



Exploring the English Language Teachers' Attitudes Towards the Use of Pedagogical Dictionaries in their Classes (Sudanese Perspective)

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Abstract

The dictionary should always be present in language education. It is the tool with which EFL teachers can effectively perform teaching tasks in their classes. Good teachers should take on the habit of consulting their dictionaries to assimilate the lexical, syntactical, phonological, morphological, etymological and more other features of one word or expression that a good dictionary can provide. This paper is investigating the attitudes of English language teachers in the use of this important teaching aid. It is an additional viewpoint from EL teachers in four Sudanese State Universities on the use of dictionary in their classes. The findings of this research might be of significance to other researchers, teachers, language learners and textbook designers; and the results may be applicable in many similar EFL environments round the globe.

Keywords: pedagogy, monolingual dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, ELT, Sudanese universities

1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Dictionaries have long been the focus of a considerable body of research (e.g. Atkins, 1985, Bejoint, 1994, Stein, 1991, 1999, 2002; Hartmann, 1991 and Wright, 2001), but insufficient interest is shown in studying the habits of users in the use of dictionaries; so there is a gap that this study will attempt to fill. Hence, the dictionary users (teachers & learners) have singularly been left out of the picture, ignored or overlooked. The role of teachers in the use of this tool should be investigated and this paper is an attempt of this type of efforts, as it will discuss the attitudes of Sudanese teachers in handling this issue.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This research is restricted to investigate the attitudes of Sudanese university teachers towards the use of monolingual English dictionaries. Moreover, the focus will be on British English and British EFL dictionaries such as Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims at:

- 1- Investigating aspects pertaining to EFL monolingual dictionaries.
- 2- Emphasising the almost inexhaustible potential of dictionaries for generating new and motivating communicative skills.
- 3- Encouraging teachers to integrate dictionaries into their pedagogical resources.

1.4 Research Questions

The study attempts to investigate Sudanese EFL teachers' dictionary knowledge and practice; it is specifically designed to provide answers for the following questions:

- 1- How do Sudanese teachers use monolingual dictionaries in teaching classes?
- 2- What type of information in these dictionaries do they provide their students in a practical way?
- 3- What types of common difficulties do teachers meet while using dictionaries?

1.5 Significance of the Research

The significance of this research stems from the dearth of studies on the pedagogical implications of lexicography from teachers' view point, in general and in Sudan in particular. This is one of a few, to the best of the researchers' knowledge that tackle the subject investigating the degree of the benefit of Sudanese teachers from the wealth of information that dictionaries offer. Though Ahmed (1999) investigated monolingual dictionaries in a Sudanese context; his research only covered the students' attitudes. It depended on a questionnaire but did not include the use of dictionaries by teachers to execute active language tasks. The present research deals with that area and adds some dimensions replicated from such studies as by Hartmann (2001) and Stein (2002).

1.6 Subjects of the Study

The subjects of this study include teachers of English language in Sudanese English departments, in four state Sudanese Universities. Our sample consists of M.A. and PhD holders, mostly educated in an EFL context, who filled in the questionnaire. We followed the stratified random sampling method to the total population of the English Departments in the four universities as provided by the registrars of the respective institutions, 50 teachers were specifically chosen out of the total population of 120 teachers. This proportion can be justified by the relative ease in filling out questionnaires and also by the fact that questionnaire method can probe the general tendencies among the population and we need a large group to carry this out instruments validation

2. Literature

It is paradoxical that most of dictionary research focused on studying the habits of learners (students) in the use of their dictionaries. We can mention here (Ard:(1982); Atkins:(1998). Baxter:(1980); Bejoint: (1994); Benoussan: (1984); Bogaards: (2001); Bourdieu: (1991); Fan:(2000); Hartmann: (2004) and Hathedral (1994), among many others, who have tackled this issue; but a little is said about studying the *habits* or *attitudes* of *teachers* in the use of dictionaries in classes. This survey is an attempt to fill this gap by investigating the topic in Sudanese context, by having the opinions of 50 university teachers.

But to be specific about the above generalization of lack of studies on this issue, we can mention one study by Miller:(2008), in Australia, who carried out a similar study in 2008 and came out with some findings. She (ibid) contented that it has long been the desire of dictionary makers that students should not only use dictionaries more, but receive training in their use. Teachers are the obvious providers of such training, but are they in a position to provide it? Miller put this question forward.

Miller's survey targeted teachers of English to non-native speakers in Australian language schools and universities. It was aimed to discover teachers' attitudes to and use of dictionaries in their English classes, particularly in relation to learners' dictionaries in the teaching of grammar, collocations and idioms. The majority of the teachers community who responded to the survey used dictionaries when preparing teaching material, but a few said that they provided dictionary training in class, and very few commented on specific uses that could be made of dictionaries.

She found that several of the respondents to the questionnaire had good dictionary skills themselves, and some had ideas for dictionary improvement. Miller found that most respondents were sympathetic toward dictionary use, but few had received training in this area. She also found that many others seemed still to be unaware of the potential advantages of an English learners' dictionary in the language classroom. The majority of teachers in her survey were thus not adequately equipped to provide comprehensive training in dictionary skills for their students.

According to Prichard (2008), instructors following traditional grammar-translation methods have tended to focus on decoding text and have encouraged the extensive use of dictionaries. However, current communicative practices in the field focus on strategic reading and inferring the meaning of unknown words from context (Grabe & Stoller, 2004; Knight, 1994; Laufer, 1997), and many teachers discourage the use of dictionaries altogether in the reading classroom (Bensoussan, Sim, & Weiss, 1984). Prichard (2008), also asserts that teachers' views on dictionary use do not always seem to be based on empirical evidence as investigated by many schools such as (Lupescu & Day, 1993), though in the past two decades researchers have paid more attention to examining the efficacy of dictionary use.

A number of studies have focused on the post reading vocabulary and comprehension scores of learners with and without the use of dictionaries (Bogaards, 1998; Knight, 1994; Lupescu & Day, 1993; Summers, 1988). Though studies have shown contrasting results, most have demonstrated that dictionary use can enable and better comprehension.

Stein (2013), argues that foreign language teaching has to include the use

of both bilingual dictionaries and those monolingual dictionaries specially written for learners. Bilingual dictionaries are an essential aid for providing ready translation equivalents for common words, and exact

translation equivalents for technical terms. He believes that Monolingual learner's dictionaries provide access to the world of meaning discriminations made by the target language; and provide definitions which distinguish subtle differences in meaning.

We believe that dictionary using skills must be taught, and these have to include paraphrasing skills. Stein put a question about what we can as teachers do to make our learners grasp the nature of monolingual English meaning descriptions. He believes that the most successful teaching method is to relate the new unit to something familiar and known, to point out the similarities between the old and the new. Stein thinks that the link that we have to provide is

that such descriptions are very similar to a type of linguistic behaviour that we all practice in our mother tongue when someone asks us what something means. Stein declares that:

What holds for me, and many, many language teachers in Europe, may also hold for many of you: no one ever taught, showed us how to use a dictionary successfully; neither at school, nor at university, nor at the teacher's training college. We had to work it out for ourselves then, and we still are doing so. Yet our teaching should not wholly be determined by what we were taught when we have recognized that modern foreign language teaching methodology has neglected a central aspect in the language acquisition process, we have to do something about it. (Retrieved June 20 2013)

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an account of the methodology employed in this study to achieve the intended objectives. In pursuance of these goals, the subjects of the study are described and so is the allocation of sample size as well as data collection instruments. The section also covers the validity and reliability of the instruments used to obtain the information and the pilot administration for the tools. Finally, the section overviews the methods adopted in carrying out the study.

3.2 Subjects of the study

The subjects of this study were teachers of English language in Sudanese English departments. A sample of 50 teachers with M.A. and Ph.D holders mostly educated in an EFL context filled in the questionnaire. A stratified random sample design method was used in which the population was grouped into strata. Thereby randomization is achieved and an equal chance of appearing is enjoyed by the population. This method of stratified random sample design, according to Bachmann (1990), achieves generalisability of the results obtained from the whole population as well as representativeness.

3.3 Validation and Instruments Administration

The questionnaire was piloted on five lecturers from the University of Khartoum to obtain comments on the statements of the questionnaire. The referees went through the questionnaire and suggested some modifications so the questionnaire that made the questionnaire to be reduced to 30 items in the final draft. Then questionnaire was handed out to the examinees and collected by the researchers themselves.

The questionnaire comprises 30 statements to be distributed among 50 teachers. It investigates teachers' beliefs about dictionaries, their personal use and their evaluation of some dictionary types, inclusion of dictionaries in lectures, and their beliefs about the place dictionaries must have within the English language syllabus. It is expected to give information on students' performance for the simple reason that teachers' beliefs are directly reflected in teaching practices and prioritization of certain language skills at the expense of others. The highlighting or otherwise of lexicography will relate directly to students' beliefs, shown in the latter's questionnaire, and in their practice in tests.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts. Part A, comprising 8 statements, inquires into teachers' beliefs about the value of dictionaries. Part B includes seven statements and surveys teachers' opinions regarding the usefulness of dictionaries for students. Part C, consists of seven statements, covers the actual use teachers put dictionaries to during their lectures. Part D is made up of six statements concerning teachers' beliefs about the inclusion of lexicographical studies in the syllabus and dictionary teaching and assessment.

The respondents were asked to mark their opinions on the Likert four-point scale extending from "strongly agree", "agree", "not sure," "disagree" to "strongly disagree", and from "always", "often", "sometimes" "rarely" ~o "never", and, finally, from "excellent", "very good", "quite good", "not sure" to "poor". In this scale, respondents are given a statement and expected to determine the degree of their agreement. This summated scale is used by giving values from 1-5 to work out the value of each" statement against a given response. Thus, opinions and attitudes are transformed into an interval scale which is amenable to statistical analysis, and comparison among different

statements is possible. Moreover, the Likert scale usually has a high level of reliability because it measures precisely the respondents' intensity of opinion according to Brown (1996)

4. Analysis, Discussion and interpretation of survey

In this part of the research we are going to deal with the analysis of the questionnaire. Our analysis is going to be based on examining each statement and make general conclusion from the whole section. We have used the percentage as a simple means of eliciting responses from our subjects. A comment is used when some discrepancies are encountered where the researchers would expect a different response. For example the first statement seems to be very shocking as we discover with regret that (31) e.g. 62% of the respondents expressed their lack of enthusiasm as to integrate dictionaries as a part of effective teaching tool in their classes. So this part is concerned with general preconceptions and clichés about dictionaries, among the teaching community

Table 1. Teachers' general preconceptions about dictionaries

Statement		I strongly agree	I agree	I am not sure	I disagree	I strongly disagree	Total
1. Dictionaries are integral part of language learning	count	3	6	10	23	8	50
	%	6%	12%	20%	46%	16%	100%
2. Teachers should have dictionaries	count	14	11	13	9	3	50
	%	28%	22%	27%	18%	6%	100%
3. Teachers need dictionary more than students	count	1	3	0	29	18	50
	%	2%	6%	0%	58%	35%	100%
4. Teachers should have the source for particular aspects of language (e.g. collocations).	count	5	18	9	13	5	50
	%	10%	36%	18%	26%	10%	100%
5. Dictionaries are pleasurable	count	1	3	8	25	13	50
	%	2%	6%	16%	50%	26%	100%
6. Teachers should look up dictionaries more than students	count	20	5	23	10	10	50
	%	4%	10%	46%	20%	20%	100%
7. Monolingual dictionaries rather than the bilingual's are the normal choice for teachers	count	37	6	7	0	0	50
	%	74%	12%	14%	0%	0%	100%
8. Electronic dictionaries have more to offer than paper ones	count	28	6	7	14	1	50
	%	56%	12%	14%	28%	2%	100%

Dictionaries are *often* hailed with enthusiasm by students, but received with indifference by teachers. As we can see in statement 1 in Table (1) above that 31 teachers which is (62%) of the 50 examinees disagree with the notion of the integrity of dictionaries to language learning. Most of the teachers interviewed would still hold to the rather traditional idea of the four discrete language skills of comprehension, listening, communication and writing. To their way of thinking, dictionaries are peripheral, an addendum that is the sole responsibility of students and not an "integral" part of a formal English language programme.

Statement (2) tests teachers' beliefs about the centrality of dictionaries by inquiring about the possession of dictionaries, one would have expected a unanimous affirmative answer, only to find that only 25 (50%) of the teachers agree with this. Does this mean that some teachers believe themselves to be above dictionary use by virtue of their high academic degree?

Statement (3) is concerned with the teachers' need of dictionaries. This is equivocal, because it might be claimed that they should need dictionaries more as they need to check many new language items they come across in their daily intensive exposure to English. Alternatively, it might be claimed that teachers need dictionaries the less by dint of their advanced levels. Teachers have taken the second, and more conventional, line: as 47 (93%) feel that keeping a dictionary by their side is more a matter of luxury than academic necessity. The researchers, however, observed that the older the teacher, the more s/he believes in the importance of dictionaries and vice versa.

Statement (4) is concerned with conventional dictionaries and thesauruses. As one would have expected, thesauruses for collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms, and synonyms to be an ever-present weapon in teachers' arsenal, as suggested by Stein (2002); however, the figures are low as only 23 (46%) of our teachers endorse this. Indeed, the researchers' have rarely seen any of these specialized dictionaries (except for Cambridge Dictionary of Idioms) in teachers' offices. It was noticed, moreover, how vague teachers' knowledge of this area is. The joys of dictionaries are the focus of statement' (5). The students' view of dictionaries as a necessary medicament rather than an enjoyable exercise is mirrored, or originates, in their teachers' beliefs; as 38 (76%) of them

think dictionaries are inevitable companions of language learning to be approached with realism rather than pleasure. Only 25 (50%) of teachers concur with the view that teachers should look up dictionaries more than students. Their responses tally with those in statement (3), and there is no reason why the majority of teachers should perceive dictionaries as more of teachers' than students' business.

Statement (7) deals with recommended dictionary types. The response of 43 (86%) of teachers to their preference of monolingual dictionaries is predictable. However, their very insistence on monolingual dictionaries in their interviews poses a problem, as bilingual dictionaries have increasingly been shown to offer some benefits not possible with other types and hence teachers should be aware of the dangers of whole-hearted belief in only one dictionary type. If teachers have shown indifference to certain dictionary types such as thesauruses, they are enthusiastic about electronic dictionaries: 34 (78%) believe in the benefits of these dictionaries for all. Perhaps this partiality to electronic dictionaries is facilitated by the fact that a large number of teachers now have laptops, and they can access electronic

dictionaries freely when connected to the internet. To conclude, though the teachers' sample is somewhat small, certain tendencies emerge as they show real lack of intimacy with dictionaries as an indivisible part of English language learning kit.

Table 2. Survey of teachers' views in the value of dictionary for students

Statement		I strongly agree	I agree	I am not sure	I disagree	I strongly disagree	Total
9. University student can achieve competence without resorting to dictionaries.	count	4	17	2	20	7	50
	%	8%	34%	4%	40%	14%	100%
10. Students should consult dictionaries constantly.	count	5	19	22	4	0	50
	%	10%	38%	44%	8%	0%	100%
11. Weaker students are more likely to use dictionaries.	count	35	4	9	2	0	50
	%	70%	8%	18%	4%	0%	100%
12. Use of dictionaries will undoubtedly increase students' vocabulary.	count	11	25	12	2	0	50
	%	22%	50%	24%	4%	0%	100%
13. Some of the students' pronunciation vocabulary are at least caused by lack of dictionary use.	count	0	2	23	19	6	50
	%	0%	4%	46%	38%	12%	100%
14 One way of improving students' writing is by urging them to use dictionaries more..	count	1	3	28	12	5	50
	%	2%	6%	58%	24%	10%	100%
15. Dictionary skills can be an indicator of student's linguistic competence.	count	0	1	3	32	14	50
	%	0%	2%	6%	64%	28%	100%

Table (2) is of a rather generalized nature. The more practical concern, however, is how teachers' think of the dictionary impact on their students. Statement (9) is on the feasibility of a student's gaining command of English with relatively little use of dictionaries. The odds are almost equal: 44% for "yes" as opposed to 40% for "no". One would have expected much higher percentages of agreement, though responses here agree with on the relative neglect of dictionaries. This skepticism is continued in statement (10) on student's need of consulting dictionaries regularly. Again, while one would have expected a uniform agreement, the figures are inconclusive, as only 24 (48%) of the examinees believe in

students' need for consulting dictionaries regularly, with 22 (44%) withholding a fully committed answer. But the responses are not totally surprising as the value of dictionaries has been questioned in the previous statements, and it only naturally follows that not all teachers should recommend the daily use of such a tool.

Teachers' relegation of dictionaries is more evident in statement (11) on how dictionary use relates to language proficiency. While researchers such as Li (2002) and Hartmann (2000) are inclined to believe that a dictionary is needed equally by weaker and competent students who find new ways of exploiting its almost inexhaustible potential as their language progresses. The teachers in this questionnaire took the more conventional view of merely associating dictionary use with weaker students who need improvement and, hence, assigning a minor role to dictionaries, mainly in the formative years of language learning. This belief is borne out by the statistics: as 39 (78%) are in agreement and only 2 (4%) disagreeing. The remainder of this part is more specific, i.e. dealing with the perceptions of how dictionaries relate to the acquisition of language skills. We started with how dictionaries aid in vocabulary acquisition (statement 12) as it is an area where effects of dictionaries are established (Nation, 1990; Luppescu ad Day, 1993). However, only 36 (72%) of our teachers are in agreement with this almost axiomatic fact, that it is one of the main functions of dictionaries whose name "lexicography" is associated with acquisition of lexis, i.e. words. Statement (13) is less consensual, relating as it does to dictionary and pronunciation. While, again, this is a function of dictionaries, we are faced with a problem in that standard phonology textbooks such as Gimson (1989), Giegrich (1992) and Katamba (1996) make no attempt to connect their phonemic descriptions to notations employed in dictionaries. This is probably why so few teachers see the connection: only "2" teachers can ascribe pronunciation problems to lack of dictionary use and 25 (50%), that is half of the teachers; disagree with attributing pronunciation problems to other factors such as faulty teaching. Statement (14) is even more indirect, inquiring about the relation of dictionary to writing. While this has been investigated by such studies as Garcia (2005), the results are far from conclusive.

This may explain the high proportion of 28 (56%) of the unresolved responses. The last statement is what brings in a general perspective of the overall language skills. In some ways this is a statement of the importance of the dictionary as a whole, and is expected to give us a truer view of teachers' belief in these tools. Teachers are apt to adopt the opinion that ability to use a dictionary cannot be an indicator of linguistic competence. In our interviews, teachers spoke of the four language skills as better embodying students' capacity in using a language. Communicative competence was

particularly stressed, though some opted for writing. It is true that these are more visible and much more analyzed aspects of the-language, but the researchers see no reason why dictionaries, the boiling pot of language, cannot be a reliable indicator of competence. This area needs to be addressed by researchers worldwide.

Table 3. how teachers make use of dictionaries in classroom activities

Statement		always	often	sometimes	rarely	never	total
16. I encourage my students to use dictionaries during classes.	Count	0	0	1	7	42	50
	%	0%	0%	2%	14%	84%	100%
17. I observe the rate of my students who use dictionaries during lectures.	count	0	1	7	4	38	50
	%	0%	2%	14%	8%	76%	100%
18. I tell my students that good use of dictionaries can have a positive impact on their language performance.	count	0	3	10	7	30	50
	%	0%	6%	20%	14%	60%	100%
19. I train my students in dictionary related- exercises (e.g. pronunciation, part of speech, collocations.)	count	0	4	9	22	15	50
	%	0%	8%	18%	44%	30%	100%
20. I point out to my students the relative advantages and disadvantages of using monolingual and bilingual dictionaries.	count	0	0	5	19	26	50
	%	0%	0%	10%	38%	52%	100%
21. I integrate dictionary skills into my general English syllabus.	count	1	0	7	11	31	50
	%	2%	0%	14%	22%	62%	100%
22. I direct my students to use dictionaries independently at home as part of their general language learning technique.	count	3	8	13	6	20	50
	%	6%	16%	26%	12%	40%	100%
23. I tell my students to consult their dictionaries during their reading and writing exercises.	count	6	7	16	18	3	50
	%	12%	14%	32%	36%	6%	100%

Table (3) deals with how teachers make use of dictionaries in classroom activities within the framework of teaching English language. Statement (16) presents the teachers' encouragement for using dictionaries. Since the nature of our classrooms is teacher-centered, it is only natural to expect teachers to take the lead by spurring their students during class. None of our teachers does so regularly, and 42 (84%) never do, on the grounds, as they said in the interviews, that a dictionary use interrupts the tempo of lectures. We suspect a deeper reason in the lack of conviction in dictionary role as shown in the preceding statements. This is clearly more of the reason, as is clear from statement (17) which shows things to be even worse, that respondents not only withhold encouragement but are even unaware of the use of dictionary in their class. This is simply some sort of indifference, because had they had the conviction, dictionaries, they would not have been so inconspicuous to 38 (86%) of them. Even supposing dictionaries to be important in teachers' views, they never take the trouble of explicitly telling students, so (statement 18), and at least 30 (66%) of them "never" do so. It is expected, though, that every teacher would have a place for dictionaries in his conception of language. Statement (19) is significant because it concerns teachers' handling of the dictionary components in detail. 37 (74%) of the teachers hardly ever refer to dictionary in their General English lessons. Some told the researchers that they would normally do so if the syllabus e.g. the (Headway or Reward Series) includes a lexicographical component. They would not assign a separate place to delineate various aspects of the dictionary, though they refer their students to look up a meaning of a word, thus linking the notion of the dictionary as a vessel of meaning, an idea also dominant in students' views. Though, as seen elsewhere in this questionnaire, Sudanese teachers predominantly believe in the use of monolingual rather than bilingual ones, yet this is not explained to students. At least 26 (52%) of teachers "never" do, and the question of taxonomy of dictionaries never crops up in lectures. One teacher informed the researchers that such questions may be raised only when a curious student asks the teacher to recommend a certain dictionary, which

we are sorry to say it is a rare incident. Then a teacher would give a catchword brand such as Oxford, Cambridge, Al Mawrid, etc. In the teachers' opinion, language proficiency is embodied mainly in the four skills. This belief is encouraged by the syllabi in the four universities (see Appendix). Statements (22) and (23) run parallel to those in the previous section and concentrate on teachers' directing students to use dictionaries in their reading and pleasure activities. It seems that the enthusiasm with

which students invest these activities is largely their own since teachers are less than willing to offer this overt instruction. Our general impression from this section is the isolation with which teachers treat dictionaries as objects not fully absorbed in the English language teaching programme.

Table 4. The teachers' opinions to the overall questions of in the ELT programmes

Statement		always	often	sometimes	rarely	never	total
24. The present English syllabus does not satisfy lexicographical needs of university students	Count	0	8	31	9	2	50
	%	0%	16%	62%	18%	4%	100%
25. Students enter university with poor dictionary skills.	count	1	4	25	14	6	50
	%	2%	8%	50%	28%	12%	100%
26. Teachers do not receive proper dictionary training.	count	0	5	28	12	5	50
	%	0%	10%	56%	24%	10%	100%
27. Lexicography should be an integrating part of English Language syllabus.	count	2	5	17	10	16	50
	%	4%	10%	34%	20%	32%	100%
28. Students should be allowed to use dictionaries during examinations.	count	0	0	6	25	19	50
	%	0%	0%	12%	50%	38%	100%
29. Dictionaries skills should be included in any assessment of students' knowledge of English.	count	1	2	19	12	16	50
	%	2%	4%	38%	24%	32%	100%
30. Conscious dictionary awareness among students will improve their general language performance.	count	4	5	27	11	3	50
	%	8%	10%	54%	22%	6%	100%

Table (4) is about the teachers' opinions to the overall questions of dictionaries in the ELT programme. Statement (24) focuses on courses devoted to the use of dictionaries in the syllabi taught in the four universities. Significantly, 31 (62%) of teachers are not sure whether the syllabus satisfies the dictionary needs of their students, nor are they aware of the general trend of their respective syllabus. We might seize this opportunity and analyse the place the dictionary lexicography has within each syllabus (see Appendix for courses outline). Hence, this part is a comparative analysis of the courses that are taught in the English departments with a view to examining their intensity and attention regarding the teaching of dictionaries.

Let us start with the University of Khartoum where (19) courses taught up to the fourth year, none explicitly mentions dictionaries or lexis. (see the BA syllabus). Phonology courses with their context-based instruction in the sounds of English dominate, and so do syntax courses based on Chomsky's (1957, 1965) theories and, indeed, there are too many syntax courses (4 courses) testifying to the rise of transformational grammar in the 1960s which still influences our teachers. The lexical theories which naturally lead to dictionary use are not dealt with. The only course on semantics deals mainly with structural semantics explained by Lyons (1977) and Palmer (1981).

In Sudan University, out of the 45 courses up to fourth year, there are the usual language skill courses that do not involve the dictionary lexicography. (see the BA syllabus). However, there is a course in the second semester of the first year entitled "Developing Skills" which might include teaching of dictionary use as one of its goals, though this will depend on the discretion of the teacher who might instead focus on reading skills such as skimming, scanning, paraphrasing, etc. Another course worthy of our attention is "Lexical Studies" which is more promising, though areas such as derivative and inflectional morphology, idioms and collocations are the normal topics. Though teachers might conveniently insert a module on dictionary, this has never been done, as the teacher of the course told us.

As for Omdurman Islamic University, (see the BA syllabus), we have plenty of language skill courses, and the only place where dictionaries can fit in is within the course entitled "Study Skills" in the first year. Even if taught within this course, dictionaries merit a course of their own, and such attention they receive within this umbrella skills course will be sketchy and inadequate.

Finally, regarding Al Neelein University, (see the BA syllabus), out of the 38 courses taught, there are the discrete proper skills courses and the one portmanteau "Study Skills Course" that can hardly cope with the many aiding skills university students require such as teaching notes, making gist's, summarizing, reading skills, dictionary skills, the internet, and library use (Wallace, 2000). Again, such treatment as the dictionary receives, if ever, will be insufficient. It is to be noted too that Al Neelein University teaches a great many courses but none of them has a name with resemblance to lexicography or its cognates.

To sum up, we can say that dictionaries is a subject hardly touched upon in our academic circles, at the local and international level. This fact may only be a reflection of such results as those produced by our present questionnaires, because it is these very sample teachers who design courses that will only reflect their beliefs about what essentially constitutes language learning and teaching. Taking into consideration the low figures both for teachers' opinions and assessment of syllabi, this is reflected in students' actual performance on dictionary tests. Since students' endeavours to use the dictionary on their own can never be effective unless aided by instruction and courses. The researchers are apt to agree with Varantola (1998:15) when he writes

"We believe that dictionary skills must be taught carefully and thoroughly if users are to extract from their dictionaries the information which lexicographers have put into them. Teachers will be better able to carry out such teaching if they are fully aware of exactly what their students are doing with their dictionaries, what they expect from them, and how easily they are satisfied during the process of consultation".

Going back to the remainder of the questionnaire, statement (26) relates to teachers' training in dictionaries. However, we are struck by the uncertainty teachers have over the value of such training and the high proportion (34%) of "unsure". As for statement (27) on the centrality of lexicography in this syllabus, we believe that it has been answered for and the neglect explained. Statement (28) is the most conventional and perhaps the easiest to answer for teachers: 44 (88%) do indeed agree with the Sudanese university rules for not allowing dictionaries in examination rooms (except, of course, for translation courses). Statement (29) is closely connected to (15) and here, again, the marginal place assigned to lexicography shows itself, as 28 (56%) of the teachers object to the inclusion of dictionaries in examinations and a significant proportion of 19 (48%) are not sure. Indeed, from the researchers' own experience as teachers of General English in these Universities, dictionaries have never been included in examinations which conventionally comprise reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary, with listening and speaking excluded due to the large number of students. It is reasonable to expect that the same thing applies to the other three universities under study. Our final question is a general one on the use of dictionary-awareness rising among students and here, for the last time, teachers' skepticism shows itself and their view of dictionaries as addenda rather than integers of language learning. 27 (54%) of them withhold their commitments. Their apathy on this question as on others contrast sharply with the students' enthusiastic, if misled, attitudes about dictionaries which prevents them from even half fully utilizing the potential of an educational aid that they appreciate so much. It can be suggested that teachers' indifference is one factor behind the students' misuse of dictionaries, a fact which has unfortunate implications for their language as a whole.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Findings

To conclude, though the teachers' sample is somewhat small, certain tendencies emerge as they show real lack of intimacy with dictionaries as an indivisible part of English language learning kit.

It is here to recall our questions of the study:

1. How do Sudanese teachers use monolingual dictionaries in teaching classes?
2. What type of information in these dictionaries do they provide their students in a practical way?
3. What types of common difficulties do teachers meet while using dictionaries?

Through our investigations we have reflected the image of teachers' poor response towards using dictionaries in their classes. We shockingly found that about 62% of our examinees would still cling to the rather traditional idea of the four discrete language skills of comprehension, listening, communication and writing. To their way of thinking, dictionaries are peripheral, an addendum that is the sole responsibility of students and not an "integral" part of a formal English language programme. So the types of information, which are expected go transfer to their students, could almost be nil, because of the teachers' poor belief in the feasibility of students gaining command of English, with relatively little use of dictionaries. The odds were almost equal: 44% for "yes" as opposed to 40% for "no". We had expected much higher percentages of agreement on this issue.

The last question of the study seems as if it was improper to ask; as the findings have explicitly revealed that teachers did hold poor attitudes and responses towards the feasibility and implementation of dictionaries in their classes. It seems to us that Stein's (2013) words could explain this the situation of this poor intimacy with dictionaries that no one ever had taught or showed [them] how to use a dictionary successfully; neither at school, nor at university, nor at the teacher's training college. This excuse seems to be the way of out to justify the situation of Sudanese EL teachers who reflected poor attitudes towards integrating dictionaries in their classes, but researchers hopefully look forward to see change of these passive attitudes towards the use of this indispensable effective teaching tool in the field of language pedagogy.

5.2 Recommendations and suggestions

The recommendations, mainly addressed to the teachers and syllabus designers. Teachers are partly to be blame for their non-inclusion of dictionary-related aspects of learning. Syllabi concentrate more on syntax and take little note of dictionary-related aspects of learning. Therefore:

1. Teachers should cultivate in their students the importance of dictionaries in language learning.
2. A natural corollary of the above proposition is the attempt needed to incorporate the dictionary components in General English courses and materials.

3. Teachers should exert themselves to correct the dominant notion among themselves of the dictionary as yet one more passive book on the library shelf to be resorted to in time of need.
4. Integration of an interactive lexicography that goes beyond paper-based versions to include accompanying electronic versions (of e.g. OALD on CD-ROM) and internet online dictionaries to provide learners with the versatility and stimulation of these up-to-date sources.
5. Inclusion of task-based activities in General English lessons to provide the learners with the means to handle the facets of monolingual dictionaries such as definitions, pronunciation, and collocation.
6. Further investigations are needed in the area:
 - to enrich our teaching practice in the classroom and,
 - to encourage the teaching force to understand the role that the dictionary can play as a tool of language teaching and learning and,
 - to remind us about the role of dictionaries as encyclopedic source of general human knowledge and
 - lastly, to tell us about how enjoyable the navigation in dictionaries could be!

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Appendices

Appendix (1)
 Outlines of English Courses in four Sudanese Universities

The English courses in the four universities

University of Khartoum

Faculty of Arts

(Department of English)

Preliminary Year

First Semester

English 101 : General English 1 (reading) 6 weekly hours

Second Semester

English 102: General English 2 (writing) 6 weekly hours.

Second Year

First Semester

English 201 : English in Context 3 weekly hours

English 203 : Introduction to Literary Appreciation 3 weekly hours

Second Semester

English 202: Advanced Composition 3 weekly hours.

English 204 : Introduction to Drama 3 weekly hours

Third Year

First Semester

English 301 : The Phonology of English I 3 weekly hours

English 303 : Syntactic Analysis 3 weekly hours

English 305 : Romantic and Victorian Literature 4 weekly hours

Second Semester

English 302 : Shakespeare 3 weekly hours

English 304 : Nineteenth Century American Literature 3 weekly hours

English 306 : Varieties of English and Levels of Usage 4 weekly hours

Fourth Year**Language Option**

English 401 : African Literature	3 weekly hours
English 403 : Twentieth Century English Literature	3 weekly hours
English 407 : TEFL	4 weekly hours

Second Semester

English 402 : The Phonology of English	3 weekly hours
English 404 : Syntactic Analysis	3 weekly hours
English 406 : Twentieth Century American Literature	3 weekly hours
English 408 : Translation	3 weekly hours

Fifth Year**Language Option**

English 501 : Dissertation on Language	5 weekly hours
English 502: Semantic of English	5 weekly hours
English 505 : Modern Theories of Syntax	5 weekly hours
English 506: Modern Theories of Syntax	5 weekly hours
English 509: Contrastive and Error Analysis	5 weekly hours
English 510 : Special Topic in Language	5 weekly hours

Literature Option

English 503 : Dissertation on Literature in English	5 weekly hours
English 504: Special Author, Period or Genre	5 weekly hours
English 507: History of Literary Criticism	5 weekly hours
English 508: Seventeenth Century Literature	5 weekly hours
English 511: Modernism	5 weekly hours
English 512: Eighteenth Century Literature	5 weekly hours

Source: Khartoum University, Faculty of Arts, Department of English, (October 2000).

Al Nilein University
Faculty of Arts
Department of English

Preliminary Year

Credit hours

First Semester

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. Basic Grammar I | 2 |
| 2. Writing | 2 |
| 3. Reading | 2 |

Second Semester

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Phonetics | 3 |
| 2. Literature | 4 |
| 3. Basic Grammar II | 3 |
| 4. Study Skills | 3 |
| 5. Reading | 3 |
| 6. An Introduction to Linguistics | 3 |
| 7. Translation | 3 |
| 8. Writing Skills | 3 |
| 9. Communication Sills | 3 |
| 10. Listening | 3 |

Third Semester

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Communicative Grammar | 3 |
| 2. Phonology and Morphology | 3 |
| 3. Syntax | 3 |
| 4. Semantics and Pragmatics | 3 |
| 5. Translation | 3 |
| 6. Sociolinguistics | 3 |

7. Language in Use	3
8. British Literature	3
9. African Literature	3
10. Expository Composition	3

Fourth Semester

1. Historical Linguistics	3
2. Applied Linguistics	3
3. Psycholinguistics	3
4. Novel	3
5. Poetry	3
6. American Literature	3
7. Drama	3
8. Stylistics	3
9. Discourse Analysis	3
10. Translation	3
11. Functional Grammar	3
12. TWFL	3
13. Research methodology	3
14. Research Paper	3

*Source: Elneelain University, Faculty of Arts, English Department
(November 2000).*

Sudan University
Faculty of Education
Department of English

Preliminary Year

Credit hours

First Semester

1. Language Skills I (Listening and Speaking)	2
2. Language Skills II (Reading and Writing)	2
3. Introduction to Phonetics	3
4. General Theory of English Literature	3
5. Summary and Composition	3
6. Communicative Grammar	3

Second Semester

1. Introduction to Fiction	3
2. Introduction to Drama	3
3. Introduction to Poetry	3
4. Practical Phonetics	3
5. Developing Skills	3
6. Communicative Grammar	3

Second Year

First Semester

1. English Poetry (Selected Poems)	3
2. Varieties of English	3
3. Short Stories (Five short stories)	3
4. Grammatical Analysis	3
5. Aspects of the Novel	3
6. Introduction to Linguistics	3

Second Semester

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Modern Novel | 3 |
| 2. Feminist Writers | 3 |
| 3. English Proficiency | 3 |
| 4. Drama and Theatre | 3 |
| 5. English Phonology | 3 |
| 6. Grammatical Analysis | 3 |

Third Year**First Semester**

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. African Literature | 3 |
| 2. Literature in Education | 3 |
| 3. Semantics | 3 |
| 4. Presentation | 3 |
| 5. E.L.T. I | 3 |
| 6. Nineteenth Century English Literature | 3 |

Second Semester

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Sociolinguistics | 3 |
| 2. Twentieth Century American Literature | 3 |
| 3. E.L.T. I | 3 |
| 4. Syntax | 3 |
| 5. Essay Writing | 3 |

Fourth Year**First Semester**

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Modern Poetry | 3 |
| 2. Lexical Studies | 3 |
| 3. Shakespearean Drama | 3 |
| 4. Research Methodology | 3 |
| 5. Psycholinguistics | 3 |

Second Semester

1. Methods and Principles of E. L. T.	3
2. Contemporary Drama	3
3. Translation	3
4. Testing	3
5. Shakespearean Drama (Criticism)	3

*Source Sudan University. Faculty of Education, : Department of English
(November 2000).*