

*The Dictionary Look-Up Behavior of Hong Kong Students: A Large-Scale Survey**

MAY Y. FAN

Department of English, Hong Kong Polytechnic University

*The aim of this study is to investigate the look-up behavior of bilingualized dictionaries of Hong Kong students. It focuses on the frequency of use of dictionary information and how useful such information is perceived. Comparison has also been made between students more proficient in English vocabulary and those less proficient to identify the dictionary look-up behavior which may enhance L2 vocabulary learning. The subjects under study included more than 1,000 students who had just been admitted to the 7 tertiary institutions of Hong Kong. The instrument for data collection comprised a questionnaire and the Word Levels Test. Data were analysed using *f*-test, multiple comparison, *t*-test and correlation analysis. Findings of the study indicate that focusing on the Chinese equivalents of English words, students in general make very limited use of the bilingualized dictionary, especially the information related to the speech habit and the social and cultural life of the L2 speakers, such as collocation and appropriateness. The more proficient students, however, make fuller use of the bilingualized dictionary. Implications of these and other findings are discussed and suggestions are made regarding the teaching of dictionary skills in EAP courses.*

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Introduction

As the dictionary is an indispensable instrument for learning a second or foreign language, a lot of research has been conducted into language learners' dictionaries, which has in turn improved the quality of these dictionaries. As Hartmann (1994, pp. 239–240) points out, the commercial success of dictionaries for foreign learners of English has been made possible by four kinds of research into dictionaries including the history, typology, criticism, and use of dictionary. Regarding the types of dictionaries compiled for second or foreign language learners, there has been the development moving from bilingual to monolingual and further to bilingualized dictionaries. Dictionaries for specific purposes have also been compiled. The following will look at the strengths and weaknesses of the bilingual, monolingual, and bilingualized dictionaries.

The major function of the bilingual dictionaries is to provide L1 equivalents of L2 words. This kind of dictionaries are popular because they are useful for quick consultation (Bejoint & Moulin, 1987). Observational user studies have also indicated that bilingual dictionaries are particularly useful to beginners of L2 (Hartmann, 1983, 1994). The insufficiencies of this kind of dictionaries are that they provide limited information about L2 words, and more problematically, the focus on L1 and L2 equivalents will give learners the wrong message that there are perfect equivalents in two languages, thereby weakening their awareness to the important fact that different languages may have different semantic and stylistic characteristics.

The monolingual dictionaries, on the other hand, are learners' dictionaries in the target language such as the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* and the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. Unlike the dictionaries for the native speakers of the target language, by using restricted vocabulary, monolingual learners' dictionaries, with lots of examples and illustrations, give information about the various senses, the grammatical patterns, the stylistic usage, the pronunciation and other related information of L2 words. The main disadvantage of this kind of dictionaries is that students who are less proficient in L2 may not be able to benefit much from them. Nevertheless, "most authors agree that the advantage of the monolingual English learner's dictionary in terms of its reliance on the target language outweighs the disadvantage ... and the deliberately sought semantic, grammatical and stylistic explicitness allows — even encourages — productive activities" (Hartmann, 1992, p. 153). Recently, with the

advance of technology and the development in computational linguistics, monolingual dictionaries for learners have been compiled based on large text corpora. The *Cobuild Dictionary*, for example, "provides new evidence not only on the frequency of vocabulary items but also on the syntactic and pragmatic properties of words and phrases." (Hartmann, 1992, p. 153).

There are also new types of dictionaries such as the *Longman Lexicon*, which is a "new style thesaurus which gives definitions in context for a limited learners' vocabulary in thematic groups" (Hartmann, 1991, p. 7) and the *Longman Language Activator*, which "combines features of the decoding dictionary with those of an encoding dictionary by supplying, in a single alphabetic macrostructure, both semantic discrimination between the different senses of a headword within the entry and conceptual cross-reference to synonyms between different entries" (Hartmann, 1994, p. 242).

The bilingualized dictionaries, growing in popularity, is a "hybrid dictionary type" and "a compromise between the monolingual and the bilingual learner's dictionary, combining the advantages of both" (Hartmann, 1994, p. 243). They are "the results of an adaptation of unilingual [monolingual] English learners' dictionaries which have all or part of their entries translated into the mother tongue of the learner" (ibid.). Hartmann (1991, p. 79) remarks, "the trend towards bilingualized LD's [learners' dictionaries] ... is in line with the double criticism that, on the one hand, monolingual LD's are still too much like NSD's [native-speaker dictionaries] and, on the other hand, straightforward bilingual dictionaries are too far removed from the target language and tend to encourage interference errors because they promote a mistaken trust in direct word-for-word equivalents."

Typical examples of bilingualized dictionaries are the Chinese versions of the *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* and the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. The former has been popular in the Far East since 1984 as reported by Hartmann (1992, p. 154). In fact, the self-report of Year One students who have attended the EAP courses taught by the researcher in the past five years has indicated that nearly 90% of the students are users of the two bilingualized dictionaries mentioned above. They find bilingualized dictionaries more helpful than the monolingual ones and also because these dictionaries are among those recommended by most secondary schools.

Regarding research into bilingualized dictionaries, Laufer and Kimmel

(1997) conducted an experiment to find out which part of the entry learners might read when they looked up an unfamiliar word in the dictionary: the monolingual, the bilingual, or both as intended by the producers of the bilingualized dictionary and they found that only 13% of the subjects under study used the whole entry for most of the words while the majority of learners preferred to use one language in the entry rather than two and they concluded that different people have different preferred look-up patterns. Laufer and Harder (1997) carried out another experiment to assess the effectiveness of the monolingual, bilingual, and bilingualized dictionaries and came to the conclusion that different dictionaries might accommodate different abilities in dictionary use.

In Hong Kong, Taylor (1988) made an investigation into the dictionary use of 122 students in one of the tertiary institutions. The survey employed a questionnaire to find out the dictionaries used, the reasons for dictionary choice, the type of dictionary use, the frequency of dictionary use, the problems of dictionary use, and factors discouraging dictionary use. It was found that 50% of the students used a "bilingual" dictionary and their dictionary choice was influenced mainly by the school. It was also discovered that the most frequent use of dictionaries was finding out word meanings and the least frequent use was looking up grammatical information. The major problems of dictionary use were pronunciation symbols and identifying the right meaning of words, and the overriding factor which discouraged dictionary use was the amount of time taken to consult a dictionary.

Taylor's study was conducted more than ten years ago and involved the students of only one tertiary institution. With the growing popularity of bilingualized dictionaries and the expansion in tertiary education in Hong Kong, there is the need to research into the dictionary use of university freshmen using a more representative sample. The present study is different from Taylor's in that it is a large-scale study where all the participants were newly admitted to the 7 tertiary institutions of Hong Kong. While Taylor's study was a survey looking into the dictionary use of the students in general, the present study focuses particularly on the frequency of use of the various types of information in the bilingualized dictionary and how useful they are perceived by the students. Also, comparison is made between the students with bigger and smaller vocabulary size to identify the dictionary behavior which is related to L2 vocabulary proficiency.

This study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. How frequently do students under study use bilingualized dictionaries and to what extent do they find them useful?
2. What types of information in the bilingualized dictionary do the students use more often and how useful do they perceive them?
3. Is there any relationship between the use of the various kinds of information in the bilingualized dictionary?
4. Are there any differences in dictionary use between students more proficient and less proficient in English vocabulary?

Methodology

This study was based on part of the data collected for a vocabulary project researching into the vocabulary knowledge and the vocabulary learning strategies of the tertiary students of Hong Kong.

The subjects under study included 1,076 first year degree students newly admitted to the 7 tertiary institutions of Hong Kong including the Baptist University, the Chinese University, the City University, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Hong Kong University, the Lingnan College (now University) and the University of Science and Technology. The number of students invited to take part in the study was proportionate to the student intake in each of the 7 institutions in the same academic year. The subjects were systematically selected according to the alphabetical order of their names across all faculties.

The instruments for data collection in the vocabulary project comprised a vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire and the Word Levels Test (Nation, 1990). This study made use of the information collected from a section of the questionnaire on dictionary strategies which consists of 13 questions. The first two questions are about the type of dictionaries used and the other 11 questions about the use of the various kinds of information provided by bilingualized dictionaries including information concerning the meanings of words, i.e., Context Meaning, All Meanings, Chinese Equivalents, and English Definitions, and information related to the usages of words, i.e., Parts of Speech, Derived Forms, Grammatical Usages, Collocations, Pronunciation, Frequency, and Appropriateness. Respondents are required to give two responses to each question. The first response is related to how frequently they use a certain kind of dictionary information and the second is related to how useful they perceive it. This design was based on the assumption that students may frequently use information which they do not consider too useful, and vice versa. For frequency of use,

the scale ranges from 1 (never), 2 (seldom), 3 (sometimes), 4 (often) to 5 (very often). Regarding perceived usefulness, the scale includes 1 (not useful), 2 (not sure), 3 (quite useful), 4 (very useful) and 5 (extremely useful). The questionnaire is in English with Chinese translation alongside to ensure perfect comprehension.

As for the Word Levels Test (Nation, 1990), it was designed to assess the vocabulary knowledge of the testees at various word levels, consisting of both words of high and low frequency. Testees are required to select the right word for a given meaning. The version of the test used for this study was a long version provided by Professor Paul Nation himself, consisting of 360 questions with 72 questions at each of the five word levels: 2,000, 3,000, University Word List, 5,000 and 10,000 levels. For this study, the overall result of the Word Levels Test was calculated and used as an indicator of the vocabulary proficiency of the subjects under study. It should, however, be pointed out that the Word Levels Test is a test on receptive vocabulary knowledge only.

Both the questionnaire and the vocabulary test were mailed to 5,000 (about half) of the students newly admitted to the degree programs in the seven tertiary institutions and the return rate was 20.08%. The purpose of the vocabulary project was explained to the students in the letter enclosing the questionnaire and the vocabulary test and they were asked to sign and return an agreement that they would do the test in the prescribed manner should they decide to take part in the project. For example, they had to agree to work entirely on their own.

For analysis, the questionnaire data were summarized by calculating the mean scores of the student's responses to both the frequency of use and perceived usefulness. While the 5 point scale provides a rough idea about the responses of students, the *f*-test and multiple comparison were used to find out whether there were any significant differences among the means. Correlational analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between the use of different types of dictionary information. The *t*-test was employed to identify the significant differences between the more proficient and the less proficient groups in terms of both use and usefulness.

Findings

Bilingualized Dictionaries

First of all, an investigation was made into the use and perceived

usefulness of bilingualized dictionaries. Findings are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Frequency of Use of Bilingualized Dictionaries (n = 1083)

How often do you use a bilingualized dictionary?					
Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Total
1.8%	7.2%	19.4%	35.0%	36.5%	100%

Table 2. Perceived Usefulness of Bilingualized Dictionaries (n = 1083)

How useful do you find it?					
Not useful	Not sure	Quite useful	Very useful	Extremely useful	Total
1.8%	5.2%	23.1%	39.8%	29.9%	100%

Although the two scales of frequency of use and perceived usefulness are not directly comparable, it is apparent that the students under study used the bilingualized dictionary quite often and they considered it useful. Only 108 (about 10%) of the students reported that they "never" or "seldom" used the bilingualized dictionary. These findings are consistent with the self-report of the students described earlier.

The Use and Usefulness of Bilingualized Dictionary Information

Another aim of the study is to find out how frequently students use the various kinds of information in the bilingualized dictionary. For this purpose, only students who reported that they "sometimes," "often," and "very often" used bilingualized dictionaries were selected, amounting to 985 in total. For expedience, in the remaining part of this paper, the term "dictionary" refers to "bilingualized dictionary." Results of the findings are shown in Table 3.

Roughly speaking, the students under study "often" used the dictionary to look up the Context Meaning of words, they "sometimes" looked up the Chinese Equivalents, the Parts of Speech, the Derived Forms, the Grammatical Usages, the English Definitions, and All Meanings of words and they "seldom" looked up information concerning the Collocations, Pronunciation, Frequency, and Appropriateness of words.

Further analysis on the means for the various kinds of dictionary information using f-test ($p < .001$) and multiple comparison ($p < .05$) showed a clearer picture. First, students looked up the Context Meaning of

Table 3. A Rank Order of the Frequency of Use of Dictionary Information

Dictionary information	Frequency of use (n = 985)	
	Mean	SD
Context Meaning	4.06	0.84
Chinese Equivalents	3.89	1.06
Parts of Speech	3.62	1.05
Derived Forms	3.34	0.97
Grammatical Usages	3.32	1.00
English Definitions	3.32	1.00
All Meanings	3.14	0.99
Collocations	2.82	0.99
Pronunciation	2.61	1.20
Frequency	2.52	1.09
Appropriateness	2.29	1.06

words significantly more often than all their meanings, which did not come as a surprise as they were all advanced L2 learners. Secondly, the Chinese Equivalents of words were looked up significantly more often than their English Definitions though both are available in the dictionary. Thirdly, the Parts of Speech of words were looked up significantly more often than their Derived Forms and Grammatical Usages despite that these three kinds of word knowledge are closely connected with one another. Fourthly, although the means for Collocations, Pronunciation, Frequency, and Appropriateness were below 3, significant differences were found between the mean for Collocations and those for the other three kinds of information, indicating students in general feel a greater need for knowledge of collocations of words.

Analysis of the perceived usefulness of dictionary information, however, suggested a somewhat different picture as shown in Table 4.

First of all, Grammatical Usages which was ranked 5th in frequency of use was, unexpectedly, rated the highest in usefulness. In fact, results of multiple comparison indicated that the means for both Grammatical Usages and Context Meaning were significantly higher than those of all the other items. The high ranking of Grammatical Usages may be explained by the fact that Hong Kong students, and Chinese students in general, regard the learning of grammar as very important in the learning of a foreign or second language.

In contrast, Chinese Equivalents, which was ranked 2nd in frequency of use dropped to 7th in perceived usefulness. Indeed, results of multiple

Table 4. A Rank Order of Perceived Usefulness of Dictionary Information

Dictionary information	Perceived usefulness (n = 985)	
	Mean	SD
Grammatical Usages	4.00	0.92
Context Meaning	3.95	0.85
Parts of Speech	3.80	1.0
Derived Forms	3.80	0.94
English Definitions	3.75	0.97
Collocations	3.69	1.01
Chinese Equivalentents	3.61	1.02
All Meanings	3.61	1.07
Pronunciation	3.23	1.16
Frequency	2.83	1.04
Appropriateness	2.70	1.09

comparison revealed that the mean for Chinese Equivalentents was significantly lower than those for Parts of Speech and Derived Forms and as low as those of English Definitions, Collocations, and All Meanings. These findings will be discussed further in the final section of the paper.

Relationship Between the Use of Various Types of Dictionary Information

The third aim of the study is to find out whether there is any relationship between the use of various kinds of information in the dictionary. To this end, correlation analysis was conducted. Results of the analysis indicated that positive correlations were found between the use of all types of dictionary information except Chinese Equivalentents, which correlated positively with only three types of dictionary information as shown in Table 5.

The above findings suggest that the more students looked up the Chinese Equivalentents of words English, the more they would ignore the other kinds of information in the dictionary including English Definitions, Pronunciation, Derived Forms, Grammatical Usages, Collocations, Frequency, and Appropriateness, and the negative correlation with English Definitions was found to be significant.

Dictionary Use of Learners of Different Vocabulary Proficiency

In order to find out whether students with different vocabulary size use the

Table 5. Correlations between Chinese Equivalents and Other Types of Information in Bilingualized Dictionaries

	Chinese equivalents
English Definitions	-0.066*
Pronunciation	-0.030
All meanings	0.017
Context meanings	0.221**
Parts of Speech	0.112**
Derived Forms	-0.055
Grammatical Usages	-0.057
Collocations	-0.050
Frequency	-0.042
Appropriateness	-0.008

* Significant (2-tailed) $p < .05$. ** Significant (2-tailed) $p = .000$.

dictionary differently, the overall results of the Word Levels Test were calculated and employed to identify students of higher and lower proficiency in English vocabulary knowledge. The top and bottom 33% of the students in the test were selected for comparison.

First of all, we look at the behavior of the two groups in terms of frequency of use (Table 6).

Results of the t-test showed significant differences between the two groups in the use of all the dictionary information, except Chinese Equivalents and All Meanings, indicating that students who acquired a larger vocabulary used more information in the dictionary than those who ac-

Table 6. Differences Between the Two Groups in Frequency of Use

Dictionary information	Top (n = 316)		Bottom (n = 306)		T- value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Context Meaning	4.15	0.80	3.92	0.93	-3.309*
Chinese Equivalents	3.83	1.03	3.87	1.16	-0.386
Parts of Speech	3.72	1.00	3.51	1.07	-2.454*
English Definitions	3.57	1.04	3.04	0.94	-6.819*
Derived Forms	3.50	0.90	3.27	0.98	-3.005*
Grammatical Usages	3.50	0.90	3.12	1.01	-4.812*
All Meanings	3.22	1.00	3.09	1.00	-1.572
Collocations	2.98	1.01	2.37	0.96	-3.165*
Pronunciations	2.88	1.30	2.41	1.05	-4.9*
Frequency	2.68	1.20	2.39	1.01	-3.394*
Appropriateness	2.59	1.10	2.01	0.93	-6.925*

* Significant at .05.

quired less. Chinese Equivalents was rated relatively high and All Meanings relatively low by both groups suggesting the reliance on L1 by students in general and their skill in looking up the context meaning of words instead of all their meanings. The two groups were then compared in terms of perceived usefulness (Table 7).

Table 7. Differences Between the Two Groups in Perceived Usefulness

Dictionary information	Top (n = 316)		Bottom (n = 306)		T- value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Grammatical Usages	4.07	0.93	3.97	0.91	-1.301
Context Meaning	4.05	0.84	3.86	0.85	-2.806*
Parts of Speech	3.87	1.02	3.75	1.01	-1.425
Derived Form	3.86	0.98	3.79	0.98	-0.897
English Definitions	3.85	0.97	3.61	1.04	-2.934*
All Meanings	3.67	1.10	3.59	1.06	-0.871
Collocations	3.80	1.04	3.65	0.99	-1.842
Chinese Equivalents	3.56	1.04	3.63	1.07	-0.772
Pronunciation	3.40	1.21	3.04	1.13	-3.682*
Appropriateness	2.95	1.17	2.49	1.06	-5.144*
Frequency	2.92	1.13	2.71	1.01	-2.485*

* Significant at .05.

Although the top group reported using most of the dictionary information significantly more often than the bottom group, when it comes to perceived usefulness, significant differences were only found between the two groups in respect of Context Meaning, English Definitions, Pronunciation, Frequency, and Appropriateness. That is to say, the top group used these five kinds of information much more often and regarded them as much more useful. It should also be mentioned that within the top group itself, Collocations was considered significantly more useful than Chinese Equivalents.

Summary and Discussion

This paper attempts to find out the dictionary look-up behavior of Hong Kong students. It has been found that the overwhelming majority of students use bilingualized dictionaries and they find them useful. At the same time, findings of the study have revealed that most students make only limited use of bilingualized dictionaries, which lends support to some of the findings in Laufer and Kimmel (1997).

As one of the most important functions of dictionaries is to provide word meanings, it is understandable that L2 learners consult dictionaries most frequently for the meanings of new words. What deserves our concern is that while it is natural for L2 learners to use their L1 to establish the meanings of new words, there is the danger that the over-reliance on Chinese equivalents of words may lead to the neglect of other kinds of knowledge concerning the word as evidenced by the present study. At the same time, the findings that students did not consider the Chinese equivalents of words very useful though they looked them up frequently may suggest that students are already aware of the limitation of focusing only on the Chinese equivalents of new words. This implication justifies the need to help students understand the correct concept of word knowledge.

On the other hand, the dictionary information which was used least often by the students in general included the collocation, the pronunciation, the frequency and the appropriate usages of words and, except for collocation, such information was also considered least useful. Nevertheless, the more proficient students were found to use all these four kinds of information significantly more often and regarded them as more useful. That students on the whole are not aware of the importance of these aspects of word knowledge in learning the target language is another cause for concern. The following will discuss in greater details the nature of these aspects of word knowledge, their relevance to L2 competence and why learners have problems with them.

Knowledge of collocation involves what words can be expected before or after a word or used with this word. Collocation is a difficult area for L2 learners because while it is sometimes possible to predict the collocates of a word, this may not always be the case. For example, it is not possible to explain why *rancid* butter is used but *rancid* egg is not. For another example, there is no explanation for the acceptability of a *flock* of sheep and the unacceptability of a *herd* of sheep (Palmer, 1981, p. 77). In fact, the problem of L2 learners in collocation has been researched into by many (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993; Brown, 1974; Chi, Wong, & Wong, 1994; Fan, 1991; Mackin, 1978). Similarly, the importance of collocation in the L2 learner's dictionary has been highlighted by linguists or applied linguists alike (Aisenstadt, 1979; Cowie, 1981). Recently, as a result of technology advancement and the development in corpus linguistics, dictionary compilers are now able to provide more information on collocations in language use.

Frequency is related to how common a word is and how often it should be used. Information on frequency has also been made available by the

application of corpus linguistics. For example, dictionaries, particularly dictionaries based on corpora, are now able to provide information about frequencies of words with similar meaning. For instance, dictionary users are supplied with the information "now is much more common than present and at the moment in both spoken and written English. At the moment is more common in spoken English than in written English. Present is the least common of the three. It is formal, and is only used before a noun, for example in expressions such as 'the present situation,' 'the present leader' etc" (Summers & Rundell, 1995, p. 1112). The frequency of words is obviously closely associated with the habit of a speech community of which the L2 learner are most likely to be ignorant.

Appropriateness is connected with where we expect to meet a word and where the word can be used. Nation (1990, p. 39) states that "inappropriate usage occurs when a second language learner uses an old-fashioned word instead of the more usual one, an impolite word instead of a polite one, American usage where British usage would be more appropriate, or formal language when more colloquial usage would be useful." Again, this information has now been made available in most dictionaries. For example, in Cowie (1989), the adjective *skinny* is followed by the warning "*infml usu derog*" (p. 1194); the noun *kid* is reported as associated with informal usage and the adjective *kid* is reported as used in informal and American English e.g. *kid brother/sister* (p. 686). Such kinds of information are particularly useful to students using the L2 for communication purposes.

Knowledge of pronunciation is essential to the production of speech. Communication may be hampered by the incorrect pronunciation of words or the failure to put stress on the right syllable. In fact, knowledge of pronunciation is related not only to the use of L2 words but also to their acquisition. Research findings have shown that when students know how to say a word, it is easier for him/her to commit the word to memory (Chi et al., 1994; Fan, 1998; Fan, Ho, & Ranson, 1996). However, it is a fact that most students have difficulty with phonetic scripts (Taylor, 1988, p. 89) and this will continue unremedied until they get help from the teacher.

It may therefore be said that in terms of L2 use the above four aspects of word knowledge are as important as the grammatical usages of words, which students perceive as most useful. But as they are closely intertwined with the cultural and social life of the speakers of L2, it is understandable why L2 learners in general are not aware of their significance and seldom look them up in the dictionary. This also explains why students who are

more competent in the L2 look up such dictionary information more often and find them more useful. In a place like Hong Kong where more than 98% of the inhabitants are Chinese, students do not have much chance to pick up the L2 or to acquire L2 vocabulary in a natural environment even though English has a more important role to play than in countries like Japan and Korea. To achieve L2 competence, there is the need for our students to learn these aspects of the target language consciously. The dictionary is definitely one of the most valuable sources of input for learning these aspects of the target language.

All the findings of the present study having been taken into consideration, it is suggested that in the teaching of dictionary skills in EAP courses, it is important to:

- first and foremost clarify to the students the idea of word knowledge: knowing a word involves not only knowledge of its Chinese equivalent but other kinds of knowledge concerning the word;
- introduce them to the various aspects of word knowledge provided by the dictionary;
- specify the function of each aspect of word knowledge, e.g. Chinese equivalents and English definitions help with the comprehension of the target language, and grammatical and collocational patterns help with the production;
- encourage students to make fuller use of the dictionary and as often as it is appropriate since dictionary use is positively related to vocabulary proficiency. For instance, in addition to the Chinese equivalents of words, they may also read the English definitions, which provide them with more input in the target language and thus enhance their English;
- emphasize the significance of word knowledge such as collocations, frequency, pronunciation, and appropriateness in achieving L2 competence; and
- teach phonetic scripts to students so that they can use the dictionary to find out how to pronounce words correctly and gain more confidence in speaking.

Above all, it is of utmost importance for teachers to introduce to the students the various types of dictionaries available in the market apart from the bilingualized ones such as the monolingual, the alphabetic, and the thematic dictionaries. The focus should be on the particular kind of services individual type or individual dictionaries offer so that students may

know which dictionary to consult for their particular reference needs. For instance, when they need the dictionary for writing, a thesaurus type dictionary such as the *Longman Lexicon* will be especially useful.

As "dictionary reference is a complicated business," it is not enough just to recommend dictionaries to our students. To help them reap the benefits of good dictionaries, they need to be taught explicitly how to use them (Hartmann, 1991, p. 9). Skills in using dictionaries are still an area that requires further exploitation. Teachers may need to work very closely together with learners to find out ways to use dictionaries more efficiently for specific purposes. Also, it should be emphasized that although dictionary skills are taught in the university, there is no reason why they are not taught in the primary and the secondary schools to meet the needs of students at different phases of L2 learning.

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