they find them useful and practical as well as time consuming. However, taking into consideration the fact that our schools are not sufficiently equipped with computers and the Internet and that not

all of the students have smartphones, laptops and the unlimited access to the Internet not all of them will have the possibility to use Online dictionaries on a regular basis in the future. Hopefully, this gap will be overcome in the nearest future giving all the students the opportunity to use online translation tools more often in their daily activities.

Key words: *English as a foreign language (EFL), English language learning (ELL), online dictionaries, online translation tools.*

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ՍԱՐԳՍՅԱՆ ՌՈՒՉԱՆՆԱ

*Մանկավարժական գիտությունների թեկնածու, դոցենտ,
ԳՊՀ օտար լեզվի և գրականության ամբիոնի դասախոս*

ԳՐԻԳՈՐՅԱՆ ԱՆՆԱ

*ԳՊՀ բանասիրական ֆակուլտետի «Անգլերեն լեզու և գրականություն»
բաժնի մագիստրատուրայի շրջանավարտ*

Հոդվածը նվիրված է ՀՀ դպրոցներում անգլերենի ուսումնառության ընթացքում թղթային և առցանց բառարանների կիրառմանը: Նկարագրված է այդպիսի բառարանների հնարավորությունների օգտագործմամբ փորձարարական ուսուցումը: Ներկայացված են ՀՀ Գեղարքունիքի մարզի Նորատուս գյուղի թիվ 1 հիմնական դպրոցում իրականացված փորձարարական ուսուցման արդյունքները:

Բանալի բառեր՝ անգլերենը որպես օգտար լեզու, անգլերենի ուսումնասիրություն, անցանց բառարաններ, անցանց թարգմանության գործիքակազմ:

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ БУМАЖНЫХ И ОНЛАЙН СЛОВАРЕЙ НА УРОКЕ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА: РЕЗУЛЬТАТЫ ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТАЛЬНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ

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ГРИГОРՅԱՆ ԱՆՆԱ

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Статья посвящена использованию бумажных и онлайн словарей при обучении английскому языку в школах РА. Описано опытное обучение с использованием таких словарей, представлены результаты проведенного экспериментального обучения в основной школе N1 с. Норатус Гегаркуникской области РА.

Ключевые слова: *английский как иностранный, обучение английскому языку, онлайн-словари, инструментарий онлайн-перевода.*

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